



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board

at HMP Lancaster Farms

**For the reporting year
1 February 2019 to 31 January 2020**

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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.

The Board is specifically charged to:

- (1) 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
- (2) inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority as it judges appropriate, any concern it has
- (3) 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.

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Main judgements

Overall, the Board considers HMP Lancaster Farms to be a well-managed prison in which, to a large extent, prisoners are treated fairly and humanely.

Are prisoners treated fairly?

On the whole, the senior management team and other prison officers and staff endeavour to treat prisoners fairly. However, our observations raise a number of areas of concern about the prison's regime and processes that, in our view, raise questions as to the fair treatment of certain sub-groups of prisoners, as follows:

- Prisoners held in the care and separation unit (CSU) are, we understand, expected to undertake all activities other than those directly affected by being held in isolation with no association time. Yet, access to any form of work or education is extremely limited (see paragraphs 6.5 and 9.11) and the exercise yards are so bleak and ill-equipped that access to exercise is negligible (see paragraph 6.2).
- Despite other efforts to accommodate prisoners with reduced mobility, a shortage of wheelchairs unfairly affects this sub-group, by limiting access to a range of activities (see paragraphs 5.7 and 8.5).

Are prisoners treated humanely?

Similarly, Board observations suggest that, in most areas, the senior management team and other prison officers and staff treat prisoners humanely. Aspects of the prison's processes and procedures that raise issues relating to the humane treatment of prisoners include:

- A recently introduced policy has removed 'individual isolator' status from any prisoner seeking to be isolated without being willing or able to reveal information about the perceived threat to his safety (see paragraph 4.7).
- The appalling condition of the exercise yards in the CSU is such that the use of those yards may be considered to be inhumane treatment of those prisoners (see paragraph 6.2).
- Prisoners spending their first night in prison are accommodated in the first night unit (FNU) to facilitate an appropriate level of induction and transition towards the normal regime. The policy of allowing these prisoners to be accommodated in close proximity to vulnerable and disruptive prisoners from the CSU or other wings raises doubts about the humane treatment of prisoners during their first night in prison (see paragraphs 4.6 and 6.7).
- Continued difficulties associated with the transfer of prisoners' property between establishments, the loss of property and in some cases lengthy periods at the prison before the arrival of property all give rise to questions of humane treatment of those in prison (see paragraph 7.7).
- The continued use of double cells, with unscreened toilets, to accommodate prisoners is, in the view of the Board, clearly inconsistent with the principle of humane treatment of prisoners (see paragraph 7.4).
- During the reporting year, a range of operational difficulties led to a marked deterioration in the timeliness of complaints handling (see paragraph 7.8) and delays in the implementation of the key worker programme (7.10). This resulted in very poor levels of support for resolving the difficulties faced by some prisoners within an environment of increasing rates of self-harm (see paragraph 4.9) and violence (see paragraph 4.1).

Are prisoners prepared well for their release?

The prison continues to offer a range of activities aimed at preparing prisoners for release, with an appropriate level of focus on strategies to reduce reoffending. However, the Board raises a number of concerns regarding the funding and organisation of these activities, including:

- During the year, the overall level of funding for education and workshop-based training severely constrained the extent to which all prisoners could develop appropriate levels of skills while at the prison and therefore support potential future employment (see paragraph 10.9).
- Information and communications technology (ICT) provision should be enhanced to support assistance with ICT-based applications for housing benefit and undertaking job searches (see paragraph 11.7).
- There should be increased provision for educational courses beyond levels 1 and 2 (see paragraph 9.9).
- Release on temporary licence (ROTL) is rarely, if ever, used, despite the designation of the establishment as a resettlement prison (see paragraph 11.5).

Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

Urgent consideration of the increasing number of incidents of self-harm by prisoners, and the very large numbers of self-harm incidents associated with a small number of individuals facing mental health difficulties, is required (see paragraph 4.9).

The Board believes that the monitoring of resettlement would be enhanced by having access to data, and cooperation from all the agencies with resettlement responsibilities, both inside the prison and in the community (see paragraph 11.1).

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

The Board requests that the Prison Service undertakes a comprehensive review of the processes associated with arranging transfers between establishments (see paragraph 6.4).

The loss of property, and the delayed transfer of property, when prisoners are transferred between establishments continues to be a significant issue in the fair and humane treatment of prisoners (see paragraph 7.7).

The Board continues to regard the conversion of single cells into double cells to be inappropriate and is disappointed to note that the planned installation of toilet screening in these cells did not take place in this reporting period (see paragraph 7.4).

The Board is concerned that, overall, there are not enough work places, largely because of budget constraints (see paragraph 10.9).

The Board remains disappointed that constraints placed upon the Governor result in ROTL is rarely used, despite the designation of the establishment as a resettlement prison (see paragraph 11.5).

ICT provision should be available in all learning areas (see paragraph 9.5) and the Board regrets the relative lack of assistance with ICT-based applications for housing benefit and undertaking job searches (see paragraph 11.7).

TO THE GOVERNOR

The number of reported violent incidents has (again) increased significantly this year, raising serious concerns about the trend towards the establishment being a less safe environment for prisoners (see paragraph 4.1).

Immediate action is required to reverse the decline in the number of trained Listeners to just two, as prisoners have not had sufficient access to this important form of support (see paragraph 4.4). Similarly, access to telephone calls to the Samaritans at night has been absent for much of the year, and a solution should be implemented with urgency (see paragraph 4.4).

The Board requests that the current policy of reclassifying as a 'refuser' any individual isolating prisoner who will not identify the source of threats made against him should be urgently reviewed (see paragraph 4.7).

The Board remains disappointed that body-worn cameras (BWCs) are not extensively and consistently worn by officers (see paragraph 4.8).

The Board would like to see greater consistency in the collection and monitoring of data on equality and diversity issues and action planning, alongside higher levels of attendance at, and improved consistency of timetabling of, equality action team (EAT) meetings (see paragraph 5.1). Discrimination incident report forms (DIRFs) should always be available on the residential wings (see paragraph 5.6).

The Board remains concerned by the bleak and untidy condition of the exercise yards attached to the CSU (see paragraph 6.2) and notes that the lack of in-cell work activity or education within the CSU creates boredom and frustration (see paragraphs 6.5 and 9.11).

The Board regrets the use of the FNU to accommodate, alongside those spending their first night in prison, prisoners who, if the CSU had not been full, would be held within the latter unit (see paragraph 6.7). The Board is also concerned that the FNU is used to accommodate a range of prisoners when other suitable accommodation has not been found, including some on assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) documents, and with restricted access to regular exercise for extended periods (see paragraph 4.6).

The timing of the distribution of breakfasts and the serving of dinner may result in excessive periods between meals (see paragraph 7.2).

There was a significant increase, in the second half of the year, in the number of complaints for which a response is overdue. This raises serious concerns regarding the allocation of resources to this activity (see paragraph 7.8).

There is a lack of wheelchairs to support prisoners with reduced mobility accessing health care and other amenities. Certain cases have illustrated difficulties of working with external agencies for the support and potential release of those with palliative care needs (see paragraphs 8.5 and 8.9). The Board would welcome additional resources to ensure that the outcomes of social care assessments are addressed (see paragraph 8.7).

The Board notes the continued issues regarding cover arrangements for education staff who are absent due to sickness (see paragraph 9.2), and continues to observe allocation delays, prisoners sent back to their cells, and class cancellations (see paragraph 9.3).

There should be increased provision for educational courses beyond levels 1 and 2 (see paragraph 9.9).

Improvements from last year

The frequency of prisoners arriving without access to their required medication appears to have declined, although has not been eliminated, over the year (see paragraph 4.5).

The use of the FNU to accommodate overspill disruptive prisoners from the CSU has declined over the year (see paragraph 4.6).

The Board's monitoring suggests a modest decline in the availability of illicit substances within the prison (see paragraph 4.10).

A families and significant others strategy has been formulated, incorporating elements from the Farmer Review (see paragraph 5.9).

The option is now given to prisoners to dine out of their cells for lunchtime and evening meals (see paragraph 7.2).

An initiative introducing a competitive element to wing cleanliness has proved successful with prisoners and staff alike (see paragraph 7.3).

Shower screens in the communal bathrooms have now been installed (see paragraph 7.5).

New sexual health/genitourinary medicine (GUM) clinics and telehealth initiatives have been introduced (see paragraph 8.1).

Improvements at reception include the introduction of speedier healthcare reviews (see paragraph 8.3).

The 'allocation with integrity' initiative, delivered through the induction process, to allocate prisoners to their choice of employment within the prison, is welcomed (see paragraph 9.3).

Changes to prison movements and the timing of healthcare provision in January 2020 have had a positive impact on the punctuality of prisoners' arrival to education (see paragraph 9.4).

In April 2019, a new quality assurance model for the observation of teaching and learning was introduced, to improve feedback to staff (see paragraph 9.8).

Lancaster Farms has been accredited as a City and Guilds (C&G) centre, and work opportunities have recently increased to seven days a week in waste management and weekend painting (see paragraph 10.5).

Gym qualifications have been introduced (see paragraph 10.7).

The employment hub has now been established as part of the resettlement unit (see paragraph 11.6).

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

HMP Lancaster Farms is a category C resettlement prison, with accommodation for around 560 adult male prisoners at the end of the reporting year. It is a modern prison with four main residential blocks, each divided into two wings. There is an FNU for prisoners recently arrived at the prison.

The prison benefits from having a large open central area with grass and flowerbeds, large, easily surveilled wing communal spaces, and buildings that are reasonably modern and generally in a good state of repair. The majority of wing accommodation is in single cells, although the number of double cells with bunk beds has increased in recent years. There are now four cells specially adapted for prisoners with reduced mobility. There is only one gated cell.

The CSU holds 12 prisoners. Accommodation is provided in single cells, with five of the cells designated as 'safer cells,' two of which have closed-circuit television installed, and there are, in addition, two special cells.

A number of prison services are provided on a contracted-out basis. Healthcare services are provided by Spectrum Community Health CIC. Spectrum also provides the substance misuse service, with mental health services sub-contracted to Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys Foundation Trust and pharmacy services being managed in-house. Rehabilitation services are provided by Sodexo Justice Services and Purple Futures, with both companies contracting Shelter to deliver resettlement. Prison catering is contracted out. The prison maintenance contract was awarded to Amey plc. Novus delivers education services under the Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) contract. The prison provides some community engagement through the well-attended school careers session, which involves five local sixth forms, as well as a collaboration between the University of Lancaster and the prison.

4. SAFETY

4.1 Safety continues to be a high priority for the staff of Lancaster Farms. However, data suggests that the frequency of violent incidents has increased again this year, with reported numbers of prisoner-on-prisoner fights and assaults higher by over 50% and reported numbers of assaults on staff also higher, by 7.7%.

4.2. Data shared with the Board suggests a marked increase in the use of force compared with the previous reporting year, with an increase of over 16% in the total number of use of force incidents, and an increase of over 46% in the reported use of control and restraint.

4.3 The minutes of weekly safety intervention meetings indicate high levels of attendance by senior staff from relevant departments, and detailed discussions of all prisoners who are individual isolators, on ACCTs, held in segregation or subject to challenge, support and intervention plan (CSIP) monitoring, suggesting a high level of concern for prisoner welfare and safety.

4.4. The number of Listeners had fallen to just two at the end of the reporting year, so prisoners do not always have access to this important form of support. Technical and security-related issues have resulted in prisoners having little or no access to Samaritans telephones during the evenings and at night for much of the year, and while a solution has been found, this delay causes serious concerns.

4.5 Our monitoring suggests that reception staff continue to have fair and humane interactions with prisoners on arrival at Lancaster Farms. We note that the frequency of prisoners arriving without access to their required medication appears to have declined, although has not been eliminated, over the year.

4.6 Prisoners are admitted to the FNU and offered an induction. The use of the FNU to accommodate overspill disruptive prisoners from the CSU has declined over the year. The Board notes that this is not routine practice but remains concerned by the use of the FNU to accommodate non-first-night prisoners, including some on ACCTs, with restricted access to regular exercise for extended periods.

4.7 The number of individual isolating prisoners declined significantly over the reporting year, from nearly 30 to less than 10. While in some cases prisoners have been safely managed back to the normal regime, the Board has serious concerns about the recent introduction of a policy to reclassify as a 'refuser' any individual isolating prisoner who will not identify the source of threats made against him.

4.8 The Board's monitoring continues to suggest that relatively few officers wear BWCs. However, minutes of use of force governance meetings indicate detailed reviews of BWC footage and, while there have been instances of cameras being turned off too soon or being used ineffectively, learning outcomes are identified and practice appears to be improving.

4.9 The Board is very concerned that the number of incidents of self-harm by prisoners has continued to increase during the year, and is alarmed by the very large numbers of self-harm incidents associated with a relatively small number of individuals facing mental health difficulties.

4.10 The Board's monitoring suggests a further and welcome decline in the availability of illicit substances within the prison during the reporting year. The monitoring of 'code blue' alarms attributable to substance misuse suggests a modest decline over the year.

4.11 There were two deaths in custody during the reporting period.

5. EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS

5.1 The senior management team and officers show a commitment to maintaining and implementing appropriate equality and diversity policies. However, the EAT meetings attract varying levels of attendance from across the establishment and are without prisoner representation. Low attendance is compounded by changes to meeting dates and times at short notice. The Board would like to see further collection and monitoring of data on equality and diversity issues, and action planning to ensure implementation in a timely manner.

5.2 The number of prisoner equality representatives has decreased during the year, and it remains unclear to the Board how the feedback is recorded and incorporated into the work of the EAT.

5.3 Forums for prisoners with protected characteristics were scheduled and a number of these took place. A new forum for foreign nationals started during the year. Initiatives are taking place to support the very specific needs of veterans in custody, currently numbering 17. The Board is disappointed to see that the number of representatives attending the forums declined during the year.

5.4 Prisoner council meetings are held regularly and are well attended by staff and prisoner representatives. Frank and open discussions take place, with opportunities to update and consult on a range of issues. Board attendance at these meetings suggests that they are well organised, and that staff treat prisoners with respect and take issues forward.

5.5 The chaplaincy team provides a breadth of pastoral duties and support to individuals, in addition to their role in the spiritual life of the prison. The chaplains provide analysis of religious affiliations for consideration by the EAT. Initiatives were undertaken to acknowledge religious festivals, with dates posted and circulated, and catering advised accordingly. Efforts were made to provide access to chaplaincy services for all faith groups.

5.6 The number of DIRFs submitted continues to be at around or below the levels observed in the previous year. The Board is concerned to note the absence, at times, of DIRFs on the residential wings.

5.7 The number of prisoners with self-declared disabilities rose over the year, with around 165 in January 2020 (140 in October 2018), and the Board would like to see more information on the prison's response to these declarations. We have observed positive, supportive responses from wing staff and other prisoners. However, prisoners with reduced mobility have faced ongoing problems with access to wheelchairs and, at times, to the health centre. The number of personal emergency evacuation plans was monitored, and remained stable over the year.

5.8 The Board continued to monitor closely the needs of older prisoners. The ageing population places additional demands on staff and healthcare resources, in terms of social care and age-appropriate activity.

5.9 Social visit applications are monitored, to identify prisoners who have received no, or few, social visits in the past six months. The prison has been proactive in its response, contacting these prisoners and offering additional telephone credit, assisted visits and access to the prison visitor scheme. A families and significant others strategy has been formulated, incorporating elements from the Farmer Review (2017). Family days, supported by the POPS (Partners of Prisoners) organisation, are well attended and are core to maintaining family links and assisting with rehabilitation.

6. SEGREGATION/CARE AND SEPARATION UNIT

6.1 Board members have been present at a number of segregation reviews and observed good practice taking place. The reviews they have observed have been conducted in an appropriate manner and have generally been attended by relevant staff. Similarly, adjudications attended by Board members reveal a proper balance between having regard for the welfare of the prisoner, and the maintenance of good order and discipline.

6.2 We repeat concerns, expressed in our previous annual reports and brought to the attention of the minister, about the five CSU external exercise enclosures. The yard area remains bleak and untidy, and continues to lack physical exercise equipment, leaving prisoners to pace around the perimeter fence of a small enclosure.

6.3 Board observations show that de-escalation techniques continue to be deployed, resulting in special cells being used rarely and, when used, only for short periods. The deployment of a de-escalation cell is planned to add to the measures available.

6.4 It has been noted, both by Board observation and in a recent Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) inspection report (March 2019), that planning for the return of prisoners to normal location or for addressing issues that caused their segregation was underdeveloped, and that this required improvement and effective monitoring. In the first half of the reporting year, some prisoners remained in the CSU awaiting, and in some cases eagerly anticipating, a transfer out of the prison, leading to extended periods of stay for some prisoners. Hence, the CSU was full and tense at times. This situation is attributable, at least in part, to the complex processes that the senior management team face when trying to secure transfers of prisoners to other establishments. However, the Board noted some positive developments regarding these issues in the second half of the year, with reduced occupancy of the CSU and the continued rollout of the CSIP.

6.5 The lack of in-cell work activity within the CSU creates boredom and frustration that could be transformed into a productive distraction to counter long periods of inactivity each day. The Board notes that three cells in the CSU are without an electricity supply.

6.6 The staff in the CSU are diligent and sensitive to the needs of the prisoners, taking action when possible, given the often challenging and highly stressed environment at times. Board observations suggest that documentation for each prisoner is up to date, accurate and well maintained

6.7 Last year and during the first half of this year, the Board observed the FNU being used to accommodate prisoners from the CSU when the CSU was full, and raised concerns about the inappropriate mixing of disruptive and new prisoners in the FNU. The Board notes that this is not routine practice (and is used when certain prisoners are under threat within regular accommodation), and is pleased to note that this has occurred less in the second half of the year, but remains concerned that this policy remains in place to be used again when the CSU is full.

7. ACCOMMODATION (INCLUDING COMMUNICATION)

7.1 The prison is built around a spacious, grassed central area. The grounds are well maintained, with areas of planting. There are many ducks living on the estate, which does sometimes cause an issue with entrance areas to wings becoming polluted with excrement.

7.2 The option is now given to prisoners to dine out of their cells for lunchtime and evening meals, although the last meal of the day is served before 5pm, which the Board considers to be too early. Furthermore, as breakfast packs continue to be given out at lunchtime for the following day, many prisoners may have large gaps between meals, although the Board recognises the importance of prisoners taking responsibility for eating meals at the appropriate time. The Board's observations of food being served without the use of utensils, together with incomplete wing server logs, would suggest that insufficient attention is paid to food hygiene, although the Governor has advised the Board that frequent and regular cleaning and checking of all serveries is in place.

7.3 The appointment of prisoner wing cleaning officers for each wing is not transparent; however, an initiative introducing a competitive element to wing cleanliness has proved successful both with prisoners and staff.

7.4 There are 68 double cells in the prison. Some of these have been created from two cells being knocked into one, giving prisoners an element of privacy when using the toilet. However, others have been converted from single cells by the installing of bunk beds. The Board is disappointed to note that the intended installation of toilet screening in these cells, as noted in our previous report, did not take place in this reporting period.

7.5 Shower screens in the communal bathrooms have now been installed and these areas are generally well maintained and clean. The Board notes, however, that the standard varies between wings, and that some baths are unusable owing to their state of cleanliness.

7.6 A programme of cell redecoration is now under way, although the prison was refused permission to reduce capacity to enable the replacement of flooring to be carried out more speedily.

7.7 Complaints by prisoners to the Board relating to property fell slightly, from 32% to 25% of all applications in this reporting period, but the frequent loss of property when prisoners are transferred between establishments remains a significant issue.

7.8 Issues related to the timeliness of the prison's handling of complaints have increased the number of applications to the Board this year. The prison's own records show a significant deterioration in the timeliness of responses to complaints towards the end of the year.

7.9 Governor's notices to prisoners are displayed on the wings. We are pleased to note that a prisoner council meets monthly and has been involved with the recent changes to canteen ordering and to the incentives and earned privileges (IEP) regime.

7.10 In this reporting year, the Board continues to be disappointed with the large number of prisoners without regular contact with an assigned key worker. Latterly, there has been a renewed focus on this area of the prison's work but improvements are being hindered by the levels of available staff to carry out additional duties, such as escorting prisoners to hospital, and this would suggest insufficient levels of staffing.

8. HEALTHCARE (INCLUDING MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE)

8.1. Board applications in regard to healthcare provision have decreased to a level close to that in 2017. Working relationships continue to be good between those involved in the management and delivery of healthcare services. Following the positive Care Quality Commission/HMIP assessment in 2018, improvements have continued to be made; for example, new sexual health/GUM clinics and telehealth initiatives have been introduced. A mock inspection in November 2019 provided feedback to inform practice stocktaking and infection control.

8.2. Changes in medication continue to be the basis of most healthcare complaints and Board healthcare applications. As some medications are potentially misused within the prison, national clinical advice has led to a removal of some prescribed medications. The prison also follows established protocols when there has been a misuse of psychoactive substances/medications, insofar as immediate medication reviews take place. The recent employment of a part-time pharmacist has supported this work.

8.3. Improvements at reception include the introduction of speedier healthcare reviews. This has helped to remedy past concerns about medications not following prisoners transferring to the prison. Electronic medical records also transfer on arrival.

8.4. While waiting times to see the GP are less than two weeks, data suggests some delays to dental appointments towards the end of the year. In addition, a triage clinic takes place each day: each wing can make two referrals per day. In urgent situations, other appointments can be made.

8.5 The Board has observed difficulties in the operation of movements of prisoners between wings and the health centre, resulting in some prisoners being unable to attend healthcare appointments. The Board has also raised concerns about the shortage of wheelchairs to support prisoners with reduced mobility in accessing the health centre and other amenities.

8.6. Mental health teams (including counselling and psychology) remain well embedded, although face an increasing demand from a number of prisoners with serious mental health difficulties. The Board welcomes the introduction of psychological wellbeing counsellors. The demands of regular ACCT reviews put much pressure on the service.

8.7. While the social care assessment process takes place for a few prisoners, some particular cases have illustrated the inadequacy of how the outcomes are addressed, and the Board is concerned to note that there are no social care staff.

8.8 The Board has observed that healthcare complaint forms are sometimes unavailable on the wings, and some confusion arose when new forms were introduced during the year.

8.9 Some cases have illustrated difficulties of the Prison Service working with external agencies for the support and potential release of those with palliative care needs. Whilst Dying Well in Custody protocols exist and discussions with a local hospice are taking place, the Board has serious concerns regarding the provision of palliative care within this prison, even when the prisoner has been offered (and declined) an option to move to another establishment.

8.10. No flu or norovirus cases were recorded during the year. Funding from Public Health England supported the flu immunisation programme (including for staff). NHS health checks also take place for prisoners at the ages of 40 and 50, including follow-ups at subsequent weekly clinics.

8.11. Protocols exist with the North West Ambulance Service (for example, it is called out for all 'code blue' events). Some prisoners are accompanied to the Royal Lancaster Infirmary for acute illness. In addition, a small number of prisoners move to HMP Preston and HMP Wymott, as there are extra care facilities at those locations.

9. EDUCATION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

9.1 Novus continues to deliver a wide range of education services within the OLASS contract.

9.2 The Board is aware of continued issues regarding cover arrangements when education staff are absent owing to sickness, and notes that difficulties in recruiting a bricklaying tutor had an impact on the number of prisoners engaged in purposeful activity during the year. We note the Governor's efforts to address these issues, and the recent increased use of agency staff to cover tutor absences and reduce cancellations.

9.3 The Board continues to observe a range of allocation delays, 'send backs' and class cancellations through the year, with cancellation rates (prison and provider) at over 11% towards the end of the year. The 'allocation with integrity' initiative, delivered through the induction process, to allocate prisoners to their choice of employment within the prison, is welcomed.

9.4 Following HMIP observations during their inspection in 2018 (published in March 2019) and similar Board observations, obstacles that prevented punctual attendance at classes remained for much of the year. However, the Board is pleased to note that changes to prison movements and the timing of healthcare provision in January 2020 have improved the prisoners' punctuality at education classes.

9.5 The Board notes that recent Ofsted/HMIP reports have identified areas for improvement in the prison's provision of information technology. The Board has observed that ICT provision is not available in all learning areas.

9.6 Board members have observed the 'Learning Together' project, a collaboration between the prison and Lancaster University, matching 12 prisoners with 12 students from the university. The next 'Learning Together' project was due to start in January 2020, and, despite issues with retention and recruitment, it continues to offer a positive experience for prisoners.

9.7 The Board is pleased to note changes to the curriculum and induction process, to take more account of prisoners' prior knowledge and learning, offering greater use of individualised learning plans, more appropriate teaching materials, curriculum and better attendance monitoring. Prisoners with more than four months to serve are now offered opportunities to enrol on level 2 vocational courses, while induction now includes a full day of diagnostics followed by a one-to-one interview, with the creation of the individual learning plan.

9.8 In April 2019, a new quality assurance model for the observation of teaching and learning was introduced, to improve feedback to staff and feed into the quality improvement plan.

9.9 The Board remains concerned that there is no provision for courses beyond levels 1 and 2, with the exception of one level 3 course connected to the Rail Track facility and some in-cell access to the Open University.

9.10 Our monitoring continues to suggest that the functional skills programme remains unpopular among prisoners, although we note the new annual delivery plan implemented at the end of the reporting year, and a range of new 'enrichment activities'.

9.11 As noted above (see paragraph 6.5), the Board is concerned that prisoners housed in the CSU and the FNU do not consistently have access to in-cell education, other than colouring/activity materials provided by the library service.

9.12 Our observations indicate that the library facilities in general are very good, and a special note is taken of the 'The Insider' newsletter, generated by prisoners in the library.

10. WORK, VOCATIONAL TRAINING and EMPLOYMENT

10.1 Novus and the prison provide a variety of work-related and vocational activities, including barista training, the Go-Shop, horticulture and gardens, groundwork construction and packaging.

10.2 A significant source of work ('Remade with Hope') worked well in partnership with M&S but the project was ended during the year. More diverse contracts with several companies in the North-West are needed.

10.3 In-cell packing has also ended, and alternative arrangements are needed to provide activities for those prisoners who are unable to attend workshops.

10.4 'Recycling Lives' remains a successful activity, with anecdotal evidence of lower reoffending rates. Paid employment within the prison motivates prisoners, and there are links to future employment, accommodation, welfare support and support from a psychotherapist. The Network Rail diploma course also provides opportunities for employment, supporting access to interviews and the potential to receive track card qualifications.

10.5 The dry lining course has been successful this year. Lancaster Farms has been accredited as a C&G centre, and prisoners in horticulture are achieving their C&G qualification. Work opportunities have recently increased to seven days a week in waste management and weekend painting.

10.6 The prison works alongside a link person from New Futures Network, to support prisoners to raise their profile and market themselves with potential employers on social media, and this is proving successful. A jobs fair is also organised for those prisoners with 12 weeks or less before release.

10.7 Despite some estate issues (for example, holes in the floor of the gym), gym provision and facilities are very good. Gym qualifications have been introduced. The second cohort is now taking the place of the level 2 course linked to diet and wellbeing. Regrettably, the refereeing programme with AFC Fylde has now ended.

10.8 As noted above (see paragraph 9.10), our observations suggest that the benefits of the functional skills courses in numeracy and literacy are not adequately communicated as a valuable opportunity for prisoners undertaking training in workshops.

10.9 Overall, it is the Board's view that there were not enough work and education places available during the year, with full-time equivalent places totalling 442, or 80% of the prison's capacity in December 2019, though the total number of places increased to 490 in January 2020 and further increases were anticipated..

11. RESETTLEMENT PREPARATION

11.1. HMIP, in its introduction to the most recent inspection report (March 2019), commented that 'resettlement remained a disappointing picture overall'. Resettlement is an issue that, by its definition, extends outside the prison. The Board concludes that the monitoring of resettlement would be enhanced by having access to data and cooperation from all the agencies with resettlement responsibilities, both inside the prison and in the community.

11.2. The Board is concerned that employment placement activity within the prison was curtailed during the year. The Board has sought (and received from the Governor) reassurance regarding the long-term funding for information, advice and guidance, and employer liaison activities.

11.3. POPS continues to deliver visitor services successfully. The senior managers and chaplaincy work well together to manage the external visits reception and the internal visits hall, including a café and crèche. The family forums are invaluable, although the Board believes that family days should be offered more often, and to more participants.

11.4. Data provided to the Board suggests that, in the reporting period, of the 374 prisoners released, 351 (94%) were released to settled accommodation but employment on release appears to be recorded for only 13 prisoners. A total of 107 of these prisoners took up substance misuse service referrals in the community, but we have found little evidence of ongoing mentoring after release. It would appear that 270 of the released prisoners were secure in their ongoing financial arrangements, and Shelter has been responsible for opening bank accounts for 79 prisoners on release.

11.5. The Board remains disappointed that ROTL is rarely used, despite the designation of the establishment as a resettlement prison, but recognises that the Governor and his team must take into account national instructions, local circumstances and the risks associated with each prisoner's release.

11.6. The proposed redesignation of one building as an employment hub during the year, concentrating resettlement, activities, industries and employment liaison, is welcomed by the Board.

11.7. The Board regrets the relative lack of assistance that prisoners receive to help them become more familiar with ICT and, more generally, the digital environment, including assistance with applications for housing benefit and undertaking job searches. The joint Novus and Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service self-assessment report and Board observations suggest that realistic employment opportunities or work simulation opportunities remain limited.

BOARD STATISTICS	
Recommended complement of Board members	15
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	8 (3 members resigned during the year)
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	10 (5 new members were recruited)
Total number of rota visits to the establishment	57
Total number of segregation reviews attended	12

Section – Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Current reporting year	Previous reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	4	3
B	Discipline, including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	5	5
C	Equality	8	3
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	6	9
E 1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	16	14
E 2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	0	0
F	Food and kitchens	3	0
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	24	30
H 1	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	41	53
H 2	Property within this establishment	4	12
H 3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	8	5
I	Sentence management including home detention curfew, ROTL, parole, release dates, recategorisation	28	27
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	10	18
K	Transfers (+Miscellaneous)	32 (+26)	24 (+14)
	Total number of IMB applications	215	217