



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Usk and Prescoed

**For reporting year
1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020**

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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

2.1 HMPs Usk and Prescoed are distinct prisons located on three sites around the town of Usk (south east Wales). These are managed by one Governor, supported by a senior management team (SMT) spread over two sites. The combined certified normal accommodation (CNA) during the reporting period was 538.

- HMP Usk is a category C prison.
- HMP Prescoed is a category D open prison.
- HMP Cilwrgi Farm in Coed-y-Paen receives prisoners from Prescoed, who work and receive training in agriculture, operating related machinery and warehousing.
- In common with the rest of the prison estate, both HMPs Usk and Prescoed were at regime stage 4 lockdown (as of 30 June 2020).

A complex mix of prisoners is supported by:

- the key worker Offender Management in Custody (OMiC) rehabilitative team in Usk. Personal officers are still in operation in HMP Prescoed; the process was to have been updated through an OMiC open-estate pilot project, but, disappointingly, as of March 2020, this has been on hold
- a resettlement team and caseworkers
- the psychology department
- a substance misuse team
- the chaplaincy
- a healthcare department which provides a day care facility at Usk and Prescoed
- libraries and gyms at both HMPs Usk and Prescoed
- a multi-faith chapel in Prescoed.

2.2 HMP Usk first opened in 1844. Located in town, its three main wings fan out from a central control point. These now house vulnerable prisoners, the majority of whom are prisoners who have committed sexual offences (MCOSO), nearly 40 of whom are over 65 years of age. The CNA for the majority of the reporting period was 278.

The regime is designed to prepare prisoners for safe release and reduce the risk of reoffending:

- The sex offender treatment programme was available to all inmates until it was terminated (nationally) in March 2017. This has been replaced with the Horizon and Kaizen programmes.
- There is a thriving education department, together with carpentry, bricklaying and plastering workshops.
- Objectives are to hold prisoners securely and safely, and to provide a well-ordered establishment, where prisoners are treated humanely and with decency and respect.

2.3 HMP Prescoed is situated in open country, some three miles outside Usk town, on the site of a young offender institution which opened in 1939. It is now a category D resettlement prison. The CNA is 260. The regime is designed to rehabilitate and educate through structured sentence and resettlement plans, and to promote the reduction in risk of prisoners reoffending when they return to their communities. Opportunities exist for education, training and work placements, with resources allocated for the resettlement of prisoners. The regime at Prescoed includes a range of industries and activities, and has been particularly successful in increasing the number and variety of paid work placements.

3. Executive summary

3.1 Background to the report

3.1.1 The COVID-19 (C-19) pandemic has had a significant impact on the Board's ability to retrieve information and research the contents of this annual report. The Board has tried to cover as much ground as it can in these circumstances, but there is less detail and supporting evidence than usual.

3.1.2 Ministers are aware of these constraints but it is important to note that as far as the findings of this report are concerned, most of the numerical and all of the subjective data (members' rota reports) were collected before lockdown stage 4 was initiated; therefore, the Board considers its conclusions to be valid.

3.1.3 Regular information is being collected on the prison's response to the pandemic, and that is being collated nationally. Following lockdown, the Board has continued to monitor remotely and wishes to record the high level of cooperation it has received from the staff and SMT in achieving this.

3.1.4 Throughout this report, the Board has used phrases 'in general' and 'in the main', so it is important to define precisely what is meant by this. It is intended to indicate an informed real-world view of the prison monitored – things can occasionally go wrong and it would be purblind and unhelpfully naive to suggest that any prison could get it right all of the time. The Board considers this corrective to be true of all organisations, bodies and individuals. To be clear, as can be seen from the entirety of this report, the Board considers both HMPs Usk and Prescoed to be effective, well-run prisons, following the concept of open review and continuous improvement. This view is mirrored by the prison performance tool ratings and the general view of prisoners expressed during members rota visits.

3.1.5 This report presents the findings of the Board at HMPs Usk and Prescoed for the period 01/04/2019 to 31/03/2020. The Board's evidence derives from:

- frequent extended contact with prisoners and staff made on rota visits
- regular meetings and updates from the Governor and SMT
- analysis of prison management information against Board records and rota reports, together with regular review of prisoner applications to the Board (see section D and our supplementary comment)
- review of the prison's complaints system, together with the quarterly discrimination incident report form (DIRF) reviews
- attendance at key meetings – for example:
 - equalities meetings (which include staff and prisoners)
 - quarterly use of force meetings.

3.1.6 Following the C-19 lockdown, monitoring has continued by:

- Board members regularly contacting prison staff by telephone. In particular, members contact staff they have had regular contact with pre-lockdown
- continued access to the SMT's management information system
- joining the SMT's weekly telephone update and having access to all meetings agenda and minutes

- review of the reports from the director of public sector prisons in South Wales and regional team's findings
- review of applications. Post C-19 lockdown, these have been collected by delegated staff members and passed on to the Board via the secure criminal justice secure email system. They have been investigated by members and replied to through the confidential 'email a prisoner' system. There has been little change in the number of applications from prisoners following the C-19 lockdown compared with the previous year.

3.1.7 Working on the assumption that lockdown may need to continue for some time, the Board is looking to widen monitoring:

- We plan to initiate telephone liaison with buddy and Listener representatives. These individuals provide confidential peer support services and are professionally trained volunteers. They will not provide the Board with personal information on prisoners but can give general practical insight.
- Following an updated risk assessment, the Board has a number of members who are keen to resume physical monitoring and this will resume, on a limited but regular basis, from August 2020.

3.1.8 The prison has been supportive of both these initiatives. To facilitate telephone liaison, they will be providing a conference telephone system and a room for participants, to maintain social distancing guidelines. For Board members who will be resuming visits, the prison will provide personal protective equipment and updates on the C-19 status.

3.1.9 Without doubt, the prison has coped well with the C-19 outbreak and the restrictions that its containment has necessitated. This needs to be considered with the (rather obvious) corrective warning that stage 4 lockdown, although necessary and clearly effective in outcome, is not ideal and has had a negative impact on prisoners' progression and development – the longer it is needed, the more difficult its management will become.

3.2 Main judgements

How safe is the prison?

3.2.1 The Board's monitoring suggests that both Usk and Prescoed provide safe environments, displaying little violence or bullying (see sections 4.1 to 4.6). Most prisoners reported that they felt safe. Vulnerable prisoners are well cared for, and the Board notes that appropriate assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) case management documents for prisoners at risk of suicide or self-harm are opened (see sections 4.2 and 4.3). Both sites appear to be safe environments in which to be a member of the LGBTQ community (see section 5.4.7).

3.2.2 The Board considers that both sites have worked hard and been successful in curbing the spread of C-19. Following an initial spike, they were classified as 'outbreak sites', but the situation appears to have been well handled and, as of 24 June 2020, this classification was removed. Staff and prisoners have collaborated to produce an effective lockdown. Despite this, tragically, a young female prison officer lost her life to C-19 on 21 April 2020.

3.2.3 There is an effective zero-tolerance substance misuse policy at both sites (see section 4.6). Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) (Prison Drugs Strategy document 2019*) states that prisons with the highest rates of positive drug tests are the least stable; the Board views Usk and Prescoed's strategy as a contributory factor to the low level of bullying and violence in both sites (see paragraphs 4.6.1 and 4.6.2).

3.2.4 The Board's judgement that Usk and Prescoed are safe prisons is evidenced through regular contact with prisoners and supported by:

- the prison performance tool for public sector prisons in Wales, which rates both Usk and Prescoed at level 4. This is the highest rating available.
- the Butler Trust, ** which reported that prisoners felt 'very safe' and that the prison 'had a real sense of community'.

* Ministry of Justice. (2016). *Prison Safety and Reform White Paper pdf*, p41.

** The Butler Trust. (2019). *The Good Book of Prisons*, p122.

How fairly and humanely are prisoners treated?

3.2.5 As the Board reported last year, prisoners at Usk and Prescoed continue to be treated with respect and fairness (see section 5). This is evidenced by:

- the small and reducing number of applications submitted to the Board (see section 8 and our supplementary comment about numbers)
- the small number of complaints submitted to the prison
- analysis of incentives and earned privileges (IEP) statistics. Previous to the C-19 regulations, a typical review of IEP at Usk revealed no prisoners on basic, 116 on standard and 158 on enhanced
- observation of staff/prisoner relationships during Board members' visits
- observations during mealtimes
- discussions with Listeners, buddies, equalities representatives and individual prisoners.

3.2.6 For some years, Usk has housed an increasing number of older prisoners and those with a recorded disability. The Board has seen significant work undertaken to develop targeted infrastructure for this cohort. As part of the planning to create a specific older person's unit at Usk, the prison has developed:

- provision for up to 100 older prisoners or prisoners with specific social care needs
- the conversion of D wing to a dedicated older persons unit – all on the ground floor and with good mobility access
- a palliative care suite
- conversion of existing accommodation to a 'daycentre'-type unit
- installation of a wet room in reception to meet the washing requirements for low mobility and elderly prisoners
- a review of learning and skills provision, to meet the needs of an increased number of prisoners who are past the normal retirement age.

3.2.7 HMP Usk recently celebrated its 175th anniversary (see section 2.2). It is the opinion of the Board (and of the prisoners) that in its operation and culture, it overcomes the potential constraints of its architecture and size, and turns them into a positive (see section 7.1). The Board can report that prisoners are treated with humanity. Relationships between staff and prisoners are generally cordial, productive and contain humour.

3.2.8 HMP Prescoed is a more modern site (see section 2.3), managed with the same ethos and producing similar positive results. It is worthy of note that until lockdown there were an average of 110 prisoners on release on temporary licence (ROTL) stage 2 (paid employment) (see paragraphs 3.2.12 and 7.5.4). Post-lockdown, over 30 prisoners have worked off-site in essential services (see paragraph 3.4.2).

3.2.9 A total of 124 prisoners were returned to closed conditions during the reporting period. The Board monitors these numbers, the majority of which were for:

- failed mandatory drug tests (MDTs): 40
- failed compact-based drug tests (CBDTs): 19
- breach of licence: 19
- possession of unauthorised items: 19.

3.2.10 A minority of prisoners at HMPs Usk and Prescoed have expressed the view that those who submit applications to the Board may be 'shipped out' – either as a punishment or in an attempt to sanitise data. In the reporting period 2017/18 and in 2019/20, the Board conducted 12-month rolling reviews of all the applications received and found no correlation in either establishment between those submitting applications and removals to other prisons, or returns to closed conditions. These findings have been documented and are regularly shown to and discussed with prisoners.

How well are prisoners' health and wellbeing needs met?

3.2.11 The Board considers that there are appropriate arrangements in place for prisoners in Usk and Prescoed to learn about the importance of healthy lifestyles, including substance misuse, emotional health and behaviour change. This often includes providing a wide range of intervention strategies, such as coaching and mentoring for learners on engagement programmes. Prisoners' health needs seem to be well met (see sections 6.1 and 6.2).

How well are prisoners progressed towards successful resettlement?

3.2.12 Until the C-19 lockdown, Prescoed had over 100 prisoners off-site on ROTL every working day (see section 7.5). During the reporting period, there were 22,679 episodes of ROTL, of which only 11 failed – giving a compliance rate of 99.95%. Nearly 70% of jobs are paid (rather than voluntary), and include industries such as manufacturing and rail maintenance – occupations which can provide prisoners with long-term, profitable employment on release (see paragraph 7.5.4).

3.2.13 In addition, Cilwrgi Prison Farm, linked to HMP Prescoed, trains and employs an average of 26 prisoners occupied in agricultural, warehousing and such related activities. The farm has been of particular value during the C-19 pandemic – as, in addition to horticulture and recycling, it has occupied prisoners' time and given MCOSO a profitable area to work in; this is particularly important as they often find it difficult to obtain work outside the prison.

3.3 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

3.3.1 The OMiC model appears to be working well and providing benefit in the closed environment at Usk. The Board understands that a pilot for the open estate, which was to have been run from March 2020 in Prescoed, has now been indefinitely postponed; this seems unfortunate, in terms of prisoner development.

3.3.2 MCOSO granted category D status and allocated to Prescoed have to reside in Usk for three months before moving to Prescoed, whereas prisoners granted category D status and allocated to other prisons – for example, HMP Leyhill – do not have to undergo the same regime. This policy remains perplexing to the Board and demotivational for prisoners.

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

3.3.3 The Board notes that sometimes prisoner records are very slow in reaching the open estate (see paragraph 4.4.3). Assessment records which are locked or unavailable to the receiving establishment cause delay in the smooth transition of prisoners, on a fourfold basis:

1. in terms of liaison with statutory agencies
2. the assessment of risk
3. planning for ROTL and eventual release into the community
4. the related discontentment of newly arrived prisoners, and the impact this has on the smooth running of the establishment.

3.3.4 As mentioned in last year's report, Lester, a two-storey prefabricated unit at Prescoed, has been the subject of several renovations. Despite this, it remains somewhat dreary, with unreliable plumbing and drainage systems. In comparison with the rest of the upgraded site, it appears to need complete replacement.

TO THE GOVERNOR

3.3.5 The Governor is successfully initiating and completing improvements, as detailed in this report (see section 3.4). The Board has been informed of others to come, and in that light, we have nothing practical to add here.

3.4 Progress since the last report

3.4.1 There have been continuing advances at both Usk and Prescoed over the last reporting period in terms of getting the basics right. Both sites look clean and tidy, and have generally responsive facilities management. Prisoners have responded to this culture, and cells and communal areas are well maintained.

3.4.2 Specific examples of progress include:

- Usk became a resettlement prison (through the reconfiguration of the estate project in 2020) from 1 April 2019. This represented part of the enhanced 'through-the-gate' provision, which enables Usk to discharge prisoners directly rather than sending them back to HMP Parc for their last 12 weeks, and is greatly appreciated by the prisoners.
- Over 70 prisoners at Usk contributed to an art exhibition, which was attended by a broad range of partner organisations, including the Welsh Government, Coleg Gwent, the Open University, the Peace Education Programme, Monmouthshire Council and Qualifications Wales. The prisoners were able to invite their families and friends to attend, to view their handiwork. As it was the 175th anniversary year, exhibits on display included a miniature-scale version of the prison, together with numerous pieces of artwork in the gym-turned-gallery. Currently, there are 159 prisoners gaining new skills or building on existing qualifications through the learning and skills provision at Usk.
- With the exception of essential workers and special purpose, ROTL has been temporarily suspended owing to C-19. Despite this, there were 24,151 periods of ROTL during this reporting period, with just three failures to the end of March 2020. Nearly 70% of these prisoners were in paid work. Throughout the C-19 outbreak, Prescoed has sent over 30 prisoners off-site to work in essential services – this includes prisoners involved in building the new district general hospital.
- Posters were placed around the establishment to inform prisoners about the meaning of Black History Month and why it is important and celebrated. Information was printed in the monthly newsletter, with lots of information about Black History Month.
- Over 50 gym and walking sessions have been introduced, as part of the 'Walking back to health' programme (see paragraph 5.4.1).

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

4.1 Reception and induction

4.1.1 Positive induction programmes take place at both establishments; for example:

- A process to liaise with prisoners upon arrival at HMP Prescoed (open estate) exists, whereby probation officers have a permanent slot at the end of induction to explain ROTL entitlement and prisoner supervision management.
- At HMP Usk, reception procedures include prisoners being interviewed by an orderly officer, whereby vulnerabilities such as need for social care, peer mentors and cell sharing suitability can be identified. This structure may vary according to the time of arrival.
- In the event of PIN telephone facilities not having been transferred, prisoners' families are contacted to confirm their arrival. Under normal circumstances, a specific cell is allocated to newly arrived prisoners for one week; however, flexibility had to be built in towards the end of this reporting period, owing to C-19.
- Prisoners have been provided with PIN credit to call their families. The price of calls has been reduced and the prison is working with the national teams to introduce video calls through Purple Visits.
- OMiC has been successfully introduced in Usk and was due to pilot from 31 March 20 in Prescoed but was placed on hold owing to C-19.

4.1.2 On 24 March 2020, all visits and the majority of ROTLs were cancelled owing to C-19.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

4.2.1 During this reporting period, there have been two deaths in custody at Usk. The initial death occurred on 21 September 2019 and the second on 17 March 2020. In neither case has the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman's report been received, so no specific comments can appropriately be made in either case – other than that the second case was believed to be due to C-19.

4.2.3 The Board has interrogated the data to identify if there was any increase in self-harm during the reporting period. There were four acts of self-harm, similar to that in previous years, and no increase or trends have been noted.

4.2.4 ACCT documents are opened infrequently at Usk and Prescoed. Sixty-five were opened across both sites during the reporting period. The Board quality control observations indicate that reviews and records are accurate, with comments being relevant and informative. Prisoners who have previously been subject to ACCTs are identified upon arrival.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

4.3.1 The prison team identifies any prisoners who require a challenge, support and intervention plan referral. This is discussed at the weekly multidisciplinary safety intervention meeting, to identify any concerns or support that should be put in place to prevent any challenging behaviour from arising. In addition, special needs or vulnerability issues are identified and communicated to orderly officers. Referrals are then made to the Buddy scheme or the Listeners, the latter being supported by the Samaritans. Peer mentors are available in both the programmes and education units

4.4 Vulnerable prisoners, safeguarding

4.4.1 The prison team identifies any prisoners who require a challenge, support and intervention plan referral. This is discussed at the weekly multidisciplinary safety intervention meeting, to identify any concerns or support that should be put in place to prevent any challenging behaviour from arising. In addition, special needs or vulnerability issues are identified and communicated to orderly officers. Referrals are then made to the Buddy scheme or the Listeners, the latter being supported by the Samaritans. Peer mentors are available in both the programmes and education units

4.5 Use of force

4.5.1 Use of force was recorded 44 times but only twice on non-compliant prisoners. The majority of occasions related to handcuffs being applied at Prescoed when moving a prisoner from his unit to reception prior to being transferred back to closed conditions.

4.5.2 Use of force is reviewed quarterly by the SMT, with a member of the Board present, with full access to the process and records.

4.5.3 New safety measures, which the board have been informed are designed to resolve and de-escalate incidents, went live on 2 March 2020; these included PAVA (an incapacitant spray), SPEAR (Spontaneous Protection Enabling Accelerated Response; a personal safety package), rigid-bar handcuffs and body-worn video cameras. At both Usk and Prescoed, this followed a readiness, assessment and training programme. It was agreed that both sites were operationally ready to deploy these new measures. Owing to the C-19 lockdown, the Board has not been able to monitor the implementation but we have received no adverse comments from the prisoners. The prison provided general information background and training for the Board on these four safety measures before lockdown, in preparation for our monitoring.

4.6 Substance misuse

4.6.1 In the Board's view, the prison has been effective in controlling substance misuse at both sites and appears to be following the HMPPS Prison Drugs Strategy of restricting supply, reducing demand and building recovery. Prisons are required to

conduct computer-generated random tests each month, and are measured against positive random MDT failures. For example, during the 12-month reporting period, 312 random MDTs were carried out at Prescoed, with nine failures – which approximately equates to a 3% failure rate.

4.6.2 Broken down by prison, there has been a total of 11 positive random MDTs between 1 April 2019 and March 2020.

- nine positive random MDTs in Prescoed, equating to a rate of approximately 3%
- two positive random MDTs in Usk, which equals 0.6% of those tested.
- 17 suspicion-based MDT failures at Prescoed. Recent evidence of unexplained violence, unpredictable behaviour or intelligence which demonstrates association with drugs constitutes acceptable grounds to ask a prisoner for a sample for suspicion testing
- 22 CBDT failures at Prescoed (see paragraph 4.6.4).

4.6.3 MDTs were suspended towards the end of March 2020, but by this time Usk had completed its full quota of tests for the month (27 completed out of the 25 required) and Prescoed had completed 21 of the 25 required).

4.6.4 To be considered to be performing well, prisons need to see positive random MDTs in no more than 5% of cases. The Board notes as a comparator that the latest figures (Ministry of Justice HMPPS Annual Digest 2018/19) show that 54,242 random MDTs were performed in England and Wales, of which 17.7% were positive. The Board realises that these figures are collected from a number of widely different prisons but considers that the results achieved by Usk and Prescoed represent a success. These findings were corroborated subjectively by member rota visits during the period:

- Records indicate that there is a low use of illegal drugs at Usk and Prescoed, with the main illegal use being the misuse of prescription drugs.
- CBDT was in place in Prescoed during the majority of the reporting period. Suspicion-based testing (where there is a reasonable suspicion that drugs have been used) has continued throughout the reporting period. CBDT was formally known as voluntary drug testing, and its primary purpose is to provide a supportive base for prisoners who need help with motivation to remain drug free.
- The misuse of drugs at Prescoed is largely confined to pregabalin and gabapentin (epilepsy/painkiller medicines misused for their euphoric and sedative effects) and performance enhancing substances.
- Limited amounts of alcohol have been discovered.

4.6.5 Prisoners found in possession of illicit contraband items are returned to closed conditions. The SMT has promoted zero tolerance to illegal drugs both in Usk and Prescoed. This appears to have had a direct and positive impact on reducing demand and promoting safety.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

5.1.1 HMP Usk is a 19th century building, which presents limitation in terms of its maintenance, and privacy for prisoners, associated with its age and design. However, a refurbishment programme has started, with wings and cells being redecorated. Board interaction with prisoners indicates that, in the main, the prisoners in Usk are content to be there. The environment, both on the wings and on site, continues to be clean, with prisoners frequently utilising the exercise yard as well as games and sitting areas.

5.1.2 HMP Prescoed has a number of buildings, the majority of which appear to be well maintained, with the exception of Lester unit, the only prefabricated accommodation unit, which continues to look unappealing and offers poorer-quality accommodation. The grounds at Prescoed are ample and well maintained, with attractive vegetation, offering a pleasant living environment.

5.1.3 Laundry services are available and well utilised at Usk and Prescoed.

5.1.4 The catering provision in both establishments remains good overall. The Board monitors this area through reviewing the comment books, observing and tasting the food being served, observing food preparation, monitoring overall conditions in the kitchen and discussions with the prisoners. Both establishments cater successfully for a number of religious and medical dietary requirements.

5.1.5 During the year, the Board received five (out of a total of 18) applications and several verbal comments regarding the food, with portion sizes being the most frequently raised issue. Despite this, there are no significant concerns in this area, although the Board will continue to monitor portion size and the provision of food for outworkers on ROTL as a priority, as this is where most prisoner applications and comments have concentrated.

5.1.6 During the C-19 lockdown, supplementary food packs have been offered to the prisoners.

5.1.7 No issues have been raised with the Board in relation to the canteen provision.

5.2 Segregation, special accommodation

There is no segregation accommodation at either site.

5.3 Staff/prisoner relationships, key workers

5.3.1 As noted in previous reports, staff–prisoner relationships at both Usk and Prescoed appear to be good. The Board can report that staff appear to be able to maintain discipline without the prison atmosphere becoming oppressive.

5.3.2 Recent examples of relationship enhancing projects include participation in:

- the 'Airborne Initiative' – a type of 'outward-bound' course. Prior to C-19, one of the PE staff took prisoners (eligible for ROTL and under 25 years old) to Dartmoor. This involved working with other prisoners from other establishments in an outdoor environment, completing activities such as camp craft, team building, cooking, navigation skills and basic life skills, with the aim of cutting reoffending rates.
- Support Transition of Military Personnel (SToMP) – a justice-led initiative that supports the transition of military personnel who have found their way into the system. It looks for funding, and provides advice and support to get the key veteran agencies to engage with the establishment.

The key worker scheme has been fully working since April 2019:

- Most prisoners seem to have a key worker and know who they are.
- Most prisoners were seen weekly for the appropriate length of time.
- Officers appear to be responsible for around six prisoners and have been trained.
- Feedback from officers is generally positive.
- The prisoners we have spoken to have a positive view of the initiative and thought that it helped them.

5.4 Equality and diversity

5.4.1 The Board notes that there appears to be is a continuous development policy with respect to equality and diversity at both sites. For example, indicative events include:

- Prescoed held a Gypsy, Traveller and Roma Month. Posters and displays spread awareness around the prison, and a special menu was provided by the kitchen. Speciality dishes were provided for those celebrating the event.
- Easter celebrations – Posters were displayed around both establishments to inform prisoners about the meaning of Easter and why it is celebrated. The feedback received was good – prisoners who did not follow the Christian faith stated that it was useful to learn about other religions. Information was also printed in the monthly newsletter.
- An Anne Frank exhibition took place in Usk sports hall. Seven prisoners were trained to be guides around the exhibition, and approximately 70 people visited the during the week.
- A community newsletter is now published. Articles have included information on Holocaust Memorial Day and St David's Day, and celebrated LGBT History Month.
- The Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME), and Gypsy, Traveller and Roma focus groups are held every month at Prescoed. Meetings are held at the new time of 6.45pm, to accommodate those who are at work during the

day. The number of BAME representatives has increased, and it is planned that this will increase awareness and generate greater numbers attending the forum.

- Posters were placed around both establishments to inform prisoners about the meaning of Black History Month and why it is important and celebrated. Information about this was also printed in the monthly newsletter. Black History month was celebrated in October, when a steel band came to the prison to entertain the prisoners.
- Over-50s exercise. Both sites offer 'Walking back to health' groups. While this is not limited to the over-50s, it is aimed at prisoners who do not attend gym sessions, so they are in fact the target group. There are three sessions a week, and attendance varies from between five to 18 prisoners. There are currently 52 prisoners over the age of 50 at Prescoed. Practical improvements for the over-50s include:
 - Hand rail has been fitted on Casey unit and a shower seat provided. Cape unit has yet to be fitted with handrails but this is in progress.
 - Visibility stripes have been painted on the external steps, and a more secure metal rail leading to the dining hall is in the process of being ordered and fitted.

5.4.2 The Board considers that active steps have been taken to comply with the Lammy review recommendations. There is a forum for officers and prisoners to review fairness in the regime, and the Board attends this. In addition, quarterly equalities meetings are attended by a Board member. Until the C-19 lockdown, these were attended in person. Currently, as most prison meetings are conducted by telephone conference, Board members join remotely by telephone.

5.4.3 Until lockdown, the prison ran a programme of weekly forums to address the protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010. Board observation suggests that these are recognised, discussed and addressed appropriately in an open forum, with efforts being made to improve. For example, there is a continued drive to increase the number of older prisoners and those with disabilities on the enhanced IEP level (see section 5.6).

5.4.4 There is a higher proportion of white (ethnic code W1, W2 and W9) prisoners in Usk than the national prison average – 94% compared with 74%. BAME prisoners make up just 6% of the Usk prisoners. Despite this, there appears to be relative parity between ethnic groups at each IEP level. There is relative parity across ethnic groups regarding complaints.

5.4.5 During the year, issues were raised by BAME prisoners in relation to stage 2 work. They were concerned that they were being provided with fewer opportunities by the community placement team (CPT) than their colleagues. The Board investigated this claim and found that there is a perception (by the prisoners) that the CPT can influence who is offered work, but this is not the case. When an employer advises that they have job vacancies, these are advertised around the prison and all

the prisoners have an equal opportunity to apply. Once names have been collated from those who have expressed an interest, their CVs are forwarded to the employer for consideration. The employer then decides who they wish to interview and who subsequently to offer the job to. The CPT department has no power to dictate to the employer who they should interview or who they should employ. Unfortunately, this means that if there is a problem relating to equality of opportunity, it is societal.

5.4.6 The bias perception is not altogether upheld by the available statistics. For example, a third-quarter breakdown of the protected characteristics of outworkers at Prescoed showed: stage 1 – 38 (nine of these being BAME), stage 2 – 54 (six of these being BAME). These numbers are reasonably consistent with the ethnicity breakdown for the establishment.

5.4.7 An indicative snapshot (fourth quarter 2019) provided the following data for Usk:

- Sexual orientation: 12% of the population are comfortable to declare as gay or bisexual, compared with 3% nationally. The Board considers the prison to be a safe place to be openly gay, and LGBTQ prisoners are acknowledged to provide a significant contribution to prison society. There is parity across the sexuality demographic for IEP.
- Gender: during the reporting period, Usk had one transgender prisoner. They played a full part in the regime and appeared comfortable to appear in either gender.
- Disability: 42% of Usk's population have one or more disability. Those with a disability are a third less likely to be on the enhanced IEP level. This disparity is acknowledged, and is being addressed by the SMT.
- Age: 16% of prisoners are over the age of 65, compared with 6% nationally. Currently, prisoners over 50 are under-represented on the enhanced IEP level. They make up 23% of those on enhanced, but 43% of those on standard. This been noted by the SMT and is being addressed to promote increased uptake.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

5.5.1 Various faiths are supported. For example, Ramadan, and the Muslim festivals of Eid ul Fitr and Eid al Adha are celebrated – this includes additional time for Muslim prayers and the fact that prisoners are not required to attend work or education activities unless they choose to do so. During Ramadan, there are special arrangements for serving meals to the prisoners – generally these appear to work well.

5.5.2 Unfortunately, the chaplaincy team discovered that property damage was occurring in the multi-faith room, which it considered unacceptable. In consultation with the security department, the multi-faith room is now locked. Currently, it is only accessible when chaplains are conducting services or groups. Staff have been asked not to unlock the room at the request of prisoners wishing access it, but to direct individuals to a member of the chaplaincy team. The Board understands that

this restriction complies with the Prison Service Instruction 05/2016 - Faith and Pastoral Care for Prisoners.

5.6 Incentives and earned privileges

The IEP Board is held regularly, dependent upon applications. An element of enhancement is assessed to 'giving something back'. For example, the buddy scheme is delivered by younger participants, while progress for older prisoners can be achieved by participating in forums and using the facilities in the exercise yard (but see bullet point on 'age', in paragraph 5.4.7).

5.7 Complaints

Visits by Board members to both establishments suggest that an awareness exists of how to complain about prison matters. In the event of an unsatisfactory conclusion, there is an awareness of how to escalate such a complaint (see section 8).

5.8 Property

The Board receives few complaints or applications with respect to property (see section 8, H1 and H2). Those received relate mainly to items that are lost when the prisoner is in transfer from other establishments.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Physical healthcare

6.1.1 The Aneurin Bevan University Health Board provides all health services for both HMP Usk and HMP Prescoed. GP, dental, optical and physiotherapy services are outsourced.

6.1.2 The healthcare department continues to provide a good service. It coordinates well with other departments and partners. It works with the Monmouthshire integrated team and meets on a regular basis to identify any potential problems and refer the prisoners concerned to the appropriate services. Healthcare training modules continue to be delivered on the buddy programme, and monthly meetings are held with buddies and social care. As part of a successful bid to the Welsh Government, a band 4 staff member has been appointed to undertake enhanced duties, including developing the role of health advisers, and buddy training.

6.1.3 Welsh Government funding was used to uplift a team member from a band 6 to band 7 role, to allow for succession planning and staff retention moving forward. They are currently undertaking their non-medical prescribing, due for completion in September. This will enhance the nurse-led service.

6.1.4 A band 6 nurse has been identified to undertake training with the sexual health team, in order to provide weekly sexual health clinics across both sites.

6.1.5 Time for Teeth Ltd provide the dental service, and has a fixed-term contract until 31 May 2023.

6.1.6 Two sessions a week are provided at both sites, and a hygienist provides a service one morning a week at Usk.

6.1.7 General medical services are provided by Malpas Brook Health Centre. There are three surgeries a week in Usk and two in Prescoed. The contract runs to 3 August 2020.

6.1.8 Since the beginning of the C-19 pandemic, a member of the Board has been in regular contact with healthcare staff, to monitor the unfolding situation. It is the Board's opinion that the good collaboration between officers and healthcare staff has resulted in effective management at both sites. The staff should be commended for their hard work in unprecedented times.

6.1.9 Contracts with external providers have been extended because of C-19 and will be renegotiated when the situation permits. There has been excellent health support during the pandemic, and Public Health Wales has been hugely supportive of the weekly dial-ins.

6.1.10 Pen Optical Ltd provides two sessions per month on both sites. The contract runs until 30 June 2020.

6.1.11 Raglan Pharmacy provides the service, on weekdays, from 9am until 5pm, excluding Wednesday afternoons. The contract runs until 31 July 2020.

6.2 Mental healthcare

The extra monies (see paragraph 6.1.2) have also allowed discussions with the mental health team about developing a service and an additional member of staff to identify and care plan for prisoners with learning disabilities and older adults with mental health problems, such as dementia.

6.3 Social care

Current social care provision at Usk is good, but further development of social care provision is currently on hold because of funding challenges faced by Monmouthshire County Council following a change to budget allocation arrangements. The Board considers it likely that the development of the older persons unit at Usk will increase the demand on social care services at the establishment, and it is good news that funding for next year has been agreed.

6.4 Exercise, time out of cell, gym.

6.4.1 In both Usk and Prescoed, prisoners spend the maximum possible time out of cells, and a range of activities is offered, although during most of the lockdown (March until July 2020) this has been limited to one to two hours per day.

6.4.2 'Walking back to health' groups. Whilst this is not limited to the over 50s (it is aimed at prisoners who do not attend gym sessions) they are the target group. There are three sessions a week and attendance can vary from between 5 to 18 men.

6.5 Drug rehabilitation

Healthcare staff are normally informed by the security team following intelligence reports regarding diverted medication, and in-cell medication checks are performed to confirm or deny this. There are still instances of diverted medication, although there have been fewer reports now that paracetamol and ibuprofen are available with a token from the vending machines, outside the hours of healthcare provision.

6.6 Soft skills

- The fire service came into the establishment to deliver safety team building for prisoners on two occasions last year. In addition, they attended on family days to deliver safety advice to families.
- The veteran's services continue to offer services to ex-armed forces prisoners on release; support and assistance is offered through coffee mornings and drop-in clinics.

Prisoners seem aware of the importance of a positive healthy lifestyle, and follow programmes to improve their health and wellbeing. They understand the need to exercise regularly and make healthy choices. Most have access to regular physical activity and some take part in worthwhile activities to promote healthy living.

For example, learners maintain an allotment and grow vegetables which are then used in the prison kitchen.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

7.1.1 The Board has noted that many learners made appropriate progress towards completing their training programmes. They developed industry-related skills in a training environment and while on ROTL. This contributed to their overall prospects in the employment market, and their economic aspirations on release.

7.1.2 However, in the last year, some learners made slow progress towards successfully completing their qualifications. The C-19 pandemic has affected the success rates of provision at both prisons, with some learners completing their course but not being able to undertake final assessments because of the management steps taken to isolate the spread of the virus within the prison environment. This has contributed to an inconsistent three-year trend in key performance indicators. Despite this, no prisoners have come to the end of their sentence without gaining a qualification.

Welsh Government targets:

Minimum starts – 100% based on allocated starts.

Retention: 80% of learners who start a course (minus agreed leavers) complete the course.

Achievement: 80% of learners who complete a course achieve an accredited qualification.

Success: 70% of learners who start a course (minus agreed leavers) achieve an accredited qualification.

HMP Usk performance data 2019/20:

2018/19 performance in parenthesis, 2017/18 performance in crotchets.

- The overall success rate for vocational qualifications was 50% (94%) [85%]. The attainment rate was 58% (95%) [96%]. This has been achieved from an increasing start performance rate of 188% (103%) [100%], and an 85% (98%) [89%] retention rate. In total, 163 (288) [244] prisoners were awarded their certificate, from 329 (308) [300] starts.
- The overall success rate for non-vocational qualifications was 46% (93%) [65%] and the attainment rate was 68% (95%) [71%]. This has been achieved from a start rate of 65% (102%) [101%], and a 68% (98%) [91%] retention rate. In total, 100 (274) [185] prisoners were awarded their certificate, from 222 (296) [260] starts.
- The overall success rate for Essential Skills Wales qualifications was 99.5% (58%) [62%] and the attainment rate was 100% (86%) [97%]. This has been achieved from a start rate of 112% (113%) [136%] and a 99.5% (68%) [64%] retention rate. In total, 208 (138) [172] prisoners were awarded their certificate, from 209 (239) [288] starts.

- The overall success rate for employability provision was 77% (53%) [74%] and the attainment rate was 56% (67%) [89%]. This has been achieved from a start rate of 136% (112%) [83%] and 73% (78%) [89%] retention rate. In total, 176 (72) [189] prisoners were awarded their certificate from 322 (153) [203] starts.

HMP Prescoed performance data 2019/20:

2018/19 performance in parenthesis, 2017/18 performance in crotchets.

- The overall success rate for vocational qualifications was 66% (81%) [86%] and the attainment rate was 69% (99%) [88%]. This has been achieved from a start performance rate of 119% (108%) [101%] and a 97% (81%) [97%] retention rate. In total, 235 (261) [260] prisoners were awarded their certificate, from 355 (324) [302] starts.
- The overall success rate for non-vocational qualifications was 57% (86%) [72%] and the attainment rate was 60% (86%) [72%]. This has been achieved from a start rate of 78% (101%) [111%] and a 95% (97%) [100%] retention rate. In total, 67 (95) [88] prisoners were awarded their certificate, from 117 (111) [122] starts.
- The overall success rate for Essential Skills Wales qualifications was 57% (94%) [32%] and the attainment rate was 59% (94%) [33%]. This has been achieved from a start rate of 77% (100%) [67%] and a 96% (100%) [96%] retention rate. In total, 71 (228) [51] prisoners were awarded their certificate, from 125 (242) [164] starts.
- The overall success rate for employability provision was 65% (81%) [76%] and the attainment rate was 65% (82%) [76%]. This has been achieved from a start rate of 77% (101%) [96%] and a 100% (99%) [100%] retention rate. In total, 120 (162) [146] prisoners were awarded their certificate, from 185 (201) [191] starts.

7.1.3 During training sessions, prisoners are working at levels that are commensurate with their ability, prior experience and aspirations. Many are developing useful and relevant transferrable skills, and understand how these could be used to secure employment and economic activity on release.

7.1.4 In both prisons, those undertaking Open University provision use their time productively to study from a choice of courses up to degree level. They pursue a wide range of subjects to develop effective independent study and research skills which improve confidence and self-motivation.

7.1.5 Both sites support a bilingual mentor to develop a strategy to promote the Welsh language. However, the number of prisoners engaging in the Welsh language remains variable and so it remains difficult to identify the impact of the strategy on teaching and learning practices, standards and distance travelled.

7.1.6 The Board observes that prisoners are encouraged to develop tolerance and respect for their peers, tutors and host employers (when on ROTL) when participating in learning, skills and work experience activities.

7.1.7 Most prisoners feel safe in their learning environments when undertaking practical training and instruction. They are aware of their rights and responsibilities, and have a good understanding of health and safety. Most feel that the prison works well to ensure their safety.

7.1.8 Generally, prisoners show perseverance and resilience in completing their learning programmes, and many overcome significant challenges to achieve successful outcomes.

7.1.9 Most learners enjoy their training programmes and improve their self-esteem and confidence. They develop their communication, practical skills and theory knowledge.

7.1.9 Some prisoners develop their independent working skills well. They manage their work and time well, and are ambitious and motivated to succeed.

7.1.11 A range of education and vocational activities is available which assists in the rehabilitation process. Tutors are generally qualified and have up-to-date subject knowledge, occupational experience and industry skills.

7.1.12 The prison employs four instructors who deliver woodwork, multi-skills and two brickwork courses. All are registered with City and Guilds to deliver qualifications up to level 2. All instructors are qualified to assess their own learners' work but also to internally quality assure all groups. Staff are coordinated in pairs to achieve the internal quality assurance required.

7.1.13 The prison does not currently use an observation process in the evaluation of its provision. Therefore, it is difficult to form reliable judgments relating to the progress that prisoners make in their formative learning. For example, it is not possible to determine whether tutors sufficiently challenge prisoners during sessions, to ensure that they make the progress they are capable of; the extent to which prisoners recall previous learning; whether prisoners apply their learning to new scenarios; or whether they speak confidently and use correct technical terms and phrases to describe their work. However, the most recent report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons, dated 9–19 October 2017, makes positive reference to these aspects of provision.

7.1.14 Generally, tutors use a variety of activities and teaching styles to engage prisoners, particularly those learners who have difficulty in settling down in a classroom environment. Individual learning plans are prepared for each learner.

7.1.15 All prisoners are encouraged to express themselves in a positive way and are treated fairly. Most have a basic understanding of equality and diversity, and respect for others.

7.1.16 Classroom accommodation is well maintained and provides an appropriate learning environment. Vocational workshops are maintained to a good standard.

7.1.17 The most recent (2018/19) Learner Pulse Survey confirms that:

- overall, 96% of prisoners rated the staff at Prescoed as excellent or good
- overall, 94% of prisoners rated the staff at Usk as excellent or good.

7.1.18 The prison works well with prisoners to reduce the risk of them reoffending or becoming 'not in education, employment or training' (NEET) on release. The prison gives beneficial personalised support where appropriate. This includes providing a wide range of intervention strategies, such as coaching and mentoring. These prisoners make particularly good progress in developing the skills and qualities that will make them more employable.

7.1.19 The prison works well in partnership with Careers Wales to improve prisoners' awareness of the opportunities available for them to prepare for rehabilitation, employment and resettlement.

7.1.20 Staff monitor prisoners' attendance at individual sessions well and routinely follow up on reasons for their absence. Generally, attendance rates are above 90%.

7.1.21 In the Board's opinion, the Governor has developed a clear vision and strategic objectives to meet prisoner needs, including the revision of accountability structures within the SMT. This includes the head of learning, skills and employment, and presents an opportunity to be responsive to the tenets of the 'Review of Offender Education in Wales', conducted by Rt. Hon. David Hanson MP in March 2019. There is an enhanced focus on setting high expectations and improving standards. However, procedures and practices are not yet sufficiently developed to lead to the improvements targeted.

7.1.22 There is provision to enable all learners of working age to participate in education, training and employment. For example:

- In Prescoed, there are currently 20 various part-time vacancies, 10 vacancies in bricklaying, and four in barbering.
- In Usk, there are 36 spaces available in essential skills provision, 20 in health education, 50 in construction and 15 in industry.

7.1.23 The Board notes that the prison appears to manage its resources well and demonstrates effective resource management to review costs. This has resulted in appropriate levels of staff and resourcing to meet the needs of prisoners.

7.1.24 Since the onset of the C-19 pandemic, the provision has been affected by related staff absenteeism. Those who have attended have been actively involved in supporting prisoners by producing in-cell materials and study packs. They have also been undertaking activities to prepare for the easing of the lockdown, on the assumption that social distancing will still be in place for the foreseeable future. This will have an impact on the number of learners in the classrooms and workshops, and strategies have been planned to manage calculated numbers appropriately, to ensure the safety of staff and prisoners alike.

7.1.25 Both libraries continue to operate effectively and prisoners seem to be content with the facilities offered.

7.1.26 On occasion, newspapers fail to arrive. During the year, there was an issue with the newsagent locating prison payments as their head office finance department did not recognise the HMPPS agency payee. This niggling problem was sorted relatively quickly by the management team, which clearly took the issue seriously and acted on it.

7.1.27 The library at Prescoed was closed briefly at the beginning of 2019 for essential building work to take place. During that time, newspapers and magazines were available in the hub (the prisoner information and help area).

7.2 Vocational training, work

7.2.1 An external City and Guilds assessor visits annually to validate the quality of the internal processes. The structure adopted by the department is considered good practice.

7.2.2 The department provided a wide range of opportunities across both establishments, ranging from the manual (for example, bricklaying woodworking, horticulture, forestry and kitchen work) to the academic (for example, Open University courses leading to a degree). The support for the academic learners is excellent.

7.2.3 The department faced the challenge of migrating data from an existing management information system to a new one, and this had a temporary adverse impact on its ability to monitor properly its work.

7.2.4 There are excellent relationships with a number of major employers – for example, DHL, Afonwell Laundry (private company) and Cwmbran Hospital. Prisoners from Prescoed have the opportunity to take permanent employment with these organisations on their release. Prisoners at Usk, while able to obtain similar qualifications, find it difficult to secure employment on their release owing to the perceived nature of their offences. This has not prevented staff from using their best efforts to provide opportunities for these prisoners on their release.

7.2.5 As far as veterans are concerned, organisations such as the Royal British Legion and SSAFA (the armed forces charity) provide services to ex-forces prisoners on their release (see also last bullet point in section 6.6).

7.2.6 The Welsh Government has completed the first draft of an initiative to maximise the establishment's capacity to improve opportunities for prisoners on their release. It examines how the establishment can improve relationships with employers and agencies, to provide more opportunities for employment on release.

7.2.7 The current and post-C-19 economic situation is a cause of concern. While there is confidence that existing large employers will continue to offer placements for the prisoners at Prescoed, there is some anxiety about what will happen if there is large-scale unemployment in the community, and how this will impact on prisoners achieving placements prior to release, and employment post-release.

7.3

In Usk, local multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) meetings are well attended. Out-of-area MAPPA meetings are attended by the senior probation officer in the case of level 3 cases, or by teleconference for levels 1 and 2. MAPPA meetings at Prescoed are conducted by teleconference. Under the OMiC model, a transferring requirement of review forms part of the process. The OASys documents arriving in Usk are mainly up to date. Problems arise with initial reports, or partially completed reports, which are received locked.

7.4 Family contact

Effort has been put into expanding family services, with a view to achieving the 'Investors in Families' kite mark. In practice, the prison is some considerable way towards achieving this, and they are already entitled to use the kite mark. The team continues to engage with 'Investors in Families' and is working on the family's tool audit and standards policy, with an intention to progress with a three-year action plan, which will be a pilot for good practice once completed.

Prisoners continue to be supported in maintaining and developing relationships with family and friends. Prior to the C-19 lockdown, evidential examples include:

- At Usk, owing to the number of applications for family days, both morning and afternoon sessions are run, to ensure that more prisoners have an opportunity to see their families and children. The introduction of therapy dogs on those days have been a success.

At Prescoed, family days continue to be a success, and the Board has noted that prison staff make a special effort for families at Christmas and Easter. A review of the feedback forms indicates that their efforts are appreciated by prisoners and families alike

7.5 Resettlement planning

7.5.1 Most areas have performed well, building upon last year's successful programme, as evidenced in the fourth quarter report to the year ending 31 March 2019, produced by the head of reducing reoffending.

7.5.2 This has been a collaborative effort, by a team consisting of a wide range of senior personnel within Prescoed and Usk prisons and in outside agencies, including St Giles Trust, which has a continued presence at Prescoed. The team meets on a regular basis in order to ensure that a robust programme is maintained. A Board member is invited to attend all meetings. Areas covered by this team include accommodation; education, training and employment; mental and physical health; finance, benefit and debt; children and families; and attitude, thinking and behaviour; community engagement, as well as a meaningful review of the local reducing reoffending action plan.

7.5.3 There have been two new measures introduced this year: accommodation on the first night on release and employment six weeks following release. Owing to the

commitment of all involved, both targets have been exceeded. Accommodation achieved an outcome of 83.33% for Prescoed and 76.19% for Usk. Employment on release achieved an outcome of 39.02% at Prescoed and 15% at Usk. Both establishments are outperforming their comparator sites.

7.5.4 As at 9 March 2020 (pre-C-19), there were 110 prisoners working out in the community. This was in various areas of employment, including food, construction, leisure, catering, heavy goods vehicle driving and laundry services. Sixty-eight of these were stage 2 (paid employment), with 42 on stage 1. Since then, only those classed as essential/key workers have been allowed to work in the community. Nevertheless, this has been a good year and many prisoners speak positively about being able to get work placements because of the efforts of staff assisting them upon their release.

7.5.5 Family days at both establishments continue to run well, as evidenced by feedback forms and surveys. It is pleasing that the team has facilitated visits, with the Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT), for the children who have additional learning and multisensory needs. The homework club continues to run successfully, jointly with PACT and resettlement officers. Efforts are being made to introduce parent evenings. There are many other examples of activities designed to assist families, some with the help of outside agencies such as Christians Against Poverty.

7.5.6 In relation to offending behaviour programmes, the team achieved its key performance targets for 2019/20 and had four completions over the target of 60. This comprised a mixture of 39 Horizon, five Healthy Sex Programme, eight Becoming New Me and 12 Kaizen completions.

7.5.7 Despite its many and varied demands, it is very much to the team's credit that it has secured another successful programme.

7.5.8 The team's main attention is now focusing firmly upon providing a safe environment for the prisoners throughout the duration of C-19.

8. The work of the IMB

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	15
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	9

Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	12
Total number of visits to the establishment	270
Total number of segregation reviews attended	N/A (No segregation at Usk/Prescoed)

Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year 2019	Current reporting year 2020
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	0	0
B	Discipline, including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	2	4
C	Equality	0	0
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	2	1
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	6	0
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	1	0
F	Food and kitchens	2	5
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	0	0
H1	Property within this establishment	0	0
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	3	4
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	0	0
I	Sentence management, including home detention curfew, release on temporary licence, parole, release dates, recategorisation	1	1
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	1	0
K	Transfers	1	1
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system	4	2*
	Total number of applications	23	18

L* = one application about inadequate time to complete a legal case and one about the buddy system.

Supplementary comment about applications:

As in 2019, the Board has noted the low (and reducing) number of applications lodged by prisoners. It has investigated whether this should be a cause for concern. The Board is aware that the spectrum of possibilities could suggest one of the following possibilities:

- a positive indicator implying that prisoners are well managed and relationships between prisoners and staff are good. The suggested conclusion in that case is that prisoners do not feel the need to submit applications.
- a negative indicator implying that prisoners are so disengaged with the prison regime, so fearful of possible consequences (for example, being moved to another prison) or so disillusioned with the effectiveness of the Board that they do not bother to submit applications.

The Board has reviewed relevant factors, including, but not limited to:

- the category of the prisons – in open prisons and those holding MCOSO, a small number of applications is not unusual
- the nature of the relationships that Board members have observed between prisoners and staff
- regular in-depth conversations with prisoners, including Listeners and buddies
- systematic review of SMT management information, with focused observation on-site
- regular review of DIRF reporting and outcomes
- regular attendance at equalities and use of force meetings.

As is reported by other Boards, a minority of prisoners at Usk and Prescoed felt that those who submit applications to the Board may be 'shipped out' as a punishment for complaining to the Board. In the reporting period 2017/18 and again in 2019/20, the Board conducted a 12-month review and found no correlation in either establishment between those submitting applications, and removals to other prisons or (in the case of Prescoed) a return to closed conditions.

Taking the above elements into consideration, the Board finds no evidence that supports the small number of of applications as a negative sign. The Board's view is that prisoners are comfortable in submitting applications, and would do so should they feel the need. Prisoners do use the prison Comp 1 system and discuss matters of concern with the Board verbally, but these are usually resolved before an application becomes necessary. The Board will continue to keep this situation under critical and regular review.



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