



# Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Stocken

**For reporting year  
1st May 2019 – 30th April 2020**

Published November 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 IMB is part of the United Kingdom's National Preventive Mechanism.

## **2. Description of the establishment**

HMP Stocken is a category C male training prison in a rural situation close to the A1 in Rutland. Access to public transport is very limited: the nearest trains and buses are in Oakham, the county town (nine miles away).

Stocken has expanded over the course of the year following the completion of a new wing together with new and expanded kitchen facilities and workshops. The population has risen from about 840 at the start of the reporting year to 1038 by the end (i.e. nearly 25%).

Prisoners serve medium to long-term sentences, i.e., of 4 years or longer. There are however a significant number of "Lifers" (71) and Indefinite Public Protection (IPP) prisoners (33) who are to be released only when they are no longer deemed to pose a threat to the public. Operating capacity is now 1044 (last year 853), and certified normal accommodation is 974.

There are seven wings – four "small", holding c. 95-120 men, and three "large", holding nearly 200 each, one of which was opened in June 2019. There are 14 workshops and a substantial education section. The large and well-equipped gymnasium is very popular with men and staff alike, and the chapel, multi-faith rooms and library are also well supplied and well attended.

Education is provided by PeoplePlus; healthcare is provided by Care UK, with mental health services subcontracted to Northamptonshire Foundation NHS Trust. Inclusion (drug rehabilitation) is now part of Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust. Library services are provided by Rutland County Council. Voluntary services include the IMB, the Samaritans, Lincolnshire Action Trust, the Prison Fellowship, the Shannon Trust and the Sycamore Trust.

### **3. Executive summary**

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

The COVID-19 outbreak has had a significant impact on the Board's ability to gather information and discuss the contents of this annual report. The Board has therefore tried to cover as much ground as it can in these difficult circumstances, but inevitably there is less detail and supporting evidence than usual. Ministers are aware of these constraints. Regular information is being collected specifically on the prison's response to the pandemic, and that is being collated nationally.

Fortunately, close monitoring continued until shortly after March 8<sup>th</sup> 2020 so that there is a solid body of first-hand evidence available for the pre-lockdown period, i.e. from May 2019 to the end of February 2020 (10 months).

#### **3.2 Main judgements**

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

No prison is completely free of violence or the threat of violence, but we feel HMP Stocken is relatively safe compared with other similar establishments

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

In general, prisoners are treated fairly and humanely. We have seen very few instances of treatment which are out of line with Prison Service directives, and possible instances of unprofessional attitudes from staff are taken very seriously and thoroughly investigated.

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

There are too many prisoners with mental health issues in the prison system as a whole, and Stocken is no exception to this judgement. The mental health team do their best but we have serious concerns about a significant number of men. Physical health is well catered for.

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

Training and education are excellent. As Stocken is not a resettlement prison, it is not funded to prepare those released directly into the community as well as they could be.

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

#### ***TO THE MINISTER***

There is a pressing need for increased capacity in two particular areas: secure mental health facilities, and Category D (Open) prisons.

There is also a need to increase capacity in all categories in London and the South East: far too many prisoners at Stocken are a very long way from their homes and families and in consequence some make strenuous attempts to be sent back there.

In-cell telephony should be funded so that all Category C prisoners can access it.

#### ***TO THE PRISON SERVICE***

There needs to be more active and prompt allocation of re-categorised prisoners to a more appropriate location: too often, the movement of prisoners within the system is at the whim of governors and minor officials.

Prisons which reduce their capacity to take prisoners for resettlement preparation should have their funds redirected to prisons such as Stocken which increasingly has to fulfil a role for which it is not adequately funded.

The frequent long delays in obtaining financial approval for repairs and refurbishments are unacceptable, and the external contractor needs closer monitoring of performance and sharpened incentives.

#### ***TO THE GOVERNOR***

Ways should be found to improve prisoners' attendance and punctuality at workshops and education sites.

Adjudications continue to cause concern. As we said in our previous report, too many end in dismissal for avoidable technical reasons.

Paperwork essential to the handling of Segregation reviews (Rule 45s) should be checked for accuracy and available to the presiding governor in good time. When adequate preparation has not taken place reviews are likely to be much less constructive, as well as less consistent between different governors.

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

Maintenance has improved. There is more of a 'can-do' spirit on site, and the main brake on further improvements is now to be found further up the corporate chain.

Access to illegal substances continues to be limited despite greater efforts from outside suppliers.

Keywording has bedded in very successfully.

Living conditions on the bigger wings have generally been much better this year, with greater cleanliness and better relations between prisoners and staff. There are still lapses, but on the whole efforts to improve have paid off.

## Evidence sections 4 – 7

### 4. Safety

#### 4.1 Reception and induction

Reception is a department which continues to work well. It is fully staffed, opening in the evenings and at weekends 90% of the time. Interviews and testing are thorough and carried out respectfully and decently. Incomers have access to a small shop which helps to avoid a build-up of debt while they are waiting to order their first canteen. Incomers have two private interviews, one in reception and one following transfer to H wing (the induction wing). H wing's function has been adapted during the course of the year, so that (for example) a number of cells are kept clear in case the Segregation Unit (SU) suffers from an excess of unusable cells, or power/water failure. There are also a number of long-term residents – cleaners, mentors, orderlies and so on.

In autumn 2019 the regional Safety team conducted an 'Early Days in Custody Review'. As a result the wing Custodial Manager (CM) and the Head of Communication are developing a plan to improve the current induction process, which can be disjointed and has gaps when staff from various departments are not always able to turn up and give their presentation. The review also made recommendations to improve facilities for prisoners with physical disabilities, to clarify and promote the role of the induction orderly, to make the décor on H wing more welcoming and to review the process which deals with men identified as having an elevated risk level. However, the review also stated that new arrivals feel safe, they can find what they need from the induction process, reception orderlies do good work and there are good working relationships between staff and induction orderlies.

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

In the previous reporting year, there were three deaths in custody. In only one case have we received the Prison and Probation Ombudsman's (PPO) preliminary investigation (final report not yet published). This criticised the length of time (20 minutes) between the discovery of the (seemingly unconscious) prisoner and the declaration of a Code Red. In fact, the prisoner had been dead for some hours, so nothing could have been done, but the prison has agreed to revisit the relevant training and impress upon night OSGs the vital importance of a rapid response. (OSGs - Officer Support Grades - are staff who are not fully-trained Prison Officers, but who provide many services where direct contact with prisoners is not normally required.) The Board has queried the seemingly low level of staffing at night on wings and in the Segregation Unit (SU), and there has been an increase in the number of Prison Officers assigned during those hours.

One aspect that the Board finds surprising is the great length of time between a death in custody and the formal inquest and consequently the final report from the Ombudsman.

Self-harm: the statistics are not very useful since although it is possible to calculate the *average* number of incidents per prisoner, this still conceals the influence of the handful of prisoners who self-harm prolifically and/or severely.

Some data: During our reporting year, there were 387 self-harm incidents (last year: 381). March 2020 was the highest monthly figure, namely 46. In April, the first full month of lockdown this fell to 25. As ever, remember that the population of Stocken increased during the year, so that this year's figure represents a relative decline.

This represents an average of 1.75 incidents per self-harming prisoner, almost the same as the previous year. One of the most prolific self-harmers has at last been found a place in a secure mental facility.

### **4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation**

Challenge Support Intervention Plans (CSIPs) had a slightly uneven introduction. In early November 2019 not all staff were making referrals in a timely fashion or at all and the safer custody team was having to go through the daily briefing sheet to check on violent incidents and chase staff to make referrals. On a positive note, the number of referrals from key workers was rising and these referrals tend to be more detailed and useful. The CSIP reviews were also not optimal. They should be interdisciplinary but this has been hard to achieve due to the difficulty of assembling an interdisciplinary team. There was a perception that Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) reviews were more important than CSIP reviews and should be prioritised. Safer Custody has been addressing this.

There are several regular meetings to discuss violent and vulnerable prisoners, the most frequent and detailed being the weekly Safety Intervention Meeting (SIM). The minutes from this are scrutinised by the Chairman and occasionally a member of the Board attends. It was noted in the early part of 2020 that an increasing number of cases were being postponed to the following week (and sometimes several weeks in a row) owing to lack of information or action, and we raised this with the Governor. He had in fact already observed this for himself and ascribed it at least partly to increased demands on Assistant Governors. The Covid-19 crisis has made it difficult to monitor whether things have improved.

#### Some statistics (last year's figures in parentheses):

Prisoner-on-prisoner assaults: Total: 132 (153) of which 21 or 15.9% were judged serious (30, 19.6%) The monthly mean was thus 11 (12.75). (Bear in mind the expansion of the prison population during the year.)

Unsurprisingly, the numbers fell sharply following lockdown.

Prisoner assaults on staff: 79 (80) of which 18 or 22.8% were adjudged serious (17, 21.2%). As we can see, very little change. There was no comparable reduction on lockdown.

#### **4.4 Vulnerable prisoners, safeguarding**

An increasing number of prisoners find themselves at risk through no direct fault of their own. A typical case was a prisoner whose younger brother had murdered a member of a rival gang, and because Stocken held some members from this group, his own life was (he thought) in great danger. The prison is generally responsive to the fears of such men and is willing if necessary to hold them in the Segregation Unit (SU) until a transfer to a safer environment is possible. Another source of fear occurs when a drugs consignment is sent to a prisoner who knows nothing about it. When it is confiscated through the screening system, the senders nevertheless pin the debt on the prisoner and/or his family.

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

Almost all the Serious Incidents (SIs) declared (resulting in the Command Suite being opened) involved prisoners on the netting or the railings. In many cases, the National Tactical Response Group (NTRG) was eventually called in. Usually, it was sufficient for the prisoners involved to see the NTRG team preparing their decisive intervention. They would then surrender without further resistance. We think that this reflects a determination to avoid loss of face. It is, however, very wasteful of expensive resources.

Almost all of these incidents were apparently motivated by a determination to achieve a transfer – to escape debt, to be nearer home, or to escape the threat of violence. Despite members' best efforts (and those of the prison staff), it is impossible to persuade prisoners that such behaviour militates against the transfer they so much hope for.

One SI was, however, on a much larger scale. This was an outbreak of Concerted Indiscipline on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> January. One spur of M wing, holding c. 100 prisoners was lost, following a serious assault on an officer and his rescue by colleagues. The spur gates were chained off. Many prisoners retreated to their cells to avoid becoming swept up. Power and water were cut, leaving only emergency lighting. The NTRGs completed their plan, and at about 2am on the 19<sup>th</sup> they effected entry to the spur only to find no resistance, with all prisoners in their cells. Subsequent investigation revealed a) that the number of ringleaders was small, b) they were largely from London and the SE, and c) trouble had been brewing for some weeks, with prisoners (also from out of the area) on another wing being involved in the planning and instigation. Although the IMB members present were highly impressed by the prison team's preparedness, calm, and professionalism during the long hours before resolution, in subsequent days the investigations revealed a significant weakness: Intelligence Reports (IRs) had been filed on the morning of the incident (a Saturday) but no analysts were on duty to alert managers to the strong possibility of concerted indiscipline. As a result, the governor spoke to staff on the need for more common sense in such situations, and to be ready to be pro-active in alerting duty governors to possible threats, as well as submitting IRs.

Use of Force data: During our reporting year, there were 442 instances (386 in the previous year). This represents a rise of 14.5%. (However, we stress that the

prison's population has risen significantly.) The figures are fairly consistent throughout the year.

#### **4.6 Substance misuse**

One of the most radical changes seen during the reporting year is the very sharp drop in the availability and use of PS (Psycho-active substances—e.g. Spice). Strictly speaking, this began during the previous reporting year, but it has continued and now is firmly established. Mandatory Drug Test (MDT) positives have remained at around 3% since the policy was introduced in spring 2019. This is extraordinarily low in comparison to the rest of the prison system and should surely serve as a template for the estate as a whole. It is based around the testing of correspondence entering the prison. Legal correspondence is also tested, but without contravening the regulations to respect its privacy and integrity. (It should be noted that some “legal” letters do not originate from law firms, but are sent in by others such as Organised Crime Groups or families.) Almost all opened correspondence is photocopied. On the whole, the resulting slight delay (and loss of privacy) are accepted by prisoners as necessary to the stability and health of the prison as a whole (IMB members’ conversations).

Other routes include drone deliveries and “throw-overs”, but neither seems to be a problem. Visitors are a more likely source of supply, but all are searched, with the assistance of drug dogs. Staff corruption is very occasionally discovered and we believe the Governor is fully committed to the identification and prosecution of the individuals identified.

By far the most likely sources of supply are transfers of prisoners from other jails. We have pressed for prisoners to be searched as they leave their remitting establishments, but surprisingly there is no prison service directive to this effect. Although detection methods on arrival are comprehensive, it is probable that some small amounts get through. Hence, there are still on occasion prisoners declared to be ‘under the influence’ (UTI), but study of the daily briefing sheets shows them to be remarkably few.

One corollary of the success in minimising the availability of PS is a massive rise in the brewing of alcohol (“hooch”). Fortunately, this is relatively easy to detect since the associated odours are hard to conceal. Hooch dogs are deployed alongside cell searches and substantial quantities are often discovered. To discourage this further, the Governor has reduced the availability of the raw materials for the brewing of hooch, in particular fruit. Some prisoners have complained that they no longer get fruit automatically, but have to request it and only one piece per day. The Board can see both sides of this problem.

A final point: the strangling of the supply of drugs has massively driven up their price. This incentivises Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) to target prisons, since they make far far more profit from supplying prisoners than users in the outside community. This has encouraged OCGs to try to infiltrate prisons, through corrupt staff or (mainly) transfers from remand prisons, with consequent debt problems – not for the users themselves always, but often for their families who are apparently subjected to threats of violence if payment is not forthcoming.

## 5. Fair and humane treatment

### 5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

There are 7 wings: F holds 90-100, K holds 120-130. H wing (c. 100-120) is mainly populated with new prisoners going through the induction process before being allocated to one of the other wings. This year has seen the wing under a good deal of pressure as a result of the influx of men to populate the newly-opened Newton wing: all come through H wing in the first instance. It has 14 cells reserved for emergency occupation should, for example, a number of cells in the Segregation Unit (SU) become unavailable. I wing is reserved for those on drug or alcohol recovery pathways. There about 75 prisoners, all of whom have in-cell showers. Prisoners find its facilities, common purpose and calm atmosphere very helpful. The three large wings, L, M and Newton, hold nearly 200 prisoners each, on two spurs. Newton is not yet quite full. It was opened in June 2019 and is being populated largely with Enhanced status prisoners. There were some delays to the planned expansion as a result of a burst water main in the new enlarged kitchens, which necessitated a halt to the process since the old kitchens could not physically feed over 1000 prisoners.

In last year's report we highlighted the fact that some of the large wings regularly failed to meet the high standards of cleanliness and repair to be found in the four smaller wings. We are glad to be able to report that, with occasional slip-ups, this year has seen a much more consistent and decent living environment for Stocken's prisoners. The newness of Newton Wing has also helped to raise the average standard. In general, few complaints reach us concerning quality of accommodation, though there are some issues surrounding cleaning and rubbish collection at weekends.

One area which could continue to improve is food handling, servery cleanliness and record-keeping. The new kitchens have equipment which enables more frequent cleaning of the trolleys which carry hot food to the wings—several have in the past struggled to maintain a minimum standard.

Maintenance is the responsibility of Amey, the private contractors. During the course of the year, we have noticed a definite improvement (from a low base) in the speed with which faults are rectified (though see comments on the SU). However, it can still take too long to fix showers or hot water supply, and we know from the experiences of other prisons that lack of these facilities can rapidly lead to disorder. Moreover, washing machines and driers are sometimes not repaired for weeks. To be fair, these facilities are very heavily used as prisoners are reluctant to send their personal - and, increasingly, prison - clothing to the main Laundry. PIN phones are another facility where repairs take too long, though in this case, the responsibility lies with BT.

The Board feels that the Prison Service should be doing its best to phase out shared cells, particularly when the original cell was intended for one occupant only. We also vigorously objected to the lack of screening of lavatories in shared cells before the new wing (Newton wing) opened which we felt was a clear breach of decency guidelines. This has since been rectified.

Food quality and variety: we have always been impressed by the management and output of the kitchens. The Manager and his permanent staff are thoughtful,

innovative and care deeply about their role. There are very few complaints, and the responses we have monitored have been respectful and constructive. Regular consultations of prisoner representatives (the Kitchen Users Group) have thrown up easy-to-make improvements and adjustments, and the introduction of healthier food can be flagged in advance. Special dietary requirements are well served, from the blanket need to supply halal food to the 20+% of prisoners who are Muslim, to those individuals identifying as vegetarians, gluten-free, diabetics or vegans. Not all prisoners understand that one cannot switch at will between a special menu and a normal one, but staff are good at explaining the need for consistency. The move into the new, much larger accommodation had to be delayed from June to January by major flooding in the new facilities (see above). The transition has gone smoothly and all concerned are much happier with their working conditions as a result.

An inspection of the kitchens by the area manager for the E Midlands group was highly complementary, though it criticised their record-keeping for NVQ training.

All in all, despite ongoing maintenance problems, we judge accommodation conditions at Stocken to be satisfactory and decent.

## **5.2 Segregation, special accommodation**

Until late June 2019, a Board member on Rota would visit the SU and make sure to speak to each prisoner. In addition, the On Call member would attend Rule 45 reviews as a matter of course, and ACCT reviews and planned transfers as feasible. From July onwards, we decided to allocate the Rota visit to the On Call member on the grounds that there was some duplication of effort.

The unit contains 18 ordinary cells, a de-escalation cell, 2 Dirty Protest cells and a Constant Watch cell. Despite our concerns that this accommodation would prove inadequate as the prison expanded its numbers, this has not proved to be the case. Having said that, from time to time a significant number of cells have been out of commission because of vandalism, hence the decision to allocate cells on H wing to provide back-up capacity. Inexplicably, it takes up to three months to repair smashed-up cells in the SU; this, we are told, is because the fixtures and fittings are specific to that part of the prison – cells on wings can be repaired much faster. There have been discussions between the prison and Amey concerning alterations to SU cell specifications which would speed up their return to service (and reduce costs) but little progress seems to have been made.

The SU has to fulfil many functions. Its primary purpose is to confine prisoners who cannot be dealt with by the sanctions available on the wings, and secondarily it provides a safe place for prisoners who are in danger because of debt or security status. The former are there on grounds of “Good Order and Discipline” and the latter are described as being there “On own interest”. The SU has a compact which prisoners sign on arrival, and finding a pathway out of the SU and back to normal accommodation (or transfer to another prison) is a priority. The Safer Custody Governor has brought a welcome sense of purposeful rehabilitation to the SU’s practices, and the prison officers who are permanently on the SU’s roster work well together with calmness, efficiency and obvious respect for their charges – no matter how much provocation they may receive. We are less happy with the intermediate management structure, simply because the officers concerned do not seem to us to

spend sufficient time in the unit. This leaves too much to the ordinary officers who are not always able to juggle regular duties, emergencies and extensive paperwork in a satisfactory manner. There is a clerical assistant in the SU but her duties are dominated by the need to compile Use of Force paperwork, leaving the preparation of most other types of bureaucracy to the hard-pressed officers.

Some statistics (last reporting year's figure in parentheses):

Segregation usage: 222 (305) Cellular Confinement (CC): 1060 days (646)

Dirty Protests: 17 (10)

The figures for CC are hard to interpret since month by month they vary enormously—from 7 in January 2020 to 190 in July 2019, and 135 in March 2020.

The SU has to serve other functions as well: for example, mentally disturbed prisoners who cannot be dealt with by wing staff are frequently housed in the SU, sometimes requiring constant observation to make sure they do not harm themselves (and even then this precaution sometimes fails). Also, prisoners who are re-categorised as B category (usually on grounds of persistent violence towards staff or other inmates) are held in the SU pending transfer to another jail. Lastly, and frustratingly, too many prisoners regard the SU as a route to transfer out of Stocken. To that end, they create incidents on the wings, leading to segregation, in the hope that the prison will become fed up with them and ensure a swap with another institution. This “departure lounge” mentality is of course pointless as the more disruption, violence or vandalism is perpetrated, the less likely it becomes that another prison will be willing to take them. Hence the multi-faceted nature of those held in the SU imposes exceptional demands of staff. Our observations tell us that they constantly rise to the challenge, and we commend their professionalism.

Issues which need to be resolved include the following:

First, when prisoners are held in the SU for more than 42 days, permission to hold them for longer must be sought from the Regional Director. On too many occasions, the paperwork for this has been submitted very late in the day, leading to occasions where the prison risks being in breach of regulations (since a prisoner cannot legally be held if permission is not granted by the end of the 42-day period).

Secondly, paperwork for Rule 45 reviews (i.e. authority for confinement in the SU) is too often done at the last minute, is inaccurate, or its completion distracts the duty governor from constructive interaction with the prisoner. When the prisoner's situation is already clear to the duty governor (rather than hastily gleaned from computer records) a much more constructive dialogue can take place.

Thirdly, Category B prisoners awaiting transfer usually cause a great deal of trouble, in the form of vandalised cells and violence towards staff. As a result of many lengthy delays in transferring these prisoners, the Board wrote to the Director of Prisons to complain formally that Category B prisons were not doing their job and that governors of such prisons had far too much discretion in refusing to accept the very prisoners they were intended to accommodate. Cat C prisons cannot cope with the presence of numbers of Cat B prisoners for long periods of time. We were extremely disappointed with the Director's response, which we felt did not constitute an acceptable reply to our criticisms.

Adjudications: In addition to all the above, the SU serves as the centre which deals with prisoners who have been reported by staff for infringements of prison regulations, such as brewing alcohol or theft from a workshop. (More serious cases are dealt with by the police or by a visiting judge.) We have brought to the governor's attention the fact that far too many charges fail because of botched paperwork, missing evidence, missing witnesses, missing reporting officer, because the prisoner has not received the paperwork in time, or because the whole procedure is now beyond the permitted time limit. The visiting judge (the "external adjudicator") has been working with the prison to try to improve the efficiency of the process. Although practices appear to us to have improved somewhat, there is still more to do. A further issue is that there are, in our view, too many adjudications – the evidence for this being the large backlog of cases. It is encouraging, though, that this backlog has shrunk from typically 130 a week at the start of our reporting period to c.40 by the end of it. Nevertheless, we continue to argue that wing staff should think twice before putting a prisoner on report when often the issue of an IEP warning would be more effective and efficient.

Problems with paperwork notwithstanding, we can report that both the Rule 45 reviews and adjudications are conducted with a mixture of professionalism and compassion which does credit to the great majority of duty governors and officers.

There are increasingly joined-up reviews of prisoners who are violent or fragile, with a weekly Safety Intervention Meeting (SIM) (see section 4.3) which will include difficult cases in the SU, and several others of a similar type, including a weekly Segregation Review to make sure that everyone is fully acquainted with the current population of the unit.

### **5.3 Staff-prisoner/detainee relationships, key workers**

Early last year, a new post (Engagement officer, for short) was created to examine and improve communication across the prison, including the IEP system. We believe that communication in particular has noticeably improved: for example, prisoners are now addressed by their full name - usually prefixed by "Mister". In the pre-Covid days, when a lockdown was implemented (perhaps because of a serious incident), notes were distributed to prisoners in their cells to explain why and how long the disruption to work or meal times was likely to last. This plays a large part in keeping the prison calm and orderly.

Our frequent observations of staff-prisoner interaction suggest a high level of professionalism. Difficult prisoners are dealt with consistently (vitaly important – grievances here can fester for years) and with the minimum of confrontation possible in the circumstances. There are, admittedly, too many young and inexperienced staff who lack "jail craft" - the ability to spot trouble coming and to defuse and rechannel complaints and anger – but the senior managers are alert to this and endeavour to disperse experienced officers throughout the prison.

One huge contribution to this state of affairs is the programme of Keyworking. HMP Stocken was the top performing prison in the UK for July 2019 measured by percentage of prison officers designated as Keyworkers and engaging with prisoners, achieving the national target of 74%. Behind this reassuring statistic lies a great deal of dedicated work from prison staff (going right up to the Number 1 Governor) who meet their allocated prisoners on a weekly basis. For most officers, the caseload is c.7. Records are properly kept of successful or of missed meetings,

in the latter case with reasons why given in full – often, staff are redeployed at short notice, or perhaps ill or on annual leave. Tentatively, we believe that a detectable drop in Applications to the IMB is due to the keyworker system, where complaints and questions can be settled much more quickly in a face-to-face context. Of course, the scheme has to be constantly monitored and, as it were, refreshed: prisoners sometimes complain that they have nothing to say to their keyworker week by week, yet the meeting still has to take place. Nevertheless, the system currently appears to work well.

#### **5.4 Equality and diversity**

At their reception, arrivals are asked whether they feel they belong to any protected characteristic group. These are groups explicitly protected in law from discrimination. The ones most relevant to men's prisons are race, religion or belief, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership. The last two categories have not yet proved relevant to HMP Stocken. Race includes a number of subgroups, such as Traveller/Gypsy/Roma individuals. The prison appoints a number of prisoners to be equality reps – i.e., someone a prisoner can go to in order to discuss their position, especially if they feel they have been discriminated against. One characteristic which has become more openly acknowledged is sexual orientation, with an increasing number of new prisoners being willing to declare that they are gay or bisexual. One such told an IMB member that he felt safer in Stocken than in any other prison where he had been.

The last report by HMI Prisons (pub. May 2019) commented that Stocken did little to promote or monitor what is encapsulated in the word Equalities. The IMB has made greater efforts to assess these aspects of prison life, especially following the appointment of an Equalities leader, and, as mentioned, an Engagement officer. There have been a number of successful initiatives. A monthly Veterans breakfast has been introduced, attended by representative of outside groups and people serving in the Armed Forces. After a slightly tentative initial reaction from prisoners, this has now become very much welcomed. The possibility of housing veterans together on one wing has been discussed. There have been reprises of LGBT+ and Black History months, though we have not received significant feedback on these and there seems a danger that they may become gestures rather than substantive contributions to integration and understanding. On the other hand, a month of celebrations of Traveller/Gypsy/Roma history and culture was an undoubted success. Despite the inclusion of these three groups under one category, there is often mutual suspicion and some tension, but the participants did feel that they had all gained a good deal from the experience and that barriers had begun to come down. Otherwise, forums for protected groups meet quarterly and the respective mentors contribute very usefully to these meetings.

Prisoners can make a formal complaint of discrimination on a form called a Dirf. The set-up to deal with these complaints is in our opinion still not sufficiently reliable or well developed. For one thing, the wings are not equipped with separate boxes which would serve to guarantee the integrity and confidentiality of the process. Second, a significant number are not really about discrimination at all – a prisoner may complain that he has been turned down for a position of responsibility because he is black or Muslim when in reality he lacks important qualifications for the job. The target period in which Dirfs should be dealt with is regularly exceeded, sometimes by

weeks. In conversation with staff, we have been told that a small number of Dirfs have been upheld (i.e. the prisoners concerned have indeed been subject to discrimination) but that it will take time to change certain attitudes among a minority of officers.

We feel that this is an area needing close attention, otherwise the whole process risks falling into disrepute. To that end, we have singled out Equality for thematic monitoring once we can return to normal duties.

### **5.5 Faith and pastoral support**

The Chaplaincy is led by an Anglican priest. He has regular support from a second minister, an RC chaplain, and an imam. There are additionally many other faiths covered – Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Mormon, Pagan, Rastafarian, Sikh and so on. Although it is not always easy to recruit suitable personnel in this area, the chaplain has by and large managed very successfully. Friday afternoon prayers for the Muslim community is an area of pressing concern: the multi-faith room used is inadequate to contain all those wishing to worship. The long-term plan is to use the vacated kitchen space to install gym equipment, and on Friday afternoons use the gymnasium as a substitute for the multi-faith room. The Covid crisis has necessarily postponed this change.

Bereavement is an area where the chaplaincy plays a very important role. Prisoners are able, with permission (not always granted), to attend the funerals of immediate family only, though in this day and age we might expect the prison service to recognise that many men are raised by their grandparents, or uncles and aunts. The Covid crisis has prompted a move to virtual attendance, where a prisoner can participate to some extent via a laptop, and this has already happened on two occasions.

In general, the area of faith is one which gives rise to very few applications to the IMB.

### **5.6 Incentives and earned privileges**

The IEP system – Incentives and Earned Privileges – is a means of rewarding good behaviour and disincentivising poor behaviour. Prisoners are assigned to the categories Basic, Standard or Enhanced, depending on behaviour and co-operation. There are very few Basic status prisoners (<1% - and in the Covid crisis, none); more than half (c. 60%) are Enhanced, allowing them to have a TV, their own clothes, etc. A new IEP policy was introduced in 2019 but we could not detect any effective difference in outcomes. Our main criticism is that too many officers control behaviour by putting a man on report (leading to disciplinary action), rather than an IEP warning (several of which would lead to loss of privileges). Also, the IEP policy is supposed to allow for reward and encouragement but we are not convinced that staff always take the opportunity to use the system in this way.

### **5.7 Complaints**

Complaints are generally dealt with efficiently. The Chairman samples 10% every month to assess the quality of the replies provided. A new complaints form was introduced in the autumn containing much more guidance for both the prisoner and the responder, emphasising to the latter that replies must be personal and

comprehensive. In the past, there have been too many which were terse, blunt and unhelpful, but this has certainly improved.

## **5.8 Property**

As ever, the Board received more Applications on this topic than any other, especially relating to transfers from one prison to another. All too often, having followed the trail and come up against a blank wall, we are forced to recommend that the prisoner claims compensation from the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO). Not only is this a bureaucratic and very slow process (itself indicative of the huge volume of cases dealt with annually), but there are many losses which cannot be fully compensated – personal memorabilia such as photos and letters, for example, cannot always be replaced and no amount of money will make up for their loss. Furthermore, the cost to the prison service is enormous (over half a million pounds for property-related loss or damage last year).

It seems to the Board that a great deal of the blame for this belongs to the companies which collect and transport property. Their T&Cs also seem to give them carte blanche: in one case we dealt with, the company – initially very helpful – finally accepted that the property had gone missing while in its care but then pointed to the terms and conditions which stated that the prisoner had 7 days in which to lodge a complaint. This is utterly unrealistic and manifestly oppressive. We strongly urge the prison service to scrutinise future contracts more carefully, so that transporting firms are incentivised to take more care of the property of prisoners who are not in a position to follow up mistakes and incompetence.

Our monitoring of the property-handling process at Stocken is, on the other hand, reassuring. Mistakes are sometimes made but investigation is prompt and record-keeping is excellent. We have always found that staff in Stores and Reception are most obliging when we have to contact them.

## **6. Health and wellbeing**

### **6.1 Physical healthcare**

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) conducted an inspection in December 2019 and were generally satisfied with the current set-up and with the significant progress made since the last inspection. This, like the HMIP report, had made important criticisms of the pharmacy arrangements – the checking of stocks of controlled drugs and record-keeping in particular. The CQC made four recommendations, covering follow-ups of DNAs (“did not attend” - i.e. missed appointments), drug administration, review of care plans for prisoners with wounds, and a greater commitment to communication with and support of staff.

The IMB’s observations have focused on staffing levels, DNAs and communication with prisoners, waiting times, and remote consultations.

Staffing still relies heavily – and at times very heavily – on agency staff. Fortunately, many such staff are familiar with the prison and several have worked there on a “temporary” basis for many months. The department is seemingly always coping but is perpetually stretched.

DNAs have been a puzzling problem. Before the Covid crisis, they ran at about 17-20%. Some of these were caused by prison procedures (such as roll calls), sometimes by lack of communication by wing staff, sometimes by prisoners deciding that they were no longer in need of care, and so on. We cannot fault the health provider in its efforts to analyse copious data to try and pin down the main causes. Nor can we criticise their practical efforts, such as a poster campaign, and telephoning the wings to check that prisoners had been issued with appointment slips. However, the fact remains: analysis shows no patterns (except that unemployed prisoners are more likely to fail to attend), and that practical interventions appear not to shift the numbers by more than a percentage point at best.

Waiting times are comparable with those experienced by the general public and have generally fallen slightly during the reporting year. They are typically 6 weeks or a little less for specialties such as dentistry, physiotherapy and ophthalmology. GP waiting times were down to 2 weeks by the end of the reporting year, though they too had been longer earlier in the year. Urgent cases are prioritised. If waiting times drift upwards, it is usual for additional sessions to be provided until the surge is under control. The introduction of remote consultations with a GP or a specialist has been fairly successful, though even here DNAs occur. The prison is charged by the private sector provider regardless. During the Covid crisis, dental treatment (barring pain relief) has been suspended, as in the outside world.

We had cause to raise a serious issue with the prison authorities concerning a prisoner whose medication needed to be ordered from an outside agency. Because the ordering was done rather late in the week, his drugs were not available until after the weekend. This left him in a very vulnerable position. The medical agencies must take on board the fact that, although medical services beyond the prison walls are much less likely to be available at weekends, prisons are a 24/7 operation.

Smoking cessation classes continued (until the crisis) and dental care advice was extended to prisoners’ children. Chlamydia screening is ongoing and the Care team

will be resuming their campaign to eliminate Hepatitis C when things return to normal.

Staff attend Reception of new prisoners though they found this challenging during the time the prison was filling up its new wing because of the unusually high number of incomers. We were very impressed by the contributions from all health and mental health staff to weekly multi-disciplinary meetings (MDMs) to discuss a prisoner on food refusal. That the prisoner was eventually willing to resume eating after a long period of being only a few steps from death is a tribute to all staff concerned, whether health professionals, officers, wing managers or governors.

In the early days of the Pandemic we were astonished by the case of a prisoner sent to Peterborough hospital as an emergency case who was put on a Covid wing and on return to Stocken had to be placed in isolation since he had tested positive for the virus. This was not in any way the fault of the prison, of course.

## **6.2 Mental healthcare**

This is a section which suffers from more understaffing and worse accommodation, compared with physical healthcare. To a great extent, the difficulties in attracting staff reflect the same problems experienced in the rest of society. However, the prison population holds a much higher percentage of people with mild and severe mental problems than the general population. Stocken is no exception to this observation. Therefore, we remain very concerned at the consequences of understaffing. (It is very rare for an ACCT review or a Segregation review to lack the appropriate Mental Health (MH) worker, but it has been known to happen.) This leads to overloading of MH staff and, we know, to a reluctance to work long-term in the prisons sector. Accommodation for staff is largely in Portakabins at the back of the health care block. These are cold in winter and too hot in summer, and the paths connecting them are unsafe.

Despite the foregoing, mental health care at Stocken has done about as well as can be expected. There is a psychologist on the staff, which is not a given in many prisons. Some of the long-term problems result from a lack of places at secure mental facilities. This means a small number of prisoners who are inclined to self-harm severely need constant watch and, in a recent case, several emergency trips to hospitals. Prison is simply an inappropriate environment for them, and they necessitate a substantial commitment of scarce resources to try to keep them safe.

This year, MH introduced a drop-in session on Friday afternoons. Initially, prisoners needed to apply to attend, mainly so that numbers could be managed effectively. Before the crisis, this had been relaxed so that prisoners needed only to inform wing staff that they wished to go, and (if MH had capacity) would be issued with a movement slip. This is a welcome initiative and seems to be working well, lightening some of the burden during the rest of the week.

DNAs run rather higher in MH – up to 30% of appointments are not kept. The department has moved away from its policy of an automatic discharge when 3 DNAs in a row occurred, and there is now a follow-up appointment on the wing to find out why his may have happened. In addition, the prisoner's keyworker is contacted to try to achieve more joined-up care.

### **6.3 Social care**

Only one prisoner currently receives social care; a second man (who is probably eligible) has declined it.

### **6.4 Exercise, time out of cell, gym**

The gym is hugely popular, very well run, and overstretched as a result. It is hoped that the vacated old kitchen area will have weights equipment installed to try to relieve the pressure – especially now that the population is markedly higher than in May 2019. The number of weight training sessions has been cut from 3 to 2 to manage this, but otherwise it is business as usual. The new wing's precincts have some impressive exercise equipment, and other wings also often have some outdoor facilities.

In normal circumstances, prisoners get about 10 hours a day out of their cells, though Serious Incidents, staff training days, intelligence-led searches and so on can all reduce this. Men who are employed typically work 9 sessions per week (5 mornings, 4 afternoons), with Friday afternoons as free association time. Of course, this pattern had to be abandoned when the Covid lockdown was implemented. At the end of the reporting period, (late March – April) prisoners were able to collect lunch, make a phone call (originally 15 minutes, now 30), and shower. In other words, about one hour in every 24. Otherwise, they remained locked down.

### **6.5 Drug rehabilitation**

Prisoners arriving at Stocken who are already addicted to drugs or alcohol are identified during the reception process. They are then strongly urged to co-operate with their detox programmes. Prisoners who show good progress are transferred where possible to I-wing (the recovery wing). "Inclusion" is the name given to the prison's programme to identify and help prisoners trying to lose their addictions. Inclusion is now part of MPFT (Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust).

In November 2019 Inclusion staff working on reducing substance misuse had an active caseload of 314 which is the maximum that staffing allows. They are running the Relapse prevention course every week leading up to Christmas, which is 6 sessions in a week for up to 12 men. An external health needs assessment was done in October and, compared to 5 similar prisons, Stocken has the highest reduction of methadone use, 87%, and is seen as an example of best practice across the estate.

### **6.6 Soft skills**

There are many examples. We commend the governor for his efforts to give prisoners a more interesting environment and provide opportunities for creative engagement with families, charities and with the general public. The very active and impressive Art department, part of the Education hub, has enabled the many furlongs of corridors to be decorated with some first-rate pictures. There is a slate-engraving enterprise where members of staff and others can order slates bearing attractive artwork. There are two bicycle charities which the two refurbishment workshops supply. Fathers Inside is a group which encourages prisoners to maintain a strong connection with their children, as does Storybook Dads, operated by the Library, enabling prisoners to continue to be a part of their children's lives (see also section 7.1). Many prisoners act as Listeners, Mentors, Equality representatives,

Orderlies and so on. We think this whole area is one of the prison's greatest strengths.

## **7. Progression and resettlement**

### **7.1 Education, library**

The education department is operated by PeoplePlus, who are also responsible for most of the workshops. The contract was transferred from Milton Keynes College a month before the start of the current reporting year, but we have seen no reason to revise our consistently high opinion of the efficiency and professionalism of managers and staff, or the achievements of prisoners. The quality of teaching and learning is good with most teaching staff at grade 2 or above. The department continued to do what it could during the first two months of lockdown, though this was obviously quite limited.

The Art classes are a particular strength. The quality of output from both groups is highly impressive and much of it decorates the walls of corridors and offices at Stocken. Six (out of 12) pieces of work were sold at a recent art exhibition in Oxford. Artwork produced by the Academy has been used by the High Sheriff of Rutland this year for her Christmas card, and has also been used in Christmas cards available to prisoners to send. Sixty men are involved in the Academy during the year, with 12 participating at any one time.

There are usually some 14 mentors. Two are allocated to each class. There is a mentor who gives 1:1 support tailored to students' individual needs, such as autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and language barriers; he can also offer learning support on the Wings. One mentor is a qualifications mentor who recruits for classes and works closely with administration.

There is a four-day "bridging" course for groups of up to 12 learners to provide positive activity for new entrants to Stocken whilst their job options are being processed. A notable commitment is that all residents, regardless of role or position, will have access to meaningful qualifications.

The Library is a well-resourced facility headed by an experienced and committed librarian. In addition, there are part-time staff and seven orderlies. As well as a substantial collection of reference, non-fiction and fiction works, prisoners can and do borrow DVDs and audiobooks. The library is also the centre for Storybook Dads, where prisoners record themselves, either audio only or increasingly with visuals too, in order to keep a connection with their children. The Shannon Trust is active in support of improved prisoner literacy. A large volume of newspapers and magazines is processed every morning and distributed to the wings. One issue the prison will need to confront in the longer term is that the technologies accessible to relatives on the outside are well ahead of the technologies permitted in the jail. In other words, CDs are no longer the medium for recording and even DVDs are on the way out as streaming takes over. Memory sticks would be another preferred way of transferring files, but they are not permitted. Nor can prisoners access the Internet directly. So, for example, job searches must be done by library staff on their behalf. Although prisoners can work with IT in the education department, we feel the prison service needs to find a way to avoid disadvantaging long-term prisoners who will one day re-join a world which has moved on, technologically speaking.

The library is open every weekday, morning and afternoon, but evening and weekend closures seem to us to be quite frequent, which is regrettable. This is due to a shortage of staff at these times. Unfortunately (but unavoidably), operational needs take first priority.

The library is also well integrated into the Education department's courses.

## **7.2 Vocational training, work**

As at February 3rd 2020, 94 prisoners out of 913 (10.3%) were neither working nor in education. Of these 94, 21 were not available for work (e.g. because retired), 18 were long-term sick, 2 were short-term sick, and 20 were classified as being on work refusal. The remaining 33 were available for work but not yet assigned. On the same date, there were by our count 65 vacancies across the prison. Since no system is capable of instantaneous matching of men to vacancies, we regard this as a reasonable (and, for any given prisoner, probably temporary) mismatch.

The workshops teach bicycle refurbishment, motor vehicle repair, plumbing & tiling, waste reclamation and management, the production of camouflage netting, bricklaying, painting & decorating, catering, motorcycle repair, gardens and grounds, and laundry work. In addition, the private sector company DHL operate two workshops which assemble and pack the weekly canteen orders on behalf not just of Stocken but of a large number of other establishments as well. There is also a workshop where prisoners make up breakfast packs. A small number of those in catering work in the prison "mess", known as Stockpot, giving them an opportunity to interact with all grades of staff in the prison. Almost all workshops offer qualifications of some kind - the exception is camouflage netting, though even here prisoners can earn a Passport to Work, which records their commitment, attitude and self-discipline. Work of this kind is necessary since many prisoners have little or no experience of regular work, and a workshop which demands the disciplines of turning up on time, being co-operative, making a useful contribution etc. is valuable training for such prisoners but the work itself is unrewarding. It would be good to see more men able to move on to more challenging work which would bring qualifications useful on release. Having said that, several workshops (bricks, painting, and motor vehicles as examples) offer Level 3 qualifications requiring much study and substantial exams. On the whole, the Reducing Reoffending staff continually monitor their practices and the possibilities for expansion and innovation of workshops offering relevant, valuable qualifications which will assist men to gain employment when released.

A number of workshops engage with society outside the prison, notably bike repair, with finished bicycles distributed to charities and other worthy causes. Grounds & Gardens produce hanging baskets and bird boxes for sale. Waste management actively seeks contracts with supermarkets and other waste generators.

We do have criticisms, however: attendance and punctuality. To take one workshop as an illustration, on our six separate visits during the year, there were the following number of prisoners not present (out of c. 43): 15, 7, 8, 10, 13, and 15. We are pleased to report that supervisors invariably chase up the reasons for absence and 9

times out of 10 the explanation is legitimate. Prisoners may be at medical appointments, short-term sick, attending an adjudication, undergoing a mandatory drugs test (MDT) and so on—but even so, this is disruptive of the workshop's rhythm, to say the least. It also absorbs a good deal of the supervisor's time. Our figures suggest that the most rewarding work suffers less than the average, but this probably reflects the calibre of the prisoners working there.

Punctuality is another issue, one criticised heavily both by HMIP and by us in the past. Throughout the year, both Board members and supervisors have bemoaned the tendency for prisoners to dawdle on their release from their wings. It is undoubtedly a spatially very extended site, with Newton wing particularly distant. We believe that a more determined use of the IEP system could help workshops and the education department to improve productivity and reduce wasted staff time.

However, despite the above defects, we find time and again that most prisoners are enthusiastic and co-operative. They could do with better careers advice, and more opportunities to suggest innovations (e.g., the motor vehicle crew want to learn the diagnostic computer skills necessary in a real-world garage). But overall Stocken is doing a reasonably good job in this area.

During lockdown, several workshops continued to operate, albeit with reduced numbers because of social distancing requirements. These included DHL, the laundry, kitchens, breakfast packs and waste management.

### **7.3 Offender management, progression**

Stocken continues to integrate the recent introduction of Offender Management in Custody (OMiC) with older management systems. The introduction of keyworkers (see 5.3 above) was an integral part of OMiC and this seems to have been highly successful. Numbers of Prison Offender Managers (POMs) and Probation Officers (PrOs) are variable but slightly better than in the previous reporting year, while still not being up to the desirable level. Apart from the day-to-day challenges of organising transfers to other prisons and receiving new prisoners, the Offender Management Unit (OMU) has been giving its attention to

- ◆ clearing the backlog of Offender Assessment System reports (OASys);
- ◆ embedding its Care Leavers Programme (designed to address the particular needs of prisoners who have spent much of their upbringing in care);
- ◆ continued monitoring of keyworking;
- ◆ much more diligent assessment of the public protection issues surrounding prisoners nearing release.

Her Majesty's Inspectors criticised Stocken particularly on the last of these. External (prison service) monitoring of Stocken's progress is generally satisfied with the prison's action plans and progress in achieving targets.

The expansion of the prison when Newton wing opened and was gradually filled caused a bulge in the backlog of OASys reports, but the population has now stabilised and numbers awaiting completion are down to manageable levels. We

said last year, and we will say it again, that remitting prisons (especially Locals) have virtually abandoned the completion of OASys reports, leaving the receiving prisons to write them. This cause both staffing and financial strain which is unnecessary. (We note in passing that the physical facilities for OMU staff are increasingly inadequate following the significant rise in Stocken's population, with lack of storage space for records, lack of natural daylight in offices, and a generally cramped feel.)

There are no Releases on Temporary Licence (RoTL), following instructions from the Regional Director. Some Home Detention Curfew (HDC) releases occur but are a very small proportion of overall releases.

A number of prisoners are required to undertake courses as part of their sentence plan. The three most commonly run at Stocken are Thinking Skills (TSP), Kaizen (targeted at prisoners who are sentenced for violent or sexual offences, and who present a high risk to the public), and Resolve (aimed at violent offenders). The Board is not altogether happy with the provision of these: Staff shortages or rapid turnover and the delays which then result from the need to train replacements have had an adverse impact on the sentence progression of certain prisoners whose potential release date is therefore postponed. The number of training places, which is not Stocken's responsibility, seems too limited, adding to the delays.

One of the Board's major concerns is the length of time it takes to transfer prisoners who have been recategorised. We referred earlier to the problems arising when prisoners are recategorised to Cat B (see the section on the SU, 5.2). Also of great concern is the lack of capacity in the open prison section of the estate which radically delays the transfer of Category D prisoners. At any given time, Stocken has around 60 prisoners waiting to be transferred.

A further issue in this context is that many transfers to Cat D seem to be arranged on a personal basis, where governors in OMU or Safer Custody "call in" favours or reach informal agreements with personnel in the appropriate position of power. While the Board approves of any arrangement which speeds up the transfer of prisoners to their appropriate prison, the haphazard, ad hoc system currently operated cannot be ideal. Probably the largest cause for complaints to IMB members as we walk round the prison is from prisoners awaiting transfer to Cat D. (We do not record statistics on verbal applications; written apps relating to sentence planning, recategorisation etc. have, however, doubled compared with last year.) The time lag for transfer seems to be about 60 days. It is a source of constant anxiety, resentment and anger. When a prisoner has worked hard to reform himself, he often finds it incomprehensible that he is still unable to progress.

#### **7.4 Family contact**

With the expansion of the prison's population, an additional half-day visits session on a Wednesday morning has been added, giving a total of 7 per week. It has been suggested that the extra session would be better placed on a Friday, bearing in mind the difficulties people frequently have in reaching this remote, rural establishment. There are also family days to allow prisoners more time with their children and partners and these seem to work very well.

Provision for visits is good, and our feedback from families regarding ease of booking, the reception area, security procedures before entry, the availability of a bistro-type refreshment area, the possibilities for young children to be occupied, etc.

is almost always positive. Lincolnshire Action Trust (LAT) have responsibility for the bulk of these arrangements (but not security or booking procedures), and their performance throughout the year has been excellent.

One complaint from families has been that visits start at 13:45 according to the prison website, but the official line is that they start at 14:45. This seems to have resulted from criticisms by HMIP that visits rarely started on time (which was officially 13:45), and their insistence that prisoners must get at least an hour. It seems that the prison has responded by putting the official start time back to 14:45, rather like a train operator altering the timetable to avoid penalties for lateness. Nevertheless, in practice most visits do last significantly longer than 1 hour.

Telephone and mail contact: the new wing has in-cell telephony, and the Board feels strongly that the prison service should make every effort to extend this facility to all prisoners in Stocken. During the lockdown period, as in-person visits were suspended, the single largest cause of conflict between prisoners and staff has been over access to and time allowed on telephone calls to family (evidenced by the daily briefing sheet). We received some complaints during the year that the cost of phone calls at Stocken was higher than at some other prisons, but this has been denied, and we have had conflicting official responses to this question. Mail is scanned and personal mail generally photocopied as part of the policy to reduce the possibility of drugs entering the prison via that route (see section 4.6).

## **7.5 Resettlement planning**

Stocken is not a resettlement prison. In theory, prisoners nearing release should have 26 weeks of preparation at prisons equipped and funded for that purpose, but throughout the year a number of prisoners are released directly from Stocken. This year, 131 prisoners were released. Rather less than half (61, 47%) of these are authorised by the Parole Board, and in general those prisoners will have had appropriate preparation: they will have accommodation to go to, access to a bank account, access to benefits, initial transport funding and strict arrangements regarding future contact with the probation service. Two were deported and three transferred to secure mental health facilities. The remaining 70 (53%), however, are likely to have had a very variable experience in this regard. LAT (see previous section) do a great deal of excellent work with prisoners who have multiple needs, caseloads permitting. But prisoners who have just one problem—such as nowhere to live - do not have the same safety net and we fear that a small number are likely to reoffend or be recalled. Statistics here are difficult to come by since we have no oversight of the world beyond the prison gates. However, we believe all men released directly from Stocken during the two months of lockdown covered by this report had accommodation to go to. No prisoners were released under the Early Release scheme during this period.

## 8. The work of the IMB

### Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	20
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	13
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	15
Total number of visits to the establishment	694
Total number of segregation reviews attended	n/a

## Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>
B	Discipline, including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	<b>29</b>	<b>20</b>
C	Equality	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	<b>17</b>	<b>16</b>
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	<b>34</b>	<b>20</b>
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	<b>11</b>	<b>15</b>
F	Food and kitchens	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	<b>36</b>	<b>23</b>
H1	Property within this establishment	<b>27</b>	<b>29</b>
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	<b>67</b>	<b>72</b>
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>
I	Sentence management, including HDC, release on temporary licence, parole, release dates, recategorisation	<b>19</b>	<b>41</b>
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	<b>37</b>	<b>31</b>
K	Transfers	<b>28</b>	<b>42</b>
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system	<b>n/a</b>	<b>0</b>
	Total number of applications	<b>333</b>	<b>329</b>



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