



# Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Birmingham

**For reporting year  
01 July 2019 – 30 June 2020**

Published October 2020



# Contents

Introductory sections 1 – 3 .....	2
1. Statutory role of the IMB .....	2
2. Description of the establishment.....	4
3. Executive summary .....	5
Evidence sections 4 – 7 .....	10
4. Safety .....	10
5. Fair and humane treatment .....	<u>1546</u>
6. Health and wellbeing .....	<u>2425</u>
7. Progression and resettlement.....	<u>2627</u>
8. The work of the IMB.....	<u>3034</u>
GLOSSARY .....	<u>3334</u>

## **Introductory sections 1 - 3**

### **1. Statutory role of the IMB**

The Prison Act 1952 requires every prison to be monitored by an independent Board, appointed by the Secretary of State from members of the community in which the prison is situated.

Under the National Monitoring Framework agreed with ministers, the Board is required to:

- satisfy itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in custody within its prison and the range and adequacy of the programmes preparing them for release
- inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom authority has been delegated as it judges appropriate, any concern it has
- report annually to the Secretary of State on how well the prison has met the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have on those in its custody.

To enable the Board to carry out these duties effectively, its members have right of access to every prisoner and every part of the prison, and also to the prison's records.

The Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT) is an international human rights treaty designed to strengthen protection for people deprived of their liberty. The protocol recognises that such people are particularly vulnerable and aims to prevent their ill-treatment through establishing a system of visits or inspections to all places of detention. OPCAT requires that States designate a National Preventive Mechanism to carry out visits to places of detention, to monitor the treatment of and conditions for detainees and to make recommendations for the prevention of ill-treatment. The Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) is part of the United Kingdom's National Preventive Mechanism.

## 2. Description of the establishment

HMP Birmingham is a category B local prison housing adult men, both convicted and on remand, serving both Birmingham and Wolverhampton courts. The majority of sentenced prisoners are transferred on a few weeks after arrival, creating a very high throughput of, on average, over 300 new prisoners each month.

The prison currently has an operational capacity of 977, with a certified normal accommodation of 1,054. In 2018, the operational capacity was reduced from 1,450 on the closure of three Victorian residential wings.

Prisoners are accommodated in nine different residential wings: five modern wings; one newly refurbished Victorian wing; the care and separation unit (CSU); the early days centre; and a social care wing for older prisoners – the latter three being Victorian wings.

The modern side of the prison has a gym; two healthcare wards, and GP and dental surgeries; eight workshops; and an education suite. The Victorian side of the prison has a library and Vulnerable prisoners (VPs) are educated in a separate, smaller education block.

On 1 July 2019, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) formally took over management and responsibility for the prison, which had previously been run by the private company, G4S.

### Service providers:

Buildings and maintenance:	Amey
Catering:	Aramark
Community rehabilitation company (CRC)	Staffordshire and West Midlands CRC
Education:	Novus
General healthcare:	Birmingham and Solihull NHS
Psychology Services:	Birmingham and Solihull NHS Psychology and Mental health Trust HMPPS Psychology Services
Transport:	GeoAmey

### **3. Executive summary**

#### **3.1 Background to the report**

In August 2018, Birmingham prison was issued with an urgent notification to improve. Under new leadership, with a significant investment in resources, both human and financial, and a reduction in the operational capacity from 1,450 to 977, the prison improved in many aspects: better living conditions, reduced violence, improved staff/prisoner ratio, and no self-inflicted death in two years. The indications are that this upward trajectory will continue. The rising trends in standards and outcomes provide strong evidence that targeted investment is producing results. It will be important to continue monitoring any impact on progress already made, alongside the changes still needed to raise attainment in education and improve rehabilitation.

The appointment, in August 2018, of a new Governor (the fourth in two years) and senior leadership team (SLT) was central to the drive for improvement. There has been a clear and consistent focus on procedural justice and accountability. Challenge has been balanced by support, and good practice is shared, achievements are acknowledged and staff feel valued. Residents tell the Board that they now have greater confidence in the leadership and management of the prison, and relationships with staff are generally good.

In general, outcomes for prisoners have improved over the last two years.

#### **3.2 Main judgements**

##### *3.2.1 How safe is the prison?*

From June 2019 to March 2020, the Board judged the prison to be much safer than before but still subject to some serious assaults and incidents of violence. Closed-circuit television (CCTV) installed in February 2020 has helped identify perpetrators and provide evidence in adjudications. Body-worn video cameras, although not always turned on when required, provides useful evidence when footage is available.

Efforts to support prisoner safety include a range of review meetings: monthly safer custody meetings, use of force meetings, and weekly stability meetings that analyse and report on incidents and trends for violence and self-harm. These self-reviews produce 'heat maps' for targeted interventions. The challenge, support and intervention plan (CSIP) system operates well in support of at-risk individuals.

There has been a determined effort to detect and remove any staff member who falls below the required professional standards of integrity.

The Board acknowledges the senior leadership management of the COVID-19 lockdown, where measures such as cohorting units, vigilance around isolation, social distancing and hygiene resulted in only three residents testing positive for COVID-19 (on 9 March, 23 March and 16 April). During this period, the number of assaults dropped below the usual numbers (see paragraph 4.3.4), drug ingress was interrupted, and men stated that they felt safer, with some even using this time to detoxify (see paragraph 4.6.5).

When self-harm started to rise (see paragraph 4.3.3), the prison responded by setting up forums for self-harmers and issuing a self-harm survey to understand and reduce such incidents (see paragraph 5.3.3).

In summary, the prison has become much safer, although, given the challenges of a complex population, it is unlikely to be completely free of violence or self-harm.

### *3.2.2 How fairly and humanely are prisoners treated?*

‘Putting people first by recognising, protecting and supporting our community through rehabilitation and opportunity for all’.

This new mission statement, chosen by all prison staff, is evidenced in practice by the creation of forums both for residents and staff, providing spaces where groups and individuals can ‘have a voice’. The Board acknowledges the Governor’s focus on developing staff morale and enhancing team building, which filters down, creating positive outcomes for residents (see paragraph 4.4.1). When asked about safety in the prison, one officer used the term ‘transformation’. Prisoner representative ‘community information lead’ workers from every wing have independently told the Board how good relationships have been with staff during the COVID-19 period.

Effective communication during the height of the COVID-19 crisis helped to reduce anxiety and build trust, and was evidenced by the provision of in-cell activity and distraction packs, regular under-the-door-communications and daily kiosk notices to residents and staff, which communicated the rationale for regime changes.

Issues raised by a weekly teleconference held between the Board and a group of residents were addressed, often resulting in positive change and improvements (see paragraph 5.3.7). Residents spoke of good staff/prisoner relationships, with a sense of ‘being in it together’.

During the COVID-19 lockdown (March to July), men were spending 23 and a half hours a day in-cell. At the start of lockdown, some residents who appeared symptomatic had to isolate for 14 days, locked in their cells with no access to showers, exercise or fresh air. While this treatment was extreme, and unacceptable over a prolonged period, it needs to be considered in the context of the prison having only three confirmed prisoner cases of COVID-19. Men generally accepted the restricted regime as keeping them safe, and commensurate with some of the restrictions in the outside community.

The Board has concerns about the length of time that some men may be held in the CSU (see paragraph 5.2.3). This occurs when individuals with disturbing and violent behaviours, who are not deemed seriously mentally ill and therefore do not meet the criteria for transfer to a high secure unit or for a psychologically informed planned environment support, cannot safely be housed on the wings.

The Board continues to believe that the frequency of lost property is unacceptable, and is evidenced by the large proportion of applications and complaints about property issues (see paragraph 5.8.1). The responses to prison complaints about missing property are not always given due consideration, and complaints often remain unresolved as they pass back and forth from complainant to respondent, which is not satisfactory.

In response to the Lammy Review, the SLT has placed equality and diversity high in its priorities. Measures recently implemented (senior appointment, forums, data scrutiny, equality monitoring tool) are aimed at improving awareness and understanding, and should help to eradicate the over-representation of black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) prisoners in adjudications (see paragraph 5.4.1).

There have been improvements in accommodation, and the Board welcomes the decision to refurbish A, B and C wings as single cell occupancy. The Board has observed that in shared cells the lack of privacy and personal differences often create issues and behaviour flashpoints, and intensify problems with lost or displaced property. The Board regards single-occupancy cells as more decent.

In summary, prisoners are generally treated fairly and humanely, although there are exceptions such as the loss of personal property, and some issues beyond the control of the prison. The latter includes lengthy stays in the CSU for some individuals and the unprecedented COVID-19 restrictions.

### *3.2.3 How well are prisoners' health and wellbeing needs met?*

The Board is of the opinion that healthcare provision in the prison is generally good, with inpatient wards noted as being particularly well run, offering treatment for a range of conditions, with NHS and prison staff working well together. Observation and, during the COVID-19 pandemic, regular telephone contact have confirmed this. A recent Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) report (April 2020) stated that the standard of healthcare was equivalent to that which could have been expected in the community.

Residents have been able to contact Listeners at all hours throughout the lockdown, and 'wellbeing navigators', who are 12 trained residents, visit the wings daily and provide one-to-one support where needed. However, the number of trained Listeners and wellbeing navigators has reduced because of transfers out. The psychology services provided self-help strategies in their absence during the COVID lockdown, and returned to work as soon as they were allowed. Several men have made remarkable progress with the support of the psychologist.

Prior to the lockdown, the key worker scheme was exceeding the national benchmark of 55% of meetings between key worker and residents, reaching 62% in February, but this was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the lockdown, a lot of work went into providing in-cell activity and distraction packs, and wing staff had the time to work with individuals, with many issues being resolved on the wings. Overall, there has been a dramatic fall in complaints and applications during the lockdown.

Medical cases were triaged throughout the whole of the lockdown, and healthcare staff continued to attend all assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) reviews during this period.

In summary, the prison makes good provision for the health and wellbeing of the prisoners in its care.

### *3.3.4 How well are prisoners progressed towards successful resettlement?*

As a result of short-term sentences, many men do not have sufficient time to make significant progress towards resettlement, and most men will transfer out before any longer-term progress can be embedded. The CRC is aware of which men are on recall. The Board currently has no means of monitoring follow-on support in the community.

A longer-term lack of support on release may cancel out any achievements or progress made in prison. There are charity organisations (see paragraphs 7.4.5 and 7.5.7) that make provision for men on release in Birmingham, but this does not impact on all men. The Board acknowledges the wisdom and foresight of giving a basic mobile phone on release to those with no other means of contacting probation services (see paragraph 7.5.3).

Figures on accommodation on release continue to be good, although the quality and suitability of that accommodation cannot be verified by the Board. Ninety per cent of men are offered accommodation on release, with 10% referred to the local housing office.

It is a concern that attendance at work and activity placements is low, despite an improvement on last year. The 690 spaces are sufficient for the 977 operational capacity, as men on remand do not have to work if they choose not to.

While education attendance has averaged 63.4%, an improvement on past years, this still leaves too many places unfilled. Signs of further improvement in recruitment to the workshops were interrupted by the lockdown. However, attendance at pre-release courses has risen from the previous year, to 51%.

In summary, as a local prison HMP Birmingham is restricted in the impact it can have on progressing men towards successful resettlement.

### **3.3 Main areas for development**

#### *TO THE MINISTER*

Will the minister guarantee that, as advised, when the three Victorian wings, now closed, are refurbished they will be single-occupancy cells, to avoid the overcrowding of the past that contributed to uninhabitable living conditions, poor staff/prisoner relationships and an unsafe prison?

Will consideration be given to transitioning Birmingham to a completely single-cell prison, to facilitate a regime which keeps people safe?

The improved safety during lockdown is likely to be lost if staffing levels remain unchanged. Increased staffing during 'step-in' has proved to be the transforming impact of a better staff/prisoner ratio. Will the ratio of staff to prisoners be revised upwards, to ensure that more landing officers are available after the COVID-19 lockdown?

Strategies are in place inside the prison to manage bullying behaviour and address the seemingly endless cycle of debt and resulting violence. How will the minister communicate to other departments the need for corresponding measures in the community, to reduce the influence of urban street gangs and organised crime gangs?

The Board repeats the question put to the minister in the 2017 annual report: how will the minister resolve the issue of prisoners serving indeterminate sentences for public protection (IPP) held in custody beyond their sentence and, apparently, indefinitely?

#### *TO THE PRISON SERVICE*

A complete overhaul of the management of prisoners' property is required, and at its core needs to be respect for an individual's worldly goods and the necessity not to lose them or allow them to be stolen. Will the prison service provide a nationwide fair and effective system for moving prisoners' property, with compensation guaranteed for any unreasonable loss?

#### *TO THE GOVERNOR*

Will the Governor undertake a review of the recording and tracking of mens' property received into the prison, with the aim of reducing the frequency of property being lost on site, and will he ensure fair and just compensation when losses are not the fault of the prisoner?

How will the Governor ensure that the cultural changes and improvements already achieved are embedded and sustained throughout the prison, now and for the future?

### **3.4 Progress since the last report**

Key aspects of progress include:

- CCTV was installed in February 2020.
- Staff/resident relationships have improved throughout the reporting period and are better than at the time of the previous report.
- The key worker scheme started well and was above target in February. Residents were receiving more frequent and individualised support. Previously, many did not even know the name of their personal officer. Unfortunately, the scheme was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In-cell telephones were fitted for all cells, to ensure telephone access for all residents during the COVID-19 lockdown.

- The CSU was fully refurbished and extended, with new showers added.
- New showers were fitted on all landings on K wing.
- The CSIP process and safety intervention meetings are managed well, enabling effective teamwork, and resultant weekly reviews ensure that follow-up action has been implemented and next steps identified.
- There is more rigorous analysis of data in stability, use of force and equality meetings. Digital signage in the main corridor serves as a visual reminder.
- Improved collaborative working between prison-based police liaison officers and the prison has improved the efficiency and preparedness of adjudications, thereby producing fairer outcomes and ensuring that cases are not dropped for lack of evidence.
- Repairs and the refurbishment of some showers has taken place over the year, improving living conditions.
- Cell call bell response times have reduced. Most are now answered within five minutes.
- Healthcare non-attendance rates have reduced.

## Evidence sections 4 – 7

### 4. Safety

The Board acknowledges the outstanding management of the COVID-19 crisis in the prison, and the dedication and selfless commitment of frontline staff at all levels. Rigorous planning, coordinated teamwork and a recognition of everyone's efforts and welfare have kept the prison safe. Many men and their relatives have expressed their gratitude. Compliance, generally, has been a key factor in the so-far successful work in keeping the virus out of the prison population, with the exception of three early cases. As the situation continues the board has concerns for the mental health of residents without access to a less restricted regime.

#### 4.1 Reception and induction

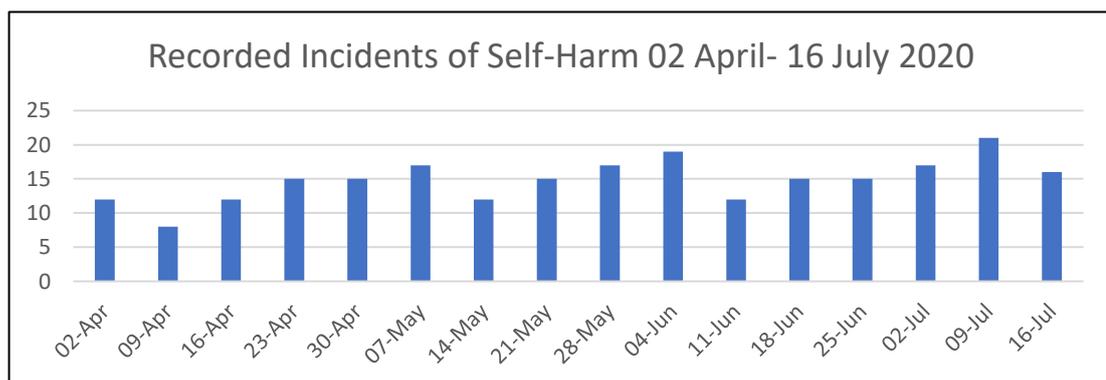
- 4.1.1 Prior to the COVID-19 lockdown, Listeners and peer support workers were in reception to assist, as needed, men arriving from the courts or on transfer.
- 4.1.2 Late arrivals sometimes meant that important safety checks were put under pressure.
- 4.1.3 The education department has reviewed its induction process, to present learning in prison as a more inviting option. The basic skills assessment test is compulsory before any resident can apply for work in the prison.
- 4.1.4 The organisation of property in reception needs improvement. Board rota reports refer to the area looking 'muddled' on one occasion, and the Board has, at other times, observed some inadequate labelling of bags. 'Hand-ins' at weekends are not processed until the following Monday.

## 4.2 Suicide, self-harm and deaths in custody

4.2.1 The Board is pleased to note that recommendations from PPO ‘deaths in custody’ reports published in the period July 2019 to June 2020 have been reviewed and actioned. There have been two deaths in custody during the reporting time frame, both from natural causes.

4.2.2 Following the death in custody of one man, palliative care in the prison can be stated as ‘good’, as the most recent PPO report of April 2020 stated that the deceased received ‘a good standard of care’, equivalent to that expected in the community. This was the first report at Birmingham to have no recommended further actions required, and represents progress.

4.3.3 The chart below shows reported incidents of self-harm recorded during lockdown (using prison data). Data obtained from November 2019 forms a pre-lockdown comparison, indicating occurrences of self-harm at an average of around 17 events. While any act of self-harm is concerning, the fact that the frequency of such acts during lockdown measures did not rise excessively is worthy of mention.



The increased focus within the prison to understand more about self-harm has resulted in measures such as daily welfare checks and, with a mix of NHS mental health staff and prison staff, the creation of self-harm support groups. Feedback from participants indicates that these groups are well received, providing an opportunity to talk openly about issues.

## 4.3 Violence, violence reduction and self-isolation

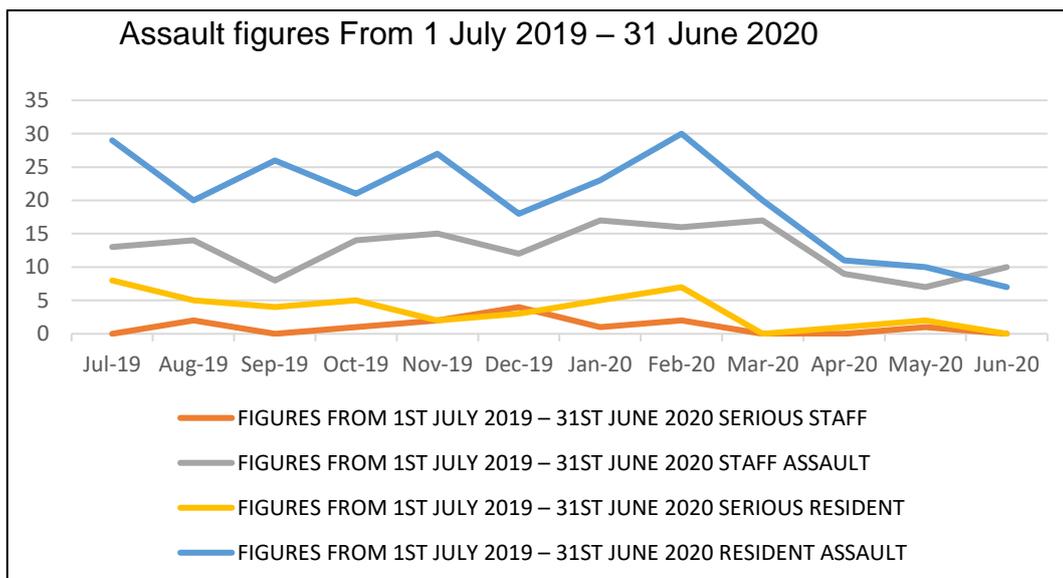
4.3.1 The Board has monitored drug-related violence on several occasions and raised issues with the Governor at Board meetings. It was confirmed that positive and covert action was being taken to tackle the ingress of drugs, and this has been independently verified by security staff. During lockdown, while the usual ways of importing illicit items, including drugs, into the prison were closed off, there was an increase in ‘hooch’ finds and the appearance of drug-impregnated correspondence.

4.3.2 In the reporting period, security at the gatehouse improved, with an increase in staff and third-party searches. All staff are now required to use prison-issue

see-through bags only. Funding and installation have been agreed for enhanced gate security, which will include resourcing to operate an X-ray scanner for all staff entering the prison.

4.3.3 The body scanner, promised as being installed in last year's report (2018/19), is due to be installed in August 2020.

4.3.4 The Board monitored prison data and specific cases of alleged assaults by residents on staff, by residents on residents and, on occasion, by staff on residents.



<b>FIGURES FROM 1 JULY 2019 – 31 JUNE 2020</b>				
	<b>SERIOUS STAFF</b>	<b>STAFF ASSAULT</b>	<b>SERIOUS RESIDENT</b>	<b>RESIDENT ASSAULT</b>
<b>Jul-19</b>	0	13	8	29
<b>Aug-19</b>	2	14	5	20
<b>Sep-19</b>	0	8	4	26
<b>Oct-19</b>	1	14	5	21
<b>Nov-19</b>	2	15	2	27
<b>Dec-19</b>	4	12	3	18
<b>Jan-20</b>	1	17	5	23
<b>Feb-20</b>	2	16	7	30
<b>Mar-20</b>	0	17	0	20
<b>Apr-20</b>	0	9	1	11
<b>May-20</b>	1	7	2	10
<b>Jun-20</b>	0	10	0	7

A sharp fall in all types of assault coincided with the COVID-19 lockdown, with the restricted regime creating limited opportunity for forms of intimidation or bullying.

- 4.3.5 The Board has increased confidence that the police and CSU staff now work together, conducting a daily review of all violent incidents in the CSU. Conversations with prison police liaison officers give assurance that procedural justice within the prison, following all assaults, both on residents and on staff, is now robust and consistent. Body-worn video camera and CCTV footage from residential areas has helped to provide evidence to support investigations and to identify perpetrators of violence.
- 4.3.6 The Board is frustrated that reviews by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) take an excessive time, to the extent that, on several occasions, the prison has had to ask about progress. It is the Board's view that, on several occasions, the CPS's failure to progress decisions on charges following violent offences led to a failure of the justice system.
- 4.3.7 Deterrents for violence reduction include the acquisition of 50 sets of rigid handcuffs, planned SPEAR (Spontaneous Protection Enabling Accelerated Response) training for all officers, and currently five staff trained in the use of PAVA incapacitant spray. To date, the spray has not been issued for use in the prison, and batons were drawn on only four occasions in the reporting year.
- 4.3.8 Self-isolators are identified daily at staff briefing meetings, and staff are tasked to manage and support them.
- 4.3.9 The weekly stability review meeting records and analyses trends in incidents of violence. It is used to plan and target interventions.

#### **4.4 Vulnerable prisoners and safeguarding**

- 4.4.1 A steady and positive culture change has been developing, and observations and discussions held throughout the establishment during the reporting year enable the Board to be confident that treating residents with respect and dignity at all times is at the heart of the leadership's approach to all interactions. VPs are often the most in need of support in this respect, and during the last year there have been fewer applications complaining about staff.
- 4.4.2 The Board has observed collaborative multidisciplinary working in the weekly safety intervention meetings. From these observations, CSIPs are seen to support VPs and important strategic decisions are made about welfare provisions.

#### **4.5 Use of force**

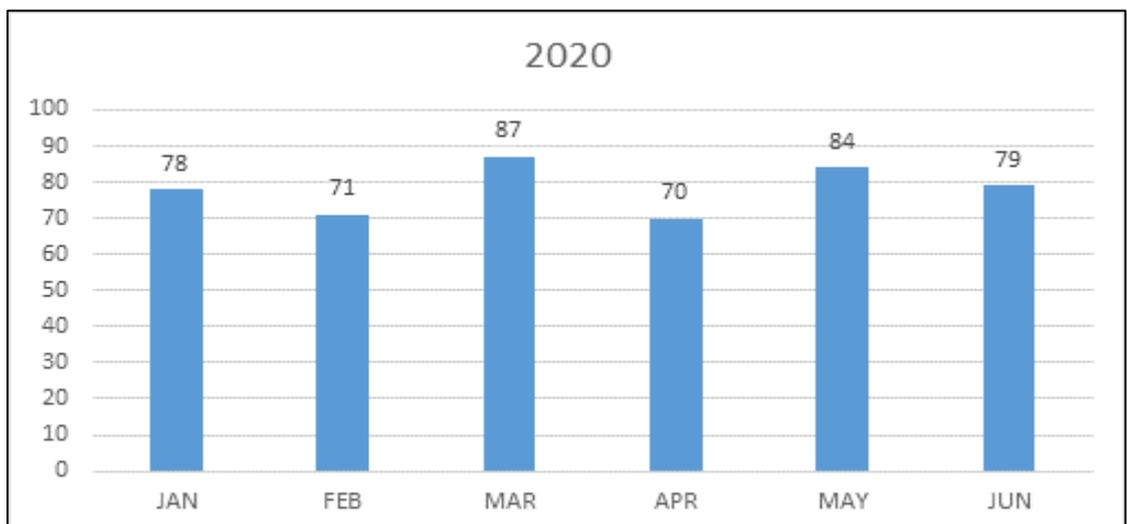
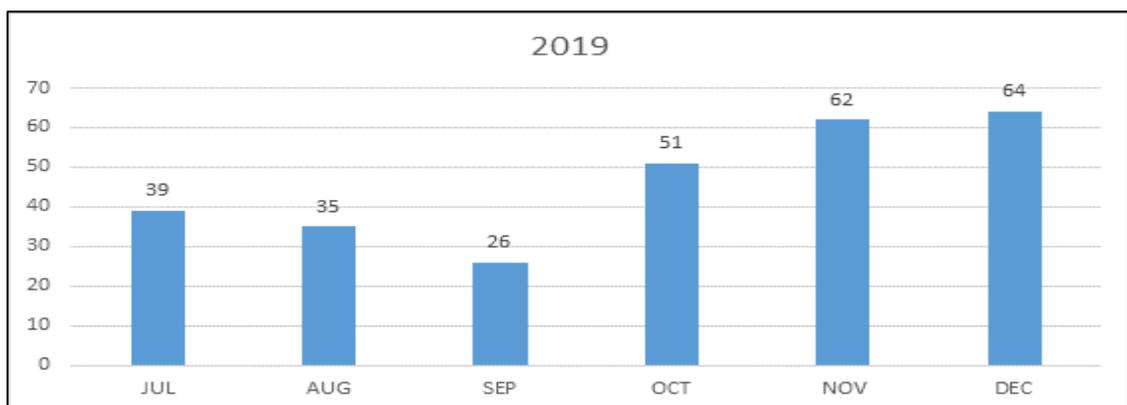
- 4.5.1 The Board has observed thorough, detailed and objective scrutiny of use of force incidents at monthly meetings. This is done well, and in the reviews of body-worn video camera footage seen by the Board, use of force has been proportionate. The Board has accessed prison data providing a statistical analysis related to age, ethnicity, location and time of day, looking for trends or concerns. Nothing indicates that any one group or characteristic is

disproportionately subject to use of force, apart from a couple of notable exceptions – namely, known members of urban street gangs, who are involved in more acts of violence than others, and also, in June 2020, men in the 30–39-year age group.

4.5.2 Use of force has increased throughout the year and was used more frequently during the COVID-19 lockdown. This is partly attributable to men not wanting to transfer out. These transfers were necessary as the courts resumed work and more spaces were needed to receive prisoners. In other cases, force was used on men who refused to return to their cells after being allowed out for one hour or less per day.

The prison also states that an increase in the deployment of handcuffs accounts for the increase in use of force statistics. Used as a restraining and preventative measure, the prison reports that the use of handcuffs contributed to a reduction in violence.

The two graphs below show use of force incidents by month, from July to December 2019 and January to June 2020.



4.5.4 The Board was notified of the use of special accommodation, and is satisfied that it was warranted and used for the shortest time possible.

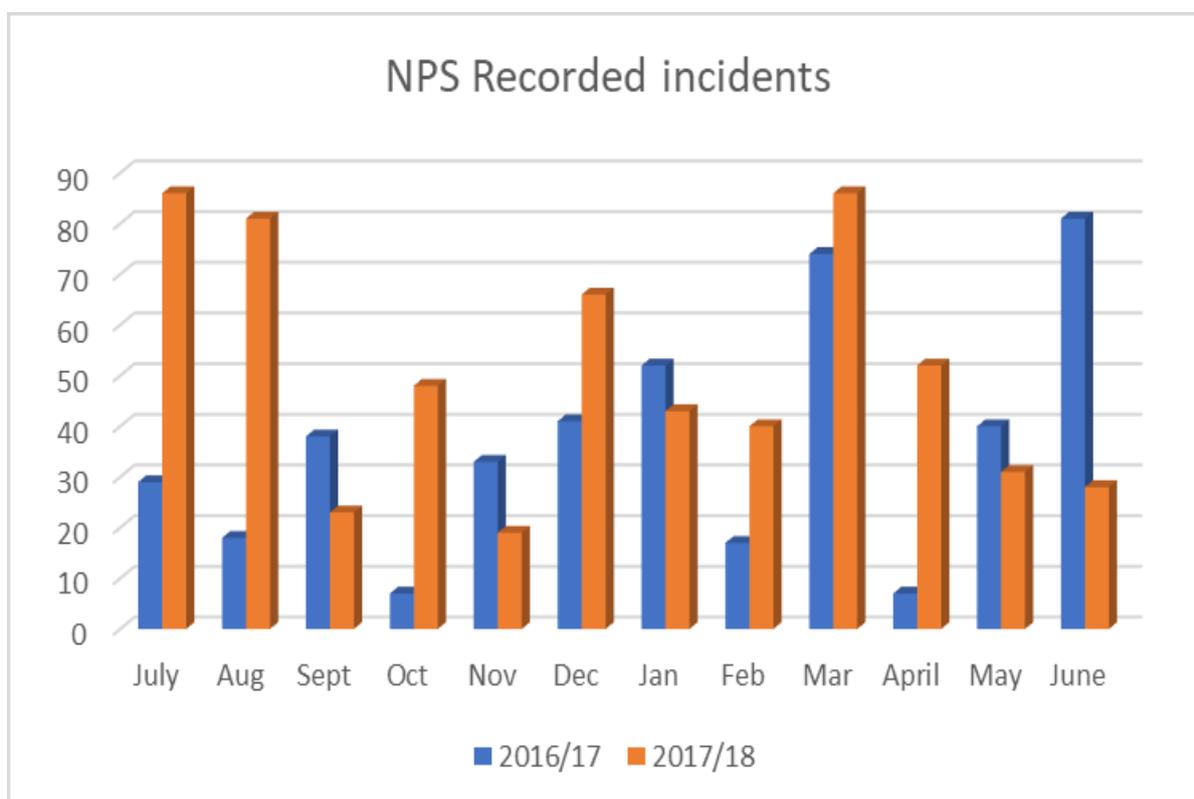
4.5.5 During the COVID lockdown, there was a significant improvement in getting officers to submit the relevant use of force paperwork on time.

#### 4.6 Substance misuse

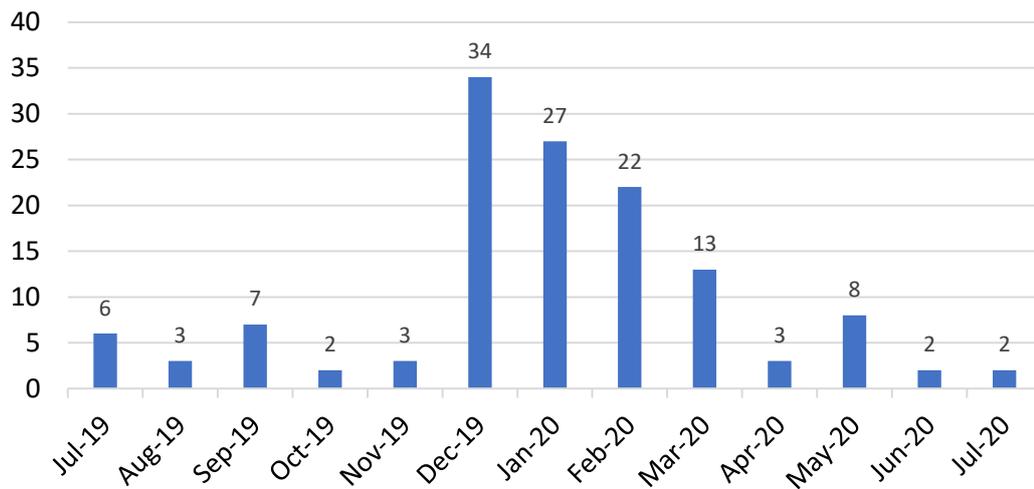
4.6.1 The Board is reassured that the prison is diligent in tracking down illicit items. There has been a significant number of finds of Rule 39 solicitors' letters being impregnated with psychoactive substances (PS). In one instance during the COVID-19 lockdown, in June, the correspondence office detected and intercepted 330 pages of drug-impregnated Rule 39 letters.

4.6.2 It has been challenging for officers, on occasion, to manage the sometimes-conflicting demands of a mixed detoxifying and non-detoxifying population on one of the wings. This resulted from the need to reconfigure accommodation to provide COVID cohorting units, and consequently has had an adverse effect on the stability of that wing. Previously, only detoxifying residents were accommodated there.

4.6.3 Incidents of PS are much lower than in recent years .



NPS Recorded incidents



The prison accounts for the spike in incidents in December to February by the 'high-profile nominals' in custody at that time, who were orchestrating much of the ingress of PS. The prison reacted by making legal visits paperless in February, resulting in a fall in the number of PS incidents. This was followed by the COVID-19 restrictions.

4.6.5 Men have told the Board about a small number of residents who have succeeded in becoming fully 'detoxed' during the COVID-19 restrictions.

## 5. Fair and humane treatment

### 5.1 Accommodation, clothing and food

5.1.1 The residential management team focuses consistently on the decency of living standards, with accommodation fabric checks and a 'living standards tracking' database to monitor cell damage and repairs. There is a weekly review.

5.1.2 While most accommodation appears to be of an acceptable standard, there have been isolated but notable exceptions:

- the screening of toilets is sometimes poor or non-existent
- the cleanliness and availability of showers on some wings have also sometimes been a problem, with issues such as slow draining water and the presence of mould being raised.

5.1.3 The prison has responded to these issues, and significant funding was secured to refurbish all the showers on K wing and the CSU. There is a guarantee that all showers across the prison will have been refurbished within two years. In the meantime, regular scouring and cleaning is undertaken.

5.1.4 Repairs, if logged correctly, have been undertaken and present less concern than in previous years. Prison data shows that, between November 2019 and May 2020, an average of 92.3% of calls resulted in a repair or temporary fix,

with 7.77%, on average, not being achieved. It was noticeable from the data that the lockdown slowed down the rate of completion of minor repairs.

- 5.1.5 The total number of callouts gives an idea of the scale of work carried out, with 2,844 callouts in seven months. This is not to say that all repairs are carried out quickly; as an example, the microphones in the closed units in the visits hall have not worked all year, despite requests for them to be fixed or replaced. This impedes communication in closed visits.
- 5.1.6 Cell call bells are now usually responded to within the five-minute time limit, and the Board has verified this by checking random cell bell analysis reports. While some cell bells are still not always answered promptly, this has improved, and since May the number of priority calls (calls waiting more than five minutes) has been monitored daily and fed back to the residential governors and wing custodial managers. This results in a summary report, highlighting factors contributing to any increase or decrease. This is used to make staff more accountable, and men are appropriately challenged on the misuse of call bells. While this is a new initiative, there was a 27.2% decrease in the number of calls in June compared with May.
- 5.1.7 Cleanliness around the perimeter has improved, and it is visibly freer of rubbish. COVID-19 hygiene measures and cleaning routines have further improved the standard of cleanliness throughout the prison.
- 5.1.8 Inadequate regulation of temperature in residential areas is an ongoing problem. Residents complain of being too hot in the summer and too cold in the winter. Temperatures can vary considerably by landing, and are more pronounced on the higher levels.
- 5.1.9 Availability of clean kit and bedding was variable by wing, and was problematic at the start of the reporting period. However, early in 2020, the establishment of the 'bonded warehouse', with two workers, linking with the laundry, improved the clean kit situation. The Board appreciates that sometimes transfers are not planned; however, ideally, there should be an adequate supply on the wings. Some men have complained about a lack of choice when issued with clothes, especially in larger sizes.
- 5.1.10 Overall, the quality and quantity of food is good, with sufficient choice and consideration for special diets, such as religious or for medical need. Informed choices about residents' individual food requirements, and evidence provided in the form of menus and spreadsheets illustrated that specific requirements are responded to, with support gained from the NHS for more complex medical needs. Orders are checked for accuracy. Staff had to help in the kitchens during the lockdown, and residents commented that the food was good. There were only three applications about food during the year, and none during lockdown.

## **5.2 Segregation and special accommodation**

- 5.2.1 During the reporting period, the CSU was extended and refurbished, with improvements made to the shower facilities and the addition of eight cells, increasing the capacity from 13 to 21.

5.2.2 It remains a serious concern of the Board when residents who are troubled by mental health conditions or have ongoing poor behavioural patterns, who do not meet the criteria for transfer to a specialist facility, are held in the CSU for extended periods of time.

5.2.3 The Board maintains that prison is not the right place for men displaying abnormal behaviour, some having been assessed as having a personality disorder, where interventions are not successful. In most cases, prison support and interventions do help such men to manage their behavioural responses but in a few exceptional cases, and with shorter-term sentences, improvements cannot be made, and for these men the CSU has been the only safe place at the establishment to hold them. The following cases are illustrative of this:

**Case 1:** Mr X was held in the CSU for 89 days, and then one week later for another 148 days, totalling 237 days with a one-week break. This was a repeat experience for Mr X, who had been held in the CSU for an excessive amount of time during a previous prison sentence. Significant support was provided and safeguards were in place but after many weeks of isolation, and reviews of his mental health, he seriously assaulted a member of staff in the CSU. There are three high-security psychiatric hospitals in the country, none of which would admit this long-term resident of the CSU, as he does not have a diagnosed psychiatric condition. The Board has been told that he has a personality disorder.

**Case 2:** Mr Y has been held in the CSU for 77 days (at the time of writing) and continues to reside there in isolation. The nature of his offence prevents the prison from safely placing him on a standard residential wing. As his sentence is for more than 10 years, there remain questions as to where he can be safely and humanely located.

5.2.4 These cases exemplify where an individual's needs cannot be met by the prison system alone. It is unreasonable to expect Birmingham, as a local prison serving the courts, and soon to be a reception prison, to meet the requirements of men such as these.

5.2.5 While it was not operationally feasible for the board to attend good order and/or discipline (GOOD) reviews during the COVID-19 restrictions, members were able to access paperwork pertaining to adjudications, GOOD reviews and details of men held in the CSU. When questions arose, the Board was able to contact the relevant staff by telephone and email.

### 5.3 Staff/prisoner relationships, key workers

5.3.1 Staff/resident relationships are generally good, and men have acknowledged this, particularly during lockdown. As additional evidence, letters from residents or their relatives have been sent, thanking staff for their frontline work and dedication to keeping the residents safe. The following quote comes from an email to the Governor:

‘...since being in prison my partner has grown in himself so much in a positive way. He’s committed to his recovery....I believe from what he tells me, this is through the encouragement and support of the officers and his drug key worker’.

5.3.2 At each of the weekly Board teleconferences with residents (15 calls in total) during the COVID-19 restrictions, men from every wing in the prison, including the cohorting units, have independently reported good relationships with staff. They have repeatedly told the Board that officers have been ‘going the extra mile’ to help them. The Board has also noted that, in spite of the fact that the regime has been limited, wing staff have had more time to develop good relationships with the men in their care.

5.3.3 The Board has received a relatively small number of complaints about staff.

5.3.4 Frustrations have increased as the COVID-19 regime restrictions have continued over months. The daily bulletins have recorded a growing number of verbal assaults on staff and physical resistance to return to cells as lockdown has progressed. Spitting at officers through the gap in the cell door has also started to occur. Self-harm has risen, but not excessively. The SLT has responded quickly to establish forums for residents who self-harm, and they report back how this is helping them deal with their issues.

5.3.5 Alerted by the ongoing large number of applications to the Board about property lost when moving cells, cell clearance was made a focus of monitoring. It was confirmed that repeated failures to complete timely cell clearances, and failure to provide residents with a cell clearance certificate are a serious weakness, which undermines mens’ confidence in the staff and often results in property being lost or stolen.

5.3.6 The Board is frustrated when an officer claims a lack of knowledge of the wing because it is not their usual site of work. Prison officers are frequently called upon to ‘stand in’ and fill gaps on wings other than their usual base. On these occasions, they sometimes say that they do not know the answer to a question. The Board considers how this must also be a frustration to residents on that wing, who also have questions that need answers. The SLT is working to address this issue by means of the daily briefing, and there is an expectation that all staff should be competent to work in all parts of the prison.

5.3.7 The reduction, although not elimination, of the drug supply and bullying during lockdown has helped to create an environment within which many men have

reported feeling safe. It is undoubtedly the case that staff/resident relationships have significantly improved during the lockdown. The challenge will be to maintain this in the future, while also allowing a reasonable time out of cell.

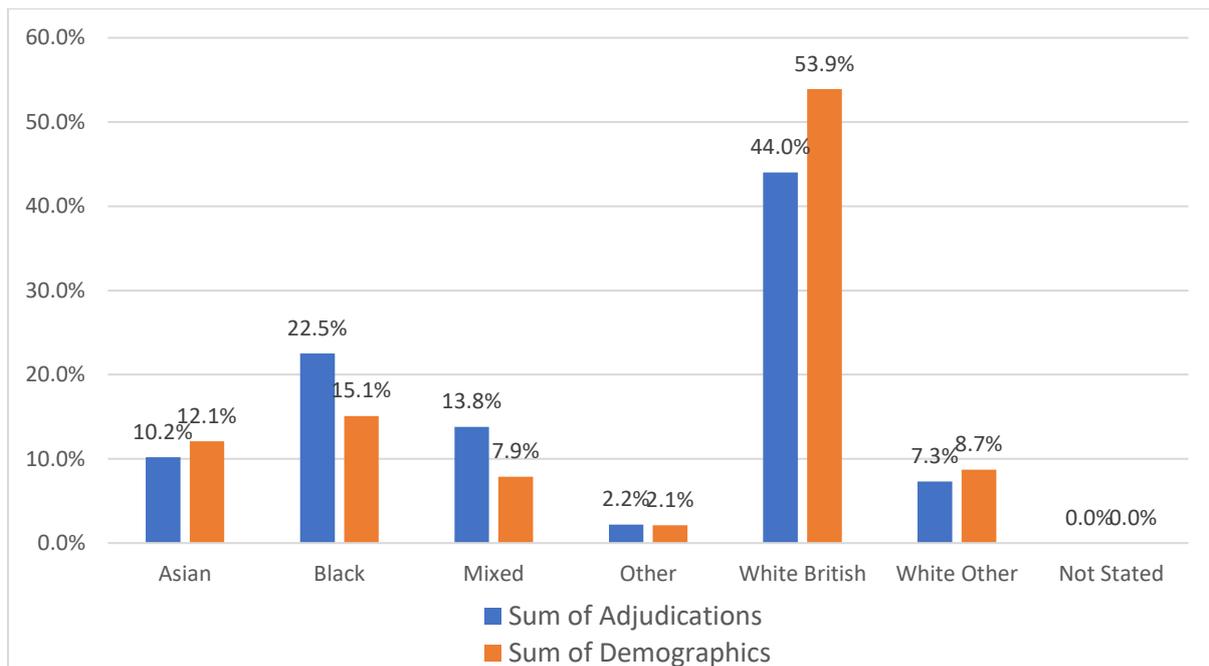
- 5.3.8 The prison does well in consulting with, listening to and responding to residents' concerns, opinions and constructive ideas, building trust. An example of this is the Governor's suggested weekly teleconference held with the Board and a group of residents. This group achieved many positive outcomes, including the extension of in-cell telephone access to 24 hours a day, clarification of new recategorisation rules suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic, availability to all of 'Inside Time', the national newspaper for residents, and many other positive outcomes.
- 5.3.9 The key worker initiative, launched in May 2019, has been successful in increasing the number of one-to-one meetings with residents. Prior to lockdown, the key worker scheme was exceeding the national benchmark of 55% of meetings with residents taking place, reaching 62% in February; however, this was completely interrupted by COVID-19 measures.
- 5.3.10 The Board welcomed the collaborative approach to managing an interim key worker model during the COVID-19 restrictions, thus avoiding duplication of effort. Under the exceptional delivery model, provision has been ensured for VPs, those at high risk and those who have been shielding. In addition, during the pandemic, key workers have monitored Terrorism Act prisoners, in consultation with security staff, and every resident on an ACCT, in consultation with safer custody staff, and these men have also been given a wellbeing check.

## **5.4 Equality and diversity**

### *5.4.1 Ethnicity*

- i. Prison data indicated that men who are black or of mixed race were over-represented in adjudications in June 2020 ( 22.5% adjudications on black men (15.1% of population) and 13.8% adjudications on mixed race men (7.9% of population). These statistics contradict the perception on the wings, where equalities representatives tell the Board that residents are treated fairly and without discrimination.

## Adjudications by ethnicity June 2020



- ii. The Board considers that the discrimination incident report form (DIRF) process has received more attention and focus than in recent years, thus improving the reliability of outcomes, as evidenced by the per centage of DIRFs upheld.

### DIRFs JULY 2019 – JUNE 2020

Total received	147
Upheld	46.9%
Not upheld	35.4%

- iii. The response taken by the SLT after the killing of George Floyd and Black Lives Matter activity in the community resulted in the setting up of a series of staff forums for BAME colleagues, where they were able to recount freely their lived experiences of racism. At the same time, a BAME residents' forum was established with the same objective, and work is ongoing. A staff/resident council is conducting a shared review, with the aim of improving understanding and cohesion. This is evidence of how the leadership of the prison wants to listen and learn from those who understand an issue from first-hand experience.

- iv. The Board views the creation of a new permanent senior post of lead for equalities, diversity and inclusion, in June 2020, as illustrative of the SLT's intent to put equality at the top of the prison agenda. The team is now proactive, as demonstrated by their higher profile around the prison, setting standards, promoting equality and events, consulting and providing information and support. Networking with Birmingham City Council and other prisons has also taken place.
- v. It remains a concern that the SLT and band 6 managers are not ethnically diverse. The first appointment to redress this imbalance was that of a black senior leader, a woman, appointed in June 2020.

#### 5.4.2 Age

- i. Men aged 21–24 years are over-represented in adjudications (June 2020: adjudications - 22.3%, population – 13.6%). The Board acknowledges that the intervention programmes department has introduced an assessment of maturity aimed at this age group, with subsequent interventions to help young men manage their behaviour and responses.
- ii. An increasingly ageing population is placing changing demands on the prison which it cannot always meet satisfactorily. More men aged 65 years and above are housed on normal location, with bunk beds and more stairs, which is not always appropriate to their physical needs.
- iii. The social care wing is excellent but not large enough to support the number of older men that now arrive at the prison. Bunk beds with narrow foot rungs are difficult for physically frail, ageing residents. The board has reported this over several years.
- iv. During lockdown, the social care wing became a shielding unit, and the regime there was better than on main location, with up to two hours per day out of cell. Relationships with staff and the level of care have remained consistently good.

Population by age – May 2020:

<b>Age banding</b>	<b>Number of men</b>	<b>%</b>
21–24 years	135	14.7
25–29 years	200	21.7
30–39 years	312	33.9
40–49 years	167	18.1
50–59 years	74	8
60–69 years	20	2.2
70–84 years	11	1.2
85+ years	2	0.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>921</b>	<b>100</b>

To demonstrate the wide age range catered for by the prison, the youngest resident is 21 years of age and the oldest is 98.

#### 5.4.3 Disability

- i. In October 2019, the Board observed that the wide-door cells intended for wheelchair users were not accessible inside, as the fixed privacy screens prevented manoeuvrability of the wheelchair. 'Men are obliged to sit on their bed to eat their meal and cannot use the chair in the cell. This is not acceptable' (from a rota report on 27 October). The prison has since removed the obstructive privacy screens.
- ii. Again, in December 2019, a rota report commented on a specific case of restricted mobility and access which may have relevance to others in a similar situation:

Mr B is in a double cell and the bunk beds contained prevent him from being able to sit upright in his cell. In addition, there is nowhere in the cell to safely store his wheelchair, which is placed in the corridor, causing him concern as others may interfere with it and not put it back in a place accessible to him. Should this man fall while in his cell, he would be unable to reach the alarm button.

- iii. The Board welcomes the moving of the dental surgery to the healthcare wing, where disabled access is easier. This has resolved the issue of a broken lift, ongoing for several years.

#### 5.4.4 Sexual orientation and gender

The prison takes an overt and positive stance on issues of sexuality and gender identity, with a clear message about inclusion and respect. All notices to staff and residents carried the LGBT logo in June. There was a series of events to recognise LGBT Week. The percentage of DIRFs relating to sexual orientation doubled from 8.9% in 2019 to 15.6% in 2020 which the board believes shows increased confidence in the DIRF system and in raising issues related to sexual orientation and gender.

#### 5.4.5 Faith and pastoral support

- i. During lockdown, Easter, Ramadan, Passover and Vaisakhi were all celebrated without incident, and this exemplifies the good communication between the chaplaincy and the prison community. A rota ensured that two members of the team were present every day, and leaflets outlining how each religious festival was to be delivered during lockdown were produced well in advance so that expectations were managed.
- ii. Two iPads were obtained for family contact in case of a bereavement during lockdown.

- ii. The prison population by faith is relatively consistent (see below). The only population that the chaplaincy cannot directly cater for are Rastafarians, who numbered 14 in June; however, to meet this group's needs, the chaplain and the equalities team work together to run a meeting.

A member of the team visits the CSU on a daily basis.

Population by faith, as of June 2020:

<b>No religion</b>	304
<b>Muslim</b>	209
<b>Roman Catholic</b>	124
<b>Christian (all)</b>	137
<b>Church of England</b>	104
<b>Sikh</b>	11
<b>Buddhist</b>	5
<b>Rastafarian</b>	14
<b>Pagan</b>	6
<b>Quaker</b>	3
<b>Atheist</b>	6
<b>Hindu</b>	2
<b>Jewish</b>	1
<b>Agnostic</b>	5

Smaller faith groups are now covered by other sessional chaplains.

## 5.6 Incentives and earned privileges (IEP)

- 5.6.1 The prison recognised that IEP warnings were not being issued consistently. A review concluded that the policy needed changing, and this is now in progress.
- 5.6.2 Rigorous prison self-review includes analysing adjudications. Board members have attended some of these meetings. At one review, 30 adjudications were quality checked and the quality was found to be unsatisfactory. There was a significant backlog and evidence was not readily available. Measures have since been put in place to improve performance and eliminate the backlog.
- 5.6.3 Concerns have arisen over the number of adjudications that have not been proceeded when officers have failed to provide a witness statement in the required time frame. This is reflected by the number of adjudications that were not proceeded with in the six months to December 2019.

## 5.7 Complaints

- 5.7.1 The Board has concerns about the quality of replies to complaints, especially the quality of response to the many property complaints. The COVID-19 pandemic prevented a Board review of complaints, but this will be reviewed in the near future.

## **5.8 Property**

### **5.8.1 'Lost' property**

Property lost in the establishment or during transfer is one of the most frequent complaints monitored by the Board. Of all applications this year, 26.7% (75) were specifically related to property issues, an increase on last year's 22.5%. Moreover, that figure reflects a period of limited prisoner movement due to lockdown restrictions, and therefore less movement of property.

Residents complain that property refused at reception or being handed in at visits is lost or that it is failing to arrive or follow on at transfer. Cell clearance is also identified as leading to 'lost' property. Evidence (applications forwarded from other Boards) suggests that this is a nationwide prison issue and not just a local problem.

### **5.8.2 Cell clearance and prisoner movements**

Both the board and SLT have independently made cell clearance a focus during the reporting year, in an effort to improve performance and produce a fairer outcome for residents. However, the COVID-19 restrictions have made any progress challenging to assess. There is a will to resolve this concern but, with a total number of movements in and out of the prison of 14,749 in the reporting year, and with an average of over 600 movements every month, the size of the challenge is not to be underestimated.

Overall, recent Board visits to reception have observed paperwork appearing casual, with the storage and labelling of property bags in some cases muddled. The Board considers that current systems need more clarity and precision.

## **6. Health and wellbeing**

### **6.1 Healthcare: general**

6.1.1 The second highest number of applications to the Board (39) are about healthcare concerns.

6.1.2 Healthcare professionals attend all GOOD reviews and ACCT reviews, and input is well informed, with appropriate follow-up actions resulting.

### **6.2 Physical healthcare**

6.2.1 Between 6 August 2019 and 22 January 2020, of 3,686 scheduled appointments, 312 residents did not attend (DNA) and had no valid reason. Based on these figures, the DNA rate for this period was 8.46%. While this is a significant improvement on previous years, staff and residents are now being held to account for missed appointments, as each DNA is analysed, and follow-up action taken. The 3,686 scheduled appointments do not show the additional emergency appointments facilitated predominantly by GPs and the staff detailed as healthcare runners, and do not include dental appointment figures.

- 6.1.4 A strong, well-established working partnership between NHS and prison staff on the wards ensures a continued high standard of care for patients. They benefit from the calm, caring atmosphere on the inpatient wards which underpins the staff ethos in those areas, as observed on Board rota visits. Good wing leadership supports team working and delivers an environment conducive to recovery, so that residents are able to return to normal location
- 6.1.5 During the COVID-19 pandemic, external hospital visits were delivered when essential. Routine GP appointments stopped but urgent cases were triaged by GPs via the kiosk message system. Healthcare staff continued to provide an appropriate range of services.

### **6.3 Mental healthcare**

- 6.3.1 Protracted delays in finding residents hospital beds in the medical high-secure estate placed additional pressure on staff and the availability of beds. Officers and nurses are placed in extremely challenging positions during such delays, but cope very well, given the circumstances.
- 6.3.2 Inevitably, the lockdown, with 23 hours a day in-cell for all residents, has had a negative impact on mental health. Daily bulletins recount an increasing number of self-harm incidents and threats of the intention of self-inflicted death. These individuals are monitored on ACCT reviews and in central multidisciplinary team meetings. These residents are seen every day, and staff are vigilant. Residents have confirmed via teleconference that these daily visits take place.
- 6.3.3 Community psychiatric nurses continued to work throughout lockdown, and made regular contact with wing offices for updates.
- 6.3.4 Psychology and psychiatry services resumed face-to-face work part-way through lockdown, having worked throughout the period.

### **6.4 Social care**

- 6.4.1 The Board has observed that the social care wing consistently delivers an exceptionally high standard of care for its residents. With desk-based work, outside gardens and association, residents are out of their cells for reasonable periods of time. Staff are pivotal in providing a calm and relaxed atmosphere within the unit. This is evident in the staff/resident partnership in entering the prison garden in the annual Royal Horticultural Society competition, in which they again achieved good recognition in the reporting year.
- 6.4.2 During the pandemic, the unit has been reconfigured as a shielding unit, with staff and residents isolated entirely to that unit. On a teleconference with the board during lockdown, one resident was able to report a regime with a longer daily time out of cell than anywhere else in the prison. The feedback was positive, with praise for the staff.

## **6.5 Exercise, time out of cell and gym**

- 6.5.1 Pre-COVID-19, there was a focus on ensuring a fair regime. To be out of his cell required a resident to be in employment or purposeful activity, unless he was on remand and exercising the right not to work. On average, around 350 residents are on remand.
- 6.5.2 During the pandemic, it has been necessary to impose a severely restricted regime in order to preserve life. Residents have been allowed out of their cell, with an option of exercise and access to the kiosk, for 30 minutes a day, with a shower on alternate days. Feedback has reported an acceptance of the situation, knowing that the outside community was also experiencing unprecedented restrictions, although understandably as time has progressed some men have been reluctant to return to their cells and on occasion this has resulted in the use of force.
- 6.5.3 A good initiative during the lockdown put gym staff on duty on the yards for exercise times, leading circuit training for those who wanted to participate. Residents told the Board that they appreciated this provision.

## **6.6 Drug rehabilitation**

- 6.6.1 The recovery team has worked shifts to allow for social distancing, and has also been present as required on the wings during the COVID-19 restrictions.

## **6.7 Soft skills**

- 6.7.1 The Board has observed small-group meditation and mindfulness sessions on the hospital ward, where every participant was fully engaged and focused.
- 6.7.2 The prison choir, pre-COVID, continued to provide a valuable group activity, with performances at prison events.
- 6.7.3 Ongoing development of resident wellbeing is evidenced by the recent introduction of a self-directed level 2 certificate in immune system optimisation.

## **7. Progression and resettlement**

### **7.1 Education, library**

- 7.1.1 Novus is the education provider of classroom-based learning, and other third-party providers offer practical sessions in the workshops and hospitality courses in the prison kitchens. Residents have access to correspondence courses up to degree level, funded by the Prison Education Trust. The Shannon Trust reading scheme in January 2020 had seven learners but this scheme, along with provision from Novus and other third-party education providers, was suspended in March 2020 owing to the COVID-19 lockdown.
- 7.1.2 Data to confirm session delivery, level of attendance and reasons for non-attendance has been difficult to access but the table below indicates varying

levels of attendance, an issue identified in previous Board reports (2016/17 and 2018/19).

<b>Month</b>	<b>Allocated</b>	<b>Attended</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
November	3,385	2,233	65.9
December	3,702	2,433	65.7
January	4,303	2,633	61.2
February	2,646	1,510	57.6
March	1,551	1,039	66.9

- 7.1.3 During six Board visits, learner numbers were observed as low, with two visits indicating one learner present. Two Board visits found classes cancelled or combined because of the non-availability of teaching staff due to sickness, late arrival or staff shortage. The Board considers one-to-one teaching to be neither cost effective nor appropriate. We acknowledge the focus on aiming to improve attendance by allocating two education staff to follow up all individual absentees and to visit all those who are self-isolating.
- 7.1.4 Owing to COVID-19, Novus withdrew from face-to-face delivery in the prison, providing distraction packs and subject-specific work for those residents who were enrolled as students at the point of lockdown. The Board has not been able to ascertain the level of uptake of these materials. In addition, some variance is noted as to their universal appeal, as feedback from the expectations hub meeting (30.04.20) stated that the distraction packs, although very welcome, are not adequate for the residents with more serious mental health conditions. The Board notes that the materials seen as examples may lack accessibility and appeal for all.
- 7.1.5 While arrangements were made for learners on correspondence courses to submit work during the lockdown period, two residents studying with the Open University experienced initial difficulties submitting work.
- 7.1.6 The Board has been impressed with the positive attitude and engagement of many learners. Worthy of specific mention is the success of three learners who achieved distinctions in their Access to Higher Education courses with the Open University, and one resident being awarded the High Sheriff award.
- 7.1.7 Visits to the library, operated by Birmingham City Council, have found it well stocked, and the Board continues to be impressed with the atmosphere, surroundings and activities observed there. However, library staff have raised concerns about under-usage, caused by the library runner only being allowed to escort six residents at a time to the library. This issue was also noted in the 2018/19 report.

## **7.2 Vocational training and work**

- 7.2.1 The Board believes that all residents should have the offer of employment, training or purposeful activity. The data offered below indicates that in the

period July 2019 to March 2020, the prison population averaged 948, and on average about half the population was unemployed:

49.8% were employed = 472 residents
50.2% were unemployed = 475 residents

In January 2020, of those who were unemployed, the reasons stated for this were:

Reason	Number
Refused to work	35
Resided on the integrated drug treatment system wing	161
Retired	15
Medical	63
Security	37
Referred to education (for low levels of literacy, numeracy)	134
Refused to complete the basic skills assessment	18

These figures illustrate that, for a variety of reasons, just under half of the prison population are not engaged in any purposeful activity, which is a concern.

### 7.3 Offender management and progression

- 7.3.1 Many residents convicted of sexual offences have been transferred out of the prison to specialist prisons, thus largely resolving the earlier problem of not having suitable courses enabling them to progress. Numbers for this group of residents have halved, from 280 residents in July 2019 to 137 in June 2020.
- 7.3.2 The number of life-sentenced residents has reduced from over 80 to 57 as residents have been transferred. Lifer forum officers have been appointed but this initiative, due to start in March, was not implemented owing to the COVID-19 restrictions.
- 7.3.3 The offender management unit (OMU) has introduced an assessment, targeting 21–25-year-olds, which screens for the maturity of the individual. If a resident is deemed to benefit from the scheme, a ‘choice and changes’ pack is offered, delivered by a key worker or a prison offender manager. The intervention provides coping methods for the individual to use in challenging situations, and it is hoped that it will ultimately reduce levels of self-harm and violence.
- 7.3.4 The backlog of offender assessment system (OASys) assessments is down to eight, compared with 46 at the end of the last reporting year, and work continued during the COVID-19 regime.
- 7.3.5 It is commendable that, in spite of the huge difficulties faced by the OMU and CRC during the last quarter of the reporting period, the basic custody

screening tool 1 has shown an overall completion rate for July 2019 to June 2020 of 92.05%. The prison can facilitate progression but cannot, however, measure or monitor what happens after release.

- 7.3.6 The OMU is making steady progress towards becoming a reception prison.
- 7.3.7 Thirty-two IPP prisoners continue to be held at the prison (June 2020). The Board considers this type of indeterminate sentence to be a failure of justice.

#### **7.4 Family contact**

- 7.4.1 Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board regularly observed visits being well managed. A special full-day visit event was organised by a resident from the expectations hub. This was called KICK (keeping in contact with kin), and allowed close family members to spend a day with their close relatives, with board games and refreshments available.
- 7.4.2 During the COVID-19 restrictions, the additional £5 PIN telephone credit offered to compensate for the lack of visits was well received by residents.
- 7.4.3 Following a request from residents, in-cell telephone access was increased to 24 hours a day during the lockdown.
- 7.4.4 The prison was admitted to the virtual visits scheme from 24 June 2020.
- 7.4.5 The Board has observed good work by the charity HALOW (Help and Advice Line for Offenders' Wives, Partners and Families), which is based in the visitors centre, working with families and supporting men on release. Residents can refer their partners to a family support line set up during the pandemic.

#### **7.5 Resettlement planning**

- 7.5.1 The CRC made steady progress in improving attendance at pre-release courses in the early part of the reporting period by amending course dates and times, and by establishing separate monthly meetings for VPs.

July 2019 – February 2020	Mains	VPs
Average attendance at pre-release courses	46%	56%

Residents, when asked, responded positively about all programmes and interventions, finding them both helpful and well delivered.

- 7.5.2 While accommodation figures, as in previous years, remain high, there was an exception in February 2020, when 105 men out of 121 releases were accommodated, with 16 classed as having no fixed abode. All 16 cases were followed up by the CRC, and a valid reason for no fixed abode was documented in each case.

- 7.5.3 The Board considers that a recent and commendable initiative is the provision of a mobile phone with credit to any man on release who has no other means of staying in touch with his probation officer.
- 7.5.4 Problems with information technology and with staff offices being scattered across the prison site have had a negative impact on the efficiency of the CRC.
- 7.5.5 During the COVID-19 pandemic, all pre-release, money management and foundation for rehabilitation courses were suspended. Under the lockdown conditions, the CRC continued to work in the prison.
- 7.5.6 The Board commends the prison for the support it has provided for residents due to be released during the COVID-19 restrictions. From 18 May, the Thinking Skills Programme and COVAID (control of violence for angry impulsive drinkers) courses were suspended but the programmes team continued to work one-to-one with residents referred to them who needed additional support.
- 7.5.7 To support prisoner resettlement prospects, the prison is entering into discussion with the Newbigin Community Trust (a local charity supporting men on release).

## **8. The work of the IMB**

- Rota visits take place every week on two or more days, and a report goes to the SLT.
- Applications are received weekly. These receive a response, either on the same day or within seven days or less, including during the COVID-19 restrictions.
- GOOD reviews take place three afternoons each week, and a Board member attends. This was not possible during the lockdown.
- Adjudications are observed periodically.
- Monthly Board meetings include the Governor's report. The Board appreciates the fullness and detail of this report.
- Members have attended national training courses, training courses within the prison and at Board meetings, and webinars during the COVID-19 lockdown.
- Monitoring during COVID-19: the Board worked remotely and received daily communications – bulletins, reports, CSU details, data, PowerPoint presentations and all other information requested. This enabled the Board to have an extensive overview remotely. Residents gave feedback from their perspective via a weekly teleconference. Triangulation was achieved through data analysis, telephone and email contact, Board teleconference and residents' teleconference and applications. The prison facilitated all such contact.
- The Chair attends the area Chairs' meetings

It remains a concern that the Board is not diverse.

### **Board statistics**

Recommended complement of Board members	20 reduced to 13
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	11
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	11
Total number of visits to the establishment	377
Total number of segregation reviews attended	287

## Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year		
			Pre-COVID-19	During COVID-19	Confidential
<b>A</b>	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>B</b>	Discipline, including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>C</b>	Equality	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>D</b>	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	<b>23</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>E1</b>	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>E2</b>	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	<b>14</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>F</b>	Food and kitchens	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>G</b>	Health, including physical, mental, social care	<b>37</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>H1</b>	Property within this establishment	<b>47</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>H2</b>	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>H3</b>	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>I</b>	Sentence management, including home detention curfew, release on temporary licence, parole, release dates, recategorisation	<b>26</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>J</b>	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	<b>21</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>K</b>	Transfers	<b>27</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>L</b>	Miscellaneous, including complaints system	<b>23</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>
	Sub total		<b>252</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>36</b>
	Total number of applications	<b>280 (+35 confidential)</b>	<b>280 (+36 confidential)</b>		

## GLOSSARY

<b>ACCT</b>	Assessment, care in custody and teamwork
<b>BAME</b>	Black, Asian and minority ethnic
<b>COVAID</b>	Control of violence for angry impulsive drinkers
<b>CPS</b>	Crown prosecution service
<b>CRC</b>	Community rehabilitation company
<b>CSU</b>	Care and separation unit
<b>HALOW</b>	Help and Advice Line for Offenders' Wives, Partners and Families
<b>OMU</b>	Offender management unit
<b>PS</b>	Psychoactive substances
<b>SPEAR</b>	Spontaneous Protection Enabling Accelerated Response



This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit [nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3](http://nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3)

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications>

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at [imb@justice.gov.uk](mailto:imb@justice.gov.uk).