



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Long Lartin

**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 Long Lartin is a dispersal prison within the long-term high-security estate (LTHSE), situated in the Vale of Evesham. The original premises date from the early 1970s, although they have been modified by successive programmes of adaptation and improvement.

The prison holds category A and category B male prisoners. Following reconfiguration, the prison can now accommodate any category B prisoner of any sentence length. The current certified normal accommodation is 609.

Prisoners are accommodated in single cells, in six mainstream wings and two support wings, with a small number in a psychologically informed planned environment (PIPE) unit. This unit is a 'pre-PIPE', preparing prisoners for transfer to an appropriate therapeutic community or PIPE unit elsewhere. Four wings in the oldest part of the establishment lack in-cell sanitation and running water. One of the mainstream wings operates as an enabling environment. The segregation unit (rebranded in November as the 'care, separation and reintegration unit' – CSRU) is one of the largest in Europe.

Service providers:

Function	Provider
Education	Milton Keynes College (MKC)
General healthcare services	Practice Plus Group (PPG)
Mental health and psychosocial substance misuse services ('Inclusion')	Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
Social care	Worcestershire County Council (WCC)
Canteen	DHL
Building maintenance	Amey (operating through the Ministry of Justice)

3. Executive summary

3.1 Background to the report

Members of the Board were monitoring the regime at Long Lartin and fulfilling statutory obligations until early March, under IMB guidelines reporting weekly to the Governor, attending meetings, dealing with applications from prisoners and effectively participating and engaging in prison life.

The Board began the year by monitoring issues highlighted in the 2019/20 annual report:

- activities for prisoners outside their cells and encouragement for the regime to meet Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) expectations
- the quality and quantity of work available for prisoners and enlarging access to education for as many prisoners as possible, and raising of standards
- levels of violence and safety both for prisoners and staff
- the night sanitation (Nightsan) facilities that have existed in four wings for many years
- the dangers to health resulting from prisoners continuing to dispose of litter and waste by throwing it from their cell windows
- the population of the segregation unit.

During the first quarter of the year, there were noticeable reductions in violence and assaults. More activities were available to prisoners, and the numbers in work and education were showing signs of increasing.

From March until December, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the regime completely changed. The Governor and staff rightly altered the operation and day-to-day running of the prison with the new objective of keeping prisoners and staff as safe as possible and free of infection. The Board maintained both direct and remote monitoring throughout this period and has been able to follow the management process by remotely attending the Governor's daily briefings. The Board has also observed excellent communication methods to consult and explain to prisoners in advance the nature of regime changes, which have largely been accepted. The regime has been tailored imaginatively to the particular circumstances of Long Lartin.

Progress since March has been significantly compromised by the COVID-19 pandemic. The imposition of a severely restricted regime with long periods of lockdown, cessation of most activities and reduced association would not be acceptable under any other circumstances. However, the Governor and senior staff were quick to intervene and to impose this regime in order to prevent COVID-19 infections from spreading within the establishment, and for nine months they were successful.

Unfortunately, COVID-19 cases were recorded in the prison early in December and infections increased rapidly, causing anxiety within both prisoner and staff populations. (At the beginning of January 2021, there are encouraging signs that infections are under control and numbers reducing.)

3.2 Main judgements

These are made in the light of the COVID-19 challenges faced by the prison and the rapidly changing situation during the reporting year.

How safe is the prison?

The Board believes that the prison offers a safe environment to the prisoners. Over recent months, in common with most establishments, there have been serious staffing shortages. While these have been well managed, any such shortfall poses a potential risk to the safety both of staff and prisoners.

How fairly and humanely are prisoners treated?

Given the restrictions placed on prisoners by COVID-19, the Board believes that their treatment by staff is largely fair and consistent. The cells on four wings lack running water and sanitation, falling below modern standards of decency for about half of all prisoners. The Board believes that action on this by the government is long overdue. We are also concerned that prisoners remain in the segregation unit for extended periods for lack of more suitable alternatives. We recognise the knowledge and understanding by staff of the prisoners in their care, and their receptiveness to prisoners' daily needs. The number of prison complaints submitted, however, remains high, with property being a key issue.

How well are prisoners' health and wellbeing needs met?

Within the exceptional constraints caused by the need to minimise the spread of COVID-19 and mandatory exceptional delivery models (EDMs), prison managers and healthcare staff have worked hard to maintain a reasonable standard of health and wellbeing. However, it is expected that the combined effect of long periods of confinement to their cells, greatly reduced opportunities to engage in activities, association, face-to-face contact with teachers and clinicians, and a shortage of hospital appointments will have adversely affected many of the prisoners throughout this reporting period.

How well are prisoners progressed (towards successful resettlement)?

Most prisoners in HMP Long Lartin will serve many years in custody, often beyond retirement age. Reasonable education provision has been maintained throughout the year, whereas vocational training and work have been understandably sporadic. Very few prisoners are released directly from the establishment, and progression this year has been limited.

3.3 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

- **Night sanitation system (Nightsan).** This unsatisfactory and deeply unpopular alternative to proper in-cell sanitary facilities in four of the wings does not conform with modern standards of decency. It has been consistently condemned by HMIP

and the Board as inhumane treatment of prisoners, many of whom will spend a large part of their lives in this establishment (see section 5.1).

The Board urges the minister to order installation of modern sanitation in all cells without any further delay.

- **Segregation.** Long periods of segregation intensify damage to the state of many prisoners' poor mental health (see section 5.2).

The Board requests the minister to take necessary action across the whole prison estate, to ensure that segregation is used only as a short-term measure and that prisoners receive every available treatment, opportunity and encouragement to progress towards reform.

- **Mental health.** Some prisoners in the segregation unit who are in urgent need of psychiatric treatment have to wait far too long for admission to secure hospitals after referral. As a result, their condition and behaviour deteriorate, and damage the dynamic of the unit.

The Board asks the minister to liaise with ministerial colleagues in the Department of Health with a view to increasing secure hospital capacity to meet the needs of this increasing number of mentally disturbed prisoners.

- **Counter-terrorist check (CTC) vetting.** The Board notes some improvement in the time taken for CTC vetting of new staff but the process can still take up to nine months, and continues to result in the loss of appointees and consequent staff shortages.

The Board urge the minister to accelerate the process of CTC vetting.

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

- **Building maintenance.** The Board believes that there is a need for additional funding to address the ongoing maintenance problems and legacy systems associated with a 50-year-old building (see section 5.1).
- **Staffing levels.** Staff numbers have increased since the previous reporting period but, in spite of severely reduced regimes, COVID-19-related absences have left the prison seriously under-staffed on occasion. An early staff establishment review is required (see section 5.2).
- **Segregation transfers.** Much better cooperation between LTHSE prisons is needed, including the early reintroduction of virtual segregation reviews, to enable timely and appropriate transfers for the progression of segregated prisoners with poor mental health. Many of these prisoners become trapped in the system, which increases their frustration, poor behaviour and incidents of violence (see section 5.2).
- **PIPE unit.** The continuing shortage of places in therapeutic environment units or PIPEs elsewhere in the prison estate severely delays progression for prisoners who have satisfactorily completed the pre-PIPE pathway at Long Lartin. This is counterproductive, frustrating for the prisoners and denies the opportunity for

others to enter the process. The Board requests Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) to address this situation (see section 6.3.2).

TO THE GOVERNOR

- **Insiders.** The Board hopes that each wing will have the support of an Insider as soon as this is practicable (see section 4.2).
- **Safety officers.** The Board strongly supports enlarging the number of safety officers as soon as current staffing issues permit (see section 4.2).
- **Incidents of violence.** The Board would like to see a continued focus on, and investigations into, serious incidents and further use of multidisciplinary team (MDT) meetings and reviews concerning all prisoners allegedly involved in incidents of violence (see section 4.3).
- **Complaints.** Based on the sample taken the Board is concerned that a high proportion of responses to complaints do not meet the HMPPS standard (see section 5.7).
- **Healthcare and Inclusion.** In spite of the Governor's personal encouragement and backing, the Board continues to believe that healthcare and Inclusion staff could achieve better outcomes for sick and mentally disturbed prisoners with more active involvement of managers and staff cooperation (see section 6.1).
- **Social care.** The Board hopes that the overdue memorandum of understanding on social care will be signed and conscientiously implemented by the establishment and WCC during the forthcoming year (see section 6.4).

3.4 Progress since the last report

- **Staffing.** There has been some increase but staffing is currently adversely affected by the challenges of the pandemic. Staff sickness levels are high and staff are becoming increasingly exhausted, and are indicating high levels of stress. The authorised staff establishment would appear to fall short of that needed to manage a high-security prison safely and successfully.
- **Violence.** Levels of violence have reduced following the increased focus on the application of challenge, support and intervention plans (CSIPs), together with appropriate individual specialised programmes. Individual work with identified prisoners through an MDT appears to be producing positive results. If this is continued and expanded, the initiative should demonstrate further success.
- **Building maintenance.** Building maintenance was raised as a serious problem in the Board's previous annual report. Since then, aided by the appointment of a new service delivery manager, Amey has demonstrated a more proactive approach. The Board is pleased to learn that a number of significant improvements have been planned to take place over the next few years.
- **PIPE.** The Board is pleased to note the removal of unsuitable 'lodgers' from the pre-PIPE unit and an improvement in dedicated unit staffing levels.

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

4.1 Reception and induction

The Board is satisfied that the reception process is adequate. We are pleased that the first night and induction policy, the induction booklet and the custody care passport have been updated to a high standard.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, there have been only 57 transfers of prisoners in from other establishments since April.

Every new arrival is supported by the two Insiders resident on Perrie Blue wing. They use a comprehensive Insider checklist and have been informed by all departments on regime changes during the COVID-19 period, which they can explain to new arrivals. The Board is confident that these arrangements are effective, and commends the commitment of the Insiders.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

Since COVID-19 restrictions were introduced, there has been a significant overall decrease in incidents of self-harm. As a comparator, in 2019 there were 439 incidents, involving 30 individuals; in 2020, there were 190 incidents, involving 45 individuals. This is partly attributable to the reduced regime, with the consequential reduction in trade in illicit drugs, debt and bullying, but a pattern was starting to emerge before COVID-19 which indicated that intervention by safety officers was having a positive effect in reducing self-harm (see below).

Sadly, there was a self-inflicted death in custody on 16 December, and on 26 December a clinically vulnerable prisoner with an underlying medical condition died from COVID-19.

Insiders – Ideally, there should be one Insider on each wing, but currently there are only four in the prison. The two Insiders on Perrie Blue wing provide a weekly clinic for prisoners on the pre-PIPE unit. The Board believes that an increase in the number of Insiders is much needed and hopes that this will be addressed as soon as it is practicable to do so.

Listeners – There are only six trained Listeners in the prison, but training of a further seven is close to completion. Training by the Samaritans resumed in early December, after eight months during which they were unable to visit due to COVID-19 and because many were in a clinically vulnerable group. The Board is pleased to report that the safer custody department is staying in contact with the Samaritans, Listeners and trainees, to ensure that nobody feels abandoned or loses interest.

Safety officers – There are currently only six dedicated safety officers. Ideally, there should be a larger designated group. Staffing pressures during COVID-19 and the need to provide a sound regime have necessitated considerable cross-deployment. The Board hopes that as soon as it is practicable, this group of specialist officers will again be able to carry out their important work with the most needy prisoners.

In spite of the extreme challenges presented this year, the safer custody team has worked hard to ensure that other areas are not neglected.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

The head of safer custody chairs regular meetings each month, to review all incidents and trends of violence. These include analysis of potential gang-related activity. Specific work with individual prisoners is then formulated to address their problems with violence.

Recorded levels of violence at Long Lartin have reduced from 161 incidents in 2019 to 62 in 2020. This is a 61% reduction.

Assaults	Recorded	Serious
Prisoner on staff	36	5
Prisoner on prisoner	26	2
Total	62	7

The reduced regime time resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, with prisoners' daily time out of cell limited to 60/90 minutes, has contributed to the overall reduced levels of violence. The illicit 'prison economy' has been suppressed, and the normal resulting debts/bullying much reduced. The safety team has continued to visit wings, offering support and distraction packs.

Each incident of violence is investigated and, following review by an MDT, offenders become the subject of a CSIP, which is aimed at supporting violent individuals in custody and working collaboratively to achieve goals/targets in a non-violent way. Regular safer intervention meetings review the progress achieved with all current CSIPs. During 2020, a total of 30 prisoners were processed through the CSIP system.

The data from CSIP investigations, reviews and interventions is used to inform strategic decisions about violence and safety at the prison.

In addition to CSIPs, the following programmes are applied and progressed as appropriate for prisoners demonstrating violent traits:

- Kaizen – high-intensity violence reduction
- Resolve – medium-intensity violence reduction
- Time Wise – violence in custody
- Identity Matters – association with gang violence

HMP Long Lartin continues to demonstrate and record favourable levels of violence compared with other prisons in the LTHSE, achieving the second lowest position during the reporting year.

4.4 Vulnerable prisoners, safeguarding

Vulnerable prisoners are accommodated on A and B wings. The custody managers on these wings are experienced and supportive. The shortage of Listeners and Insiders has had an impact on these wings, as it has elsewhere.

4.5 Use of force (UoF)

The Board remains confident that UoF has been limited and appropriate, and that staff have dealt with incidents of violence with discipline and restraint. Tribute is paid to staff skills in de-escalating potentially dangerous situations.

The formal, independently monitored system for quality reviewing closed-circuit television footage of UoF incidents stalled during the period of the pandemic. One meeting was held in December. It is now intended to meet monthly with a Board presence.

It is now an operating policy requirement in the establishment to record situations as follows:

- hand-held cameras for all planned moves under restraint
- body-worn video cameras for all spontaneous incidents resulting in UoF
- body-worn video cameras when delivering incentives and earned privileges (IEP) reviews or potential bad news.

Measures introduced to aid staff involved in incidents requiring UoF, and control and restraint include:

- use of ratchet handcuffs
- new control techniques, including SPEAR and Five-Minute Interventions
- PAVA incapacitant spray.

UoF training was interrupted by COVID-19.

UoF incidents reported during 2020 were required for the first time to include routine protocol moves. This involves segregated prisoners who, for safety reasons, require routine use of mechanical restraints (ratchet or rigid bar handcuffs) and multi-officer escorts. These changes have inflated the UoF figures this year. There was a total of 503 UoF incidents during the reporting year, of which 423 were planned moves and 80 were spontaneous/unplanned.

4.6 Substance misuse

The coronavirus pandemic has had a significant effect on the availability of drugs and alcohol, and on efforts at control. Mandatory drug testing was only possible at the start of the year, and during October and November. On arrival, all prisoners who are already prescribed opioid substitute treatment are referred to the dedicated substance misuse nurse and Inclusion (psychosocial substance misuse key workers). Referrals for new treatments can be made by the prisoner, healthcare staff, Inclusion staff or other staff working with the prisoner (see also section 6.6).

At the end of the year, staff reported reduced levels of substance misuse, possibly due to reduced movements and association. Debt and violence, often associated with drug use, were also reported to be at lower levels than might have been expected. Inclusion staff expressed concern that prisoners found with drugs are not always referred, or encouraged to self-refer, for treatment programmes. As well as reducing opportunities for early treatment, this creates difficulties in accurately assessing the problem.

Drug dog searches have been used throughout the year, but during COVID-19 high-risk periods, cell searches have had to be limited to weapons and escape materials. Due to the risk of infection, drug searches have only been carried out when there has been strong intelligence. This may have led prisoners to believe that drugs will not be discovered. Search resources are concentrated on wings that have an entrenched drug culture. Statistics show that the use of 'hooch' (illegally brewed alcohol or its constituents) and drugs varies between wings.

The cessation of social visits closed one of the main drug routes into the prison. This has led to an increase in the receipt of letters impregnated with 'spice' (a new psychoactive substance). Main drug dealers become known, so impregnated letters are increasingly being sent to prisoners with no previous drugs profile, in the hope that the drugs will not be detected. Although all incoming mail should be swabbed, staffing pressures mean that total compliance cannot be guaranteed. The Board understands that drugs may have been imported in supposedly legal mail.

Following the usual pattern, larger amounts of illegal alcohol, and materials for its manufacture, were found in the period leading up to Christmas.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

The Board's concerns with building fabric dilapidation, raised in the 2019 report, remain but the following major improvements have been planned and are due for completion in April 2023:

- a comprehensive roof repair project
- a major update of the electricity supply
- a new kitchen is in the design stage to be built

The Nightsan system in four wings is planned to be upgraded, starting in March 2021. However, the Board continues to believe that anything less than in-cell sanitation is degrading for prisoners. It also leads to prisoners throwing urine and excrement from cell windows.

Amey continues to have a serious backlog of building maintenance and appliance repairs. The Board is particularly concerned that overgrown grassed areas are a health hazard, concealing human and food waste, which encourages vermin and gives the appearance of untidiness and neglect. Regular grass cutting is necessary.

In July, a serious rat infestation under the portable building housing the offender management unit (OMU) required immediate evacuation. The problem persists and control measures are ongoing.

The general cleanliness of cells, communal areas and corridors is good. Prisoners have done excellent work in painting corridors in bright colours during the COVID-19 restrictions.

Since the start of the restrictions, the kitchen staff have worked very effectively to provide adequate and nutritious food to meet all requirements, despite the many challenges, including the availability of prisoner workers. Since lockdown 1.0, the evening pack has been enhanced with treats.

The breakdown of essential kitchen equipment and unacceptable delays in effecting repairs has hindered catering management and adversely affected menu variety. Encouragingly, the Board has noticed a more proactive attitude from maintenance contractors since the recent appointment of a new service delivery manager.

Prisoners have periodically complained to Board members about the temperature of the food at some wing serveries. Reasons include inadequate kitchen oven capacity requiring food to be loaded on trollies well ahead of delivery, and failure to use serverie heat lamps.

5.2 Segregation, special accommodation

The segregation unit (now called the 'CSRU') at Long Lartin remains one of the largest in the prison estate.

Nationally, these units remain full (particularly in the LTHSE), resulting in a major shortage of appropriate places for long-term segregated prisoners. These prisoners

have complex needs and often suffer from mental health problems. Many become 'stuck' in the system, some for years, and are the subject of open assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) documents.

During the first quarter of the reporting year, some prisoners under segregation conditions were lodged on other residential wings. This is an unsatisfactory situation, resulting in wing staff having to manage two separate regimes. However, this was alleviated soon after the start of lockdown 1.0, when it became possible to accommodate all prisoners subject to Rule 45 (good order and/or discipline) in the segregation unit. The average occupancy during the year was 32.

Governors of LTHSE prisons undertake regular remote virtual segregation reviews, at which they seek to agree to limited transfers between establishments, but these meetings have been curtailed.

COVID-19 has further exacerbated the difficulties in agreeing a suitable transfer location for progressive moves because establishments with infection on site became classified as 'red' status and were unable to transfer prisoners in or out.

Special complex cases involving secure hospital treatment pathways cause frustrations for psychiatrists when, having identified a suitable establishment where a prisoner with complex needs could receive the treatment he needs, they then learn that the establishment cannot or will not allow the transfer.

A single analysis on 20 November records the following periods of stay for 28 prisoners under segregation conditions, 10 of whom (36%) were on high-level staff unlock due to violence risk:

- 9 (32%) at 0 – 100 days
- 3 (11%) at 100 – 200 days
- 5 (18%) at 200 – 300 days
- 4 (14%) at 300 – 365 days
- 7 (25%) at 365+ days (highest 755 days).

An emerging concern is that many prisoners perceive segregation as a route towards securing a transfer. Acts of violence and indiscipline are known to be deliberately planned to achieve relocation to the segregation unit, followed by a refusal to return to a wing at Long Lartin.

Segregation review boards are held regularly, under the direction of a governor, and every prisoner should have the opportunity to attend individual reviews every two weeks. The object should be to address behavioural issues and seek pathways forward out of the segregation unit. Regrettably, it is often the same prisoners being reviewed, with little or no news of any progression options. A mental health professional assigned to the unit would greatly assist this process (see section 6.3.3).

The Board is confident that staff work well and professionally under very difficult and stressful conditions. They manage prisoners who represent the most challenging and violent in the estate, many of whom require multiple staff unlocking protocols. The

environment is extremely demanding, with staff working in an area of persistent noise, prisoner aggression, damage to cells and ‘dirty protests’.

Assaults on staff are regular. Fourteen were reported during the year, of which seven resulted in serious injury and hospitalisation.

UoF records in the segregation unit show 27 spontaneous incidents during the reporting year. This excludes the routine protocol prisoner moves involving use of multiple staff wearing personal protective equipment and the use of handcuffs or mechanical restraints. Special accommodation cells have been used on nine occasions.

Despite these challenges, staff absences are low. The staff establishment for the segregation group has been, on average, nine below the recommended level and they have required support from other wings. Staff shortages result in the regime falling below expectation, which, in turn, exacerbates poor prisoner behaviour.

5.3 Staff/prisoner relationships, key workers

In general, the Board’s experience is that staff/prisoner relationships are good. These have been tested during COVID-19, when staff, in conjunction with the prisoners, have taken responsibility for their own local community. Matching what is happening in the outside community with the regime in the prison has been challenging but dealt with well by staff and prisoners.

Unfortunately, this positive picture was not reflected in the Board applications this year, where staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying, was the most common subject:

Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	Staff bullying	Other	Total
Applications	20	8	28
Confidential access	19	2	21
Total	39	10	49

However, it should be noted that a greater proportion were from the segregation unit, with an increase in the second half of the year.

Key worker interviews have continued throughout the year, when staff resources have permitted. However, the emphasis has been on welfare as opposed to progression. Due to the nature and regularity of contact, key worker targets have been met and exceeded. The recording of entries is not consistent. Some entries are logged on the Prison National Offender Management Information System (P-NOMIS) and others on Digital Services. The quality varies, from insightful and prisoner specific to standard narratives. Plans for the Board to speak to some prisoners about their key worker experience did not materialise due to the COVID-19 restrictions.

The introduction of the role of prisoner information advice and guidance workers and the resultant conflict with the prisoner consultative committee representative role has caused local dissatisfaction on some wings. Imparting information to the prisoners by managers has been regular, thorough, open and candid. During the second half of the year, the monthly consultative meetings were held weekly, and the prisoners given ample opportunity to participate.

Wing forums are an important precursor to consultative meetings and are intended to be held monthly. The most recent meetings on wings A to F were held in November; Perrie Blue in February; Perrie Red in October; and the pre-PIPE unit December (the only one in the year).

There are many important wing representative roles but, although these are highlighted at prisoner induction, they are not publicised on the wings.

5.4 Equality and diversity

The equality agenda took a back seat in the first half of the year. However, in response to the Lammy review and events in the USA, it was brought back to the forefront of prison life at Long Lartin. Additional equalities representatives were recruited, and the equality committee was reinstated and refreshed in September, when the staff actively promoted 'joint ownership' of this important aspect of prison life with prisoners. An equalities report is produced on a quarterly basis (although the content is inconsistent) and presented to the equalities committee. It has included P-NOMIS data on trends and specific issues for protected characteristics, discrimination incident report forms (DIRFs) and equality monitoring data by function.

The equalities committee has acknowledged that the prison needs to do more to focus on all aspects of protected characteristics and not just ethnicity. This is welcomed by the Board.

Events and celebrations are publicised; Black History Month was recognised with a comprehensive programme, and an awareness campaign for LGBTQ+ is planned for February 2021.

The prison introduced black, Asian and minority ethnic forums, which met during the latter part of the year until COVID-19 made them too much of a risk. The expectation is that they will restart once the restrictions are lifted.

There was a significant increase in the number of DIRFs submitted during the year:

DIRFs	2019	2020	Year on year
Submitted	121	174	+43.8%
Classified as DIRFs	53	148	+179.2%

There was a peak in June and July, the majority being from C wing and the segregation unit. It has been suggested that the issues around the Black Lives Matter movement could have caused the increase, together with the raising of the

equalities profile within the prison. The Board would welcome more detailed investigation into this situation after the fourth quarter of the year (January to March 2021).

Based on day to day observations the Board's experience is that the prison operates with fairness. It commends the commitment and progress made in this aspect of prison life during the latter part of the year.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

Throughout the reporting year, the faith team has not only continued to meet the challenges faced since the beginning of COVID-19 and lockdown 1.0, but have also worked tirelessly to support those prisoners who have faced additional personal challenges during this period. All faith groups have continued to distribute weekly sermons and prayer sheets to their congregations, and bereaved prisoners have received extra support with the opportunity to watch live streaming of family funerals. The team has worked with regimes in an effort to restart collective worship but this has sadly not been possible, in light of the developing COVID-19 situation. The outstanding work of the chaplains continues to bring much needed comfort and solace to the prison community.

5.6 Incentives and earned privileges

While the restricted COVID-19 regime has been in place, the majority of prisoners have been able to access the privileges afforded by their standard status, to make life as tolerable as possible. It is unfortunate that those prisoners with enhanced status have been unable to gain from the extra benefits to which they would normally be entitled. By contrast, prisoners on basic status have received some extra privileges, such as an in-cell television, which would not normally be afforded to them.

Key workers have, by necessity, focused attention on prisoner welfare checks and have consequently not had the opportunity to carry out the usual IEP reviews.

5.7 Complaints

A quarterly analysis over the reporting period reveals areas of concern to the Board.

The prison did not meet its target of dealing with 95% of complaints within the required deadline in any of the quarters (Q1: 94.3%; Q2: 90.3%; Q3: 92.8%; Q4: 93.6%).

The table below shows the number of complaints received according to stage:

Complaint	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Stage 1	729	775	875	604
Stage 2	196	195	197	134
Confidential Access	153	191	180	154
Total	1,079	1,161	1,252	892

The figures above are skewed by the large number of serial complainers, but the proportion of individual complainers remains large and fairly stable throughout the year.

Individual complainers	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number per quarter	419	421	440	348
Percentage per quarter	23.5	23.9	25.7	20.7

The following main areas for complaints are of concern and should be investigated:

Q1: property; residential

Q2: property; segregation

Q3: property; segregation; cash/financial

Q4: property; residential

Quality of complaint responses

In December, the Board conducted a quality review of prison responses. A total of 100 complaints were reviewed, with a sample from each month (excluding serial complaints). Samples were compared against the Prisoner Complaints Policy Framework Prison Service Instruction 02/2012). These HMPPS guidelines require responses to have a *problem-solving element, address the issues, have language that is easy to understand, be clear and signed off*. Compliance with procedural justice (*voice, neutrality, respect and trustworthiness*) was also considered. The review found that only 60% of responses fully met the standard. Of the remainder, 9% were found to be misleading, providing inadequate information and failing to resolve the issues raised.

5.8 Property

The handling of prisoners' property to an acceptable standard, whether within the prison or on transfer to another prison, remains an unresolved problem. Prisoners can wait a significant and unreasonable time to receive their property. Indeed,

property has been one of the chief single issues for Board applications and prison complaints over the last three years.

The Board has previously raised prisoner concerns that establishments apply different rules concerning property when a prisoner is transferred. It is understood that this is a recognised problem which causes confusion and concern for prisoners. The Board believes that HMPPS should standardise and clarify the rules on the management of property on transfer within the LTHSE.

Reception staff have made some welcome changes to processes allowing the transfer of property from the prison store to the wings. The Board hopes that this action and further focus will produce a reduction in property complaints.

As part of its review of complaints, the Board noted that rules concerning property, and mail order and incoming items from family were not consistently applied or understood.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare: general

Healthcare services are provided and managed by PPG. Mental healthcare and substance misuse interventions are provided by Inclusion, from Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.

Healthcare and Inclusion staff interact well but the Board continues to believe that greater interest and support from prison managers and wing staff is needed to develop and improve the outcome for physical and mental health patients alike. There has been a slight improvement in the time taken for CTC clearance but new key staff have been lost due to delays. Clearance can still take up to nine months for some new appointees.

In July, the Care Quality Commission reported favourably on Long Lartin's overall state of preparedness for a COVID-19 outbreak and level of care during pandemic restrictions. EDMs have been conscientiously implemented and the establishment evaded a serious outbreak until December. Prisoners appear to have been largely appreciative of efforts to deliver the best possible care in the difficult circumstances. There has been a backlog in all types of clinical appointments, but emergency medical and dental treatment has always been available, and most regular clinics were restored between lockdowns 1.0 and 2.0.

At the end of the reporting period, approximately 140 prisoners and six healthcare staff had tested positive for COVID-19, and five prisoners had been hospitalised.

Normally, quality assessment and improvement meetings are held monthly in healthcare, and local delivery board meetings, chaired by the Governor, are held periodically. Attendance at these meetings, which have been less frequent this year, continues to be disappointing and it is hoped that appropriate managers and external representatives will make more effort to attend in 2021 as other pressures ease.

6.2 Physical healthcare

Physical healthcare provision is professional, efficient and largely proactive. Staffing levels are below established strength but are adequate, with a combination of full-time, agency and bank staff. Dentistry, optometry, physiotherapy and podiatry services are all outsourced by PPG. Attempts to recruit an in-house audiologist have not been successful to date.

In spite of occasional lapses, medications have been distributed efficiently and securely twice daily during the pandemic, and some clinics have been conducted on the wings when space has been available. Comprehensive screening is completed on all new arrivals, who are quarantined on Perrie Blue wing.

Healthcare staff are required to be present at all Rule 45 reviews, and at ACCT reviews if necessary. Complaints and concerns peaked in May and June as pandemic restrictions began to affect appointments.

Inpatient cell and day-care facilities remain drab and dispiriting, and healthcare staff believe that a more pleasant and therapeutic environment would improve the recovery of patients.

The Board is concerned that healthy but difficult prisoners, and also those requiring purely social care should not be co-located with inpatients requiring clinical care

While COVID-19 has affected the delivery of healthcare services throughout the reporting period, the table below indicates that a reasonable degree of normality has been maintained, and that prisoners' appreciation of the service appears not to have suffered:

Statistic	2019	2020
Complaints/concerns	781	706
Clinic appointments	11,489	10,512
Clinic patients seen by practitioner	9,380	8,484
Clinic patients not attended	902	802
Hospital referrals by GP	111	71
Hospital appointments made	278	285
Appointments cancelled by hospital	59	68
Appointments cancelled by prison	32	21
Board healthcare-related applications	26	23

The table above indicates that, in spite of some reduction in clinical appointments, a good level of healthcare has been maintained through the year, and that there has been a slight decrease in complaints from prisoners.

6.3 Mental healthcare

6.3.1 Inclusion

The Inclusion team has now relocated to a more spacious office in a more central position within the prison. It is fully staffed with nurses and recovery practitioners but is waiting for a clinical psychologist and assistant psychologist to join. Two psychiatrists visit once weekly, but more psychiatric support is always needed.

Referrals to Inclusion during the reporting period are categorised below:

Referral origin	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Healthcare staff	4	3	1	1	9
Prison staff	7	6	5	5	23
Self-referral	12	3	6	7	29
Other establishment	52	22	32	12	109

Of those referred, 138 were identified with a mental health issue as their primary need, of whom 81 required and accepted further intervention.

Of the 32 prisoners referred with substance misuse as their primary need, 22 required and accepted further intervention.

Of the 109 prisoners received from other establishments, 60 did not require further intervention.

At the end of the period, there were 115 primary care and 20 secondary care mental health patients, and 71 prisoners receiving treatment for substance misuse. Ten prisoners were transferred to secure hospitals during the period and two are awaiting transfer.

COVID-19 regimes have restricted face-to-face contact between Inclusion staff and patients since March and there has been no group therapy. There has not been a significant increase in referrals, leading team managers to believe that the effect of less exposure to threats and violence has had a positive effect on the mental health of fearful and vulnerable prisoners. However, reports from wings during lockdown 3.0 have begun to indicate increased mental health concerns. As regimes return to normal, the Board looks forward to seeing proactive measures to assess the overall state of mental health in the establishment.

6.3.2 PIPE unit

For most of the year, seven prisoners have been following the pre-PIPE pathway, with one housed there for necessary additional support. All 'overflow lodgers' from the segregation unit were removed early in the year, which has greatly improved the smooth running of the unit. Unfortunately, COVID-19 has prevented the introduction of prisoners from the waiting list.

Five prisoners have completed the pathway, and one has been transferred out to continue the offender personality disorder pathway. The others have been waiting for suitable places for many months and are understandably frustrated by the further delays being caused by COVID-19. One has given up his progress on the pathway and chosen to return to a wing.

The atmosphere on the unit is mostly relaxed and purposeful, and prisoners generally say they are happy to be there. It is disappointing that one or two have become distressed and difficult to manage during this time. Socially distanced small group work with a psychologist restarted twice a week in the summer. One-to-one key work continues, but it is unfortunate that the community forum for all prisoners and staff cannot take place.

Custodial staffing has improved, with a new appointment and a larger proportion of appropriately trained dedicated staff.

6.3.3 Segregation unit

The recruiting of a Complex Nurse to be permanently assigned for care of prisoners in the segregation unit was deferred in 2020 by NHSE/I. It is hoped that, as COVID-19 pressure on the NHS reduces, this important new role will be filled by a suitably qualified nurse in 2021 (see section 5.2).

6.4 Social care

Approximately 10 prisoners are listed as having social care needs but only one, who is semi-permanently housed with in-patients, receives daily care from WCC carers.

The Board continues to be concerned that social care is not given sufficient priority. A draft memorandum of understanding between the establishment, WCC and PPG to document clearly responsibility for social care has been awaiting signature since January but has yet to be agreed. It is hoped that the memorandum will be signed and implemented early in 2021. With sufficient prominence and support, it should stimulate staff awareness of prisoners with social care needs and improve their quality of life.

6.5 Exercise, time out of cell, gym

Until March, the gym timetable was full and well executed. The Board observed excellent first-aid training.

Since the start of the COVID-19 restrictions, exercise, time out of cell and use of the gym have been drastically reduced. Nevertheless, the Board has been impressed by the prison's determination to provide innovative and thoughtful solutions to ensure maximum time out of cell while ensuring the safety of prisoners.

The Board commends the efforts which were made by gym staff to provide a full service between lockdowns on seven days a week, from 8.45am to 5.55pm, with attention paid to cleaning equipment and services.

In October, when restrictions permitted, prisoners had three hours of association time from Monday to Thursday, and two hours on Fridays and weekends. Telephone access became unrestricted and gym sessions of 30 minutes each week were available.

Work around cohort structuring has been relentless and those involved should be congratulated. Regrettably, as the prison suffered a COVID-19 outbreak towards the end of the year, time out of cell was again greatly reduced.

6.6 Drug rehabilitation

A long-serving dedicated nurse with specialist qualifications works in the healthcare department two days each week and is responsible for prisoners undergoing drug rehabilitation. She is supported by members of the Inclusion team. The normal regime would be for treatment sessions to be held individually for prisoners on the wings, followed by clinics within the healthcare department. Since the COVID-19 outbreak, review and urinalysis clinics have been cancelled. Daily supervised consumption of methadone and emergency treatments are being carried out on the wings, together with monthly wellbeing reviews for each patient.

There are 15 prisoners currently in treatment, with a further four requesting voluntary screening to demonstrate their abstinence. There are no prisoners waiting for treatment, and the target for all new referrals to be seen within a week is usually achieved. Necessary equipment is always readily available.

Following comprehensive clinical assessment, the treatment provided may be detoxification or maintenance. Prisoners self-guide their treatment plans, provided that they engage with the team and attend scheduled reviews and screening. Each prisoner's programme is individual to him. Most prisoners engage positively with their Inclusion key worker, who will attend review clinics for a joint approach. Thirteen-week reviews with a GP are standard practice but these are currently suspended due to COVID-19.

Success rates for achieving abstinence are around 60%, which can take many years. As prisoners make their own decision that they need support, refusals to engage clinically are very rare.

All notes of treatment programmes and decisions are confidential and only shared with prison staff with the prisoner's agreement. The Inclusion key worker completes an information sharing form with each prisoner, to ensure compliance with their wishes.

6.7 Soft skills

COVID-19 has prevented prisoners from taking part in events such as art competitions and money-raising charity efforts. Although not a major part of the life of most prisoners in a LTHSE prison, such activities have previously allowed some to follow their interests.

A small choir of volunteers and prisoners was formed by a prison chaplain. They performed in an excellent concert in early March, attended by prisoners, staff and members of the Board. Plans to continue with this commendable project were unfortunately put on hold due to COVID-19.

Activity packs have been distributed to prisoners in their cells, and much effort has been made to ensure that some education has continued. When a normal regime

can be resumed, it will be interesting to see if these steps have been sufficient to prevent a deterioration in skills previously acquired.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

The Board remains impressed with the work and commitment of MKC and the prison. At the beginning of the year, a full programme of learning included: English, mathematics, art, business, food safety; English as a second language, creative writing, 'Story from Dad', mentoring, nutrition, and customer service. A new tutor had been appointed for music.

In March, at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the education provided by MKC ceased. This led to urgent communication between the prison and MKC, to ensure that education restarted as soon as possible. The short-term measure of providing distraction packs became unacceptable. Between lockdowns 1.0 and 2.0, considerable progress was made with the provision of in-cell advice and guidance courses and in-cell skills action plans, carried out in line with prison safety arrangements.

Working with the prison, MKC introduced in-cell education packs. Officers distributed these and collected them for marking. In the opinion of the Board, these packs were of high quality and provided motivation for the prisoners.

MKC runs the library facility. Use has been restricted, and for most of the year library orderlies have delivered library provision.

The Board notes that, due to education budget restrictions, one excellent initiative, 'Music in Residence' will not be progressed.

7.2 Vocational training, work

The Board understood that negotiations leading to new employment opportunities were to be explored in 2020, but these have not taken place. Conversations with New Futures Network are in progress and it is hoped that they will result in more varied and meaningful work being offered to prisoners.

The workshops at Long Lartin consist of: two textile units; the Prisons Information Communication Technology Academy (PICTA) workshop; two woodwork units; a food packaging unit; and the laundry. Before COVID-19, the Board had concerns about the erratic use of the workshops, which was caused by staff shortages and equipment failures. Much of the work offered continues to be dull and repetitive.

The implementation of the 2020 pay review reduced some pay rates. Short-term sick pay was reduced from £4 to £2.50 per week, and long-term sick pay from £8 to £3.25 per week (both inclusive of any basic payments). The Board believes that these rates should be reviewed.

Since the start of COVID-19, prisoners have been unable to go to the workshops and the laundry, and the breakfast food-packaging units have been manned by staff and instructors. More cleaning jobs have been created. Although prisoners have had little employment, the Board notes that wages allocation has continued.

During the COVID-19 restrictions, some refreshment of the information technology (IT) equipment in the PICTA workshop was planned but this has not been completed.

Virtual work allocation meetings begun during the COVID-19 restrictions are thought by some staff to be unsatisfactory. The Board hopes that they will revert to meeting in person as soon as it becomes possible.

7.3 Offender management, progression

It has been a challenging year for the OMU. The year saw a shortage of prison offender managers (POMs). Their working situation was disrupted by a rat infestation, resulting in the OMU office base being moved out of the main prison. This was further exacerbated by COVID-19, making it necessary for probation POMs to work from home.

The vacant position for head of offender management delivery/senior probation officer was filled in December and, by the end of the year, numbers has increased to eight full-time POMs, with only 1.5 vacancies.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, POMs have been coming into the prison on a rota basis one day each week, to carry out priority work and act as duty POM. Face-to-face meetings with prisoners are rare, although some virtual meetings have taken place. Communications are either in writing or by messages via wing offices or key workers. Applications to the Board have highlighted the difficulty that some prisoners have faced in gaining direct access to their POM.

The offender management delivery/senior probation officer remains highly committed to the Offender Management in Custody model. Pre-COVID, communications between POMs and key workers followed this model, but this has changed since the start of the restrictions, with the changes to the role of key workers.

There are no OMU performance indicators at present. The backlog of offender assessment system (OASys) assessments is acknowledged, and is a priority for 2021. Virtual meetings are being considered to aid this process.

The prison was prompt to implement digital categorisation, the revised security categorisation, which went live on 1 October. This has taken up a considerable amount of time and has resulted in an increased number of potential category C prisoners, who will need to be processed when practicable.

To enable POMs to carry out their role effectively, a permanent, suitable office base and appropriate prisoner interview facilities are badly needed.

7.4 Family contact

The team responsible for implementing family contact during this difficult year has worked extremely effectively in the face of a number of logistical challenges.

The commendable early introduction of remote visits ('Purple Visits') proved difficult, not through any fault of the prison but due to software and internet problems. When introduced in August/September, take-up was low; however, given that most

prisoners are remote, and that this provides the opportunity to see family whom they would not otherwise have been able to see, the level of interest increased. It is available to all prisoners (including foreign nationals, healthcare inpatients and segregated prisoners). After a promising start, interest waned again due to IT problems, together with a booking system not fit for purpose. An example was in the week starting 22 November, when over 135 remote visits were cancelled. While the team dealing with this are being as responsive as possible, the problem was mainly caused by the 'person outside' not responding or being unable to make the visit at the time or date arranged. A more flexible booking system would result in fewer cancellations, provide a better service for prisoners and reduce wasted staff time.

Nevertheless, the take-up of visits in December was a healthy 50%. The prison is to be commended for taking the initiative during lockdowns to arrange an extra visit per month in addition to the national policy of one visit per prisoner per month.

Traditional telephone contact continues to be popular, with the prisoners using their precious time out of cell to make their calls.

Actual visits restarted after lockdown 1.0 and lockdown 2.0. The visits hall was reconfigured to allow for eight visits, with a further two in other rooms, and the procedure has worked well. The hour clock starts ticking from when the visitor sits down. However, some prisoners described the experience as impersonal and difficult, mainly due to being unable to hug their children and the compulsory wearing of face masks. As result of this, demand has reduced. Visits stopped in December, following the COVID-19 outbreak.

8. The work of the IMB

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	15
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	12
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	8
Total number of visits to the establishment	480
Total number of segregation reviews attended	700

Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	6	7
B	Discipline, including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	11	11
C	Equality	7	12
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	17	3
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	20	10
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	6	6
F	Food and kitchens	1	8
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	26	23
H1	Property within this establishment	31	35
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	30	12
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	1	2
I	Sentence management, including home detention curfew, release on temporary licence, parole, release dates, recategorisation	25	21
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	35	49
K	Transfers	4	11
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system	9	13
	Total number of applications	229	223

Applications dealt with under confidential access: 38 (20 in the previous year)