



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Onley

**For reporting year
1 March 2020 – 28 February 2021**

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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 international human rights treaty designed to strengthen protection for people deprived of their liberty. The protocol recognises that such people are particularly vulnerable and aims to prevent their ill treatment through establishing a system of visits or inspections to all places of detention. OPCAT requires that states designate a National Preventive Mechanism to carry out visits to places of detention, to monitor the treatment of and conditions for detainees and to make recommendations for the prevention of ill treatment. The IMB is part of the United Kingdom's National Preventive Mechanism.

2. Description of the establishment

HMP Onley is an adult male category C resettlement prison , situated between Rugby and Daventry. The population is split approximately **75%/25%** between London and the Midlands area prisoners. However, the prison is part of the East Midlands group.

In March 2020, the certified normal accommodation was **742**. Prisoners are housed in 12 wings. Wings A-I, including F wing and the care and separation unit (CSU), radiate from a single corridor in the main block, which also includes the kitchen, gym, education, chaplaincy and healthcare unit. Wings J and K are located in a separate block as is the newest accommodation, L wing. Since March 2020 and COVID-19, the number of residents was consistently at **645**.

Physical and mental health services and dentistry are provided by Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. The Coventry Samaritans train the Listeners and peer supporters.

The agency delivering education during this reporting year was People Plus supported by industry players including Halfords.

Phoenix Futures manages drug rehabilitation. Library services are provided by Northamptonshire County Council. Voluntary sector services include the Samaritans, the Prison Fellowship, the Shannon Trust and the Sycamore Trust.

3. Executive summary

3.1 Background to the report

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

Fortunately, close monitoring continued until shortly after 10 March 2020 so that there is a solid body of first-hand evidence available for the pre-lockdown period. Board members have continued limited on-site monitoring from July 2020.

3.2 Main judgements

How safe is the prison?

During much of the reporting year, due to the restricted regime, overall the establishment has seen a reduction in violence and self-harm. However, the Board is concerned that from November 2020, incidents of violence and self-harm began to rise. However, despite this recent rise, the incidents of violence are still lower than the previous year.

Despite reduced staffing due to self-isolation and shielding, the regime has operated efficiently and safely. The cohort system has worked well in containing and reducing the spread of the virus and in reducing debt-related incidents due to the prisoners not mixing with others during association or free flow.

Intelligence-led searches have found a number of illicit items and Rapiscan continues to identify a number of mail items containing new psychoactive substances (NPS).

Throughout the lockdown, the establishment has been calm and efficient and every effort has been made to ensure COVID-19 hygiene protocols and social distancing.

The Board was seriously concerned to report on 30 December 2020, after intelligence was received from a member of staff, that a firearm was found in one of the workshops within the prison. Whilst an investigation is ongoing involving HMPPS security and Northampton Police, no charges have been brought against any individuals, although several security moves and re-categorisation of some prisoners has occurred at the time of writing.

How fairly and humanely are prisoners treated?

The Board believes the prisoners have been treated fairly and humanely. The co-operation from the prisoners has been good and many prisoners have advised the Board that they feel safer in the current regime.

During monitoring, the Board has found the prison to be generally clean, tidy, and organised. Prisoners have been provided with distraction and education packs, additional TV channels and faith reflection sheets to keep them occupied during extended time in cells.

The senior management team (SMT) has dealt with issues well and worked as a team.

How well are prisoners' health and wellbeing needs met?

Generally, the prisoners' health and wellbeing needs have been met. Healthcare has managed some planned and emergency support. At the start of the lockdown, healthcare experienced high vacancy levels. The Board is pleased to advise that by the end of the reporting year, most vacancies have been filled. The Board has seen a number of complaints regarding healthcare issues including dentistry. Some urgent and long-term dental issues have not been resolved and planned medical appointments have not occurred.

Escorts to hospital have been reduced to emergency escorts only.

How well are prisoners progressed towards successful resettlement?

Some resettlement services started back in late August 2020 and business as usual resumed at the end of September 2020. This means no face-to-face services were available between the end of March 2020 and the end of August 2020. The Board is concerned that those prisoners due for release have had limited preparation, which could impact on the success of the prisoner in not re-offending.

Lack of meaningful activities including education and work has also occurred, with limited workshops re-commencing from September 2020. This will have an impact on the readiness and skills of those prisoners coming to the end of their sentences.

3.3 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

There is an urgent need for increased capacity in one particular area: category D (open) prisons. There is also a need to increase this capacity in London and the south east. Far too many prisoners at HMP Onley are a very long way from their homes and families and this makes resettlement much harder for these prisoners.

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

There needs to be a prompter allocation of recategorised prisoners to an appropriate location. Both category C prisoners needing a category B space and prisoners granted category D status can wait a considerable time to be transferred.

The Board has been advised that the need for intimate partner violence courses is an East Midlands wide issue. If a suitable training provider can be found, the introduction of an appropriate course should be considered. Additional staff may be required to run the training.

Urgent attention should now be given to the funding of windows in wings A – H, which are no longer fit for purpose and have been mentioned in this report for several years.

Ways should be explored as to how to retain good long-standing officers in HMPPS. We see all too often good officers leaving to pursue careers outside HMPPS due to better progression and increased salaries. These losses unfortunately lead to more new, inexperienced officers at HMP

Onley. As mentioned in last year's report, increasing the local pay allowance to that in London might help to support the recruitment and retention of prison officers and help the Governor manage attrition.

TO THE GOVERNOR

The Governor, SMT, staff and agencies should be congratulated on steering the prison through the COVID-19 pandemic regime changes/restrictions and keeping spirits high.

As we exit this, HMP Onley must focus on its purpose as a training and resettlement prison. It is vital that more industries become involved with the prison to assist the men to gain vocational qualifications.

Ways should be found to increase the number of prisoners attending workshops and education and improve the percentage of prisoners engaged in meaningful activities/education which provide them with either a qualification or a skill on release.

3.4 Progress since the last report

Due to COVID-19, progress made since the last report is not comparable. The Board believes the handling of the pandemic by the establishment has been well executed, evidenced by minimal disease transmission and long periods with no transmission at all. The SMT have worked well as a team to ensure the safety of the prisoners and staff.

Considerable work has been done to improve cleanliness. The Board has observed good prison cleanliness throughout the reporting year.

Prisoners reported to the IMB that staff, including wing officers, key workers, offender managers and agencies had supported them during lockdown. The basis of trust established, in particular between wing officers and men, meant that the changes to the regime were accepted. Many men have praised the efforts of the Governor and his staff in keeping them safe.

Prior to the pandemic, the prison has made excellent progress in the development of the key worker, offender management in custody (OMiC) initiatives, which saw improved relationship between prisoners, staff and the safer custody team. The safer custody governor should be commended.

The prison officer entry level training (POELT) mentoring programme is well established with national vocation qualifications (NVQ) and apprenticeship schemes. These two schemes follow different educational paths and it would be beneficial if new officers followed the same path.

The Board wants to recognise the effort and commitment that has been shown by the establishment to testing staff and IMB members for COVID-19. HMP Onley was one of the first establishments to implement staff testing and the overall uptake rate during February was **70%**. However, it should be noted that the uptake for prison officers is **50%** and every effort is being made by the testing team and the deputy governor to encourage a higher take-up.

The impact of COVID-19 however, cannot be underestimated. The reduced rehabilitation services available since March 2020 may have significant implications for the prisoners following release.

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

4.1 Reception and induction

The Board has found the reception and Induction process to be well executed and prisoners are treated with respect and care. During the early stages of COVID-19, April 2020 to July 2020, a minimum number of prisoners were transferred to HMP Onley. Since the beginning of September 2020, transfers using the reverse cohort system (when prisoners coming into the prison are isolated for a period of time to minimise infection risk) have taken place.

Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, transferring prisoners are not searched. To detect drugs or mobile phones, a passive dog and metal detectors are used.

All arriving prisoners are located in H wing for a 14-day quarantine period. Prisoners are not seen by healthcare during induction but instead seen on H wing. The Board is aware of instances where arriving prisoners who have been prescribed specific medication have been unable to receive the same medication in HMP Onley. This is because each prison/region has their own medication protocol.

Property continues to be a significant issue on transfer. This is often because there is not enough space on the transfer vehicle or the prisoner has an amount of property which is in excess of the carrier's protocol. This causes considerable work for staff and frustration for the prisoners. There appears to be inconsistency between Serco and Amey who conduct the transfers with regard to allowable property.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

During the initial regime change and lockdown period there was a reduction in incidents of self-harm and those individuals who carry out self-harm. Whilst this is positive, it must be noted that the regime of near complete lockdown and reducing the mixing of wing prisoners has been a significant factor.

The Board is concerned that since October 2020 the number of self-harm incidents and the number of individuals self-harming has risen.

Self-harm incidents

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2019	21	21	29	21	44	38	19	31	39	32	21	37	353
2020	26	22	22	17	9	10	6	8	9	22	23	10	184

Self-harming individuals

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Number of Individuals	15	15	14	12	5	9	5	7	7	16	11	7	123

The majority of individuals self-harming occurred in the age groups 25-29 and 30-39, with some prisoners self-harming on multiple occasions. The reasons for self-harm vary. Situational (cell moves/adjudications) and symptomatic (mental health/paranoia/stress) are the most common.

The white population of 55% was significantly more likely to self-harm, representing **73%** of all incidents. The black population of 35% represented **10%** of self-harm incidents; both these figures are disproportionate to the population.

The number of assessment, care in custody and teamwork documents (ACCTs) has remained low throughout the reporting year with an average of nine open ACCTs at any one time. During monitoring visits, the Board has evidenced consistent and appropriate completion of ACCT documents.

HMP Onley currently has 10 Listeners. The only calls taking place however, are 'casual' rather than requested listening. The Samaritans' service has been available throughout the pandemic via telephone. The Board has been advised that the Samaritans are rewriting Listener training to reflect the restricted regime and as of December 2020, operational instructions and risk assessments for the Samaritans to visit have been approved. This will enable face-to-face Listener support.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

Challenge, support and intervention plans (CSIPs) have been rolled out across HMP Onley. Staff are making referrals in a timely fashion to the safer custody team. Prior to COVID-19 the number of referrals from key workers was rising and these referrals were more detailed from key workers when observed in monitoring.

There has been a reduction in violent incidents of **41.5%** in 2020 compared to 2019. It must be noted that the regime change is the most likely cause rather than specific establishment intervention. It is recognised by the Governor and the SMT that when free flow re-commences post COVID-19, the management of prisoner movements will be a critical success factor in helping men feel safe and comfortable whilst attending their places of work.

Most of the incidents of violence occurred around the tea-time period when prisoners did not want to return to their cells.

Also, in most of the incidents, victims and perpetrators fell in the three lower age groups with age group 25-29 being the highest and disproportionate to the population.

Prisoners self-isolating include those shielding due to COVID-19 and those under possible or verified threat.

There have been no reported deaths in custody.

Violent incidents

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2019	32	27	21	40	31	23	15	15	8	11	14	16	253
2020	26	17	18	11	13	8	5	5	10	5	15	11	148

Incident breakdown

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Assault on staff	12	9	6	7	6	3	3	1	8	3	6	7	71
Assault on prisoner	12	9	9	2	3	2	1	0	1	2	4	4	49
Fight	2	4	3	2	4	3	1	4	1	0	5	0	29

The highest incidents of violence were against staff. The biggest drivers occurred during non-compliance such as cell moves and during restraint. Removal of illicit items also caused assaults on staff. The majority of incidents of violence occurred in the 25-29 age group. No incidents at height were reported.

4.4 Use of force

During the reporting year, overall use of force reduced by **24%**. The reason for this reduction is thought to be mainly the restricted COVID-19 regime. The Board believes staff have had more time to deal with issues arising such as de-escalation discussions before resorting to use of force.

Use of force incidents

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2019	26	19	31	44	34	43	36	40	42	36	34	34	419
2020	40	48	33	29	22	28	20	14	19	21	22	23	319

The main reason for use of force was due to disobeying a direct order. Removal of illicit items also required, in some cases, use of force. During 2020, there were **53** incidents of staff injuries during use of force action. There were no reports of prisoners being injured as a result of use of force.

4.5 Substance misuse

Substance misuse continues to be prevalent within the establishment although in comparison to 2019, there were fewer recorded findings of illegal substances.

Security finds

	2019	2020
Drugs	514	386
Hooch	332 litres	249 litres
Mobile phones	320	140
Weapons	136	67
Tobacco	99	64
Phone accessories	226	313

The above table shows a reduction in all illicit items found during 2020. Most searches are intelligence led with all intelligence reports (IRs) 'triaged' twice a day. The Board is informed that searches are **70%** effective. The security team believes that routes of incoming illicit items are likely to be via mail and packages. Hot spots for passing illicit items are the kitchens, healthcare, cells situated close to the adjoining wings, exercise yards and the wing-to-wing interconnecting doors.

The Board is advised that any prisoner found under the influence of illicit substance is offered healthcare support at the time they are identified.

Healthcare attends Code Blues (when a prisoner collapses or stops breathing) and these should be noted on the daily report in order that the substance misuse team can intervene if required. The Board has concerns over the accuracy and fullness of the daily report in capturing such individuals who may need support.

The governor suspended mandatory drug testing (MDT) in March 2020 to avoid close contact with prisoners and the risk of transmission.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

The establishment has been kept clean and tidy. On most monitoring visits, Board members found the wings to be well looked after, with equipment in reasonable working order and non-working equipment repaired promptly. The association areas and the serveries were found to be mostly clean and tidy. There have been issues with some showers, for example, broken privacy doors and some showers being out of order prior to repairs. Issues that have been identified by the Board have been raised with the governor and the response has been positive.

The food offered has been varied and respectful of lifestyle, religious diversity and health issues. The catering staff appear to work effectively with healthcare and chaplaincy to ensure menus meet an individual's needs where applicable. The Board has observed the small number of men working in the kitchen to be engaged and the environment to be productive and positive.

The previously reported rat issue appears to have been resolved and as a result, food and ingredients are stored correctly. However, during February 2021, there was a suspected re-infestation.

During regular monitoring of the kitchen, the Board has found the kitchen to be clean and efficient. The Board has evidenced the kitchen journals being kept up to date on most visits including temperature checks for fridges, food, equipment, fire extinguishers, first aid boxes, search gate and door checks, hand washing and governor attendance.

Training and mentoring of the kitchen workers appears good although they are no longer offered the opportunity to work towards gaining a catering NVQ. This issue has been raised with the governor as the Board is of the opinion such a qualification could lead to employment opportunities on release.

5.2 Segregation, special accommodation

The care and separation unit (CSU) remains busy. The staff are one of the key strengths. Officers engage well with prisoners in the unit and demonstrate experience in dealing with difficult prisoners in a professional, fair and constructive manner.

The CSU has a custodial manager (CM) and governor who offer good direction and leadership to both staff and prisoners. The unit is clean and tidy.

On average, throughout the reporting year, approximately 10 prisoners were segregated at any one time. This is comparable to 2019. The Board has not received complaints of any segregated prisoner receiving a negative experience.

The Board however, is concerned that prisoners with mental health needs requiring secure mental health hospital accommodation frequently remain in the CSU for long periods. This is reported to be due to the lack of secure mental health accommodation.

The Board also notes that on several occasions during the reporting year, prisoners requiring category B accommodation have been kept in the CSU for lengthy periods prior to being moved to a category B establishment, due to lack of available spaces and COVID-19 restrictions. This is a concern to the Board.

Despite the start of the pandemic in March 2020, resulting in the Board's absence from the establishment, the chair of the Board was advised by telephone of any prisoner transfers into the CSU. Since July 2020, a member of the Board has seen all prisoners in the CSU weekly. The Board has visited prisoners in the CSU, attended GOOD reviews and occasional ACCT reviews.

5.3 Staff-prisoner/detainee relationships, key workers

During monitoring visits, staff-prisoner relationships have been observed to be mostly positive and respectful.

Due to the risk of COVID-19 infection transmission, only the most vulnerable prisoners, approximately **60**, had access to a key worker. The Board is aware that although the absence of a key worker for all prisoners may have had an impact on positive outcomes, the small cohort system does appear to have facilitated more stable prisoner relationships. This may be because prisoners have reported to the Board they feel safer residing in small cohorts.

5.4 Equality and diversity

There has been a reduction in the number of discrimination incident report forms (DIRFs) submitted in this reporting year from **220** to **92**. This is due in part to a national change in the reporting of DIRFs including the removal of staff/prisoner DIRFs which are now reported through the prison complaints system.

Race continues to be the highest category of complaint, representing **66%** of all DIRFs. The establishment has a **58%** black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) population, therefore the number of DIRFs submitted regarding race is disproportionate to the population. Only **27%** of DIRFs have a reason/incident that caused the complaint. Since September 2020 the way DIRF data is collected has been updated to include a reason or incident that has caused the complaint. In total, **8.6%** of all DIRFs reported were upheld following investigations.

The number of DIRFs related to disability was **20** representing 22% of claims. This is broadly proportionate to the prison population, of which **19%** are registered disabled.

Six prisoners have been trained in protected characteristics, to provide support to other prisoners. These trained prisoners are able to provide valuable guidance by offering awareness of discriminatory behaviours. Training further prisoners is planned for 2021.

DIRFs

DIRF's by protected characteristic	Number of DIRF's January 2020 to December 2020
Age	3
Disability	20
Gender/sex	0
Gender realignment	0
Marriage/civil partnership	0
Pregnancy and maternity	0
Race	61
Religion and belief	6
Sexual orientation	2
Total	92

Since April 2020, all prisoners were moved to either standard **(52%)** or enhanced **(48%)** status.

Prisoners aged 21-24 were the most likely age group to be on the standard level of incentives and earned privileges (IEP).

Adjudications

From January 2020 to December 2020, **54%** of adjudications were proven. The Board has been made aware that the low proven rate is often due to paperwork or process issues. In addition, since the start of the pandemic, the number of adjourned adjudications has increased in part whilst prisoners are isolating on H wing. Those in the 25-29 age group were the most likely to be charged and to have adjudications proven which is disproportionate to the prison population. From July 2020 to December 2020, there were proportionate charged and proven adjudications across all religions and ethnicities.

The equalities action team (EAT) and race equality action team (REAT) meet quarterly and are chaired by the governor. The Board has visibility of the minutes and it is the intention of the Board to attend these meetings during the next reporting year.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

Throughout lockdown, the chaplaincy team have provided support as follows:

- **weekly faith specific reflection leaflets**
- **bereavement counselling where possible**
- **assisting in 'live stream' funerals**
- **Wayout TV for Friday prayers and Sunday services**
- **telephone support calls for a family member with COVID-19**
- **daily visits to CSU**

The chaplaincy has continued to service the prison community and aimed to be as visible as possible during the lockdown. They work well together as a team supporting and representing all major faiths with the exception of Rastafarian and Mormon. It is planned to have chaplains for these faiths in 2021.

There has been no collective worship since March 2020.

Religious festivals are supported via packs including donations from staff and the community of sweets/chocolates.

From 2 September 2020, the chaplaincy introduced wing-based clinics (not faith specific) on a rotating basis. Wings B, D, E, G, J and K are allocated two sessions per week and remaining wings one session per week.

During monitoring in January 2020, the Board found that the wing clinics were providing a valuable service. Uptake varies and the chaplains are varying the times of the wing clinics as much as possible to capture those most in need.

5.6 Incentives and earned privileges

During the initial COVID-19 lockdown, the national instruction to temporarily place basic level prisoners on to standard level was delivered. All prisoners were issued with TVs. However, as restrictions eased, a very small number of prisoners were unable or unwilling to adhere to the minimum acceptable level of behaviour relevant to standard status. Sanctions were introduced in October 2020 that included removal of TV for 3 days; prisoners were then able to demonstrate a 7-day period of acceptable behaviour before temporarily returning to standard status

5.7 Complaints

The total number of complaints during the reporting year was similar to the total number reported during 2019. The main complaints, as in 2019, fell into the categories of property and re-categorisation. Notably 2020 saw an increased number of complaints recorded as miscellaneous. On investigation by the Board, it was concluded that a number of these complaints could have been coded to another category. This is likely to be due to different complaints clerks' interpretation throughout the year. Further training may be helpful to capture some of the complaints more accurately.

The establishment work to a seven-day response to complaints and achieve this **95%** of the time. The Board is concerned that whilst healthcare complaints are logged separately on the healthcare system, they are not visible on the prison complaints system. The Board also believes some healthcare complaints may not be logged.

Complaint Category	2019	2020
Property	242	191
Monies	74	3
Correspondence	42	0
Closed visits	3	5
Visits	14	30
Security	28	46
Employment	196	90
Conditions	209	52
Bullying	26	5
Segregation	6	8
Food	48	51
Recategorisation	191	201
Transfer	58	54
Regime	13	9
Assaults	8	8
General applications	12	96
Confidential access	118	193
Adjudications	30	25
Canteen	24	22
Staff	58	0
PIN telephones	13	21
ROTL	0	6
IEP	85	53
Wages	9	45

Facilities	4	12
Miscellaneous	115	411
HDC	23	18
OASys	6	4
Parole	3	7
Sentence planning	33	22
Total	1,691	1,688

5.8 Property

Property continues to be one of the highest areas of complaint to the Board. Property often 'goes missing' either because it does not travel with prisoners during their transfer to HMP Onley or, the number of bags exceeds the prisoner or carrier allowance.

Also, property arriving into stores from HMP Pentonville is often not labelled with the prisoner's name and number and property arriving by courier can also be unnamed. All these issues cause ongoing frustration to prisoners and staff and are time-consuming for the Board.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Physical healthcare

All prisoner healthcare application forms, since the beginning of the pandemic have been triaged daily according to medical need.

The Board has received complaints from prisoners, throughout the reporting year, of delays in receiving medical help and in particular dentistry. The Board have been advised that healthcare is trialling a new system whereby each wing is allocated appointments on specific days, to speed up the appointment process. Dentistry, from January 2021, has started providing eight dental sessions per week. Optical services have also resumed to provide services fortnightly along with physiotherapy weekly and podiatry fortnightly.

Hospital visits were limited to emergencies. The Board was informed, in January 2021, that remote medical video consultations have started to take place with Visonable technology.

Recruiting nurses with specialist substance misuse experience to the integrated drug treatment service has been difficult. Earlier in the reporting year there were two staff vacancies and one on long term sick. The Board was advised in January 2021 that the vacancies have now been filled.

Prisoners shielding at the height of the pandemic were seen regularly by healthcare and a nurse visited the shielding wing daily.

One prisoner has been diagnosed with stage 4 cancer and is receiving end of life treatment. The establishment has applied for an executive release in order that he can receive treatment in London.

Those self-isolating include shielding COVID-19 prisoners who in some cases have continued to shield throughout the pandemic regardless of any regime relaxations.

6.2 Mental healthcare

Earlier in the reporting year, the mental health care team (MHCT) was significantly understaffed. The situation has been resolved. The team consists of three registered nurses (in the fields of primary healthcare, learning disability and mental health), a trauma nurse, occupational therapist, support worker, one psychologist, two psychology assistants and a psychiatrist.

All prison officers receive some mental health awareness training during their induction. The Board is informed by the MHCT, however, that the amount of mental health awareness training during induction is to be increased to incorporate mental health trauma training. Once it is safe to do so, the MHCT plan to provide mental health trauma awareness training on the wings for all officers.

Since COVID-19, referrals to the MHCT have received a 'check in' appointment at their cell by a member of the team. Due to staff shortages earlier in the reporting year, not all non-urgent referrals were assessed within the target of five days or treatment able to start within one week following assessment. The Board was informed in January 2021 that both targets are now being met and there is no waiting list for treatment. Urgent referrals have continued to be seen within the target time of 48 hours.

A member of the MHCT attends the first ACCT review. If a prisoner has mental health needs, a member of the MHCT attends all subsequent reviews. Most prisoners awaiting transfer to hospital are held in the CSU where they can be better monitored. Some waits have been extensive. Since September 2020, the situation has improved but prisoners can still wait 5-6 weeks for a hospital bed.

6.3 Exercise, time out of cell, gym

During the initial stages of the lockdown, prisoners were able to leave their cells for one hour a day. During this allotted time, prisoners needed, for example, to do laundry, shower and make phone calls, leaving limited time for exercise. Although the gym was closed, the outside facilities have been kept in reasonable order. The Board has observed staff encouraging men to go outside and exercise.

With the easing of the restrictions in September 2020, the allotted time out of cell was increased to one and a half hours per day. Each wing was allocated scheduled gym sessions per week.

Since the introduction of the national lockdown in January 2021 and the establishment reverting to HMPPS regime level 4, the gym closed. The Governor and SMT are aware of the importance of exercise and have maintained the outside cardio areas.

6.4 Drug rehabilitation

The substance misuse team is operated by Phoenix Futures. Since the start of the pandemic, new arrivals receive a letter from the team containing information on how they can be contacted. Prior to COVID-19, recovery champions met new prisoners on induction and assisted them to become familiar with the available services. In the absence of the recovery champions, the Board is concerned that those with poor literacy skills could be missing out on the help and support that is available. Currently, wing staff communicate information about the service.

The team works in two cohorts and uses a blended approach of remote and in-prison services. There is an answerphone for out of hours and weekends.

Clinical prisoners (those on medication) are seen every four weeks; non-clinical prisoners are seen every six to eight weeks on a one-to-one basis. No group sessions have been held since the end of March 2020. Group sessions are proven to provide important rehabilitation techniques. Without these sessions the impact on the prisoners' rehabilitation may be hindered.

Referrals mainly come from healthcare. If a prisoner is 'Code Blue' on the daily debrief report and the team is not working with the prisoner, they will contact healthcare to gain an understanding of the incident and to establish what stage the prisoner is at with his recovery. Prison staff will refer prisoners if they believe them to have developed a substance problem following their arrival or during their time at HMP Onley.

During November 2020, **357** prisoners requiring some form of support were on the database. This represented **57%** of the prison population. The database includes prisoners with addiction and those that require rehabilitation as part of their sentence plan. In January 2021 the breakdown as follows:

- **prisoners assessed as needing drug treatment – 156**
- **prisoners assessed as required to undertake impact interventions as part of sentence planning – 73**
- **current prisoners who have completed Impact Intervention – 3**
- **prisoners who have been offered the service but declined – 37**
- **prisoners who have completed all work with their allocated worker - 15**

Along with community specialists, the rehabilitation team works closely with the families of addicts once the prisoner is released, as it is likely he will return to an environment that may perpetuate addiction.

6.5 Soft skills

There are many examples. We commend the Governor for his efforts to give prisoners a more interesting environment in which to live and work. Prior to COVID-19 the very active and impressive art department, part of the education hub, enabled the many long corridors and recreation areas to be decorated with some first-rate pictures painted by the prisoners. Many prisoners act as Listeners, mentors, equality representatives, violence reduction representatives and prisoner information desk workers.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library. Since COVID-19, education services have been provided via education packs. The packs are comprehensive and cover a range of programmes at various levels. The introduction of a subject diagnostic form enables prisoners to be matched to appropriate programmes more easily.

Some of the courses are accredited but not those with a practical element such as dry lining.

Communication regarding queries/questions and support is provided in writing which means some courses are taking longer than usual to complete. The Board is of the opinion that many prisoners may fail to complete an education pack due to poor understanding or lack of motivation to work alone.

The number of prisoners engaged in education is reported to the governor bi-weekly. On average, **18%** of the population are requesting education packs. This is a measure of packs requested not necessarily completed.

The education team works with the activities department to ensure skills required for employment in the London area remain relevant. There are a range of post COVID-19 offerings in development. They include:

- **more vocational courses**
- **increasing accredited programmes – especially construction**
- **developing the Gateway and Way to Learn programmes**
- **re-opening the ‘lock in’ for accredited training in hospitality**
- **improved course/prisoner matching**
- **developing special needs learning**

Whilst the COVID-19 restrictions continue, the education department is advertising on Wayout TV to promote their courses. A new course on motor mechanics was launched in January 2021.

The Board is very concerned that in the absence of tutors on the wings to guide and support the students in an active and practical way, it is likely some may be reluctant to learn or will fail to progress. These men could leave the establishment without a useful qualification that could help them gain employment.

Each wing is allocated two library visits per week. It would appear the library is mainly used by the ‘seasoned learners’ who continue to progress.

7.2 Vocational training, work

Throughout lockdown, minimal vocational training has been taking place. Education packs have been provided but only some have been returned.

Wayout TV has been used for learning opportunities and provided information for prisoners which they have found reassuring.

Additional TV channels have provided a greater variety of entertainment who those who choose not to engage with educational learning activities and materials.

Limited work activities re-commenced in September 2020 including:

- **waste management, concrete and the kitchen employing seven prisoners in each area**
- **emergency COVID workshop to supply PPE to the establishment**

To avoid contamination across wings, only prisoners from I wing were able to work. During monitoring, the Board identified that prison issue clothing for those working in the concrete workshop was limited.

During January 2021, the concrete workshop was closed to avoid virus transmission. This meant only waste management and the kitchen could offer meaningful employment.

Prisoners have been provided with the following during the COVID-19 regime restrictions to keep them occupied and entertained:

- **£5 phone credit per week** – enabling the men to communicate with family regardless of any private account debt they may be paying
- **additional TV Channels**
- **Wayout TV**
- **distraction packs education packs** - enabling those who wish to learn to continue their development

The Board is concerned that without meaningful vocational and educational development, prisoners will be less prepared for employment on release.

7.3 Offender management, progression

Thinking Skills programme (TSP) and Resolve are the two courses usually offered at HMP Onley. The courses were unable to run in any format during the lockdown due to the accreditation process requiring tutor assessment. This resulted in a backlog of **122** prisoners during January 2021 and increasing by **10** per month; **94** of these are waiting a suitability assessment. The courses did recommence in September 2020 but only on a one-to-one basis, rather than in groups, to ensure COVID safety. However, since January 2021, again, no courses are being run.

The Board is concerned that the backlog of prisoners waiting to attend courses will hinder their progression, as they may not be able to move to category D status if they have not completed a specified course.

The Board has been advised that the TSP and Resolve courses are delivered in the community. It should be considered whether certain prisoners could access these training courses in the community, if they are assessed as suitable, to avoid further delay.

Interventions have highlighted gaps in the range of courses available HMP Onley as follows:

- **Intervention for group and gang related offenders and intimate partner violence**

Gangs are identified as a key issue within the prison. The newly-planned and developed course ‘identity matters’, aimed at prisoners involved in gangs, is seen as an essential addition to the training portfolio. Its introduction is currently on hold.

There is no dedicated programmes manager. The Board is aware that some Band 5 staff are currently undertaking Band 6 manager duties and responsibilities such as preparing and submitting exceptional delivery model (EDM) plans.

Prisoners have progressed during the pandemic as follows:

Number of men transferred to D Category establishments

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
20	10	16	5	21	14	16	24	10	15	1	17

Number of men granted HDC following HDC boards

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Boarded	30	12	12	21	9	19	12	7	7	14	18	14
Granted	22	8	10	17	6	16	7	4	7	10	13	10

During February 2021, there was a reported backlog of **74** prisoners who had met the assessment criteria for a category D establishment but were awaiting transfer. This is due to COVID-19 restrictions and lack of availability of spaces in the south east.

7.4 Family contact

Purple Visits were introduced in July 2020. Each prisoner is able to make one 30-minute video call per month without charge. The uptake was initially low (approximately 20 video visits per week made across the prison population). This was thought to be due to internet connection issues at the establishment causing screen freezing and drop-outs and user issues with the facial recognition software used as part of the system's security arrangements.

During October 2020, the video visits monitor was given the ability and authority to override screen freezes. This resulted in an increased take up. The Board has seen a gradual increase of prisoners using the service. Since January 2021, the Board has observed that the video booking system has been simplified and made more flexible. Prisoners can now apply for more than one Purple Visit each month. During February 2021, the uptake of prisoners using the service increased to **43%** of the prisoner population.

Physical visits also recommenced at the same time Purple Visits were introduced. The limited one-hour visit and social distancing measures resulted in a low uptake. The visits were extended to one and a half hours, as a result of regime changes in September 2020, with a ten-minute window for late arrivals. Visitors without the correct ID, with incorrect family contact data, or arriving late have been turned away. Social visits were temporarily suspended in November 2020 and again in January 2021 due to the national lockdown.

The Board is in no doubt that restricted family and social visits will have a detrimental impact on prisoners' mental health and wellbeing.

7.5 Resettlement planning

At the height of the COVID-19 lockdown, the resettlement team suspended both the delivery of workshops (finance, benefit and debt) and face-to-face meetings with prisoners. This was substituted with in-cell packs providing similar information to that on the courses. There was limited uptake of these in-cell packs due to the sheer general volume of in-cell packs available to prisoners during the lockdown.

Face-to-face meetings were substituted with forms. The forms were vague and did not go into enough detail, meaning that the resettlement team were not getting all of the information they would usually receive. When further contact was made with the prisoners to collect additional information, letters were often not responded to and this made delivery of the resettlement preparation service difficult.

Limited face-to-face meetings were reinstated in July 2020 and from the beginning of October 2020 the resettlement team was able to conduct 'business as usual' and provide a full service. However, as a result of the national lockdown in January 2021, face-to-face meetings were suspended.

Another issue experienced is that there have been delays in setting up some bank accounts at Barclays. The Board is concerned that **50** men have been released since August 2020 without a bank account in place.

Accommodation on release during the COVID-19 lockdown

The Board has been concerned during lockdown that men may have had no accommodation in place on release, due to hostels being closed or unwilling to take prisoners for fear they may spread COVID-19.

The resettlement team, however, reports that there have been no major issues with housing during the lockdown. The Homeless Prevention Taskforce was set up by the Ministry of Justice in March 2020 to ensure that rough sleepers were accommodated during COVID-19 and this was further extended until the end of March 2021. This helped to limit homelessness on release and as a result, the majority of men (**85%**) were released into safe, temporary accommodation e.g. hotels and B&Bs.

Departure lounge

A notable new addition is the departure lounge. This was introduced in May 2020 with the objective of providing men with a place to go for help and support before being released from prison. The departure lounge has remained open, and staff are available to help on the day of release. The resettlement team is able to give relevant information, advice and guidance depending upon the specific prisoner's needs including contacting accommodation providers to ensure the prisoner has a place to go on release. They also deal with any outstanding issues the prisoner may have.

Out of a total of **268** men released since March 2020, 149 (55%) took up the offer to visit the departure lounge. The governor has recognised, therefore, that this initiative should continue beyond lockdown.

Between May 2020 and January 2021, **58** mobile phones were issued to men on their release.

8. The work of the IMB

During the initial period of lockdown, visits to the establishment were curtailed until July 2020. However, during this time, the Chair and Vice Chair attended several weekly conference calls with the establishment to gain updates and to be advised of any new arrivals into CSU.

Applications have been dealt with throughout via written responses.

The 0800 application line was piloted by IMB Onley and Board members have contributed by covering shifts each week.

Since August 2020, Board members have been monitoring all aspects of the establishment on a structured basis with both physical and remote monitoring. The Board have ensured minimal visits whilst still being visible and thorough.

Due to the present situation, recruitment of new members has been put on hold. The ability to provide appropriate training and mentoring whilst maintaining social distance is hindered and, not being able to conduct tours of the facility to ensure the full understanding of the role with potential new members is too restrictive.

Board members began attending meetings from February 2021 including safety, use of force, security and the EAT and REAT meetings.

The Chair and Vice chair would like to pass on their thanks to all members of the Board in what has been a difficult reporting year, for the dedication and support in manning the national 0800 line, continuing to attend the establishment and the effective monitoring of the prison throughout the pandemic.

Two members resigned during the reporting year.

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	14
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	10
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	8
Total number of visits to the establishment	326
Total number of segregation reviews attended	94

Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	9	24
B	Discipline, including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	4	30
C	Equality	0	2
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	49	16
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	10	15
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	7	2
F	Food and kitchens	10	4
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	24	42
H1	Property within this establishment	22	83
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	78	52
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	15	4
I	Sentence management, including HDC, release on temporary licence, parole, release dates, recategorisation	98	52
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	58	29
K	Transfers	31	12
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system	62	84
	COVID		1
	Confidential Access	31	16
	Total number of applications	508	468



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