



Report on an independent review of progress at

HMP Leeds

by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

18–20 July 2023



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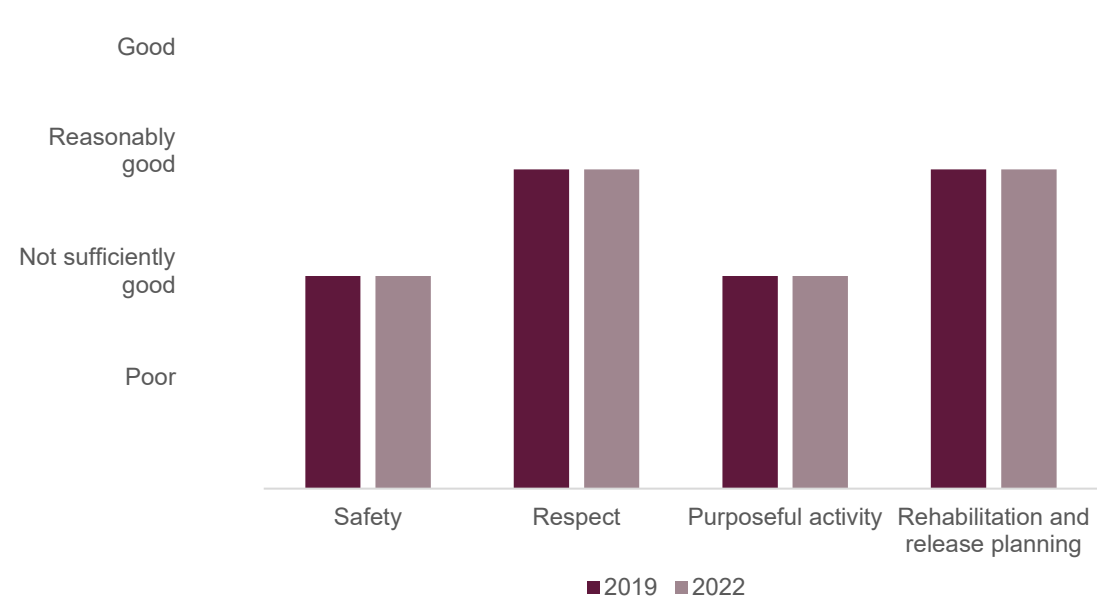
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Section 1 Chief Inspector’s summary

- 1.1 HMP Leeds remains an overcrowded inner city Victorian reception prison holding just under 1110 adult prisoners. When we last inspected in 2022, we found a prison that needed to be safer and to provide more meaningful activity for prisoners. In particular, we were concerned about the high number of prisoners who had taken their own lives.
- 1.2 Since the inspection, a new governor had been appointed and some other leadership changes had been made which had slowed progress in a number of key areas.
- 1.3 At our previous inspections of HMP Leeds in 2019 and 2022, we made the following judgements about outcomes for prisoners.

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



- 1.4 At this independent review of progress (IRP), we reviewed progress against eight concerns and found progress had been reasonable or better in five areas and insufficient or worse in three. Crucially the failure by leaders to make progress in reducing the rate of suicide undermined progress in other areas.
- 1.5 Seven prisoners had taken their own lives since our inspection just 13 months ago, and Leeds now had the second highest rate of self-inflicted deaths of any prison in England and Wales. Reports by the Prison and Probation Ombudsman outlined repeated failings in identifying risks when prisoners arrived, and we found unemployment and the long periods spent locked up during the weekend were common factors in many of these deaths. Leaders seemed unable to focus on these key issues while they were managing an unwieldy plan

with more than 100 recommendations from the various recent reviews, audits and investigations that followed the incidents.

- 1.6 Critically, action to address self-harm had started far too late and its impact on the experience of prisoners was yet to be realised. An example was the limited time out of cell and activities prisoners could access. While education periods had been extended and unemployment was now lower, the daily routine had not substantially changed since the pandemic. Staff still unlocked prisoners in 'COVID-19 bubbles' which needlessly limited the useful time out of cell for all prisoners. In addition, there was a considerable variation in delivery of the regime from wing to wing. A reprofiling exercise was under way to try to improve delivery but it was not due to be implemented until October 2023.
- 1.7 For those that did access activity, however, leaders in education, skills and work had increased the breadth of the curriculum, improved the quality of learning in prison workshops and developed careers information, advice and guidance. Attendance among those allocated to work had also greatly improved. There was still a need to improve the provision of English, mathematics and English for speakers of other languages to make sure that the high levels of need in the population were addressed.
- 1.8 In the area of resettlement, there had been progress in improving the support received by prisoners on remand. There was now provision to help with finance, benefits, debt and accommodation.
- 1.9 The evidence of this review suggests Leeds was capable of making progress. On the critical issue of reducing self-harm, however, our observations suggest a clearer, sharper and sustained focus on what might actually work to improve the well-being of prisoners remained the priority.

Charlie Taylor

HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

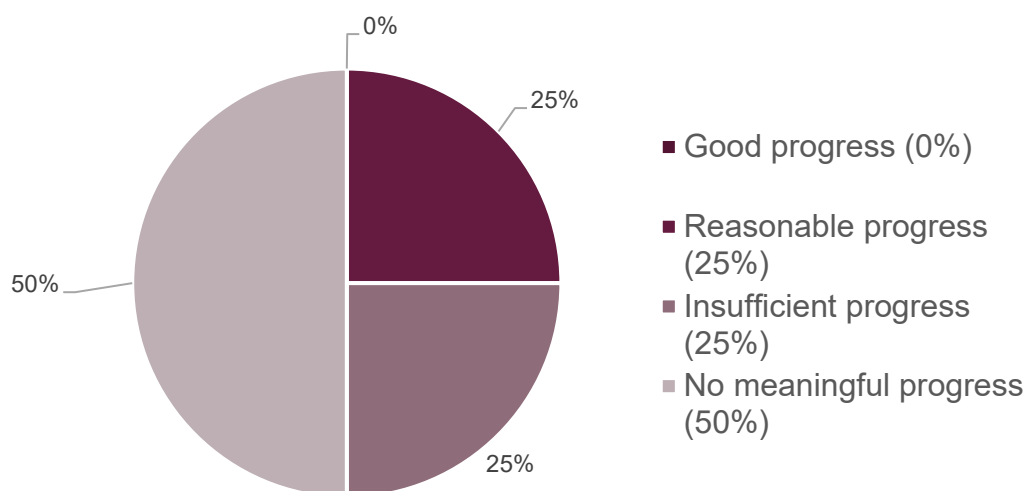
July 2023

Section 2 Key findings

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

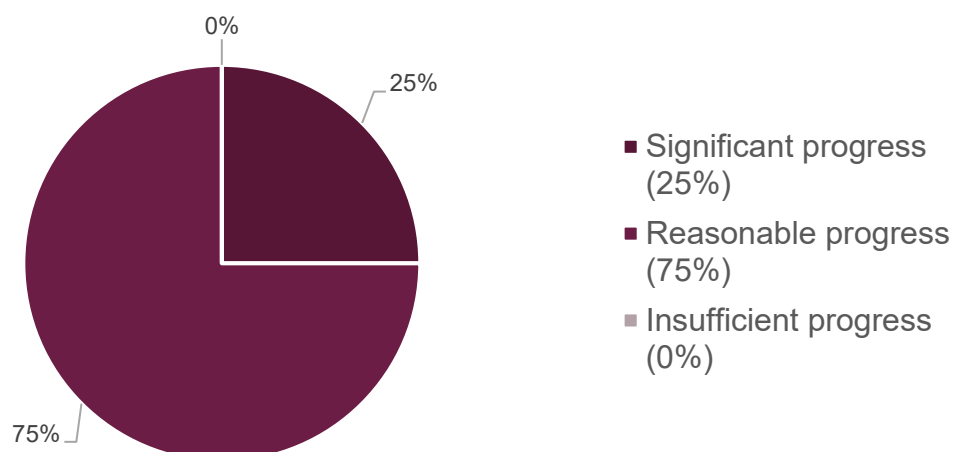
Figure 2: Progress on HMI Prisons concerns from June 2022 inspection (n=4)

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 one theme and reasonable progress in three themes.

Figure 3: Progress on Ofsted themes from June 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 no examples of notable positive practice during this independent review of progress.

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.

Suicide and self-harm prevention

Concern: The number of deaths at Leeds since the last inspection remained high: 28 in total, including eight self-inflicted deaths, one attributed to drug use and two waiting to be classified.

- 3.1 Since our inspection, there had been seven further suicides at Leeds. Action by local and regional leaders had failed to reduce the rate of self-inflicted deaths, which was now the second highest in England and Wales.
- 3.2 As further deaths occurred, national and regional leaders had identified Leeds as a high-risk prison where the large number of self-inflicted deaths had created a specific cluster, causing them to meet prison representatives regularly to try to address this major concern. However, the scale of the problem had stretched the resources at the establishment. The safety team was managing unwieldy action plans with, for example, more than 100 actions, which was preventing managers from focusing on priorities that might have the most impact.
- 3.3 There had been significant instability of leadership and staffing in the safety team. Since the last inspection, for example, there had been changes to the head of safety and a middle manager in the team, as well as the redeployment of four senior officers within the safety team in October 2022. These officers had subsequently been reinstated in May 2023, but the prison's ability to sustain progress had by then been frustrated, limiting what could be retrieved to the three months before our visit.
- 3.4 Leaders had latterly reviewed common features that had emerged from the self-inflicted deaths. These included prisoners being in a cell on their own because they had been assessed as too risky to share, poor sharing of risk factors on arrival, being unemployed and that the majority of deaths had occurred at the weekend when the regime is more limited. However, leaders had so far only taken remedial action in one of these identified themes, which was to make single cell occupants a priority group for key workers (see Glossary). Despite improvements in time out of cell for prisoners who worked, the regime for unemployed prisoners during the week and all prisoners at the weekend had not appreciably or meaningfully changed since our inspection (see paragraph 3.13).

- 3.5 Learning from Prison and Probation Ombudsman investigations and early learning reviews conducted by a regional safety team for more recent deaths was inadequate. Responses were not always useful and sometimes highlighted as safeguards the very processes that had repeatedly failed. As a result, many deaths had recurring issues on identifying, recording and sharing risk factors on arrival.
- 3.6 Leaders had implemented some improvements, which included delivering suicide and self-harm training to more than 80% of operational staff, quality assurance of the ACCT process (assessment, care in custody and teamwork case management of prisoners at risk of self-harm and suicide) and the introduction of daily meetings with the safety team.
- 3.7 We considered that the prison had made no meaningful progress in this area.

Living conditions

Concern: Too many prisoners were living in overcrowded cells originally designed for one.

- 3.8 The prison remained overcrowded, with almost 80% of prisoners living two to a cell designed for one person. Prison leaders were unable to reduce crowding because of pressure for prisoner spaces nationally.
- 3.9 Prison leaders had continued to make sure that the condition of cells was of a reasonable standard through a robust assurance system and we found that most cells were well equipped, for example with two chairs in each cell. Overcrowded cells on E and F wings had toilets that were well screened to afford a good level of privacy. Prisoners whom we spoke to expressed their frustration at having to share a cell.



A crowded cell on F wing

- 3.10 Leaders had also implemented a guide on how to share a cell for prisoners to consider.
- 3.11 A promising part-time working model was being planned to enable some prisoners to work alternate shifts. This would give them the opportunity to spend time alone in their cells and to use the phone or toilet in private.
- 3.12 We considered that the prison had made no meaningful progress in this area.

Time out of cell

Concern: Time out of cell for many prisoners was poor.

- 3.13 Evening association had been introduced for an hour four times a week and an additional hour in the mornings for work or education was an improvement since the last inspection. Despite this improvement, time out of cell for many prisoners was still too limited, particularly for those who remained unemployed.
- 3.14 Leaders had reduced the number of unemployed prisoners by about half. Despite having enough activity for everyone to work part time,

inefficient allocations meant there were still about 200 unemployed prisoners. These prisoners received an impoverished regime of as little as 45 minutes out of cell a day. Prisoners who worked part time received around four hours out of cell a day and those working full time could get up to seven hours. This varied from wing to wing as the regime was not delivered consistently across the prison.

- 3.15 The published regime was not being followed by officers across many of the wings. Some staff we spoke to were unsure about timings and how many prisoners they should unlock. Understandably, many prisoners found the recurring inconsistencies in the regime extremely frustrating.
- 3.16 Recovery from the pandemic had been too slow. Despite adequate staff, prisoners were still being unlocked in small groups which halved the domestic period for all prisoners. We were surprised to hear leaders and staff referring to 'COVID-19 bubbles' so long after the pandemic restrictions had eased.
- 3.17 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 ensure that there were enough activity spaces and that the curriculum was broadened to meet the needs of a substantial proportion of prisoners?

- 3.18 Leaders and managers provided sufficient activity places for the population to be purposefully occupied using a range of full- and part-time places across the provision. They had extended the range of provision available to prisoners. The construction workshop had just re-opened and mentor roles had increased. In education, managers had doubled class times in the morning to three hours and in the afternoon added an additional hour to the timetable. As a result, learners could achieve their qualifications at a faster rate, freeing places for other prisoners.
- 3.19 Leaders and managers had changed the delivery model for English and mathematics courses from fixed start and end dates to a flexible

enrolment pattern, allowing prisoners to join courses at any time. As a result, more prisoners were able to access classes than previously. However, despite these improvements, there were too few available places to meet the demand of the population for English and mathematics courses, and waiting lists were too long. Approximately a quarter of prisoners had skills at below level 1 in English and around a fifth had skills below level 1 in mathematics. Their needs were not being met quickly enough.

- 3.20 Leaders and managers had well-advanced plans to increase provision further. For example, courses were due to start in health and well-being, forklift truck and basic logistics and warehousing. In education, taster sessions were scheduled to attract prisoners who were difficult to engage.
- 3.21 Leaders and managers had secured funding for courses to develop prisoners' employability skills, targeting those with short custodial sentences who were due for release into the community. To promote prisoners' interest in reading further, workshops run by authors on writing based on their life experiences were planned.
- 3.22 Ofsted considered that the prison had made reasonable progress against this theme.

Theme 2: What progress had leaders and managers made to ensure that prisoners were allocated to work activities that related to their ambitions or future career goals?

- 3.23 Prisoners benefited from participating in induction and careers information, advice and guidance services (CIAG) within a week of arriving at the prison. CIAG advisers delivered an efficient and effective service. During individual interviews, they questioned prisoners skilfully to enable them to focus on their current skills and future ambitions and how they could use their time productively in prison to achieve these. They helped prisoners identify their short- and long-term career aspirations, map these to the activities available and sequence their choice of activities in priority order. All information was recorded on a digital personal learning plan (DPLP) that was accessible to education and prison staff electronically.
- 3.24 Allocations staff took appropriate account of the activities that prisoners had selected. Dependent on availability and risk, many prisoners were deployed in the area of their first choice, but others had to wait until a place became available or their risk level was lowered, allowing them access to the job. However, the allocation process was not swift enough and too many prisoners remained unemployed for a few months before starting any activity.
- 3.25 Prisoners who had identified English and mathematics needs could not be allocated to some jobs where English and mathematics at level 1 was a prerequisite. Waiting lists for English and mathematics classes were high, which meant that these prisoners were delayed in improving

their English and mathematics skills. As a result, they could not achieve their career aspirations through some work opportunities as they did not have the prerequisite qualifications.

- 3.26 Managers had undertaken a useful mapping exercise detailing the education opportunities, by course and level, offered at other regional prisons. This enabled prisoners with longer sentences to increase their skills over time at Leeds and plan to continue their progress when they were moved to another prison.
- 3.27 Ofsted considered that the prison had made reasonable progress against this theme.

Theme 3: What progress had leaders and managers made to improve the monitoring of quality of prison-led activities, and to ensure that prison instructors were qualified in teaching or training and took account of prisoners' existing skills or learning support needs?

- 3.28 Leaders and managers had established effective quality assurance arrangements in prison industry workshops. Managers regularly undertook a wide range of activities such as audits of prisoners' progress booklets, speaking to prisoners about their training in workshops and observing instructors carrying out training with prisoners. Senior leaders also conducted weekly visits so that they could become more familiar with the activities that took place and to seek feedback from prisoners. Managers used the results from quality assurance visits and checks effectively to make improvements by sharing them with instructors, and to set and monitor improvement targets. Leaders and managers recognised that the quality assurance process needed to be strengthened further to identify, for example, how well prisoners were developing their employment-related skills.
- 3.29 Leaders and managers had ensured that all instructors who provided training in industry workshops had completed, were due to complete soon, or had a start date for a teacher training qualification at level 3. Instructors had also completed useful training in the use of the 'progress in work' notebooks and in supporting prisoners with learning difficulties and disabilities and neurodiverse needs. They valued this training as it helped them to identify and provide support for prisoners with physical and learning needs.
- 3.30 Instructors in workshops considered prisoners' existing skills and learning support needs well. Instructors used information recorded on the DPLP and from discussions with prisoners during their induction to the workshops to establish these needs. They assigned prisoners with existing skills to job roles where they could apply and develop their skills further. Instructors met prisoners' support needs well by providing reasonable adjustments and adaptive equipment. For example, they provided prisoners who had autism with ear defenders to prevent sensory overload. They supported prisoners with physical disabilities

by allowing them more time to complete tasks and assigning them to jobs that they were able to complete effectively.

- 3.31 Ofsted considered that the prison had made reasonable progress against this theme.

Theme 4: What progress had leaders and managers made to improve prisoners' attendance at their allocated work placement during the working day?

- 3.32 Leaders and managers had made significant improvements to prisoners' attendance at prison industry workshops. Reporting of non-attendance of prisoners by allocation staff was swift and actions taken to rectify poor attendance were effective. As a result, attendance at prison industries had improved significantly and was consistently high at over 90%.
- 3.33 Leaders and managers had improved communications with residential managers and had successfully promoted the importance of prisoners' regular attendance at work. New prison officers had been provided with training, as part of their induction, on the importance of ensuring that prisoners attended work regularly. Prison officers on residential units provided helpful support to prisoners on the benefits of attending work, such as improving mental health through purposeful activity and the social benefits of working with their peers.
- 3.34 Leaders and managers had appointed a peer support worker as an attendance mentor who worked very well with prisoners who refused to attend their allocated activities. Through conversations with the prisoners, he gathered accurate information on why attendance was low or why prisoners were refusing to work at all. He developed very good relationships with prisoners and provided them with useful advice. This included advice on the benefits of attending work to develop skills for employment, to improve their mental and physical well-being, and to receive pay that would help them to avoid being in debt to other prisoners. The mentor worked very successfully with prison officers from the reducing reoffending unit, providing them with information on the reasons for a prisoner's absence, so that the unit could act on the information with residential unit managers and workshop instructors. This was having a significant effect on improving the attendance of those who refused to work.
- 3.35 Ofsted considered that the prison had made significant progress in this area.

Release planning

Concern: About 40% of prisoners were remanded and they had very little support with planning for their resettlement.

- 3.36 About 40% of prisoners were on remand. Support for remand prisoners' resettlement needs had improved and they now had access to a range of services including finance, benefits and debt advice. These services had started in September 2022 by an enthusiastic team from the Growth Company (a social enterprise training provider).
- 3.37 The community intervention team supported prisoners' housing needs following an assessment within the first 48 hours of arrival in custody. Remand prisoners now had access to help with writing CVs, setting up bank accounts and applying for identification documents.
- 3.38 However, much of the work between these agencies and prison staff was uncoordinated. The reducing reoffending meeting had become ineffective, the frequency of meetings and attendance of key staff were limited, and leaders were not monitoring important data such as prisoners being released with no accommodation or employment.
- 3.39 We considered that the prison had made reasonable progress in this area.

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

The number of deaths at Leeds since the last inspection remained high: 28 in total including eight self-inflicted deaths, one attributed to drug use and two waiting to be classified.

No meaningful progress

Too many prisoners were living in overcrowded cells originally designed for one.

No meaningful progress

Time out of cell for many prisoners was poor.

Insufficient progress

About 40% of prisoners were remanded and they had very little support with planning for their resettlement.

Reasonable progress

Ofsted themes

What progress had leaders and managers made to ensure that there were enough activity spaces and that the curriculum was broadened to meet the needs of a substantial proportion of prisoners?

Reasonable progress

What progress had leaders and managers made to ensure that prisoners were allocated to work activities that related to their ambitions or future career goals?

Reasonable progress

What progress had leaders and managers made to improve the monitoring of the quality of prison-led activities, and to ensure that prison instructors were qualified in teaching or training and took account of prisoners' existing skills or learning support needs?

Reasonable progress

What progress had leaders and managers made to improve prisoners' attendance at their allocated work placement during the working day?

Significant 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:

Charlie Taylor	Chief Inspector
Angus Jones	Team leader
Esra Sari	Inspector
Donna Ward	Inspector
Sheila Willis	Ofsted Inspector
Jonny Wright	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/>

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.

Protected characteristics

The grounds upon which discrimination is unlawful (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2010).

Protection of adults at risk

Safeguarding duties apply to an adult who:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs); and
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse and neglect (Care Act 2014).

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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