

Report on an independent review of progress at

HMP The Mount

by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

23–25 April 2019

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Glossary of terms

We try to make our reports as clear as possible, but if you find terms that you do not know, please see the glossary in our 'Guide for writing inspection reports' on our website at:
<http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/about-our-inspections/>

About this report

- A1 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons is an independent, statutory organisation which reports on the treatment and conditions of those detained in prisons, young offender institutions, secure training centres, immigration detention facilities, police and court custody and military detention.
- A2 All visits carried out by HM Inspectorate of Prisons contribute to the UK's response to its international obligations under the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT). OPCAT requires that all places of detention are visited regularly by independent bodies – known as the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) – which monitor the treatment of and conditions for detainees. HM Inspectorate of Prisons is one of several bodies making up the NPM in the UK.
- A3 Independent reviews of progress (IRPs) are a new type of visit designed to improve accountability to Ministers about the progress prisons make towards achieving HM Inspectorate of Prisons' recommendations in between inspections. IRPs will take place at the discretion of the Chief Inspector when a full inspection suggests the prison would benefit from additional scrutiny, and will focus on a limited number of the recommendations made at the inspection. IRPs will therefore not result in assessments against our healthy prison tests.¹
- A4 The aims of IRPs are to:
- assess progress against selected key recommendations
 - support improvement
 - identify any emerging difficulties or lack of progress at an early stage
 - assess the sufficiency of the leadership and management response to our main concerns at the full inspection.
- A5 This report contains a summary from the Chief Inspector and a brief record of our findings in relation to each recommendation we have followed up. The reader may find it helpful to refer to the report of the full inspection, carried out in April–May 2018 for further detail on the original findings.²

IRP methodology

- A6 IRPs will be announced at least three months in advance and will take place eight to 12 months after the full inspection. When we announce an IRP, we will identify recommendations from the original inspection report which are of most importance to the well-being of prisoners (usually no more than 15) and communicate these to the Governor/Director of the prison.
- A7 During our three-day visit, we will collect a range of evidence about the progress in implementing each selected recommendation. Sources of evidence will include observation, discussions with prisoners, staff and relevant third parties, documentation and data.

¹ HM Inspectorate of Prisons' healthy prison tests are safety, respect, purposeful activity and rehabilitation and release planning. For more information see our website: <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprison/our-expectations/>

² <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprison/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2018/09/HMP-The-Mount-Web-2018.pdf>

- A8 We will make one of four possible judgements for each recommendation we follow-up:
- **No meaningful progress**
Managers had not yet formulated, resourced or begun to implement a realistic improvement plan for this recommendation.
 - **Insufficient progress**
Managers had begun to implement a realistic improvement strategy for this recommendation but the actions taken had not yet resulted in any discernible evidence of progress (for example, better systems and processes) or improved outcomes for prisoners.
 - **Reasonable progress**
Managers were implementing a realistic improvement strategy for this recommendation and there was evidence of progress (for example, better systems and processes) and/or early evidence of some improving outcomes for prisoners.
 - **Good progress**
Managers had implemented a realistic improvement strategy for this recommendation and had delivered a clear improvement in outcomes for prisoners.
- A9 Depending on the recommendations to be followed-up, IRP visits may be conducted jointly with Ofsted (England), Estyn (Wales), the Care Quality Commission and the General Pharmaceutical Council. This joint work ensures expert knowledge is deployed and avoids multiple inspection visits.

Key findings

- S1 At this IRP visit, we followed up 13 of the 69 recommendations made at our most recent inspection and made judgements about the degree of progress achieved to date.
- S2 We judged that there was good progress in five recommendations, reasonable progress in two recommendations and insufficient progress in six. There were no areas of no meaningful progress. A summary of the judgements is as follows.

Figure 1: Progress on recommendations from 2018 inspection (n=13)

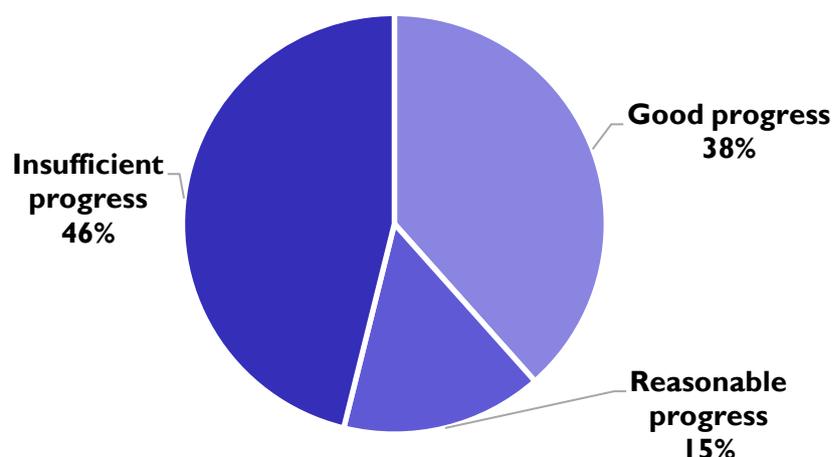


Figure 2: Judgements against HMI Prisons recommendations from April–May 2018 inspection

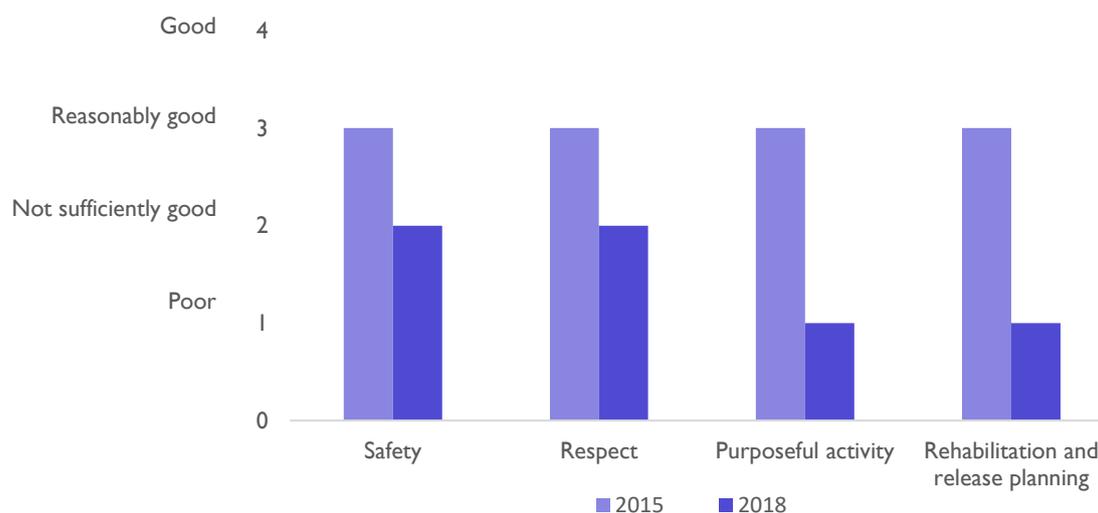
Recommendation	Judgement
An effective violence reduction strategy should be implemented. It should include ongoing prisoner consultation; thorough investigation of violence, antisocial behaviour and unexplained injuries; systematic challenge and monitoring of perpetrators; and support for victims. (S42)	Insufficient progress
Managers should ensure that poor accountability and oversight in relation to the use of force is addressed through filming of all planned use of force and routine use of body-worn cameras during spontaneous incidents, systematic scrutiny of video footage, and thorough review of paperwork. Where necessary, staff should be challenged and lessons learned. (S43)	Insufficient progress
The distinct needs of prisoners with protected characteristics should be identified and systematically addressed. In particular, systematic equality monitoring data that cover all key areas of prison life should lead to thorough investigation and action where necessary. (S44)	Insufficient progress
All prisoners should have the opportunity to participate in a full, purposeful and predictable regime, including association and exercise. Managers should ensure that the prison has sufficient staff and activity places to achieve this objective. (S45)	Reasonable progress
Prisoners should be enabled and encouraged to attend activities that meet their assessed education and resettlement needs, and receive coordinated support to enter employment or education and training on release. (S46)	Good progress

The prison should implement a whole-prison approach to offender management and reducing reoffending, which effectively supports prisoners to progress through their sentences. Prisoners should have up-to-date sentence plans and sufficient opportunities to meet their objectives, with support from dedicated staff. (S47)	Good progress
All newly arrived prisoners should have a confidential interview as soon as possible on the day of arrival, at which any risks, vulnerabilities or immediate needs are identified and addressed, using professional interpretation when needed. (1.10)	Reasonable progress
Systematic management oversight of the segregation unit should ensure that prisoners do not stay on the unit any longer than necessary, and should include routine monitoring of segregation records for completeness and quality. (1.40)	Insufficient progress
An integrated drug strategy should be designed to reduce the demand and supply of drugs. An adequately resourced drug testing programme should ensure that all necessary random and intelligence-based tests are carried out promptly. (1.54)	Insufficient progress
Units should be clean and decorated to a good standard. Outside areas should be free of litter and vermin. (2.7)	Good progress
Staff should respond to emergency cell bells within five minutes. Response times should be recorded electronically and monitored by managers. (2.12)	Insufficient progress
Managers should ensure that the functional skills of all prisoners are assessed on induction, and that prisoners with lower-level skills in English and mathematics are encouraged to improve these skills. (3.22)	Good progress
The interdepartmental risk management team (IRMT) meeting should be attended by representatives from all key departments across the prison. All high-risk prisoners due for release should be reviewed through the IRMT and there should be consistent quality assurance to improve the usefulness of MAPPA F reports. (4.22)	Good progress

Section 1. Chief Inspector's summary

- I.1** At our inspections of HMP The Mount in 2015 and 2018 we made the following judgements about outcomes for prisoners.

Figure 3: HMP The Mount healthy prison outcomes 2015 and 2018.



- I.2** HMP The Mount in Hertfordshire is a category C training and resettlement prison with capacity for about 1,000 prisoners. Opened in the late 1980s, it is a relatively modern prison holding convicted prisoners, most of whom are serving long sentences for serious offences.
- I.3** At our inspection of The Mount in 2018, we found a prison that had deteriorated substantially in many areas. There were high levels of violence, drug use and use of force, and a general failure of accountability structures and management oversight. Segregation and use of force paperwork was often not completed, and there was too little focus on reducing illicit drug supply. Staffing was low and many officers were inexperienced. There was virtually no work on equality, despite particularly large populations of black and minority ethnic and foreign national prisoners.
- I.4** We found the worst outcomes in our tests on purposeful activity, and rehabilitation and release planning. The prison was clearly failing in its fundamental mission to provide constructive activity, training and rehabilitation. A restricted regime was in place, and few prisoners were meaningfully occupied or achieving qualifications. The offender management unit (OMU) had been stripped of staff and was unable to complete effectively basic functions of assessment, management and release planning. The general lack of commitment to rehabilitation work in what was nominally a resettlement prison was a depressing indictment of the state that the prison had reached.
- I.5** However, in this visit we noted that the prison appeared to be on an upward trajectory, albeit from a very low base. Managers told us of many improvements expected within the next few months. At this independent review of progress, we were pleased to find that there was some substance to these plans. In particular, there was evidence of greater clarity of

vision around training and rehabilitation, something that we had urged in 2018. Of the 13 key recommendations that we examined, there had been good progress in five, reasonable progress in two and insufficient progress in six; it is noteworthy that we identified no recommendations for which there had been no meaningful progress.

- 1.6** Work to improve safety outcomes was less advanced than would have been expected a year after the inspection. There had been some improvements to procedures on arrival, but violence and use of force had risen, and the governance of use of force and segregation was still weak. Not enough had been done to interrupt drug supply and use, and there were still few suspicion drug tests being completed. However, some useful work was under way in all of these areas. There was now a comprehensive and partially implemented strategy to address violence. More body-worn cameras were available and they were used more often. A drug strategy was now in place, and in recent months there had been evidence of steadily reducing drug use in the prison.
- 1.7** In the area of respect, cleanliness had improved substantially, and a programme of redecoration and refurbishment was well under way. This work was supported by the prisoner 'handyman' scheme, which gave useful occupation to prisoners while ensuring that basic repairs were completed quickly. Staffing had greatly improved, with around 80 new officers, and staff sickness levels were now very low. A new equality officer was making some improvements but equality work was still in the early stages of recovery.
- 1.8** We were pleased to note the use of 'culture representatives'. These prisoners were appointed through the charity User Voice, and part of a well-supported team including a senior manager and staff from different departments. They ensured that policy implementation was informed by the prisoner experience; they tested out new procedures and helped to make significant changes. Their efforts were appreciated by staff and they had the potential to support meaningfully the development of a respectful, rehabilitative culture.
- 1.9** There had been reasonably good progress in purposeful activity. While far too many prisoners were unemployed and locked up during our roll checks, time out of cell had improved substantially. A full regime was now available to most, with some advanced plans to create more activity places. Prisoners could develop good work-related skills and, while accreditation of skills was still limited, there were plans to rectify this problem. The functional skills of all new arrivals in English and mathematics were now assessed, and the large backlog of those waiting for inductions had been cleared. Managers had substantially increased the number of employers that the prison engaged with, and this had yielded good outcomes for some prisoners who had obtained employment or work experience on release.
- 1.10** The most impressive area of progress was in rehabilitation and release planning. There were still insufficient interventions – for example, to address the needs of prisoners with domestic violence histories. However, the prison now had a much more coherent and joined up approach to offender management and reducing reoffending. All prisoners had key workers and there was evidence that they were helping prisoners to progress through their sentence and address offending-related needs. Good work had been done to reduce substantially the backlog of offender assessment system (OASys) assessments, and the OMU was now properly resourced. Pre-release risk assessment and planning were now much more robust.
- 1.11** Overall, this was an encouraging review. While a great deal of work was still needed to ensure that momentum was not lost, improvement and progress were evident. The two worst areas identified at the last inspection – purposeful activity, and rehabilitation and release planning – had both seen significant improvements. There was a sense of purpose and management drive at the prison, and the contribution that prisoners themselves could make to positive change was being recognised. It would be a disappointment – and a surprise – if

the areas of insufficient progress identified during this review were not addressed with vigour before we return to The Mount.

Peter Clarke CVO OBE QPM
HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

May 2019

Section 2. Progress against the main concerns and recommendations

The following provides a brief description of our findings in relation to each recommendation followed up from the full inspection in 2018. The reference numbers at the end of each recommendation refer to the paragraph location in the full inspection report.

Early days in custody

Concern: No reception or routine first night interviews were undertaken to encourage disclosure of vulnerabilities and risks, or to help address any immediate needs. There was no log of the use of professional interpretation in reception and staff could not recollect having used it.

Recommendation: All newly arrived prisoners should have a confidential interview as soon as possible on the day of arrival, at which any risks, vulnerabilities or immediate needs are identified and addressed, using professional interpretation when needed. (I.10)

- 2.1 One-to-one interviews now routinely took place on the first night wing. However, the interviews were not always confidential. The interviews we observed were conducted in the induction office, with frequent interruptions from staff and other prisoners.
- 2.2 A new 'induction passport' had been developed, to ensure the systematic identification of risks, vulnerability and needs. It was a positive attempt to bring more consistency and rigour but was hard to follow and not well understood by all staff. As a result, some potential risks were not addressed consistently. For example, there was confusion about whether reception or induction staff should ask about self-harm. During our visit, a new prisoner, identified from records as having previously been on assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) case management processes for prisoners at risk of suicide or self-harm, was not asked about potential self-harm, either on reception or during his interview on the first night wing.
- 2.3 About a fifth of the prison population was foreign national. The use of professional telephone interpreting services had increased but was still low. In 2018 the service had been used 23 times, and in the first quarter of 2019 it had already been used 13 times.
- 2.4 We considered that the prison had made reasonable progress against this recommendation.

Encouraging positive behaviour

Concern: The number of violent incidents was high and safer custody work was weak. Not enough was done to understand, address and tackle victimisation. Unexplained injuries were not systematically investigated. Not all violent incidents were properly investigated. Support for victims and monitoring of perpetrators were limited.

Recommendation: An effective violence reduction strategy should be implemented. It should include ongoing prisoner consultation; thorough investigation of violence, antisocial behaviour and unexplained injuries; systematic challenge and monitoring of perpetrators; and support for victims. (S42)

- 2.5** A comprehensive violence reduction strategy was implemented in January 2019, but had yet to show any impact. The number of violent incidents involving staff and prisoners alike had increased since the last inspection. Prisoner consultation was not yet effectively supporting violence reduction work; consultation groups had started in February 2019 but only with the five safer custody representatives, rather than the wider prison population.
- 2.6** The ‘Challenge, Support and Intervention Plan’ (CSIP)³ process had been implemented and had so far resulted in nearly 200 referrals. There were currently 11 prisoners on live documents. Electronic records evidenced that, although CSIP investigations had taken place, they were of poor quality, and that management plans were not being completed. Unexplained injuries were now investigated by the safer custody team and a log was kept. ‘Belong’, a restorative justice organisation, continued to do very good work with some prisoners.
- 2.7** We considered that the prison had made insufficient progress against this recommendation.

Use of force

Concern: The level of use of force was high and scrutiny of its use was weak. A large amount of paperwork required to justify use of force was missing. Planned incidents were not recorded and body-worn cameras were not routinely turned on during spontaneous incidents.

Recommendation: Managers should ensure that poor accountability and oversight in relation to the use of force is addressed through filming of all planned use of force and routine use of body-worn cameras during spontaneous incidents, systematic scrutiny of video footage, and thorough review of paperwork. Where necessary, staff should be challenged and lessons learned. (S43)

- 2.8** The level of use of force had increased since the last inspection, with no clear understanding of why this was so. Only four of 12 planned removals in the previous six months had been recorded. There were two hand-held cameras for recording planned incidents.
- 2.9** There had been a drive to use body-worn cameras during spontaneous incidents. There were now enough cameras for staff, and most were collected daily, which was an improvement since the last inspection.
- 2.10** Use of force footage and paperwork were not routinely reviewed to establish concerns and learn lessons. Such reviews were usually carried out reactively, following complaints, and normally only after a formal investigation.
- 2.11** We considered that the prison had made insufficient progress against this recommendation.

³ The Challenge, Support and Intervention Plan (CSIP) is a system used by some prisons to manage the most violent prisoners and support the most vulnerable prisoners in the system. Prisoners who are identified as perpetrators of serious or repeated violence, or who are vulnerable due to being the victim of violence or bullying behaviour, are managed and supported on a plan, with individualised targets and regular reviews.

Segregation

Concern: At the last inspection, we found that governance of segregation was weak. The segregation review documents that we examined were poor. We found examples of reviews not taking place, and incomplete safety screens and segregation records. Targets were generic and there was no evidence of individual care plans. Reintegration planning was underdeveloped and not enough prisoners returned to normal location. About 53% of those segregated were transferred to other prisons. Too many prisoners were held on the segregation unit for as long as three days while waiting for an adjudication.

Recommendation: Systematic management oversight of the segregation unit should ensure that prisoners do not stay on the unit any longer than necessary, and should include routine monitoring of segregation records for completeness and quality. (1.40)

- 2.12** The governance of segregation remained weak. An assurance checklist was in place to help ensure that paperwork was completed, but every form that we checked was blank. Safety screenings were completed adequately. Good order and/or discipline (GOOD) reviews had taken place but without any meaningful targets being set.
- 2.13** We found no evidence of reintegration planning for any segregated prisoners, and around 50% of segregated prisoners were still transferred out, usually for their own protection.
- 2.14** However, since the last inspection there had been a large and steady decrease in the number of days that prisoners spent segregated. This figure had dropped from an average of 24 in April 2018 to 14 in April 2019.
- 2.15** We considered that the prison had made insufficient progress against this recommendation.

Security

Concern: Very few requested suspicion drug tests had taken place over the previous six months. It was too easy for prisoners to obtain illegal drugs. Supply reduction work was weak and not embedded within a wider drug strategy. The proportion of positive mandatory drug tests was high, at 32%, including new psychoactive substances (NPS).⁴

Recommendation: An integrated drug strategy should be designed to reduce the demand and supply of drugs. An adequately resourced drug testing programme should ensure that all necessary random and intelligence-based tests are carried out promptly. (1.54)

- 2.16** The prison now had a comprehensive drug and alcohol strategy, which explained how various departments would address drug and alcohol supply and demand. The strategy was underpinned by an action plan but parts of it were out of date. A drug strategy working group had recently been convened to take this work forward, but had met only once.
- 2.17** Too many prisoners continued to take drugs. Over the previous six months, a third of prisoners had tested positive in random drug tests – similar to the proportion at the time of the last inspection. We could smell drugs on some wings in the prison. However, there were early signs that drug use may have been reducing. From December 2018 to March 2019, the percentage of prisoners testing positive had fallen from 38% to 20%.

⁴ NPS generally refers to synthetic cannabinoids, a growing number of man-made mind-altering chemicals that are either sprayed on dried, shredded plant material or paper so they can be smoked or sold as liquids to be vaporised and inhaled in e-cigarettes and other devices.

- 2.18** The drug testing programme was still not suitably resourced to meet demand. Only three officers were trained in drug testing. These officers carried out the minimum number of random tests each month but struggled to complete intelligence-based tests. In the previous four months, only one in five of the requested intelligence-based tests had been completed. Those that were completed usually proved positive, which suggested that the intelligence was of good quality.
- 2.19** We considered that the prison had made insufficient progress against this recommendation.

Living conditions

Concern: At the last inspection, many communal areas were shabby and some units lacked natural light and felt claustrophobic. Some efforts to improve conditions, such as painting and cleaning, had been very recent. Outside areas were attractive but rat infested, and there was still too much litter around some units.

Recommendation: Units should be clean and decorated to a good standard. Outside areas should be free of litter and vermin. (2.7)

- 2.20** The senior management team had started daily 'decency checks', which entailed them visiting wings together and identifying concerns. These checks ensured direct senior leadership understanding of problems, and increased accountability for wing managers who were subsequently tasked with implementing improvements. There was now a designated staff decency lead, and detailed cleaning schedules and cell compacts had been introduced.
- 2.21** A substantial and ongoing programme of refurbishment, painting and decorating was in place, including replacing lighting, showers, window grilles, flooring and some in-cell furnishings. A new prisoner 'handyman' team was a good initiative. These prisoners responded quickly to requests for basic repairs.
- 2.22** Communal areas were now reasonably clean, except for some stairwells. Outside areas were mostly free of litter and well maintained. In spite of this, and also regular visits from a pest control company, the vermin problem remained.
- 2.23** We considered that the prison had made good progress against this recommendation.

Concern: At the time of the last inspection, there had been a number of self-inflicted deaths. Despite repeated Prisons and Probation Ombudsman criticism, emergency cell call bells were still not answered promptly and there was no consistent oversight of this by managers.

Recommendation: Staff should respond to emergency cell bells within five minutes. Response times should be recorded electronically and monitored by managers. (2.12)

- 2.24** A bid to install an electronic system to monitor emergency cell bells in the prison had been unsuccessful. It was not therefore possible to establish if bells were routinely answered quickly.
- 2.25** Managers were carrying out regular covert checks, which showed that some bells were still not answered within five minutes. For example, one had taken 13 minutes, and another 11 minutes. The staff responsible in these cases had been reprimanded immediately.

- 2.26** Senior managers identified potential shortcomings in the integrity of the covert checking process, which involved wing managers making checks on their own wings. As a result, there were now plans for custodial managers to carry out checks on wings other than their own.
- 2.27** We considered that the prison had made insufficient progress against this recommendation.

Equality, diversity and faith

Concern: Equality work had declined greatly since the previous inspection, with no obvious ownership of this area by senior managers. Black and minority ethnic and Muslim prisoners responded negatively in a wide range of areas in our survey. Other minority groups were under-identified. There was no current equality monitoring or action to ensure equitable outcomes. There had been no meetings for many months to discuss equality. An action plan had been drawn up, but with no clear objectives, dates or allocation of responsibilities.

Recommendation: The distinct needs of prisoners with protected characteristics should be identified and systematically addressed. In particular, systematic equality monitoring data which cover all key areas of prison life should lead to thorough investigation and action where necessary. (S44)

- 2.28** Since the last inspection, a new 'equalities and foreign national officer' had been appointed. He had made positive strides in developing equality work, including the appointment and support of 10 equality and four foreign national peer representatives. He had also organised a prisoner survey about sexual orientation and gender identity, and set up two support forums – one for gay, bisexual or transgender prisoners and one for black and minority ethnic prisoners. Both forums had so far met once. Prisoners were now routinely asked about their sexual orientation on arrival, and four men had identified as gay to prison staff, in comparison with none at the time of the inspection in 2018.
- 2.29** The equalities and foreign national officer had developed a good referral system for prisoners with disabilities, to ensure that emergency evacuation plans were provided when needed. When the first night wing officer identified disabilities that might require an evacuation plan, the equalities and foreign national officer visited the prisoner, made an assessment, completed an evacuation plan and informed staff. There were currently 17 personal emergency evacuation plans in place, and the wing staff we asked were all aware of the prisoners concerned.
- 2.30** However, there was no local equality strategy, and a newly established equality meeting had yet to actually meet. The recent creation of senior management team equality champions had not yet resulted in any discernible initiatives. A new senior manager with responsibility for overseeing the development of equality work had just been appointed.
- 2.31** At the time of the previous inspection, there had been no use of equality monitoring data. This had improved but was still very limited. A monthly equality report provided a breakdown of the population, including by ethnicity, disability and religion, but there was no analysis of key areas of prison life, such as use of force, adjudications, and incentives and earned privileges levels. It was therefore not possible to identify areas of potential discrimination.
- 2.32** Well-attended prisoner equality representative meetings had recently started taking place. They provided a good forum for equality concerns to be discussed. For example, prisoner complaints that recategorisation decisions were racially biased had been brought to the meeting, and resulted in equality representatives being briefed by the offender management unit (OMU) on how the system worked, so that they could help to explain it to prisoners.

- 2.33** The equality action plan now in place had clear objectives, dates and allocation of responsibilities, but it was not sufficiently comprehensive, due to the lack of strategic oversight. For example, there was no plan to develop data monitoring.
- 2.34** We considered that the prison had made insufficient progress against this recommendation.

Purposeful activity

Concern: Staff shortages and insufficient activity spaces were having a severely detrimental impact on outcomes for prisoners. Prisoners were increasingly frustrated by a predictable but restrictive regime, inhibiting their ability to progress constructively in custody. They were locked up for significant periods of the day, particularly at weekends, and many were unable to work full time, or have regular exercise or association periods.

Recommendation: All prisoners should have the opportunity to participate in a full, purposeful and predictable regime, including association and exercise. Managers should ensure that the prison has sufficient staff and activity places to achieve this objective.
(S45)

- 2.35** The prison was now fully staffed, having recruited approximately 80 more officers, and there were now usually sufficient staff on the wings. A previously high sickness rate of over 22% in July 2017 had been much reduced, to an average of 7.56% in the year to date.
- 2.36** The amount of time out of cell was now better for most than at the time of the last inspection – particularly at the weekends, when prisoners could be out of their cells for around seven hours a day. Evening indoor association took place daily for all wings, and outside association was being introduced imminently on a rota basis. Prisoners had daily access to fresh air and exercise, and regime curtailment was now rare, with only two instances in recent months. On weekdays, prisoners could be out of their cells for up to nine hours. Despite this, during our morning and afternoon roll checks, around 40% of prisoners were locked behind their doors, which was too many.
- 2.37** Key operational, leadership and management roles concerned with the provision of activities had been vacant for extended periods after the last inspection. Leaders and managers had made slow progress in providing prisoners with well-planned and sequenced education, skills and work activities based on their individual and resettlement needs.
- 2.38** There remained a large shortfall of activity spaces (around 140), and nearly a fifth of the population were unemployed. However, there were plans, some of which were at an advanced stage, to introduce additional activity places – for example, in DHL, rag recycling, motor mechanics and multi-skills workshops. If implemented, these plans were likely to meet most of the current shortfall in places.
- 2.39** The process for allocating prisoners to activities had only recently been reviewed, and it was too early to assess the effectiveness of the revised procedure in ensuring that they could access progression pathways that met their resettlement needs. There had been a recent improvement in attendance at activities, but it was too soon to ascertain whether this improvement could be sustained.
- 2.40** We considered that the prison had made reasonable progress against this recommendation.

Concern: Enrolments on the available accredited courses had declined sharply. Allocation to activities took insufficient account of prisoners' needs and aspirations, and preparation for employment after release was inadequate. There were some good initiatives but they were not coordinated and many prisoners approaching release did not receive adequate support.

Recommendation: Prisoners should be enabled and encouraged to attend activities that meet their assessed education and resettlement needs, and receive coordinated support to enter employment or education and training on release. (S46)

2.41 Prison workshops provided good-quality, interesting work. Almost all prisoners who attended behaved well and developed good vocational and work-related skills. Managers had made a slow start to enabling prisoners to have these skills accredited. They had plans to address this issue, but they had yet to be implemented.

2.42 Managers had increased substantially the number of employers that the prison engaged with. A small number of prisoners had obtained employment, work experience or guaranteed interviews on release through these partnerships. A well-attended careers fair had taken place in 2018. This was an excellent initiative, with evidence of positive outcomes for some prisoners. We were pleased to see that it was to be repeated.

2.43 We considered that the prison had made good progress against this recommendation.

Concern: The prison did not have an effective policy to ensure that prisoners improved their English and mathematics skills. Many prisoners did not attend the education induction, so were allocated to work before their skills were assessed. About a third of those who were assessed were found to be below level 1 attainment. Despite this, few attended English and mathematics classes.

Recommendation: Managers should ensure that the functional skills of all prisoners are assessed on induction, and that prisoners with lower-level skills in English and mathematics are encouraged to improve these skills. (3.22)

2.44 The functional skills of all new arrivals were now assessed, and the large backlog of those waiting for inductions had been cleared. Managers had recently improved the identification of the need for, and offer of, English and mathematics provision for prisoners who had poor skills in these subjects. The functional skills manager agreed appropriate programmes, either in the education department or through outreach provision, with prisoners who were willing to engage.

2.45 We considered that the prison had made good progress against this recommendation.

Reducing risk, rehabilitation and progression

Concern: There was no whole-prison approach to reducing reoffending or to offender management. Many prisoners were very frustrated at the limited sentence progression opportunities. The OMU was severely understaffed, and about 40% of prisoners had no offender assessment system (OASys) assessment.

Recommendation: The prison should implement a whole-prison approach to offender management and reducing reoffending, which effectively supports prisoners to progress through their sentences. Prisoners should have up-to-date sentence plans and sufficient opportunities to meet their objectives, with support from dedicated staff. (S47)

- 2.46** Joint working between the OMU and the reducing reoffending department had improved. The recently published reducing reoffending strategy explained the role of the OMU. The strategy was informed by a prisoner survey but not an analysis of criminogenic need.
- 2.47** All prisoners now had a key worker. Case note entries showed that key workers had improved communication between offender supervisors and prisoners. We saw evidence of key workers talking to prisoners about upcoming categorisation reviews and parole hearings. OMU wing surgeries appeared to be a good means of increasing communication with prisoners and supporting a focus on progression. Several prisoners told us that they appreciated the work of the OMU.
- 2.48** The number of prisoners without an OASys assessment had greatly reduced since the last inspection. The backlog of assessments had been reduced from over 400 to 48, only four of which were the responsibility of the prison. However, a further 56 prisoners had not had their OASys assessment reviewed in the previous three years. The longest period without a review was six years.
- 2.49** The prison still lacked sufficient opportunities for prisoners to meet their sentence objectives. The range of accredited offending behaviour programmes and other interventions was similar to that at the time of the previous inspection. Despite many prisoners being convicted of offences involving domestic violence, the prison did not offer sufficient opportunities to address this need.
- 2.50** The OMU's human resources were better than at the time of the last inspection. There were now 10 offender supervisors, three probation officers and a senior probation officer, and there were plans to recruit more probation officers.
- 2.51** We considered that the prison had made good progress against this recommendation.

Concern: Attendance at the monthly interdepartmental risk management team meeting was poor. The cases of some high-risk prisoners had not been reviewed at the meeting. The quality of multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) F reports (information-sharing reports) varied considerably. Those completed by prison staff were not sufficiently good, and based on little knowledge.

Recommendation: The interdepartmental risk management team (IRMT) meeting should be attended by representatives from all key departments across the prison. All high-risk prisoners due for release should be reviewed through the IRMT and there should be consistent quality assurance to improve the usefulness of MAPPA F reports.
(4.22)

- 2.52** Attendance at the IRMT meetings was improving, and at the most recent meeting was reasonably good. A wide range of departments was represented, including residential supervising officers. Unlike at the time of the previous inspection, these meetings were now minuted. Discussions were reasonably detailed, and information sharing was good. We did not find any high-risk prisoners due for release who had not been reviewed at the IRMT. The quality of MAPPA F reports had improved and were reasonable. The senior probation officer or the head of the OMU signed off all reports. As at the time of the previous inspection, those written by probation officers were of better quality than those written by offender supervisors.
- 2.53** We considered that the prison had made good progress against this recommendation.

Good practice

- 2.54** We were pleased to note the introduction of a promising new initiative, known as the 'culture representatives'. These prisoners were appointed through User Voice (a charity which specialises in consultation with, and engagement of, offenders), well supported and part a team including a senior manager and staff from various departments. One of their key tasks was testing the effectiveness of changes that were being implemented. For example, they had examined a new induction process in detail, and their analysis from a prisoner perspective, including discussions with newly arrived prisoners, had led to improvements. They also fed back to staff on the general atmosphere and culture in the prison. The importance that staff attached to work done by these prisoners reflected the stated desire of managers to create a community prison ethos; it was commendable that most staff we spoke to were appreciative of the help that these prisoners gave them.

Section 3. Appendix

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