

Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Full Sutton

**For reporting year
1 January 2020 – 31 December 2020**

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Introductory sections 1 – 3

1. Statutory role of the IMB

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

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

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

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

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

2. Description of the establishment

HMP Full Sutton is one of five high-security dispersal prisons for category A and B adult males, and forms part of the long-term high-security prison estate. It is situated about 11 miles east of the City of York. It has a certified normal accommodation of 601 and an operational capacity of 586. At the end of 2020, the number of prisoners accommodated stood at 579.

Nearly all prisoners at Full Sutton present significant risks to security or the public at large. A small number of prisoners have committed offences connected with or sympathetic to terrorist goals and some have achieved significant criminal notoriety for other reasons.

The establishment opened in 1987 as a purpose-built high-security establishment. There are six main wings: A, E and F are general wings, and B, C and D wings accommodate vulnerable prisoners. The Supporting Transition and Enabling Progression (STEP) unit is a reintegration wing for those complex prisoners who are leaving long-term segregation. There is also a segregation unit, close supervision centre and healthcare unit.

The site also comprises a kitchen, education rooms and workshops, a chaplaincy, a gym, a library and a visitors centre. A reception area for prisoners' visitors is located outside the main gate.

The prison is part of the public sector, and although HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) is responsible for the operation of the establishment, the main service providers are:

- Milton Keynes College, for learning and skills
- Spectrum Community Health CIC, for health services
- GeoAmey, for escort provision
- Amey, for provision of facilities management and site maintenance.

The prison also works in partnership with:

- POPs (Partners of Prisoners), for visitor centre services
- The Samaritans, for the provision of training for prison Listeners
- Leeds Beckett University, for the 'Learning Together' initiative
- Origin, for the supply of gym equipment
- Sportsafe, for the maintenance and repair of gym equipment.

3. Executive summary

3.1 Background to the report

This report, which covers the period January to December 2020, is written against the background of the COVID-19 pandemic. The first national lockdown began on 23 March 2020. The way in which the prison operated – that is, its regime and its practices and procedures – had to change quickly, to counter the threats of the virus. Subsequently, practices were adapted throughout the year as the threats from the virus rose and fell and rose again. From the start of the pandemic, and throughout most of the year, the prison's approach, along with that of all prisons, was led and directed by HMPPS Gold Command.

2020 was a testing and tiring year for HMP Full Sutton's managers, staff and prisoners. The Board is keenly aware of the strenuous and constant efforts made by managers and staff to keep the prison safe both for prisoners and staff. Their efforts were successful. During the first wave of the pandemic, no prisoners contracted the virus, and only five members of staff did so. During the second wave in the autumn, infection took a greater hold. The prison was designated an outbreak site between 13 October and 30 November, and a total of 65 prisoners and 69 staff tested positive over that period, and until the end of December. This was a difficult time for all but it was managed well.

The Board withdrew from visiting the prison on a regular basis between 23 March and July 2020, during the first lockdown. During that time, we established arrangements for monitoring remotely, through regular attendance, by teleconference, at morning management briefings, Rule 45 boards and the complex needs/safety intervention meeting. We also established regular telephone contact with governors, functional heads and wing custodial managers, and sought the views of the prisoners by contacting their wing representatives and Listeners. These contact arrangements continued throughout the year. We attended the prison in person again from July to December, for meetings at which the welfare of prisoners was considered, including the prisoner council. We withdrew again in December 2020, in the light of the national lockdown and government advice that we should work from home wherever possible. Throughout 2020, we continued to deal with applications from prisoners, made to us in writing or through the telephone application service.

The Board is grateful for the full support and cooperation it received from the Governor and prison staff which enabled us to work remotely, and for their consistently open and inclusive approach to communication and ensuring that the Board was kept fully informed.

The Board has tried to cover all aspects of prisoners' welfare during this difficult time, while also ensuring that we understood the pressures on staff and the decisions of managers. Nevertheless, in some areas, coverage may have been less than usual. Unless otherwise stated, the report refers to circumstances during the period of the pandemic.

3.2 Main judgements

How safe is the prison?

Safety within the prison was well maintained during 2020. The prison managed restrictions and the effects of the pandemic professionally and managers ensured that the prison remained a safe residential and working environment. The establishment avoided the worst excesses of the pandemic. Incidents of violence between prisoners and violence against staff decreased, as did acts of self-harm. Complex and vulnerable prisoners were regularly monitored throughout the year. One prisoner is believed to have taken his own life; the inquest is awaited. However, the Board is satisfied that the environment in Full Sutton remained safe throughout 2020.

How fairly and humanely are prisoners treated?

Extensive restrictions were placed on prisoners as a result of the pandemic. Time out of cell reduced initially to one hour a day, and education, association and gym access ceased. For most, the ability to work also ceased. The effect of this on prisoners was mitigated by good communication and explanation from managers and a recognition by staff, in their approach, of the pressures that these conditions placed on prisoners. Prisoners themselves understood that their circumstances reflected restrictions in the community, and the seriousness of the pandemic. The Board is satisfied that prisoners on all wings and units continued to be treated fairly and humanely.

How well are prisoners' health and wellbeing needs met?

As in the community, prisoners had reduced access to medical appointments in the early stages of the lockdown. Regular clinics, and dentist and optician appointments were suspended in March, although GP cover, and other emergency cover, was available throughout. Clinics resumed in September. The mental health team was short of staff at the start of lockdown. In the main, prisoners coped well, but those already struggling with mental health issues continued to find life difficult, and strategies were put in place to help them. Daily health checks on those already on the mental health caseload continued.

All prisoners were treated as if they were on the standard level of the incentives and earned privileges (IEP) scheme (except in exceptional circumstances), which meant that they had use of a television and an Xbox if they wished. A trolley library service was provided on all wings and units. In reality, however, prisoners had very little to do. Contact with families was maintained mainly through video-link, which proved popular with prisoners and their families alike.

Overall, the Board is of the view that prisoners' health needs were met, and that prison managers sought where possible to mitigate the potentially negative effects of the restricted regime on prisoners' wellbeing.

How well are prisoners progressed towards successful resettlement?

As a result of the HMPPS COVID-19 restrictions in March, there has been an almost complete lack of opportunity for prisoners to progress through offending behaviour programmes (OBPs), education and employment this year. All education ceased and prisoners were offered only distraction packs and some art materials. In general,

these were not sufficient to occupy them. Some OBPs resumed in September for those who were already in treatment or those due to be released imminently: high-risk, or very high-risk prisoners, and post-tariff high-risk and very high-risk indeterminate prisoners. However, overall, only 10% of planned programme completions were achieved during the year, although local efforts were made to mitigate the effect of this and to try to address some aspects of offending behaviour.

3.3 Main areas for development

The Board is carrying forward the areas for development identified in its 2019 report, which have not been able to be implemented because of the pandemic. We will monitor progress in these areas when we can in the coming year, and report on them in our 2021 annual report.

TO THE MINISTER

Review the provision of work and education for prisoners, in order to improve and enhance these. **(Recommended in 2019. Recommendation carried forward).**

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

Improve, in conjunction with the Governor, the provision of meaningful work for prisoners. **(Recommended in 2019. Recommendation carried forward).**

Take action to ensure, with educational providers and the Governor, that a fuller range of educational and therapeutic activity is consistently available. **(Recommended in 2019. Recommendation carried forward).**

Improve systems for the management and tracking of prisoners' property between establishments.

Review and clarify the purpose of the STEP unit, its role in the Pathways to Progression programme, and the referral system, to ensure that it can resume its intended role of breaking the cycle of segregation.

Re-examine, with the service provider, the cost of telephone calls made by prisoners to mobile phones, with a view to reducing this.

TO THE GOVERNOR

Improve the provision of meaningful work, and breadth of education provision, for the prisoners. **(Recommended in 2019. Recommendation carried forward).**

Review and clarify, with HMPPS, the purpose of the STEP unit, its role in the Pathways to Progression programme, and the referral system, to ensure that it can resume its intended role of breaking the cycle of segregation.

3.4 Progress since the last report

The pandemic has meant that there has been little progress against the main areas for development and improvement identified by the Board last year – in particular, an increase in the provision of work and educational opportunities for prisoners. Plans to introduce new workshops and a new educational curriculum had to be postponed when both work and education ceased, to limit the spread of the disease. Plans are still in hand for the introduction of new workshops when this is possible. The Board will monitor progress in 2021.

Mandatory drug testing was paused during the lockdown, although restarted later in the year. Suspicion testing, based on intelligence, continued, but the Board can make no meaningful comparison of performance in 2020 against that in 2019. The Board will monitor this again in 2021.

A dedicated Listener room has been provided as the Board recommended but was not used in 2020 because of restrictions in face-to-face contact.

As part of the rehabilitative culture programme, staff now use prisoners' preferred names. In 2019, the Board also recorded that improvements were needed to the showers in the gym, and to the speed with which all repairs were carried out. During 2020, the prison was substantially redecorated, action was taken to ensure that repairs were carried out quickly, and the showers in the gym were refurbished.

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

4.1 Reception and induction

4.1.1 At the start of the pandemic, the number of prisoners transferring into Full Sutton reduced; for a period of time, transfers ceased altogether. A small unused wing was established as a protective isolation unit for any new prisoners, who stayed there for 14 days until it was established that they had no symptoms of COVID-19. The wing was well run, and prisoners understood the reason for being located there until they could be safely moved.

4.1.2 During the course of the year, the wing closed as it was found no longer to be necessary, and newly arrived prisoners quarantined on the wings.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

4.2.1 Prisoners with complex needs and those who present a risk because of vulnerability or violent behaviour were regularly reviewed. Complex needs/safety intervention meetings were held weekly, led by the governor responsible for safer custody and equality. The meetings were multidisciplinary and attended by representatives from the safer custody team, the mental health team, wing custodial managers, the residential and segregation governors, offender managers and the chaplaincy. The meeting reviewed: particularly complex prisoners whose behaviour may be causing concern; monitors, through input from the wings, prisoners on challenge, support and intervention plans (CSIPs) and subject to assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) procedures; and reviewed prisoners of concern in the segregation unit, transgender prisoners and any violent incidents that have occurred in the previous week. The meeting also considered any relevant information about new prisoners that had just transferred in. The Board has attended these meetings where possible during the year. They were effective and there was good sharing of information. The meeting ensured that staff from the relevant disciplines were regularly aware of the circumstances of particularly complex prisoners.

4.2.2 There was a general expectation that the increased confinement of prisoners during the pandemic would lead to added pressures and might result in an increase in acts of self-harm, and in the numbers of ACCT documents that had to be opened to support prisoners. In fact, this has not been the case. The number of incidents of self-harm during 2020 reduced from 445 in 2019 to 125 in 2020. Likewise, the number of ACCT documents that had to be opened during the year reduced from 243 in 2019 to 151 in 2020. In all, 20 Listeners were in place to support their fellow prisoners. Although the safer prisons support meeting, normally attended by Listeners, could not be held, Listeners continued to be provided with regular information on issues relating to self-harm. The Board was in contact with Listeners during lockdown. While some raised with us issues relating to individual prisoners, the overall consensus was that prisoners were coping well with the restrictions. The Board has been unable to attend any ACCT reviews since March.

4.2.3 There were three deaths in custody during 2020. One prisoner is believed to have taken his own life, and two deaths were the result of natural causes. The inquests on all three deaths remain outstanding. As a result of delays caused by the

pandemic, inquests into deaths which occurred in the prison in 2019, and one dating from 2018, have also yet to be held.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

4.3.1 During the year, 213 CSIPs were opened, to investigate potential violence or bullying between prisoners, compared with 236 in 2019. The continued relevance of individual plans was regularly reviewed, and the number of CSIPs open at any one time has reduced. The number of prisoner-against-prisoner assaults decreased from 38 in 2019 to 10 in 2020. Similarly, the number of incidents of violence against staff reduced from 45 in 2019 to 34 in 2020, five of which were considered to be serious. The restricted nature of the regime in 2020, which meant that prisoners were only mixing regularly with the same small cohort of fellow prisoners, has meant that there has been less opportunity for wider-scale disputes, bullying and debt-related issues to arise. In addition, the Board was aware of conscious attempts by staff to reduce tensions when they arose either between prisoners or against staff – for example, when there was pushback against the regime – in order to ensure that the atmosphere remained as calm as possible.

4.4 Use of force and security

4.4.1 Use of force by prison staff continued to be reviewed regularly at use of force meetings. Separately, a sample of incidents of force is selected by the Board for review with senior staff, as part of a use of force scrutiny panel. During 2020, only two panel meetings were held because the Board was not attending the prison in person, and therefore could not review closed-circuit television or body-worn camera footage. Scrutiny panel meetings will resume as soon as it is safe to do so in 2021.

4.4.2 The number of incidents of use of force decreased from 230 in 2019 to 193 in 2020.

4.4.3 During 2020, 114 potential weapons were found across all areas. This includes all items that had the potential to be used as a weapon – for example, discarded tin lids. Most were found in communal areas and therefore could not be attributed to individuals. Of these, 38 were categorised as actual weapons, and reported as such. Target searching continued where there was intelligence.

4.4.4 The Board is satisfied that the prison's focus on security and safety, as well as safety issues arising from the pandemic, was maintained in 2020. Security issues that arose during the year were, for the most part, low level and minor. The position was reviewed across the long-term high-security estate to look for common themes; none emerged.

4.5 Substance misuse

4.5.1 Mandatory drug testing was suspended in late March, following restrictions at the onset of the pandemic. Testing briefly restarted in October but was suspended again in December. There were 16 positive tests out of 114 completed until the end of March, and eight positive tests out of 91 conducted from October to December. Overall, 158 drug finds were made across the establishment; 81 of these were within the prison, the remainder being made up of positive indications within mail and property entering the prison. Finds included non-prescribed medication and psychoactive substance-soaked papers. Of substances testing positive on the

Rapiscan itemiser (which tests mail), the most prevalent were psychoactive substances, with small amounts of steroids, MDMA (ecstasy) and Subutex (an opioid).

4.5.2 With prisoners being locked in their cells for long periods, there was less opportunity for them to gain access to drugs, through whatever source, and there were, in the early days of lockdown, very few reports of prisoners being under the influence of any substance. A slight increase took place during the summer, when restrictions were relaxed and some transfers into the prison took place. Some hooch making took place throughout the year. The prison took a firm line on this, and prisoners were put on report and subject to adjudication; prison managers were particularly concerned because of the potential effect of hooch on behaviour and the subsequent knock-on effect that might have on the ability to run the restricted regime safely. Hooch making is often seen as an indicator that other substances are not available.

4.5.3 The differences in the regime and prison life in 2020 have meant that the Board can make no direct comparison between substance misuse in 2020 and 2019.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Treatment: general

5.1.1 At the beginning of the pandemic, the prison moved at once to stage 4 lockdown levels. Workshops, education, gym sessions and normal association activity ceased. Prisoners could no longer opt out of servery food and cook for themselves, and were able to leave their cells, in small cohorts, for only one hour a day to shower, use the telephone and exercise. This regime continued until June. Time out of cell was increased slightly in August, but the above restrictions have remained in place throughout the year.

5.1.2 The extent of restrictions that were applied mirrored the ebb and flow of the virus and restrictions in the community. Despite the extreme restrictions, the atmosphere on the wings remained mainly calm and the prisoners coped well. A letter to the Board from a wing representative indicated that while prisoners were sometimes frustrated, they were 'learning to get on with things' and acknowledged that 'most of the staff do the best they can to accommodate any requests'.

5.1.3 Although severely curtailed, we are satisfied that the regime remained decent, fair and humane. We are also satisfied that any opportunities to reduce restrictions were taken swiftly, when it was safe to do so.

5.1.4 The Board is also satisfied that there was good communication with the prisoners to inform them of regime and other changes, which helped the restrictions to be accepted.

5.2 Accommodation, clothing, food

5.2.1 The standard of accommodation is generally good, and all prisoners occupy single cells. Wing cleaners cleaned the wings (according to a strict regime) and the safer custody team enabled prisoners who were coping less well to form corridor cleaning parties. All common areas were cleaned systematically and regularly. Prison staff used the time created by the absence of normal activity to redecorate large parts of the prison, including the wings (where some prisoners were also involved), the gym and workshops. Overall, the prison is well decorated and clean, although some showers still need attention.

5.2.2 With prisoners no longer able to cook for themselves, the kitchens had to produce an extra 150 meals a day. Prisoners have occasionally had concerns about the portions available for those at the end of the servery queue. This was taken seriously by staff and was usually because of shortcomings in portion control earlier on, rather than a shortage in the quantity of food available.

5.3 Segregation, special accommodation

5.3.1 The segregation unit was able to maintain its regime during the pandemic and continued to provide a decent and stable environment. As elsewhere in the prison, some redecorating took place, which has improved the environment for prisoners and staff.

5.3.2 From March 2020, there were restrictions on prisoner transfers. This, in addition to a reduction in disruptive behaviour (see section 4.3) and a 20% reduction in the number of adjudications held, meant that the average number of prisoners in segregation on a daily basis reduced, from 26 in 2019 to 23 in 2020. However, the

restrictions on transfer also meant that it was difficult to move Full Sutton prisoners to other establishments or other specialist units, when necessary.

5.3.3 We are satisfied, however, that staff maintained a focus on trying to identify pathways out of segregation to other establishments (which were then able to be achieved when restrictions lifted slightly), and on identifying other locations for some within Full Sutton. Better coordination was established between the segregation unit and the residential wings to achieve this. The average length of stay in the Segregation Unit was 33 days.

5.3.4 There was, however, a significant reduction in interventions early in the lockdown, and some difficulty in providing mental health and psychological support because of staff absence. Prisoners in the segregation unit also had limited access to in-cell work and education.

5.3.5 Board members continued to attend Rule 45 boards throughout the year – in person until March, and by conference call after March – in the same way as other members of the multidisciplinary review team. Membership of the review team increased this year to include members of the safer custody team and offender managers. This enabled a more complete range of information to be considered at the review boards.

5.3.6 In order to control the spread of the pandemic, in March prisoners ceased to attend their Rule 45 boards in person. Paragraph 2.15 of Prison Service Order (PSO) 1700 (2015) states that a prisoner may only be completely excluded from attending where specific safety concerns exist. The Board was of the view that it was appropriate that threats from a pandemic could and should be construed as a specific safety concern for prisoners and staff alike. The Board was satisfied, therefore, that the risk, at that time, of spreading the disease during the pandemic meant that non-attendance by the prisoner did not breach the PSO. Paragraph 2.15 also states that prisoners should be given the opportunity to make representations. Board members attending the review boards were satisfied that prisoners were given the opportunity, before their review board was held, in accordance with the PSO, to make representations, which were then brought to the attention of the review board.

5.3.7 There were no serious incidents in the segregation unit during 2020. The Board received 34 applications from prisoners on the unit in 2020, a significant reduction from the 132 received in 2019.

The STEP unit

5.3.8 This small unit opened in August 2019, as part of the long-term high-security estate Pathways to Progression programme. Its aim is to break the cycle of long-term segregation and prepare prisoners to re-enter mainstream location. The regime incorporated a high level of purposeful activity and had the services of a dedicated senior forensic psychologist. The Board saw meaningful reviews being undertaken of prisoners' progress towards previously agreed goals, and good-quality interactions between staff and prisoners on the unit.

5.3.9 The unit was only partially populated at the end of 2019; the numbers of prisoners placed there increased at the beginning of 2020. During 2020, the unit suffered more than most from the restricted regime, as the close and personal interactions that were a feature of prisoners' life there, and which were designed to

encourage changed behaviours, ceased. There were also managerial and staff changes. It appeared to the Board that the unit was not able to maintain its purpose of breaking the cycle of segregation. Budgetary provision for the unit was also re-examined in 2020. Clarity needs to be re-established about the purpose of the unit and the referral process. The Board will continue to monitor the changes to, and progress of, the unit during 2021.

Close supervision centre

5.3.10 The close supervision centre is a small self-contained unit sited away from other prison wings and units, which houses serious offenders who have committed acts of violence in prison. As with other units, during the pandemic, the usual patterns of association ceased and the gym was closed, although outdoor exercise was scheduled with a PE instructor, weather permitting. Only one new prisoner joined the unit during the year.

5.3.11 Despite the need to run a split regime, to ensure that some prisoners did not mix on association, the small size of the unit enabled more time out of cell than for prisoners on the residential wings. Apart from a short time at the beginning of lockdown, support from mental health clinicians continued, by telephone if necessary, when staff were not able to come into the prison.

5.4 Staff/prisoner relationships, key workers

5.4.1 Overall, staff/prisoner relationships were maintained on an even keel in 2020, despite the pressures on prisoners and staff caused by the restricted regime. The Board received several reports from prisoners about staff flexibility and commending the efforts that particular staff had made to support prisoners in crisis.

5.4.2 Members of the safer custody team have, since 2018, been appointed as key workers for complex prisoners and those at higher risk of suicide and self-harm, including those in the segregation unit.

5.4.3 At the start of the pandemic, normally profiled key worker sessions of 45 minutes per prisoner were suspended from the working profile, for two reasons: to limit the spread of the virus and because of staff shortages, although key workers continued to have contact with the prisoners in their care where possible. In August, profiled key worker sessions resumed for 'priority cases', which ranged from between 45 and 65 individuals per week, but did not resume for every prisoner. The proportion of sessions that was able to be completed each week was, on average, 60%. When staffing allowed, welfare checks on other prisoners took place on a two-weekly basis.

5.5 Equality and diversity

5.5.1 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) report published in June 2020 made a recommendation that focus groups and forums for prisoners with protected characteristics should take place regularly and be supported by prison managers. This recommendation was accepted by the prison. Equality forum and action group meetings (regular meetings with prisoners and staff) were, however, no longer possible after March 2020, when all but essential contact and movement around the prison ceased. The Board will monitor progress in 2021.

5.5.2 Members of the equalities team each have special responsibility for particular protected characteristics, as defined by the Equality Act. Following lockdown in March, staff from the equalities team visited the wings twice weekly to speak to prisoners and deal with any issues, although this reduced to once a week during times of staff shortage. Lockdown did not result in an increased number of complaints, as staff had expected, and the number of discrimination incident report forms reduced from 157 in 2019 to 122 in 2020. The Board also received slightly fewer applications relating to equality issues: 10 in 2020 compared with 13 in 2019.

5.5.3 The Black Lives Matter movement had some effect, with some prisoners from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds complaining that staff treated them differently to their non-BAME counterparts in subtle ways – for example, in how they were spoken to or because staff were unaware of cultural issues; the Board received some correspondence on this. There were also complaints that there were fewer prisoners from BAME backgrounds employed as cleaners and working at serveries. This complaint was taken seriously by the prison and investigated, and found not to be the case, except on one wing which holds predominantly white elderly prisoners.

5.5.4 Full Sutton is under-represented in terms of BAME prison staff, although there are BAME staff across other functions. The prison is exploring setting up an advisory group for staff, to help their understanding of BAME issues. The prison's recruitment policy includes a target of 14% BAME staff.

5.6 Faith and pastoral support

5.6.1 Throughout the pandemic, chaplaincy staff have continued to attend the prison, attending meetings at which the welfare of prisoners was considered, and offering appropriate support and alternatives to communal worship.

5.7 Incentives and earned privileges

5.7.1 Early on in the pandemic, a decision was made that prisoners on the basic IEP level should revert temporarily to the standard level and be afforded all the relevant privileges. Managers made clear to staff that any decision to keep a prisoner on, or move a prisoner to, the basic level had to be considered as exceptional, and the decision was to be recorded as a defensible decision in the COVID-19 defensible decision log. Managers were clear that, in considering any reduction to the basic IEP level, staff must satisfy themselves that standards would not fall below acceptable levels of decency.

5.8 Property

5.8.1 With the reduction in the number of transfers into Full Sutton because of the pandemic, and a reduction in those transferring out to other establishments, the Board has seen a reduction in applications from prisoners concerning both the receipt of property within Full Sutton, and property during transfer or within another establishment.

5.8.2 However, the handling of prisoners' property on transfer between establishments remains problematic, as does the failure by establishments to investigate and resolve property issues in a timely manner. Loss of property causes prisoners understandable frustration and anxiety and, when referred to the IMB, such complaints take a disproportionate amount of time for Board members to resolve. In cases where property does not arrive with the prisoner, they

subsequently experience long delays, unsatisfactory explanations and inappropriate obstacles to obtaining compensation. We also discerned an indifference amongst staff at sending establishments to resolving matters promptly, and additionally saw cases of improper confiscation of property. The Board has expressed concern in previous annual reports about systems for the management and tracking of prisoners' property when they transfer between establishments.

5.8.3 The Governor at Full Sutton has recognised the importance to a prisoner's wellbeing of him being reunited with his property as quickly as possible, and during the year gave instructions that, within the reception function, searching and clearance of the property of new arrivals should take priority over the clearance of other items.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare: general

6.1.1 Spectrum Community Health CIC provide primary, general and mental health services within the prison, including outpatient services, chronic disease management, health promotion programmes and referral to secondary care consultant services.

6.2 Physical healthcare

6.2.1 Regular clinics, where a large number of prisoners wait in communal waiting rooms, were suspended in March. Thereafter, prisoners were triaged and called up individually for appointments, and these arrangements remained in place until the end of the year. GP services were maintained throughout the year, although originally at a reduced level, with only one GP on site on a regular basis. The service was, however, supplemented by use of a 'remote and agile' medical team, comprising GPs and advanced nurse practitioners based at Spectrum headquarters.

6.2.2 As in the community, some regular medical checks initially ceased, but all prisoners with relevant conditions continued to have their annual checks, which in the prison are organised by birthday.

6.2.3 Dentist and optician appointments were also suspended in March. However, emergency dental cover was available throughout. Fortnightly dental and optician clinics resumed on a restricted basis in September. Referrals to outside hospital services continued to be made for cancer cases, and the mobile MRI scanner visited during the year. This service will now be provided every four months.

6.2.4 The prison continued to provide good palliative care when necessary. Funding was secured at the start of 2020 for Macmillan Cancer Care to be able to support the local team with palliative care for prisoners, although this was not used in 2020. Links have also been newly established between the prison, the York District Hospital palliative care team and St Leonards Hospice in York.

6.2.5 The Board is satisfied that, at the start of the pandemic, action was taken to identify prisoners who were clinically vulnerable. These prisoners remained on the wings and were supported in keeping themselves safe.

6.3 Mental healthcare

6.3.1 In 2019, we reported that the mental health team was carrying three mental health nurse vacancies. In March, at the beginning of lockdown, the mental health team saw the number of nurses reduce further as two members of staff had to isolate. While the majority of prisoners coped very well during the year with the lack of association and work, and increased time in cell, for a few, who were already struggling with mental health issues, the early days of lockdown were very difficult. Wing staff maintained a careful watch on such prisoners, but in some wings their fellow prisoners expressed concern to the Board about the support that individuals were receiving. The uncertainties for all prisoners, brought about by the unknown nature of the pandemic and the possible length of increased confinement, meant that their expectations of the mental health team were high, at a time when mental health resources were very stretched.

6.3.2 Daily healthcare checks of prisoners already on the mental health caseload continued after the imposition of lockdown. Prisoners were able to access mental health services through self-referral, although it is recognised that this presents difficulties for some because of their circumstances or because they have literacy problems. Prisoners could also be referred by staff and by their key workers. When the number of available mental health staff increased, good contact was maintained with known vulnerable prisoners, and our assessment is that they were well supported. The Board witnessed some thoughtful and knowledgeable interventions by mental health staff during the complex needs/safety intervention meeting (see section 4).

6.3.3 There was some confusion at the start of lockdown about the support role that other prisoners could play in helping fellow prisoners with mental health issues. As a result of discussions between prisoners and governors, it has been agreed that, after the pandemic recedes, a post-recovery team will be established, with post-recovery workers appointed from among the prisoners on the wings, to support their fellow prisoners.

6.4 Exercise, time out of cell, gym

6.4.1 Revised core days were introduced in June, and the prison moved to a less restricted regime in August, when time out of cell increased from between one hour 40 minutes to two hours per day, across two sessions. PE instructors offered prisoners exercise activities on the exercise yards. The regime was curtailed again in October, when, during the second wave, Full Sutton became an outbreak site and some prisoners on all residential wings, and some staff, tested positive for COVID-19. When infection subsided, restrictions were sensibly loosened on a wing-by-wing basis, as necessary, rather than restricting the time out of cell for all prisoners.

6.4.2 Time out of cell has therefore been severely limited for most of the year. Although prisoners were able to take exercise on the wing exercise yards there was, for most of the year, no access to the gym. Access to the gym was allowed for a short period between mid-November and the end of December, but the facilities were closed again at the beginning of 2021.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

7.1.1 At the start of the national lockdown in March 2020, all classroom-based teaching and exam preparation ceased. Between March and July, no work was set for prisoners, and coursework which had previously been issued was not collected or assessed; those prisoners about to take level 1 and 2 mathematics and English examinations could not sit them. Only token educational provision was made during this time, in the form of distraction packs and the offer of some art materials. While some prisoners used the distraction packs, others reported finding them too childish, preferring instead to watch television or play on their Xbox.

7.1.2 A new education curriculum had been commissioned and was due to be delivered in 2020/21; this could not take place because of the pandemic. When tutors were permitted to return to the prison in July, short in-cell self-learn courses were offered in mathematics, English, business skills, personal and social skills, study skills, food safety, art, and mentoring and coaching skills. As far as possible, these replicate courses which would have been available under the proposed curriculum plan, but do not attract any formal accreditation. The in-cell work was assessed remotely, and written feedback provided to prisoners. During the lockdown period, 79 prisoners engaged with the in-cell modules, resulting in 158 enrolments, with some opting for more than one course. In all, 80 certificates of achievement were issued by Milton Keynes College to 46 learners. Distance learning continued and, at the end of 2020, there remained no face-to-face contact between tutors and prisoners.

7.1.3 In our report for the year 2019/20, the Board was critical of the education provision: less than three-quarters of planned sessions were delivered; there were tutor vacancies in key areas; and attendance was low. We recommended that the breadth of educational provision needed to improve. This recommendation was echoed by Ofsted in April 2020, as part of HMIP's inspection of the prison. We recognise fully the difficulties in offering an education programme during the early uncertainty of the pandemic, with changing regimes, lockdown levels and, at times, worrying levels of infection in the outside community. However, the early provision of distraction packs only was insufficient for prisoners. The Board believes that significant effort is required now to engage with the wider prison population, both with those who have become accustomed to no education provision, and those who, prior to lockdown, were not previously attracted to education.

7.1.4 Some changes were made at the end of 2020 that may help in the future. By the end of the year, work had been completed on the preparation of teaching aids to be broadcast in 10-minute slots on the in-cell Wayout TV channel. It is hoped to introduce this in 2021. The education team sent prisoners arriving at the establishment a welcome pack and assessment form to complete, to assess their skill levels. Education mentors from among existing prisoners, who are paid for the role, have been recruited not only to support existing learners, but also to help with the re-engagement process and act as a bridge between the education team and prisoners. The textile, woodmill and recycling workshops will offer accredited qualifications when workshops reopen (see below).

7.1.5 There are plans for education staff to have face-to-face contact with prisoners on the wings again if and when the prison returns to level 3 lockdown levels. At the time of writing, January 2021, the prison's lockdown level remained at level 4. A

book club is also being established as a way of trying to engage prisoners with education.

7.1.6 Prisoners on the residential wings did not have access to the main library during lockdown. A trolley service was established to fill the gap, with 25% of books rotated weekly, and all books being rotated monthly. A free DVD loan service was also established. The segregation unit and close supervision centre have their own permanent library trolley services, and these continued during lockdown.

7.1.7 There are plans to relocate the library to the education area at the beginning of 2021. The new library will be larger than the existing one, and have a separate room for legal research, which will allow the main library area to be used for general sessions throughout the day. There are also plans to hold some education sessions in the new library.

7.2 Vocational training, work

7.2.1 At the start of the year, the prison operated textile, bicycle repair, braille, Ministry of Defence and contract services workshops, and there were plans to introduce new woodmill and recycling workshops. In March 2020, all workshops closed and plans for the new workshops were postponed. Only the DHL workshop (which acts as a distribution hub, supplying goods to other prisons) and the kitchens, both staffed mainly by prisoners, stayed open throughout 2020. Prisoners also continued in their roles as cleaners, wing painters, and servery and laundry orderlies. Prison staff worked in the textile workshops, to ensure that prison orders continued to be met.

7.2.2 In our report for 2019/20, the Board found that there was insufficient employment for prisoners who wanted to work and made recommendations for change. New strategies were put in place to increase the employment rate, including part-time employment opportunities and changes to the core day. Proposals were also made for increased in-cell working. These changes and the planned introduction of new workshops could not be implemented during the pandemic, while the majority of workshops were closed. The implementation and effectiveness of any proposed changes will not, therefore, be able to be assessed until at least 2021.

7.2.3 Prisoners in employment who were unable to work during the pandemic continued to be paid their usual rate of £13.20 per week. Unemployed prisoners were paid £2.50 unemployment pay, plus £6 per week Job Seekers Allowance. Some prisoners argued that this is unfair, as in normal times they would have been able to be offered work. Full Sutton's pay policy is in line with other prisons in the long-term high-security estate and has been examined by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman, who has determined that the approach is fair and in line with central policy.

7.3 Offender management, progression

7.3.1 The pandemic reduced the opportunity for in-person meetings between prisoners and their offender managers, resulting in the need for prisoners to make written contributions to their offender assessment system (OASys), category A, parole and recategorisation reviews. Some socially distanced personal contact was maintained for high-priority prisoners – for example, those due a category A or parole review or 'start custody' OASys. There has been a considerable improvement in the national information technology systems used to support offender management, which is expected to lead to better-quality assessments for prisoners.

7.3.2 Category A reviews and parole hearings were put on hold in March and restarted in September. The backlog of cases is gradually being cleared and good use is being made of video-link and telephone facilities.

7.3.3 Board observations suggest that there have been improvements in sentence planning, which has begun to move away from being a simple annual review, and become more dynamic, as the new system of probation offender managers has become embedded.

7.3.4 The Board has seen improved consultation between probation offender managers and psychology staff this year. However, because of national HMPPS COVID-19 restrictions, there has been an almost complete lack of opportunity for prisoners to progress through OBPs, education and employment this year, as all were paused in March. Some OBPs resumed in September for those who were already in treatment, or those due to be released within two years: high-risk and very high-risk prisoners with determinate sentences due for release, and post-tariff high-risk and very high-risk indeterminate prisoners. Overall, only 10% of planned programme completions were achieved during the year. Local efforts were made to mitigate the effect of this and address some aspects of offending behaviour, by supplying some prisoners with self-analysis workbooks.

7.3.5 Although, at the start of the year, referrals to the Pathways to Progression programme, which fast-tracks prisoners to small and specialised units, were better and more structured, the pandemic disrupted transfers throughout the year.

7.3.6 In October 2020, there were 12 IPP (Imprisonment for Public Protection) prisoners at Full Sutton. Bi-monthly meetings review the support needs of those over tariff. During the pandemic, only limited assistance has been possible for this group, but efforts have been made, where possible, to move prisoners to different establishments so that they can access specialist support or OBPs, when they restart.

7.4 Family contact

7.4.1 Enabling prisoners to maintain contact with their families has been difficult during the pandemic. Social visits were suspended completely in March. They were reintroduced briefly between the beginning of August and beginning of November, but were limited to 45 minutes, and there could be no physical contact between prisoner and family member, including children. For many would-be visitors, the journey to Full Sutton was long for a restricted meeting of only 45 minutes; the arrangements were unpopular with prisoners and families alike, and the take-up was poor. The introduction of differing lockdown tiers in different regions of the country also meant that prisoners could not receive visits from those living in higher-tiered areas, as travel from those areas was not permitted.

7.4.2 Full Sutton was a pilot site for a scheme known as 'Purple Visits', by which prisoners have contact with their family by video-link. The scheme began in June, when prisoners were initially offered one contact per month. This increased, and by the end of the year they could book three sessions each month. The scheme has been successful and is popular.

7.4.3 In an attempt to address the difficulties for prisoners in maintaining contact with their families during this time, HMPPS allocated an additional weekly telephone credit of £5. This was in place from April and continued throughout most of the remainder of the year. However, the costs of telephone calls remain high:

CALLS TO UK FIXED LINES: cost per minute including VAT

6.33 pence during the week **midnight Sunday to midday Friday**

5.62 pence during the weekend **midday Friday to midnight Sunday**

CALLS TO UK MOBILES: cost per minute including VAT

14.08 pence during the week **midnight Sunday to midday Friday**

9.18 pence during the weekend **midday Friday to midnight Sunday**

7.4.4 There are no in-cell telephones in Full Sutton, so all prisoners make calls on public telephones on the wings. The Board considers that the cost of telephone calls, set out above, is unreasonably high, particularly costs to mobile phones. With the reduction in the number of landlines in private households and the move generally to mobile phone usage, calling a mobile phone is now a necessity to enable prisoners to keep in contact with their families, not an alternative of choice to using a landline. HMPPS should review arrangements with the service provider, with a view to reducing the cost of calls for prisoners to mobile phones.

7.5 Resettlement planning

7.5.1 Very few prisoners are released directly from Full Sutton. Release planning and resettlement work have been mainly unaffected by the pandemic. Pre-release meetings and inter-agency contact for prisoners due for release within six months have continued. All those released from Full Sutton have been found places in approved premises. Multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) procedures continue to be properly applied and managed, and the prison maintains good relationships with other external criminal justice agencies.

8. The work of the IMB

The work of the IMB was curtailed in March 2020, when, at the time of the first lockdown, Board members withdrew from attending the prison in person, in the light of the government's risk assessment of the threat from COVID-19, which required all but those offering essential services to work from home where possible. Board members reluctantly took the view that they should not risk either bringing the virus into the prison or putting their own health at risk, by continuing to attend Full Sutton regularly in person.

The Board established systems for monitoring remotely by attending meetings via teleconference and through regular telephone contact with all governors, wing managers and functional heads, and established a regular flow of information to enable us to understand the effect of changed practices on the welfare of prisoners. This contact and supply of information continued throughout the year. Listeners and wing representatives were written to and information was sought from them, to try to ensure that we heard, through them, about the circumstances of the prisoners. The Board regularly reviewed both its decision not to attend the prison and the extent of its monitoring, to ensure that both remained appropriate. Members were free to make their own decision about attendance, depending on their personal circumstances.

In the summer, following a relaxation of national lockdown, we returned to Full Sutton to attend in person the complex needs/safety intervention meeting, Rule 45 boards in the segregation unit, and the prisoner council, withdrawing again when infection rates became high and Full Sutton was designated as an outbreak site for several weeks. Thereafter, we attended again in person, only to have to withdraw again in the middle of December. The prison staff and governors ensured that they stayed in contact with the Board, and that we received all the relevant information we sought, to enable us to maintain as complete a monitoring function as possible. We are very grateful for this.

It has therefore been an unsatisfactory year for the work of the Board, as it has for everybody. Board members decided only reluctantly that they were not able to continue to attend the prison, and were very sorry not to be able to do so at a time when prisoners and staff were facing such difficulties.

The stop/start nature of the year, and monitoring from home, has meant that Board members have had to adapt in a number of ways, and for some the work became too remote. Two members of the Board resigned during the year.

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	17
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	12
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	10
Total number of visits to the establishment	189
Total number of monitoring telephone calls (including daily management briefings)	315

Total number of segregation review board meetings attended	26
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Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	26	9
B	Discipline, including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	32	10
C	Equality	13	10
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	18	10
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	23	14
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	19	4
F	Food and kitchens	7	3
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	56	26
H1	Property within this establishment	14	7
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	22	13
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	6	5
I	Sentence management, including home detention curfew, release on temporary licence, parole, release dates, recategorization	23	4
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	53	22
K	Transfers	3	8
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system	44	16
	Total number of applications	359	161

146 of the received applications were written; 15 were received via the 0800 IMB Application telephone line.



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