



Report on an independent review of progress at

HMP Feltham B

by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

8–10 January 2024



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Section 1 Chief Inspector’s summary

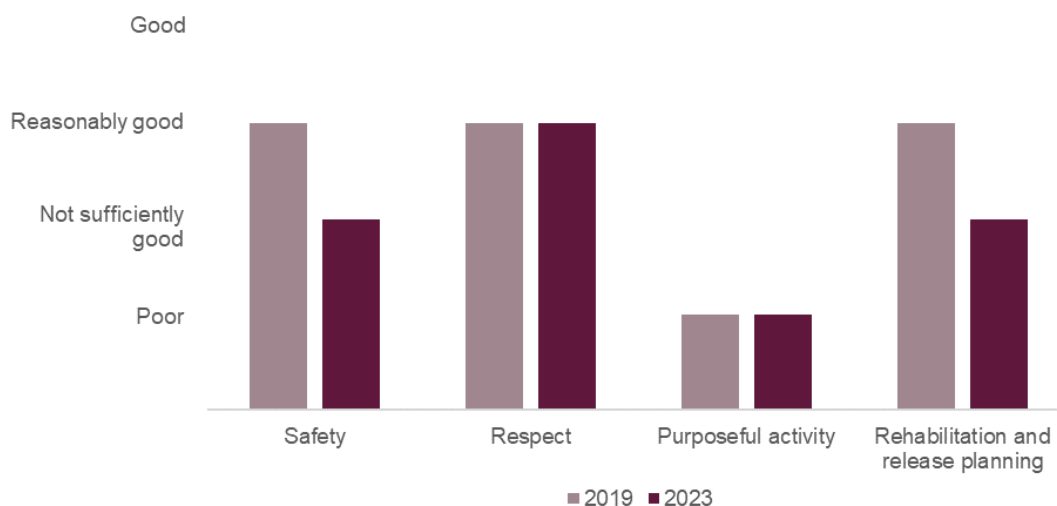
- 1.1 After many years as a young offender institution (YOI) for 18–21-year-olds, over the last year Feltham B has been re-roled to become a category C training prison holding prisoners up to the age of 30, as well as continuing to hold sentenced young offenders aged 18–21.
- 1.2 This review visit followed up on the concerns we raised at our last inspection of HMP Feltham B in 2023.

What we found at our last inspection

- 1.3 At our previous inspections of HMP Feltham B in 2023 and 2019, we made the following judgements about outcomes for prisoners.

Figure 1: HMP Feltham B healthy prison outcomes in 2023 and 2019

Note: rehabilitation and release planning became ‘preparation for release’ in October 2023.



- 1.4 At the previous inspection of the establishment, we found a site struggling with high levels of violence, shortfalls in preparation for release and weaknesses in the provision of education, training and work.

What we found during this review visit

- 1.5 At this independent review of progress, we followed up eight concerns raised at the last inspection and found that progress had been insufficient in five of them. At the heart of this lack of progress was the re-role which had been necessary because national leaders had over several years failed to plan effectively for predicted increases in the prison population. In 2023 leaders at Feltham B were told they needed to extend the age range of the prisoners held, increasing their population by around 40%. The lack of planning meant there was not

nearly enough work or education and staff profiles did not reflect the new population.

- 1.6 The lack of activity was an understandable concern for the category C prisoners that now made up nearly 70% of the population. These men wanted more to do and to be allocated to an activity that would benefit them. However, safety concerns meant that work was allocated by units not by need and a combination of a lack of activity spaces, shortage of prison officers and teachers as well as safety concerns among prisoners meant that attendance and punctuality were woeful.
- 1.7 More positively, violence among prisoners had reduced but there was still a concern about violence against staff. This was often caused by prisoner frustration with a poor or unpredictable daily routine.
- 1.8 A well-led offender management unit had worked tirelessly to try to reduce the large backlogs of work that we had found at the previous inspection. Unfortunately, their efforts had been fundamentally undermined by staff shortfalls in London Probation and the increased workload created by more prisoners being placed at the establishment, many of whom were high risk.
- 1.9 Despite the change in purpose, at the time of this visit Feltham B was not operating as a category C training prison where we would expect the whole population to be fully occupied. Instead, we found just one in five prisoners was gainfully employed in activity off the wing. Local leaders will be unable to make significant progress without substantial support from HMPPS leaders. This will need to focus on increasing the amount of work at the site, changing the culture and addressing the shortfalls in the probation service in London.

Charlie Taylor
HM Chief Inspector of Prisons
January 2024

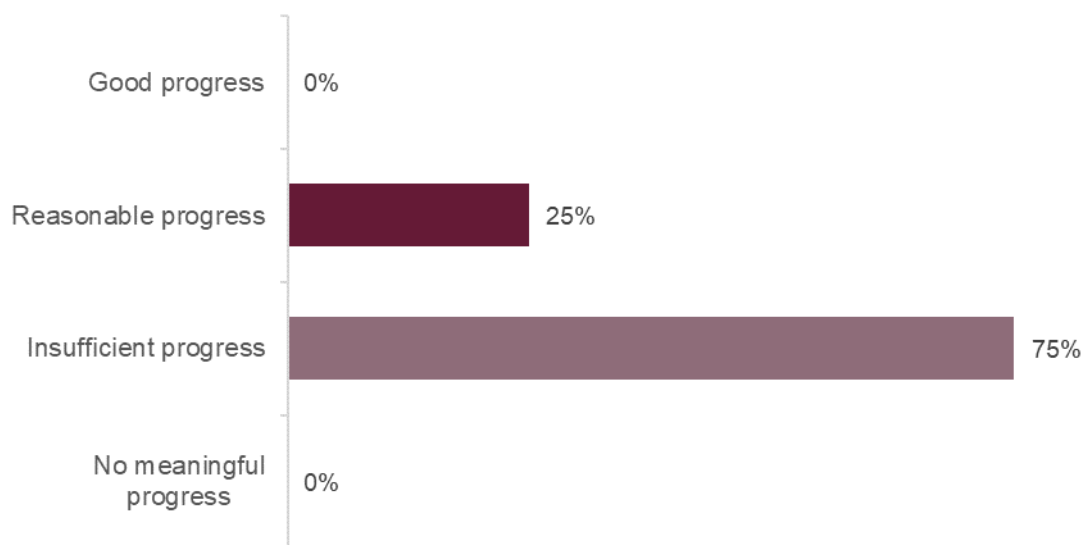
Section 2 Key findings

2.1 At this IRP visit, we followed up four concerns from our most recent inspection in January 2023 and Ofsted followed up four themes based on their latest inspection.

2.2 HMI Prisons judged that there was reasonable progress in one concern and insufficient progress in three concerns.

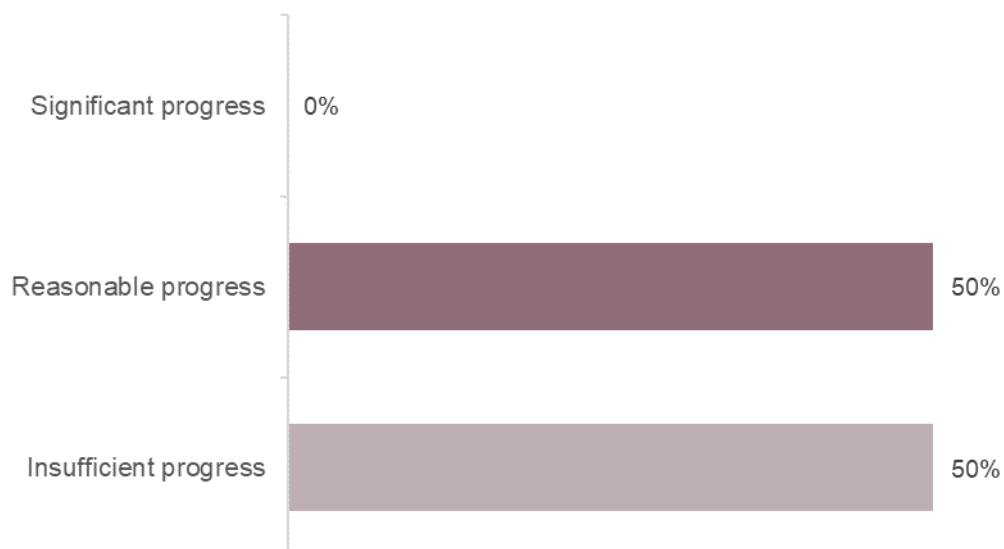
Figure 2: Progress on HMI Prisons concerns from 2023 inspection (n=4)

This bar 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 reasonable progress in two themes and insufficient progress in two themes.

Figure 3: Progress on Ofsted themes from 2023 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 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 2023.

Encouraging positive behaviour

Concern: Levels of violence were too high and prisoners had poor perceptions of their safety. Leaders, staff and prisoners were over-reliant on keeping prisoners apart rather than addressing underlying causes of violence. Investigations into incidents were often delayed and sometimes of poor quality.

- 3.1 Since the previous inspection, there had been 277 recorded assaults on prisoners and 76 on staff. Despite an increase in the population, incidents of prisoner-on-prisoner assaults had decreased by 47%. While this reduction appeared promising, leaders attributed it to consistently keeping prisoners apart and limiting interactions through groups. About 7% of all assaults were recorded as serious, with rates of serious assaults on both staff and prisoners declining.
- 3.2 In contrast, assaults on staff had risen since the last inspection arising from frustration over the inconsistent daily routine and prisoners being locked in their cells for prolonged periods. The over-reliance on keeping prisoners separated as a violence management strategy persisted, with 339 instances involving 236 prisoners since the inspection. This excessive reliance badly affected the ability to optimise the prison routine. There were no plans to address the high number of separations and the conflict resolution team, which was crucial in addressing these issues, was both under-resourced and underused.
- 3.3 Although investigations into violence had become more timely, the quality remained poor. Enquiries into violent incidents were often basic and failed to identify the root causes. The monthly safety meeting reviewed some violence data, but the analysis was inadequate and resulting actions were sometimes left unaddressed for several meetings. Investigations lacked depth and leaders were unable to pinpoint the triggers for violence or to address it. Some thought had been given to engaging community agencies to provide support to prisoners, but this did not form part of a wider cohesive plan by leaders to identify causes of violence and implement targeted solutions to reduce it.
- 3.4 A new initiative to screen gangs and non-associations appeared to be positive, but its impact had yet to be realised.
- 3.5 We considered that the prison had made reasonable progress in this area.

Segregation

Concern: The use of segregation was high, conditions on the unit were poor and the regime was limited.

- 3.6 The use of segregation had reduced in the last six months which was attributed to heightened oversight that restricted the authority to segregate to senior leaders. Adjudications were also reviewed to make sure that segregation was reserved for the most serious cases.
- 3.7 The segregation regime remained poor with prisoners having about an hour out of their cells a day. Record-keeping of entitlements such as a shower, exercise and time out of cell was unreliable, with no written records and an electronic system that inflated unlocked time. Living conditions in the segregation unit were poor, with dirty cells covered in graffiti, and some prisoners were sleeping on unsanitary bedding.
- 3.8 Persistent problems such as the leaking roof caused internal flooding during heavy rainfall and contributed to damp problems.



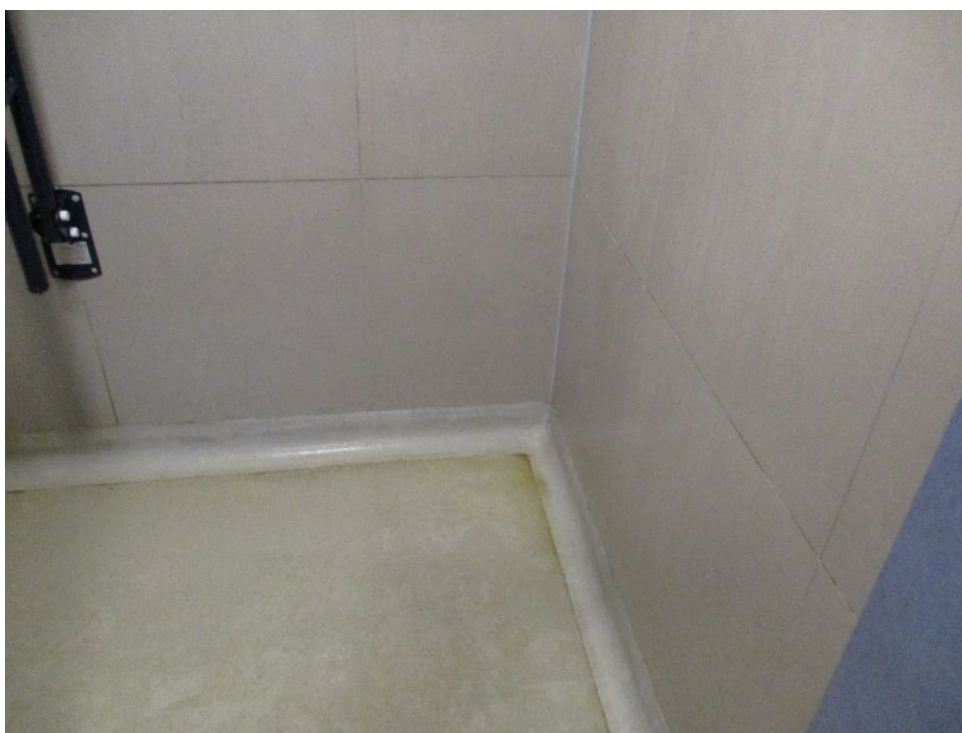
Leaking roof in segregation unit

3.9 In-cell toilets and sinks were rusty and filthy.



Rusty sink and filthy toilet in segregation unit cell

3.10 Prisoners were not routinely provided with cleaning materials to keep themselves and their cells clean and many prisoners expressed frustration at this. Algae was growing on the showers which needed thorough cleaning.



Algae growth in segregation unit shower

3.11 Staff were friendly but did not help prisoners to keep themselves clean.

3.12 The introduction of in-cell telephones in November 2023 was an improvement. Subject to risk assessment and staff agreeing to facilitate it, some prisoners could go outside together which alleviated boredom and encouraged social interaction with their peers.

- 3.13 The painting of murals on the exercise yards had improved the environment and softened an otherwise austere area. Leaders had plans to deliver well-being sessions but these had not yet been realised.



Segregation unit exercise yard mural

- 3.14 We considered that the prison had made insufficient progress in this area.

Time out of cell

Concern: Leaders and managers had limited oversight of the regime on residential units. There were regular delays in the core day. There was too little association and exercise which was inconsistent across wings.

- 3.15 Leaders had introduced a revised core day, which was followed consistently by staff on the residential units, and there was more management oversight of the daily running of the regime. This was an improvement since our last inspection.
- 3.16 The part-time work model allowed nearly all prisoners the opportunity to take part in purposeful activity. This was appropriate given the increase in population that leaders had had to manage with no corresponding increase in the work and education provision. However, prisoners' engagement was limited and this affected the time spent out of cell (see Glossary). Slow movement to activities resulted in delayed starts to some sessions.

- 3.17 Restrictions on the number of prisoners who could be unlocked at any one time further reduced opportunities to use the regime fully. Similarly, staffing issues led to curtailments to education, workshops and association. These often happened at short notice which caused frustration to prisoners and to staff who had needed to spend time with specific prisoners.
- 3.18 Prisoners had clear perceptions about the differences between the regime at Feltham B and other category C prisons they had spent time in. Leaders were working to address some of these deficiencies.
- 3.19 Roll checks that we carried out indicated that a smaller proportion of prisoners than at the inspection were off their wings in work, training or education during the core day. There was, however, a small reduction in the proportion of prisoners locked up.
- 3.20 Leaders had requested support from within HMPPS to develop the monitoring of their regime. In the meantime, they had used training events to highlight the importance of accurate daily recording, recognising that there were weaknesses in this area.
- 3.21 It was difficult to see how leaders could substantially improve the regime without a consistent workforce and support to develop the education, training and work provision.
- 3.22 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 prisoners' access to education, skills and work, based on their needs?

- 3.23 Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers had managed to ensure that they had enough part-time places in education, skills and work for the increased population.
- 3.24 Leaders had a good understanding of the local employment opportunities for prisoners once released. However, they had made

slow progress in aligning their curriculum to these employment needs. Therefore, courses for which they had identified an employment need, such as tyre fitting, were yet to start.

- 3.25 Leaders and managers did not have a good enough understanding of the aspirations and needs of the revised prison population. Plans had been developed to introduce new courses including tyre fitting and personal training. At the time of the inspection, prisoners could not yet access these courses.
- 3.26 Most prisoners were suitably allocated to activities based on information gathered at their induction. In education, prisoners from across the prison mixed well with other prisoners who were allocated based on their interests or needs.
- 3.27 Leaders had recently introduced cohort arrangements in vocational workshops to try to alleviate prisoners' concerns about safety. One accommodation unit attended workshop lessons in both the morning and afternoon for one month before the next unit attended. This limited the access for prisoners from other accommodation units to workshop activities and did not provide sufficient access to activities that would benefit prisoners when they were released.
- 3.28 Prisoners who were not able to participate in workshop lessons due to the cohort arrangements remained in their accommodation units, often with nothing to do.
- 3.29 Ofsted considered that the prison had made insufficient progress against this theme.

Theme 2: What progress had leaders and managers made to ensure that more prisoners attended and were punctual to activities?

- 3.30 Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers had struggled to sustain improvements in prisoners' attendance to education and work. Despite some positive increases between April and July 2023, significant staffing losses across the prison had resulted in attendance declining. Consequently, too few prisoners attended education, skills and work.
- 3.31 Leaders had successfully managed to recruit staff for the vacancies in education. This meant that education was fully staffed and fewer activities were cancelled. Despite this, staffing remained fragile, often with only one member of staff in a subject area. If that member of staff was off duty, then the activity would need to be cancelled. In addition, a lack of prison officers often resulted in a restricted regime. This had a negative impact on the time that prisoners could spend working towards their qualification, leaving them frustrated and disengaged.
- 3.32 A majority of prisoners arrived late to activities. For example, prisoners escorted by prison officers to the bicycle workshop arrived an hour late for their lesson. Leaders and managers acknowledged that prisoners

typically lost up to five hours a week because of the time taken to move prisoners from their accommodation to activities. As a result, prisoners had less time to complete their qualification.

- 3.33 Prisoners allocated to activities preferred to report an illness rather than attend activities. This avoided potential sanction for non-attendance at education, skills and work and allowed prisoners to stay in their accommodation units.
- 3.34 Ofsted considered that the prison had made insufficient progress against this theme.

Theme 3: What progress had leaders and managers made to ensure that prisoners had access to enough accredited courses in industries that would help them gain employment once released?

- 3.35 Since the previous inspection, leaders had increased the range of qualifications offered to prisoners. They had opened the construction workshops which offered entry-level qualifications in brickwork and painting and decorating.
- 3.36 Leaders were repurposing their motor vehicle workshop into a tyre-fitting workshop. When open, this would allow prisoners to gain the skills and qualifications needed to work in tyre-fitting centres. In addition, leaders' work with a national waste management company had started to provide prisoners with training that would lead to sustained employment when released from prison.
- 3.37 Leaders were in the process of upskilling prison instructors to enable them to offer qualifications in personal training. This was in response to an increase in demand from prisoners.
- 3.38 Leaders and managers had improved their links with employers. They used these links to arrange meaningful work for prisoners while they were in prison. This included working with a local NHS trust to recycle crutches to be reused by patients. They also refurbished headsets for airlines to extend their use.
- 3.39 Leaders and managers did not provide prisoners with sufficient opportunity to progress to higher-level courses. For example, in vocational courses such as brickwork, bicycle repair and painting and decorating prisoners were only able to complete entry-level courses. Consequently, prisoners were not able to develop their skills to a level where they could gain employment once released from prison.
- 3.40 Ofsted considered that the prison had made reasonable progress against this theme.

Theme 4: What progress had leaders and managers made to ensure that prisoners achieved their qualification?

- 3.41 In education, fewer classes were being cancelled which had enabled more prisoners to achieve their qualification.
- 3.42 The proportion of prisoners who achieved qualifications in courses related to prison industries, such as recycling, waste management and the kitchens, was very high. The proportion of prisoners who achieved qualifications in brickwork and painting and decorating was good.
- 3.43 In the Railtrack course and art lessons, tutors were enthusiastic and highly motivated and, as a result, prisoners were also motivated. For example, in art prisoners researched the methods and techniques of established designers and artists and reflected this in their own work which was of a good quality.
- 3.44 In functional skills mathematics courses, prisoners' achievement remained too low. Prisoners' behaviour in these lessons made it difficult for tutors to teach and contributed to the low achievement. Too many prisoners had been on the course for a significant time and were yet to achieve the qualification.
- 3.45 Ofsted considered that the prison had made reasonable progress against this theme.

Reducing reoffending

Concern: Staffing pressures in the OMU and resettlement teams were also present in many of the community probation teams that Feltham worked with, which affected prisoner progression and release planning. This contributed to a backlog of prisoner OASys assessments, delays in some home detention curfew releases and often limited contact with prisoners.

- 3.46 Staffing pressures remained in the offender management unit (OMU), the resettlement team and community probation teams.
- 3.47 The two probation officer prison offender managers (POMs) had higher caseloads than at the inspection, while the other probation POM posts remained vacant. Prison staff POM posts were now all filled, albeit with some redeployment of the two operational prison officers. There was little scope for contingencies to cover temporary absences.
- 3.48 Sensible interim measures helped to alleviate the pressure. These included an agency probation officer to complete OASys assessments from home, a case management support POM and trainee probation officer placements. These were not a full substitute for permanent POMs who worked consistently with their allocated case load.

- 3.49 More demands were made on the OMU team by the increase in population and the number of prisoners who posed a high risk of harm to others, more recalled prisoners and more with longer sentences. The continued lack of an on-site resettlement officer caused more involvement for POMs and their manager in resettlement and release preparation at the expense of helping prisoners to progress while at Feltham B.
- 3.50 Against this background, it was creditable that a smaller proportion of prisoners than at the inspection had no assessment of their risk and needs (OASys assessment). Processes such as home detention curfew, parole and release on temporary licence (see Glossary) were managed efficiently, albeit delays were still caused by factors outside the control of OMU staff.
- 3.51 Contact between prisoners and POMs remained limited and focused on key points in their sentence rather than on continuous reinforcement of risk reduction and progression. The good key work (see Glossary) noted at the inspection as a mitigating factor for the lack of regular POM contact had deteriorated. This increased prisoners' frustration at not being able to get their questions or concerns resolved.
- 3.52 We considered that the prison had made insufficient 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

Levels of violence were too high and prisoners had poor perceptions of their safety. Leaders, staff and prisoners were over-reliant on keeping prisoners apart rather than addressing underlying causes of violence. Investigations into incidents were often delayed and sometimes of poor quality.
Reasonable progress

The use of segregation was high, conditions on the unit were poor and the regime was limited.
Insufficient progress

Leaders and managers had limited oversight of the regime on residential units. There were regular delays in the core day. There was too little association and exercise which was inconsistent across wings.
Insufficient progress

Staffing pressures in the OMU and resettlement teams were also present in many of the community probation teams that Feltham worked with, which affected prisoner progression and release planning. This contributed to a backlog of prisoner OASys assessments, delays in some home detention curfew releases and often limited contact with prisoners.
Insufficient progress

Ofsted themes

What progress had leaders and managers made to increase prisoners' access to education, skills and work, based on their needs?
Insufficient progress

What progress had leaders and managers made to ensure that more prisoners attended and were punctual to activities?
Insufficient progress

What progress had leaders and managers made to ensure that prisoners had access to enough accredited courses in industries that would help them gain employment once released?
Reasonable progress

What progress had leaders and managers made to ensure that prisoners achieved their qualification?
Reasonable 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.justiceinspectors.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 January 2023, for further detail on the original findings (available on our website at <https://www.justiceinspectors.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:

Angus Jones	Team leader
Angela Johnson	Inspector
Esra Sari	Inspector
Steve Lambert	Ofsted lead inspector
Dave Baber	Ofsted inspector
Montserrat Perez-Parent	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/>

Certified normal accommodation (CNA) and operational capacity

Baseline CNA is the sum total of all certified accommodation in an establishment except cells in segregation units, health care cells or rooms that are not routinely used to accommodate long stay patients. In-use CNA is baseline CNA less those places not available for immediate use, such as damaged cells, cells affected by building works, and cells taken out of use due to staff shortages. Operational capacity is the total number of prisoners that an establishment can hold without serious risk to good order, security and the proper running of the planned regime.

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.

Special purpose licence ROTL

Special purpose licence allows prisoners to respond to exceptional, personal circumstances, for example, for medical treatment and other criminal justice needs. Release is usually for a few hours.

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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