

Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP/YOI Chelmsford

**For reporting year
1 September 2019 – 31 August 2020**

Published December 2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introductory sections

Section	Topic	Page
1	Statutory role of the IMB	3
2	Executive summary	4
3	Description of the prison	7

Evidence sections

4	Safety	8
5	Equality and fairness	10
6	Segregation/Care and separation unit	11
7	Accommodation	13
8	Healthcare (including mental health and social care)	15
9	Education and other activities	16
10	Work, vocational training and employment	18
11	Resettlement preparation	19

The work of the Board

12	Board statistics	22
13	Applications to the Board	23
	Glossary	24

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 or centre is situated.

The Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) 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 they have 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

The Board acknowledges the efforts of the Governor and senior management team in what was a very difficult year, the second six months of which were spent in lockdown because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Not a single prisoner was infected by the virus while at Chelmsford, but this came at the cost of a regime so restrictive that it would not be countenanced in normal times. In accordance with national instructions, new prisoners spent their first 14 days in quarantine on B wing, before being moved to one of the other wings, where most of them spent 23 hours a day in a shared cell. Social visits were suspended completely for almost three months, until mid-June, when virtual visits were introduced, with limited physical visits restarting at the end of July. The gym and library were closed, no education classes ran, workshops were closed and very little work was available. Preparation for release also suffered because many of the people from external agencies such as Nacro and Jobcentre Plus were not in the prison (although Nacro returned after three months). The Board itself was absent from the prison for the first four months of lockdown, making it difficult to deal with prisoners' applications and for monitoring to take place.

Having said all that, steps were taken by the prison to make life more bearable for the prisoners in its care. For example, all prisoners had a television and were allowed to make more telephone calls; they were compensated for not being able to do paid work; reading material, puzzles, distraction packs, self-help books and education materials were made available to all who wanted them; and officers with specific responsibility for monitoring prisoners' welfare were stationed on the wings. The chaplaincy is also to be commended for continuing to deliver meaningful support to all prisoners, while operating on significantly reduced numbers.

The effects of COVID-19 should not be allowed to overshadow some of the good progress made during our reporting year:

- There was a reduction in the number of incidents of violence and self-harm, and the use of force, during the first half of the year compared with the previous year. There was a sharp increase at the start of lockdown but this subsequently reduced to pre-lockdown levels.
- The presence of more experienced and better trained staff is thought to have helped in the above.
- The introduction of a 'youth council', to give a voice to the under-25s (who make up about 22% of the prison population) appeared to have an immediate effect on the behaviour of that group – notably in levels of violence and compliance.
- The previous year's efforts to get more prisoners to education and work continued, and the externally provided vocational training continued to take place.
- The number of officers deployed as key workers increased, as did the number of prisoners to whom they were allocated (although the prison remains a long way from meeting its own targets in this regard).
- Refurbishment work which had started in the previous year was completed and has made for a better environment in all but one of the wings.

However, the Board had major concerns about:

- the poor condition of A-wing – in particular, the segregation unit: this wing needs major refurbishment to make it fit for purpose. (At the time of writing, we have been told that funding has been allocated and tenders returned.)

- overcrowding: 288 of the 690 prisoners are in shared cells, which is in conflict with the requirements of decency and respect, and is in contravention of the United Nations standard minimum rules for the treatment of prisoners.
- the lack of permanent accommodation for prisoners on release: towards the end of our reporting year, just 28% left with an offer of accommodation.
- maintenance: the government-owned facilities management company, Gov Facility Services Limited (GFSL), is not sufficiently proactive, with the result that want of servicing and maintenance too often leads to the failure of essential and costly equipment. This is of particular concern in the kitchen.
- equality: this area was not given a sufficiently high priority. It is acknowledged that 'equalities' is a regular agenda item at other meetings (for example, segregation monitoring and review group (SMARG), safer custody and mental health) but the overarching focus on equality was reduced when the head of equalities role was added to that of the head of safer prisons. In addition, the equalities sub-group of the senior management team, which is supposed to meet on a two-monthly basis, held its last meeting in April 2019.
- the use of healthcare beds to house prisoners whose mental health problems are such that they would be better served in a different type of institution.
- There were three deaths in custody during the year. The Prisons and Probation Ombudsman's finding on one of these was that, when assessing whether the prisoner should be under observation, staff were guided too much by the prisoner's presentation on the day of admission and not enough by his known risk factors, a criticism made in relation to a death in custody in the previous year as well.

Despite these concerns, the Board continued to be impressed by the care, professionalism and dedication shown by individual staff and members of the prison's senior management team in a very challenging environment. It is clear to the Board that many of the failings mentioned in this report were not the fault of HMP Chelmsford but were attributable to government policy, which has starved the Prison Service of resources over a period of years.

TO THE MINISTER

We urge the minister:

- to make every effort to eliminate overcrowding, which is in conflict with the requirements of decency and respect and is in contravention of the United Nations standard minimum rules for the treatment of prisoners
- to ensure that the funding allocated for the refurbishment of A wing, including the segregation unit, is retained
- to work with other government agencies to ensure that IS91 prisoners (those detained by the immigration authorities) are informed of the intention to deport at the earliest possible moment, not at the end of their term, which inevitably means that they are detained beyond the end of their sentence
- to exert influence to ensure the provision of suitable permanent accommodation for prisoners upon release, so that no prisoner ends up on the street
- to exert influence to ensure that the prison is not used to house people whose mental health problems are such that other institutions are more appropriate.

TO THE GOVERNOR

We urge the Governor:

- to continue to take steps to reduce the levels of violence, self-harm, bullying, drug taking and drug smuggling
- to make purposeful activity full time, and to make it difficult for convicted prisoners not to attend, so that they get the maximum opportunity to make themselves employable upon release
- to ensure that the equalities committee is given sufficient resources, and that it meets two-monthly
- to ensure that offender supervisors and key workers are given the time to perform their vital role, rather than being allocated to other duties at a moment's notice.
- to continue to make every effort to maintain a clean and decent environment, including the elimination of accumulated rubbish around the exterior of the wings
- to ensure that when staff assess whether newly arrived prisoners should be put on an assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) document, they are guided not just by the prisoner's presentation on the day, but also by an understanding of the prisoner's known risk factors.

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

There has been a prison on this site in Chelmsford since 1819. The original prison (A–D wings) was built on the traditional ‘spokes of a wheel’ design, with three storeys.

Two new residential units were added in 1996 (E and F wings), and a third (G wing) was opened in 2006. There are a variety of other facilities, including a 12-bed, 24-hour healthcare centre, educational facilities, a gym and artificial sports pitch, a multi-faith room, a library, a kitchen, a laundry, a recycling centre, a visitors centre and a variety of offices housing prison and agency staff.

The segregation unit is on A wing, and vulnerable prisoners have separate accommodation on G wing. E wing provides the drug and alcohol treatment programme, and B wing is the first-night wing and induction unit.

HMP/YOI Chelmsford is designated as a category B local prison serving local courts, and holds those who are sentenced, on remand or on trial. It holds adults and young adults, and some foreign national prisoners. The average length of stay of a prisoner is just a few weeks, which leads to a high churn, with transfers to and from court and other establishments each day.

At the start of the reporting year, the prison’s operational capacity was 750, but this was reduced to 690 in January 2020 to facilitate refurbishment work on E and F wings.

Castle Rock Group (CRG) was the healthcare provider throughout the year, PeoplePlus provided education services, and Sodexo was the community rehabilitation company that subcontracted the ‘through-the-gate’ contract to Nacro. GFSL was responsible for the maintenance of the prison.

Evidence sections 4 – 11

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.

Life in the prison changed drastically on 24 March 2020, when the prison went into lockdown, and where necessary the comments in sections 4 to 11 of this report have been split into pre- and post-lockdown periods, with the latter shown in italics for clarity.

4 SAFETY

Safety covers many aspects of prison life: efforts to reduce self-harm, and initiatives for reducing violence and minimising the need for use of force. Key workers are a crucial part in maintaining safety.

Self-harm

- Safer custody staff report that between 1 September 2019 and 29 February 2020 there were 25% more ACCTs opened than for the same period in the previous year. Less than 10% of incidents of self-harm were classed as first-time incidents (46 out of a total of 498).
- There was one self-inflicted death during this period.
- Improving access to psychological therapies (Mid Essex Psychological Therapies) provided support to prisoners, working closely with staff and holding group and individual counselling sessions.

Post-lockdown to year-end:

- *There was a small increase in open ACCTs and a 14% increase in self-harm incidents when compared with the same period in the previous year. This was attributed to increased isolation and a lack of work and education.*
- *There were two further deaths in custody, bringing the total for the year to three (the same total as in the previous year).*

Violence

- There was a small reduction in prisoner-on-prisoner violence for the period to the end of February 2020 when compared with the same period in the previous year.
- However, assaults by prisoners on staff showed a reduction of over 40%. Safer custody staff believe that this is because staff were better trained and more experienced than in the previous reporting year.

Post-lockdown to year-end:

- *At the start of the period, there was an immediate increase in violent incidents, but they gradually reduced to pre-lockdown levels. Assaults on prisoners totalled 142, compared with 163 in the period to lockdown. The number of assaults on staff, however, was higher, with 99 in post-lockdown, compared with 64 in the first six months of the reporting year. It took until August 2020 for assaults on*

staff to return to the pre-lockdown level. Most staff assaults were perpetrated by single prisoners.

Use of force

- There was a 20% reduction in the use of force in the period to 29 February compared with the same period in the previous year. The prison has suggested that this is attributable to the presence of more experienced and better trained staff, an improved environment following refurbishment work, a reduction in drug supply and demand, and the effect of consultation with the prison and youth councils.

Post-lockdown to year-end:

- *Use of force during the lockdown period was 18% higher than during the first six months of the reporting year, although only 10 of the additional 55 instances required full control and restraint; the rest were just guiding holds. Despite the increase in the second half of the year, the whole-year figure was 16% lower than for the previous year.*

Key workers

- Key work should make a significant contribution to reducing self-harm and violence. It was therefore encouraging that in the period to the end of February 2020, there was a 16% increase in the number of key workers allocated to prisoners, compared with the previous year, with 83% of prisoners having a key worker assigned.
- The number of key worker sessions was 32% higher than for the previous year.

Post-lockdown to year-end:

- *Although there was a nominal increase in the number of prisoners with assigned key workers, staff shortages meant that the focus was on the most vulnerable prisoners, with just 2% of the total population receiving key worker sessions.*

In summary:

The Board is pleased to note that, during the first half of the year, there was a reduction in violence and the use of force; there were only 46 first-time incidents of self-harm, out of a total of 498; and key worker performance improved on the previous year.

The Board is concerned that, during the period since lockdown, the number of self-harm incidents has increased, as has the number of assaults on staff. The level of use of force also increased in this period. This was probably an inevitable consequence of prisoners' extended periods of isolation with little purposeful activity.

5 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS

The prison has a duty to uphold the Equality Act 2010, which protects against discrimination, harassment and victimisation of protected groups, as well as promoting equality of opportunity.

The Board is concerned that:

- Although 'equalities' is a regular agenda item at a number of meetings (for example, SMARG, safer custody, mental health), the overarching focus on equality was reduced when the head of equalities role was added to that of the head of safer prisons. The equalities sub-group of the senior management team is supposed to meet on a two-monthly basis; the last meeting to be held was in April 2019.
- Although data monitoring shows a marked reduction in the number of discrimination incident report forms submitted, it is not clear how to interpret the reduction, and whether the process has been operating effectively. This was raised by the Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons inspection in 2018. It was noted in the equality action plan that looking into dirfs should be part of the role of wing equality and diversity representatives.
- It remains difficult for prisoners with mobility problems, particularly those in wheelchairs, to move around the prison unaided.
- Black, Asian and minority ethnic prisoners were significantly over-represented among adjudications, relative to the percentage of such prisoners in the prison's population

The Board is pleased to note that:

- The kitchens catered well for a range of diets, including kosher, halal, vegetarian and vegan.
- Efforts to boost the implementation of the equalities strategy were under way, including the recruitment of officers tasked with diversity and inclusion as part of their duties.

The Board is also pleased to note that, in June, the prison established a youth council, with a view to holding regular meetings to discuss what can be done to alleviate frustrations and make improvements for the under-25s, who account for about 22% of the total population. We have been told that this initiative has been well received, and statistics suggest some positive behavioural changes among this group. For example:

	June	July	August
Use of force	141	35	11
Adjudications	38	14	3
Violent incidents	42	11	0
Disobeying instructions	30	6	3

6 SEGREGATION/CARE AND SEPARATION UNIT

The segregation unit accommodates prisoners held in cellular confinement as a punishment following adjudication, and those who are moved from the normal wings in order to maintain good order and/or discipline (GOOD), or for their own safety. Many of the prisoners who are held in the unit are violent and/or vulnerable, and present considerable challenges to the officers who care for them. We continue to be impressed by the professionalism and dedication of these officers. However, their work is often made more difficult by the physical deficiencies and limitations of the building.

The Board is concerned that:

- As stated in reports from previous years, the physical condition of the segregation unit is poor:
 - The unit is housed in the oldest part of the prison, and although the interior is generally kept clean and tidy, for much of the period under review the exercise yard was very dirty and untidy, with large amounts of rubbish.
 - The unit is in poor physical condition. The cells are draughty and cold, and often out of order – mostly owing to prisoner action.
 - The wing office and the adjudication room are too small, cluttered and poorly furnished to facilitate the work of the officers, governors and other members of prison staff, and do not provide a sufficiently calm, quiet and private space for the very many adjudications, and GOOD and ACCT reviews that take place. Swapping around the wing office and the adjudication room made things better but conditions remained inadequate.
 - The ground floor lacks adequate drainage, and when cells are flooded by prisoners, and during 'dirty protests', waste flows out and quickly contaminates large areas of the unit, including the offices and servery. The only way for it to be removed is by sweeping it through the corridor to the exercise yard, making this area also unusable for long periods. The installation of adequate drainage and a quick and effective external method of turning off the water to individual cells is vital if disruption is to be minimised.
- While the prison, with the support of CRG, was making extensive efforts for a re-evaluation of one particular prisoner's condition and a transfer to a more appropriate institution, the prisoner in question was on an almost constant dirty protest, alternating between the segregation unit and healthcare centre, until at the end of February 2020 he went permanently to the healthcare centre. Despite the prison escalating this case to the court, the prisoner has not been transferred. We question whether prison – particularly the segregation unit – is an appropriate place for this prisoner.

The Board is, however, pleased to note that:

- The GOOD reviews, ACCT reviews and adjudications attended by Board members were found to be sensitively and appropriately managed, despite the limitations imposed by the physical condition of the segregation unit.
- The refurbishment of the segregation unit is now out to tender. We understand that the work will include individual isolation of water and electricity for each cell, drainage outside the cells, a change of furniture and installation of one trap toilets. Once these works are completed, many of the unsanitary and unacceptable conditions of the segregation unit will be resolved.

7 ACCOMMODATION

'Accommodation' includes cells, food, showers, maintenance, showers, toilets, serveries, regimes, kitchens and gym.

Maintenance

The Board is pleased to note that:

- In-cell fixtures and fittings, which are often damaged by prisoners and which had previously been in short supply, were more readily available.
- Most of the maintenance staff were directly employed by GFSL, leading to more consistent staff levels and reduced waiting times.

Prisoner accommodation

The Board is pleased to note that:

- Following on from the previous year's refurbishment of B, C and D wings, refurbishment of E and F wings was completed, resulting in a cleaner and, it is to be hoped, healthier environment on those wings.

However, the Board is concerned that:

- The prison is overcrowded: 288 of the 690 prisoners are in shared cells. All overcrowding is in conflict with the requirements of decency and respect, and is in contravention of the United Nations standard minimum rules for the treatment of prisoners, which state that: 'Where sleeping accommodation is in individual cells or rooms, each prisoner shall occupy by night a cell or room by himself or herself'.
- There was a serious problem with the supply and exchange of 'kit' (prisoners' clothing and bedding), with some wings waiting for up to four weeks for changes of kit. The Governor took action at the end of January 2020, with the provision of new kit and a much more stringent regime. We continue to monitor how well this system works.
- As reported in our last annual report, the long-promised installation of effective external screens to the windows of cells on E and F wings has still not been undertaken. The absence of such screens makes these wings susceptible to the ingress of drugs and other contraband; the wings are close to the perimeter, and, despite the extensive netting, throwovers still occur, and it is easy for prisoners to fish for them and pass them from cell to cell. Huge quantities of food waste and rubbish thrown out of the windows make it hard for prison staff to spot any unretrieved parcels, and the accumulation of food waste has attracted rats, which in turn has resulted in damage to the drains.

Regimes

The Board is pleased to note that:

- During the period to the end of February 2020, the regime allowed prisoners to access training, work and education from Monday to Thursday in the mornings and afternoons, and on Friday mornings. In addition, the wings ran domestic and

association periods, as well as access to fresh air. This regime was continued at weekends, with all units having morning or afternoon sessions of access to fresh air and association.

- In view of increased staffing (including the provision of detached staff), the prison had plans to make it possible for convicted prisoners to attend work and education full time, and for all prisoners to be out of their cells for half the day at weekends.

Post-lockdown to year-end:

- *B wing was designated as the quarantine wing, where prisoners spent the first two weeks of their time at Chelmsford in isolation, before being moved to a regular wing.*
- *On other wings, prisoners were locked in their cells for 23 hours a day, with 30 minutes out of cell for exercise and 30 minutes for 'domestics'. On each wing, the prisoners were split into 'bubbles', so the number mixing at any time was reduced, making it easier to maintain social distancing, thus reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission.*
- *The prison took steps to mitigate the effect of the restricted regime. For example, all prisoners had a television and were allowed to make more telephone calls; they were compensated for not being able to do paid work; reading material, puzzles, distraction packs, self-help books and education materials were made available to all who wanted them; and officers with specific responsibility for monitoring prisoners' welfare were stationed on the wings. The chaplaincy is also to be commended for continuing to deliver meaningful support to all prisoners, while operating on significantly reduced numbers.*
- *On the inpatients wing, where there are just 12 beds, the regime was not significantly different from that prior to the pandemic.*
- *The Board is pleased to note that there were no cases of COVID-19 among prisoners throughout the lockdown period.*

Kitchens

The Board is pleased to report that:

- The kitchen continued to supply prisoners with food of an acceptable quality and quantity, and it is worth noting that we received only three complaints about food during the period to the end of February 2020.
- Faith-based dietary preferences (for example, halal, kosher) were scrupulously catered for.

However, the Board is concerned that:

- For the first six months of the reporting year, GFSL had no proactive strategy for the repair, maintenance and replacement of key items of equipment. This meant that when equipment broke down, staff had to try to make do until replacement/repair took place, which sometimes took several months. However, since March, all kitchen equipment has been on a planned maintenance regime, although no discernible improvement was noticed.

8 HEALTHCARE (INCLUDING MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE)

CRG has been responsible for the provision of healthcare since 1 April 2019.

The Board is concerned that:

- During the period to the end of February 2020, healthcare services were the most frequent area of complaint to the Board, with 28% of applications received relating to healthcare issues. This was both significantly higher than in the previous year (18%) and significantly above the next most frequent area of complaint (property within the establishment, at 11%).
- *However, during the lockdown period, there have been only three healthcare-related applications – just 8% of the total – but whether this is because CRG has made progress, or whether it is simply because the lockdown regime made it easier for healthcare staff to manage prisoners’ needs, is hard to say.*
- Communicating effectively with healthcare managers was a challenge for the board, as CRG was not able to use the criminal justice secure email system.
- Some healthcare beds were being used as a ‘band aid’ solution to house medium- and long-term prisoners with mental health issues, for whom prison does not appear to be an appropriate location. CRG has been proactive in working with the wider mental health providers but it seems that a lack of investment in the community makes speedy assessment and transfer to a community secure unit difficult to achieve.
- Complaints from prisoners made using the wrong forms were simply returned by CRG for a resubmission on the correct form. CRG has since been working with the prison towards using correct documentation, so that healthcare complaints do not get mixed up with prison documents and data.
- The psychiatry provision of one person four days per week was a reduction from the three psychiatrists who attended as and when necessary with the prior healthcare contractor, thus ensuring readily available cover for absences.

The Board is, however, pleased to note that:

- CRG responded within an average of two days to prisoners who had submitted their healthcare complaints correctly.
- CRG has a funded plan to enable the GP and healthcare members to ring prisoners directly. This should reduce waiting times and improve upon the existing healthcare appointment process.

9 EDUCATION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

Education

'Education, training and employment' is one of the seven pathways which together comprise the prison's 2020 reducing reoffending strategy. Education services are provided by PeoplePlus, and are designed to equip prisoners with skills to improve their employment chances on release. Many prisoners enter the establishment with entry-levels E1–3 (the equivalent of primary school) levels of literacy and numeracy. PeoplePlus is funded to provide education from entry-level E1 up to and including L2 (the equivalent of GCSE).

The Board is pleased that:

- The prison was working hard to get those prisoners who should be in education into class. Teachers told us that wing staff were more proactive about getting prisoners to classes than had been the case in previous years.
- The previous year's improvement in the number of times that there were explanations for prisoner non-attendances was maintained.

The Board is concerned that:

- Over-allocation of spaces in anticipation of some non-attendance was routine, and attendance continued to be low – varying from 58% to 66%.

Library

The library service is provided by Essex County Council.

The Board is pleased that:

- The previous year's staffing difficulties were overcome and the library was fully staffed.

The Board is concerned that:

- There continued to be occasions when prison staff shortages or redeployments meant that prisoners' visits to the library were cancelled.

Gym

The gym is managed and run by prison staff, and sessions are provided to prisoners from all wings.

The Board is pleased that:

- 63% of Chelmsford's prisoners make use of the gym facilities, getting an average of 3.3 hours each week in the gym.

Post-lockdown to year-end:

- *There was no access to classroom-based education, the library or the gym. However, education packs were produced by PeoplePlus and made available, and taken up by around 70 prisoners. Other education resources were available on Wayout TV. Two prisoners were able to continue with their distance learning.*
- *PeoplePlus was running nearly all of the courses, giving learners the opportunity to study access courses which gave them the basics of the subjects. The intention*

was that when the classrooms re-open, prisoners will be able quickly and easily to gain qualifications once they have had some face-to-face tuition. PeoplePlus has been running English, mathematics, English for speakers of other languages, graphics, personal development, construction (theory), and painting and decorating (theory). Open University and distance learning courses were available to anyone of the right educational level.

- *Initial English and numeracy assessments restarted in August. At the end of our reporting year, 357 prisoners were waiting for their assessments*
- *To compensate for the library closure, books were donated by the library provider and by staff and others, and were made available to prisoners via safer custody staff. From the beginning of August, the library operated a quasi 'click and collect' system.*

Work, vocational training and employment are an important part of prison strategy to reduce reoffending.

The Board is concerned that:

- There were still too few activity places, and the amount of purposeful activity was not being maximised.
- The type of work available to vulnerable prisoners was more limited than for others, although a higher percentage of these individuals than other prisoners have work.
- Not all activities are formally accredited, and prisoners' progress and skills development were not sufficiently recognised.

The Board is pleased to note that:

- Attendance at work averaged 81%.
- The previous year's work to improve the availability of work continued. For example: the revised allocation process, vacancies displayed on Wayout TV, activity information given out via Insiders and prisoner information desk workers, new partnerships with component makers 'Gripit' and logistics company 'Woodlands Group', and a shift in focus by Jobcentre Plus from benefits to employment.
- Two-week roofing courses delivered by a local firm continued to run.
- 'Firebreak' courses continued to be delivered by the Fire Service.
- Accredited training continued to be delivered, with courses in construction and decorating, and industrial cleaning (delivered by PeoplePlus); health and safety in recycling (accredited by WAMITAB); and health and safety, and peer mentoring in the laundry (accredited by City and Guilds).

Post-lockdown to year-end:

- *The workshops and externally provided courses ceased and the only work available was on yards parties (rubbish removal, litter picking, and so on), in the kitchen (10 prisoners), in recycling (three prisoners), in cleaning (two prisoners per landing) and on each wing's meal serveries.*
- *The laundry, which had formerly been operated by vulnerable prisoners, was staffed by workshop instructors.*

Offender management unit (OMU)

It is the role of the OMU to supervise a prisoner's stay at the prison. Of crucial importance in this process is the offender supervisor, who works out the prisoner's sentence plan and liaises with their offender manager (previously known as 'probation officer') so that supervision can be seamless when the prisoner leaves prison. Within the context of the sentence plan, prisoners are then allocated a key worker, who is meant to meet with them regularly to support and mentor them, and advise on any issues of concern.

The Board is concerned that:

- The appeal process in cases of deportation remains long and unwieldy. Delays are built into the system because foreign national prisoners often do not know about deportation until just prior to release, and some are even detained under immigration powers on the day of release. In past reports, we have expressed our concerns about the significant numbers of prisoners (21 in the previous year) still being held after the expiry of their sentence.

The Board is pleased to note, however, that:

- At the beginning of the current reporting period, the prison reported that only three prisoners were still being detained under the relevant legislation (IS91). Although by the beginning of lockdown this number had increased to five, the Board is pleased to see that progress had been made.

The Board is concerned that:

- At the beginning of the reporting period, 12 prisoners were still being held under indeterminate sentences for public protection, and by the end of the period the number had increased to 16.

The Board is pleased to note that:

- Following our concerns in last year's report that staff were often called away at short notice for other duties, thus impeding their work, an independent review of the prison's population profile resulted in an agreement that five full-time-equivalent prison offender manager (POM) posts are to be filled once the prison is back in normal operation. The role of these POMs is a mix of prison officer and probation officer, and it is intended that they will work with the prisoners and their key workers to help fulfil the objectives of sentence plans and complete assessments/reports. A duty POM should be available every day to support all areas of the prison, and should be involved in ACCT, challenge, support and intervention plan, and GOOD reviews. The prison has told that all convicted prisoners will, in future, be allocated a POM (previously only those with a sentence of 12 months or more had a POM).

Resettlement

The Board acknowledges the substantial amount of effort and planning expended to produce a system designed to cover every aspect of a prisoner's journey, from the day he arrives in prison until the day of release.

It is acknowledged that the most crucial areas contributing to a prisoner's successful resettlement are accommodation; education, training and employment; and finance, benefit and debt.

Resettlement is a multi-agency undertaking, including Nacro and Jobcentre Plus.

Clearly, financial, housing and employment security are vital to help prisoners reintegrate into society once they leave prison.

The Board is pleased to note that:

- Prisoners are provided with resettlement information detailing the resettlement journey from first night in prison to release, and also receive newsletters which explain the profile of support available, recognise and celebrate success, and are intended to motivate prisoners to attend work, education and resettlement provision.

Accommodation on release

The Board is pleased to note that:

- Until lockdown, Nacro generally continued to provide support to prisoners who were being released, including offering a mentoring service and, when necessary, providing limited ongoing support immediately after release.
- The prison is part of the Essex Housing Partnership, with a memorandum of understanding focusing on influencing and improving outcomes in this area.

The Board is concerned that:

- During the first eight months of our reporting year, 60% of prisoners were released with an offer of accommodation. (We reported the same figure in the previous year.)
- We acknowledge that Nacro has only a limited influence on outcomes, but we remain concerned that prisoners were too often released onto the street, with the associated increased risk of reoffending.

Post-lockdown to year-end:

- *Nacro staff were in the prison on a very limited basis, with two members of staff attending in the mornings only. Prisoners have not been able to have face-to-face inductions, but Nacro tells us that all prisoners continued to receive the necessary paperwork, including information on how to access Nacro's services within the prison.*
- *Unfortunately, prisoners were unable to contact Nacro via the in-cell telephone system, but Nacro provided mobile phones for prisoners on discharge so that they could effectively liaise with and report to their supervising officer. Other contact was via the prison's internal post. Nacro believes that, as a result, a smaller percentage of prisoners were using their services, albeit those prisoners were possibly those in greatest need.*
- *A regrettable consequence was that the number of prisoners released with an offer of accommodation fell to 28% during May, June and July. (The figure for August was not available at the time of writing.)*

Work

The Board is concerned that:

- The staff of Jobcentre Plus, who, in normal times, are responsible for helping to prepare prisoners for release, with information about how to access benefits and, in the best circumstances, with a job offer, were not in the prison after it went into lockdown.
- Over the course of the year, only 22.5% of prisoners had a job to go to on release.

Visits

The visiting facility exists to help prisoners maintain relationships with friends and family. The visits hall is open plan and split into three distinct areas, where each category of prisoner may have visitors. These areas are clearly defined by the type of seating, the largest area being for 'enhanced' prisoners, a smaller area for 'standard' prisoners and a smaller area still for 'basic' prisoners.

The Board is concerned that:

- Not all visiting areas are fully utilised, with the seating area for basic prisoners often underused.

The Board is pleased to note that:

- Visitors generally seem positive about the visits process, and the Board receives few complaints about it.
- Facilities for families remain generally very good, particularly in the waiting areas, thanks mainly to the excellent work of the Ormiston Trust.

Post-lockdown to year-end:

- *Physical visits ceased when the prison went into lockdown, but 'Purple Visits' (a secure and dedicated video-calling platform specifically designed for the criminal justice system) started on 15 June, and physical visits restarted on a limited basis on 27 July (with a maximum of two adult visitors per prisoner, and a maximum of 14 prisoners at a time, for social distancing).*
- *Children aged 11+ were allowed to visit with an adult (from the same family bubble) from 24 August.*

12 BOARD STATISTICS

Recommended complement of Board members	14
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	14
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	11
Total number of visits to the establishment	239
Total number of segregation reviews attended	25

13 APPLICATIONS TO THE BOARD

Code	Subject	Current reporting year	Previous reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	5	20
B	Discipline, including adjudications; incentives and earned privileges; sanctions	2	1
C	Equality	4	10
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	1	8
E 1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	15	8
E 2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	1	1
F	Food and kitchens	3	6
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	27	47
H 1	Property within this establishment	16	55
H 2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	9	13
H 3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	2	8
I	Sentence management, including home detention curfew, release on temporary licence, parole, release dates, recategorisation	9	15
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	13	29
K	Transfers	10	6
L	Miscellaneous	11	39
	Total number of IMB applications	128	266

GLOSSARY

ACCT Assessment, care in custody and teamwork (case management for prisoners at risk of suicide or self-harm)

Adjudication The formal internal disciplinary procedure for prisoners

Application A request by a prisoner for a personal interview with the Board

Category B Prisoners for whom the highest conditions of security are not necessary but for whom escape must be made very difficult

Discrimination incident report form Form which prisoners use to submit complaints about discrimination

GFSL Gov Facility Services Ltd (a government-run maintenance company)

GOOD Good order and/or discipline (Prison Service Rule under which a prisoner can be segregated)

HMP Her Majesty's Prison

IS91 Refers to those detained by the immigration authorities

Insider Prisoner who introduces new arrivals to prison life

Key worker Prison officer given responsibility for supporting a small number of prisoners under the Offender Management in Custody scheme

Offender Management in Custody: Scheme providing prisoners with key workers

OMU Offender management unit

Safer custody The mechanism employed by the prison to keep prisoners from harm

YOI Young offender institution