



Report on an independent review of progress at

HMP Forest Bank

by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

9–11 January 2023



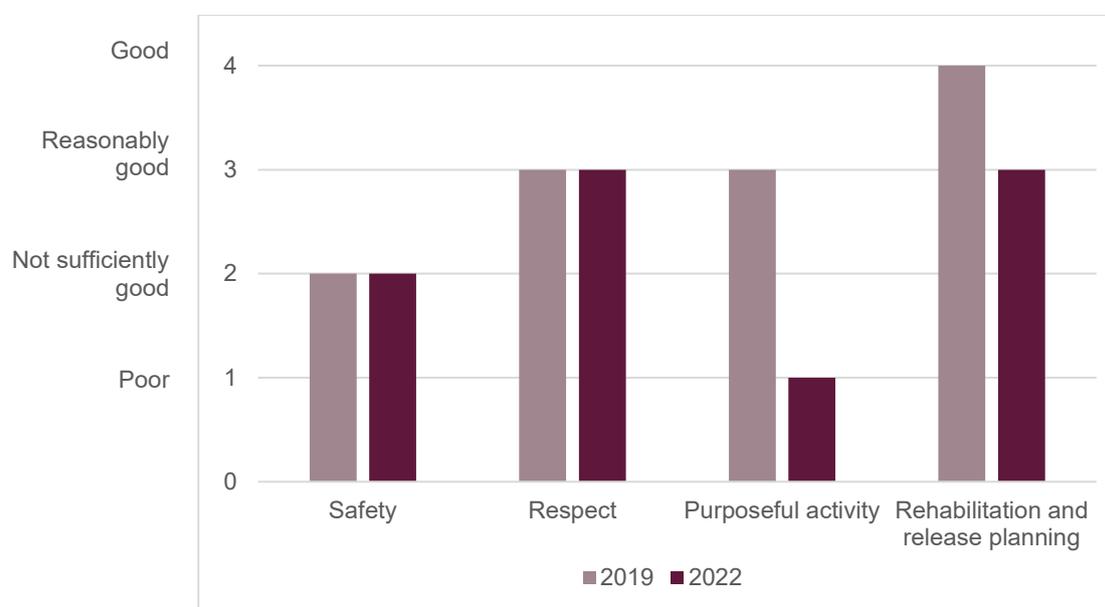
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Section 1 Chief Inspector's summary

- 1.1 HMP Forest Bank is a privately managed category B prison, located in Manchester, that has been operated by Sodexo for well over 20 years. Currently designated as a reception prison, it is a large, complex establishment with a transient population, holding up to 1,460 remand and sentenced adult men and young adults. It opened in 2000 as a local prison serving the courts of Greater Manchester. Accommodation was initially provided over six residential units, with a further two added in 2009.
- 1.2 At our previous inspections of HMP Forest Bank, in 2019 and 2022, we made the following judgements about outcomes for prisoners.

Figure 1: HMP Forest Bank healthy prison outcomes in 2019 and 2022



- 1.3 In February 2022, we identified deterioration in two of our healthy prison tests, purposeful activity, and rehabilitation and release planning. We judged the prison regime to be poor, with prisoners experiencing very limited time out of cell (see Glossary). Ofsted assessed the learning and skills provision as 'inadequate'. Nearly a quarter of all officers had less than a year's experience and the limited unlock restricted the development of meaningful relationships. We considered that more needed to be done to support newly received prisoners, and to combat the ingress of drugs and other illicit items, which was a major challenge and often linked to the high levels of violence – among the highest when compared to similar prisons.
- 1.4 Shortly before our February inspection, HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) had issued Sodexo with a formal rectification notice because of concerns about the safety of prisoners and the conditions in which they were held. The provider had responded promptly, recruiting

a new director, and decisive action had seen improvements in living conditions, with a renewed focus on improving safety.

- 1.5 At this independent review of progress (IRP), we assessed progress against 12 recommendations, including four themes identified by Ofsted. There had been good or reasonable progress in five of the recommendations that we examined, although there remained insufficient or no meaningful progress against three. Ofsted found that there had been insufficient progress in all four themes reviewed.
- 1.6 Since the inspection, there had been further leadership changes, with an experienced Sodexo lead appointed as director in September 2022. The director had created a clear vision to drive improvements at the establishment, placing leaders (see Glossary) in a good position to demonstrate progress at the time of this IRP.
- 1.7 Improvements had been made to early days processes and there had been substantial work to address the problem of illicit items, leading to improvements in safety. Nonetheless, mandatory drug testing results and associated violence data indicated that there remained much still to do.
- 1.8 Robust systems had been introduced to monitor time out of cell, which was now better than we usually see in similar prisons, and there had been notable improvements in access to visits, PE and the library. While leaders had developed arrangements and interventions to support new staff, officers we spoke to suggested that this help was not as effective as leaders believed. Leaders were due to introduce a new core day to improve consistency for staff and prisoners.
- 1.9 The prison reconfiguration model was still not working well, and an increased remand population was not being provided with the support it required. Similarly, despite improvements to time out of cell, oversight and evaluation of teaching, learning and training in vocational areas and workshops remained weak. In addition, the quality of education and work provided to prisoners was still not aligned sufficiently to meet their needs for future employment and progression. However, a senior lead to oversee learning had been appointed shortly before our visit and Ofsted had some confidence that, with clear direction, these areas could be improved.

Charlie Taylor

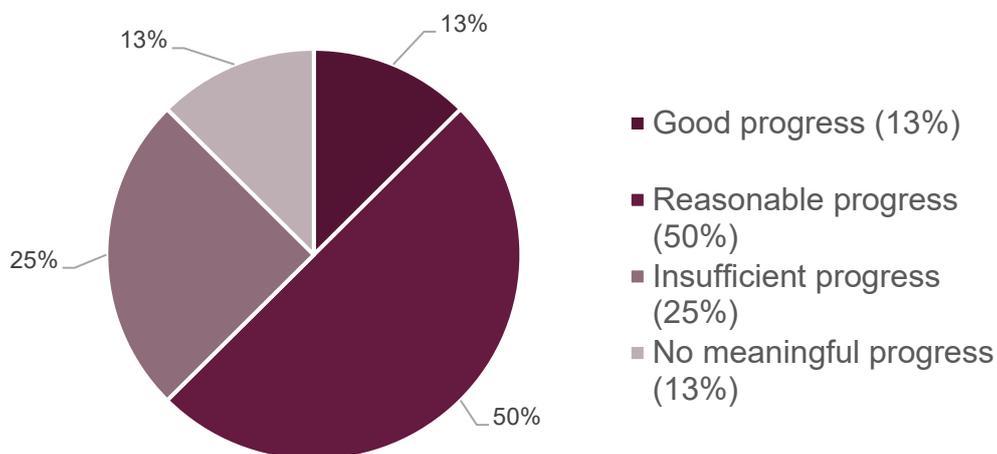
HM Chief Inspector of Prisons
January 2023

Section 2 Key findings

- 2.1 At this IRP visit, we followed up eight recommendations from our most recent inspection in February 2022 and Ofsted followed up four themes based on their latest inspection.
- 2.2 HMI Prisons judged that there was good progress in one recommendation, reasonable progress in four recommendations, insufficient progress in two recommendations and no meaningful progress in one recommendation.

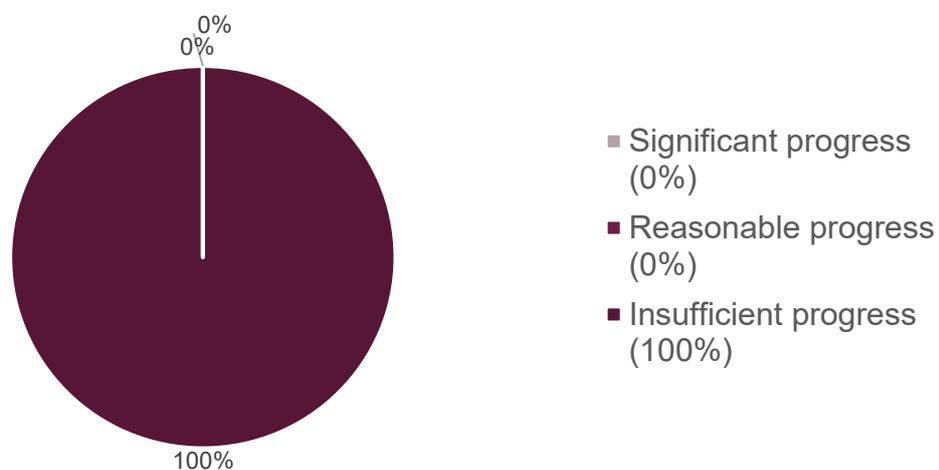
Figure 2: Progress on HMI Prisons recommendations from February 2022 inspection (n=8)

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



- 2.3 Ofsted judged that there was insufficient progress in all four themes.

Figure 3: Progress on Ofsted themes from February 2022 inspection/progress monitoring visit (n=4).



Notable positive practice

- 2.4 We define notable positive practice as innovative work or practice that leads to particularly good outcomes from which other establishments may be able to learn. Inspectors look for evidence of good outcomes for prisoners; original, creative or particularly effective approaches to problem-solving or achieving the desired goal; and how other establishments could learn from or replicate the practice.
- 2.5 Inspectors found one example of notable positive practice during this independent review of progress.
- 2.6 The 'StreetFit' health and well-being fitness suite encouraged positive behaviour and motivated prisoners. (See paragraph 3.38)

Section 3 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 2022. The reference numbers at the end of each recommendation refer to the paragraph location in the full inspection report.

Early days in custody

Concern: Early days processes did not always keep prisoners supported or informed. Holding rooms in reception lacked useful information, prisoners' safety interviews were not held in private, and staff did not always fully explore the risks during their early days. Vulnerable prisoners were held alongside the general population and felt significantly less safe on their first night. Prisoners could not have a shower on their first night. There was very little time out of cell for those in the induction unit and most prisoners did not get a full induction. As a result, prisoners too often felt unprepared for prison life.

Recommendation: All prisoners should feel safe on their first night. Support in the first few days should prepare new arrivals for prison life and they should receive sufficient time out of cell. (1.37)

- 3.1 Although reception was extremely busy, staff put prisoners at ease and completed processes calmly and efficiently. First night safety interviews were now held confidentially. Noticeboards and television screens had been installed in holding rooms, displaying useful information. All new arrivals were met by Insiders (prisoners who introduce new arrivals to prison life), who put them at ease and explained what to expect following their arrival at the prison.
- 3.2 Most new prisoners were initially located on E1, the early days in custody unit (EDiC), while those also needing support for substance misuse were located on H1. Both units were clean and bright. Prisoners arriving before 7pm could speak to an Insider on the wing and have a shower that night, while the rest could do so the following morning.



Induction room used for new arrivals on induction unit

- 3.3 Most prisoners stayed on the EDiC unit for between three and five days, and daily time out of cell (see Glossary) for these men was poor, at around 2.5 hours. However, they now received a useful and interactive induction presentation, co-hosted by an Insider and an officer.
- 3.4 Vulnerable prisoners were still held with other prisoners on the EDiC unit, and often for much longer periods because of a lack of spaces for these prisoners elsewhere in the prison. Their time out of cell remained worse than that of other new arrivals, at around just two hours per day.
- 3.5 An exit survey for those leaving the EDiC unit had been launched. This was a promising initiative, but so far very few prisoners had completed it and no learning had yet been drawn from it.
- 3.6 We considered that the prison had made reasonable progress against this recommendation.

Managing behaviour

Concern: Levels of violence remained very high but interventions to manage perpetrators and support victims were too limited. The adjudication system was undermined by the large number of cases that had not been concluded, which meant that some poor and antisocial behaviour went unpunished. The incentives scheme focused too much on punitive measures rather than promoting good behaviour.

Recommendation: Violence should be reduced using a range of effective interventions that challenge perpetrators and support victims. Good behaviour should be promoted and those who break the rules should be held to account. (1.38)

- 3.7 Levels of recorded violence had reduced by about 15% for the six-month period before the IRP, compared with the same period before the inspection. While the number of assaults, both on prisoners and staff, had reduced, it continued to be much higher than in similar prisons and there had been an almost 50% increase in serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults.
- 3.8 The prison understood the root causes of violence to be related to drugs and associated debt, organised crime, gangs and young prisoners, and was taking steps to address these challenges.
- 3.9 A range of interventions had been implemented, including the CTEV (Challenging Thinking Ending Violence) course, which was well supported by the prison's programmes team and very popular with prisoners. F1 wing had been identified as what was referred to as a 'fresh start' wing, where the perpetrators of violence were located and supported to address their antisocial behaviour before reintegrating back to other residential units. F2 had, in addition, been designated as an 'enhanced only' wing, providing an improved regime with additional privileges, to incentivise positive behaviour further. While these interventions showed promise, they were also new, so it was too soon to fully assess their effectiveness.
- 3.10 Data supported the prison's view that younger prisoners were disproportionately represented in violence and so A1 wing had been allocated as a younger prisoner unit, with consideration given to the needs of younger men and a tailored regime better to meet their needs.
- 3.11 All incidents of violence were investigated and referrals were made for consideration of a challenge, support and intervention plan (CSIP; see Glossary) where appropriate. Support for victims was also available using the CSIP process. The large backlog of adjudications we found at the inspection had been vastly reduced, but there was recent evidence that this was beginning to increase again.
- 3.12 Peer supporters were used well working alongside staff to help address antisocial behaviour and mediation was routinely conducted by trained staff and prisoners to resolve conflicts wherever possible. All new

arrivals spent time with the peer workers, who explained how mediation was available should the need arise, and to explain the prison's approach to addressing violent behaviour.

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

Security

Concern: Illicit items such as mobile phones and drugs had been easily available in the prison and had fuelled debt and associated violence. Steps had been taken to stem the flow but some of them, such as escorting prisoners to exercise yards away from their units were time consuming and possibly hard to sustain in the long term. Intelligence reports were processed swiftly, but not all requested cell searches were undertaken.

Recommendation: Leaders should take robust and sustainable action to reduce the availability of illicit items, including acting on all intelligence received. (1.39)

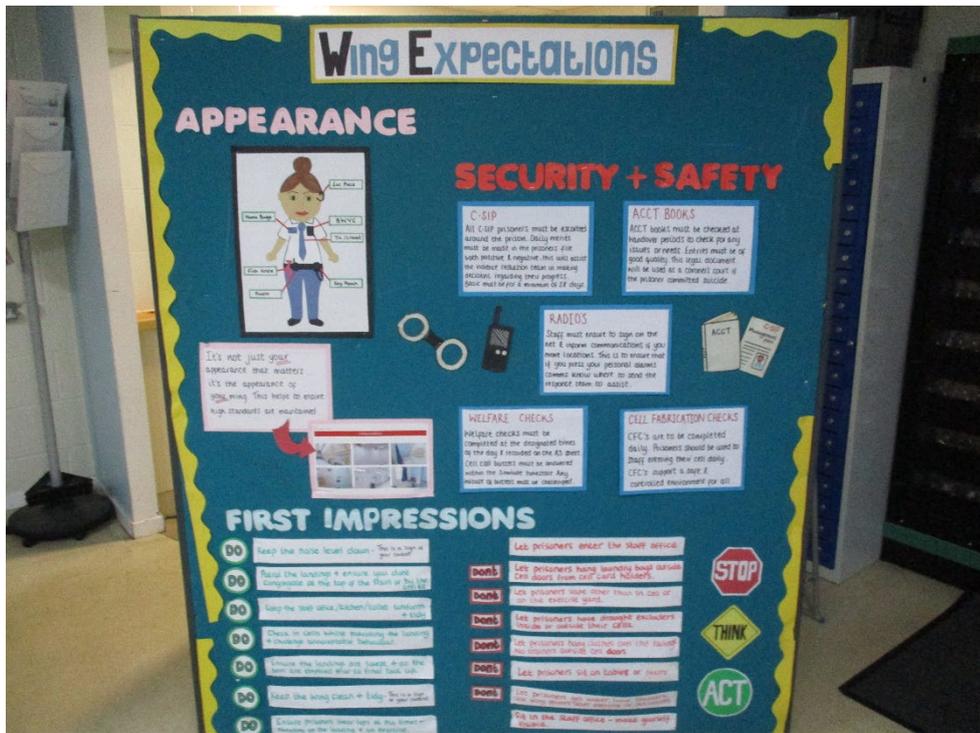
- 3.14 There had been a substantial reduction in the availability of drugs, weapons and mobile phones since the inspection and measures to disrupt and repel the large number of items thrown over the prison walls had been mostly effective. However, the threat posed by the ingress of drugs remained and the mandatory drug testing failure rate was among the highest for this type of prison, at over 30% for the previous six months, with cannabis being the prevalent drug of choice. Leaders (see Glossary) were aware of this threat and had prioritised drug testing to challenge and support prisoners over the previous 12 months.
- 3.15 A good flow of intelligence from across the prison was well managed and responses to emerging threats were dealt with efficiently, with most searches and suspicion drug testing being completed in good time.
- 3.16 The prison continued to work well with the local police and wider criminal justice agencies to reduce further the ingress of drugs and other contraband. Joint work had successfully led to arrests and convictions.
- 3.17 Leaders made sure that there was an appropriate focus on staff corruption, with regular training, and awareness sessions for staff underpinning this approach. Enhanced gate security technology was also a welcome initiative, although procedures at entry were not sufficiently robust or consistent.
- 3.18 We considered that the prison had made reasonable progress against this recommendation.

Staff-prisoner relationships

Concern: The lack of an effective key worker scheme, little time out of cell and the very short stays of most prisoners had a detrimental effect on staff-prisoner relationships. A quarter of prison custody officers had less than a year in post and some lacked the confidence, knowledge and experience they needed to do their jobs effectively. Some staff were still too reticent to challenge poor behaviour consistently. We too often saw them in unit offices rather than interacting with and supervising prisoners.

Recommendation: Staff should receive enough training and ongoing supervision to give them the confidence, knowledge, and experience to engage meaningfully with prisoners, support those who need their help and challenge poor behaviour consistently. (1.40)

- 3.19 Increased time out of cell (see paragraph 3.35) provided more opportunities for staff to interact with prisoners, but on some wings we frequently saw staff in wing offices rather than out on the landings.
- 3.20 Leaders provided evidence of systems that had been implemented since the inspection to support staff. These included informing staff of the expectations needed to be positive role models for prisoners, additional one-to-one support for staff from their line managers and more consistent return-to-work and welfare checks. There was a clear focus on improving standards among staff, including wing expectations and prosocial modelling. However, in spite of these measures and clear, visible leadership from the director, some staff told us they were still not aware of the standards expected of them, while others told us that the new procedures were not always effective. For example, a 'wing expectations document' had been issued to all officers to raise standards, but, when asked, not all staff were able to locate it easily, while others said that they were not aware of the content.



Example of expectations of staff in gate entry area

- 3.21 Staff we spoke to, many of whom were relatively new, told us that they were assigned to different areas each day. This prevented them from building relationships with their colleagues and prisoners. Similarly, there was no formal peer support or mentor system to enable staff to learn from a more experienced colleague. Leaders were able to provide evidence that redeployment had reduced and was at a lower level than staff claimed. However, such issues suggested that communication and clarity about expectations needed to be better.
- 3.22 At the time of our visit, very few scheduled key work sessions (see Glossary) took place. However, leaders provided evidence that designated time would be set aside for key work in the new core day that was due to be implemented shortly after our visit.
- 3.23 There had been an improvement in staff retention since the inspection which, in conjunction with a new core day, was intended to support consistency on the wings.
- 3.24 We considered that the prison had made insufficient progress against this recommendation.

Health, well-being and social care

Concern: Despite raising significant concerns at our last two inspections, the inpatient unit remained poor. There was a lack of clinical leadership to coordinate health care input and no continuous nursing presence. Time out of cell was very limited and there was a lack of therapeutic activities. Patients could not routinely access the day room as it was constantly being used for other purposes.

Recommendation: The inpatient unit should deliver a clinically led, purposeful and therapeutic environment. (1.41)

- 3.25 The health care residential unit remained prison led. While there was clinical leadership of each service to coordinate health care input, as at the time of the inspection, there remained no overarching clinical manager for the unit and there was no continuous nursing presence.
- 3.26 NHS England (NHSE) had awarded the primary care and clinical substance misuse services contract to Spectrum from 1 April 2023 and work was under way to manage the change from Sodexo to the new provider.
- 3.27 Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust, which currently provided an integrated mental health service, had been allocated substantial financial investment under the new contract arrangements via NHSE from April 2023, to enhance mental health services, including psychology and for neurodivergent needs.
- 3.28 The future of the unit was under discussion with NHSE, the prison and Spectrum, the proposed healthcare provider. The service was currently not commissioned to provide an inpatient unit.
- 3.29 The health care residential unit operating policy outlined the admission and discharge criteria to the unit and had been reviewed in October 2022.
- 3.30 At the time of this visit, there were 13 patients on the unit, seven under the care of the mental health service, four receiving social care and two patients under the primary care team. All patients had care plans and received care from nurses on a visiting basis. The progress notes we reviewed via electronic medical records were concise and outlined the care given. The primary mental health team saw mental health patients on the unit daily and the mental health in-reach team visited these patients regularly. Social care packages (see Glossary) continued to be delivered on the unit, to a good standard. The GP visited the unit three times a week and additionally when needed.
- 3.31 A weekly meeting was held to discuss referrals into both mental health teams and admission/discharge to the unit. The mental health in-reach team coordinated the meeting and it was attended by prison staff, the primary mental health team and the substance misuse team, but no primary care staff attended.

- 3.32 A regular group of officers managed the unit and we saw kind and considerate interactions during the association time. Patients we spoke to were complimentary about the support from officers and the care received from health and social care staff. The amount of time out of cell had improved, although was more limited for some because of the level of security needed to unlock them.
- 3.33 The regime on the unit had improved since the inspection. The day room was available for association and the two morning education sessions held weekly, but its use remained pressured. Private space on the unit for patients to be seen by the psychiatrist and other clinicians was very limited. There were still no therapeutic activities run by clinicians.
- 3.34 We considered that the prison had made insufficient progress against this recommendation.

Time out of cell

Concern: Leaders had been too slow to ease some COVID-19 restrictions. Very few prisoners had access to work or education, and we found about two thirds of the population locked up during the core working day. Unemployed prisoners had only two hours out of their cell each day. Hardly any could visit the library and access to the gym was far too limited.

Recommendation: Prisoners should have more time out of cell to access purposeful activity including work, education, the gym and library. (1.42)

- 3.35 Robust systems had been introduced to monitor time out of cell and engagement in purposeful activity. Time out of cell had increased since the inspection, to an average of just over six hours per day. Almost all prisoners were now able to eat their lunch and evening meals communally. Full-time workers and prisoners on the enhanced level of the incentives scheme had evening association until 8pm twice a week. There were credible plans to increase evening activity further over the coming months, including weekday evening gym sessions, visits and association.
- 3.36 More prisoners were involved in purposeful activity than at the time of the inspection, although there were still not enough activity spaces for the population. Most full-time allocations were wing cleaner roles and although these prisoners benefited from more time out of cell than others, they appeared to be underemployed at the time of our visit.
- 3.37 Despite improvements overall, time out of cell for the one-third of prisoners unallocated to an activity remained poor, at between two and three hours a day.
- 3.38 The gym was open seven days a week, including two evening sessions for full-time workers and enhanced prisoners, and dedicated weekly remedial gym sessions for those referred by the health care team. A

new, additional fitness hub had recently opened, providing 12 part-time activity spaces on the new 'StreetFit' (see Glossary) intervention in the mornings as well as holding well-being and fitness sessions in the afternoons. Despite this initiative being relatively new, it was clearly motivating prisoners and encouraging positive behaviour. It was also encouraging that the library had reopened, ensuring that all units received a minimum of one weekly slot.



StreetFit fitness hub

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

Children and families

Concern: There were too few social visits available for the population, especially for the large number of remanded and unsentenced prisoners. Other methods of communication, such as video-calling, were underused.

Recommendation: Prisoners, especially those on remand or unsentenced, should be able to have more visiting sessions, and video calling should be used more extensively. (1.46)

3.40 The availability of social visits had improved considerably. Visits were now offered six days a week, with a capacity of 50 prisoner visits per sitting, compared with a limit of 12 at the time of the inspection. A total of 850 visits were offered weekly and there were plans to increase this further, to add additional sittings, including evening visits.

- 3.41 We saw polite and respectful interactions between staff and visitors at the front desk, and the visits hall was bright and welcoming. Hot food and drink were still not available, which was a source of frustration for prisoners. Leaders told us that they were in the process of recruiting suitable catering staff, but there was no confirmed date for when this service would resume.
- 3.42 Family days had restarted, with the aim of running four per year. Two had been held before Christmas and had been welcomed and well received.
- 3.43 The family intervention team continued to offer good support to prisoners and their families, and particularly to young children.
- 3.44 Other methods of communication were available. In the previous six months, 846 secure video calls (see Glossary) between prisoners and their families had been made. Additional laptop computers were made available during our visit, further increasing capacity. In-cell telephony continued to allow prisoners regular access to the outside world.
- 3.45 We considered that the prison had made good progress against this recommendation.

Education, skills and work



This part of the report is written by Ofsted inspectors. 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 prison's previous inspection report or progress monitoring visit letter.

Theme 1: Leaders should have effective oversight of education, skills and work provision, to make sure that the standard of teaching, training and learning is high enough to prepare prisoners effectively for their next steps, including employment.

- 3.46 Since the inspection, leaders and managers had increased the number of observations of teachers and lessons, to strengthen their quality assurance process and improve their oversight of the standard of teaching, learning and training being provided.
- 3.47 However, these observations gave managers only limited evidence to evaluate fully the quality of the education provision and to enable them to identify the changes needed to improve this to meet prisoners' future employment and resettlement needs. Most of the evidence of prisoner learning provided by the observations was descriptive of behaviour and

engagement, rather than an evaluation of the progress made by prisoners towards agreed targets. In addition, most of the observations did not have action points for improvement, and in the few instances where these were in place, there was no subsequent follow-up to develop teaching practice.

- 3.48 The oversight and evaluation of teaching, learning and training in vocational areas and workshops were still weak and the observation process used was underdeveloped. Very few workshop instructors had been observed, and none had received training to help keep them up to date with their subject or industry knowledge, a gap which had been highlighted at the inspection.
- 3.49 Very recently, the newly appointed head of education, skills and work had begun to evaluate teaching, training and prisoners' progress through 'learning walks' and scrutiny of prisoners' work. However, the outcomes of this process had not yet been analysed, or actions for improvement implemented, and it was too early to judge the impact of these recent measures.
- 3.50 Ofsted considered that the prison had made insufficient progress.

Theme 2: Leaders must increase the number of education, skills and work activity places to meet the needs of the prison population and make sure that allocations are fair, equitable and timely.

- 3.51 Prison leaders had not made sufficient progress to increase the number of education, skills and work activity places to meet the needs of the prison population and to ensure that allocations were fair, equitable and timely.
- 3.52 The curriculum offer remained narrow and as a result did not support prisoners with sufficient opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviour that would support them in their future employment, on release or within the prison estate.
- 3.53 Since the inspection, the considerable staffing shortages had remained and these were having an impact on prisoners' access to the education and training that had been planned.
- 3.54 More prisoners were accessing industrial workshops and attendance was mostly good. However, most of the prisoners in the workshops did not have access to accredited learning, were not routinely set production targets and were not able to monitor their own performance.
- 3.55 Leaders had provided insufficient assurance that the education, skills and work offer met the needs of the prison population and the external employment market. Managers had carried out a needs analysis in June 2022, as part of a process to improve the provision, but too few prisoners responded to enable any meaningful analysis of the outcomes. In addition, leaders and managers were unable to analyse the success of employment outcomes, as a result of technical and

software constraints. As a result, destinations data could not be used to support the development of the curriculum and the work provision on offer.

- 3.56 The allocation of prisoners to appropriate work was ineffective. The employment board did not adhere to the terms of reference set, and as a result it did not fully review applications, to ensure that prisoners were assessed and allocated to work that met their needs for future employment and release.
- 3.57 Ofsted considered that the prison had made insufficient progress.

Theme 3: Leaders must make sure that all prisoners receive appropriate tuition and support that is planned effectively to enable prisoners to remember what they have learned and enable them to achieve relevant qualifications that are useful in the future.

- 3.58 Managers had introduced staff training that supported teachers in ensuring that, for most of the prisoners attending education classes, there were appropriately planned sessions. As a result, most lessons had a logical sequence of activities to support prisoners to build on their existing knowledge. In addition, effective questioning and assessment ensured that most were able to remember what they had learned over time.
- 3.59 In education classes, prisoners were able to achieve recognised qualifications in English and mathematics with regard to future employment. However, attendance in education remained low and most sessions were not well attended. Too many prisoners were not accessing the education planned.
- 3.60 For too many vulnerable prisoners, there was limited or no access to appropriate support and education. For these individuals, there was a small and reduced educational provision on the wings and in workshops, which relied partly on in-cell learning packs, so they made limited progress.
- 3.61 Support for those with additional learning needs or who struggled to complete their work was at an early stage. Too often, managers applied insufficient monitoring/checking of the success of any plans in enabling prisoners to make progress and become independent learners.
- 3.62 In education and workshops, there were still too many missed opportunities to provide relevant or recognised qualifications for future employment. For example, in essential skills areas such as information technology, prisoners completed qualifications that were not recognised in this industry sector. In workshops, there was insufficient recording and recognising of both the work-related skills and employability behaviour developed by prisoners. Employability skills such as timekeeping, attitude, work ethic, performance and outcomes were not routinely recognised or recorded by instructors.

3.63 Ofsted considered that the prison had made insufficient progress.

Theme 4: Prisoners should receive an appropriate induction to purposeful activities and timely careers advice and guidance throughout their time at the prison.

3.64 Leaders and managers had not ensured that the induction process encompassed all aspects of the education, skills and work available. As a result, prisoners were not fully aware of all the training and work opportunities for future resettlement and purposeful activities that they could access.

3.65 Attendance at induction was poor. Managers and staff did not make use of the available data on prisoner progression to ascertain their previous achievement, experience and qualifications, to determine a realistic starting point for their future development.

3.66 Prisoners' starting points in English and mathematics were assessed by a recognised initial assessment tool. However, their future aspirations were not clearly assessed and most felt that these had not been asked about at induction and/or entry to the prison. Managers and teachers were often unaware of prisoners' previous development, their employment goals for release and whether or not their programme of study was appropriate or helpful to achieve their aims.

3.67 Prisoners did not receive timely careers advice and guidance while at the prison and in planning their education and training. However, managers had introduced a new employment advice and guidance service to support those preparing for release. Prisoners accessing this service were able to benefit from employment advice and guidance 12 weeks before release. This service also coordinated contact with potential employers and offered support with resettlement needs, such as opening bank accounts. However, only just over a third of eligible prisoners accessed this provision, so the impact of this initiative had yet to be fully realised.

3.68 Ofsted considered that the prison had made insufficient progress.

Reducing risk, rehabilitation and progress

Concern: Forest Bank was now a reception prison and the only one in the Greater Manchester area to accept prisoners on remand. The model was not working well and had badly affected outcomes for prisoners in a range of areas. Some remanded prisoners were sent from court to other prisons often miles away because the prison had no space, while others serving shorter sentences who should have stayed at Forest Bank in the lead up to their release were often transferred away from their resettlement area. Prisoners serving longer sentences needed to progress to training prisons but instead remained at Forest Bank.

Recommendation: The role of Forest Bank as a reception and resettlement prison should be reviewed to make sure it has the capacity to retain prisoners on remand and those serving under 18 months, while being able to transfer others to more suitable prisons.
(1.47)

- 3.69 The establishment continued to be the only reception prison accepting remand prisoners in the Greater Manchester area. However, the prison reconfiguration model was still not working well, and Forest Bank was not fulfilling its purpose as a reception prison with a resettlement function. Reconfiguration meetings had taken place with HMPPS, but outcomes had yet to materialise.
- 3.70 The remand and unsentenced population had increased to around 45% at the time of the inspection and had since continued an upward trajectory to 57% by the time of this visit. There was still no dedicated support for this group, despite making up such a large proportion of the population.
- 3.71 While the number of prisoners transferred was increasing, with 827 progressive transfers in the previous six months, those serving short sentences continued to be transferred to prisons at a distance from their resettlement area. As a result of population pressures, only those with up to 28 days left to serve were exempt from a transfer. Prisoners were rarely admitted to the prison to support resettlement before release.
- 3.72 We considered that the prison had made no meaningful progress against this recommendation.

Section 4 Summary of judgements

A list of the HMI Prisons recommendations and Ofsted themes followed up at this visit and the judgements made.

HMI Prisons recommendations

All prisoners should feel safe on their first night. Support in the first few days should prepare new arrivals for prison life and they should receive sufficient time out of cell.

Reasonable progress

Violence should be reduced using a range of effective interventions that challenge perpetrators and support victims. Good behaviour should be promoted and those who break the rules should be held to account.

Reasonable progress

Leaders should take robust and sustainable action to reduce the availability of illicit items, including acting on all intelligence received.

Reasonable progress

Staff should receive enough training and ongoing supervision to give them the confidence, knowledge, and experience to engage meaningfully with prisoners, support those who need their help and challenge poor behaviour consistently.

Insufficient progress

The inpatient unit should deliver a clinically led, purposeful and therapeutic environment.

Insufficient progress

Prisoners should have more time out of cell to access purposeful activity including work, education, the gym and library.

Reasonable progress

Prisoners, especially those on remand or unsentenced, should be able to have more visiting sessions, and video calling should be used more extensively.

Good progress

The role of Forest Bank as a reception and resettlement prison should be reviewed to make sure it has the capacity to retain prisoners on remand and those serving under 18 months, while being able to transfer others to more suitable prisons.

No meaningful progress

Ofsted themes

Leaders should have effective oversight of education, skills and work provision, to make sure that the standard of teaching, training and learning is high enough to prepare prisoners effectively for their next steps, including employment.

Insufficient progress

Leaders must increase the number of education, skills and work activity places to meet the needs of the prison population and make sure that allocations are fair, equitable and timely.

Insufficient progress

Leaders must make sure that all prisoners receive appropriate tuition and support that is planned effectively to enable prisoners to remember what they have learned and enable them to achieve relevant qualifications that are useful in the future.

Insufficient progress

Prisoners should receive an appropriate induction to purposeful activities and timely careers advice and guidance throughout their time at the prison.

Insufficient progress

Appendix I About this report

HM 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.

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.

Independent reviews of progress (IRPs) are designed to improve accountability to ministers about the progress prisons make towards achieving HM Inspectorate of Prisons' recommendations in between inspections. IRPs take place at the discretion of the Chief Inspector when a full inspection suggests the prison would benefit from additional scrutiny and focus on a limited number of the recommendations made at the inspection. IRPs do not therefore result in assessments against our healthy prison tests. 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/hmiprisons/our-expectations/>

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.

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 [MONTH, YEAR] for further detail on the original findings (available on our website at <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/>).

IRP methodology

IRPs are announced at least three months in advance and take place eight to 12 months after a full inspection. When we announce an IRP, we 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.

During our three-day visit, we collect a range of evidence about the progress in implementing each selected recommendation. Sources of evidence include observation, discussions with prisoners, staff and relevant third parties, documentation and data.

Each recommendation followed up by HMI Prisons during an IRP is 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.

When Ofsted attends an IRP its methodology replicates the monitoring visits conducted in further education and skills provision. Each theme followed up by Ofsted is 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.

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

Inspection team

This independent review of progress was carried out by:

Ian Dickens	Team leader
Nadia Syed	Inspector
Lindsay Jones	Inspector
Paul Rowlands	Inspector
Maureen Jamieson	Health and social care inspector
Joe White	Care Quality Commission inspector
Malcolm Bruce	Ofsted lead inspector
Daryl Jones	Ofsted inspector

Appendix II Glossary

We try to make our reports as clear as possible, and this short glossary should help to explain some of the specialist terms you may find. If you need an explanation of any other terms, please see the longer glossary, available on our website at: <http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/about-our-inspections/>

Care Quality Commission (CQC)

CQC is the independent regulator of health and adult social care in England. It monitors, inspects and regulates services to make sure they meet fundamental standards of quality and safety. For information on CQC's standards of care and the action it takes to improve services, please visit: <http://www.cqc.org.uk>

Challenge, support and intervention plan (CSIP)

Used by all adult prisons to manage those prisoners who are violent or pose a heightened risk of being violent. These prisoners are managed and supported on a plan with individualised targets and regular reviews. Not everyone who is violent is case managed on CSIP. Some prisons also use the CSIP framework to support victims of violence.

Key worker scheme

The key worker scheme operates across the closed male estate and is one element of the Offender Management in Custody (OMiC) model. All prison officers have a caseload of around six prisoners. The aim is to enable staff to develop constructive, motivational relationships with prisoners, which can support and encourage them to work towards positive rehabilitative goals.

Leader

In this report the term 'leader' refers to anyone with leadership or management responsibility in the prison system. We will direct our narrative at the level of leadership which has the most capacity to influence a particular outcome.

Offender management in custody (OMiC)

The Offender Management in Custody (OMiC) model, being rolled out across the closed male prison estate, entails prison officers undertaking key work sessions with prisoners (implemented during 2018–19) and case management, which established the role of the prison offender manager (POM) from 1 October 2019. On 31 March 2021, a specific OMiC model for male open prisons, which does not include key work, was rolled out.

Secure video calls

A system commissioned by HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) that requires users to download an app to their phone or computer. Before a call can be booked, users must upload valid ID.

Social care package

A level of personal care to address needs identified following a social needs assessment undertaken by the local authority (i.e. assistance with washing, bathing, toileting, activities of daily living etc, but not medical care).

Street Fit

Streetfit is part of the Street soccer academy that project tackled youth homelessness. Street fit is designed to improve the general physical and mental health of participants. The programme focuses on sustainable fitness, empowering users to continue their fitness regimes regardless of the environment in which they live or any budget restraints they may have. A feature of the programme is the ability to tailor the exercises to suit the overall capabilities of an individual, meaning that groups of mixed capabilities can take part in the same sessions.

<https://www.streetsocceracademy.co.uk/programme/street-fit/>

Time out of cell

Time out of cell, in addition to formal 'purposeful activity', includes any time prisoners are out of their cells to associate or use communal facilities to take showers or make telephone calls.

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This publication is available for download at: <http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/>

Printed and published by:
HM Inspectorate of Prisons
3rd floor
10 South Colonnade
Canary Wharf
London
E14 4PU
England

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