



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Wealstun

**For reporting year
1 June 2020 – 31 May 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

2.1 HMP Wealstun is a category C adult training and resettlement prison for men, situated in a semi-rural area near Wetherby, West Yorkshire. It has a certified normal accommodation of 809 and an operational capacity of 832. However, the latter was reduced to 809 in April 2020 to enable all prisoners to be housed in single cells during the Covid-19 pandemic.

2.2 There are 10 residential units and a segregation unit. A and B wings are the original 1960s remand centre buildings; A wing includes a residential support unit of self-isolators; D wing is a pre-fabricated single-cell accommodation unit; C wing accommodates the majority of prisoners on the integrated drug treatment system programme; E, F, G, H, I and J wings were converted from open category D accommodation to closed category C accommodation; G wing is the incentivised substance-free living unit; H wing is mainly for prison kitchen workers.

2.3 However, following the start of the pandemic and the need to manage different cohorts of prisoners, I and J wings are now the reverse cohort units and induction wings.

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

2.5 The prison is part of the public sector and, although Her Majesty's Prisons and Probation Service is responsible for the operation of the establishment, the main service providers are:

- Novus, for works, learning and skills
- Initially Care UK then Practice Plus Group from 1 October 2020, for the provision of physical/mental healthcare
- GEOAmey, for escort provision
- Amey, for the provision of facilities management and site maintenance
- St Giles Trust, for resettlement services
- Jigsaw, for family intervention services.

3. Executive summary

3.1 Background to the report

3.1.1 The restrictions placed on prisons and the general public due to the Covid-19 pandemic have affected the lives of the prisoners considerably, as well as the ability of the Board to directly monitor the situation throughout the period of this report. The Board has therefore tried to cover as much ground as it can in these difficult circumstances but inevitably there is less detail and supporting evidence than usual. Ministers are aware of these constraints.

3.1.2 This report presents the findings of the Board at HMP Wealstun for the period 1 June 2020 – 31 May 2021. Board evidence comes from a variety of sources, which was especially difficult to achieve when direct monitoring was not possible. Monitoring instead had to be conducted remotely through regular telephone and email contact with the Governor, wing staff and functional heads. As soon as it was permitted, some members returned to direct monitoring and so evidence was then available from observations made on visits, scrutiny of records and data, informal contact with prisoners and staff, and prisoner applications, although this was limited at times. The restrictions have, however, caused a considerable amount of additional work for the Board and this will continue until normality returns.

3.1.3 Throughout the reporting period the majority of prisoners were locked up for up to 23 hours a day, which would normally be unacceptable, but the Board acknowledge that it was unavoidable given the pressures on the prison during the pandemic. A small number of essential workshops were running, with a reduced number of prisoners working in each. There was a major outbreak of Covid amongst the prisoners and staff early in 2021 which affected the regime further. However, considering how difficult the year has been for both staff and prisoners, the prison was settled and the restrictions and difficulties were accepted by all. The Board commends the prison for their handling of this situation.

3.2 Main judgements

How safe is the prison?

During the majority of the reporting period the prisoners were locked up for up to 23 hours a day. There was very little access to drugs and the level of violence and self-harm was significantly lower than in the previous reporting period. There was also little bullying and things were generally quiet, so prisoners were probably safer. However, whilst a prison might be judged to be safe in this situation, the Board is concerned about what will happen once the regime restrictions begin to be lifted and, as has already been seen, the level of violence begins to rise.

How fairly and humanely are prisoners treated?

Whilst the Board accepts that there have been extenuating circumstances this year as a result of the pandemic, the fact that the prisoners were locked up for most of each day could be seen as inhumane, as being locked up for 23 hours a day is clearly unsatisfactory, and would normally be unacceptable, but the Board acknowledge that it was unavoidable given the pressures on the prison during the pandemic.

However, the Board feels that the prisoners were treated fairly as there was a consistent approach across the prison and all prisoners were able to have a television and were given a £5 pin credit to enable them to keep in touch with their families, and goody bags.

How well are prisoners' health and wellbeing needs met?

Healthcare has managed well over this period, with prisoners having normal access to most healthcare services. However, access to dentistry was stopped for a number of months and there is now a backlog. As previously stated, the length of time out of the cell was extremely limited and, as the report highlights, there was little face-to-face access for prisoners to soft skills such as Jigsaw, although full use was made of the opportunities presented.

How well are prisoners progressed towards successful resettlement?

There has been little progression work during the reporting period as there was limited work and education and no accredited behaviour programmes. Transfers to category D prisons, when allowed, were delayed because of a lack of spaces and having to reverse cohort prior to transfer. Visits were cancelled for the majority of the year. The one positive aspect was the additional £5 pin credit each prisoner received and the introduction of 'purple visits' (video calling), which although not well liked initially, allowed prisoners to keep in touch with their families.

3.3 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

To consider increasing the daily food allowance, as £2.02 is an extremely small amount to feed adult men and provide the nutrition they require (para 5.1.11 refers).

To consider how to encourage employers to be more supportive towards employing ex-offenders, given the shortage of labour in certain sectors (para 7.5.4 refers).

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

Ensure that as prisons move out of lockdown a review is undertaken to identify any long-term effects on prisoners and plans are in place to address them (repeat area from 2019/2020 report).

Ensure that prisons are provided with detailed guidance on managing the withdrawal of the mitigations that were put in place during the pandemic (for example, the £5 pin credit) as this withdrawal is likely to cause prisoners considerable upset.

Ensure that the requirements are clear for when prisons which undertook training as part of their participation in a pilot should undertake refresher training; if it is essential training for a pilot, why isn't it refreshed (repeat area from 2019/2020 report) (para 4.5.4 refers)?

Ensure that there is a comprehensive review of the use of body scanners, including better training for officers and consistency across the estate, so that prisoners are

not segregated when the only evidence is the scan image (which is subject to interpretation) (para 5.2.6 et seq.).

Ensure that the system used to record prisoners' learning (CURIOUS) is updated so that information is available to inform decisions (para 7.1.4 refers).

Provide more category D open prison places, so that transfers are not delayed once a prisoner is recategorised (repeat area from 2019/2020 report) (para 7.3.1 refers).

TO THE GOVERNOR

Ensure that once approval is given to resume training, refresher training in use of PAVA and rigid-bar handcuffs is given priority (repeat area from 2019/2020 report) (para 4.5.6 refers).

Ensure that the planned change for all laundry to be done in the prison laundry is managed sensitively, as prisoners may have concerns about an increased risk of personal clothing damage or loss (para 5.1.6 refers).

Ensure that the secreted items policy is reviewed, including daily scans for segregated prisoners so that prisoners are not segregated where evidence is not clear/available or kept segregated any longer than necessary (para 5.2.7 refers).

Ensure that when lockdown restrictions are lifted, key workers are fully in place for all prisoners (repeat area from 2019/2020 report) (para 5.3.6 refers).

Ensure that the Board is notified consistently when a prisoner is placed in segregation (para 5.2.2 refers).

Ensure that funding is available to reinstate the Resolve offending behaviour programme, given the significant number of prisoners with a history of domestic violence (repeat area from 2019/2020 report) (para 7.3.5 refers).

Ensure that the monthly forum with the offender management unit (OMU) for IPP and life-sentenced prisoners is reinstated (repeat area from 2019/2020 report) (para 7.3.5 refers).

3.4 Progress since the last report

Due to the pandemic, several of the main areas for development from the annual report for 2019/2020 have not progressed. Where significant, they have been repeated for 2020/2021 and are included above.

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

The safer custody team has been fully staffed, with an experienced governor in place and staff being ring-fenced. The team now produce a weekly safer prison report, which is emailed to all staff. It contains details of notable new arrivals, any dual harmers (prisoners that cause harm to themselves and others) and, prolific self-harmers, acute repeat self-harmers, isolating prisoners and vulnerable and problematic prisoners. They produce a detailed monthly safety report for the monthly safety meeting, containing considerable information and helpful analysis of the data. The Board commends the Governor and her team for ensuring that safety is seen as a priority across the prison.

4.1 Reception and induction

4.1.1 There were 549 receptions during the reporting year. The majority of receptions (498) arrived from HMP Leeds, with single digit numbers arriving from other establishments, predominantly in the Yorkshire & Humberside region. 446 new receptions were sentenced prisoners, 96 were recall cases and there were seven new arrivals serving indeterminate sentences. The total number of receptions during the reporting year was significantly lower than in previous periods, reflecting the desire to not unnecessarily increase the risk of importing Covid into the establishment. However by January 2021 the need to transfer prisoners out of HMP Leeds meant that new receptions returned to typical levels, despite the ongoing risk of contagion.

4.1.2 On arrival, prisoners are escorted off the bus individually and their temperature is checked and photograph taken. The body scanner and metal detecting equipment installed in the previous reporting period as part of the Ten Prisons Project is used to scan all new receptions upon arrival. In cases where scan images appear to show that a prisoner has secreted items within his body, he is sent to the segregation unit. Prisoners who refuse to be scanned are also segregated and immediately placed on report.

4.1.3 The Board became concerned about the scanning process: the increasing number of positive scans during the early part of 2021 and the resultant increase in the number of prisoners being segregated. Whilst the scanning process increases confidence that unauthorised items (including drugs) are less likely to enter the establishment, the Board was concerned about the potential number of 'false positives' that might result in prisoners being unjustly segregated and placed on report on suspicion of having secreted items. The Board has raised its concern with the Governor, and more generally with the Ministry of Justice, that processes are insufficiently robust to justify the number of prisoners being segregated. The prison no longer automatically places a prisoner on report when a scan shows a possible secreted item.

4.1.4 The Board met with those officers from reception who oversaw the scanning process and it became clear that consistency was an issue: different officers may

interpret the scans differently. The question of appropriate training was discussed, as covered later in this report.

4.1.5 In the final quarter of the reporting year (March to May 2021) 41 prisoners from a total of 224 new arrivals were segregated on the basis of reception scan results (18.3%). The interpretation of scans was raised with the prison, as Board members who also monitor at HMP Leeds had been informed that prisoners are scanned before they leave HMP Leeds and if that scan indicates a possible secreted item Leeds telephones Wealstun to ask whether Wealstun is willing to accept the prisoner. Very few prisoners indicated positive when scanned at HMP Leeds before transfer. The two prisons are now working closely to ensure consistency of results. Whilst the Board completely supports efforts to reduce the inflow of prohibited items, there is a clear need to improve processes and provide proper training to ensure consistent and accurate interpretation of scan images. Further concerns about the scanning of prisoners are discussed in section 5.2.

4.1.6 With the exception of prisoners sent to segregation, new arrivals are accommodated initially on the reverse cohorting units for a period of induction and 10 days' isolation. Throughout the pandemic period induction processes have been conducted individually through cell doors. Healthcare, mental health and substance misuse service workers visit or telephone new prisoners. Officers explain how the prison regime works and identify any existing issues or concerns with new prisoners.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

4.2.1 Despite the fact that most prisoners were locked up for 23 hours a day, the level of self-harm, and thus the number of open assessment, care in custody and teamwork documents (ACCTs) is 31% lower than for the previous reporting year and there has been a downward trend over the year. The fact that prisoners were not associating with others and the low availability of drugs meant that prisoners felt safer and bullying had reduced. ACCT reviews are well managed by the safer custody staff and mental health attend the reviews. The Board has only seen minor omissions on any ACCTs that were examined, and staff quickly corrected them.

4.2.2 Unfortunately, several prisoners regularly self-harm and the Board has noted the significant efforts that staff make to support them. Whilst detailed analysis is undertaken on such things as age, reasons, length of time to serve etc. it is difficult to draw any meaningful conclusions as the overall amount of self-harm is low. However, now that reporting is entrenched it will be useful information when the regime restrictions are lifted.

4.2.3 The seven Listeners were available throughout the year and supported remotely by Samaritans in Harrogate.

4.2.4 There were no deaths in custody in the reporting period. Inquests are still pending for five deaths in custody from previous years.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

4.3.1 The level of violence has been consistently low over the year, with a 34% reduction in staff assaults and 58% reduction in prisoner assaults. However, violence has increased over the last couple of months of the reporting year, which may be

linked with the easing of the regime, repayment of debts incurred during lockdown and the increase in availability of drugs. It has been difficult to see any trends in the data as the number of incidents is small.

4.3.2 The number of challenge, support and intervention plan (CSIP) referrals is beginning to rise and is higher than a year ago, as are the number of open CSIPs. The cause is likely to be the opening up of the regime. The Board has no concerns about their management.

4.5 Use of force

4.5.1 Use of force incidents have gradually reduced over the year, due to the restrictions in place and the low availability of drugs and are 50% lower than for the same period in the previous reporting year. However, worryingly, in the last month of the reporting period, as the regime began to relax, there was a 90% increase in incidents.

4.5.2 The threat and deployment of PAVA has reduced from 26 incidents for the period June 2019 – May 2020 to just five for this reporting period.

4.5.3 The monthly use of force meetings are well attended. A considerable amount of data is presented, together with full details of any incidents. These are then scrutinised by attendees. The Board commends the officer with responsibility for his work and diligence. He also reports on the quality of use of force incident reports and whether F213s have been completed. The new online reporting system has been well received. One issue being closely monitored by the prison is that officers are not always activating their body-worn video camera at the start of an incident. Officers are being reminded continually.

4.5.4 The Board remains concerned about training in the use of PAVA, including training for new recruits (POELTs):

- a. As reported last year, the Board asked why prisons which were part of the PAVA pilot and had remained so whilst national rollout was considered, did not have to undertake refresher training. Officers are required to undertake annual refresher training in a number of areas, including control and restraint (C&R), and the Board considers that, given that PAVA is classed as a firearm under Section 5 of the Firearms Act 1968, annual refresher training should be appropriate. Whilst it is accepted that the pandemic has delayed training, the question for the MoJ remains: why should training considered essential for a pilot to commence not require refreshing annually during the course of the pilot?
- b. As a result of the pandemic, all C&R training was cancelled and consequently all the officers who carry PAVA at Wealstun will be out of ticket. The Board would expect the Governor to give this issue priority once training can be organised.
- c. The Board understands that new officers do not receive PAVA training when at college and that the refresher course designed for existing officers is not appropriate for new officers. The Board is concerned that new officers will not be able to carry PAVA and do not have a basic understanding of PAVA.

4.6 Substance misuse

4.6.1 In previous annual reports the Board has highlighted the fact that the prevalence of drugs in the prison has been a significant contributing factor to high levels of self-harm, violence and bullying. In 2020-21 the impact of the pandemic has significantly reduced opportunities for drugs to enter the establishment and, in turn, it has been noted that this has led to lower levels of self-harm, violence and bullying. The considerable reduction in the number of prisoners found under the influence indicated the lack of illegal drugs. There were more finds of hooch and reports of prisoners being under the influence of alcohol. As the regime has slowly been opening up, drug finds are on the increase. There has also been very good work by staff in detecting spice and other drugs arriving at the prison in mail.

4.6.2 The body scanner installed in reception has improved the ability of the prison to detect the attempted importation of unauthorised items and substances. All prisoners (with the exception of those being released at the end of their sentence) are scanned when moving through reception. The scanner is also used by the dedicated search team (DST) as part of their targeted search process. In addition to identifying suspect items secreted in prisoners' bodies, the increased likelihood of detection should prove a useful deterrent to those seeking to bring drugs and other unauthorised items into the prison. Used correctly, the scanner is an important part of the prison's armoury to reduce the inflow of drugs, but the Board has some concerns in connection with process and training which are described in more detail in sections 4.1 and 5.2.

4.6.3 In last year's report the Board also noted that Wealstun had secured funding for enhanced gate security and gate teams. This has now enabled the prison to increase the DST to 10 people and early indications are that this is having a beneficial impact, with the team finding illicit items in approximately 70% of cell searches conducted.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

5.1.1 The prison maintenance contractor, Amey, has now established a clean rehabilitative, enabling and decent (CRED) programme which is intended to carry out a programme of repainting all cells over a three-year cycle. To facilitate this process, it has been agreed that three cells will be removed from the establishment's operational capacity so that there is an opportunity to repaint three cells each week. CRED's aims, as expressed to prisoners, are "[a] proactive and collaborative approach to support cleaner and more decent prisons with prisoners engaged in improving the environment that you live in."

5.1.2 In 2020 the programme of senior leaders inspecting cells on a daily basis to ensure high standards of maintenance and decency had to be suspended due to Covid. Nevertheless, random inspections have continued throughout the pandemic and, even though prisoners have been confined to their cells for up to 23 hours a day, the standard of cells has remained good on the whole. In future, wing custodial managers (CMs) will have responsibility for ensuring that standards are maintained and that any issues are properly identified and logged for remedial action.

5.1.3 The small works programme is now operating more smoothly, but is not without problems. In previous years there have been discrepancies between the list of repairs identified by the establishment and the list of pending work maintained by Amey. A new process has now been implemented where the list of cells out of action is cross-checked weekly against the Amey schedule to ensure an agreed programme of work. However there have still been issues during the reporting year which have concerned the Board, including a prolonged period in January 2021 when there were heating problems on C wing and a lack of working showers on H wing which resulted in men returning from work having insufficient time to shower before being locked up. Following the intervention of the Board, managers were reminded to check that items were fixed and working.

5.1.4 Whilst the prison management continues to work hard to ensure that conditions in the older A and B wings remain acceptable, it is increasingly apparent that this accommodation, built in the 1960s, needs significant remedial action or reconstruction/replacement.

Clothing

5.1.5 Clothing stocks are adequate for the establishment. Throughout the pandemic replacement clothing requests declined, probably due to a reduction in damage and loss because of prisoners largely being confined to their cells.

5.1.6 The establishment received £49,000 from the Ten Prisons Project to purchase new commercial laundry equipment. Wealstun now provides a laundry service to five other prisons in the region, in addition to meeting its own needs. However it currently caters only for non-personal laundry, such as bedding and prison-issue clothing, and is only operating at 30% of available capacity. Meanwhile, personal laundry is still being dealt with on residential wings, amid concerns that overuse of aging machines intended more for domestic use constitutes a fire risk. There are plans to incorporate

personal laundry into the main laundry service and although this makes sense from a safety and cost point of view it will be important for the prison to manage the change sensitively with prisoners who may have concerns about an increased risk of damage to or loss of their personal clothing.

Food

5.1.7 The Board continues to be impressed by the kitchen manager's team and the variety and standard of food produced. The kitchen caters well for religious diets and festivals, as well as allergies. Until lockdown a farm shop was open to the public outside the prison fence every Friday, selling bread, pastries and cakes from the main kitchen, and vegetables and plants from the prison gardens. It is of particular note that despite all the complications arising from the pandemic the Board only received two applications relating to food & kitchens during the 2020-21 review period. The Board did, however, hear of some prisoners' concerns that during the pandemic they often received their evening meal at 4pm, together with breakfast packs, and some felt that these were insufficiently filling.

5.1.8 Ensuring that prisoners continued to receive nutritious meals throughout the pandemic clearly presented a significant challenge for the establishment. The catering department put together a robust contingency plan to ensure that non-catering staff from across the establishment were trained in food safety, enabling them to work in the kitchens if necessary. When this plan had to be activated it was well executed. The plan also included training prisoners from a different wing to cover kitchen duties if necessary. Throughout the pandemic the pre-select menu continued to be in place, with only minimal changes to published menus. The kitchen also produced comfort packs for all men, funded nationally.

5.1.9 Kitchen staff worked with wing staff to make good progress in improving food safety, with hygiene training for all prisoners working at server points and catering champions being appointed to act as a point of contact between wings and the kitchen.

5.1.10 Trolleys are used to transfer hot food from the kitchen to the wings. In previous years the Board reported that trolleys were often vandalised and food stolen. The trolley food distribution process has benefited from reduced disruption during the pandemic and, in addition, three new trolleys have been purchased. The decision to combine senior leader responsibility for the kitchen with responsibility for residential wings is intended to ensure that CMs take a more active interest in ensuring that the distribution of food is not subject to disruption and/or theft.

5.1.11 The kitchen continues to look at innovation to maximise the effectiveness of the £2.02 per prisoner per day budget. Of note has been the baking of homemade bread and pizza, together with a range of dessert products from the in-house bakery. The prison farm and gardens provide a supply of fresh produce for the kitchens, but not as much as in previous years because of Covid restrictions. The Board would like the Minister to consider increasing the daily food allowance as it is an extremely small amount to provide an adequate diet for adult men.

5.2 Segregation

5.2.1 The segregation unit is purpose built and has 13 cells including three short-term holding cells for prisoners awaiting adjudication. There is one constant watch cell and one robust cell (built in such a way as to be unbreakable).

5.2.2 The unit is reasonably well maintained and kept fairly clean. It is brightly lit and regularly painted. In August 2020 the Governor decided that the toilet-traps which were installed as part of the 10 Prisons Project could not be used as the layout of the water closet did not allow for them to be properly installed.

5.2.3 A new governor and custodial manager were appointed in April 2020 and their experience provided some necessary stability. The head of the unit (head of drug strategy and healthcare provision) was keen to re-integrate prisoners from the segregation unit back into the main prison as soon as possible and so the number of prisoners held in segregation was generally much lower than previously. He also introduced R45 boards weekly rather than fortnightly and this helped reduce the number of prisoners held in segregation and their length of time there. However, other staffing in the unit proved difficult during the pandemic and guest staff had to be regularly detailed to work in segregation. This resulted in the Board not always being notified of newly segregated prisoners, and in incorrect paperwork. This was raised on a number of occasions with the Governor but remains an issue.

5.2.4 For the first three months of the reporting year the Board was unable to visit the prison and monitor the segregation unit. There was weekly telephone contact with the staff on the unit but not with the prisoners. Once direct monitoring recommenced in September 2020 the Board visited the unit weekly and was able to speak to the prisoners and view any documentation. However on occasion there was no social distancing in the office and members were unable to enter to monitor the relevant documentation. This was brought to the attention of the governors and improved.

5.2.5 During the reporting period, the average number of prisoners held in segregation was just over 27 per month, with the fewest being 17 during February 2021 and the most being 43 during December 2020. The increase in December 2020 was due to the new dedicated search team (DST) who were successful in locating illicit items.

5.2.6 During the reporting year the Board became aware of many prisoners being segregated straight from reception owing to a positive result for secreted items on the body scanner. From June to August 2020, there were no prisoners being held for alleged secreted items. This gradually rose to three in September 2020 and four in December 2020. However, a big rise came in March 2021 when 15 prisoners showed positive on the scanner followed by 19 in April and 11 in May. Until May 2021 these prisoners were placed on report and adjudications usually adjourned for evidence. The Board became concerned that segregation was being used based purely on images from the body scanner, which the reporting officers could interpret differently, and with no physical evidence of any secreted items.

5.2.7 The Board raised its concerns with the prison on several occasions and some changes were made. However, the Board continues to be concerned about a number of issues relating to the body scanner, including training on the interpretation

of scans, ensuring segregated prisoners are scanned daily, close working with transferring prisons on scanning and requests that the secreted item is reviewed.

5.2.8 As many of the prisoners in question were transferred from HMP Leeds, the prison liaised with HMP Leeds to ensure a consistent approach to scanning. Another consequence of prisoners being segregated on suspicion of secreted items was that their medication was sometimes stopped. The Board questioned this and was informed that such decisions are made by healthcare on a case-by-case basis. The Governor stated that as a standard rule, any prescribed medication which has sedative/stimulant effects (eg methadone, tramadol, ADHD medication) is withheld as there is a risk of a significant clinical interaction with any secreted substance which could potentially cause further harm. Any medication prescribed for the management of long-term conditions such as cardiac/respiratory problems is not stopped, as abrupt withdrawal can cause health complications. Primary care nurses complete daily observations on individuals held in segregation.

5.2.9 When prisoners subsequently went clear on the scanner they were relocated within the main prison. Prisoners were supposed to be scanned daily whilst segregated, but often this duty was not carried out due to a lack of staff. The Board's view is that it is not acceptable to deny prisoners the opportunity to demonstrate that they are not secreting items. If a prisoner refused to be scanned, this triggered an automatic sanction of segregation and being placed on report for denying a direct order. One prisoner was segregated for 35 days for refusing to be scanned.

5.2.10 In May 2021 the prison confirmed that prisoners whose scan result indicated a potential secreted item would be segregated but not placed on report initially because the image on its own was not sufficient evidence to prove an illicit item. If the secreted item is handed over, then they would be placed on report and the adjudication would use the item and scanner image as evidence. Any previous adjourned adjudications were to be dismissed.

5.2.11 Use of force incidents within the segregation unit have been greatly reduced, as in the prison overall, probably due to the low availability of illicit substances within the prison and fewer prisoners segregated. The use of body-worn video cameras (BWVC) has fluctuated generally. Of the three incidents in the unit reported in the quarter to July 2020, one lacked BWVC footage. However, with continual reminders being given out by the prison, activation of the cameras is occurring prior to any reportable incident taking place in most cases.

5.2.12 Special accommodation was not used during the reporting period. There were four dirty protests during the period.

5.2.13 Unfortunately, there were a number of occasions when prisoners on an open ACCT were segregated. From April to December 2020 there was an average of 2.6 prisoners segregated on an open ACCT. Of those ACCTs opened on the unit, the highest was seven in September 2020. However, hardly any were opened during the other months of 2020. All ACCTs in the unit are checked by a Board member during their weekly rota duty. The prison merged the meetings for adjudications and the segregation monitoring and review group (SMARG) in 2020 and whilst they were postponed during the pandemic the first meeting took place in October 2020. One of the points raised at the meeting was that prisoners in segregation and on ACCTs needed to be listed and discussed as a specific group.

5.2.14 Board members have not been able to attend the Rule 45 boards (a 14-day review of each prisoner's segregation) in person due to the pandemic but have been able to hear the proceedings, albeit with difficulty, by joining the meeting by phone. The correct procedures were generally followed, with the attendance of a mental health nurse, and prisoners being able to participate.

5.2.15 Virtual segregation (whereby a group of prisons in the area agree transfers of difficult prisoners once they reach 30 days' segregation) was stopped for some months during the pandemic but began again in September 2020. It was used nine times during the reporting period to transfer prisoners out of Wealstun, and 11 times to receive prisoners in.

5.2.16 Self-harm still occurs in the unit and staff, including healthcare staff, appear to deal with these incidents compassionately. Unfortunately, there are prisoners who come into segregation time and time again and constantly self-harm. One such prisoner was eventually transferred to HMP Leeds, where 24-hour medical care was available for them.

5.2.17 Some prisoners with mental health issues have been held in the segregation unit for some time. One example is a prisoner who was held for 38 days whilst waiting for a place in a mental health unit. The Board realises that this is unacceptable and understands that the prison does not want to keep such prisoners in the unit, but it is often the safest place for them. Staff also work hard with these prisoners to reach a position where they can be re-integrated onto a wing, but sometimes this is not possible. However, it is still taking some considerable time to transfer these prisoners to an appropriate unit. Hopefully, the recently issued guidance will improve this.

5.2.18 Adjudications have continued to take place throughout the pandemic, although it has not been possible for Board members to attend. During June 2020, there were 180 adjudications, but this figure dropped to 123 in July, 102 in August, 132 in September, 139 in October, 126 in November and 114 in December. This compares to 90 in April 2020. The percentage of proven charges varied greatly from wing to wing; the prison confirmed it would be looking into the reason for these variations. During October to December 2020, 11% of adjudications were adjourned for the reporting officer to be present and 10% were adjourned in order for the prisoner to take legal advice.

5.2.19 The number of adjudications rose during the first half of 2021 but much of this was due to prisoners with alleged secreted items. Many of these cases were not proceeded with because of a lack of physical evidence.

5.2.20 Independent adjudications continued to be held during the pandemic by video-calling, but the Board has been unable to monitor these during this reporting year.

5.3 Staff-prisoner/detainee relationships, key workers

5.3.1 The impact of the pandemic on the relationship between prisoners and staff cannot be overstated. The year overall has been difficult, but the months of February and March were especially hard, with a huge outbreak of Covid and consequent cellular confinement for prisoners. There was also an impact on the limited regime in place, due to a shortage of staff because of sickness and self-isolation.

5.3.2 The staff capacity is 400, with 288 Band 2 to Band 5 operational unified grades. Sixty new staff have been appointed since June 2020. The majority of these were Band 3 and operational support group (OSG) officers. A mentor helps and supports new staff. A new deputy governor was welcomed in April after a period with acting temporary deputies and another governor resigned. Senior managers have changed responsibilities during the year, with movements in OMU, security, safety and residence, as well as roles with Covid responsibility and “Building Back Better” planning. The Board has found it difficult to establish continuity as governors changed responsibilities, especially when monitoring remotely. The Board recognises that these changes might be unsettling during the induction and learning period in new roles, and for other staff to know to whom to address queries.

5.3.3 Two or three staff have resigned each month during the period of the report. Some staff are suffering from long Covid whilst others are on long-term sick leave.

5.3.4 Due to the restricted regime, officers have had fewer than normal drug, ‘hooch’ and self-harm incidents to deal with. The number of ACCTs and adjudications have also reduced. Before the pandemic, governors could expect 30 adjudications a day but this reduced to five or six a day throughout lockdown. Line route took a few minutes during lockdown, compared to up to 30 minutes previously. As the regime becomes less restrictive, the Board will monitor staff management of the larger numbers of movements.

5.3.5 Staff have, of course, been concerned about the effect of Covid restrictions on their private lives as well as on their prison work and policies, but morale appears to have been steady throughout the year. Periods of Covid outbreak, however, created extra work and the team had to pull together to manage the regime. The Governor expressed her gratitude for everyone’s patience and adaptability during that extraordinary spring period of outbreak.

5.3.6 Before the pandemic there were meant to be 600 hours of key work each week. This was never achieved due to staffing issues. This target reduced to 250 hours as lockdown began. The completed hours within this 250-hours plan were reported to regional office each week. On average 75-80% of the 250 hours per week was achieved and reported. Safer custody identified prisoners who were vulnerable, on ACCTs or had been discussed at the weekly SIM meeting, and these were prioritised for key work hours. This meant that the majority of prisoners received no key worker interactions during the reporting period. The Board will monitor closely as normality returns.

5.3.7 Gold Command insisted that every prisoner was contacted by phone for a welfare check each week. Two members of staff, usually on restricted duties, were tasked with checking well-being daily via the in-cell telephones in the old security building. Wing staff recorded conversations with each man weekly.

5.4 Equality and diversity

5.4.1 The prison’s ethnic diversity remains similar to previous years, with approximately 75% of prisoners identifying as white and the balance as from various

ethnic minorities. In last year's report approximately 40% of prisoners identified as having some form of disability.

5.4.2 Approximately 30% of the prisoner population is under 30 years of age, and 46% is between 30 to 40. There is evidence that those under 30 are more likely to be involved in cases of complaints, adjudications and use of force and be less likely to have enhanced status. This has been acknowledged by the prison and strategies are being developed to address it.

5.4.3 As indicated in last year's report, a new initiative was launched under the title IDEAL (inclusion, diversity, equality, access, leadership) under a dedicated governor. Each senior member of staff is allocated a protected characteristics group and is expected to report quarterly. The Board has attended several meetings and been impressed by the focus given to the subject. For example:

- A new DIRF process for handling complaints has been established with extra training.
- Quarterly data is analysed and where negative trends are identified action plans are introduced. One example which was instigated by the board was around the intelligence-led searches. The results showed that 6% of white and 6 % of BAME prisoners were searched by DST. However, there were 37% of no finds for white prisoners and 64% of no finds for black prisoners.
- The IDEAL group are looking to invite the three prisoner diversity reps to future meetings, whilst at the same time recruiting more members.
- The IDEAL group also worked on collecting data around employee profile in order to be able to track and compare staff profiles in comparison to the prison population. A number of HMPPS staff networks exist to support staff across disability, race and sexual orientation.

5.4.4 The Board recognises that these improvements are due in the main to the strong, enthusiastic and committed leadership of the governor with responsibility for equality.

5.4.5 The kitchen continues to provide a broad range of food options for all dietary requirements. Special meals are provided for all religious festivals such as Eid, Ramadan, Christmas and Easter.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

5.5.1 As reported last year, the new managing chaplain started at the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020. As such his tenure at Wealstun has been exclusively during lockdown. The team consists of one full-time managing chaplain, one full-time Anglican, one part-time Muslim (three days per week) one part-time Roman Catholic (four days per week) and one part-time Free Church (two days per week). There is also further support available for Sikh, Jewish and Buddhist prisoners. The prison continues to seek a Pagan and Rastafarian representative for those prisoners who identify with those beliefs.

5.5.2 The chaplaincy has worked throughout lockdown and provided a valuable service to prisoners in what has been an incredibly challenging period. This is in

addition to their regular involvement in segregation, ACCT reviews and adjudications. Of particular value during this past year has been the chaplaincy role in bereavement counselling.

5.5.3 Since lockdown commenced religious services have not been possible and at the time of writing there are no firm plans to restore group services. The chaplaincy has developed proposals to provide socially distanced services based on a wing rotation system and are hoping that these may be adopted by late July.

5.5.4 During the past 12 months the chaplaincy has redecorated parts of their accommodation and created a larger well-equipped office for use by all chaplains.

5.5.5 As noted last year, it was the intention of the new managing chaplain to try and enlist more support from outside agencies and communities, for example to help prisoners who may not receive visits and to support re-settlement plans. Given the pandemic this has been somewhat restricted. Nevertheless, they have developed a relationship with a Bradford-based charity (<https://mmchurch.co.uk/prison-mentoring/>) that aims to assist prisoners in their return to the community.

5.6 Incentives schemes (IP)

5.6.1 Each prison has an incentives policy (IP) which aims to encourage and reward responsible behaviour, encourage sentenced prisoners to engage in activities and courses designed to reduce the risk of re-offending, and help create a more disciplined and safer environment for prisoners and staff. Under the policy, prisoners can earn additional privileges. There are three privilege levels: basic, standard and enhanced. The 2020 incentives policy and facilities list for HMP Wealstun were both reviewed in February 2021 in accordance with the incentives policy framework.

5.6.2 Under the Prisons Exceptional Regime and Service Delivery instructions, basic should only be used in exceptional circumstances. Thus, throughout the period of the report all basic prisoners were moved to standard. All prisoners were given a television in their cell at no cost and £5 extra pin credit was added to their phone account. Any decisions to remove the television had to be recorded in the defensible decision log.

5.7 Complaints

5.7.1 Given the limited time available during the reporting year due to the pandemic, the Board has not conducted an in-depth review of complaints. However our observations show that given the stable and professional management of the complaints process, there appear to be no major issues.

5.7.2 Compared to previous years there has been little evidence from the content of IMB applications and rota visits of any major problems within the complaints process. This is an improvement.

5.7.3 The number of complaints compared to the previous year has reduced by 9.5%.

5.7.4 In terms of the subject of complaints, the most common are property and residential. Given the changes to how they were reported in previous years it is difficult to make a direct comparison or to know if the subjects are the same. However, the Board intends to monitor this going forward.

5.8 Property

5.8.1 During the pandemic, the property of prisoners transferred to Wealstun was kept in isolation in reception for 72 hours. It was then checked and the property returned to the prisoner. There were no applications to the Board on this issue and it seemed to work well. It seems the prison has a good process in place for handling property, despite the work overloading the staff in reception. During the Covid period, prisoners were buying more items from Amazon and Argos.

5.8.2 There was a rise in applications to the Board concerning property within the establishment. However, 45% (25% and 20%) of these were from just two prisoners and they were both about one problem which took time to resolve. The number of applications concerning property at another establishment significantly reduced, which is not surprising given the reduction in transfers over the year.

5.8.3 The property cupboard in the prison is always quite full. There was a section of the cupboard filled with property bags which had been confiscated after cell searches as the property found was not on the prisoner's property card. These belongings are kept for around 12 months and if they are not claimed then they are disposed of.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

6.1.1 Healthcare at the prison is provided by the healthcare contractor Practice Plus Group (called Care UK prior to September 2020). This includes support for primary health, mental health and substance misuse.

6.1.2 Psychosocial services, psychiatry and psychology services are sub-contracted through Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust. Also sub-contracted are:

- dental services, provided by Time for Teeth;
- physiotherapy and podiatry, provided by Premier Health;
- optical care, provided by Pen Optical;
- x-ray and ultrasound, provided by Global Diagnostics.

The prison receives GP services through a GP practice in Wetherby.

6.1.3 The relationship between the prison and healthcare managers is generally good. The head of healthcare is involved in all relevant prison meetings, such as SMT and use of force, and mental health nurses attend all ACCT reviews and Rule 45 boards.

6.1.4 During the pandemic, healthcare delivered its services through face to face and phone contact with prisoners. Many triage appointments and doctor's appointments were conducted by phone and this system proved so successful that it will continue in the future. The mental health team continued to see prisoners face to face.

6.1.5 Prisoners were informed that from 1 February 2021 if they want to raise a concern about healthcare-related services they would need to complete the healthcare complaint/concern form (available on all wings) and post it into the prison's complaints box. They were informed that they would receive a response within five working days. There have been no applications to the Board this year concerning healthcare complaints being delayed. The Board will continue to monitor the situation.

6.1.6 The Board has seen an increase in applications to the IMB about healthcare over the past year. There seems to be no reason for the increase, although 50% of applications were from just three prisoners.

6.2 Physical healthcare

6.2.1 The past year has been testing for the healthcare team but they have managed well and overcome many obstacles, especially throughout the Covid outbreaks. The main outbreak occurred early in 2021. This was due to a mass testing programme run by Southampton University which identified a number of positive cases which were asymptomatic. As well as prisoners being affected, staff either tested positive or had to self-isolate/quarantine as a precaution.

6.2.2 Healthcare staff continued to work the same shift pattern (7am–7:30pm) and the same GP service and 111 service were used for out-of-hours GP services and at weekends. Robust contingency plans were in place to ensure continuing care if there was a Covid outbreak.

6.2.3 The biggest impact was on dental services as prisoners, like the outside community, were unable to attend appointments. Dental services are now up and running again and prisoners can attend but the service is playing catch-up so prisoners are experiencing some delays.

6.2.4 Statistics show the number of prisoners on medication remained the same (between 70% and 75%) and roughly a third of those were on methadone replacement (180-200 prisoners).

6.2.5 There was a reduction in the number of prisoners not attending their healthcare appointments; the restricted regime meant that prisoners' whereabouts were known and they could therefore be collected and escorted to their appointment. There were also fewer prisoners at workshops/education, which resulted in more appointments being attended. However, there seemed to be several prisoners who did not attend because they were working, refused or did not want to miss association. Members of the Board spoke to some of these prisoners via their in-cell telephones and followed up any issues with healthcare. Several prisoners stated that they refused to attend because they did not know why they were being called. Healthcare confirmed that these prisoners were given at least two further appointments. The Board will continue to monitor this.

6.2.6 Wealstun is currently free from hepatitis C. There has been a major drive to eradicate cases of hep C and the establishment has achieved this on its own, without the need for support from external organisations.

6.3 Mental health

6.3.1 All prisoners are screened on arrival by healthcare for any mental health problems and referrals made if required. There has been no increase in reports of mental health issues over the past year, despite the restricted regime. There was a spike over a two-month period but it was reported as not being related to the pandemic. Face-to-face consultations have still been carried out during the pandemic and the in-cell phones have been beneficial too. Some prisoners reported the in-cell phone to be a preferred means of communication as it maintained their privacy – other prisoners are unaware that they are seeking mental health support.

6.3.2 The Board has observed good interactions between the mental health team and prisoners, particularly in Rule 45 reviews.

6.3.3 Four prisoners have been referred/transferred to external hospitals for mental health support, a similar figure to last year.

6.3.4 Distraction packs/self-help books have been provided during the pandemic, which prisoners have found useful. These packs are put together nationally by external organisations (PPG) rather than the establishment, which has helpfully taken some pressure off prison staff.

6.4 Social care

6.4.1 Due to limited access over the year, the Board was unable to monitor this area. However, it is not a priority area at Wealstun due to the nature of its prison population, which has relatively few social care needs.

6.5 Exercise, regime

6.5.1 The regime in the prison has not changed significantly throughout the year. Due to the pandemic, men were locked in their cells for over 23 hours each day. They were allowed 30 minutes for domestics (showers, etc.) and 30 minutes for exercise. However, this depended on staffing availability, and some prisoners were out of their cells for longer as they were working. The Board was concerned that the time for exercise or association changed daily for groups of prisoners; they might be out of their cell in the morning one day and in the afternoon the next. This meant that they could be locked up for 30 hours or more. However, there were few complaints from prisoners as they did not want to have the same time each day and in the main they were understanding of the need to be locked up.

6.5.2 A significant problem occurred when there was a major Covid outbreak early in 2021 which affected both staff and prisoners. Although prisoners were informed that they would have access to showers, exercise etc. there were some complaints to the Board that alleged that this was not the case. However, under the circumstances, it was impossible to confirm either way. Given the circumstances, the Board must commend the prison, especially the officers on the wings and the kitchen, for keeping things running as well as they did.

6.5.3 The gym was closed during the pandemic but has now been reopened for prisoners and staff. Prisoners follow a gym timetable which is located on the wings.

6.5.4 There has been a reduction in applications to the Board concerning the regime. Some prisoners have preferred the extended time in cell/restricted regime as it has reduced contact with other prisoners and ensured their safety.

6.5.5 The young person strategy is still a work in progress. The plan to reopen the football pitch is still on hold as it has become overgrown and unsafe to use and is currently being repaired. A bi-monthly forum, whereby prisoners suggest ideas, and a more varied curriculum, appear to be common themes, as well as more team-based activities with involvement from staff.

6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

6.6.1 In July 2020 the incentivised substance free living unit (ISFL) was re-launched on G wing, one of the smaller wings, following difficulties in making satisfactory progress on the much larger D wing. Staffing was refreshed and the selection/de-selection process that determines whether prisoners can be admitted to the unit was reviewed. New incentives have been introduced such as a Saturday night pizza night and access to the vocational training centre restaurant.

6.6.2 Unsurprisingly the pandemic impacted negatively on the ISFL group particularly during the new lockdown period which began in December 2020 and included an outbreak at the establishment. When restrictions were relaxed, the drug and alcohol recovery service (DARS) was able to re-establish a regular presence on the ISFL. A recovery café is now regularly attended and compact testing has resumed. The ISFL now has its own exercise yard and there are plans to hold a joint ISFL resident and prison staff charity event.

6.6.3 The pandemic period, and the associated restrictions, have significantly reduced the opportunity for prisoners to access drugs. The regime in place over the reporting year has also undoubtedly contributed to controlling drug use and a more secure and safe environment for those who might otherwise become involved in using harmful substances.

6.6.4 DARS and the mental health team are integrated within the wider healthcare department. DARS facilitates structured drug awareness programmes which prisoners attend as part of a supportive measure if they are found to be, or suspected of being, under the influence of drugs. Adjudication awards are suspended if a prisoner engages and is motivated to address substance misuse. DARS works alongside the St Giles' Trust, Through The Gate and the OMU and also has strong links with a wide range of community drugs teams to facilitate smooth transition and care for prisoners leaving custody.

6.6.5 Almost 25% of all prisoners are on opiate substitution treatment. As part of their treatment, prisoners must engage with both psychosocial and clinical substance misuse teams through a wide range of interventions. They also attend daily clinics where the treatment is administered. Given the unusual circumstances in 2020-21 it is difficult for the Board to assess the level of progress being made with drug and alcohol rehabilitation and this will be an area of focus once normal operating conditions resume.

6.7 Soft skills

6.7.1 The impact of the pandemic on the delivery of soft skills to prisoners at Wealstun has been dramatic. Face-to-face contact was restricted by social distancing rules. Charities and education facilitators had to find different (sometimes, better) ways of managing their contacts with prisoners. There have been some successful new initiatives involving and helping individuals.

6.7.2 Jigsaw, a charity involved in family engagement and wellbeing, maintained work with prisoners and their families. It functions with two full-time members of staff. The popular accredited parenting course, Homework Club and Dad's Days were impossible to promote during the year.

6.7.3 Since visiting re-started, Jigsaw has supported families on 'purple visits' and in the visiting centre, explaining new systems and giving guidance on behaviour, attitudes, thinking, family and mental health. Jigsaw casework was possible through in-cell telephones. Demand was high and there were insufficient lines connecting to the in-cell phones so sometimes there were queues waiting to make calls and booking was required. OMU had priority. This eased as the regime relaxed. Storybook Dad videos began in April, after men had been cleared by security.

6.7.4 Jigsaw arranged for an artist to be escorted in to enable him to paint inspirational leaders and their quotations in the M1 corridor, reception, healthcare and on wings.

6.7.5 Calm is a life skills course, previously delivered on Fridays by Novus. After the discontinuation of Calm, one prisoner, suffering his mother's bereavement, was assisted by Jigsaw. He sent a testimonial to Jigsaw on release. It is long and

moving, expressing initial scepticism but describing how telephone calls and activities gradually helped him understand his emotions. This helped with his life in the community upon release.

6.7.6 Information advice and guidance courses have continued so that peer support mentors, PID workers and Shannon Trust mentors could be identified and trained.

6.7.7 A partnership has been formed with Mary Magdalene Church in Bradford to run a community support centre. A member comes each week to contact prisoners who are to be released to offer information about their community-based mentoring scheme.

6.7.8 Koestler (Unlock the Talent Inside) awards have been made. Twenty-two pieces of art were submitted from Wealstun among the 6,500 entries. Three appeared at Sheffield Millennium Gallery. Each prisoner received a £24 prize for his first entry. One, "Murmuration", featured in the Big Issue and another was chosen by Koestler as a lead image and will appear at Ripon Museum throughout summer 2021.

6.7.9 The Shannon Trust is a charity which unlocks the power of reading in prison. Prison mentors help other prisoners through basic reading skills. There has been a tripling of mentors. This means more support staff are required. A request has been made by the librarian for an officer to facilitate this work.

6.7.10 WayOut TV was introduced in April, enabling information to be shared throughout the prison.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

7.1.1 The remote monitoring necessitated by the pandemic meant that although the Board was able to contact staff it could not monitor the quality of education on offer. There was no face-to-face education and it appeared that little was happening apart from 'pack' creation and updating of training and systems. Under the surface, however, networks were being formed between staff at other prisons. Help and inspiration came from shared experiences.

7.1.2 Novus provides education services from an education block and five libraries.

7.1.3 During the initial stages of lockdown, education staff worked from home. The Board heard about distraction packs and training but little about achievements. Novus staff in Yorkshire built up packs, which at first seemed to be little more than puzzles and colouring. Gradually the distraction packs filled with comprehension and mathematical problems. Much work shared across the prisons enabled a variety of subjects to be covered; building a wall, guttering, catering, employability and life skills, to name a few. This period of colossal workload for the staff, not done before, benefited staff and prisoners. Staff colleagues consulted, gained information and shared experiences. It will be beneficial to be able to continue to contact other prisons for help in future.

7.1.4 CURIOUS, the new information system, is supposed to be updated within 24 hours and provide information about a learner's attainments, skills and courses, but is not popular because data are not refreshed quickly, making it misleading. OMU now sends a weekly report on prisoners expecting to be released or transferred during the following week, enabling Novus staff to help finish work quickly. This enables accreditation and progress. The Board is concerned that CURIOUS is not fit for purpose.

7.1.5 Few officers, because of the constant churn of staff, knew of the Shannon Trust studies' and booklets' availability. With the coordinator visiting wings, officers have become more knowledgeable and aware of what is available for disadvantaged readers. They now demonstrate more interest and encouragement than in the past. They understand reasons why a mentor and mentee require a peaceful twenty minutes every day and help to facilitate it. Likewise, as education staff have visited wings, and packs are distributed, there is a growing awareness of prisoners' targets and learning.

7.1.6 The reliance on packs of work can be evidenced in March 2021. 121 non-accredited packs were distributed to prisoners but the majority were not returned because without accreditation staff could not insist that they be returned; they were a voluntary task. These packs included topics on personal and social development, mental health, distraction and maths and English. They were regarded as stepping stones towards learning. When tackled about not returning them prisoners said they were asked but could not be bothered to finish them. Prisoners get paid for work on accredited courses, however, so it was easier to encourage them to complete other tasks.

7.1.7 By August 2020 bubbles of eight staff were allowed into work for four days a week. Seven different subjects (maths, English, personal development, employability, health and safety, food safety and industrial cleaning) were being taught, but not face to face. PID workers collected the work for Novus to mark. It could take up to an hour to mark some of the more complicated packs. In May 2021 teachers were allowed onto wings and could help learners face to face, although there was still no classroom activity.

7.1.8 Six in-cell telephones became available during August and September 2020. These enabled staff to contact learners. A booking system was required at first as there was such demand. As rules have relaxed, so that staff can go onto wings, the phones have remained valuable and are used regularly.

7.1.9 Some prisoners who passed through non-accredited courses progressed through the stepping stones to accredited ones. Education has developed positively throughout the pandemic, reaching prisoners who might not have enjoyed a classroom environment. Many have found that working quietly in their cell with encouragement from teachers, by phone every other day, is productive. As a result, modern blended learning is being planned, with less classroom time (a 3-hour session was too long for many) and more independence, with guidance.

7.1.10 Education efficiency data is not applicable because of suspended classroom activity. In-cell education participation was monitored by weekly regime delivery reports. This captured, in a large document, reports on performance, feedback and spot checks (five a month) etc. and goes to the Governor.

7.1.11. Prisoners assessed below entry level 3 in English at induction are referred to the Shannon Trust. Other candidates are found from discussions with wing staff about, for example, who needs help filling in a canteen sheet. Staff visit prisoners when the wing is busy, so they are not overheard, and discuss reading with them. Not all are interested but sometimes come back later for help.

7.1.12 Learner data shows they enrol on accredited functional skills courses after completing Trust work. This work is one of the success stories of the pandemic. The part-time library worker dealing with it works almost entirely on Trust work. Changes in paperwork were made so that mentors had to record each day's work and progress from each twenty-minute session. Previously they had only filled in pay sheets. Rather than grumbling about the extra paperwork the mentors seem to appreciate they are demonstrating their own teaching progress.

7.1.13 Each wing has spare mentors available so that prisoners who move wings can have another mentor. Twenty-four mentors are on call whilst eighteen prisoners are learning, for example. Mentors have become interested in the problems faced by their mentee and have been supplied with information sheets on ADHD, dyspraxia and dyslexia to help with their student. One prisoner who initially couldn't recognise his own name reached the stage of revising the Highway Code. Certificates are awarded to prisoners and mentors as significant stages are reached.

7.1.14 WayOut TV (WOTV) has been made available in cells. Posters and advertisements announced this innovation. Since March 2021, WayOut 2 Learn

packs with 12 different course booklets have been issued and marked. It seems there has been a reluctant take-up elsewhere but in Wealstun they have been popular. Distribution and collection are managed by Novus but work is sent away to be marked. The Board is concerned about what will happen when basic IP is reintroduced and some prisoners will no longer have TVs and so will be unable to access the courses.

7.1.15 Library procurement of orders has been busier than before the pandemic. A book and newspaper delivery service was provided by wing officers. Enhancement and distraction packs on various subjects were distributed by the library, with special activities like the six-book challenge.

7.1.16 Music enrichment packs and instruments (ukuleles, guitars, keyboards, saxophones) have been distributed and are popular. DVD/CD players and self-help DVDs were supplied. The supply of guitars ran out. The initiative comes through the Irene Taylor Trust which provides CDs of different types of music, with a short course included. Suggestions for introductions to different types of music (reggae, classical) were provided.

7.2 Vocational training, work

7.2.1 The monitoring of vocational training through the Covid lockdown difficulties was helped by Board members phoning in to the weekly reducing reoffending managers meetings. Discussions were held on learning skills, catering, programmes, chaplaincy, activities, equality and rehabilitative culture, industries, education, gym, St Giles and ITTG, with each representative submitting a report.

7.2.2 From this meeting discussions about preparations for the new accommodation contract, beginning on 26 June 2021, revealed the slowness of information being passed down to the prison. Managers were, eventually, relieved to hear about the three-month handover period to iron out procedures.

7.2.3 Health and safety requirements for Covid meant worker numbers in workshops were reduced. Eighteen prisoners worked in areas where there were previously 45-50 people. The group had to come from the same landing so there was no cross-contamination of bubbles.

7.2.4 The laundry, textile, food packing and kitchens workshops remained open throughout the pandemic. The textile/tailors provide 12,000 boxer shorts a quarter for the prison estate. There were shortages, which meant working overtime on Friday afternoons and Saturday mornings for a period. The textile, laundry, and food packing workshops carry out work for other prisons, thus receiving income for the prison.

7.2.5 Gardens were open between July and November and then forced to close during the second lockdown. They reopened in May 2021, as did the sewing machine repairs workshop, which had been refurbished for three months from January.

7.2.6 It was noted that smaller numbers of workers coming from the same areas of the prison worked together better and had greater productivity. Vulnerable prisoners

were protected by their colleagues. This will be taken into account for future planning for prison work.

7.2.7 There was a period of instability in June 2020 when several prisoners in the kitchen were sacked. All kitchen workers live on the same wing, leading to an unsettled atmosphere on the wing until the dismissed workers were moved elsewhere. The kitchen is more spacious and works in shifts so the 50% cut for social distancing in other areas of work did not apply.

7.2.8 Other workshops, such as Martin House (refurbishment of furniture for charity) for example, which were closed, moved to larger accommodation. Some, like the barbers and sewing machine repairs, have been refurbished.

7.2.9 The construction skills certification scheme (CSCS) courses were not possible and will begin again in July 2021. There is a huge demand from prisoners for this qualification. The construction industry is in great need of workers with these certificates.

7.2.10 The kitchen remains a popular place for prisoners to work, with worker retention continuing at high levels. Prisoners enjoy the working environment and also benefit from regular one-to-ones and work reviews carried out by the catering supervisors. Prisoners are encouraged to work independently in real working kitchens to gain valuable skills which they can utilise after their release.

7.2.11 The Board will monitor the position as regimes become more relaxed.

7.3 Offender management, progression

7.3.1 The pandemic restrictions have resulted in limited progression for prisoners and very few transfers were approved. There were very few face-to-face conversations between OMU staff and prisoners, especially as some staff were working from home and communication was either by in-cell phones or post. Even when a prisoner was recategorised to category D and transfers were permitted, the lack of category D places resulted in significant delays in moves to open conditions. This was an issue in the last reporting period and remains so.

7.3.2 During this reporting period, the Board observed that changes in governors resulted in objectives set by OMU for reducing offender assessment system (OASys) backlogs and improving the quality of assessments being achieved. In fact, OASys backlogs have been reduced massively, from 200 to 45, which is the average figure among prisons. Also, the quality of the assessment of prisoners has improved as the new management of the Probation Service in the prison was determined to make this a priority. As a result, there has been more training and the standard of the work has improved.

7.3.3 At the end of the reporting period there were 10 prison offender managers (POMs), 3.5 more than last year. Also, there were five probation officers. The allocated cases depend on the prisoner's risk and sentence and they have either a POM or a probation officer. However, those with short sentences will have no contact with the POM or probation officer and are managed by their key worker.

7.3.4 The offender management in custody (OMiC) model was implemented fully in April 2021.

7.3.5 There were no accredited behaviour programmes during the reporting period due to the pandemic. Where necessary, the Parole Board had to make decisions based on managing the risk without the programme. Some prisoners were released when it was decided they could manage the programme in the community. Home detention curfew (HDC) by contrast has not been impacted by the pandemic. IPP prisoners and lifers are treated the same as other prisoners, so they are not given any priority, and the Board is still hoping that the monthly forum for IPP and life-sentenced prisoners with the OMU is reinstated.

7.4 Family contact

7.4.1 Social visits were stopped from the start of the pandemic. Prisoners were encouraged to use their in-cell telephones to maintain contact with loved ones. The visits hall was refurbished and small booths surrounded by Perspex screens were built so there was no physical contact between prisoners and their visitors. This allowed visits to recommence once approval was received. Unfortunately, the prisoners did not like the booths as they were noisy and prisoners were unable to hold hands with their visitors. The take-up of these visits was therefore small.

7.4.2 Purple visits (video calling) were introduced and were more popular, although there were teething problems in the beginning. Each prisoner could apply for one free 30-minute call per month. Checks were required for each prisoner who booked such a visit and some prisoners complained about the length of time these checks were taking. Whilst on the call, prisoners found that the picture would often pixelate or there were problems with connecting or remaining connected. If an unexpected person came into view, such as a child, then the call would be curtailed.

7.4.3 In February 2021, any prisoner with a confirmed or suspected case of Covid, or who was located in a Covid outbreak area, was not able to access purple visits. Alternative dates were offered when these had to be cancelled. However, by April 2021, the uptake of these calls was between 25 and 50% of the 21 daily slots available, due to the continuing problems with access and facial recognition, as mentioned above.

7.4.4 By the end of May 2021 the prison was able to reopen social visits, subject to restrictions such as the wearing of face coverings at all times and the rule that only children under the age of 11 could have physical contact with the prisoner. Changes were made to the visits hall, with much of the Perspex screening being removed and only a waist-high screen being left to separate prisoners from visitors. Twelve pods were available for a maximum of three people; two adults and one child or one adult and two children.

7.4.5 During the pandemic, prisoners were unable to attend funeral services for family members so the prison chaplains arranged for funeral services to be streamed onto an iPad and for the prisoner to be brought to the multifaith centre so that they could view the funeral service.

7.5 Resettlement planning

7.5.1 St Giles was responsible for obtaining housing for prisoners upon release. In November 2020 six prisoners, about 10%, were released without accommodation. There was an improvement at the beginning of 2021, mainly because local authorities had more money for housing during the pandemic. According to St Giles and Through the Gate, housing referral is still problematic, despite the improvement.

7.5.2 St Giles staff worked throughout the year. They were able to use the in-cell phones but housing assessments were completed face to face.

7.5.3 At the end of 2020, there were five members of staff working on the integrated Through the Gate service, an improvement from the previous year. They worked mainly from home during the pandemic. Their role is resettlement planning and liaison between OMU, St Giles and the Probation Service in the community. They see each prisoner 12 weeks before they are released. They help them with housing, bank applications, family support and health community support. They also coordinate with OMU on issues related to HDC. One of the main issues they encounter is inadequate mental health liaison between the prison and services in the community.

7.5.4 The Board has not been able to monitor the number of prisoners leaving with employment but would like consideration to be given to how employers can be encouraged to employ more ex-offenders, given the current shortage of labour in some sectors.

8. The work of the IMB

The Board currently comprises nine members, one of whom is on sabbatical. Unfortunately, for various reasons, three members will be leaving before the end of 2021 and a recent recruitment campaign was unsuccessful, with no new members. A further recruitment campaign has begun.

For the first three months of the reporting period, because of the Covid-19 pandemic, no members visited the prison and monitoring was conducted remotely. The Board received copies of the daily operations briefings and other relevant information. There were weekly calls with the Governor, which were minuted. Arrangements were in place for members to telephone wings and other key functions weekly and join Rule 45 reviews by telephone. Board meetings were held remotely.

However, some members resumed visits to the prison in September and were able to speak to prisoners in the segregation unit and also speak to officers and staff in the establishment. They also had access to in-cell telephones and were able to speak to prisoners on the wings to get their views on the effects that lockdown was having on them. Face-to-face Board meetings commenced in March with the facility for members who were unable to visit to join by telephone.

Rule 45 reviews continued by telephone throughout the reporting year. There was a significant reduction in prisoners being segregated and so the number of reviews was small.

Applications were collected and scanned by the clerk, and the Board's responses were provided through the 'email-a-prisoner' scheme. Prisoners also had access to the IMB applications line and 31% of applications were made by this method. The number of applications for the reporting year has increased by 25%, however 15% of applications were from just one prisoner.

It should be noted that the statistics do not reflect all the work of the Board during the reporting period as a considerable amount of work was undertaken at home. It is also the case that the availability of improved technology is allowing more activity to be undertaken remotely and that consideration should be given to this being incorporated in Board statistics where possible.

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	15
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	8
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	8 (plus one on sabbatical)
Total number of visits to the establishment	121
Total number of segregation reviews attended	86

Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	2	9
B	Discipline, including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	2	6
C	Equality	0	4
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	10	6
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	13	24
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	1	14
F	Food and kitchens	8	2
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	20	32
H1	Property within this establishment	20	34
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	27	3
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	5	4
I	Sentence management, including home detention curfew, ROTL, parole, release dates, recategorisation	28	32
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	27	34
K	Transfers	5	4
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system	22	40
	Total number of applications	190	248



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