



Report on an independent review of progress at

HMP Norwich

by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

30 May – 1 June 2023



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Section 1 Chief Inspector's summary

- 1.1 Holding about 750 adult male prisoners, HMP Norwich fulfils several functions and is spread over three adjacent sites. The main prison is a traditional reception jail, but it is complemented by a separate 1960s-built category C training site and a small open resettlement facility, known as Britannia House.
- 1.2 At our previous inspections of HMP Norwich in 2019 and 2022 we made the following judgements about outcomes for prisoners.

Figure 1: HMP Norwich healthy prison outcomes in 2019 and 2022



- 1.3 At the last full inspection in September 2022, we found improved outcomes in our healthy prison tests of respect, and rehabilitation and release planning. We judged these to be reasonably good, which reflected leaders' achievements in promoting the rehabilitative purpose of the prison. There had, however, been no improvement in safety outcomes, which were still not sufficiently good; incidents of violence, self-harm and use of force were high, and the number of segregated prisoners had risen. The prison was also struggling to provide purposeful activity, which had deteriorated, and we judged this to be poor. During the working day we found nearly two-thirds of prisoners locked up, and our colleagues in Ofsted judged the overall effectiveness of education, skills and work activities to be 'inadequate'.
- 1.4 The principal cause of these difficulties seemed to be the prison's inability to recruit or retain staff, with a 40% shortfall in prison officer availability for operational duties. During this review, we found a more positive staffing situation; almost the full quota of prison officers had been recruited and resignations had reduced by half. The time that prisoners spent unlocked had increased as a consequence, although most activity was still part-time. Our Ofsted colleagues found 'reasonable progress' in three themes they reviewed, although there

was still 'insufficient progress' in the completion of induction and assessments for prisoners to be allocated to learning and work. Plans for a new central library and a prison-wide reading strategy were encouraging, although we found insufficient progress so far.

- 1.5 Most positively, however, there was good progress in efforts to reduce violence and prevent suicide and self-harm. Comprehensive strategies, underpinned by in-depth data analysis and consultation with prisoners, had been completed, and care for prisoners had improved. Incidents of both violence and self-harm were on a downward trajectory, although levels were still higher than at similar prisons. We also found reasonable progress in arrangements for the monitoring of prisoners for public protection purposes, which was now prompt and better resourced.
- 1.6 Overall, this was an encouraging and positive review of progress. Both leaders and staff should be congratulated for their success in delivering these improvements in a short period of time. We were disappointed, however, that the regime on the category C site was still too limited, and further efforts were needed to develop activities prison-wide. The challenge will be for leaders to maintain the upturn in recruitment and retention of prison officers in order to build on the creditable progress that has been made.

Charlie Taylor

HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

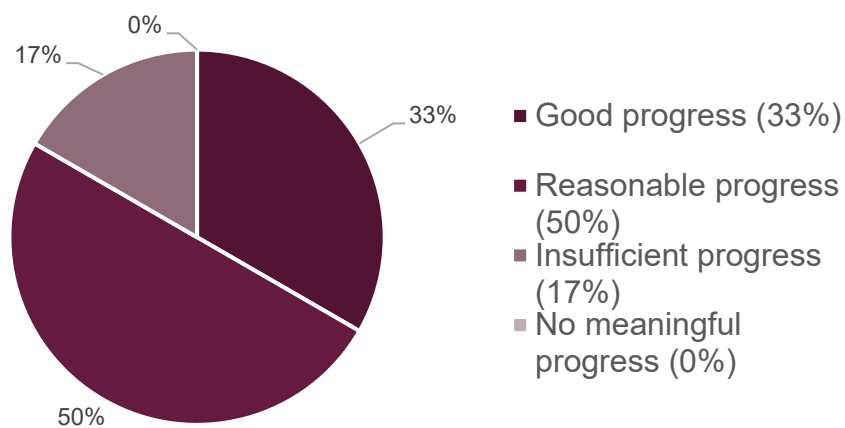
June 2023

Section 2 Key findings

- 2.1 At this IRP visit, we followed up six concerns from our most recent inspection in September 2022 and Ofsted followed up four themes based on their latest inspection.
- 2.2 HMI Prisons judged that there was good progress in two concerns, reasonable progress in three concerns and insufficient progress in one concern.

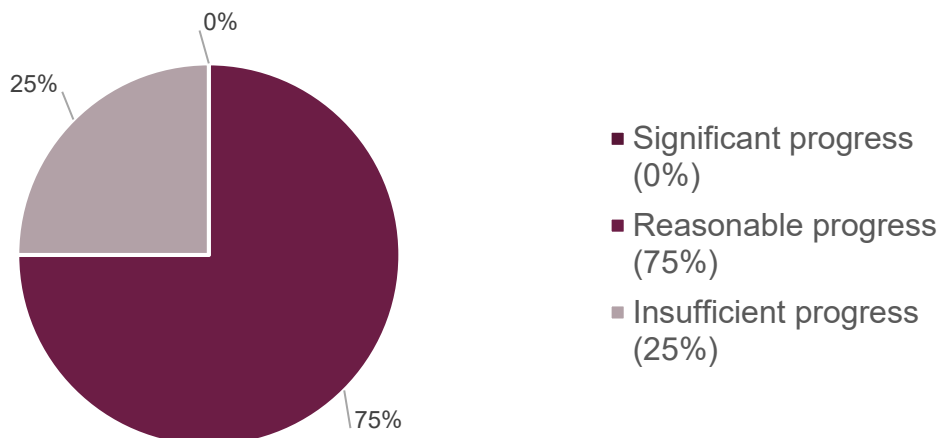
Figure 2: Progress on HMI Prisons concerns from September 2022 inspection (n=6)

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



- 2.3 Ofsted judged that there was significant progress in no themes, reasonable progress in three themes and insufficient progress in one theme.

Figure 3: Progress on Ofsted themes from September 2022 inspection (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 A weekly document was emailed to all staff highlighting risks, triggers and behaviour targets for individual prisoners to raise awareness about those being supported through assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) case management for risk of suicide or self-harm), and challenge, support and intervention plans (CSIPs). (See paragraphs 3.9, 3.16.)

Section 3 Progress against our concerns and Ofsted themes

The following provides a brief description of our findings in relation to each concern followed up from the full inspection in 2022.

Leadership

Concern: A severe shortage of officers limited time unlocked for prisoners and the care they received.

- 3.1 The prison had recruited almost its full quota of prison officers, and resignations had reduced by half since our last visit. A total of 62 band 3 (basic grade) prison officers had been recruited since September 2022; 13 had resigned in the past eight months compared with 26 in a similar period before our previous inspection. The prison had a healthy pipeline of potential new recruits and anticipated being fully staffed by the end of the year.
- 3.2 Although staffing had improved, there was still a shortfall in prison officers available for deployment – 21 were at training college and 20 had been temporarily promoted. However, 72% of the prison's quota of prison officers were available for operational duties compared with 60% at our last inspection. 'Detached duty' prison officers (on short-term postings from other prisons) and overtime bonus schemes were alleviating the current shortage.
- 3.3 A high proportion of prison officers were relatively inexperienced – 36% had less than a year and 55% less than two years in the role. A comprehensive retention strategy included more support for new recruits. The governor also met staff at three-monthly intervals during their first year to improve staff engagement.
- 3.4 Prisoners spent more time unlocked than at our last inspection, but access to activities was still largely part-time and delivery of key work (see Glossary) remained limited.
- 3.5 We considered that the prison had made reasonable progress in this area.

Managing behaviour

Concern: Levels of violence were very high and were increasing. Leaders had no overarching strategy or plan to reduce this.

- 3.6 The recorded number of assaults on both staff and prisoners had decreased by 21% since the last inspection and this downward trend was continuing. The level of violence, however, was still higher than the rate for similar prisons.
- 3.7 Most prisoners we spoke to on the category C site said that they felt safe from violence or bullying, but those on the category B site reported mixed feelings. During our visit, 12 prisoners were choosing to stay locked in their cell as they did not want to engage or because they feared for their safety.
- 3.8 Prisoner forums had been held to understand the causes of violence, and some positive action had followed; a weapons amnesty had been held, and a wing dedicated to older prisoners had been set up because they felt unsafe. However, frustration at the lack of activities had not been fully addressed and had escalated to some antisocial behaviour.
- 3.9 A weekly document was emailed to staff to raise awareness about prisoners being supported through challenge, support and intervention plans (CSIPs, see Glossary). This included reasons for their plan, targets and details of non-associates. A training guide on how to make a referral and case management was also disseminated (see paragraph 2.6).
- 3.10 There had been a recent informative safety summit involving both staff and prisoners, and an action plan in response to the findings was being developed.
- 3.11 A comprehensive violence reduction strategy, including in-depth data analysis to understand the causes of violence, had been completed. An overarching action plan was now reviewed regularly.
- 3.12 We considered that the prison had made good progress to reduce levels of violence.

Suicide and self-harm prevention

Concern: The number of self-harm incidents was high and was increasing. Too little was being done to address and understand the causes of self-harm.

- 3.13 Fewer incidents of self-harm had been recorded since the last inspection, and the overall trend for the past 12 months was downward. The number of incidents, however, continued to be higher than that for similar prisons.
- 3.14 The number of at-risk prisoners receiving support from assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) case management had reduced, and prisoners we spoke to on A wing were more positive than at our inspection about the support they received. Additionally, staff on A wing told us they no longer felt overwhelmed by the number of prisoners who needed support; they were knowledgeable about the needs of prisoners supported by ACCT case management in their care.
- 3.15 More prisoners had access to the daycare suite than at our inspection as there were now more officers available to take them there. The suite aimed to deliver tailored individual and group therapy to support mental health and well-being. During our visit, a prisoner who was being supported through ACCT case management spoke positively of the facility and said: 'It takes my mind off my problems and helps me find solutions'.



Day-care suite

- 3.16 A useful weekly ACCT overview highlighting risks, triggers and protective factors was sent to all staff to raise awareness of individual prisoners in crisis. The introduction of a daily safety intervention meeting to discuss and respond to the previous day's incidents was also a good initiative.
- 3.17 Prisoner forums had been held to understand the causes of self-harm, but the prison had not yet fully addressed prisoners lack of access to recreational activities, identified as a contributing factor. An informative safety summit involving staff and prisoners had also been held to drive improvements.
- 3.18 The suicide and self-harm strategy had been reviewed and a comprehensive action plan to reduce self-harm was updated regularly.
- 3.19 We considered that the prison had made good progress to reduce levels of self-harm.

Time out of cell

Concern: Time unlocked was poor for most prisoners. Access to the open air was also insufficient.

- 3.20 During our roll checks, we found, on average, 28% of prisoners locked up. This was much better than at our last inspection when 65% of prisoners were locked in their cells during the core day. Time out of cell for prisoners in activities had improved, although most work was still part-time, with prisoners attending either a morning or afternoon session.
- 3.21 On the category B site, most prisoners in full-time work could expect to be unlocked for about eight hours a day, and part-time workers for about six hours. However, the regime on the category C site was still not good enough and those with jobs could only expect to spend between four and seven hours a day out of their cell.
- 3.22 The regime now ran consistently, and daily outdoor exercise periods had increased from 30 minutes to one hour, which was positive.
- 3.23 Time out of cell on Fridays and at the weekend had improved but remained too limited, as did the time unlocked for many prisoners who were unemployed.
- 3.24 There were few wing-based recreational activities available. Wing landings were sparse, and the association room on the category C site was only used at weekends. Prisoners told us they were frustrated that they did not always have enough to do during association periods. Some board games were available, but there was little other recreational equipment, such as table tennis.



Lack of wing-based recreational activities

- 3.25 The category D prisoners in Britannia House continued to spend considerably more time unlocked, and most were regularly released on temporary licence (ROTL) to work and access resettlement opportunities in the community.
- 3.26 We considered that the prison had made reasonable progress in this area.

Concern: The library facilities were poor and had insufficient materials or activity to promote literacy and encourage reading.

- 3.27 There were encouraging plans to replace the small libraries on the main site with a central library in the education building. The prison had sourced materials to equip the new facility, including a donation of 5,000 books and some laptops. Furniture and shelving had been donated by Suffolk libraries, which had recently taken over the library contract.
- 3.28 Although the implementation of a well-considered reading strategy was still in its early stages, book groups were now running on two wings and the prison had funding for staff to coordinate Shannon Trust literacy activities. There were also plans to repurpose the small satellite libraries as reading rooms.
- 3.29 The library on the category C site was now a dedicated facility and better resourced, but activities to encourage reading were still too limited.

- 3.30 Britannia House had a small selection of books in the association room, but prisoners could access the nearby local library while on ROTL, which was positive.
- 3.31 The number of prisoners accessing the library and book loans had increased since our last inspection, although only around half of the prison population were library members.
- 3.32 We considered that the prison had made insufficient progress in this area.

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: What progress had leaders and managers made to increase access to education, skills and work?

- 3.33 The governor and senior leaders were committed to making sure that all prisoners accessed education and training. Leaders had successfully reduced the considerable staff shortages since the previous inspection, which had improved prisoners' access to education and training.
- 3.34 Leaders and managers had successfully increased the number of spaces by 25% and the duration of sessions by an average of 30 minutes. Consequently, the vast majority of prisoners who wanted to participate in education or work did so. However, for most prisoners, spaces remained part-time.
- 3.35 Staff were thorough in managing the allocations process. They worked hard to fill available spaces in both education and work. As a result, waiting lists and times were short.
- 3.36 Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers had successfully introduced a motivation policy to incentivise prisoners to participate in education and training. Prisoners valued the benefits, including additional gym sessions.
- 3.37 Leaders and managers had reviewed the curriculum strategically, reducing the course length for mathematics, English, and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses. This enabled more

short-stay prisoners to participate in education. The majority of prisoners achieved their qualification within planned timescales. Managers carefully monitored the time prisoners took to complete their courses. They supported those who were falling behind so they could complete their studies and pass their examinations.

- 3.38 Managers carefully monitored those who had passed their planned end dates with the education provider. Where appropriate, targeted support was put in place to assist prisoners to complete their course and pass their examinations.
- 3.39 Leaders and managers did not analyse management information sufficiently to understand the effectiveness of their education offer. As a result, they did not provide sufficient challenge to the education provider, for example to ensure consistency in the quality of education and vocational training across both the category B and C sites.
- 3.40 Ofsted considered that the prison had made reasonable progress against this theme.

Theme 2: What progress had leaders and managers made to ensure the quality and timeliness of careers information, advice and guidance?

- 3.41 Leaders and managers had improved the quality of careers information, advice and guidance since the previous inspection.
- 3.42 The majority of prisoners' personal learning plans were completed swiftly. Advisors held in-depth discussions with prisoners to identify their prior education, work experience and career aspirations. Consequently, most prisoners had appropriate targets to support them to progress towards their personal goals and aspirations. Their learning plans were shared quickly with staff, minimising any delays in allocation to activities in education, skills or work.
- 3.43 Managers had successfully introduced an activities board where staff met twice a week to review prisoners' learning plans. They carefully tracked the allocation of prisoners and vacancies. This enabled them to swiftly allocate prisoners to the courses with waiting lists, namely English and mathematics.
- 3.44 Leaders had ensured that category C prisoners had access to CV writing and employability courses prior to release. However, this was not yet available for category B prisoners to support them to prepare for release.
- 3.45 Leaders and managers had reduced the significant backlog of outstanding personal learning plans, with the exception of those for prisoners with the most complex needs. Advisers provided outreach careers information, advice and guidance on the wings for prisoners not yet ready or reticent to access education. However, managers had not ensured that advisers had a suitable area where they could discuss confidential information with prisoners. Consequently, some prisoners'

plans missed vital information that staff would need to make sure they had the necessary support to be successful.

- 3.46 Leaders and managers had initiated three-monthly reviews of prisoners' learning plans. It was too early to judge the impact of these on prisoners' preparation for resettlement and release.
- 3.47 Ofsted considered that the prison had made reasonable progress against this theme.

Theme 3: What progress had leaders and managers made to ensure that prisoners attended learning and arrived on time to commence learning at the start of the lesson?

- 3.48 Senior leaders at the prison had improved attendance monitoring and reporting since the previous inspection. As a result, they had made notable improvements in prisoners' attendance and punctuality, particularly on the category B site. Tutors commenced and concluded sessions on time, maximising the time allocated to learning and work.
- 3.49 Prisoners on the category C site did not have sufficient access to education or vocational skills training. Due to the mixed regime, prisoners often attended alternative activities, such as exercise and gym sessions, that interrupted their learning.
- 3.50 Leaders and managers had implemented training for all prison staff on the purpose and benefits of education, skills and work. As a result, there had been a meaningful change in culture, with staff now taking a proactive role in promoting the benefits of education and vocational skills training. Activity officers on the category B site were enthusiastic about their role and understood the importance of education in preparing prisoners for resettlement and release. They successfully supported prisoners, particularly those not motivated to participate in activities such as induction and careers information, advice and guidance sessions.
- 3.51 Most prisoners behaved well. Classrooms and workshops were calm and orderly with purposeful and respectful prisoner and staff interactions. Prisoners enjoyed their studies and valued what they had learned. For example, those studying mathematics aspired to further learning, such as open and distance learning. Prisoners studying bricklaying intended to achieve their construction skills certification scheme (CSCS) qualification and progress to work in the construction sector on their release.
- 3.52 Staff on the category C site did not challenge prisoners who frequently left the classroom to vape. Too many prisoners left sessions early to return to their cells. As a result, they missed a significant amount of time allocated to learning, which affected the pace of their progress.
- 3.53 Ofsted considered that the prison had made reasonable progress against this theme.

Theme 4: What progress had leaders and managers made to ensure that all prisoners completed a timely induction and assessment for learning and work?

- 3.54 Induction to education was not yet effective. Staff focused excessively on completing an initial assessment of prisoners' knowledge of English and mathematics, and did not spend enough time on discussions about the education, skills and work offer in the prison. Therefore, prisoners were not fully aware of all the training and work opportunities available to them. They were not able to make informed choices to participate in purposeful activities that supported their short-term and resettlement plans.
- 3.55 Prisoners with complex learning difficulties did not receive the support they needed. Staff did not ensure that prisoners who had been referred for in-depth screenings completed these. As a result, prisoners with complex support needs, such as autism, post-traumatic stress disorder or mental health needs, did not benefit from well-planned and targeted support strategies they could use to be successful in education and work.
- 3.56 Teachers did not plan learning to meet the specific needs of learners with difficulties and disabilities. Many prisoners had completed basic assessments that showed they had additional learning needs, such as dyslexia, but not all teachers used this knowledge to plan individual learning activities for them.
- 3.57 Instructors in the bricklaying and carpentry workshops used assessments effectively to assess prisoners' vocational knowledge and skills, such as dexterity. Instructors used the information to set prisoners' employability and skills development targets. They monitored prisoners' progress, frequently setting prisoners more demanding and complex targets. As a result, prisoners swiftly developed their skills, becoming increasingly competent and autonomous in tasks. Most prisoners who completed accredited courses in these subjects achieved their qualifications.
- 3.58 Ofsted considered that the prison had made insufficient progress against this theme.

Public protection

Concern: Monitoring arrangements for those with public protection concerns were not effective. Prisoners' telephone calls were not being listened to when they should have been, posing a potential risk to the public.

- 3.59 Public protection monitoring arrangements had improved, following a review by staff in the offender management unit (OMU). Work to embed new administrative processes were developing well, although more robust recording arrangements were required to give assurance that the screening of new arrivals identified those who needed to be monitored.
- 3.60 Eight operational support grade staff had recently been assigned to the telephone monitoring of prisoners considered a public protection risk, and there was a programme of training and information, advice and guidance to upskill those less experienced in the role.
- 3.61 There had been a recent improvement in the time it took to listen to calls, which was now usually prompt. The quality of monitoring entries varied, but they were sufficiently detailed to enable OMU staff to undertake timely reviews of potential risks and to determine whether or not prisoners' calls should still be monitored.
- 3.62 We considered that the prison had made reasonable progress to improve public protection arrangements.

Section 4 Summary of judgements

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

HMI Prisons concerns

A severe shortage of officers limited time unlocked for prisoners and the care they received.

Reasonable progress

Levels of violence were very high and were increasing. Leaders had no overarching strategy or plan to reduce this.

Good progress

The number of self-harm incidents was high and was increasing. Too little was being done to address and understand the causes of self-harm.

Good progress

Time unlocked was poor for most prisoners. Access to the open air was also insufficient.

Reasonable progress

The library facilities were poor and had insufficient materials or activity to promote literacy and encourage reading.

Insufficient progress

Monitoring arrangements for those with public protection concerns were not effective. Prisoners' telephone calls were not being listened to when they should have been, posing a potential risk to the public.

Reasonable progress

Ofsted themes

What progress had leaders and managers made to increase access to education, skills and work?

Reasonable progress

What progress had leaders and managers made to ensure the quality and timeliness of careers information, advice and guidance?

Reasonable progress

What progress had leaders and managers made to ensure that prisoners attended learning and arrived on time to commence learning at the start of the lesson?

Reasonable progress

What progress had leaders and managers made to ensure that all prisoners completed a timely induction and assessment for learning and work?

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, 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 in addressing HM Inspectorate of Prisons' concerns 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 concerns raised 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 priority and key concerns
- 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 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 concern 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 concerns we intend to follow up (usually no more than 15). Depending on the concerns 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 concern. Sources of evidence include observation, discussions with prisoners, staff and relevant third parties, documentation and data.

Each concern 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 to address this concern.

Insufficient progress

Managers had begun to implement a realistic improvement strategy to address this concern 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 to address this concern 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 to address this concern 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:

Sara Pennington	Team leader
Natalie Heeks	Inspector
Jade Richards	Inspector
Carolyn Brownsea	Ofsted inspector
Diane Koppit	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/>

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

Under the key worker scheme, 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.

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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