



**Annual Report of the
Independent Monitoring Board at HMP/YOI Pentonville**

**For reporting year
1 April 2020 to 31 March 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, of 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/YOI Pentonville, on Caledonian Road in the London Borough of Islington, is a category B local prison primarily serving the magistrates' and Crown Courts in north and east London. The four cell blocks remain much as they were when the prison was opened in 1842.

Pentonville holds category B and C male adults and young adults (YAs, aged 18 to just before their 21st birthday). Almost half of the adults are on remand. Most prisoners stay for six months or less, either serving short terms, recently convicted but still awaiting sentence, or sentenced to longer terms and awaiting transfer to other establishments. Most of the YAs are on remand; once sentenced, they are transferred to other prisons. At the end of the reporting year, approximately 27 foreign nationals were held as detainees beyond the end of their sentence at the request of the Home Office.

The certified normal accommodation, which is the normal capacity of the prison, as judged by Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) – is 909 prisoners. The operational capacity, which is the maximum number of prisoners it can hold without serious risk to safety, security, good order and the proper running of the planned regime, is 1000. At the end of the reporting year, there were approximately 966 prisoners (of which 100 were YAs).

Providers

- Maintenance: Gov Facility Services Ltd
- Education: Novus
- Escort contractor: Serco
- Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC): Penrose (sub-contracted by MTCNovo via the London CRC)
- Healthcare and pharmacy: Care UK, known as Practice Plus since October 2020
- Mental health: Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health Trust NHS co-ordinates the work of Care UK / Practice Plus primary mental health nurses, with its own secondary mental health, inpatient and day care services
- Substance misuse programme: Building Futures
- Gym qualifications: Active IQ
- Housing resettlement: St Mungo's
- Gang violence reduction: Catch22 (until end March 2021)
- Visitors' centre: Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT)
- Resettlement support: Only Connect, Switchback, Standout

3. Executive summary

3.1 Background to the report: the pandemic in Pentonville

Two prisoners, two members of staff, and a volunteer chaplain were sadly lost to the Covid-19 virus.

Pentonville was in lockdown from late March until June 2020, and also in Covid-19 outbreak mode (as defined by Public Health England (PHE)) for part of this time. Men were confined to their cells, many up to 23 hours a day, with infrequent opportunities for shower or exercise.

New prisoners had to quarantine, and showers and exercise were very limited for all prisoners. An isolation unit operated for prisoners who were symptomatic or confirmed Covid-19 cases and they were not allowed out of their cells at all. Early in the year, testing was slow and swabs had to be sent out of the prison. GPs could however contact the men via in-cell telephones.

Essential workshops/activities kept going but with fewer workers: recycling, industrial cleaning, boxer shorts and bedding production, and distribution of prison clothing. Opportunities for other work were limited. The prison recorded that overall 300 men were at work most days.

All group activities stopped including collective worship, mental health therapy, drug rehabilitation groups, education classes and skills workshops. However, one-to-one support continued throughout, including from health professionals and other key services. Members of the chaplaincy team visited most men weekly throughout the year.

Activity and education packs were provided. Games consoles were dug out of the property store. Gym staff gave tips on exercise routines for the men to follow in their cells and ran outdoor group exercise classes. The library began a book ordering service and kept book tables stocked on the wings.

In-cell telephones were a lifeline for prisoners to keep in touch with families, and for the most anxious to call the Samaritans at any time. Digital visits became popular and enabled prisoners to see family, including those overseas. Visits to the prison resumed for a period in the summer, but with social distancing and prisoners concerned for their families' wellbeing, the take-up was low.

Remand and sentencing hearings went online, as did conferences with lawyers. Legal visits at the prison resumed in person as more trials got underway. However, the backlog in the courts meant some men waited for more than a year to get to court, and many continue to do so. Parole Board hearings also went online.

Tentative plans for resuming some activities were overtaken by the autumn lockdown and then the winter surge in the virus. Pentonville was an 'outbreak' prison again in January and February, and face coverings became mandatory for staff and

prisoners. Vaccinations for prisoners began in line with community criteria and were offered to all Pentonville staff by Islington Council in March.

The IMB resumed visiting from the end of June until December, and again in late February, but on fewer occasions than in previous years. Prisoners could instead contact the IMB on a free national phone line. Pentonville was the second highest user with 675 individual calls over the period, which provided the Board with a picture of their main concerns. Prisoners in distress could then be referred by the IMB for welfare checks by staff. The *emailprisoner* service meant IMB responses reached men promptly. It should be noted that this IMB report is informed by our visits, although it also relies more than usual on information provided by the prison and should be read in that context and against the background of the public health and operational constraints on the prison.

3.2 Main judgements

How safe is the prison?

The overwhelming threat to safety this year has been Covid-19. Prison management and healthcare saved many lives by coordinating a stringent isolation and testing regime without which many more than the two prisoners who died might have perished.

However, the day-to-day safety issues which affect prison life have continued, namely violence and drugs. CCTV coverage around the prison has been boosted this year, and more staff have been wearing, and turning on, their body worn video cameras (BWVC), but violence between prisoners, or involving staff, has still been an issue. Young adult violence numbers remain too high, and notwithstanding the innovative Time4Change programme, much more is needed to engage this population.

Drug strategy was at last at the forefront of Pentonville's management priorities this year. More drugs dogs have been working this year than last, although there have still been gaps in cover, and there was no mandatory drug testing (MDT) during the reporting period.

How fairly and humanely are prisoners treated?

It would be difficult to overestimate the boredom and sense of isolation and anxiety generated by conditions in Pentonville over the past year. To hold two men in a 12 x 8 feet cell with a bunk bed, a television, a badly screened toilet and a sink with precious little time out of cell is bad enough. Not to let them out at all for 10 days when isolating is inhumane, given the conditions inside cells. However, the IMB believes that the management team could not have safely provided the men with a better regime given the infection risks, the staffing numbers, the infrastructure, and the number of prisoners at Pentonville.

There will not be decency at Pentonville until it is one man to a cell. It may be that sharing a cell alleviated some of the loneliness of lockdown for some men, but their accommodation could not be judged as decent by any measure.

Data collection and analysis around use of force and adjudications have improved. Equalities is now receiving the attention that it deserves. Allegations of staff misconduct are robustly investigated. The Board believes that, in general, prisoners are treated fairly.

How well are prisoners' health and wellbeing needs met?

Covid-19 has changed many prison systems drastically and healthcare perhaps the most. That Pentonville never had a more sustained and deadly Covid-19 outbreak (compared to other London prisons) speaks well for the prison and healthcare working together. While there were occasional coordination issues with the prison, healthcare managed their responsibilities well and, in general, the relationship between the prison and healthcare was good. Given the challenges of Covid-19 and staff shielding, it was fortunate that there was never a shortfall of healthcare staff. However, Covid-19 has reduced the mental health provision for prisoners dramatically. The care has moved from therapeutic (helping prisoners to improve) to basic monitoring (trying to ensure that patients don't get worse).

How well are prisoners progressed towards successful resettlement?

With limited access to work and education, and the absence or curtailing of other group activities, progress toward resettlement was, inevitably, compromised. Nonetheless, some good work was established or continued. The homelessness prevention taskforce (HPT) was a major initiative enabling prisoners to secure accommodation, a key requirement for effective resettlement. Also, more drug rehabilitation places were secured. In-cell telephony enabled prisoners to maintain contact with their families. Given its limited contact with prisoners, the Board was unable to explore directly how useful they considered resettlement services to have been during the reporting period. But it is noteworthy that, in contrast with some other services, the CRC remained in the prison throughout the year and even expanded their role.

3.3 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

Will you take steps to reduce the population in Pentonville?

Will you invest in the fabric of the prison to provide a safe, decent and rehabilitative environment?

Will the investment in technology made during lockdown be sustained and developed going forward to give prisoners more technology for personal use? For example, more prisoner laptops for education, more video links for those having legal visits, and biometric kiosks on wings.

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

Will the Prison Service fund and deliver more essential refurbishment for decency, such as toilets and showers?

In the case of further lockdowns, will the Prison Service ensure that prisoners have better access to the education staff than during this past year?

Will the Prison Service increase the capacity of offending behaviour programmes at Pentonville, so that prisoners can benefit from these programmes without needing to transfer to another prison?

Will the Prison Service commit to increasing the devolution of decision-making powers to local Governors?

TO THE GOVERNOR

What will you do to improve the quality of assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) documents?

Will you refresh the local incentives and earned privileges (IEP) policy to give: (i) better recognition to positive behaviour and (ii) enhanced prisoners meaningful privileges that will incentivise sustained good behaviour?

Will you commit to developing a record of achievement for prisoners that they can use in job applications upon release?

Will you ensure that each equalities meeting is attended by yourself or your deputy, and commit to updating and progressing the equalities action plan?

Will you commit to improving the analysis and action driven by the equalities data that is being collected, including discrimination incident reporting forms (DIRFs)?

Will you urgently address the lack of timeliness of internal prison communication regarding prisoners' sentence management, which generates a lot of anxiety among the prisoners?

3.4 Progress since the last report

- More scrutiny by prison of use of force incidents
- Better focus by the prison on implementing its drugs strategy
- More data collection generally across the prison
- Better communication with prisoners through regular use of in-cell TV and newsletters
- Production by CSU staff of detailed reports on their residents
- Renewed emphasis by prison management on equalities data and work
- In-cell telephony for all prisoners
- Freephone 0800 IMB applications line and use of *emailprisoner* by the Board
- Regular support from safer custody team when referring on prisoners of concern who contacted the IMB on the 0800 applications line
- Use of remote technology to facilitate prisoners' visits (so called 'Purple Visits')
- CCTV now on all wings
- Renovation of some prisoner accommodation and shower rooms
- Energy and dedication shown by chaplaincy throughout the pandemic, against a backdrop of reduced staffing and volunteer numbers and personal difficulties
- A prison officer received a Butler Trust Award for his work devising and leading Time4Change
- An education tutor commended by the Butler Trust Award scheme and awarded 'outstanding tutor award' at the Festival of Learning 2021

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

4.1 Reception and induction

Pentonville continued to receive new prisoners during the pandemic but in relatively small numbers owing to the reduction in movements to court and so as not to exceed the operational capacity. In normal circumstances there would be around 33,000 movements in and out of reception per annum. In the past year there were approximately 6,600.

A restricted regime reverse cohort unit (RCU) for quarantining new arrivals and NHS vulnerable groups for 14 days on specified wings was, and remains, in operation. However, many prisoners have been kept longer than this on the RCU because no space could be found for them on the regular wings of the prison. Early days in custody are acknowledged to be very risky in terms of self-harm. Due to Covid-19 these measures meant that this initial period became much tougher, and the isolation these prisoners endured was consequently very challenging.

From September, prisoners arriving at reception were tested for Covid-19 on arrival and on day five. Prison guidance enabled prisoners who became symptomatic to stay in their own cells rather than be moved to isolation. In October, prisoners were issued with two washable masks to wear when outside their cell.

A £60k body scanner came into operation in August. In March it had been used 303 times and successfully identified 38 unauthorised items concealed inside prisoners' bodies.

The physical condition of the reception area has improved including a refurbished search area and new screens installed at the front desk and in interviewing rooms. The process of moving the prisoner through reception and into the holding room has been observed to be efficient, with staff displaying politeness and respect. However, the process can on occasion bottleneck in the holding room, which in the summer can become very hot.

Reception experienced some late finishes when there were high levels of Covid-19 sickness amongst Serco staff, meaning that officers working in reception had no idea when a prisoner van would arrive and who might be on it. Fortunately, the situation appears to have been resolved as late vans are now an unusual occurrence.

Due to the pandemic, group induction sessions stopped and induction was instead carried out one-to-one with new arrivals at their cell door by an officer and an Insider. Prisoners were provided with a 34-page induction booklet, 'Welcome to Pentonville Induction Book (Covid Edition)', and any prison forms they required. If a prisoner's first language was not English, an ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) pack was issued instead of the usual basic skills assessment pack issued to native English speakers. New arrivals are seen by a nurse on their first full day as well as by a member of the mental health team. The governor provided regular updates for all new arrivals on the in-cell TV channel.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

Four prisoners sadly died during the reporting year, two in hospital from Covid-19 (in January and March 2021) and two which were apparently self-inflicted (July 2020 and March 2021).

Aside from the deaths attributed to Covid-19, it is to be noted that significantly fewer prisoners died from apparently self-inflicted injury this year compared to the previous year (six).

Of these four most recent deaths, only the one in January 2021 has a date set for inquest. The remaining three await Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) reports or completion of preliminary investigations. Six deaths which occurred before the current reporting year (between August 2019 and February 2020) are also either awaiting PPO reports and/or inquest dates to be set. This backlog must be very unsettling for families, but also means that Pentonville is unable to act on the expert independent recommendations which would no doubt be made in a PPO report and/or by HM Coroner, thus potentially delaying improved outcomes for vulnerable prisoners.

There were a total of 556 recorded incidents of self-harm, a decrease of 126 on the previous reporting year. Prison management has told the Board that they believe lockdown has reduced prisoner anxiety (on the basis that time out of cell for association can be a stressful time due to contact with bullies or people seeking repayment for prison debt). However, anecdotal evidence from conversations with prisoners and IMB applications would suggest that anxiety levels have remained high. The first, second and third lockdowns tested prisoners' resilience levels and the IMB observed that many prisoners found it harder to cope as the year went on.

A total of 774 ACCTs were opened, a decrease of 12 on the previous reporting year. July and August were peaks in the year in relation to numbers of self-harm incidents and ACCTs opened. This was perhaps a reflection of the fact that at this point in the year the community was enjoying respite from the most strict lockdown and the weather was at its best, while life in prison remained mundane and hot (in terms of cell temperature).

HMIP conducted a scrutiny visit in autumn 2020. At the time they reported that the issue of variable quality of ACCTs had not been effectively resolved since their invited review of progress (IRP) visit in February 2020. In response the prison group director for London (PGD) assured the PPO that, following a review, new quality assurance procedures had been introduced including daily reporting to senior management, daily follow up with wing staff, and the identification of best practice processes for ACCTs being transferred between staff.

Throughout the pandemic, prisoners in crisis have had access to prisoners trained by the Samaritans (known as Listeners, with each interaction being a Listen). For a number of months the Samaritans provided the necessary training, mentoring and support to Listeners remotely and as soon as they were authorised to return to the prison, provided that support in person. The peak number of Listens/Listeners was in

December, typically a time of great strain for prisoners owing to the seasonal holidays: 247 Listens were delivered by 25 Listeners.

Over the course of the pandemic, Listeners were designated as red band prisoners which meant they were unlocked for long periods every day alongside other essential worker prisoners such as cleaners. This meant they could attend to prisoners in need in person much more easily because they did not need to be individually unlocked by staff for each Listen.

The long-awaited installation of in-cell telephones just before the pandemic also gave prisoners unprecedented access to the support of their friends and family at any time of the day or night. For most of the reporting year the prison gave each prisoner extra money on a weekly basis towards phone calls as visits were limited or non-existent.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

According to the Governor, approximately 2% of Pentonville's population should be on a challenge, support and intervention plan (CSIP) (approximately 20 prisoners). Over the reporting year, the number of prisoners referred to CSIP varied between 9 and 23. In principle every act of violence ought to be triaged for CSIP but this has not happened, notwithstanding the number of assaults on staff, which steadily increased each month over the last quarter of the year (including serious assaults of spitting, punches to the face and head, and throwing of faeces/urine). Each custodial manager in the prison (of which there are approximately 24) is trained as a CSIP case manager and can take on at least one referral. As noted last year, CSIP has still not fully embedded with all staff and it remains an ongoing challenge for management to encourage more referrals, but numbers have generally increased compared to last year.

Violence peaked in August and March, with 20 assaults recorded against staff and 50 against prisoners. However, the number of CSIP referrals remained comparatively low with just 13 in August and 9 in March. Prison data records the main reasons for violence as including non-compliance and retaliation. Problems with debts (canteen, drugs or tobacco) and bullies were much less likely to be the reason for a prisoner behaving violently compared to pre-Covid-19 times when prisoners came into contact with each other much more often on the wings or in activities.

Analysis of IMB applications over the year indicates that growing frustration with the limited emergency regime and problems with individual staff members were flashpoints.

For the majority of the year, a newly staffed Catch22 team worked on gang violence reduction from outside the prison due to Covid-19. The charity's contract was terminated in March 2021 because management felt that better value could be had by expanding the prison's own security team and using staff with specialist knowledge about London gangs to proactively manage the complex gang dynamics which affect such matters as which wing a prisoner lives on and what activities they can take part in.

The IMB has not been provided with data about self-isolating prisoners as defined and recorded by the prison's safer custody department. However, the reality of this year is that almost all prisoners have been living isolated lives with minimal opportunity for normal social interaction and those that did not speak up to ask for help, or were not noticeably distressed, have been living their lives under the radar of normal day-to-day welfare checks.

4.4 Prisoners with specific vulnerabilities

The vulnerable persons unit (VPU) provides accommodation for prisoners at risk in the wider prison population (VPs). Most VPs were charged with or convicted of sexual offences, but other reasons for vulnerability might include a high profile cases, disability, age-related vulnerability, or transgender status. For the fourth consecutive year the Board reports that many of these prisoners did not feel well protected.

Pentonville has one self-contained unit for about 45 VPs. An adjacent landing for about 10 men is described by the prison as part of the VPU, but this is not self-contained: others come to its medical facilities. For most of this year, up to 18 VPs were located outside the VPU, amid the general population. Reduced transfers out due to Covid-19, court delays and insufficient space in the prison estate exacerbated this overspill.

It is unrealistic to expect that VPs housed outside the self-contained unit can be fully protected. Their safety was a serious concern to the Board and prison management, particularly following an influx of volatile prisoners onto this wing in June. In the last six months VPs frequently complained about abuse, threats, being spat at, having urine thrown at them, and assault. Some of their families were threatened. Several men complained that their food had been contaminated; investigations by the Board could not confirm or rule this out.

Staff seemed to be firefighting as they struggled to keep VPs safe – on the landings, up the stairs, and when exercising. One officer told the Board an incident could happen at any time. Consequently, VP showers or exercise were sometimes cut by staff or declined by prisoners. Prisoner feedback suggested that CCTV, installed in February, reduced the fear but did not eradicate abuse.

Meanwhile, prisoners generally spoke favourably of staff-prisoner relationships in the self-contained unit, making this a supportive location for transgender and older prisoners (5.4). Those with mobility difficulties continued to be disadvantaged by the unreliable lift, restricting their access to visits, and by the inaccessible exercise yards. Older, less mobile prisoners were especially vulnerable when the heating failed (5.1).

Work opportunities for VPs have been historically poor but during lockdown a small number of VPs continued to work in prison industries and bin parties (7.2). Education has always been limited due to lack of space and was further reduced by Covid-19 restrictions (7.1). Like many other prisoners this year, VPs complained of not having enough to do.

4.5 Use of force

The Board was concerned at the introduction of PAVA spray into the prison in April 2020 despite the deficiencies in use of oversight and record-keeping noted by HMIP in its IRP report in February 2020 and the fact that key workers had not been rolled out, both of which the Board understood to be pre-requisites for its introduction.

PAVA has not been used over the reporting year and only the four trained control and restraint (C&R) instructors in the prison are authorised to carry and use it.

The number of incidents of use of force dropped at the start of the restricted regime before increasing again. Since May 2020 it has averaged about 75 per month, with only a very small number of these being planned interventions. Just over 70% of incidents involved the use of full C&R with the rest being a mixture of personal protection and guiding holds. Data for March 2021 show that the most common reasons for use of force were issues with staff or the regime (including failure to lock up, move or wear a mask), assaults or fights between prisoners, and assaults on staff. Baton usage has remained at the same level as last year, with batons being used to break up fights between prisoners and where weapons were present. Each baton usage is reviewed.

There has been a welcome improvement in the oversight and scrutiny of use of force incidents. Twice-monthly use of force assurance and governance meetings review incidents including paperwork, BWVC footage and CCTV, and detail all necessary follow-up actions. In addition, there is a monthly use of force review meeting attended by senior management. In March 2021 the paperwork for reporting use of force went live on Digital Prison Services. This system has been tested at three other prisons and improved the rate of completion of reporting at all sites.

Data show that 18–24-year-olds, Muslim, black and mixed ethnicity prisoners were consistently over-represented in use of force incidents involving restraint while white prisoners were under-represented. The latest use of force meeting minutes note that this over-representation data can be skewed by the same prisoners being involved in multiple incidents. The prison reviews the data at various meetings and seeks solutions through the CSIP and Time4Change programmes.

Use of BWVCs has improved but remains an issue. The number of cameras being drawn daily has increased steadily since April 2020. March 2021 saw a big increase, with an average of 32 of 47 active cameras being drawn daily. They are being switched on more often during incidents but there are still many occasions on which they are not activated, despite the Governor continuing to reinforce to staff how important this is.

4.6 Substance misuse

Drugs came to the forefront of Pentonville business during the year through governors' attendance at drug strategy meetings, monitoring of agreed actions and regular communication with all staff about the drugs strategy. Thirty-five percent of the Pentonville population were engaged in drug support services (6.6) and 15% were prescribed maintenance drugs. The drugs most commonly used in the prison are cannabis and spice.

New arrivals from court who were detoxing were well supported on the quarantine wing. When the men moved on to another wing support continued, but the atmosphere was less stable and the wing was porous to drugs.

Counter measures to detect drugs and other contraband focussed on channels unimpeded by lockdown. New receptions suspected of carrying drugs were given the opportunity of amnesty, after which the x-ray body scanner was used.

Table 4.6.1. Snapshot of body scanner usage to detect contraband

Month		Percentage of positive finds
October	280	8.8%
November	269	14.1%
December	211	12.8%
January	200	17.5%

All mail, social and legal, went through narcotics trace detection equipment (Rapiscan). Drugs were detected in fake Rule 39 letters. All clothing parcels were held back for testing by sniffer dogs. From the summer dog cover improved, but there were still gaps.

In winter there was an increase in detection of 'throw-overs' of drugs and phones. Enhanced gate security will be a further deterrent to staff corruption: construction is underway.

There was no MDT during the year.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

Accommodation

Most men had to share a 12 x 8 feet cell with another prisoner. This cell has been for the last year their shared bedroom, toilet, dining room and living room, in which many often spent 23 hours a day having to tolerate an unimaginable lack of privacy. It is no surprise that applications to the IMB about accommodation almost tripled compared to last year. It is extremely fortunate that the installation of in-cell phones coincided with the start of the pandemic. Additional channels became available on in-cell TV which was also helpful.

The operational capacity of the prison was reduced to 1000 in September. One wing was decanted and refurbished and now looks very good, but these small cells should not house two men. There is nothing that the management team at Pentonville can do about the overcrowding. The operational capacity should be reduced further to allow for single occupancy of the cells.

In March two landings of another wing were emptied and refurbishment started. Renovation of a few shower rooms took place, but some shower rooms are still in an appalling state: damaged floors, mouldy ceilings, partitions falling apart and offering almost no privacy, and recurring fly infestations. There are insufficient showers for the number of prisoners at Pentonville. This led the management to investigate the installation of field showers, but the plumbing logistics proved to be too complicated.

The heating has been problematic for years at Pentonville and it reached crisis point in February. It failed on various wings and some men were left without any heating or hot water for the best part of 10 days at a time when the weather was at its coldest. Blankets were provided and a few heaters were installed on some landings. This was not sufficient and many men suffered greatly from the cold. The Board wrote to the PGD and the Minister at that point. The PGD was very responsive. The Minister asked HMPPS's Chief Operating Officer to reply on her behalf.

Vermin is still an issue at Pentonville despite a three-month program of eradication that started in June.

Clothing

There has been a shortage of kit all year. There is not always enough clothing for all the new prisoners and the replacement system for clothing and bedding is not working. This is especially difficult for those prisoners who cannot rely on their friends and family to send clothing to them.

Food

The IMB continues to receive many complaints about the quality and quantity of prisoners' food. These complaints peaked when the food started being served at cell doors in containers rather than at serveries. Prisoners have been given extra snacks to alleviate the boredom and discontent.

All through the year the kitchen managed, with the help of officers at times, to serve not only regular meals but also a number of health-related special diet meals. The kitchen very successfully organised the delivery of meals to the Muslim prisoners during Ramadan.

5.2 Segregation

The care and separation unit (CSU) (formerly known as the segregation unit) has 11 cells and three special accommodation cells. During the year the occupancy of the unit was 50% or higher and on a few occasions it was completely full for days.

The unit houses prisoners who are awaiting an adjudication and others who, following an adjudication, are serving days of cellular confinement. Some are also held there for the good order and discipline of the prison or for their own protection. The CSU has suffered from a vermin problem again this year.

The overall fabric of the unit remains very tired and in urgent need of further major renovations. Cells are often out of use due to prisoners damaging cells, and observation panels are broken on a regular basis. Delays to repairs can run into weeks or months. A budget for renovation was allocated to the CSU in 2020 and some cells were refurbished. However, it is never long before the cells are either damaged or looking tired again.

Some prisoners held on the unit come with complex mental health needs, and/or are on an ACCT. Weekly good order and/or discipline (GOAD) reviews are attended by a multi-disciplinary team and include a Board member when possible.

These reviews aim to get the prisoners who are held on the unit for the good order and discipline of the prison back onto normal location as soon as is practicable. The Board finds that these reviews are conducted with thoroughness, care and respect for the prisoners. There have been no significant long stay prisoners in the reporting year, which is acknowledged by the Board, as in previous years we have reported some very lengthy stays.

When a violent or refractory prisoner is held in a special cell to prevent him injuring himself or others, the Board is informed. The special accommodation forms must, in these cases, be completed. The Board notes that throughout the year this was being done more thoroughly than in the past. More details, especially concerning the extent of the initial search taking place and the reasons for it, were included in the forms.

During the first lockdown officers went out of their way to keep the Board informed of who was being held in the CSU, with almost daily resident lists being provided. This good practice has continued and includes every use of special accommodation. If a prisoner continues to stay in a special cell for more than 48 hours, the Board tries to join the review held for that prisoner.

The staff try their best to give all prisoners a decent regime, and activities and events are noted on the prisoners' record sheets. The CSU is a very challenging environment to work in, and the Board regularly observes good staff-prisoner relationships.

Radios and distraction in-cell packs were not always made available to prisoners at first request and radios were sometimes out of stock.

The prison tried to facilitate Board members joining GOAD reviews remotely when they were unable to visit in person. Unfortunately, poor internet and speakerphone connection has been a challenge and the Board's attendance at reviews was reduced this reporting year. However, the governor responsible for GOAD reviews regularly kept the Board updated by email or telephone as to recommendations made during any such meetings.

Adjudications

Well-prepared and regular adjudication standards meetings have been run quarterly by the prison to discuss relevant statistics from the previous three months and longer-term trends.

The visiting independent adjudicators (IAs) (who consider the more serious offences) stopped coming into the prison as a precaution against Covid-19. A video conference facility was established in June 2020, and since then a very small number of independent adjudications have been made (an average of seven per month over the period January–March 2021 compared to tens of prisoners per week in normal times).

A backlog in adjudications led to several charges being written off due to the passage of time.

A significant backlog of referrals to the police for investigation of the most serious offences committed in prison has built up this year. Prompt action on these referrals is essential if staff are to have faith in the prison taking their welfare and safety seriously. Measures have been taken to address this. However, there is still some way to go before the backlog is cleared.

A disproportionate number of prisoners of Muslim faith have been to adjudication in the past quarter (44% of adjudications were for Muslim prisoners compared to a Muslim population in the prison of 35% between January and March 2021). The presentation of these statistics is a recent improvement in the management of the adjudication process; no action has been taken by the prison to investigate the cause so far.

Without the IAs hearing the more serious offences, governors were given permission to adjudicate on some of these offences. However, the penalties at adjudications that can be awarded by governors are limited and were not changed for these more serious cases.

One penalty available to governors at adjudications, and which is effective in a normal regime, is cellular confinement. Under the restricted regime in place during the pandemic, most prisoners have been confined to their cells for most of the day, and consequently this penalty has been less of a deterrent.

5.3 Staff-prisoner/detainee relationships, key workers

This has been an extremely challenging year for both prisoners and staff and the Board has been impressed by the resilience of both. There seems to have been a genuine appreciation by staff and prisoners of how difficult the situation was for everyone, which has led to generally good relationships during much of the year. Prisoners have expressed to Board members their appreciation of how the staff were handling the situation and that they felt well supported. Likewise, staff have told Board members how impressed they have been by how tolerant and cooperative most of the prisoners have been despite the very limited regime.

The increased level of communication from the prison to prisoners has been important. The Governor sent out regular newsletters keeping the prisoners updated about the regime and other issues. These were informative and always acknowledged how difficult the situation was for the prisoners. Use of the in-cell TV channels to broadcast information was also a positive development. A good example of effective communication was seen when a wing was decanted in March 2021. Prisoners were kept updated in advance about the timing and process for the move. It went very smoothly, and prisoners were thanked for their cooperation afterwards.

However, prisoner frustration has increased at times during the year, particularly when prisoners were seeing restrictions outside the prison easing, and February and March saw increases in assaults on staff, which had been at a low level. In its report on its scrutiny visit in November 2020 HMIP noted that it had seen many examples of positive prisoner/staff interaction but also instances of unacceptable staff conduct towards prisoners. The Board welcomes the Governor's recognition of the importance of improving staff skills in this area and his commitment to achieving this.

Running key work sessions has been extremely difficult during the pandemic due to the staff-intensive regime and staff absences. Key work stopped nationally in March 2020 but started up again at Pentonville in a limited capacity by telephone in May. Numbers of sessions remained very low until October when they started to increase. The Governor has encouraged staff to hold sessions whenever possible, either face to face or by phone. The number of sessions remains low but is increasing: in January, February and March there were 508, 557 and 864 sessions respectively. Groups being prioritised for key work include those on open ACCTs, those on CSIP and vulnerable YAs.

5.4 Equality and diversity

Pentonville’s prisoners were highly diverse in ethnicity, faith and age. About a third identified as black, with less than a quarter white British, 20% other white, 10% Asian and 9% mixed heritage. Nearly half were Christian and over a third Muslim. Nearly 30% were aged 18 to 24, while 2% were aged 60 to over 80. Nearly 30% had a disability.

Table 5.4.1: Equalities Data: (Source: Equalities meeting, February 2021)

Age	18-20: 91	21-24: 172	25-29 193	30-39 298	40-49 156	50-59 61	60+ 17
Disability	With disability 260	No disability 661					
Ethnicity	Asian 117	Black 305	Chinese/ Other Asian 29	Mixed 93	White 232	Gypsy/ Irish Traveller 24	White Other 158
Religion/ Belief/ Faith	Buddhist 11	Christian (excluding RC) 145	Hindu 6	Jewish 10	Muslim 343	Sikh 8	Other (including RC) 334
Sexual Orient- ation	Bisexual 0	Gay/ Lesbian 13	Hetero- sexual 864	Other 2	Refused/ Not disclosed 22		

Note: RC indicates Roman Catholic

HMIP described equality work as 'neglected' in February 2020 but impressive progress followed the appointment in July of an equality advisor focused on strategy and an equality officer to support individual needs, with strong governor support. By February 2021 Pentonville became the only London prison where over 90% of prisoners declared their protected characteristic status, revealing widespread disproportionality.

In late 2020 those aged 18 to 24, Muslims and black men were more likely to experience use of force, segregation in the CSU, adjudications and basic level of IEP than others. Explanations varied, but one view was that it was due to the kind of misbehaviour of young men (many of whom were black and/or Muslim) that led to harsher treatment. No black men initially got the valued red band jobs but this was partially addressed in March (7.2). Delays at the national monitoring hub hampered end of year data and analysis on disproportionality.

The Prison Service allocates additional resources for YAs, supporting Pentonville's Time4Change (T4C) programme. The officer who led T4C received a Butler Trust Award for this 'outstanding, imaginative and innovative' initiative. Prisoners aged 21-24 years were included because of their similar needs. More programmes like this could reduce disproportionality, but Pentonville's allocated resources fell short of its YA numbers.

IMB applications suggested isolated incidents of discrimination, but there was no evidence for or against widespread bias. Of the 100 DIRFs, nine were fully, and four partially, upheld.

Around ten events took place during the year promoting understanding of different strands of diversity.

Partnership work progressed for the previously neglected neuro-diverse population (6.4). Review boards were held for four transgender prisoners and for two not identifying as male. Access remains unsatisfactory for those with limited mobility (4.4).

Translation and interpretation for foreign national prisoners improved, with key information in six foreign languages. Due to Covid-19, free telephone access with Bail for Immigration Detainees, Kent Refugee Help and Detention Action replaced their useful workshops.

Work to promote the prisoner voice through the Zahid Mubarek Trust and the offender-led organisation User Voice was hampered by Covid-19, but virtual and free telephone access were facilitated. This included an informal meeting between User Voice prisoner representatives and the User Voice worker using Microsoft Teams.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

The chaplaincy team is made up of a managing chaplain, two full-time chaplains, a team of part-time and sessional chaplains and over 100 key-holding volunteers. In addition, official prison visitors attend regularly. The team's commitment is to meet the pastoral and spiritual needs of all prisoners and staff regardless of their belief and practice.

The team has faced numerous challenges during the pandemic. Many members have been ill with Covid-19, one chaplain has died and there have been significant personal bereavements. As part of infection control measures some have had to shield, and others have been restricted in their ability to work across the prison estate and across different areas of the prison. In November the full-time Roman Catholic chaplain was seconded to a national government project.

In spite of these obstacles, the chaplaincy team has maintained a continuous physical presence in the prison on every day since the start of the pandemic. A Covid-19 contingency plan was brought into play for a short period to deal with key absences.

Full corporate worship has remained suspended since March 2020. When restrictions were partially lifted, small groups prayed together in the chapel, mosque and on the wings. Rosary and discussion groups met and from September nine men were able to participate in the Sycamore Tree restorative justice course. In full lockdown, written materials were delivered to cells and communications, some produced in-house, were broadcast on in-cell TV. Prison staff supported the team in facilitating observance of major religious festivals, and local churches and charities sent in contributions.

Prisoners in the CSU, on the RCU, those shielding and those referred by reception, landing staff or who had called in on the chaplaincy telephone line, were visited daily. Those on ACCTs were seen weekly. Good use was made of in-cell phones with prisoners able to call the chaplaincy direct for support. Prisoners were able to attend funerals virtually accompanied by chaplaincy members. Purple (remote) Visits to sick relatives were facilitated.

Counselling support was provided to prisoners and staff, and members of the team had access to training webinars made available by CRUSE. The managing chaplain led a care support team which communicated with staff who were isolated or sick.

5.6 Incentives schemes

A new IEP policy was drafted and finalised in March 2020. This followed criticism of the existing scheme by an HMIP inspection in 2019. However, this policy has not been implemented due to the outbreak of Covid-19. In May 2020 HMPPS issued a directive that the use of IEPs should be suspended due to the limited regime and prisoners being in lockdown. It was felt the IEP policy could be detrimental to prisoners' welfare and mental health. The directive stated that the application of a basic regime should only be used as a last resort and a defensible decision log must be in place to justify placing a prisoner on basic and removing their television.

In May 2020 the Governor and the senior management team determined that poor behaviour which could not be dealt with by the adjudication process should be punished by the imposition of the basic level, to be reviewed in each case after 7 days. Prisoners on basic would have reduced canteen spend and TVs would be removed for three days for offences of assaulting a prisoner, refusing to share a cell or move off the RCU, and in cases of involvement in fights by multiple prisoners where a weapon was used.

The defensible decision log seen by the IMB lists the men on basic and records reasons for TV removal. From March to October 2020 the weekly number of men on basic ranged from between approximately 20 to 50, most frequently at the higher end of the range. Following an HMIP visit in October 2020, the numbers dropped significantly, often into single figures. Inspectors commented that maintaining the basic level was contrary to national guidance and disproportionately punitive.

Although Pentonville has entered phase 3 there are currently no plans to implement the IEP policy. The prison is waiting for further guidance from HMPPS on the reintroduction of the policy. The current position continues with minimal numbers of residents on basic regime and although there is no guidance on when incentives will be reintroduced, it is understood that following the recent move into level 3 and planning for levels 2 and 1, a timeframe for delivery of the new policy will be re-established.

5.7 Complaints

This is a snapshot of complaints over three months in the autumn with the main topics and an explanation of the prison's approach to analysing complaints data:

Topic	September 2020	October 2020	November 2020
Work	7	19	11
Visits	4	1	4
Violence	0	0	0
Transfer	10	9	13
Staff	41	25	20
Segregation	2	3	1
Property	55	27	48
Release	8	3	16
Healthcare	28	17	16
Finance	13	10	24
Food	9	7	4
Canteen	5	10	2
Bullying	4	4	0
Other *	79	60	66
TOTAL	265	195	225

Between 63% and 70% of complaints were answered within target. The Governor has consistently reminded staff how important it is that complaints are responded to within the right timescale.

Data is analysed each month for trends about topics or proportionality from different wings. Complaints relating to staff in September included a campaign of 19 letters from one wing to retain a popular officer. Other* includes over 30 categories which may have one or a few complaints. Occasionally there is a spike, for example in November when there were 21 complaints about hot water when a boiler was out of action.

The ethnicity of complainants is monitored. The largest group consistently is W9 (any other white background): in November there were 111 complainants with 80 B9, (black or black British), 34 Asian or Asian British and 19 any other mixed background. There was a single complaint about a protected characteristic in each of September and October.

5.8 Property

Issues with prisoners' property continued to be a concern during this reporting year. The number of applications concerning property within the prison went up by 20% to 60, and in spite of the much-reduced number of movements in and out of the prison the number of applications about property during transfer or in another establishment only decreased slightly on last year, from 29 to 27. Complaints about property were the highest of any single category during the year. The impact of loss of property on prisoners must be hard at any time, but especially during the isolation and boredom experienced during the pandemic.

The Board heard of delays in the searching and issuing of property at reception due to drug issues, especially impregnated clothing, partly due to a lack of drug dog cover. By March this had improved somewhat due to a scanner being taken from visits. Another fairly common problem was legitimate property that had been sent in by family or friends being delayed getting up to the wings. Applications about property being lost on transfer included one involving the loss of a mobile phone which contained evidence the prisoner needed for his trial, causing him much distress.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

Primary care services were commissioned by the NHS from Care UK (which changed its name to Practice Plus Group in October 2020). This included optometry (provided by Pan Optical, one day per week) and dental services (provided by Time4Teeth, five days a week). Podiatry and physiotherapy were sub-contracted from Premier. Barnet, Enfield and Haringey NHS Mental Health Trust was commissioned to provide in-patient and mental health services. No Care Quality Commission assessment was carried out during this reporting year.

Pentonville healthcare staffing is made up of approximately 70% permanent staff, with the remaining 30% filled by agency staff. In June, a new GP was hired. Towards the end of the reporting year, two permanent GPs were hired (1.6 full time equivalent (FTE)) along with a lead GP (0.6 FTE). Healthcare is considering reducing GP sessions to allow more time for complex cases.

There is a 22-bed in-patient unit, mainly for prisoners struggling with mental health issues. This unit includes a common room and gym, and staff provide a programme of activities. Due to Covid-19 activities have been curtailed but prisoners have still received regular showers and exercise, the provision of well-being activities in-cell, and singing sessions. Needless to say the pandemic has made the unit, an already challenging environment, even more challenging. Many prisoners saw minimal outsiders (for example, chaplaincy were unable to visit) as only healthcare staff and prison staff were permitted to attend the facility for much of the year. This meant less additional support for the men.

Unfortunately, the healthcare gym facility is very rarely if ever used due to a lack of availability of trained PE staff (required to supervise patients using the equipment).

On the positive side, much-needed new showers and a disabled toilet/shower have been installed in the in-patient unit.

Other duties of healthcare staff – beyond the delivery of healthcare services – are to contribute to GOAD and ACCT reviews as well as visiting the CSU to certify the fitness of prisoners for segregation. Healthcare also manages and monitors health complaints, looking for patterns and managing any investigations.

Covid-19 has changed many prison systems drastically and healthcare perhaps the most. That Pentonville never had a more wide-ranging and deadly Covid-19 outbreak (compared to other London prisons) speaks well for the prison and healthcare working together. While there have been occasional co-ordination issues between healthcare and the prison, the Board feels that healthcare managed its responsibilities well. In general, the relationship between the prison and healthcare was good.

There was fortunately never a shortfall of healthcare staff in spite of the challenges of Covid-19 and staff shielding.

When healthcare took over the Covid-19 isolation lists for the reception wing, the management of prisoners in their care noticeably improved.

Of necessity, but still concerning to the Board, Covid-19 has made the use of healthcare clinic waiting rooms problematic as where previously 30 men could have waited, there is now only socially distanced space for 12. Below are details of some of the available clinics this year and attendance:

- GP – the number of clinics dropped from an average of 400 per month last year to 250 per month this year, with 13% of prisoners not attending appointments (DNA)
- Dentist – average 120 available appointments per month; 17% DNA
- Podiatry – average 11 available appointments per month; 34% DNA
- Physiotherapy – average 11 available appointments per month; 16% DNA (service not provided in May and June)
- Optician – average 24 available appointments per month; 21% DNA (service recommenced in July)

Healthcare representatives on the wings are meant to assist and signpost the men to healthcare services. There is a new monthly healthcare newsletter that goes out to all prisoners.

Paper appointment slips used to be put under prisoners' cell doors but that system lapsed during lockdown. This led to poorer communication between healthcare and the prisoners (as prisoners did not know to expect being unlocked for an appointment, and thus could not insist that staff checked their lists) and likely raised prisoner anxiety. Waiting times, from what the Board can judge, seem comparable to the wait in the community.

Due to Covid-19, there were times when no physiotherapy or optician appointments were possible and there was only an emergency dental service.

6.2 Physical healthcare

Primary care is run by a team including GPs, nurses and pharmacists who run a range of clinics and pharmacy facilities both in the healthcare centre as well as on the wings. Reception screening is run by nurses and a GP.

The Board is pleased to record that GP clinics on the wings have reduced waiting times and their proximity to where prisoners live has made it easier for prisoners to be seen. The percentage of prisoners not attending appointments ranged from 15% to 20% over the year. This is a small improvement from last year, but still wastes valuable healthcare staff time, and is of concern to the Board. Also of concern is the fact that the GP is not available in reception until after 5.30pm each day; this means men who arrive in the afternoon must wait in reception for some hours.

The prison pharmacy service is attentive to prisoners and provides a reliable service, rarely drawing a prisoner complaint. They did not report any supply shortages due to

Covid-19 or Brexit. In possession medication is technically possible, but there is no private in-cell storage so men often choose to attend the pharmacy hatch in person.

However, continued lax supervision of the medication queues by prison officers for much of the reporting year meant that opiate substitutes become a tradeable substance. Fortunately, towards the end of the reporting year the pharmacists refused to dispense unless officers were present, and supervision consequently improved.

6.3 Mental healthcare

The mental health team is comprised of mental health nurses, a psychiatric social worker, forensic psychiatrists and a part-time occupational therapist. They work in tandem with the wellbeing centre where, in normal times, staff provide a range of group work (including support for those with anger management needs, those hearing voices, and peer support). However, these group sessions were not permitted during lockdown.

The pandemic has dramatically reduced mental health provision for prisoners. The care has, in part, moved from therapeutic (helping prisoners to improve) to basic monitoring (trying to ensure patients do not get worse).

The enhanced support team (ESS) focuses on a small number of prisoners, usually those with personality disorders. This team is made up of an officer and a clinical psychologist and they focus on prisoners with particularly challenging issues. The number of mental health in-reach staff and their caseloads has not changed this year.

Healthcare participation in ACCT reviews has improved.

The Board commends the good management of the in-patient wing which exemplifies good co-operation between the prison and healthcare staff. Committed staff on the in-patient wing manage complex prisoners with care and sensitivity. The waiting times for transfers to specialist mental health facilities have been reasonably good over the year.

Several cells in healthcare were out of action for a long period because of damage (caused by a prisoner) to the beds. These are specially built and repaired by a single manufacturer. Replacement beds have been made to an improved specification which should be more difficult to damage.

Wellbeing centre

Pentonville is, and should be, proud of its award-winning wellbeing centre comprising occupational therapists and support workers. Adapting to the restrictions on group work, staff instead helped prisoners on an individual basis to develop strategies to

support their mental health including through mindfulness techniques, singalongs, and yoga classes screened on TV.

The staff and leadership are committed and very dedicated to their (often fragile) clients. The support they gave to prisoners with in-cell activities and distraction packs was impressive.

6.4 Social care

Prisons and local authorities are obliged to meet the social care needs of those unable to fully care for themselves, who need help getting around the prison or to participate in prison life. This includes older prisoners and those with physical or mental health difficulties, autism and learning difficulties. In 2019 HMIP found social care at Pentonville to be inadequate, but in the opinion of the Board it has steadily improved.

In April 2020, the task of assessing referrals, liaising with Islington Council or arranging in-house support lay with the equalities officer who had many other pressing duties. In September the equalities team expanded, giving this work more time and focus but still within a wider remit. In November 2020 HMIP noted the excellent support and transitional arrangements for a vulnerable man being released.

From September 2020 to March 2021 16 men were referred to the local authority for help with physical and mobility needs. Of these, none received care plans, 14 received equipment including shower and toilet chairs, utensils and crutches (two were refused). 15 men received in-house support such as a prisoner 'buddy' (assistant) to assist with cleaning cells, fetching meals, and help to get around. Buddies were trained and supported by equalities and landing staff.

IMB discussions with prisoners and staff revealed how complex and challenging social care support can be at Pentonville, so it is welcome that the trajectory of increasing resources continued. At the end of the reporting year responsibility for this service passed from the prison to a team of six within Practice Plus who will both manage and deliver care.

All prisoners with limited mobility had a personal evacuation and escape plan (PEEP). The equalities team reported that these were regularly updated on the computer system with paper copies at the centre and in landing offices. IMB enquiries found officer awareness varied.

Staff in the equalities, healthcare and education departments worked together to identify and assess the needs of prisoners with mental health difficulties, autism and learning difficulties, delivering tailored packages of support. Referrals came from reception, officers and the chaplaincy. An awareness raising event took place focusing on autism.

6.5 Exercise, regime

Due to Covid-19, prisoner 'association' was cancelled and instead exercise and showers were prioritised. Prisoners did not have access to the indoor gyms for most of the year and instead specially trained PE prison officers led guided exercise sessions outdoors for the men.

Depending on infection rates, prisoners were allowed to exercise outdoors every day or every other day, but most wings were also fully locked down for one or two days a week.

Those prisoners who had to self-isolate because they had just arrived in the prison were given exercise and showers as a cohort on the RCU, generally every other day. A yard was divided in two to allow more men from different cohorts to exercise at the same time.

The living conditions were especially tough for the prisoners who had to isolate because they were symptomatic or Covid-19 positive and for their cellmates who had to do the same regardless of their Covid-19 status. These prisoners in isolation could not leave their cells at all during the 10 days' quarantine: not for exercise, showers, meals or to collect medicine. They did not have the luxury of waiting until their cellmate was out to use the toilet. Prisoners tend to do this in normal times as it is difficult and humiliating to defecate with someone else present. The prisoners isolating were provided with hygiene packs (containing soap etc) to try to make up for the lack of showers.

6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

Sixteen men were accepted into fully funded drug rehabilitation in 2020-2021, compared with nine men in 2019-2020. This was a notable achievement against the backdrop of homelessness and closure of community support services because of the pandemic. Building Futures, which is an integral part of healthcare, worked with an average caseload of 354 men. A focus on partnership working and visibility on the wings during the year improved communication with supervising prison officers and resulted in Building Futures being invited to ACCT reviews, of which there were on average 70 per month.

The number of one-to-one interventions and assessments remained consistent with levels in the previous year. Following an autumn recruitment drive 13 new staff joined, comprising just over half the team. New staff and others who were isolating or working from home revamped the content, presentation and range of the activity packs which the men could complete in their cells. Quality of work improved without a decline in quantity.

Peer supporters were working on every wing and a correlation between this activity and an increase in self-referrals has been identified. Peer supporters spoke about how they engaged men by talking about the support available to deal with problems

wider than detox, and also observed that drug problems were getting a higher profile in Pentonville. The men really wanted group activities to restart.

6.7 Soft skills

The lockdowns have made it exceedingly difficult if not impossible to ensure consistent opportunities for prisoners to develop soft skills. In 'normal' times these skills would be developed through a combination of face-to-face education courses, including the creative arts, philosophy and criminology, and at the graduation and celebration of success events, as well as through attendance at the wellbeing centre, courses run by chaplaincy, and the work done by Listeners, Insiders and User Voice run by the prison.

The wellbeing centre, along with other mental health services, had to suspend its normal activities, and education staff were unable to provide face-to-face teaching. The wellbeing team has more recently focused upon developing the small area of garden adjacent to its rooms which provides opportunities for men to develop new skills. Education staff have also organised a range of projects and competitions which enabled men to work on developing their soft skills.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

During virtually all of this reporting year education was delivered by way of in-cell learner packs. At different times over the year one or both of Novus or HMPPS did not permit education staff to access the wings to work with prisoners, and prisoners were also unable to attend the classrooms. In February 2021 these restrictions were lifted to allow education staff to access the wings. No classroom lessons took place at all this year.

Before the March 2020 lockdown there were 180-200 spaces per education session. Provision was divided into three areas: vocational skills, functional skills and enrichment (personal and social development). Most were part-time courses but painting and decorating, construction, food safety, first aid, and health and safety were all full-time.

The prison population (men on short sentences or remand, YAs, plus a small number on long sentences) poses challenges for education. In addition to a broad range and different levels of courses covering academic and vocational learning, there are several project-based courses in collaboration with external organisations. These are:

- Drama/creative writing - London Shakespeare Workout*
- Commercial Law workshops - Urban Lawyers (University of Law)*
- Level 3 Criminology course - University of Westminster**
- Music*

*These re-started remotely in February 2021; **this ran remotely throughout

For most of the reporting year, education packs were delivered to the prison's activities hub to go to the wings for distribution and collection by officers. This system did not always work efficiently and so it was not always possible to provide prompt feedback from teachers marking the prisoners' work. Some concern was expressed from non-education staff and prison managers about the quality of the in-cell packs in the first lockdown, but packs were judged as 'good' by HMIP. MOJ learner feedback forms suggested that 99% of learners were satisfied with the in-cell provision. Education was selected for the National HMPPS Quality Audit and, despite the difficulties, in March 2021 it was graded as 'good' with recommendations.

One member of the education staff, with the support of the education manager, devised several special projects during lockdowns. These included 'Creativity at the Ville' to showcase creative talents and 'Earth Day' where men produced artwork from recycled objects in their cells. He was awarded a commendation from the Butler Trust Award Scheme and the 'outstanding tutor award' for the Festival of Learning 2021.

As part of the response to the pandemic, educational material was developed for in-cell TV. Education is part of the Coracle Inside laptop pilot in the prison, with eight

laptops currently in Pentonville. Some course materials have been uploaded but in-cell TV development for education has been slow. There is only one person in the prison uploading materials.

Staffing was fully recruited throughout the year with no contractual issues.

Education returned to the wings in February and course completions reached approx. 200 by the end of the year. This compares to an average of 1700 p.a. in the last two years.

Library

During lockdown a system was established for prisoners to order and receive books and legal documents. One orderly was assigned to the library every day to help process orders but as library staff could not go on the wings there were delays in delivering the materials to prisoners and in returning them to the library.

Some prisoners requested materials through healthcare and other services. Staff came directly to the library for them. A presentation about the library service was shown on in-cell TV. There was an addition to the staff newsletter to remind staff of the service. At the beginning of lockdown 500 or so books were given by a local charity. These were put out on the wings and were well-used.

Monthly workshops for foreign nationals did not operate due to lockdowns and limitations on mixing prisoners in groups.

7. 2 Vocational training, work

Industrial workshops

These were not visited regularly this year and so the report is based largely on information from the providers. There was a regular service, but with a reduced number of 39 places, broken down as follows:

Recycling – 12

Industrial cleaning – 10

Textiles – 17

Of the seven members of staff, four were off sick during the reporting year, leaving only three working throughout. The reduced team still managed to run workshops during the lockdown period, which is to be commended. There were fewer men able to work but there was consistent and purposeful activity for those who attended.

There is normally a WAMITAB (Waste Management Industry Training and Advisory Board) qualification in waste and environmental management in recycling but due to staff sickness this was not available. It has not been possible to introduce new courses with external employers during lockdown but there has been planning for the future in conjunction with New Futures Network.

Liberty Kitchen

For two and a half years Liberty Kitchen, an award-winning street food social enterprise, has worked with prisoners in Pentonville to create, supply and deliver a range of street food.

Some men have gone on to work on the Liberty Kitchen market stall and other jobs in the company on release. In the last two weeks before March's lockdown the Liberty Kitchen model was functioning well, as the team provided food for three weekly street food markets and an impressive range of private functions.

The pandemic severely affected their activities, but they still managed to work in the prison for several months. From September to December there were afternoon shifts allowing social distancing with a reduced number of mess workers, cut from eight to four. In January 2021, PHE outbreak status was declared so shifts had to be cancelled. Despite this, between February and March Liberty Kitchen prisoners worked with the outside team to deliver over 3,000 lunch boxes to Royal Free Hospital medics on the frontline.

Both Pentonville and Liberty Kitchens are to be congratulated on maintaining a presence, though limited, over this time. Feedback from the men involved reflects the importance of their work during this time to their wellbeing.

7.3 Offender management, progression

The past year has seen the offender management unit (OMU) having to adapt to remote working and little face-to-face contact with the prisoners, although contact was maintained through in-cell telephony.

As of the end of April 2021, there was no backlog of the offender assessment system (OASys). The basic custody screening tool (BCST) for all new prisoners is currently being administered by prison offender managers (POMs).

The OMU is staffed by both probation offender managers from the national probation service (NPS) and POMs. At the end of the reporting period there was a full complement of eight probation offender managers and, since the beginning of March 2021, there has only been one 0.5 FTE senior probation officer vacancy.

Pandemic restrictions have caused a divergence in the service offered by NPS staff and POMs. NPS staff, shielding or working from home, have had access to data extracted from the Prison National Offender Management Information System (NOMIS) and Microsoft Teams, enabling them to complete reports and continue to support their clients. POMs, however, have not had this facility and have therefore been limited in the support they have been able to offer. Furthermore, with staff shielding and Covid-19 restrictions, training of both POMs and administrative staff has been curtailed. The lack of training of staff responsible for completing sentence

calculations has led to sentence calculations not being completed within the recommended timescale of five working days.

The delay in confirmation of their release date has affected many prisoners' levels of stress and anxiety, as is evidenced in the high number of IMB applications with concerns relating to the OMU. There have been 122 applications for this reporting year, the highest of any category. Prisoner complaints have ranged from applications not being responded to, to not being kept informed by their offender managers. One reason for this could be the churn of POMs, many of whom were reportedly temporarily deployed to the OMU. Some probation staff have expressed the view that they feel this lack of training and commitment to the work of the OMU negatively affects the service they are able to offer the prisoners.

The implementation of the second stage of offender management in custody (OMIC) will see the reconfiguration of Pentonville as a remand and resettlement prison. However, the slowdown in prison transfers owing to the pandemic has led to implementation being delayed.

NPS and CRC staff are currently scattered in workspaces throughout the prison. Notwithstanding the communication and collaboration challenges this poses, the Board has observed that they appear to work well together. With the reunification of the two services planned for June, the benefit of relocating CRC and probation staff into one area appears even more pressing.

As a designated remand and resettlement prison, sentence planning will continue to be very limited. Once categorisation and sentence calculations have been completed, prisoners should be transferred out as soon as is possible.

However, a further consequence of the limitations on the POMs has been a backlog of prisoners waiting for categorisation. There are currently only three processors (compared to eight this time last year), preventing these calculations being completed within the recommended three-week timeframe.

There are no accredited offence or offending-related interventions offered at Pentonville. This means that offence-based risk reduction work cannot take place until prisoners are transferred elsewhere. This highlights the necessity of completing categorisation and transfers within an appropriate timeframe.

As of 31 March 2021, there were 27 lifers and IPP prisoners at Pentonville, compared with 60 in the preceding six months. There is a notable increase in the number of transfers of this cohort.

Parole/oral hearings have been held via telephone conferencing to ensure social distancing. With building works taking place outside and ad hoc IT problems this has been particularly challenging. However, a new videoconferencing centre has now been delivered and should be functioning by September.

Release on temporary licence (ROTL) is being used on compassionate grounds for a terminally ill prisoner. From April 2020 to April 2021, 72 prisoners had been released on home detention curfew (HDC). However, throughout the pandemic there have been lower numbers going out on HDC than in the previous year. With current

offender flows the numbers continue to be low as offenders who would normally have HDC have been transferred out.

7.4 Family contact

Family contact is normally maintained by visits managed through the visitor centre. The initial point of contact is run by PACT, a charity that provides practical services to prisoners and their families. Prisoners can also contact their families using telephones in their cells or using secure video calls. Emails, letters, and parcels are strictly regulated but can be sent in by family members.

The introduction of in-cell telephones at the end of last year was completed just in time for the change of regime introduced to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic. This has been crucial in maintaining prisoner morale. The prison added an extra £5 credit per week to each prisoner's telephone account to make up for losing their visits. This was, for many, the only way that prisoners had contact with their families.

Secure video calls between prisoners and their families were introduced using the Purple Visits video package. This also allowed prisoners to maintain vital family contact during the pandemic. The use of video technology in a secure environment was introduced rapidly to provide an urgently needed solution when face-to-face social visits were completely stopped. Allowing up to 23 calls per day on 6 days of the week, it has been a great success.

Families could send in emails and images (including letters) using the paid-for email service *emailaprisoner*. Hard copies are printed in the prison and passed to the prisoners. A reply service was made available part way through the year.

In exceptional compassionate circumstances, prison-owned computer tablets have been used to allow prisoners contact with their families, where no other method has been available.

Covid-19 restrictions prevented social visits for much of the year. When these restrictions were relaxed, and social visits were allowed, numbers were down on normal levels. A significant structural problem in the visits hall this year added a further constraint on the total number of visitors allowed in the hall, and repairs are still in progress. The plan is for the restoration of the visits hall to full capacity before social visits start again. Had this happened in normal times there would have been a huge impact on the prison's ability to manage the number of visits from families and friends.

With the reorganisation of the visits hall to allow for socially distanced visits, the children's play area has been completely removed. It is hoped that as the prison returns to normal these facilities will be reinstated to allow families to visit in a more pleasant and relaxed environment.

Once again, a lift that gives visitors access to the visits hall was out of action for several months this reporting year, preventing disabled visitors from seeing their relatives when social visits were permitted. Now repaired again, the reliability of this

lift (and others in the prison) is a reflection of the poor state of the ageing infrastructure.

Despite the prison's efforts to intercept it, mail and parcels sent to prisoners continue to be used to attempt to smuggle drugs into the prison.

7.5 Resettlement planning

There were positive developments in the work of the CRC, leading to improved services for prisoners. After shortfalls were identified in the amount and quality of the information collected by the CRC five days after a prisoner's reception into custody (known as BCST2), performance in this area was brought up to the required standard and then maintained. CRC staffing increased, reached its complement, and specialist workers in education, training and employment, health and wellbeing, and finance, benefit and debt were appointed and began work. CRC workers remained in the prison throughout the pandemic, contacting prisoners on the latter's in-cell phones, visiting them face to face on the wings and providing them with written information.

They also staffed the 'departure lounge', providing men being released with mobile phones and information relevant to their release. The groupwork 'Getting it Right' programme was suspended, as were workshops on topics such as CV writing and budgeting. Despite these restrictions, the CRC expanded its work overall and increased its profile within the prison, thanks at least in part to a well-motivated and active new team. More than 300 bank accounts were opened for prisoners. The education, training and employment (ETE) specialist received over 300 referrals.

Although potential homelessness continued to remain an issue for some released men, over the year there was an upward trend in men released into settled accommodation. Of the 356 prisoners referred to St Mungo's over the 11 months from April 2020, around four in ten went to settled accommodation, mainly a sustained tenancy, to a friend or family or to supported housing plus an additional (unspecified) number being placed in temporary accommodation while inquiries were made as to their suitability for long-term accommodation. The creation of the Homelessness Prevention Taskforce (HPT) as a response to the pandemic made available hotel and bed and breakfast accommodation for prisoners who would otherwise have been released without accommodation. The HPT released funding for rent deposits to secure settled move-on accommodation from hotel stays. The scheme ran between May and August 2020 and from October 2020 and provided accommodation for up to 200 released men. As of March 2021 the future of this scheme was not known.

A number of charitable organisations were involved in providing rehabilitative and resettlement support for prisoners both before and after release. They included StandOut, Switchback and Only Connect. StandOut focuses on employability. Its work preparation course was unable to run during the pandemic but it ran a helpline for prisoners both before and after release and supported 33 callers with such issues as CV preparation and accessing benefits.

Switchback suspended visits to the prison, receiving referrals from staff and self-referrals from men to whom it had made available information about its services. These included mentoring to support mental health and wellbeing and practical help with, for example, bank accounts, CV writing and subsistence support in cases of hardship. Twelve men leaving prison had contact with Switchback, of whom eight engaged post-release. Only Connect is responsible for ETE provision, principally for 18-25 year olds. It reported delivering 166 sessions between August 2020 and February 2021, seeing prisoners on the wings.

8. The work of the IMB

The Board meets once a month for two hours, and each meeting is preceded by an hour's training or discussion on issues that the Board is particularly concerned about. Every such gathering this year has been held remotely.

The Governor (or a deputy) is invited to attend every Board meeting for approximately 40 minutes, to answer questions from the Board and to address issues raised in the previous month's rota reports. Again, all such contributions have been made via remote means.

One member is on rota for each week of the year. Apart from times when the prison was in a state of outbreak (as defined by PHE), approximately one visit was made in person each week, and sometimes three or four. If members were unable to visit, they sought to get information from governors and managers by telephone and email.

The areas to be focused on each week of the year are set out in a matrix, which reflects perceived risk to prisoners. For example, the CSU is visited/monitored every week (Board attendance at GOAD reviews in person or by telephone was limited this year due to Covid-19), whereas the library is monitored every six weeks.

If a particular concern has been raised with the Board about an area which is not due to be visited that week, it will then be followed up on as a matter of urgency.

During the reporting year, the vast majority of applications to the Board were received via the 0800 telephone line. All such applications were investigated and replied to by the Board within a few days of receipt using the secure *emailprisoner.com* service. Any applications submitted to the Board in writing were collected from the wings by the IMB clerk and securely emailed to the Chair for follow up.

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	16
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	16
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	16
Total number of visits to the establishment	Approx 90
Total number of segregation reviews attended	Approx 40

Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Current reporting year	Previous reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	59	22
B	Discipline, including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	20	11
C	Equality	13	12
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	34	39
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	39	47
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	16	22
F	Food and kitchens	34	4
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	86	111
H1	Property within this establishment	60	50
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	27	29
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	18	15
I	Sentence management, including HDC, release on temporary licence, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	122*	111
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	65	84
K	Transfers	14	43
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system	3	4
	Total number of applications	610	604
NOTE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pentonville was second highest user of the 0800 number - 675 calls. • 69 written applications were received. • Multiple calls about the same issue and applications from men who had left the prison were discounted. *17 were immigration cases 		



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