



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Leicester

**For reporting year
01 February 2020 – 31 January 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 an international human rights treaty designed to strengthen protection for people deprived of their liberty. The protocol recognises that such people are particularly vulnerable and aims to prevent their ill-treatment through establishing a system of visits or inspections to all places of detention. OPCAT requires that states designate a National Preventive Mechanism to carry out visits to places of detention, to monitor the treatment of and conditions for detainees and to make recommendations for the prevention of ill-treatment. The IMB is part of the United Kingdom's National Preventive Mechanism.

2. Description of the establishment

HMP Leicester is a local male adult prison and serves the courts of Leicester and Leicestershire. It holds remand and recall prisoners and those serving fewer than 12 months and arranges the transfer out of those with longer sentences, chiefly to HMP Ranby and HMP Stocken. The operational capacity in 2020 was 350, but there was a planned reduction to facilitate building works and by the end of the year the population had fallen to about 300.

HMP Leicester is a Victorian prison built in 1874, behind a gatehouse dating from 1825, and it occupies a site of three acres, close to Leicester city centre. A visits hall and administration accommodation were added in 1990. The main residential unit is a long rectangular cell block with four galleried landings. Usually, two prisoners share a cell. There are separate areas on the main wing for the segregation unit, the Lambert unit (for disruptive prisoners) and the Parsons unit (for workers and prisoners on the enhanced privilege level). Changes were made in the configuration of the remaining accommodation after lockdown for the Covid-19 pandemic, to create a protective isolation unit, a reverse cohorting unit and a shielding unit. There is one main outdoor exercise area.

About 22 vulnerable prisoners continue to be housed in the Welford unit, which is in a separate building, with a dedicated small exercise area. The healthcare facility occupies the ground floor.

Other buildings on site include those housing reception, the offender management unit (OMU), resettlement services, learning and skills, a workshop, the gym, the multi-faith room, the chaplaincy, the IMB office, and legal visits.

Service providers:

Healthcare – Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, commissioned by NHS England (Midlands and East)

Dental care – Time for Teeth, commissioned by NHS England

Integrated drug and alcohol treatment services (IDTS) – Turning Point Leicester and Leicestershire

Education and skills – PeoplePlus

Library services – Leicestershire County Council (LCC)

Community rehabilitation company – Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and Rutland (DLNR) CRC

Escort contractor – GEOAmey

Catering suppliers – Bidfood

Maintenance - Amey

3. Executive summary

3.1 Background to the report

The Board was fully supported in its work by the establishment during the whole reporting year (see section 8). The Board believes that the information presented in this report gives a reliable picture of prisoner treatment and conditions during 2020. There were no surprises in the report of the HMIP scrutiny visit (HMIP SV) on 8, 15 and 16 December 2020.

The lockdown introduced on 24 March 2020 to manage Covid-19 infection had a huge impact on the establishment and the prisoners in its care. The highly restricted regime was still in place on 31 March 2021, with no significant change over the whole 12-month period (see page 9).

3.2 Main judgements

HMP Leicester is a well-run establishment. There continues to be strong leadership by the energetic and strategic thinking Governor. He is supported by a hardworking senior management team (SMT) and an engaged body of staff. The prison remained settled and the staff of all departments did their best to continue to provide a good service by reacting promptly to introduce new ways of working.

How safe is the prison?

The Board judges that the prison remained safe. The effective weekly multidisciplinary safety intervention meeting (SIM) continued without interruption (see section 4). As usual, the establishment continued to house some prisoners with very challenging behaviour, but compared to 2019 there was less violence (4.3.1), in particular fewer assaults and fights, and less need for the use of force (4.4). There were fewer incidents of self-harm although lengthy periods of constant watch were required for a few individuals (4.2.1). The availability and use of drugs, particularly new psychoactive substances (NPS), continued to fall (4.5). There were significant additions to security (4.5). Prisoners reported feeling safe (4.3.3).

How fairly and humanely are prisoners treated?

It is not humane to lock a person in a small shared cell for 23 hours a day, and this was the situation for the majority of prisoners in HMP Leicester from 24 March 2020. Nonetheless the Board judges that prisoners were treated fairly and with respect during the reporting year. Staff did their best to help prisoners cope with the restricted regime (see page 9). Good staff-prisoner engagement remained a strength of the establishment and was confirmed by observation and survey (5.3). The capital investment programme has started to improve the decency of the accommodation (5.1.2). There were fewer prisoner complaints to the establishment (5.6), and fewer applications to the IMB (see section 8).

How well are prisoners' health and wellbeing needs met?

The Board believes that the establishment did its best to meet prisoners' health and wellbeing needs, in the circumstances. Healthcare continued to deliver an excellent service, with a number of innovations (see section 6) and drug rehabilitation services remained efficient and well regarded (6.6). Prisoners were supported by an energetic

chaplains team (5.5), peer workers and Listeners (4.2.4), and were especially appreciative of the efforts of the physical education officers (6.5). Formal wellbeing checks were introduced from the start of the restricted regime (see 5.3). Loss of social visits (7.4.1) was upsetting for many prisoners, although Purple visits and extra phone calls (7.4.2) were helpful.

How well are prisoners progressed towards successful resettlement?

The progress of most prisoners towards rehabilitation and resettlement was interrupted by lockdown. The opportunities for work were very much reduced (7.2). The main purposeful activity became in-cell education, well supported by PeoplePlus (7.1.1). Progressive transfers to other establishments resumed in summer (7.3). The CRC (7.5.1) continued to work effectively, and the homelessness prevention team (7.5.3) operated very successfully. The critical time intervention project (6.3.2) was a new valuable support to prisoners deemed vulnerable on release. There was less delay in the transfer of foreign national prisoners held under immigration powers (5.4.2), but the situation for prisoners serving an indeterminate sentence for public protection (IPP prisoners) was of great concern to the Board during 2020 (7.3.1).

3.3 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

Transfer of the seriously mentally ill

Although the gatekeeping process has improved overall, the Board again has to report that two prisoners experienced long waits for transfer to secure hospital accommodation (6.3.1).

Is the minister satisfied that there are sufficient secure hospital places to cope promptly with the demand?

Management of IPP prisoners

IPP prisoners were particularly disadvantaged during the lockdown period (7.3.1).

Does the minister agree that assisting them to make progress to safe discharge should have a higher priority?

Prisoners homeless on release

The Board commends the measures introduced during the lockdown period which were successful in greatly reducing the number of prisoners released homeless (7.5.3). These were however a temporary solution to a persistent problem. Lack of accommodation is a major risk factor for re-offending.

The Board wonders if the minister will speak to colleagues in other departments to address the long-term accommodation needs of this population?

Increasing number of prisoners waiting for remand hearings

Because of backlogs in court hearings, the remand population at Leicester gradually rose during 2020 from the designated 55% to over 70% of the population, reducing the spaces available for the local resettlement function, designated 45% (7.3).

Is the minister able to work with colleagues in the criminal justice system to address this situation?

Easing of lockdown

Leicester prisoners have endured a very harsh restricted regime for more than 12 months, despite very good infection control in the establishment, and in part this has been the result of the high Covid-19 infection rates in Leicester city. The cramped accommodation, small outdoor exercise area and necessity for social distancing will mean that Leicester prisoners will continue to endure more restrictions for longer than establishments with more space.

Would the minister consider whether a special case could be made for all prisoners and staff at Leicester to receive priority vaccinations, to redress this imbalance and to allow relaxations to proceed fairly?

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

Key worker reintroduction

The Board regrets the suspension of the key worker system (5.3) and would like to be reassured that the funding and staffing will be available for this when it can safely be reintroduced.

Regime safety

Although not in prisoners' long-term interests, the restricted regime led to an increase in safety in the establishment (see section 4).

How does the service plan to reintroduce a decent regime with a reasonable time out of cell for prisoners without losing this benefit?

TO THE GOVERNOR

The Board fully supports the Governor's plans to reintroduce key working (5.3) at the earliest opportunity, and to make available more opportunities for purposeful activity, so strengthening the 'rehabilitative culture' (7.5.6).

3.4 Progress since the last report

Capital investment

The Board is very pleased to report that the capital investment programme to improve safety and decency in the accommodation has proceeded as planned (5.1.2) and that, in addition, installation of in-cell telephony was nearing completion at the end of the reporting year. The promised X-ray body-scanner was installed in reception in November and rapidly proved effective in detecting secreted unauthorised articles (4.5).

Covid-19 management

From the outset there was a whole prison approach and very good teamwork between healthcare and all departments of the establishment. All guidelines from HMPPS and NHSE were adopted straight away. The aim was to provide a decent regime, and prisoner welfare was the top priority. The Board commented to the Governor at the end of May that 'To run a prison with initially vastly reduced staff and prisoners falling ill with Covid and to maintain a good sense of humour and as decent a regime as possible in the circumstances was a testament to the outstanding management skills of the whole of the staff at Leicester'. This opinion was echoed at each Board meeting.

Infections

The first prisoner with symptoms was isolated on 20 March 2020, and 29 men were unwell or self-isolating as contacts by 31 March. The last confirmed case of this initial outbreak was on 17 April. The establishment was Covid-19 free until October when a prisoner known to be positive was received from court, and a similar case occurred in December, and six cases in January. All infections were contained by the procedures in place.

Twenty staff were away through illness or the need to self-isolate through contacts on 19 March 2020, and the number rose to about 68 (over a third of staff) off duty in early April. The last confirmed staff case in the initial outbreak was on 28 April 2020.

Protective measures

Covid-19 antigen testing was available for frontline staff at a testing centre from mid-April 2020, and from 23 November voluntary testing using the PCR test once weekly was offered in the establishment. From January 2021 staff have been additionally offered two lateral flow tests per week. At the end of the reporting year, the uptake was 89%, one of the highest in the prison service. Suspicion PCR testing of prisoners had begun by mid-April 2020, and routine PCR testing of arrivals in reception began on 30 November.

The mainstay of management for the whole establishment was the introduction of a very restricted regime, together with hand cleansing, social distancing for staff and prisoners, the use of isolation areas, and regular thorough cleaning of the accommodation. Face masks were compulsory for all staff and visitors from 5 November and were required for prisoners in certain situations. Prisoner vaccination began on 1 February 2021 for priority groups, as in the community.

Prisoner accommodation was re-organised for the purposes of infection control (see page 10). Prisoners known to be Covid-19 positive or who were symptomatic and awaiting test results were managed in the protective isolation unit, on the periphery of level 4 and were managed by dedicated staff in full PPE.

It is greatly to the credit of all staff and prisoners involved that infections have been so well controlled, especially with the situation in Leicester City where some areas had been under continuous restrictions for 313 days on 31 January 2021.

Restricted regime

A very restricted regime was introduced on 24 March 2020 and remained in place on 31 March 2021, apart from some slight temporary easings allowed in October and November. Because of the cramped accommodation, with 280 men housed in one block, and one exercise yard, social distancing rules meant that there could no longer be a 'mass unlock'. Delivery of the restricted regime involved very strict timetabling, required increased staffing, and relied on prisoner cooperation.

Time out of cell was reduced to about one hour for the 80% of prisoners who were not allocated a prison job. The regime for these prisoners offered:

- a 10 minute shower on 11 days per fortnight
- a daily 10 minute phone call (7.4.2)
- 30 minutes of outside exercise on 11 days per fortnight (6.5)
- daily attendance at the servery for the evening meal (5.1.4)
- use of the library once a week (7.1.2)
- all prisoners on basic IEP (incentives and earned privileges) level were raised to standard level and allowed a TV (5.1.3).

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

Safety remained a high priority in the establishment. The very effective safety intervention meeting (SIM) continued to be held weekly during 2020 to discuss incidents from the previous week, all prisoners held in the segregation and Lambert units, individuals at risk of self-harm or on violence management interventions, cell sharing risk assessments and safeguarding issues. There was good multidisciplinary discussion, and an updated management plan for each individual. The monthly safer custody meeting also continued and included analysis of self-harm and violence data.

4.1 Reception and induction

During lockdown, arrivals have been managed in a Covid-19 safe way. The reverse cohorting unit (RCU) on level 3 housed new receptions away from the mainstream population for 14 days, with a regime managed in four separate 'bubbles'. The dedicated induction staff were assisted by cleaners and a peer advisor living in the unit. From 30 November, PCR testing was made available on days 1 and 5, and, if negative, prisoners could join the mainstream on day 8.

The shielding unit housed men vulnerable because of pre-existing health conditions, as in the community, and was also managed by dedicated staff and live-in prisoner workers. The Welford unit remained self-contained, and the 22 men had access to the full regime. Other main-wing areas were divided into regime groups of about 30 men in neighbouring cells who were unlocked at the same time.

After reception processes, prisoners are allocated to the RCU, where they are usually able to shower and make a phone call on their first night. Wellbeing checks are performed daily for prisoners on this unit, and more frequently over the first 24 hours. The resident peer adviser conducts the induction process face to face, and Big Word translation services are available. The written induction pack is available in the commonly used foreign languages, and fresh packs are prepared for speakers of other languages if required.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

4.2.1 Self-harm and constant watch

There were fewer episodes of self-harm during 2020, with a total of 455 incidents, compared with 471 in 2019. The total includes a number of prolific self-harming prisoners, with fewer than 12 men accounting for 135 of these episodes, and usually involving the younger white population. Injuries were chiefly the result of cutting, most often superficial or the opening of old wounds, but sometimes life-threatening. All self-harming prisoners were managed by the assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) process, and those prisoners showing manipulative and goal-orientated behaviour were encouraged to engage with an individual management plan, setting clear boundaries for entitlements, which staff aimed to deliver in a consistent manner.

Fifteen prisoners attended the accident and emergency department and three were admitted to hospital, compared with 16 and six in 2019. There were four serious episodes involving ligaturing, where a fatal outcome was averted by the prompt

actions of staff, including cardiopulmonary resuscitation. Serious episodes are always followed by a prompt de-brief and the offer of support from the care team to staff and to prisoners if required.

During 2020 there were 34 episodes of constant watch, compared with 37 in 2019, occupying a total of 584 days, compared with 352 in 2019. Twenty-one individuals were involved, and 22 episodes lasted fewer than 14 days, but for four very troubled individuals the total time spent on constant watch was over 75 days each. The Board commended the whole prison approach and teamwork which kept safe an individual whose repeated life-threatening self-harm was subject to constant watch for 147 days in all, together with 14 days in hospital, and who was released with a good resettlement package in autumn.

4.2.2 *The ACCT process*

A total of 325 ACCT documents was opened in 2020, compared with 426 in 2019. Seventy-three were opened on reception for men with self-harm warnings from court or during early days in custody. The number open on any day varied from four to 17 (compared with five to 23 in 2019) but was most commonly 10 or fewer. These perhaps surprisingly lower numbers during 2020 may in part be related to the daily interactions with staff prompted by wellbeing checks at unlock (5.3).

ACCT reviews were properly timetabled and attended by a mental health nurse. The establishment continued to pilot ACCT version 6 documentation, and this has now been adopted. Quality checks were done frequently by senior managers and staff were reminded regularly of the importance of documentation and meaningful conversations.

A dedicated safer custody telephone line is available for members of the public who are concerned about a prisoner's welfare. These calls are properly logged and promptly followed up by a check with the prisoner, and appropriate action is taken.

The Board was sorry that the DistrACCTion group stopped meeting at lockdown. Held weekly and provided by a member of chaplaincy with the assistance of a Listener, these meetings offered an hour of low pressure social time away from the main wing for prisoners on ACCTs and those judged at the SIM to be coping less well. Attendance was usually about six men.

4.2.3 *Deaths in custody*

The Board regrets having to report two deaths in custody during 2020. The verdict of the Coroner's Inquest was that each was from natural causes, and one was Covid-19 related.

4.2.4 *Listeners*

The Listeners are a group usually numbering between six and 10 of volunteer prisoners, selected, trained, and supported by the Samaritans and by safer custody staff. They offer confidential emotional support to residents in distress and crisis and are available 24 hours a day seven days a week. Issues raised by prisoners usually concern mental health, self-harm, and family matters.

Involvement of the Listeners was particularly valuable during lockdown. As recorded on the daily briefing sheet, between January and March 2020 there were 13 calls, which were supplemented by informal contacts on the wing. Between April and July

there were 70 calls (monthly range 16-26) the number later falling to 10 or fewer per month by the end of the reporting year. Listeners were usually able to use an interview room, with appropriate social distancing, but occasionally spoke to the prisoner at the cell door, wearing PPE if necessary.

The weekly Samaritans Listener group support meetings were replaced by regular telephone contact, although in late summer two 'Covid-19 safe' meetings were held in the prison, which was the first in the area to have Samaritans back in person, although this had to stop from December. A planned training course in April 2020 was cancelled, so that numbers gradually fell through transfer or release, and in October the service was suspended. Thanks to excellent cooperation between the Samaritans and the safer custody team, face-to-face training with on-line support was enabled, and the service resumed in November. By December there were 10 Listeners in post, seven on the duty rota, one based on the shielding unit and two on the reverse cohorting unit.

Samaritans' phones were also available with no cost, but were rarely requested during 2020, even in October, when only two occasions were recorded.

A report from the Samaritans to the safer custody meeting in November confirmed that there was considerable prisoner distress during the early part of lockdown, often related to family and outside matters, but that this settled. The report said: 'We were expecting higher levels of self-harm, violence and distress but the regime appears to have been very successful in that regard'.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction

Violence fell during 2020, although staff still had to deal with very challenging behaviour from a few individuals. The establishment was very settled between May and July in particular, and at one stage 28 days passed without any reported assaults or fights, unlike the situation in some comparator prisons.

4.3.1 Violence

In 2020 there were 53 prisoner-on-prisoner assaults, (compared with 133 in 2019), and 14 fights, (47 in 2019), both usually related to family or 'outside' issues, or debt. Three men attended the accident and emergency department for their injuries (14 in 2019). The victims were offered referral to the police and support as appropriate. There were 54 assaults on staff, (103 in 2019), about a quarter involving biting or spitting, and 10 punching. Threatening or abusive behaviour fell during lockdown to an average of 11 incidents per month (compared with 28 per month in 2019).

There were 205 episodes of damage to prison property and accommodation, (compared with 300 during 2019), and for a few men this was a frequently repeated behaviour.

Challenge, support and intervention plans (CSIPs) were used throughout 2020 to identify prisoners who posed a risk to themselves or others. Fifty plans were opened, 22 of them between January and March. During lockdown, an average of seven (range four – 12) was open at any time compared with up to 19 on some occasions during 2019.

4.3.2 The Lambert unit

Up to 11 prisoners were housed in this small unit adjacent to the segregation unit. The intention was that they should receive, in addition to a standard regime and management by a CSIP plan, a series of interventions over a two- to three-month period from the 'Time Wise' bite-sized programme, with trained officers delivering the one-to-one sessions, overseen by a senior psychologist. The aim was to modify disruptive or violent behaviour and for the prisoner to reintegrate successfully back into normal location and activity. After a review held at the end of 2019, management of the unit and staff training were to be strengthened and progress and outcomes for prisoners were to be better defined and evaluated.

Unfortunately, after lockdown, these prisoners had the same restricted regime as the rest of the population, and no face-to-face interviews were allowed, impeding delivery of the Time Wise programme. Staff did their best informally to support individual prisoners, and the psychologist supported staff with regular phone calls. However, over time, the Lambert cells were used to house 'segregation overflow' and prisoners with complex mental health needs, and although these prisoners were managed well, the original intention for the unit was lost. At the end of the reporting year a working group was set up to review the policy, location and purpose of this unit, and the IMB was invited to monitor the meetings.

4.3.3 Feeling safe

IMB members always felt safe when visiting the establishment during the reporting year, both in terms of the general management of the wings and the precautions in place against Covid-19. The staff remained very good at maintaining order and control and reacted promptly to any incident. Those prisoners who were violent or disruptive were usually managed in segregation or the Lambert unit, away from the mainstream population.

A survey of all prisoners conducted by the safer custody team in May 2020 received 150 responses, and 62% of prisoners replied that they felt safe most of the time. In the HMIP SV in December, in answer to the question, 'Do you feel unsafe now?', 84 of 107 men (79%) answered 'No'.

The Listeners reported to the safer custody meeting in November that prisoners had felt safer during the restrictions because there were fewer opportunities for drug passing, bullying and debt and violent behaviour, although the men disliked the confinement and the limited family contact.

4.4 Use of force

In 2020, force was used on 395 occasions, compared with 544 in 2019 and 612 in 2018. Force used was usually low level, for example guiding arm holds to counter threatening behaviour or refusal to return to cell, but there was also prompt higher level intervention to contain incidents of violence or vandalism. An IMB member witnessed one such episode and had no concerns.

Fifty-two episodes were 'planned' interventions, compared with 83 in 2019, commonly involving the use of rigid bar handcuffs by trained officers, and were usually arranged to move a prisoner to the segregation unit or to effect transfer to another establishment. On most occasions prisoners behaved compliantly. A prisoner subjected to the use of force is seen that day by the duty governor and by

healthcare staff. PAVA spray was made available after 15 April 2020 but had never been used by the end of the reporting year.

The Board normally monitors the use of force committee, where all incidents are discussed and several cases reviewed in detail, including the viewing of CCTV, body worn camera footage for unplanned episodes and handheld camera recordings for planned interventions. No member attended a meeting during 2020 but the minutes and data for the six meetings held were made available. The monthly programme had resumed by January 2021.

Use of the safe cell: see section 5.2.3.

4.5 Substance misuse, unauthorised items

Security was strengthened during 2020. There are now three dog handlers based on site, each of whom has a passive search dog to be present at all visits and in reception, and an active search dog for work in the prison. Intelligence-led and whole prison lockdown searches continued, and there was good liaison with the police prison crime team. During 2020, about 55 weapons and 23 mobile phones were removed from circulation, compared with more than 70 weapons and 65 mobile phones in 2019. A reduction in the availability of illicit items in turn leads to less bullying, debt, and violence, and makes the establishment safer for all.

Unauthorised items, including drugs, tobacco, mobile phones, and SIM cards enter the prison by four main routes:

- social visits: between January and March 2020, the dedicated visits staff assisted by CCTV and the dog team detected seven incidents and two visitors were arrested.
- throwovers: four were intercepted in 2020, compared with eight in 2019. One large package with contents worth over £8000 was recovered in June. In 2020 the external CCTV system was enhanced.
- reception: prisoners arriving at HMP Leicester from the courts and other establishments, or on recall, sometimes conceal unauthorised items internally, and these pose the most difficult detection problem. The Board welcomed the installation in November 2020 of an X-ray body scanner in reception, operated by trained officers. The prisoner is offered an amnesty before scanning, and if the scan shows suspicious items, is allowed the opportunity of a period of reflection and further amnesty before re-scanning. The priority is for removal of items from circulation, rather than punishment. Intelligence-led scanning can also be authorised for prisoners on the wing; on the second day of operation four of six suspects had to remove and dispose of packages. Between 30 November 2020 and 6 February 2021, 328 body scans were performed, and two mobile phones and 15 packages were removed from circulation.

The enhanced gate security project was underway at the end of the reporting year. Building works to the entrances for both staff and visitors will provide one main access stream, and all visitors and staff will pass through a metal detector and a property X-ray scanner.

- mail: the Rapiscan, which detects drug impregnated paper, again proved

highly effective. In 2020, 40 items of mail tested positive (compared with 125 in 2019), and included letters purporting to be Rule 39 (legal) mail, opened under proper authority, some with very many A4 pages of NPS soaked paper. The police liaison officer is informed of all finds and investigates appropriately.

The use and supply of NPS has fallen annually over the past four years. Episodes of a prisoner 'under the influence' fell to 99 in 2020, compared with 133 in 2019, 277 in 2018 and 360 in 2017 and no prisoner required the assistance of paramedics or attendance at the accident and emergency department, compared with one and five respectively during 2019. In 2020, 'in possession' finds of cannabis and NPS fell to 58, compared with 85 in 2019 and 165 in 2018.

In fact, the picture during 2020 was rather more favourable than the totals suggest. From January to March, there were 24 episodes of 'under the influence' and 23 finds, while for the whole period April to October there were just 16 and 26, respectively. A spike occurred in November, with 43 episodes of 'under the influence', and the finding of 15 tiny pieces of an item of clothing soaked in NPS which had been brought in through reception and then cut up for distribution. The Rapiscan was immediately moved to reception and all clothing and property brought into the prison is now tested before returning it to the prisoner, and impregnated items are either confiscated or washed first.

All prisoners involved in drug misuse were referred to Turning Point, and during November and December there was an information campaign through the newsletter and peer workers about the dangers of drug use and the benefits of abstaining. Sixteen prisoners were participating in the frequent testing programme when this was halted in March 2020, and some had found it helpful in managing their drug misuse.

Prisoners surveyed by HMIP in 2018 responded to the question, 'Is it easy or difficult for prisoners here to get illicit drugs?' with the answer:

Easy 66 (52%), Difficult 10 (8%), Don't Know 52 (40%).

In the HMIP SV in December 2020, the responses were as follows:

Easy 27 (24%), Difficult 17 (15%), Don't Know 68 (61%).

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, food

5.1.1 Accommodation

The higher standard of cleanliness reported last year was further improved during 2020 by a vigorous cleaning and painting programme, employing prisoner workers. Extra cleaners were employed on the wings from March, and their efforts were appreciated by other prisoners in the June survey – ‘cleaners are doing a top job’ ‘the best it’s ever been’. All cells now have window curtains, in-cell toilets are screened, and prisoners have duvets. There is a rolling programme of decency checks by senior managers.

5.1.2 Capital investment programme

The Board is pleased to be able to report an unprecedented level of capital investment in the establishment during 2020, with all projects intended to improve the safety and decency of the accommodation, and to bring into use previously uninhabitable areas, increasing the opportunity of purposeful activity for prisoners.

During 2020 the roofs of the gym and of the legal visits block were replaced. In November, the eighteen-month project to fit in-cell fire detectors and landing smoke extractors began, with replacement of in-cell lighting in the same contract. On the main wing all landing floors were replaced, and two shower areas were repaired and refurbished, with a rolling programme to be completed in early 2021 of the remaining five. There were works to the boiler house, notably asbestos removal, prior to the installation of new boilers and a complete overhaul of the heating system. An unexpected and very welcome addition to the planned projects was the installation of in-cell telephony, with work expected to be finished by April 2021.

The Board congratulated the establishment on coping with so many different projects and groups of workmen on site simultaneously. This was enabled by having a dedicated member of the SMT in charge of the security arrangements, and by the presence each day of officers detailed to liaise with the contractors. Overall, during 2020, there was minimal disruption for prisoners, apart from cell moves, which were facilitated by a reduction of the roll by about 40 prisoners for the duration.

Works planned for the main wing for 2021 include alterations to some subterranean cells to provide dedicated rooms for prisoner interviews and key working, and the installation of washing machines and dryers, which will allow prisoners to have their own clothes laundered and create more employment opportunities.

5.1.3 TV

TV signal reception was upgraded in December, making available six digital channels and 10 radio stations. Way out TV and National Prison Radio were also available. Enhanced prisoners were allowed to purchase a Freeview box. TV was very important in helping prisoners cope with lockdown, and there was surprising tolerance over channel choice between prisoners in shared cells.

5.1.4 Food

Throughout 2020, the kitchen staff continued to deliver food of a high standard, with a good menu choice. Social distancing requirements after March meant that the prisoner workforce was reduced to 12 men, delivering 14 shifts each week, compared with up to 24 men on a maximum each of nine shifts. There was also an increased requirement for deep cleaning twice daily rather than once weekly in normal circumstances. As usual there was a very good working relationship between staff and prisoners, and the team worked hard and with good morale. The NVQ teaching was halted, but men were able to progress with the Gateway qualification Level 2 Food Health and Safety.

During lockdown, in-cell breakfast and a cold lunch were delivered to the cell door, but each prisoner could attend the servery to collect the hot evening meal. From April, prisoners could at the same time collect 'goody bags' containing snacks and a drink, available twice or three times a week. This is planned to continue until April 2021 and has been very much appreciated by prisoners.

In the forums by post in May and June, prisoners were generally happy with the food offering, and as usual the comments included favourable comparison with other establishments. In the HMIP SV, 83 of 112 prisoners questioned responded that the food was 'good' or 'reasonable'. The menu choices celebrating 'diversity' occasions such as Black History month and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller month were particularly appreciated.

5.2 Segregation

5.2.1 Accommodation

The planned works to the flooring, the six cells and the showers were completed during 2020 and have greatly improved the decency and safety of the unit.

5.2.2 Population

In 2020 there were 154 episodes of segregation involving 110 prisoners, compared with 165 and 107 in 2019. As usual, there were a few repeat offenders; 19 prisoners had two episodes each, five had three, two had four and one had eight. Five prisoners were held for more than 42 days, compared with five in 2019, although four were moved out by day 47. One prisoner was held for 81 days for circumstances relating to his wellbeing, and the Board agreed that this was reasonable.

A few of these prisoners exhibited particularly challenging disruptive behaviour, with repeated episodes of vandalism, threats, assault, and repeated dirty protest, as well as self-harm. Prisoners were treated respectfully regardless of their behaviour, and the Board had occasion to commend the resilience of the staff caring for them.

5.2.3 The safe cell

In 2020 the safe cell was used on 14 occasions, compared with 13 in 2019. This was always to defuse violent or aggressive behaviour or to prevent serious self-harm. Most episodes were shorter than four hours. However, one prisoner had eight episodes, three of which lasted for between 16 and 26 hours, including one use of the body-belt for 20 hours. The Board agreed that this was justified to control life threatening self-harming behaviour, and was satisfied that at every stage all available options were fully explored.

5.2.4 Adjudications

A total of 1079 charges was laid in 2020, and the number proven was 581 (compared with 1584 laid in 2019 and 798 proven). The Board monitored 35 adjudications between January and March 2020 and found them to be fairly conducted. A member was present for three of the four visits of the independent adjudicator during this period. The visits by the judge were halted by lockdown, and there was a change to the Prison Rules in May, allowing adjudication charges to be referred back to the Governor to deal with, excepting the most serious cases. The judge held one remote hearing in September. In total, 633 additional days were awarded in 2020, compared with 2100 in 2019.

5.2.5 Referral to the police

In 2020, 42 referrals were made to the police for crime committed in prison, including all serious assaults on staff. Police involvement was strengthened and more proactive this year, and several prisoner and staff interviews were held, and statements taken, including victim impact statements. It is too early to report on the outcomes.

5.3 Staff-prisoner relationships, key workers

Communication between staff and prisoners was excellent throughout 2020. At the beginning of the outbreak of Covid-19, when prisoners were very anxious, members of the SMT held daily open forums on the exercise yard. During lockdown, the governing governor or deputy regularly made themselves available on the wing and at the servery at the time of the evening meal, to answer questions, discuss concerns, and provide moral support to prisoners and staff. Members of the SMT were visible on the wings at key times during the day. The attitude fostered was 'we're all in this together to keep each other safe'.

An informative and well-written prisoner newsletter was issued and delivered to prisoners under the cell door frequently during the early days of lockdown, and then at weekly intervals. As well as news about the Covid-19 situation, there are items from all departments providing updates of their services, and encouragement to take up the educational opportunities which form the main purposeful activity for most prisoners (7.1.1). The newsletter also includes articles with related competitions and challenges, often involving art and design, writing poems or short stories, puzzles and quizzes, open to all prisoners. The names of the winners are published, and small prizes are awarded. 'Prisoner forums by post' were held in May and June, and prisoner feedback and suggestions were acted upon. Notices to prisoners (NTP) were issued when necessary, with more formal advice about new or changing requirements relating to the Covid-19 situation and the regime. Between March and December 2020 there were 53 such notices. The Director General of Prisons issued informative letters to all prisoners and their families in June and August.

A dedicated Covid-19 contact custody manager has played a key role throughout lockdown, supported by a deputy and two administrators, and in close collaboration with healthcare. He has acted as a focal point for information for staff and prisoners, reminding all about the long-running Covid-19 safety measures, in person and by weekly articles in the prisoner newsletter. He organises the staff testing programme and is the contact tracing lead for HMP Leicester. Through conversations with staff,

prisoners, peer advisers, and listeners, and through regular meetings with the kitchen workers, who see prisoners daily at the servery, he can learn promptly of developing issues.

The very good supportive, friendly and constructive interactions between staff and prisoners consistently highlighted in IMB Leicester annual reports remained a strength of the establishment and played a major part in helping prisoners cope with the restricted regime. The fact that most prisoners were prepared to cooperate with the strict timetabling and short time out of cell was testament to these good relationships.

Formal key working sessions were stopped, but officers were required to have a conversation with each prisoner at unlock and ask about their health, contact with family and any problems. This became formalised as the 'welfare check', later referred to as the 'wellbeing check', to be recorded on the national offender management information system (NOMIS) as a meaningful conversation with open questions and support for any issues raised.

On resuming rota visits in June, the Board consistently noted a generally calm, purposeful, and cheerful atmosphere, and those prisoners encountered said they were 'alright', 'OK', 'I know officers are doing their best', 'it's as good as it can be', 'we don't like it, but it is keeping us safe'. The Board observed many instances of good staff-prisoner engagement.

HMIP SV in December also reported that they had observed many positive interactions and that many prisoners spoke well of their wing staff. In their survey, 85% of the 110 prisoners questioned said that most staff treated them with respect, and 78% that they had staff to turn to if they had a problem. In the prisoner forums, comments included, 'the staff seem to be doing as much as they can, considering', 'the staff who work on the shielding unit are always polite, helpful and professional in these hard times', 'these are difficult and troubling times, so I understand that implementing a proper regime is difficult', and 'it's OK as it is for our safety and not just affecting us, it's across the board'.

5.4 Equality and diversity

The protected characteristics as listed in the Equality Act 2010 are age, sex, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (includes nationality and ethnicity), religion or belief, and sexual orientation. A member of the senior management team is the named sponsor for each characteristic as it applies to staff and prisoners. The Board monitors whether prisoners with any of these characteristics suffer disadvantages.

HMP Leicester holds a diverse population, with typically 15 nationalities, 18 ethnic groups and 16 faith groups represented. The population characteristics were similar to those of 2019. About 57% of the population was white and 28% from a black, Asian or minority ethnic background. About 75% were men aged between 20 and 39, with 9% over the age of 50. The regular meetings of the equalities and diversity action team (EAT) were halted at lockdown but were resumed in October. The East Midlands Support Group continued during 2020 to supply monthly data analysis of the relationship of four characteristics – age, ethnicity, religion and disability – against IEP status, adjudications and their outcome, submitted complaints, and the

use of force. Anomalies were discussed at the meeting and investigated by the safer custody team. At EAT the leads also give an update on the characteristic they are responsible for and this has led to a number of good ideas for promotional projects and surveys. In January 2021, discussion included LGBT+ History month, Time to Talk Day (mental health), and an on-line package for staff relating to older people in custody. This is a more proactive approach than previously.

Unfortunately, the post of equalities officer remained unfilled, but five peer equality representatives were appointed in November and their availability was publicised on the wings. They were able to have the first of a planned schedule of regular meetings in December with supervisors from the safer custody team. It is too early to report on their effectiveness.

During lockdown there was a noticeable 'whole prison' promotion of awareness of diversity, for example for Black Culture week in June, and Black History month in October there were articles available in the library, posters, competitions for all to enter and special menu choices. Information about faith group celebrations such as Diwali, Ramadan, and Easter is now circulated by NTP. From August the weekly newsletter began publishing articles focussing on one of the protected characteristics, often with an associated competition, such as to design a logo, write a poem or a story or produce an artwork. Beginning in 2021, two topics per month from the equality and diversity calendar have been promoted. All prisoners can access in-cell information, tasks and puzzles, and enter short competitions with the winners named in the newsletter and awarded a snack prize. World Braille Day and International Holocaust Remembrance Day were the topics for January.

5.4.1 *Discrimination incident report forms (DIRFS)*

In the 10-month period between April 2020 and January 2021 inclusive, 19 DIRFS were submitted, compared with 42 in the whole of 2019. Two were submitted by staff about prisoners, and 17 by prisoners about staff. One prisoner submitted six DIRFS, and another three. All were investigated by the member of the SMT responsible for the protected characteristic involved and all were recorded as 'not upheld'. Quality assurance checks were done by the deputy governor on the timeliness of the reply, the thoroughness of the investigation and how the outcome was conveyed to the prisoner. A regular independent check on the quality of response was introduced in January 2021 with the feedback to be discussed at the EAT meeting.

5.4.2 *Foreign national prisoners held on an IS91 (immigration authority to detain)*

In its last report, the Board expressed concerns about delays in the management of foreign national prisoners held on an IS91 and awaiting deportation, one of whom had been held for over 12 months. The Board is pleased to report that the situation has been somewhat better in 2020. Five men detained during 2019 were all removed from the prison by June, and for the 13 received during 2020 the stay was between two and six months, with only one waiting at the end of January. Immigration visits stopped at lockdown, but immigration officers made themselves readily available by phone and email. Visits resumed from June. The Board still believes that the holding of these individuals in prison for months after their sentence has expired is unfair and will continue to monitor their situation in the changing global conditions.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

The chaplaincy team is well led, and provides cohesive multifaith support to all prisoners, embracing 21 participating faith groups. About 30% of prisoners declare as Christian, 20% as Muslim and 25% as holding no faith.

Until 19 March, each faith group had one hour of worship and one hour of study timetabled each week, with outside leaders invited in for the smaller faith groups. The DistrACCTion group (4.2.2) was also held weekly.

All meetings ceased at lockdown, although members of chaplaincy continued to attend the establishment and were a constant visible presence on the wing. In person they visited each week a total of about 200 prisoners, to deliver in-cell faith material, typically including prayers, readings, and materials for inspiration and meditation. This individual pastoral care was much appreciated by prisoners, who spoke highly of this support to HMIP inspectors during their scrutiny visit and to the IMB. Some prisoners suffered bereavements during lockdown, and Leicester was one of the first establishments to offer remote attendance at funerals.

In 2020, 57 of 350 prisoners observed the 30-day Ramadan fast in April/May. The lockdown made this a particularly difficult experience for participants, because of the lack of mutual support and communal prayers. The arrangements were handled respectfully. Muslim prisoners were allocated to share a cell if possible. The imams made daily contact with each prisoner and offered words of encouragement. At the end of the fast on Eid day, the imams delivered finger food to participants, and the prisoners were allowed extra phone calls to family and friends. The Eid meal was offered as a menu choice for the whole prison to encourage a virtual shared celebration.

From mid-October to 5 November there was an easing of restrictions and groups of six men and a chaplain were permitted to meet, on a rota system. Corporate worship was allowed during Christmas week, and 15 minute-long services were held for socially distancing men in their regime bubble, and this was appreciated. From 2 January 2021 corporate worship was again stopped, and this remained the case on 31 March.

5.6 Complaints

There were fewer complaints to the establishment in 2020. There were 677 formal complaint ('Comp 1') forms submitted, compared with 1,100 in 2019. Eighty-five related to property, 77 to finance (including PIN phone credit, canteen and orders) and 72 to staff. Forty-nine forms were attributable to two prisoners. All complaints were replied to on time, thanks to vigorous encouragement from the complaints team. Fifty-eight Comp 1A (Appeals) forms were submitted, compared with 60 in 2019. The IMB has occasion to inspect paperwork when applications are being investigated and can confirm that the quality of replies has been good.

IMB applications were also fewer (see section 8).

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare

Healthcare is provided by the Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and is supported by GPs from Inclusion Healthcare and by visiting specialists.

The IMB commends the work of the healthcare team during 2020, both in their response to the pandemic and in their determination to continue to provide the best service possible during lockdown.

Prisoners were kept informed about changes in healthcare during lockdown by means of NTP, by the weekly prisoner newsletter and by their daily conversations with staff. In the HMIP SV survey 67 prisoners said it was easy to see a nurse, 26 said it was difficult and 20 did not know. The Board received only 10 applications concerning healthcare, seven of which had been resolved by the time the prisoner was seen. Only two prisoners complained about their appointment being delayed.

6.2 Physical healthcare

6.2.1 Covid-19 response

The team stepped up promptly to the challenges of Covid-19 management, and rapidly implemented all NHSE guidelines, despite having a significant number of staff absent through illness, shielding or self-isolation in March 2020. There was excellent partnership working with staff in all areas of the prison, which led to a successful containment of the initial outbreak and of the later sporadic cases. Vaccination was delivered according to the national programme, with a very good uptake.

6.2.2 Delivery of healthcare

By coincidence, the healthcare suite had closed in March for reflooring and upgrading. Some consultations and treatments had been relocated to the wings and some routine services suspended, with plans for catch up sessions when the accommodation reopened. As an innovation, remote working had already been introduced, allowing telephone and laptop consultations for prisoners with healthcare nurses, GPs and hospital specialists.

From 24 March 2020 routine clinics were suspended, but emergency work continued throughout the year, and prisoners remained well supported. Primary care continued uninterrupted. Two face-to-face clinic slots were made available Monday to Saturday for emergencies and those prisoners flagged up by the triage nurse in reception, and routine work was done remotely, including electronic prescribing. Prisoners could contact healthcare by PIN phone from April, and the phone conversation often saved an appointment. The GPs returned from June for a clinic every weekday morning.

Pharmacy worked very efficiently and were able to convert medications to in-possession, thus reducing queueing at the medicines hatch. Routine workload remained high, and in December over 250 men were in receipt of medication.

Specialist clinics were closed, but practitioners occasionally attended for emergency support and triage. Remote liaison continued, with two or three hospital consultations per month by phone. From September however Leicester was one of the first establishments to reintroduce specialist clinics, all of which resumed, except sexual health, whose staff had been transferred to Covid-19 duties.

Clinic use continued to be supplemented by i-pad and telephone, because the number of prisoners allowed to attend a session had to be reduced by about a third for the sake of social distancing in the small waiting room, and the need for extra cleaning of clinic areas between consultations. The healthcare prisoner orderly proved a valuable asset. By the end of the reporting year waiting lists for routine work were comparable with outside and usually shorter than four to six weeks.

Routine healthcare interventions continued. Long-term conditions were flagged up and regularly reviewed. The hepatitis C treatment programme continued and in 2020 arrangements were introduced to allow men on the programme to transfer to their next prison taking their supply of medications with them to complete the course. The infectious disease nurse continued to attend regularly and a number of cases of Streptococcus A occurring between January and March 2020 were well managed. Smoking cessation support continued to be offered but demand steadily fell, as many prisoners had taken up the use of vapes.

Dental services were maintained, and Time for Teeth provided triage and emergency treatments. However, as in the community, certain procedures were not allowed. The routine waiting list built up but by December was acceptable, with 17 prisoners waiting up to four weeks for non-urgent treatment.

6.3 Mental healthcare

The burden of mental health illness is higher for Leicester than in comparator prisons. Up to 60% of the prisoners self-report mental health problems, and during 2020 about 135 men at any time were receiving mental health services. The case load of moderate to severe illness was usually between 60 and 70. There was full staffing of mental health nurses, and full involvement with reception, casework and properly timetabled ACCT reviews. An appointed psychiatrist attended one day a week before lockdown, ensuring continuity of care. Consultations were held by i-pad for three months, but then resumed face-to-face in clinic.

It was recognised from the beginning that lockdown could be detrimental to mental health. There was an open referral system for men who seemed to be struggling, identified from incident recording, staff daily contacts and the formally introduced wellbeing checks (5.3). It was concerning that towards the end of 2020, mental health nurses told the Board that there was an increase of prisoners with poor mental health being received into the establishment.

Services expanded during the reporting year. The psychological wellbeing practitioner with a special interest in cognitive behaviour therapy was joined in early 2021 by a psychologist to work with men troubled by the aftermath of traumatic events such as childhood abuse and genocide. A member of the sexual assault referral centre began to attend once a week to meet appropriate prisoners and arrange support in the community on release. Face-to-face therapies resumed in June, but no group support meetings were allowed to resume during 2020.

Leicester prisoners continue to participate in the three-year research project 'Potential Unlock Art in Prison – the Impact of Arts on Mental Health in a Custodial Setting' which involves healthcare staff, the CRC, De Montfort University and Soft Touch Arts. Their work was included in the second annual art exhibition 'Unlock 2', which was open to the public between 7 and 22 March 2020 at Leicester Museum and at the Soft Touch Arts Heritage Centre, New Walks.

6.3.1 *The gatekeeping process*

This is the system by which prisoners with severe mental illness are transferred to secure psychiatric accommodation. Nottingham NHS Trust led the development of the IMPACT project for secure services in the East Midlands during 2019, and the collaborative now includes the West Midlands. There is a single point of referral to the commissioners (NHSE), and assessment and secure bed allocation are co-ordinated. A fortnightly meeting is held on-line, and all 'delayed discharges' (prisoners waiting more than two weeks for transfer) are discussed at a high management level. This information is also being collated nationally.

In 2020, ten prisoners (compared with seven in 2019) were transferred to secure psychiatric accommodation. Taking Covid-19 restrictions into account, eight had progress comparable to 2019. The average time interval between first referral and assessment by secure unit staff was 24 days (range 10 – 36), compared with 16 days (7 – 27) in 2019, and the time spent by these eight accepted and awaiting transfer was an average of 31 days (10 – 57), compared with 29 days (19 –16) in 2019. Five were for waiting for low secure accommodation, and three for medium, and three were out of area.

Two prisoners caused the Board concern. One man was so unwell that he was held in Leicester on constant watch for 119 days while waiting for transfer to a medium secure unit. One man waited over nine months for a place in the high security estate and was particularly disadvantaged as he was an IPP prisoner with a Parole Board requirement that his mental health disorder be addressed.

6.3.2 *Critical Time Intervention*

This project was in development before lockdown and came into its own from April 2020. Some men become well known to the establishment through repeated cycles of release and reoffending ('revolving door' prisoners), often the result of complex health needs and poorly organised behaviour. Two mental health practitioners identified these vulnerable individuals and for six weeks before release networked with the Probation Service, the CRC, and community teams so that through the gate support was in place on the day of release. They then supported these prisoners for six weeks afterwards by keeping in touch through phone calls and visits and, if necessary, accompanying them to appointments. More than 30 prisoners had been supported in this way by the end of the reporting year and there were some notable anecdotal successes. A formal evaluation is awaited, but the Board feels that this is a valuable new service likely to reduce re-offending.

6.4 Social care

An LCC-funded trained care assistant is now in post and provides rapid assessment and response for physical disabilities. Twenty-seven prisoners were assessed between April and December 2020, with two receiving a social care package.

6.5 Exercise and the gym

At lockdown, outdoor exercise was restricted to 20 minutes offered on alternate days because of the shortage of supervising staff and social distancing requirements, but from June was made available to up to 30 men in their regime groups for a 30 minute session on 11 days per fortnight. The three enthusiastic physical education officers (PEOs) energetically encouraged men to keep active, and to join in activities.

There were regular competitions and challenges, with the winners announced in the newsletter, and small prizes awarded. Over 60 men competed in the 500-metre fastest time challenge. There was a 'Fit-Brit' competition, with heats and a Champion of Champions. All levels of fitness were catered for. Circuit training was offered for beginners, for mixed abilities working in pairs, as a fun base circuit involving dice, cards and ping-pong, and as 'John's circuit of death', a very challenging circuit attempted by 20 men.

The gym closed at lockdown, which was disappointing for many prisoners. By the end of March 2020, however, the PEOs had moved gym equipment to a suitable area on the yard, for men to use during exercise. The prisoner gym orderlies cleaned the equipment between sessions. Two gazebos and astroturf were obtained towards the end of the year so that activities could continue in all but the worst weather.

A visit to the exercise yard was a useful socially distanced way for the IMB to speak to prisoners. They regarded highly the efforts of the PEOs in helping to make lockdown bearable and comments included 'these guys are doing a great job', 'it's brilliant to have the weights', 'thoughtful of staff', 'something to look forward to every day', with the regular addition of 'please could you arrange for us to have longer?'

Time out of cell, see page 9.

6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

The service was delivered by Turning Point, which worked closely with prison and healthcare staff and was supported by GPs from Inclusion Healthcare. The team was managed efficiently and well regarded by prisoners.

The case load remains high. In December, 110 men were receiving psychosocial support, and about half were on opiate substitution therapy. The previously weekly group sessions were halted at lockdown, but the team continued to offer welfare checks and support at the cell door, and from July had confidential face-to-face meetings with individual prisoners on the wing. The group materials were added to the usual in-cell learning packs. Support continued in the community after release. When a significant number of prisoners were found to be 'under the influence' at the end of the year, there was a vigorous publicity campaign about the dangers of NPS, which included notices to all prisoners, posters and encouraging articles in the weekly newsletter from prisoners who had broken the habit.

Prisoners on the alcohol withdrawal programme missed the support of the weekly group sessions provided by Dear Albert, which stopped at lockdown.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

7.1.1 Education

Education remained the main purposeful activity in the prison. The performance of PeoplePlus has improved greatly during this second year of their contract, and Leicester is now ranked highly among comparator prisons for learner numbers and those on accredited courses. This was driven by the appointment of their new manager in March, and an excellent working relationship with the prison learning and skills manager. There is full staffing, with 12 tutors in post, four appointed during 2019 and five during 2020, and cover for absence is included.

When classroom teaching stopped on 24 March 2020, the staff moved to an administrative area on site and worked hard to support prisoners already on courses by rewriting teaching materials for in-cell learning. Education packs were delivered with the help of wing staff. Over 70 packs were issued during the first two weeks, and the process of review by a tutor, return with comments and then final marking was well underway.

From 20 April, in-cell education packs were offered to new learners, and the range and choice available increased during the year. The priority was to offer accredited courses, which could be continued on transfer to other establishments, with qualifying exams to be held when classroom teaching resumes. The awarding body was changed to Gateway Qualifications for English, maths, ESOL and employability skills. An in-cell art course of four units teaching basic to advanced techniques with step-by-step instructions was introduced in September and proved extremely popular. In December, two-week courses began to be offered for prisoners uncertain of their length of stay and these included budgeting, health and safety in the workplace, individual rights and responsibilities, understanding stress, tonal drawing and valuing equality and diversity.

By the end of June over 200 education packs had been issued, with high completion rates, and in December 63 prisoners had completed 89 courses over the previous three months, and 106 were in progress.

Tutors continued to attend the establishment, initially three each day with others working remotely, and later with the formation of two alternating bubbles. Support for learners was available from the outset, initially by written request, and from August by PIN phone contact available daily. Phone calls averaged 40 per month, about half of them requesting education packs. Some tutors reported that prisoners were making better progress in-cell than in a classroom setting. Quality assurance of teaching included reviewing and upgrading course materials, 'learning walks', and prisoner surveys and feedback.

A learning support practitioner was appointed in February 2020. He identifies those with learning difficulties and disabilities from a questionnaire given to all prisoners on induction and followed up in depth by a phone conversation with those who may need extra support and physical aids such as large print materials.

Education opportunities were very well promoted on induction and in the weekly prisoner newsletter, and by course leaflets delivered to all prisoners. There were successful targeted mailshots to those not engaging or 'difficult to reach' – after one

of these, 18 of 22 prisoners on the Welford unit requested a pack. The 'Learner of the week' was named in the newsletter which increased morale. Teaching staff also arranged regular competitions and challenges open to all prisoners.

7.1.2 Library

The library was valued by prisoners during 2020. It closed in line with national instructions on 24 March and the librarian service was withdrawn. However, it was permitted to reopen from 7 April, with the help of wing staff, for book exchange. There was a rota system for a visit by each regime group once a week, and a trolley service for the RCU, Welford and shielding units.

Other material was freely available, including distraction packs, origami, puzzles, magazines, and self-help materials about coping with stress and lockdown. Prisoners could borrow board games. Enhanced prisoners could borrow DVDs, and at the end of the reporting year, money was made available for the purchase of 25 DVD players which all prisoners could borrow on a rota system. Some new DVDs were purchased, but a call for donations from staff led to over 500 being gifted.

The librarian returned during the summer, with limited prisoner contact, but the library was closed again on 5 November. However, the establishment made a special case because of the very restricted regime and was allowed to re-introduce the book exchange and access supervised by officers. This was advertised in the prisoner newsletter as a 'unique opportunity' for prisoners to visit the only library open in the City of Leicester.

As usual, there was a programme of extra activities organised by the senior community librarian and the writer-in-residence, in collaboration with prison staff.

In March, the first of a three-part project 'Your Brain in Science' involving prisoners and professional actors was recorded for National Prison Radio.

The project 'Celebrating Artists from a Working Class Background' funded by Arts Council England was ongoing, and between January and March 2020 sessions included story-telling, and workshops for drama, for banner making, and for cut up and collage. There were visits from a sound engineer, an author, a rap artist and a performance poet. Visits planned after March were cancelled, but instead the writer-in-residence invited these artists and those who had contributed to the project previously to send in articles about creativity and the arts, to include positive thoughts, ideas and tasks for prisoners during lockdown. This resulted in the publication of a 96 page 'Tool Book', sponsored by Arts Council England, LCC and the Joyce Carr Doughty Trust. A copy was given to all Leicester prisoners and the publication was also made available to the wider prison estate.

In January 2021 prisoners were invited to sign up for a new project 'Ingenuity' aiming to explore and celebrate the creativity of those living in prison. This is a collaboration with the National Justice Museum in Nottingham and will involve in-cell working initially.

7.2 Vocational training, work

In February 2020 about 40% of the population was in employment, but this fell to about 25% after the introduction of the restricted regime. Jobs remained available for workers in kitchens, waste management, and the clothing exchange system, and for

cleaners, bio-cleaners, wing orderlies, peer workers and painters. The workshop remained closed.

PeoplePlus adapted the work-related teaching courses into self-study materials, and from July in-cell courses in cleaning and in manual handling were introduced, leading to a qualification when classroom teaching resumes. At the end of the reporting year five men had begun to study for level 1 health and safety in a construction environment, available as a five unit in-cell course. This is an essential requirement for the construction skills certification scheme (CSCS) card, and prisoners will be assisted to book the test on release. The level 2 certificate in warehouse and storage was also offered.

Kitchen workers could no longer study for the City and Guilds NVQ in catering and hospitality and worked instead for the level 2 Gateway qualification food safety and storage.

In October and November, classroom teaching was allowed to resume for the waste management industry training and advisory board (WAMITAB) cleaning course, and 10 of 14 learners achieved the qualification.

During the year, 10 St Giles peer advisers were employed, and eight completed work for the level 3 NVQ information, advice and guidance (7.5.1).

7.3 Offender management and progression

The OMU worked hard to transfer those prisoners serving more than 12 months to other establishments, and to support resettlement on release. The unit is well staffed and includes a senior probation officer, six prison offender managers (POMs) of whom three are probation and three prison officers, and five case workers. From February 2020, each POM provided a timetabled 'drop in' session on the wing to answer prisoner and staff queries and to give advice. After lockdown this was replaced by a direct phonenumber available daily and staffed by POMs on a rota. This service was very well used, and prisoners appreciated a quick response to their concerns, which usually related to transfer, sentence planning and release arrangements. No prisoner met the criteria for the early release end of custody temporary release (ECTR) scheme.

Leicester is designated as a local prison with a 55% reception and a 45% resettlement function. Throughout lockdown the prison continued to receive recall prisoners serving short sentences and remand prisoners awaiting court. Remote hearings began in June, and the video link was very well used (7.3.2), but a backlog gradually developed and by February 2021 70% of the population comprised reception prisoners, reducing the spaces available for local resettlement.

From June, the prison was allowed gradually to transfer prisoners to the training estate, and a new 'offender flow' process worked well. Between June and November 287 men were transferred out, 190 of them during the last three months of that period. Some of these men were long-term prisoners held inappropriately at Leicester. Over the same six-month period 295 men were released. At the end of the reporting year, over 90% of those held were Leicestershire men

7.3.1 Prisoners serving an Indeterminate sentence for Public Protection (IPP)

The IMB became very concerned during 2020 about the management of IPP prisoners held in the establishment. These prisoners are held indefinitely until they can satisfy the Parole Board that any risk they pose can be managed in the community. HMP Leicester has no special facilities to support these prisoners or to offer them the courses or interventions required by the Parole Board. Despite this, 14 such men were held during the reporting year, waiting either for a transfer or for a Parole Board hearing.

Transfer: IPP prisoners have typically spent time in several establishments, including secure mental health accommodation, and other prisons are reluctant to accept them, despite the strenuous efforts of OMU. At the end of the reporting year, five had achieved a progressive transfer of whom four had waited over 12 months. One man was still waiting at 12 months.

Parole Board: Following lockdown, the Parole Board introduced remote and paper hearings, but after June 2020 they met in the establishment. However, in February 2021 five men were still waiting for their hearing after an average wait of seven months (range three – 12 months). One man admitted in October 2019 had a parole hearing during 2020, but additional reports were required, and a further hearing was booked for January 2021. An error with the paperwork outside the prisoner's control led to a postponement to May 2021.

Most of these men suffered the whole lockdown serving 'extra empty time' with no ability to progress. There were detrimental effects on their wellbeing. Three had serious mental health disturbances, two made serious self-harm attempts and spent periods under constant watch and three spent time in segregation. When feelings of dismay and hopelessness showed as violence or threats, this risked being attributed to the 'offending behaviour' rather than a cry for help.

The IMB believes these prisoners are treated as a low priority in the criminal justice system, and that they are subjected to unacceptable delays in their ability to make progress, and that this could be regarded as unfair and inhumane treatment.

7.3.2 Legal visits and the court video link

This accommodation proved very valuable in prisoner management during 2020. Face-to-face legal and official visits and court work were halted during April and May, but from June there was increasing use of the two court links and of the four legal visits video booths. One booth was converted to a Cloud Video Platform video meeting room, and was open each weekday to support court business, mainly sentencing hearings and probation work which allowed remand prisoners and those convicted awaiting sentencing to progress. Extra sessions were staffed, and the facilities were often fully booked. This increased Covid-19 safety for prisoners, staff and official visitors, by reducing footfall and movements in and out of the establishment, and was appreciated by legal teams, as it saved travelling and often allowed several clients to be seen in one session. At the end of the reporting year, funds had been allocated for the additional installation of videoconferencing facilities in the five rooms used for face-to-face visits.

7.4 Family contact

7.4.1 Social visits

Social visits were stopped on 24 March 2020. They were re-introduced between 12 October and 5 November, but only 10 per afternoon weekday session could be offered because of Covid-19 social distancing and staffing requirements. A rota system was used, with up to three visitors from the same household arriving at ten minute intervals, and the visit lasting one hour. Not all the slots were booked, as some men felt it would be too upsetting to see their family without contact, and some were fearful of the risk of Covid-19 transmission either inwards or outwards. The 50 visits booked for the exception period over Christmas had to be cancelled at short notice.

The Board was pleased to see the introduction of secure video visits from 20 July, funded by HMPPS and provided by Purple Visits. Leicester had three video units, with a master screen supervised by an OSG, and each prisoner could be offered a 30-minute visit once a month. Visitors had to gain security approvals, including photographs. The prisoners who used it reported that it was appreciated, although 'not as good as a real visit'. However, some found it emotionally upsetting to see part of their home after a long time away. Some families could not manage the set-up arrangements, and there were technical issues, and so continued uptake was lower than expected. Initially seven slots on average were booked of the 10 offered each weekday, but by the end of 2020 only about a third were utilised, and two visits per month could be offered.

7.4.2 PIN phones and credit

After 25 March 2020, all prisoners were able to make a 10-minute daily phone call to family or friends using either the PIN phone on the landing or one of the 12 mobile phones issued to the establishment by HMPPS in April. Each prisoner received £5 per week in PIN phone credit, paid by the prison service and ringfenced for this purpose. BT reduced the price of calls by 15% during lockdown.

This facility was very much appreciated by prisoners, and for some it meant more contact with their family than usual. Positive comments were recorded in the prisoner surveys in May and June (5.3) including 'appreciated', 'good for privacy', 'phone system is working well', 'officers helpful', 'would like longer'. Leicester was allocated morning slots initially, but in July phone access was increased with an evening phone call available once a week.

From April free PIN phone calls were also made available for all residents to contact healthcare, resettlement, OMU and the information advice and guidance (IAG) service, with education added from August. By 5 May there had been 780 uses of the mobile phones, one of the highest uptakes among establishments without in-cell telephony. Postal correspondence and 'e-mail a prisoner' continued as usual.

7.5 Resettlement planning

7.5.1 DLNR CRC

The CRC remains hard working and well regarded by prisoners. The team is fully staffed and includes seven Through the Gate (TTG) case workers, some of whom have particular specialist interests such as finance and accommodation, a housing

and welfare officer and a community support worker, and there is good managerial and administrative support. The sharing of an office with OMU and probation services enables good collaboration.

Because of lack of space in the office, after lockdown CRC staff combined remote working with part-time attendance. Face-to-face interviews with prisoners were stopped, although could be arranged for urgent cases. In practice this was rarely necessary.

Peer workers helped prisoners to complete a basic questionnaire on reception and obtained consent from those in housing need to allow the CRC to contact agencies promptly. A more detailed questionnaire was completed in cell, both by new arrivals and by prisoners within 12 weeks of release. Prisoner circumstances were also known through existing systems such as NOMIS and OASys. The IMB routinely saw caseworkers on the wing during the lunch-time patrol state, speaking to prisoners through the door to clarify any queries. The PIN phone service (7.4.2) was very well used.

During the year St Giles peer advisers were an invaluable support to prisoners and to the CRC team. Ten were employed, compared with four during 2019, and eight of them completed the NVQ level 3 qualification in information, advice and guidance.

7.5.2 Finance and debt management

During each month of 2020, the finance officer assisted an average of 62 prisoners with a total reported debt of £43,000 and contacted 48 creditors and helped 10 men to open a bank account. He responded promptly to the systemic changes required by lockdown and he converted his regular group sessions on budgeting and dealing with debt to an in-cell learning course, available from mid-April. The finance officer is very highly regarded in the establishment, and he received a Butler Trust Award in the 2020/2021 round for his local, regional and national work.

DWP worked remotely during lockdown but maintained regular email contact with TTG caseworkers so that prisoners were assisted with their benefit claims. From November DWP were able to offer appointments on release for prisoners classed as vulnerable.

7.5.3 Accommodation on release

Lack of available accommodation remains the greatest challenge for successful long-term resettlement. However, the work of the national homelessness prevention team (HPT) was of benefit to many prisoners during lockdown in providing funded accommodation for up to 56 days for those men who were potentially homeless. Of 295 men released between June and November 2020, about half were identified as potentially of no fixed abode (NFA), but only 19 (6%) were actually NFA on leaving custody. No longer term data are available for the eventual outcome of those assisted by the HPT.

The scheme was temporarily withdrawn between 22 October and 11 November, but then reintroduced, including for retrospective referrals, because of the high Covid-19 infection rates in Leicester City. From this time the community offender manager became involved in the referral, in the hope that this would encourage men to engage better in the arrangements for their 'move-on' accommodation. The provider, Response Accommodation, was also starting to move away from hotels and towards

bedsit and individual accommodation. Assistance from the HPT was still available on 31 March 2021.

Charitable organisations continued to provide accommodation support, including The Bridge (Loughborough) Homeless Transitions project, and for men with substance misuse issues, Carpenters Arms, Loughborough.

Those NFA continued to be referred to LCC, and prisoners were made aware of the immediate help offered by Help the Homeless in Leicester City in terms of food parcels, clothing and toiletries

In January 2021, the Board was very pleased to hear that discussions had been held, facilitated by the chaplaincy and involving the CRC, Leicester Homeless Charter and Action Homeless, about the housing needs of men leaving HMP Leicester. A pilot project has started, involving Help the Homeless, LCC, the National Probation Service and Action Homeless, to provide accommodation (usually shared) for men leaving custody, and in addition four hours of support each week to each service user.

7.5.4 Employment on release

At the time of release, 5% of men reported that they had employment to go to, and 2% that they had a training opportunity, compared with 10% who had a job or work placement in 2019, and 5% in 2018.

Information, advice and guidance services were available to the CRC from Acorn training, who offered all men the opportunity to complete a learning development plan, which 71% completed. The team was available by CRC PIN phone, and vacancies and opportunities were advertised regularly in the prisoner newsletter. Thirty-two men were assisted to complete a CV.

Work opportunities were very limited. Of 10 men who expressed an interest in a job in the Glen Parva prison building project, four applied and one was successful. Eight men applied for vacancies in Greene King hospitality, with no-one successful.

The RIFT social enterprise scheme offered support for developing the skills needed for self-employment for men nearing release, by means of in-cell material, and five men successfully engaged.

Five men were referred to CT Skills, Leicester, for construction skills training and obtaining a CSCS card (7.2).

From November CRC caseworkers were again able to refer suitable candidates to the CRC ETE team, who offer employment, training and education support in the community.

7.5.5 Release planning

Photo identity cards were supplied to the 90% of prisoners without one, to enable them to progress in seeking accommodation, employment and benefits. The required copy of their birth certificate was funded for a number of necessitous prisoners by the Rebecca Hussey Leicester Prison Charity.

From May, 97 prisoners without a mobile phone were supplied with one on release, so that they could straight away activate arrangements in connection with housing and benefits and contact other agencies such as substance misuse services. Tesco

supplied 40 phones loaded with initial credit, and the rest were funded by the MOJ, with credit funded from the Rebeca Hussey Charity and other donations.

'Release packs' were provided to necessitous prisoners. These contained essential toiletries, hand sanitiser, food items and clothing if necessary, as well as the resettlement booklet containing contact details of community support agencies. Donations from Tesco, Boots and Next were supplemented by charitable and staff donations. The critical time intervention (CTI) initiative (6.3.2) has been invaluable in coordinating arrangements and support for those men judged particularly vulnerable on release.

Plans are well advanced for a 'departure lounge' under the New Beginnings initiative. When face-to-face meetings can once more be held, the intention is that all men due for release will meet staff from the resettlement team and from outside agencies, including DWP and Turning Point, as well as Meet at the Gate workers.

A named officer provides support for veterans in custody and these prisoners are offered referral to Care after Combat, an organisation that provides mentored support for up to 12 months before and after release, a telephone help-line and assistance with contacting support agencies in the community. No prisoner wished to take this up in 2020.

7.5.6 Reducing reoffending function

The reducing reoffending function includes seven elements: education, training and employment; mental and physical health; drugs and alcohol; finance, benefit and debt; accommodation; attitudes, thinking and behaviour; and children and families of offenders. It therefore requires good partnership working from the whole establishment, and this was evident in practice during 2020. The regular multidisciplinary meeting chaired by the head of reducing reoffending suffered some postponements during lockdown, but an IMB member attended four of the five meetings held in 2020 and reported good engagement by all participants. The IMB would like to see a strong focus on the 'Rehabilitative culture' during 2021.

8. The work of the IMB

The Board had 12 members, a full complement, at the beginning of the reporting year. Three members left during 2020. Two members are in their probationary period. A successful recruitment campaign was held at the end of 2020 and appointments are in progress.

Remote monitoring replaced normal Board duties between March 24 and June 8 2020.

During this period, the Governor and staff were very accommodating in providing information to the Board, and this has continued to the present time. The IMB receives the daily briefing sheet, all notices to prisoners and staff, the weekly newsletter to prisoners and the 'Off the Cuff' staff newsletter, as well as the minutes of departmental meetings, notably the weekly safety intervention meeting, and the monthly meeting of the safer custody team, with associated data. National directives and Covid-19 regime management plans and updates have been promptly provided. In addition, the Chair has spoken to the Governor, usually at weekly intervals, by telephone during April 2020, and in person since May. Other members stayed in telephone contact with functional heads and received regular updates, concentrating particularly on residential, healthcare, OMU and CRC functions as well as Covid-19 management. These conversations were kept confidential within the Board to allow cross checking of information.

From 9 June 2020, five members have been able to provide rota visits, with limited prisoner contact, usually at weekly intervals, and have occasionally attended departmental meetings. Members unable to attend the establishment for Covid-19 related reasons have continued telephone contacts with staff.

Monthly Board meetings have continued, by teleconferencing from April, and have always been attended by the Governing Governor or his deputy. The December meeting was held in the establishment visits centre, to bid farewell to a member leaving on tenure after 15 years' service.

Board statistics 2020

Recommended complement of Board members	12
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	12
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	9
Total number of visits to the establishment	January – March: 66 April – December: 50
Total number of segregation reviews attended	No face-to-face reviews after March

Applications to the IMB

Application boxes are situated in the induction unit, Welford Unit, Lambert Unit, segregation unit, Parsons unit and beside the servery on the main wing.

Between 24 March and 8 June 2020, the IMB appreciated the help of staff who opened the boxes and arranged for scanned applications to be dealt with remotely. Subsequently the boxes were opened, usually weekly, by an attending member. From July prisoners also had access to the IMB 0800 applications line. Three Board members participated as call handlers.

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	10	1
B	Discipline, including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	5	9
C	Equality	2	2
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	1	2
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	12	7
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	6	2
F	Food and kitchens	1	2
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	16	10
H1	Property within this establishment	14	3
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	15	7
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	8	1
I	Sentence management, including HDC, release on temporary licence, parole, release dates, reclassification	5	7
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	16	10
K	Transfers	8	4
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system	12	2
	Total number of applications	131	69

Between January and March 2020, 25 applications were received. Between April and December there were 44. Seven confidential applications were dealt with (compared with eight in 2019).

The issue had already been resolved before the IMB contacted the prisoner in 14 cases, and eight prisoners had left the establishment. One prisoner used the 0800 IMB applications line.



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