

Report on an independent review of progress at

HMP Onley

by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

11 – 13 November 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 (HMI 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 November 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 which recommendations we intend to follow up (usually no more than 15). 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.
- 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/inspections/hmp-onley-2/>

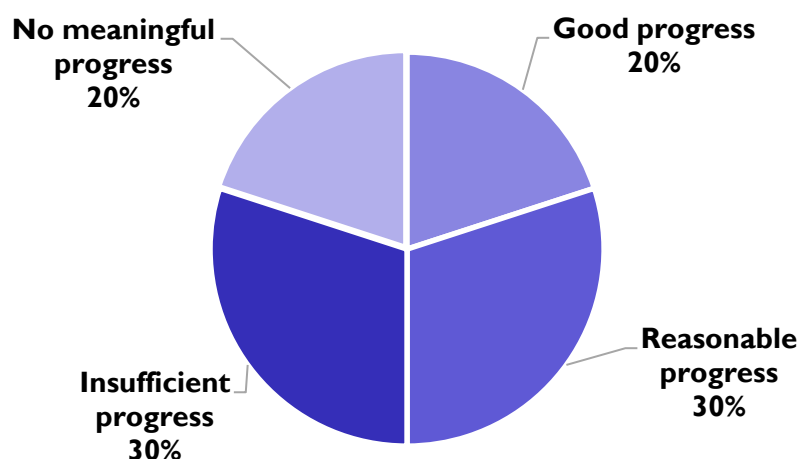
- A8 Each recommendation followed up by HMI Prisons during an IRP will be given one of four progress judgements:
- **No meaningful progress**
Managers had not yet formulated, resourced or begun to implement a realistic improvement plan for this recommendation.
 - **Insufficient progress**
Managers had begun to implement a realistic improvement strategy for this recommendation but the actions taken since our inspection had not yet resulted in sufficient evidence of progress (for example, better and embedded systems and processes).
 - **Reasonable progress**
Managers were implementing a realistic improvement strategy for this recommendation and there was evidence of progress (for example, better and embedded 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 When Ofsted attends an IRP its methodology will replicate the monitoring visits conducted in further education and skills provision.³ Each theme followed up by Ofsted will be given one of three progress judgements.
- **Insufficient progress**
Progress has been either slow or insubstantial or both, and the demonstrable impact on learners has been negligible.
 - **Reasonable progress**
Action taken by the provider is already having a beneficial impact on learners and improvements are sustainable and are based on the provider's thorough quality assurance procedures.
 - **Significant progress**
Progress has been rapid and is already having considerable beneficial impact on learners.
- A10 As part of this report we will also report on any good practice we find during our visit. Our definition of good practice is impressive practice that not only meets or exceeds our expectations, but could be followed by other similar establishments to achieve positive outcomes for prisoners.

³ Ofsted's approach to undertaking monitoring visits and the inspection methodology involved are set out in the *Further education and skills inspection handbook* at paragraphs 25 to 27, available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-education-and-skills-inspection-handbook>

Key findings

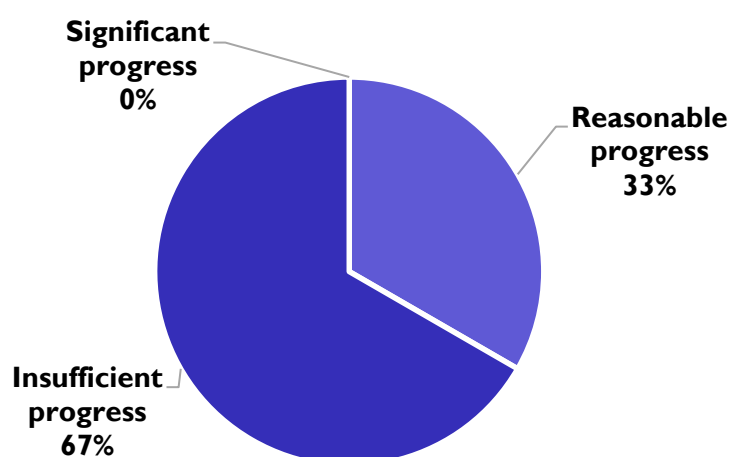
- S1 At this IRP visit, we followed up 10 of the 64 recommendations from our most recent inspection and Ofsted followed up three themes.
- S2 We judged that there was good progress in two recommendations, reasonable progress in three recommendations, insufficient progress in three recommendations and no meaningful progress in two recommendations. A summary of the judgements is as follows.

Figure 1: Progress on recommendations from 2018 inspection (n=10)



- S3 Ofsted judged that there was reasonable progress in one theme and insufficient progress in two themes.

Figure 2: Progress on Ofsted themes from 2018 inspection (n=3)⁴



⁴ This pie chart excludes any recommendations that were followed up as part of a theme within Ofsted's concurrent prison monitoring visit.

Figure 3: Judgements against HMI Prisons recommendations from the November 2018 inspection

| Recommendation | Judgement |
|--|------------------------|
| The first night environment should be welcoming and reassuring. New arrivals should be supported and informed by staff and peer workers. Cells should be clean and fully equipped. (S62) | Good progress |
| Robust strategic action should be taken to reduce levels of violence and make the prison safer. This should include an analysis of violent incidents, a local violence reduction strategy, with associated action plans, and improved violence management and victim support processes which are well known to all staff and implemented reliably. (S63) | Good progress |
| Security intelligence should be promptly and fully analysed, and effective action taken in response to the concerns identified. (S64) | Reasonable progress |
| The gang affiliations of prisoners should be better understood and shared, to provide effective management of these individuals and prevent violent behaviour. (1.49) | Reasonable progress |
| A comprehensive drug supply reduction strategy and action plan should be implemented and monitored for effectiveness. (S65) | No meaningful progress |
| Staff should be skilled and confident in confronting and controlling poor prisoner behaviour and should be supported in undertaking their role. (2.6) | Insufficient progress |
| Outside and internal communal areas should be kept clean. (2.14) | Insufficient progress |
| The prison should operate a full regime, including evening and weekend association. (3.11) | Insufficient progress |
| All prisoners should have an up-to-date OASys assessment and sentence plan. Contact between prisoners and offender supervisors should be regular and meaningful and should encourage and monitor progress against targets and actions to reduce offending. (S67) | No meaningful progress |
| The full extent of the need for offending behaviour work should be evidenced, and an appropriate range of interventions and places should be provided to meet this. (4.29) | Reasonable progress |

Figure 4: Judgements against Ofsted themes⁵ from the November 2018 inspection

| Ofsted theme | Judgement |
|---|-----------------------|
| What progress have leaders and managers made with their strategies to increase the number of activity spaces, ensuring that unemployment is reduced and that attendance at education, in particular at English and mathematics lessons and industry areas, is improved to a good level securing the engagement of a significant number of prisoners in purposeful activity? | Insufficient progress |

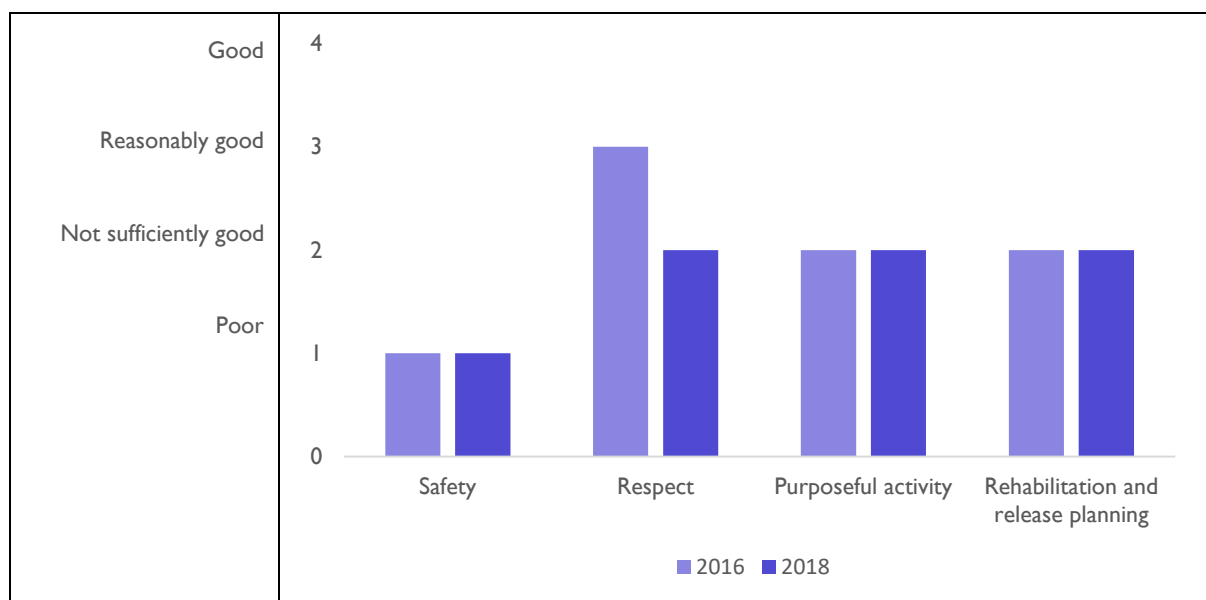
⁵ Ofsted's themes incorporate the key concerns at the previous inspection in respect of education, skills and work.

| | |
|--|-----------------------|
| What progress have leaders and managers made in improving the effectiveness of peer mentors in supporting prisoners' learning and skills development and ensuring that wing cleaners have the opportunity to develop employability skills and that these are recorded? | Reasonable progress |
| What progress have leaders and managers made in securing good outcomes for learners providing recognised qualifications in the activities that prisoners attend, decreasing the withdrawal rates in vocational courses and raising the achievement rates in English and mathematics courses? | Insufficient progress |

Section 1. Chief Inspector's summary

- I.1** At our inspection of HMP Onley in 2018 we made the following judgements about outcomes for prisoners.

Figure 5: HMP Onley healthy prison outcomes 2016 and 2018



- I.2** HMP Onley is a category C training prison holding around 740 prisoners. It is situated near Rugby in Warwickshire but some 80% of the prisoners held there come from the London area. About three-quarters are serving lengthy sentences of four years or more.
- I.3** At our inspection in November 2018, we reported our concerns about safety, where we judged (as we had at a previous inspection in 2016) outcomes for prisoners to be poor, our lowest assessment. Outcomes for prisoners were little better across our other healthy prison tests of respect, purposeful activity and rehabilitation and release planning, all of which we judged to be not sufficiently good. The lack of safety at Onley was all too obvious. From the moment of their arrival, prisoners were exposed to unnecessary risks and intimidation; levels of violence were very high and drugs were easily available. The prison was doing too little to understand the causes of violence or the impact of gang activity on the safety of prisoners. It failed to manage the risks, with an approach that was not only reactive, but slow. Underpinning nearly all our concerns were chronic staff shortages and inexperience, and staff lacked the confidence and skills to challenge poor prisoner behaviour. Prisoners had too little time unlocked and for the previous four years the prison had operated a restricted regime, meaning that there was no evening association and no scheduled exercise. Despite being a training prison, Onley had too few activity places and only half the population was engaged in anything purposeful. The prison was failing to assess prisoners' risks and needs effectively or provide opportunities for progression, despite holding a relatively high-risk, long-term population.
- I.4** At this independent review of progress (IRP), we followed up 10 recommendations and three Ofsted themes. We found that the prison's response had been good or reasonably good in half the recommendations that we reviewed and that it had made reasonable progress in one Ofsted theme. Some improvements had been achieved following an increase

in staff, but this also compounded some of the challenges of staff inexperience that the prison faced.

- I.5** In the area of safety, our area of greatest concern, the prison had made mostly good or reasonable progress. Prisoners were now better supported and informed during their early days at the prison and were better protected from predatory behaviour. The prison was managing its intelligence more effectively and had a much better understanding of the gang affiliations of prisoners in order to manage them more safely. We were concerned about the risks presented by using peer workers to gather valuable and sensitive information about gangs, and this needed to be addressed immediately. The prison had worked extremely hard to address violence. The causes of violence were now well understood and a range of actions had been taken to make the prison safer. Levels of violence against both staff and prisoners had reduced substantially since our inspection. Disappointingly, there had been no meaningful progress in tackling drug availability. A quarter of prisoners were testing positive for drugs, more than at the 2018 inspection.
- I.6** Relationships between staff and prisoners had not improved overall. Increased staffing levels meant that staff supervision was often better, but about 60% of officers had less than 12 months' experience and did not have the skills and confidence to challenge poor behaviour or even respond to very basic requests from prisoners. Action to improve the external and communal areas of the prison had been minimal. Communal areas were still grubby, rats were still prevalent and showers were in a very poor state.
- I.7** With the arrival of new staff, a new fuller regime had been introduced, allowing for greater time unlocked, but this regime remained beset by cancellations and was not reliably delivered. This was compounded by a lack of education, work and training places and poor attendance, leaving more than a third of prisoners locked up during the working day, which is particularly unacceptable in a training prison. The prison had made insufficient progress in improving prisoners' access to recognised qualifications and in increasing the proportion of prisoners who achieved qualifications that they had started, both of which remained too low.
- I.8** No meaningful progress had been made in addressing the OASys backlog or providing prisoners with regular, purposeful contact with their offender supervisor. This meant that many prisoners (most of whom were serving long sentences) struggled to progress. Some reasonable progress had been made in establishing and delivering a suitable range of interventions.
- I.9** At this IRP, we found that progress was very mixed. It was clear the prison had focused on safety as a main concern and its success in reducing levels of violence should be commended. However, the lack of attention to tackling drugs was inexplicable. The lack of progress in improving education, work and skills outcomes for prisoners, given that Onley is a training prison, is a concern. There are other considerable challenges ahead. The prison has been running with staff shortages for many years. The impact this has had on staff and prisoners has been immense, and while there have been some improvements, staff shortages continue to blight progress. If Onley is to progress further, it needs support to recruit and retain its new staff, and ensure they are skilled and confident in their role.

Peter Clarke CVO OBE QPM
HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

November 2019

Section 2. Progress against the key concerns and recommendations and Ofsted themes

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: Too many prisoners felt unsafe on their first night at the establishment. New arrivals were not supported by staff or peer workers on the induction wing and faced predation from other prisoners. First night cells were often dirty, not fully equipped and sometimes not fit for habitation.

Main recommendation: The first night environment should be welcoming and reassuring. New arrivals should be supported and informed by staff and peer workers. Cells should be clean and fully equipped. (S62)

- 2.1 The induction unit (H wing) was now more ordered. Staff engaged with new arrivals to ensure that their practical and welfare needs were met, and prisoners were seen individually in a new, welcoming, well-resourced induction room. Prisoners were better supervised, providing them with greater protection from predatory behaviour.
- 2.2 Induction staff were friendly, helpful and efficient and were now more informed about early days processes for prisoners. Additional welfare checks on new arrivals took place during the night.
- 2.3 First night cells were now clean, prepared and fully equipped. However, as at the most recent inspection, not all first night cells were used exclusively for new receptions and not all prisoners could be located on the induction unit on arrival.
- 2.4 Since April 2019, peer-led induction had been implemented and peer mentors were used well to help prisoners settle in. They delivered a useful and interactive overview of relevant information about daily life during the initial stage of the induction process, usually on the morning after arrival. However, more oversight by staff was required to maintain and secure this high quality, appropriate delivery. Attendance was not tracked and we were not confident that all prisoners received this overview. The recently introduced induction booklet was comprehensive and helpful.
- 2.5 Prisoners spoke positively about their early days experience.
- 2.6 We considered that the prison had made good progress against this recommendation.

Managing behaviour

Concern: Too many prisoners felt unsafe. Levels of violence remained high and were much higher than in similar prisons. Despite this, the strategic management of safety was weak and there was little analysis of violent incidents or action taken to make the prison safer. Perpetrator and victim management processes were not fully implemented.

Main recommendation: Robust strategic action should be taken to reduce levels of violence and make the prison safer. This should include an analysis of violent incidents, a local violence reduction strategy, with associated action plans, and improved violence management and victim support processes which are well known to all staff and implemented reliably. (S63)

- 2.7 Levels of violence, including serious assaults against both staff and prisoners, had fallen dramatically since the inspection and were now similar to most other category C prisons. A substantial amount of work had been undertaken to understand the factors behind the high levels of violence that we found at the inspection. This included wide consultation with prisoners and staff, in-depth analysis of available violence related data and a review of the demographics of the population.
- 2.8 A comprehensive safety strategy had been introduced in April 2019 which reflected on the findings of the investigative work and outlined the processes to be employed to address and manage violence. An associated action plan considered new and emerging threats and was reviewed and updated each month.
- 2.9 The ongoing reporting of incidents of violence was poor. In only half the reported incidents were the causes of violence recorded. This was a significant gap in the prison's continuing understanding of violence and emerging trends.
- 2.10 Processes to manage the perpetrators of violence had been introduced across the prison but too few staff could demonstrate their understanding of the process or how they could contribute.
- 2.11 A new policy had very recently been published which outlined procedures for managing and supporting the victims of violence and antisocial behaviour. This had yet to be widely adopted.
- 2.12 We considered that the prison had made good progress against this recommendation.

Security

Concern: Security intelligence was not fully analysed promptly, to determine the action to be taken. The backlog of analysis of intelligence reports risked missing opportunities to detect and disrupt a range of issues, including violence and the supply of drugs.

Main recommendation: Security intelligence should be promptly and fully analysed, and effective action taken in response to the concerns identified. (S64)

- 2.13 The backlog of intelligence reports had peaked earlier in the year at more than 700. This posed a significant threat to the safety and stability of the prison as responses to emerging threats were at best delayed but potentially not addressed at all.
- 2.14 Additional resources had been allocated to address the backlog and an effective triage system had been introduced to ensure that the most serious threats were identified quickly and prioritised.
- 2.15 All intelligence reports were assessed each day and the most serious were presented to senior managers for action. The backlog had reduced to just 30 which were relatively low-risk issues. The longest delay was 10 days.

2.16 Once analysed, many of the intelligence reports submitted prompted requests from security for searches or suspicion drug tests. The response to these requests was limited and records that we reviewed indicated that only about two-thirds of searches requested over the past three months had been completed. Almost no suspicion drug tests had been undertaken.

2.17 We considered that the prison had made reasonable progress against this recommendation.

Concern: About 80% of the population came from the London area, and prison staff continued to suspect that many violent incidents had arisen from gang-related conflict in prisoners' communities or in previous prisons. The prison did not obtain adequate information about the gang affiliations of prisoners received from London but had initiated interviews with new arrivals about their associations. This was not always shared with security staff. Very little was done to understand, analyse and map prisoners' affiliations and potential conflicts, and to inform their safe management.

Recommendation: The gang affiliations of prisoners should be better understood and shared, to provide effective management of these individuals and prevent violent behaviour. (1.49)

2.18 A database of known gang affiliations and associated activity was maintained to gain an understanding of the likely gang related demographic of the population. This was informed by a wide range of external and internal sources and was linked to other electronic systems which enabled regular updates. This database was accessible to all staff and was used to inform the allocation of prisoners to residential units and to activities. Wing staff we spoke to were aware of the database and could explain how they would use it to try to manage potential conflicts.

2.19 Joint working between key departments in the prison was much improved and contributed to the gathering of intelligence and the management of potential risks. Available intelligence from originating prisons was reviewed before prisoners arrived and induction staff carried out initial gang affiliation screening interviews.

2.20 Trained peer workers met newly arrived prisoners to discuss gang related issues and to try to reassure them of their safety when they reached the residential units. These peer workers gathered valuable information which new prisoners were unlikely to share with staff. This had proved to be useful, but we were concerned about the inherent risks of prisoners having access to potentially sensitive and high-risk information. These risks needed to be addressed immediately.

2.21 We considered that the prison had made reasonable progress against this recommendation.

Concern: Drugs, particularly PS⁶, were easily available, and in our survey more than half the prisoners said that it was easy to get illegal drugs. Despite this, the supply reduction strategy did not explicitly address NPS and there was no clear, regularly reviewed action plan.

Main recommendation: A comprehensive drug supply reduction strategy and action plan should be implemented and monitored for effectiveness. (S65)

2.22 A new supply reduction strategy had been introduced following the inspection. The strategy was largely generic and did not address the specific issues at Onley. Despite the continued (although reduced) availability of synthetic drugs, it did not explicitly address NPS. The action

⁶ Psychoactive substances are either naturally occurring, semi-synthetic or fully synthetic compounds. When taken they affect thought processes or individuals' emotional state. In prisons, these substances are commonly referred to as 'spice'. For more information see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/psychoactive-substances-in-prisons#what-are-psychoactive-substances>.

plan was similarly generic and the actions did not reflect current and emerging threats nor were they routinely monitored to ensure continued relevance or effectiveness.

- 2.23** The availability of drugs remained a serious concern. The random drug testing positive rate had increased since the inspection and had exceeded 30% on a few occasions, with an average of more than 25% over the previous six months. This rate was twice the average for similar prisons and the NPS proportion was four times greater.
- 2.24** We considered that the prison had made no meaningful progress against this recommendation.

Staff-prisoner relationships

Concern: The prison was managing a challenging and dynamic mix of prisoners with an inexperienced staff group. We saw many examples of poor prisoner behaviour going unchallenged. Staff were often stretched and supervision of some of the residential areas, including landings and serveries, was inadequate. The failure of staff over previous months to discharge basic responsibilities, such as unlocking prisoners and completing roll counts on time, had clearly had an adverse impact on relationships.

Recommendation: Staff should be skilled and confident in confronting and controlling poor prisoner behaviour and should be supported in undertaking their role. (2.6)

- 2.25** The prison continued to manage a challenging mix of prisoners with an inexperienced staff group. About 60% of officers, more than double the number at the time of the inspection, had less than 12 months' experience. Overall staffing levels had increased but there were still too many vacancies. Staff shortages, coupled with lack of experience, continued to present challenges in many aspects of prison life and caused considerable frustration to many prisoners in getting a response to basic requests.
- 2.26** A training needs analysis had been undertaken and plans had recently been developed to increase staff engagement, retention and training opportunities. Two mentors had very recently been recruited to support new staff. However, this initiative was in its infancy and staff had not yet developed the necessary skills and confidence to manage the dynamic mix of prisoners.
- 2.27** Line management support for residential staff had increased with the introduction of custodial managers on each wing. Managers were more available to support and develop new officers, but this had yet to make an impact.
- 2.28** Supervision of prisoners at critical times (such as meal times) had improved since the inspection with the presence of more staff. However, we continued to observe some low-level poor behaviour going unchallenged, and staff too often congregating in wing offices, leaving prisoners unsupervised.
- 2.29** We considered that the prison had made insufficient progress against this recommendation.

Living conditions

Concern: Many outside areas were consistently littered with rubbish thrown from cell windows. Internal communal areas, particularly on the older wings, were unkempt and dirty. A number of wings had locked off rooms, some of which were empty, and others were filled with broken furniture and other rubbish. There were problems with rats, and recent attempts to control the infestation

had left some drying in wall cavities and vents, leaving an intolerable smell in some areas. Some communal showers were poorly screened, dirty, mouldy and in very poor condition.

Recommendation: Outside and internal communal areas should be kept clean. (2.14)

- 2.30** There remained an almost constant stream of litter from cell windows. Regular efforts were made to keep outside areas clean and prevent the long-term build-up of rubbish that we witnessed at the inspection.
- 2.31** Communal areas were generally much tidier than at the inspection but, despite the many cleaners, most areas remained grubby. Cleaning was mostly superficial and landings and stairways were too often dirty. When we saw prisoners painting on the wings, surfaces had not been prepared, accumulated dirt was being painted over and paint was dripping on the already poor flooring. Most wings still had locked off rooms filled with broken furniture and rubbish (see Appendix II).
- 2.32** Showers were being refurbished on two of the older wings but the condition of others across the prison was poor (see Appendix II). Many had missing screening or doors, ceilings were mouldy with flaking paint and far too many were just dirty, with accumulated deposits on walls.
- 2.33** We considered that the prison had made insufficient progress against this recommendation.

Time out of cell

Concern: As a result of chronic staff shortages, a restricted regime had been in place for more than four years which continued to reduce the time unlocked, particularly in the evenings and at weekends. Daily problems in reconciling the prison roll continued. There was still no evening association. In our roll checks, we found about 39% of prisoners locked in cells, which was far too high for a training prison.

Recommendation: The prison should operate a full regime, including evening and weekend association. (3.11)

- 2.34** There had been active and continuing staff recruitment since the last inspection. More officers were in post (138 compared to 108), but staff retention and sickness were problematic, and the prison was still not at its full officer complement of 148. Staff shortfalls were only partly mitigated by overtime and detached duty staff. A new regime introduced in April 2019 had provided evening and weekend association, but continuing staff shortages prevented reliable delivery. During the previous two months, curtailments to association had occurred most days on some wings.
- 2.35** When a full regime was operating, time unlocked had improved to about 10 hours for prisoners engaged in full-time activities, but for unemployed prisoners it was only about three hours.
- 2.36** Prisoners could access outdoor exercise yards at the weekend and for two hours during evening association, as long as association was not cancelled.
- 2.37** Delays in reconciling the prison roll had reduced markedly and prisoners were mostly unlocked on time. However, lengthy queues for morning medication resulted in some delays for prisoners attending education and work.

- 2.38** In our roll checks we found 33% of prisoners locked in their cells, a reduction from 39% at the last inspection, but still too high for a training prison.
- 2.39** We considered that the prison had made insufficient progress against this recommendation.

Education, skills and work⁷

Theme 1: What progress have leaders and managers made with their strategies to increase the number of activity spaces, ensuring that unemployment is reduced and that attendance at education, in particular at English and mathematics lessons and industry areas, is improved to a good level securing the engagement of a significant number of prisoners in purposeful activity?

- 2.40** Since the inspection in November 2018, leaders had struggled to provide a stable and reliable regime for the population due to staffing levels. In April 2019, there had been a substantial reduction in the number of available activity spaces to engage prisoners in purposeful activity. Attendance at purposeful activity had also declined to an unacceptably low level.
- 2.41** At the time of this review, there were still not enough activity spaces to ensure that all prisoners were engaged in purposeful activity. Although the proportion of prisoners who were unemployed had declined slightly since the inspection, overall it was still too high at around 100 prisoners.
- 2.42** The proportion of prisoners who were attending purposeful activity had improved slightly to around 60% of the population, from the very low starting point of about 50%. However, the proportion, including those attending English, mathematics and industry areas remained too low and too many prisoners did not develop the necessary employment-related skills that they needed, such as attending work on time.
- 2.43** Managers had recently introduced a new prisoner pay policy which offered heavy incentives to attend education and a number of work areas. Prisoners were also able to earn bonuses for productivity and the achievement of English and mathematics qualifications. There were early signs that this had started to improve attendance in these areas, but it was too early to judge its full impact.
- 2.44** Managers' oversight of the allocations process had improved. Waiting lists for the most popular training and work opportunities were now shorter and better managed. However, managers needed to ensure that all the available activity places were used.
- 2.45** Ofsted considered that the prison had made insufficient progress against this theme.

Theme 2: What progress have leaders and managers made in improving the effectiveness of peer mentors in supporting prisoners' learning and skills development and ensuring that wing cleaners have the opportunity to develop employability skills and that these are recorded?

- 2.46** Peer mentors were effective across education, vocational training and work. In prison workshops, they supported fellow prisoners well to meet quality standards and trained new prisoners who had been allocated to specific work areas so that they understood the role that they were expected to fulfil. In education and vocational training, mentors worked

⁷ Ofsted's thematic approach reflects the monitoring visit methodology used for further education and skills providers. The themes set out the main areas for improvement in the last inspection report.

closely with teaching staff to ensure that prisoners received effective support to deepen their knowledge and skills in the subjects that they studied.

- 2.47** A peer mentoring policy had been recently introduced which included a clear job description for prisoners allocated as peer mentors. Qualifications for peer mentors had also been introduced. The completion of qualifications had helped peer mentors to develop the knowledge and skills they needed to be highly effective mentors. However, at the time of this review, only a small number of peer mentors had benefited from the training and qualifications.
- 2.48** Since the inspection, the number of wing workers had been increased to address some of the decency recommendations from the wider prison report. Formal training for wing cleaners had been very recently introduced, although only a few had received it and it was too early to assess the impact.
- 2.49** There was no system for recording the employment-related skills that wing cleaners had developed unless they were engaged in formal training.
- 2.50** Ofsted considered that the prison had made reasonable progress against this theme.

Theme 3: What progress have leaders and managers made in securing good outcomes for learners by providing recognised qualifications in the activities that prisoners attend, decreasing the withdrawal rates in vocational courses and raising the achievement rates in English and mathematics courses?

- 2.51** At the time of this visit, only about a fifth of prisoners were allocated to activities that gave them the opportunity to work towards a nationally recognised qualification which was fewer than at the inspection. Managers had plans to introduce more qualifications in a range of prison work areas, but prisoners' access to nationally recognised qualifications was still too limited.
- 2.52** In recent months, the proportion of prisoners who achieved qualifications in vocational training had increased slightly but needed to improve further to be considered good.
- 2.53** Prison leaders had undertaken careful analysis of why prisoners left education and training courses without achieving a qualification. They worked closely with their subcontractors to understand better the reasons why prisoners withdrew from courses. However, despite this improved understanding, leaders and managers had failed to increase sufficiently the proportion of prisoners who completed their courses.
- 2.54** Information shared by the prison indicated that a large proportion of prisoners who completed their course achieved their qualifications. However, too many prisoners made slower than expected progress towards their qualifications and continued in learning beyond their planned end date.
- 2.55** The proportion of prisoners who achieved English and mathematics qualifications was particularly low and showed no signs of sustained improvement. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics was not good enough. Too many staff were not suitably qualified for the subjects that they taught. Managers' use of performance management to tackle underperforming teachers in these areas had improved but had been unable to improve the quality of teaching quickly enough.
- 2.56** Ofsted considered that the prison had made insufficient progress against this theme.

Reducing risk, rehabilitation and progression

Concern: Offender supervisors did not review the OASys assessment and sentence plan often enough and contact was limited, which failed to motivate prisoners consistently towards progression.

Main recommendation: All prisoners should have an up-to-date OASys assessment and sentence plan. Contact between prisoners and offender supervisors should be regular and meaningful and should encourage and monitor progress against targets and actions to reduce offending. (S67)

- 2.57 Too many prisoners, about half, still arrived at Onley with no initial OASys assessment.
- 2.58 Despite concerted efforts by the offender management unit (OMU) to reduce the backlog, about 42% of prisoners did not have an up-to-date assessment of their risk and needs. About 15% of these did not have an initial OASys and about 27% of prisoners had not had a review in the last 12 months. This affected the ability of the prison to deliver the right interventions for prisoners to progress and reduce their risk.
- 2.59 Records showed that levels of contact with offender supervisors remained infrequent and largely occasioned by milestones and events such as recategorisation reviews and Parole Board hearings.
- 2.60 It was not uncommon for several months, if not more than a year, to pass with no contact between an offender supervisor and a prisoner. Most prisoners were serving long sentences and the lack of proactive contact and structured one-to-one interventions meant that their sentence planning and progression was not effectively driven or monitored.
- 2.61 The very recent introduction of fortnightly OMU wing surgeries was positive.
- 2.62 We considered that the prison had made no meaningful progress against this recommendation.

Concern: A full needs analysis had not been completed to ensure that the offending behaviour programmes met the needs of prisoners. The offending behaviour needs of some prisoners were not being addressed and progress was delayed for some while they waited for courses to become available. Some courses were very poorly attended.

Recommendation: The full extent of the need for offending behaviour work should be evidenced, and an appropriate range of interventions and places should be provided to meet this. (4.29)

- 2.63 A useful needs analysis had been undertaken to start to understand the needs of the population and identify the range of offending behaviour work needed. The analysis used criminogenic and demographic data from a number of sources including P-Nomis (database used in prisons for the management of prisoners) and OASys. However, the lack of up-to-date and complete OASys assessments compromised the prison's understanding of the full extent of need and only about 20% of the population were included in the analysis.
- 2.64 The analysis had identified a prevalence of prisoners who would benefit from addressing their gang related offending. A business case had recently been submitted for resources to deliver Identity Matters, an accredited treatment programme for prisoners involved in gang affiliation.

- 2.65** A small proportion of prisoners were identified as requiring high intensity general offending interventions (Kaizen). There were plans to transfer these prisoners to other prisons to access this programme.
- 2.66** The two accredited offending behaviour programmes delivered - the thinking skills programme (TSP) and Resolve (a moderate-intensity programme to reduce violence) - remained appropriate. There were more places on these courses than at the inspection, with 70 available for the current year. However, waiting lists for Resolve were too long and some prisoners would leave Onley with their treatment needs unmet.
- 2.67** We considered that the prison had made reasonable progress against this recommendation.

Section 3. Appendix

Appendix I: Review team

Martin Lomas
Alison Perry
Jade Richards
Paul Rowlands
Jonathan Tickner
Ken Merry
Mary Devane

Deputy Chief Inspector
Team leader
Inspector
Inspector
Inspector
Lead Ofsted inspector
Ofsted inspector

Appendix II. Photographs



A room on A wing



Showers on E wing