

# **Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Coldingley**

**For reporting year  
1 August 2024 to 31 July 2025**

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# Contents

<b>Introductory sections 1 – 3</b>	<b>Page</b>
1. Statutory role of the IMB	3
2. Description of the establishment	4
3. Key points	5
 <b>Evidence sections 4 – 7</b>	
4. Safety	10
5. Fair and humane treatment	14
6. Health and wellbeing	22
7. Progression and resettlement	25
 <b>The work of the IMB</b>	
Board statistics	32
Applications to the IMB	32
 <b>Annex 1</b>	
Glossary	33
<b>Annex 2</b>	
Service providers	34
<b>Annex 3</b>	
Summary demographics	35
<b>Annex 4</b>	
Safety data	36
<b>Annex 5</b>	
Fair and humane treatment data	39
<b>Annex 6</b>	
Healthcare data	44
<b>Annex 7</b>	
Progression and resettlement data	45

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## **Introductory sections 1 – 3**

### **1. Statutory role of the IMB**

The Prison Act 1952 requires every prison to be monitored by an independent board appointed by the Secretary of State from members of the community in which the prison is situated.

Under the National Monitoring Framework agreed with ministers, the Board is required to:

- satisfy itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in custody within its prison and the range and adequacy of the programmes preparing them for release
- inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom authority has been delegated as it judges appropriate, any concern it has
- report annually to the Secretary of State on how well the prison has met the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have on those in its custody.

To enable the Board to carry out these duties effectively, its members have right of access to every prisoner and every part of the prison and to the prison's records.

The Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT) is an international human rights treaty designed to strengthen protection for people deprived of their liberty. The protocol recognises that such people are particularly vulnerable and aims to prevent their ill-treatment through establishing a system of visits or inspections to all places of detention. OPCAT requires that states designate a National Preventive Mechanism to carry out visits to places of detention, to monitor the treatment of and conditions for detainees and to make recommendations for the prevention of ill-treatment. The IMB is part of the United Kingdom's National Preventive Mechanism.

## 2. Description of the establishment

HMP Coldingley (hereafter 'Coldingley') is a men's category C resettlement and training prison, located in Bisley near Woking, Surrey. It opened in 1969 and was one of the earliest prisons of its type. It has functioned as this category throughout.

The baseline certified normal accommodation (CNA) is 513<sup>1</sup>. No prisoner is under the age of 21. The prison has remained full for three successive reporting years, with a resident population ranging from 505 to 513 prisoners.

Coldingley has the following accommodation:

- **A wing:** an old main accommodation wing lacking in-cell sanitation housing 93 men with three double cells. It has an induction landing.
- **B wing:** a refurbished main accommodation wing re-opening in May 2024 with in-cell sanitation, housing 93 men with three double cells.
- **C wing:** an old main accommodation wing closed for refurbishment since May 2024 – refurbishment currently delayed.
- **D wing:** an old main accommodation wing lacking in-cell sanitation housing 93 men with three double cells.
- **E wing:** two storey accommodation opened in 2008. It houses up to 162 men in four zones, with an incentivised substance free living (ISFL) zone and a zone allocated to lifer and long-sentenced men; all have in-cell sanitation, including showers,
- **F wing:** a separate annex to A wing of five double cells,
- **G wing:** 62 outdoor single-occupant pods with full sanitation. It opened as temporary accommodation in 2020; it received planning permission as permanent accommodation this June,
- the **care and separation unit (CSU, for segregating prisoners)** has 11 cells with sanitation; one cell has recently been adapted for constant observation.

There are four main training workshops, a technology and education centre (TEC) and administration and maintenance facility areas.

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<sup>1</sup> Figures included in this report are local management information. They reflect the prison's position at the time of reporting, but may be subject to change following further validation and therefore may not always tally with Official Statistics later published by the Ministry of Justice.

### **3. Key points**

#### **3.1 Main findings**

##### **Safety**

- The prison has been operating at capacity for over three years. But now population turnover has accelerated to new levels. The population churn is impacting all aspects of the prison's life and sense of community.
- Progress has been made in overall safety management and co-ordination.
- There has been a doubling of the new arrivals on an open assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) plan (used to support prisoners who are at risk of self-harm and suicide), a significant increase in self-harm and a 30% rise in ACCT documents opened this year.
- The use of force has again risen, although at a slower rate than previously, and is mainly the application of low level restraint techniques. Training levels are better, but disappointingly 25% of incidents were not captured on camera.
- Drugs are widespread with prisoners reporting easy access. At times the focus has had to be on advising safe use rather than their elimination. The proliferation of drugs continues to bring debt, gangs, improvised weapons, intimidation and violence to the landings.
- Poor and infrequent searching throughout the prison and of all those entering it contributes to the ingress of drugs and the other contraband that destabilise the prison environment.

##### **Fair and humane treatment**

- Over a third of the prisoners continue to live in cells without a sink or a toilet. The failure of the contractor ISG means no refurbishment work has taken place since last September. The works programme has fallen even further behind schedule.
- The extreme rate of staff attrition seen last year has eased. Prisoners and the prison regime have benefitted recently from better staffing levels. This is now at risk by immigration visa rule changes announced in July.
- The lack of staff visibility on wing landings remains a concern.
- Loss of property, both on transfer and internally, continues to affect many men and generates the highest number of complaints. The reduction in the number of property complaints this year has been down to better staffing in reception, not the introduction of much needed new systems or technology.
- Communication continues to improve. The Governor's weekly video blogs and availability in the library every Monday are widely appreciated. The Prison Council is a well-run Coldingley asset, meeting senior management every month.

##### **Health and wellbeing**

- The rapid turnover in prisoners has meant more complex cases arriving unexpectedly in healthcare, some with acute mental health issues that the prison is ill-equipped to care for.
- Transferring such patients to secure mental health establishments is a slow process often leading to acute cases being held for long periods in unsuitable segregated conditions.
- The under-resourced substance misuse services had 30% more prisoners requiring treatment and prescribed interventions for addictions.
- Better frontline staff availability has ended the previous necessity of weekend lockdowns. Time out of cell is good. The introduction of an hour of daily open air

exercise was well managed and the impact on prisoners of a prolonged shortage of gym staff has been minimised.

### **Progression and resettlement**

- Education provision is badly affected by the rapid population turnover. In demand practical vocational courses struggle to function at full capacity. There is often not enough time to train men for the more skilled and progressive prison jobs.
- The principal prison workplaces have capacity for 190 jobs, but at best only 60% of that is being used. The Governor's target of getting 50% of men off the wings and into purposeful activity has not been met.
- Rapid population turnover, increased offender management unit (OMU) workloads and staffing issues in community probation and reception prisons have left too many men, especially recalls, without up to date sentence plans.
- OMU probation staff, dealing with a succession of early release schemes, have reduced ability to support the many serving long or indeterminate sentences.
- Imprisonment for public protection (IPP) sentenced men continue to make up 5% of Coldingley's residents.
- The number of recalls has been rising every year. Resettlement and probation staff have more releases and less time available to prepare them for life and arrange accommodation in the outside community. Recall is often the outcome.

### **3.2 Main areas for development**

#### ***TO THE MINISTER***

- The churn of prisoners is having many impacts in this resettlement prison:
  - More men at risk of self-harm and arriving on ACCTs
  - More men coming to a category C when they are not ready
  - Many men without sentence plans
  - Poorer behaviour, many more adjudications
  - More men arriving with health needs the prison is ill-equipped to care for
  - No time to meaningfully engage with education courses or vocational training
  - Too little time to treat cases of addiction and substance abuse
  - Offender managers struggling to cope with early release schemes
  - Offender managers shorter on time to help progress those on long sentences
  - More work and less time to do it for resettlement services

How is the Minister proposing to alleviate the destabilising effects of population churn on the resettlement and training estate?

- The collapse of ISG and re-letting of its contracts has halted the work installing in-cell sanitation since last September. What can be done to prioritise and speed this project up?
- Has the Minister any further plans to help IPP sentenced men still in prison?
- What can the minister do to help those staff whose visas and jobs are threatened by the recent changes to immigration regulations?

#### ***TO THE PRISON SERVICE***

- Coldingley has witnessed an extreme case of operational staff attrition, what is being done to improve and stabilise staff retention?
- Current property handling systems always generate the most complaints. The last policy framework has had little impact. When are fundamental and effective systemic changes going to be made?

- What will be done to get mentally unwell men out of unsuitable accommodation and into secure hospitals far more quickly?
- What is being done to replace the Sycamore Tree restorative justice programme?

### **TO THE GOVERNOR**

- How is the widespread availability of drugs and other illicit substances around the site going to be curtailed and eliminated?
- How is progress in such actions going to be monitored and measured?
- What is happening to ensure that far more moments of potential conflict and all incidents of the use of force are recorded on camera?
- During core hours too many men are still to be found around the site neither fully engaged in purposeful activity or in their accommodation. What steps are being taken to stop Coldingley's 'loitering culture'?

### **3.3 Progress since the last report**

Lord Timpson, Minister of State for Prisons, Probation and Reducing Reoffending responded to the 2023-24 report with the HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) in a letter dated 20 January 2025. The Governor responded with an update on progress by email on 27 May 2025.

<b>Issue raised</b>	<b>Response given</b>	<b>Progress</b>
<b>To the Minister</b>		
1.Many men still living without in-cell sanitation.	1. Date by which all men will have access to in-cell sanitation has slipped to November 2026. This element is prioritised over the rest of the refurbishment work. GFSL continues to maintain the existing sanitation system.	1. Failure of managing contractor ISG in September and appointment of new contractor caused further delay. No more men moved to in-cell sanitation accommodation this year. Late 2027 is now forecast to be time when all have access to in-cell sanitation.
2.The increasing number of IPP sentenced prisoners in the establishment.	2. The Victims and Prisoners Act (November) 2024 has done much to shorten IPP licences and so future IPP recalls. The national IPP Action Plan has been refreshed and strengthened.	2.Despite many IPP releases, no clear impact on IPP numbers, these remained at about 25 throughout the year.
3. Prisoners having difficulty completing courses because of transferring between prisons.	3. Difficulty in the training estate is acknowledged because of the challenges posed by the population pressures in the estate. Urgent action being taken to relieve these pressures and measures, such as SDS40, may provide some relief in the category C estate.	3. No improvement on the situation during the year. There are plans for Coldingley to start new internal course programmes possibly early next year.

Issue raised	Response given	Progress
<b>To the Prison Service</b>		
1. Kitchen facilities largely unfit for purpose.	1. It is acknowledged that the kitchen is at its operational limit. There are no plans to increase the operational capacity. Standby plans exist for operational contingencies. Funds for improvements are very limited.	1. Kitchen staff do a good job under difficult circumstances. A business case for some refurbishment work is being prepared, but no guarantee of support or funding.
2. Holding mentally unwell prisoners in segregation.	2. Long-term segregation reduced in 2024. Support is available from the mental health team, neurodiversity lead and the substance misuse provider. B-wing provides more opportunity to support vulnerable men than the 'older wings'. A new constant observation cell in the CSU will help.	2. This situation may have worsened during the year with some very difficult cases in the CSU. The new constant observation cell has helped, but is not the answer. The B-wing environment with high levels of substance misuse has not been the supportive environment for vulnerable men anticipated.
<b>To the Governor</b>		
1. The increase in use of force (UoF) and levels of assault and lack of staff training in control and restraint.	1. Safety is a top priority. Assaults remain a prime concern. Increases in UoF have 'settled' and any rise is mainly in low level techniques. There have been declines in all assault, most noticeably on staff. Significant increase in local training and staff with in-date training.	1. Agreed. There have been improvements this year, but still room for more – notably prisoner on prisoner assaults.
2. Need to increase staff visibility on the landings and CCTV coverage.	2. Higher staff levels due to engagement in national workforce delivery project. Improving staff retention and lower staff sickness rates are helping. Further CCTV improvements are coming.	2. Staffing levels noticeably better in the past quarter of the reporting year. Lack of staff visibility on landings has been noted by the Board during the year. CCTV coverage has improved but there is much to do including priority sites out of action.



Issue raised	Response given	Progress
3. Use of illicit substances on the ISFL wing.	3. Use of these substances remains a problem throughout the prison. A new local Drug Strategy was launched in December. The ISFL wing has been reduced to one zone. Random mandatory drug testing (MDT) returned in March. Various measures are planned to make healthy living central to the unit.	3. Agreed that ingress and use of illicit substances has been a major concern all year. Revision of the ISFL facility and return of MDT in late March are appropriate and welcome measures. It is too early to assess any consistent impact.
4. No independent auditing of the discrimination incident reporting form (DIRF) process.	4. Done: 100% of DIRFs now reviewed by the University of Surrey.	4. Agreed – independent audits now being undertaken since April. Challenge is now to improve credibility and use of the system.
5. Loss of regime and lockdowns.	5. Improved staff levels and lower staff sickness rates have all but eliminated lockdowns.	5. Agreed – residents have benefitted from a major improvement.
6. Low numbers participating in education and work.	6. Attempting to increase allocation levels, and challenge non-attendance. Education and instructor staffing levels have improved. Workshop heating and roofing issues are being addressed. A broader range of courses is being provided, notably in construction.	6. The last two months have seen some upturn in attendances. But far too many men stay on the wings all day. Good educational facilities are not fully utilised. The Governor's targets for purposeful activity haven't been met.

## Evidence sections 4 – 7

In this report, unless otherwise stated, annual data covers the 12-month period to the end of June 2025. This period is referred to throughout as ‘this year’, ‘the year’ or the ‘reporting year’. The use of this 12-month period for data is consistent with previous annual reports from this Board. Additional supporting data are included in the annexes.

Where technical terms or acronyms have been used, these are defined in a glossary (Annex 1).

### 4. Safety

#### 4.1 Reception and induction

The major development in reception this year has been the unprecedented increase in admissions, transfers out to category D (open prisons) and releases out of the prison. The churn in the prison population resulting from measures such as SDS40 (where certain prisoners serving ‘standard determinate sentences’ (SDS) became eligible to be released after serving 40% of their sentence instead of 50%) to cope with the capacity crisis across the estate is most obvious in the increased movement and workload in reception. This year:

- admissions increased 27%, transfers out increased 23% and releases 41%
- nearly all the increases in admissions came from category B prisons, notably bulk drafts in from the Kent, Surrey, Sussex region (KSS)
- category C to category C movement usually for progression courses or family contact reasons remains at the low levels noted last year.<sup>2</sup>

Some men express alarm at arriving at a prison where they feel they will be under threat from known ‘non-associates’. The need to hurry men out of category B reception prisons in bulk transfers does not help. Staff have more work processing property using paper-based systems. But new arrivals who spoke with the Board generally reported being kindly and respectfully treated in reception.

From to conversations with prisoners, the Board understands that first nights can be a shock. Most arrivals are housed on A wing in the main accommodation block lacking in-cell sanitation. This wing has greatly improved in recent months – particularly in its cleanliness. The induction cells are better prepared and more welcoming. Much credit for the improved conditions is due to wing staff, but especially to the prisoner wing cleaners.

Peer mentors are involved in the two-week induction period. Some prisoners say that is too long. Recently, many arrivals were less familiar with the category C environment and regime, having spent relatively little time in reception prisons. Some admitted that they found prison life confusing, sometimes bewildering, and wondered whether induction could take more account of this. Others arrive with little time left to serve and question the value of an induction programme. Population pressure in the category B prisons creates different needs in the category C training and resettlement estate.

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<sup>2</sup> more detail on recent trends is in Annex 4.0.

## **4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody**

There have been no deaths in custody this reporting year.

Lessons have been learned from a protracted inquiry at Surrey Coroner's Court in November. There have been noticeable improvements in prisoner safety following changes in the safer custody leadership and team:

- the safety intervention meeting (SIM) is greatly improved in its organisation, scope, presentation and attendance from all functions. Staff demonstrate knowledge of each prisoner who has been causing concern
- there has been a similar upgrade in the presentation of data and analysis in the monthly safer custody meetings
- safer custody orderlies have returned and are more visible
- family members raising telephone concerns about safety of a prisoner are now logged and included in daily briefs to staff.

Some new areas of concern have, however, become apparent – often linked to the increasing churn of prisoners and prison population management pressures:

- the number of men arriving on an open ACCT continues to rise significantly. There were 42, double the number arriving last year
- despite the prison's history of maintaining relatively low levels of deliberate self-harm (DSH), prisoners who repeatedly self-harm have contributed to a doubling of recorded DSH incidents
- new ACCT documents opened are arguably a more reliable measure of DSH in the population – these increased by over 30%
- 45 (28%) of the new ACCT documents were opened on residents in the CSU.

## **4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation**

The number of assaults on staff was a major concern last year. All assaults on staff, however minor, are down this year. Last year, 21 serious and sexual staff assaults were recorded. This year there have been just three assaults. More functioning wing CCTV systems may have played a part in this improvement.

The level of prisoner-on-prisoner violence remains a concern. The ingress of drugs and other contraband, the presence of organised crime groups, the illicit economy and prisoner debt appear to underlie the violence. In the Board's view, inexperienced staff and low staff visibility on wing landings, and more men on shorter sentences and closer to release with less to lose through poor behaviour will also have contributed to the problem.

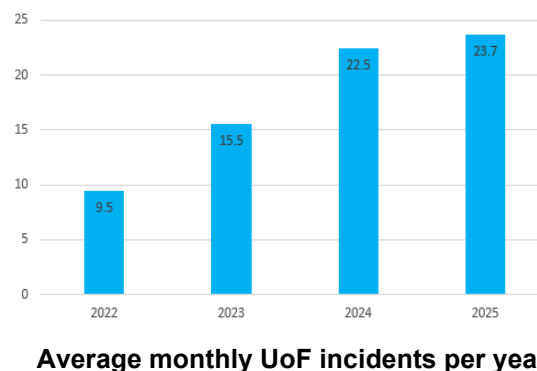
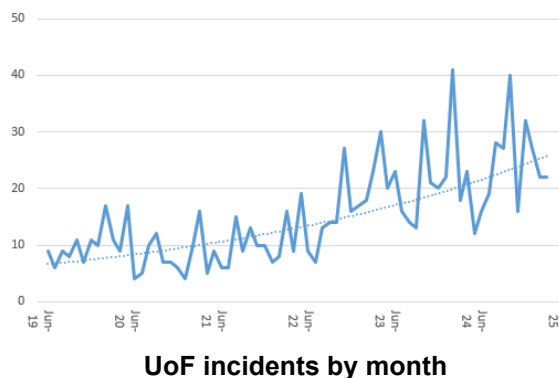
Last year saw an increase in all prisoner-on-prisoner assaults and a 50% increase in serious assaults. This year the number of such assaults has dropped, but the levels remain relatively high, above that seen in earlier years or in many other category C prisons.<sup>3</sup>

## **4.4 Use of force**

The upward trend in the use of force (UoF) since pandemic lockdowns has continued.

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<sup>3</sup> Data on assault levels is in Annex 4.0



The Board is concerned about a drop in the use of body-worn cameras. So far this year almost a quarter of all incidents have not been recorded on camera.

The year has also seen signs of progress:

- the recent rate of UoF increase has slowed
- no PAVA spray (an incapacitant similar to pepper spray) and batons have been used
- generally only low levels of force were being used – over half the cases involve just restraint or positive communication and in a further 32% of incidents the UoF did not escalate beyond handcuffing or escort holds
- the disproportionality in UoF on Muslim prisoners is no longer evident: Muslims are 25% of the population but were involved in only 21% of incidents where force was used – this compares to 38% last year
- the return of an in-house trainer has seen staff numbers with up-to-date training at the highest level in a long time.<sup>4</sup>

New UoF meeting terms of reference were published, resulting in the separation of data and scrutiny meetings. The scrutiny meetings now take place weekly. They are better attended by senior management and specialist staff. Most incidents the Board see are low-level interventions, often with the subject visibly under the influence of illicit substances.

#### 4.5 Preventing illicit items

*'lots of drugs here'*  
*'it's easier than on the outside'*  
*'staff turn a blind eye'*

There were some attempts in preventing the circulation of illicit items over the past year:

- CCTV was restored on the old landings of A wing and has remained functional on refurbished B wing. A policy of consistently and speedily replacing damaged installations has been maintained; prior to refurbishment more CCTV is to be installed on D wing. Working CCTV is valued by the majority of residents

<sup>4</sup> see Annex 4.0 for further UoF details, all data from HMPPS use of force dashboard.

- random mandatory drug testing (MDT) made an overdue return in March as more trained testers became available
- better records are now being kept of those in debt and made more available to staff – debt is both a root cause and result of the circulation of illicit items

Coldingley is poorly located to prevent the ingress of contraband via throwovers and drone activity. The site is bordered by both accessible residential streets and thick woodland vegetation criss-crossed by public footpaths. Contraband has been known to enter through visits and staff. Staff from the external HMPPS dedicated search team (DST) told the Board that Coldingley was about the 'worst in the region' for phones and illicit substances. When in May the Board sought the views of 40 prisoners about life in Coldingley, 'lots of drugs' was named as one of its main downsides, with the majority saying it was 'easy' or 'very easy' to get drugs. Some commented 'staff turn a blind eye' and 'it's easier than on the outside'.

Security finds of contraband can be as indicative of the amount and effectiveness of searching as of the amount of contraband circulating. The past year has seen similar numbers of finds as the last two years of drugs, tobacco and their paraphernalia, mobile phones, chargers and other associated digital equipment and weapons. Only the volumes of 'hooch' (alcohol illicitly brewed and distilled in the prison) have dropped from last year's peak.<sup>5</sup> When the DST are not present supporting local staff, the number of finds is noticeably lower.

In one incident almost 3kg of cannabis was found scattered around one man's cell. Such quantities are hard to conceal and suggest organised crime networks operating in a brazen fashion. About half of the re-introduced MDTs have been coming back with positive results.

Against such a backdrop the Board has specific concerns about:

- gatehouse security and staff searching – only once in 351 visits to the site have Board members been subjected to or witnessed staff searching
- too few sniffer dogs being available on site
- staff turnover and loss of experienced staff, some in the security department
- reliance on the DST for much searching at the expense of development of more in-house expertise
- drug-testing on the incentivised 'drug-free' ISFL wing which does not detect psychoactive substances (also known as 'spice', a chemical compound that mimics the effects of the active ingredient in cannabis).

More security issues were highlighted when the first independent HMPPS security audit at the prison in eight years took place in June. Its outcome, although not unexpected, in the Board's view could not be seen as anything but disappointing by local staff, with the concerns raised including staff key-handling, rub-down searching and off-site prisoner escorting.

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<sup>5</sup> see Annex 4.0 for more data/details.

## 5. Fair and humane treatment

### 5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

#### Accommodation

All year, 35% of all the residents have been living in the old unrefurbished wings without a sink or toilet in their cell. They must rely on the night sanitation queueing system. The collapse of ISG in September hit Coldingley hard as ISG were the managing contractor for the refurbishment project to provide in-cell sanitation.

Around 90 men are expected to be living without proper private sanitation or sinks in their cells until the final round of refurbishment, scheduled to start in late 2027. The completion date for other associated essential works in the project, such as site re-wiring, a heating ring main and fire safety work, has been pushed back to 2029.<sup>6</sup>

Last year this Board reported optimistically on the opening of refurbished B wing. The wing remains bright and in good decorative order, encouraging other wings to up their game in terms of appearance and cleanliness, but much of the Board's reporting has been about the lessons to be learned:

- inadequate ventilation, poor landing window design and air circulation led to difficult summer living conditions; with not enough sockets to allow the use of temporary landing fans, some men chose to sleep on concrete floors because of the heat
- some tried to purchase their own fans but experienced long administrative delays after fans were withdrawn from the DHL canteen lists
- by late autumn numerous heating and hot-water failures were emerging
- opportunities to make cost-effective and necessary ground floor office and association area improvements were missed
- ISG's failure left GFSL to pick up the pieces often without sufficient details of the new assets to maintain the work undertaken by ISG.

The building fabric across the site continues to make heavy maintenance demands. The newer (2008) E wing has many problems: flooring deteriorated again - dangerously so in places; ventilation and humidity problems persist; many CCTV sites, including priority ones, are out of action; and an exercise yard is disused having no access from the wing. Legionella closed all cell sinks in F wing, and during the winter the workshops were regularly closed at the start of the week through lack of fuel to temporary boilers before the ordering system was re-organised.

There are some pleasing outcomes to report. Roofing repairs have allowed more workshop use and allowed the largest to be converted for use as a construction skills training centre. Winter sewage pumping issues all but disappeared, as efforts to stop prisoners flushing wet wipes and J-cloths proved effective. Above all, the older accommodation looks brighter and cleaner. This is primarily down to the initiative and effort of more prisoners, supported and encouraged by wing staff, taking greater responsibility for communal living spaces.

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<sup>6</sup> Annex 5.0 summarises the programme of works.

## Food

The kitchen remains a difficult and cramped working environment with wet floors from leaking pipework and often faulty and broken equipment. The kitchen needs rewiring, refitting and a general overhaul. However, the Board hears more praise than criticism of the food, particularly from recent arrivals. There has been some improvement in the cleanliness and running of the kitchen since last year. There have been fewer issues raised about catering for special dietary needs. This is reflected in logged kitchen complaints dropping to their lowest level in the past four years.

Managing and controlling the fair distribution of food and discipline at the serveries has been a Coldingley challenge, needing a change in operational staff attitudes and habits. A 'one man one portion' rule was introduced and its effectiveness monitored and enforced by staff. This change was overdue.

Many men prefer to prepare their own food – a recognised rehabilitative activity. On many wings there is still a need to ensure a fair distribution of cooking appliances and more care taken that they are kept clean and stay in place. Many are not. Inadequate equipment, plumbing, ventilation and fittings in the association areas used for cooking have seen cooking moving on to residential landings, although this is prohibited and a health and safety risk.



The kitchen working environment



Unrefurbished wing cooking facilities

Men who make use of the wing cooking facilities complain about DHL food item canteen prices. Men are highly sensitive to any rises in the cost of food essentials, given the low and static prison pay rates.

## 5.2 Segregation

The care and separation unit (CSU) is a small protective environment for a prison without a vulnerable prisoner wing, and an illicit economy with its associated levels of debt, threat and assault. This has been a challenging year for the specialist and skilled staff caring for disruptive and vulnerable men. In the absence of suitable alternative facilities there have been more mentally unwell men segregated. A constant-observation cell has been opened and seen much use. CSU capacity is back up to 11 cells - when residents leave them all fit for use. Doing CSU rounds has at times been difficult for the Board. A welcome change has been holding segregation review meetings on a more predictable and regular timetable.

This year in the CSU there have been:

- 11 men located to the CSU straight from reception; this number has been rising every year<sup>7</sup>
- 11 men stayed in segregated conditions for over 42 days, a significant improvement on the 18 reported last year, but still higher than earlier years
- 45 men had ACCTs opened while in segregation
- 39 men moved to the CSU while on an open ACCT
- shorter stays in the CSU with 6% fewer days spent there compared to last year's peak
- no evidence of minority ethnic group disproportionality in those segregated.

There has been a rise of 26% in the number of new adjudications (disciplinary hearings when a prisoner is alleged to have broken prison rules). Poorer discipline, with more men on shorter sentences or with less time left to serve, may be a factor in this increase. 406, or one third, of all adjudications concluded in-house ended NPW ('not proceeded with') through non-appearance of witnesses, errors in wing paperwork or being timed out. This is much to the annoyance of all - the prisoners put on report, the CSU staff dealing with more paperwork and the senior staff adjudicating.

### **5.3 Staff and prisoner relationships, key workers**

Late last summer for several months Coldingley had the highest rate of prison officer staff attrition in England and Wales. That situation steadily improved over the year. By June the availability of the day-to-day frontline staff had reached its highest level in the 30 months since the Board started monitoring this measure. Prisoners have been seeing benefits in regime and day-to-day escorting to and from purposeful activities. The rate of staff turnover means that half these frontline staff have under two years' experience of working in a prison. Most men the new staff encounter on the wings will have considerably more experience than that. Staff retention in this part of Surrey is challenging. That challenge was exacerbated in July with sudden changes to visa rules leaving 24 newer staff uncertain about their right to work in the UK beyond 2026.

When prisoners were recently surveyed by the Board on the best things about life in Coldingley, 'good staff' and 'the people' were frequent responses. A sense and culture of respect in staff-prisoner relationships continues to foster a unique community spirit, although some prisoners complain of lack of empathy and poorer people skills of some officers. With such a high proportion of relatively new staff, if the focus remains on staff retention and peer support, for many these skills will come.

As reported last year, getting staff out of offices and increasing their visibility on the wings has again been a challenge. The reality has been some staff 'no-go' areas and 'self-policed' landings. The Governor is aware of the issue and stresses its importance at the well-attended all-staff meetings. Making staff of all levels more visible means changing staff culture – a slow process. The Board on their visits see mixed progress with staff visibility varying from month to month and from wing to wing. Visibility is not easily measured, but there been some encouraging signs with cleaner brighter wings, more working CCTV and more staff available.

The Governor prioritises the role of communications and consistent messaging in maintaining a positive culture. He acknowledges the room for more effort - prisoners justifiably point to the lack of a good quality (or any) weekly or monthly local newssheet

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<sup>7</sup> More segregation data is in Annex 5.0



of the type found in their previous prisons. Since his arrival there have been several noticeable improvements:

- the Governor's weekly video blogs on Wayout TV (a prison educational channel) are popular and well regarded
- prisoners appreciate the Governor making himself available every Monday evening in the library
- Wayout TV had been under threat – but the service has now been locally retained for a further year

The prison council<sup>8</sup> is considered a 'notable asset' by the Governor, although some of its members and the wider community questioned its ability to deliver tangible change. The council is well run and meets the Governor and relevant managers monthly. Last year council elections had to be postponed owing to lack of candidates. This year's election in August – overseen by the Board – had 19 candidates for 10 posts and an impressive 82% turnout.

Prison managers encourage and recognise the importance of orderlies and peer mentoring in developing a community culture. Praised by the Minister, the prisoner-led initiative 'Turning Lives Around' (TLA) typifies the best of the local self-help culture. TLA continues to thrive and provide signposting and a broad range of tailored support services to men struggling to cope with life in prison. One man told us how these men had got him back into education and work 'and out of bed and into his life again'.

Key work should be providing similarly tailored individual support to aid progression. Delivered by day-to-day frontline staff, its usefulness depends on the numbers of such staff, their available time, suitable meeting places and the quality of relationships they have sufficient time and opportunity to develop.

Early in 2025, the Board repeated a 2023 study interviewing both prisoners and staff about key work. 84 key work sessions were also assessed. We found:

- only 55% of men in the survey month had a key work session
- those receiving key work getting just under half the target rate of one session a fortnight

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#### ***Prisoner views on key work from March IMB survey***

*'it depends on who you get – "luck of the draw"'*

*'you need to keep the one you've built a relationship with'*

*how much depends on where you are in your sentence*

*'needs to be monitored more'*

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#### ***Officer views on key work***

*'works best if they're on your wing'*

*'more care is needed matching key worker and prisoner'*

*'better when I work with the OMU and know about their sentence plan'*

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- using HMPPS criteria, a quarter of the reports were found to be of good quality

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<sup>8</sup> As renamed this year from 'prisoner council'

- the quality was an improvement on those monitored in 2023.

Allocation of key work officers to prisoners has improved greatly since last year. There have also been efforts to build more consistent relationships by allocating key work to men rather than impersonally to cells, but the latest data also shows that the total delivery of key work has been dropping each reporting year.<sup>9</sup>

## 5.4 Equality and diversity

### Ethnicity

Celebrating and understanding the ethnic diversity of its population has been long established at Coldingley. Staff attendance at comprehensive bi-monthly diversity and inclusion meetings has improved. The scope and level of data presented now extends to any disproportionalities in accommodation, cell-searching and adjudications. Ethnic and religious groupings are now analysed not only wing by wing but landing by landing. Black History Month sees a range of social events, guest motivational speakers, entertainment and regional foods on the kitchen menus. It was excellent this year and was a credit to all the organisers.

	Jun-23		Jun-24		Jun-25	
White British	246	49%	272	54%	321	63%
Black	158	31%	136	27%	108	21%
Asian or Asian British	50	10%	47	9%	34	7%
Mixed heritage	38	7%	41	8%	36	7%
Other or not stated	15	3%	12	2%	9	2%
Total	507		508		508	

Recent prisoner churn has produced a noticeable change in the ethnic mix. This is significant context when examining ethnic disproportionalities and the need to protect minority cultural values.

- the ethnicity disproportionalities by wing have seen relatively little change - B and E wings with in-cell sanitation have mainly white residents
- wings A and D, relying on night sanitation, are disproportionately populated by ethnic minority groups. New arrivals to the induction A wing are often reluctant to move to a wing with fewer residents of their ethnicity
- efforts to increase wing diversity are challenging while the prison remains full. Management is averse to blunt diversity measures such as quota systems
- when security considerations permit, we do see some successful efforts, such as housing minority nationalities together to allow self-support systems to grow.<sup>10</sup>

The number of men from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) communities has risen by fifty percent. They are now 9% of the total population and were given their own culture celebratory week in June. This provided traditional food and entertainment. GRT meetings have become more regular and better attended.

In line with national trends and policies, the number of foreign national prisoners resident has fallen again, reducing to 6% of the population. Very few of this group have problems understanding English.

Chaplaincy has been proactive in forming a group for the over 60s. It is popular and around half those eligible have attended a meeting.

The equalities team have been addressing lack of trust in the DIRF system. Only a quarter of those remaining classified as DIRFs are upheld or partially upheld. This is not

<sup>9</sup> Recent data on delivery and more survey findings are included in Annex 5.0

<sup>10</sup> The chart of wing occupants is in Annex 5.0.

helped when often the men must ask for the forms in the wing office. But this situation may improve as since April all DIRFs are being independently audited by staff from Surrey University. Since December when better records have been kept, more than half the DIRF forms received were reclassified as complaints. Chaplaincy are now involved in the initial sift that decides whether an application is a DIRF or an ordinary complaint.<sup>11</sup>

## **5.5 Faith and pastoral support**

Ramadan arrangements fared better than last year and the two Eid celebrations went well. The excellent variety of hot eastern food was appreciated. Muslims comment that they have better access to the mosque at Coldingley than in other prisons.

Christmas continues to be celebrated with a carol concert, services, charity collections and family present wrapping and distribution sessions organised.<sup>12</sup>

Some of the smaller religious groupings feel they are not treated equitably. The Rastafarians complained of not being allowed the same privileges for cooking in their traditional ways or having the paid religious holidays enjoyed by other faiths.

The chaplaincy team has returned to full strength. They have been active setting up a bereavement course 'Living with Loss', organising a Thursday evening cinema club in the chapel and facilitating video links to family funerals.

The national cancellation of the Sycamore Tree restorative justice course has been keenly felt. This course was valued by men at Coldingley and had a long waiting list. Chaplaincy and management are hoping an appropriate substitute can be organised. The waiting list was 60 at the time of cancellation - over 10% of the prison.

## **5.6 Incentives schemes**

Men often remark that there is insufficient differentiation between the three incentive scheme bands (a system of earned privileges used to encourage positive behaviour), inferring that enhanced privileges do not sufficiently incentivise.

Population churn with deteriorating behaviour has brought a change in the pattern of incentive status. The proportion on enhanced incentives (the highest level of earned privileges), usually in the range 60%-65%, has finished the year closer to 55%. The proportion on basic (the lowest level), previously around 5%, are at their highest level seen in recent years at around 10%. More residents serving shorter sentences and feeling closer to release, and more men on recall can all feel less incentivised to behave well.

Scheme statistics show no disproportionality around minority ethnicities in the privilege banding.<sup>13</sup>

## **5.7 Complaints**

The total number of complaints received has dropped. On first sight this seems an encouraging trend, but the Board consider it has much to do with a loss of confidence in the system, the way the forms are collected and the difficulty in being able to discretely access all the relevant forms away from the wing office:

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<sup>11</sup> Analysis of DIRF outcomes is charted in Annex 5.0.

<sup>12</sup> More ethnicity and religious details are in Annex 3.

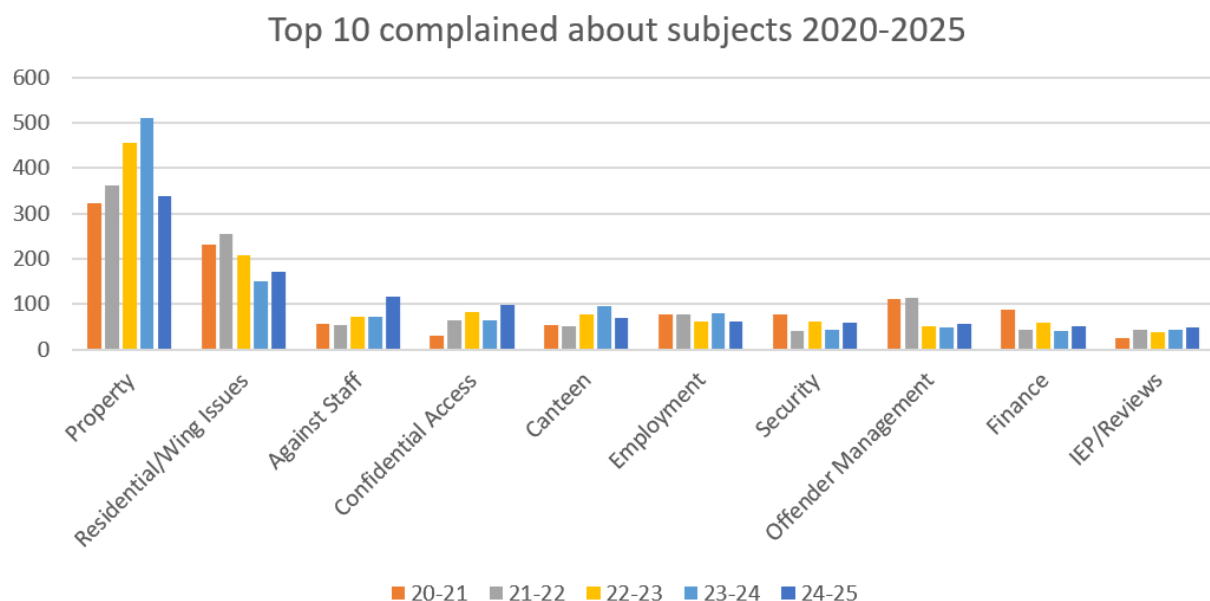
<sup>13</sup> Privileges scheme data is in Annex 5.5.

- the Board has frequently had to ask wing staff to replenish stocks of forms in their correct places out of sight of the wing offices
- during regular Board checks, full sets of all three form types have never been found available on all wings
- some men are put off by a paper-based system, some can't read, they and many others would much prefer a face-to-face discussion
- sometimes we are told that the subject of a complaint answers the complaint
- some men felt they would be targeted by staff if they used the system and 15 out of 42 of those questioned said they would never use the system
- in conversation with officers, it is not clear at which point, if any, in their training learning about the system takes place.

more positively:

- the Governor quality audits more than 10% of all responses
- 87% of responses are made on time
- there is no evidence of disproportionality in treatment or responses by ethnic or religious identity.

Property and residential issues always top Coldingley's rankings most complained about subjects.



A growing area of concern in the pattern of complaints is a consistent year on year rise in the number made against staff. For the first time in recent years there has been a significant drop in the number of complaints about property.<sup>14</sup>

## 5.8 Property

Issues relating to property nonetheless remain the biggest concern for prisoners, both in terms of the complaints system and applications to the Board. Personal property may be lost during transfer from another prison, within Coldingley itself, or be the delayed receipt of catalogue ordered items. Missing property can cause great distress to

<sup>14</sup> more data about complaints is given in Annex 5.6

prisoners at a vulnerable point in their lives. It wastes prison staff time and leads to losses to the public purse in compensation payouts.

Property issues were 26% of all complaints and 21% of applications to the Board. Last year they had been 34% and 27% respectively. This is not due to any significant modernisation or new technology. The sustained improvement can be credited to better reception staffing.

The Board received more applications about property issues within the establishment than about property transfers between establishments. Cell-clearances when men locate to the CSU remain a problem. More staff training and diligence is needed, including always recording on body-worn cameras throughout the task.

## **6. Health and wellbeing**

### **6.1 Healthcare general**

Healthcare at Coldingley is provided by Central and North West London (CNWL) NHS Trust. Primary healthcare is available 07:00 – 19:00 on weekdays and 08:30 – 17:30 at weekends. Outside these hours the emergency services or 111 call services are used. There are no residential facilities.

Conversations with the Board and surveys conducted by the healthcare consultancy EP: IC confirm the prisoners' positive views of healthcare in comparison with other prisons.

The staffing is mainly permanent. Overall staffing levels have improved. A broad multi-disciplinary team provides, and has enhanced, the range of services for prisoners with healthcare needs. Appropriate healthcare professionals attended all ACCT and segregation reviews observed by the Board. The bi-monthly delivery board meetings are well run and well attended. A well-being open day is run each year with drop-in sessions for prisoners.

Healthcare professionals continue to be concerned that, despite the intermittent presence of operational staff, prison management does not consider the daily presence of an officer throughout open hours justifiable in its operational staff profiling. This is despite a violent incident taking place last summer that put the main GP surgery out of action for many months.

The high rate of prisoner churn is leading to the arrival of more prisoners with complex medical needs, some with significant mental health illnesses. The number of transfers where medical records are incomplete has risen. Prisoners have arrived whose prescribing needs cannot be met by Coldingley.

### **6.2 Physical healthcare**

The GP caseload increased with appointments up by a third in the first half of the year but was managed and the Board has no concerns over GP wait times. Dentistry, podiatry, optician and psychology assessment wait times have all reduced. The physiotherapy service waiting times need improvement.

There is a system of prisoner healthcare wing reps run by NHS consultancy EP: IC. Reps are trained to recognise and raise concerns with operational staff. They meet regularly with healthcare and the governor responsible. But their efforts are wasted when their role and the concerns raised are not always recognised by staff on the wings.

### **6.3 Mental health**

More prisoners are arriving with complex mental health needs. A secure mental health provision may be more suitable for these men. The process of getting patients transferred to secure mental health establishments is slow and hindered by the differing structures at the relevant agencies. This has led to some prisoners with severe mental health issues being held in unsuitable CSU conditions for extended periods.

Neurodiversity and the need for interventions and special adjustments is progressively, although slowly, being recognised. This is the second year with a neurodiversity lead in post – based in education rather than healthcare. The number identifying or identified as neurodiverse has risen in each of the past three years. In June there were 133 prisoners identified or self-declared as having a hidden disability. Staff report that during

screening 50% of new arrivals self-declare neurodiverse conditions. A bookable sensory room became available last September and monthly neurodiverse drop-in sessions prove popular. There remains a need for wing staff to have a better understanding of neurodiverse needs.

#### **6.4 Social care**

Social care needs cover the range from help with dressing and showering to help with menus and ordering food. There are more prisoners with a social care need than can be met and sustained under the current contract with Surrey County Council. With over-stretched resources, priority has been given to keeping clients safe and clean. Coldingley has two accessible cells and is not well set up for receiving prisoners with mobility issues. Social care peers help prisoners with mild disabilities, but these men are limited to working on the wing where they live.

#### **6.5 Time out of cell, regime**

Greater staff availability has led to the virtual elimination of unplanned lockdowns and a significant improvement in time out of cell.

The one hour daily of open air exercise introduced in August 2024 was well received and has been sustained. An IMB survey in October had 70% of interviewees reporting 6 – 10 hours out of cell per day and a further 15% (mainly G Wing pods) having over 10 hours.

The main complaint in the survey was the boredom of having so little to do at weekends. Measures to address this issue were made as the year went on.

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#### ***Comments from prisoners from the October 2024 IMB survey:***

*‘it’s boring, so there is a temptation to “do other things”  
‘prison does not seem to appreciate the importance of exercise and gym  
for mental health’  
‘table tennis has gone, pool table is dodgy. I hate the weekends’  
‘it’s a good gaol, but it’s boring. More courses, practical, job specific  
courses please’*

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The lack of outdoor weekend exercise was addressed as staffing improved. Boardgames and other indoor amusements reappeared on most wings. The recurrent request from prisoners for more team sports to help with mental health and strengthen the prison’s community spirit is a ‘work in progress’.

The organisation of team sports points to a persistent issue – the shortage of qualified PE instructors. For much of the year only two of the five posts were filled. Gym orderlies are limited in what they can supervise. Prisoners understood the difficulties. Most recognised that they got more gym time than in their previous establishments and were aware of the good communication about the situation.

#### **6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation**

The number of prisoners engaging in substance misuse service (SMS) related group work has risen significantly over the past year. Around 30% of prisoners receive drug and alcohol rehabilitation and support from the SMS operated by Forward Trust.

SMS has been short staffed, under pressure and seeking new recruits. This has led to delays in the assessment of referrals. SMS still meet all referrals to explain delays and signpost anyone nearing crisis.<sup>15</sup>

The number of prisoners receiving pharmacological intervention has risen from an average of 36 at the beginning of this reporting period to 47 by the end, with prisoners on a maintenance prescription rising from 28 to 41.

Many more prisoners are now treated with opiate substitution treatments (OST) than previously - 40 in the past year. Such has been the level of drug use in some wings, especially in the ISFL wing before its improvement, that concerns were raised about air quality affecting residents, visitors and those working there. Poor wing ventilation on B and E wings has not helped the situation. During the winter, messaging had to focus on safe drug use rather than prevention.

'Spice' (a chemical compound that mimics the effects of the active ingredient in cannabis) and cannabis remain by far the most used illicit substances. The return of random mandatory drugs tests (MDTs) in March has led to the detection of a wider range of drugs including cocaine, ketamine, Subutex, amphetamine and gamma aminobutyric acid (GABA) painkillers.

The volume of 'hooch' (alcohol illegally brewed in the prison) found has declined slightly, but alcohol and its effects remain a major problem, especially as it is being more frequently discovered in its distilled form.

Last year the Board reported how large and overcrowded E wing, the designated ISFL accommodation, was failing in its role of providing a specialised substance-free living environment for those in recovery. In March it was reduced and a single upstairs zone with accommodation for 32 was re-designated and equipped as the ISFL area. It is a little early yet to judge its success, although in recent months the E wing ISFL is no longer the main venue for 'under the influence' incidents.

Residents complain that the ISFL compact's swab-based twice monthly drug tests still do not detect the most prevalent drug – 'spice'. The Board find it surprising that managers have explained that the urine tests used in MDTs are too expensive for the volume of testing required by the ISFL compact, take too long to give a result and require more staff training. Subjecting ISFL residents to random and suspicion-based MDTs, like the rest of the prison population, does not seem an adequate substitute.

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<sup>15</sup> More data on services and users are in Annex 6.



## 7. Progression and resettlement

### 7.1 Education, library

#### Education

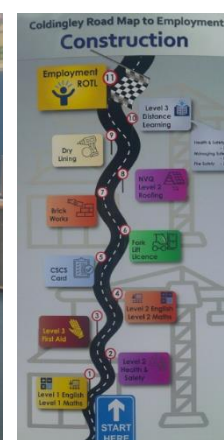
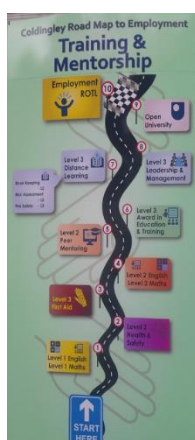
Education is an important step on the journey to rehabilitation and resettlement. Coldingley's momentum and its energetic leadership in education is to be praised. 'They do this well', commented one recent arrival, highlighting award ceremonies attended by the Governor as excellent study incentives. Some promising new courses, such as the Award in Education and Training, have started and the regular teaching of literacy and numeracy is prioritised.

Although one new arrival described education as 'a hidden gem', engagement in Coldingley's teaching offer is disappointing, with average daily attendances in the education block at best ranging between 40-60 men. In the past three months, 52% of the planned course capacity was being utilised.<sup>16</sup> Education has the resources and capacity to help meet the Governor's target of getting at least 50% of men off wings A/F, B, D and E and into productive activity during core hours. The educational providers complain of the abuse of movement slips for brief appointments elsewhere, or of men simply not turning up and contributing to a 'loitering issue' around the establishment.

Having more men arriving with only a few weeks to serve also hits class attendances. These men have too little time to take advantage of the learning opportunities of a training prison. The numbers engaged in higher level education dropped this year. By June there were only 12 on Prison Education Trust distance learning level 3 or above courses and 18 registered with the Open University.

Many positive steps have been seen:

- seven prisoners qualify with the level 3 Award in Education and Training (AET) and teaching courses in first aid and health and safety up to level 2 standard
- the vibrant and well-attended education open day in March filling the sports hall while introducing the latest curriculum
- the new April curriculum bringing new accredited courses and opportunities; start dates, durations and entry requirements with the sign shop's skills being used to create bright promotional displays in prominent locations



<sup>16</sup> This excludes those attending induction, Islamic classes (taught elsewhere), learning vocational trades elsewhere or working as education orderlies or prisoner course leaders.

- the Coldingley reading and literacy strategy being increasingly promoted– books and book trolleys are more visible on wings and even in the gym; reading and literacy is often addressed in ACCT reviews
- The Shannon Trust playing a key role in the literacy strategy since their return in May 2024. Peer mentors conducted nearly 1,000 one-to-one learning sessions.
- 10 Coracle laptop computers being used in-cell for pre-loaded non-technical non-accredited courses with no problems –often giving men their first experience of working with keyboards and screens; but 10 is a small number and those taking level 3 and higher distance courses would like to see more and their use extended for in-cell higher education.

Prisoners argue that too much emphasis is placed on English and maths and not enough on vocational training skills. When contracted-in vocational courses run in the Coldingley Construction Centre, they are in high demand, yet the churn in prisoners can mean that valued places are wasted as men leave just before or during the courses. For those seeking to learn or improve essential modern digital skills, the fragmented and hard-to-access nature of Coldingley’s limited IT resources is a missed opportunity and a source of frustration.

## Library

Coldingley has a good library playing an important role in its literacy strategy. In addition to continuing to run the Coldingley book club, a creative writing course and providing more capacity for ‘Storybook Dads’ to help parents in prison to record bedtime stories and messages, the library now runs a popular 10x10 writing challenge, a 100-word writing competition. The library is prominent in improving prison communication. A bright and interesting monthly newsletter, *Shelf Talk*, promotes library activities and stock additions. The Governor is available in the library every Monday evening.



**Background art for Storybook Dads produced in Coldingley’s sign shop**

Helped by a better and more settled regime, usage has risen steadily as all wings have access to the library at least weekly. There is generally better information and familiarity about library opening hours. If work is short, leaving men unneeded or unassigned to a job, they are now allowed extra library access. January and February had record numbers of loans and March saw a record number of visits.<sup>17</sup>

Apart from a static budget and the perennial problem of stock shrinkage, a new issue faced by the library has been the churn in the trained orderlies. Men in this job are often successful in getting their category D status to ease pressures on the closed prison estate capacity.

<sup>17</sup> More library usage data is in Annex 7.2.

## 7.2 Vocational training, work

The Governor's annual target was to get 50% of men off the enclosed wings (A/F, B, D and E) and into workplaces or on vocational/academic courses. The Board has never seen anywhere near the potential total 190 capacity present in these workplaces. Capacities are determined by difficulties resourcing local instructors rather than by space and equipment. The best month saw on average 43% leaving the targeted wings, but more recently the proportion had dropped well below this level.

Coldingley has four significant 'industries' offering the 190 workplaces:

- MNH Sustainable Cabin Services: considered by many prisoners to be the mundane entry level work of disentangling airline headphone wires for reuse, capacity 50
- Print shop: mainly Ministry of Justice/HM Prisons and Probation Service (HMPPS) funded work, much of it entry level involving folding card and paper with a handful of jobs operating machinery, capacity 55
- Sign shop: one of two workshops mainly serving the prison estate – a wider mix of skills – both digitally designing and producing signage, capacity 45
- DHL (a logistics company): warehousing and distribution, picking canteen, for three or four prisons including Coldingley, capacity 40

These capacities are based on one specialist instructor per 10 men and one non-specialist instructor per 15 men. More recently attendances have improved. In a Board study of the first week in June, 140 men were allocated to these industries and between 100 and 120 (70%-85% of those allocated) might attend.

Attendances at sign and print shops have improved recently with more work to keep men occupied. MNH attendance recovered from a slump caused by low pay when attendance and productivity related higher pay bands returned. DHL continues to have staffing difficulties and is an unpopular workplace despite being well paid by prison standards. It often runs at half its employment capacity, having lost experienced men either to category D, for disciplinary reasons or frustration at the poor working conditions. DHL often has insufficient staff to facilitate induction of much needed new workers.

Vocational training and work have seen positive developments in the past year:

- weekly work allocation meetings are often well-attended with lively discussions and representation from education, industries and senior operational staff from the wings. But the meetings do not often take a sufficiently strategic view of how work is allocated and often do little allocating
- job fairs were held in September and June in the sports hall with many large businesses from a wide range of industries present
- a tentative attempt at making better use of prisoners' practical skills with support from HMP Lewes has started. A 'clean and decent' area for simpler maintenance tasks (e.g. furniture repair) has been set up, it is early days and finding acceptably skilled and suitable prisoners has been a slow process.



- the largest of the workshops has been cleared and re-opened as the Coldingley Construction Centre with contractors running courses in bricklaying (12 weeks, 3 a year), dry-lining (6 weeks, 6 a year) and roofing courses (4 weeks, 4 a year). The in-demand forklift driving programme runs a three week course throughout the year, but only takes three men at a time, which does not get near to meeting the potential demand.

The Creator Centre allows men to develop computer graphic design skills while undertaking HMPPS contracts to provide e-learning courses used throughout the prison system. It is an under-utilised facility providing modern in-demand skills. The tutor has said how he struggles with prisoner churn, often being offered men with fewer than 35 days left before release. This makes it harder to find and train men to see through creative design projects. Regrettably, the practical solution for delivering contracts is to operate well below capacity with a handful of experienced men.

### **7.3 Offender management, progression**

Coldingley offender management unit (OMU) operates with a settled staff group. Their workload increased again with capacity pressures throughout the national prison estate. SDS40,<sup>18</sup> several changes to home detention curfew (HDC -tagging) and parole eligibility dates required multiple and overlapping sentence reviews and recalculations. The OMU was under pressure to recategorise as many men as possible to category D to fill vacancies in the open estate. The unit achieved a new peak of 172 men transferring from Coldingley to category D prisons.

Each year Coldingley receives significant numbers of men without offender assessment system (OASys, used to assess the risks and needs of prisoners) and sentence plans. The OMU must do their best to plug this gap if the men are to progress. The acute capacity crisis in category B reception prisons has considerably worsened this problem.

<sup>18</sup> SDS40 was introduced to tackle the ongoing overcrowding crisis in prisons. Certain prisoners serving 'standard determinate sentences' (SDS) became eligible to be released after serving 40% of their sentence instead of 50%.



	No sentence plan, monthly average	OASys completed in the year
22-23	36	362
23-24	67	259
24-25	77	360

On average three men arrive every week without an OASys. An OASys is an intrinsic part of the sentence plan to be completed within 10 weeks of sentencing. Yet the Board is now seeing men arrive at a resettlement prison within six weeks of being sentenced.

With support from remote prison offender managers (POMs), the OMU has done well to complete the OASys assessments it has, but the number of prisoners without a progression plan is rising and there are obstacles to reaching targets for those with up-to-date plans:

- in recent months with rising number of recalls, the responsibility for most of the men without an OASys has been with the outside community offender manager (COM)
- Coldingley's lack of accredited behavioural and thinking skills programmes and the difficulty of arranging transport to prisons which do offer them is a perennial issue. This situation has not improved
- there has been a lack of release on temporary licence (ROTL) work. So men transferring to category D have a less-than-ideal preparation about what to expect in the open estate
- almost a third of men are on indeterminate sentences (mainly lifers). They see the needs of the increasing number close to release or recategorisation taking priority over their sentence planning.

Nevertheless, there have been brighter developments in sentence progression:

- the respected peer mentor group, Turning Lives Around, continues to grow and provide men with practical advice on achieving specific sentence plan targets
- a video Q & A link-up with HMP Ford OMU for invited potential category D men should help more men make a successful transition to open conditions
- lifer days, lifer forums and the lifer orderlies continue to fill development gaps encouraging progression for the large cohort serving long sentences through promotion of the value of lifelong learning and the acquisition of new skills
- a lifer wing with capacity for 32 men has been designated and opened with enhanced facilities on E wing in May. The prison's first specialist trained lifer officers have been trained.

Some prisoners have remarked that OMU staff are not sufficiently visible. Given the complexity of their increased workload, senior managers have concerns about adding to it. Judging from the lively interaction the Board has observed when the OMU talks at induction, it seems that some form of wider OMU surgery would be welcome and can ultimately lead to greater efficiency and understanding. More informal contact between key worker and POM in line with the offender management in custody system (OMiC, a project designed to transform the way prisoners progress through their sentences by building better relationships between staff and prisoners) could further reduce OMU workload and improve prisoner outcomes.

### **IPP sentenced prisoners**

Despite the changes to the law of November 2024, Coldingley has a relatively high number of Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) prisoners. They make up almost 5%

of its population. Of the 26 present at the end of June, 20 were recalls. The other six have never been released.

	<b>Total IPP prisoners</b>	<b>Recalled IPP prisoners</b>
June 2021	9	Not known
June 2022	13	Not known
June 2023	23	16
June 2024	27	20
June 2025	26	20

There is no obvious explanation for why Coldingley, with its lack of necessary programmes, seems to attract IPP-sentenced prisoners. A possible reason for the stubbornly high total is their arrival in bulk drafts rather than negotiated exchanges - 9/14 IPP-sentenced newcomers this year arrived in transfer drafts from Kent Surrey and Sussex prisons.

However, Coldingley does have a good track record of supporting the IPPs:

- since we last reported, the OMU has assisted 14 IPPs in securing release by the parole board and the opportunity – unlike those remaining in prison – of benefitting from the legal changes to the IPP licence
- the OMU allocates more specialist/experienced POMs to IPPs wherever possible, especially to help with parole board preparation
- the OMU continues to organise an IPP forum with a specialist lawyer
- in accordance with the HMPPS Action Plan, psychologists in the mental health team have increased their interventions
- other Action Plan interventions such as the multi-disciplinary IPP progression panel (including POMs, COMs, SMS, neurodiversity and other functions as appropriate) were requirements Coldingley already had in place and which it continues to operate
- IPPs are more often identified as a distinct cohort across prison function meetings and analyses– notably at the SIM and safer custody meetings.

One area where little progress in line with the Action Plan was evident, was parole board hearings where significant delays still occurred.

#### All recalls

June 23 58

June 24 80

June 25 106

Consistent with a wider national trend, the number of all prisoner recalls at Coldingley has steadily risen taking up much needed capacity and frequently adding to disciplinary problems and extra resettlement work.

## **7.4 Family contact**

The large intake of new men from Isle of Sheppey prisons and difficulty in arranging compassionate category C to category C transfers means that more men are further from their families while in Coldingley. Visits and phonecalls are important. A national BT 20% reduction in prison phone charges was welcome. A transfer in public protection vetting of new PIN phone number requests to POMs in the OMU causes delays in

getting numbers authorised. There has been a marked rise in applications to the Board on this.

The visiting facilities and family liaison are organised by the charity Prison Advice and Care Trust (Pact). Before Christmas Pact experienced a serious staff shortage. In 2025 it has recovered and coped well. Complaints about visits are at their lowest level since the pandemic. The visits hall is bright and usually has a calm and friendly atmosphere. There has regularly been good news to report from the visits hall:

- family day entertainments including a pop band and children's entertainer were great successes
- despite occasional hold-ups at entry through staff inexperience or malfunctioning sliding doors, many visitors commented on how friendly and welcoming their reception at Coldingley had been
- a family day for neurodiverse residents complete with pets as therapy (PAT) dogs and face-painting was well received
- a prisoner wedding took place in the visits hall

## **7.5 Resettlement planning**

The 40% increase in prisoners released has meant more work for the resettlement staff and orderlies in the employment hub.

The often-late notice and uncertainty surrounding potential release dates caused by SDS40 and extended HDC (tag) eligibility periods and the overlapping of various schemes caused stress for many potential early releases as well as exacerbating the demands on staff.

The challenges of resettlement are illustrated by an interview with an unhappy new arrival from Elmley on the Isle of Sheppey. He had just two weeks to serve before being released back into Kent. Elmley and Coldingley may both be in the same prison service administrative region but they are at opposite ends of it and far apart.

In early September the Board interviewed nine men being released the following week in the first wave of SDS40. Only six had engaged with resettlement but were full of praise for the efforts of the employment hub in ensuring they had IDs, bank accounts and appropriate DWP benefit referrals. The main stress factor was uncertainty around accommodation. Four of the nine had anxieties over where they would be sleeping. The main responsibility lay with the community rather than the prison offender managers. Community probation's last-minute efforts on their behalf were described by those affected as 'running late' and 'chaotic'. Two of the four said they expected to be swiftly recalled.

## The work of the IMB

The Board has ten members, of whom three are in training.

### 1. Board statistics

1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025 (data reporting year)

Recommended complement of Board members	12
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	8
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	10
Total number of monitoring visits to the establishment	232
Total number of segregation reviews attended	83

### 2. Applications to the IMB

1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	12	20
B	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives schemes, sanctions	7	8
C	Equality	6	11
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	14	8
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	9	23
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	8	5
F	Food and kitchens	5	4
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	15	17
H1	Property within this establishment	31	26
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	26	20
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	12	4
I	Sentence management, including HDC (home detention curfew), ROTL (release on temporary licence), parole, release dates, re-categorisation	27	32
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	14	19
K	Transfers	14	7
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system	15	18
	<b>Total number of applications</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>222</b>



## Annex 1: Glossary

ACCT	Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (plans for those at risk of self-harm)
CNA	Certified Normal Accommodation
code blue	medical emergency call involving chest pain, difficulty in breathing, unconscious, choking, fitting or concussed, severe allergic reaction or suspected stroke
CNWL	Central and North West London (NHS healthcare provider)
COM	Community Offender Manager (a probation officer)
CSCS	CSCS card, Construction Skills Certification Scheme card
CSIP	Challenge, Support Intervention Plan
CSU	Care and Separation Unit (the 'Seg')
DIRF	Discrimination Incident Report Form
DSH	Deliberate self-harm
DST	Dedicated Search Team
ECSL	End of Custody Supervised Licence (early release scheme)
EDS	Extended Determinate Sentences (IPP sentence replacement)
FTE	Full time equivalent
GFSL	Government Facility Services Ltd.
HCC	Healthcare Centre
HDC	Home Detention Curfew ('tag')
HMPPS	His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service
ISFL	Incentivised Substance Free Living (a specialised wing for addiction recovery)
KSS	Kent, Surrey, Sussex (the HMPPS region)
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
NOMIS	National Offender Management Information System (sometimes c-NOMIS)
OASys	Offender (risk) Assessment System
OCG	Organised crime group
OMiC	Offender Management in Custody
OMU	Offender Management Unit
OSAG	Operational and System Assurance Group (HMPPS internal auditors)
OSG	Officer Support Grade
Pact	Prison Advice and Care Trust (national prison charity)
POM	Prison Offender Manager (a probation officer)
R45G	Prison Rule 45 Good Order and/or Discipline or Own Protection
R55CC	Prison Rule 55 Cellular Confinement (a punishment)
RBH	Rigid bar handcuffs
ROTL	Release On Temporary Licence
SDS40	Standard Determinate Sentences forty percent tariff
SMS	Substance Misuse Services
SMT	Senior Management Team
TEC	Technology and Education Centre
TPRS	Temporary Presumptive Recategorisation Scheme
UoF	Use of force

## Annex 2: Service providers

- Healthcare/mental health care: Central and North West London NHS Trust (CNWL)
- Substance misuse services Forward Trust, Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous
- Social care Surrey County Council
- Learning and skills Milton Keynes College
- Library Surrey County Council
- Employment hub Jobcentre Plus
- Resettlement Probation Service, Making Connections
- Family services Prison Advice and Care Trust (Pact)
- Restorative justice Belong
- Maintenance Government Facility Services Ltd. (GFSL)
- Refurbishment works Bowmer & Kirkland – managing contractor
- Escort contractor Serco

## Annex 3: Summary demographics

### Age

	Jun-22		Jun-23		Jun-24		Jun-25	
21-29	124	26%	130	26%	110	22%	108	21%
30-39	191	40%	184	37%	195	38%	196	39%
40-49	94	20%	107	21%	124	24%	126	25%
50-59	51	11%	58	12%	56	11%	50	10%
60-69	9	2%	16	3%	20	4%	23	5%
70+	5	1%	5	1%	3	1%	5	1%
	<u>474</u>		<u>500</u>		<u>508</u>		<u>508</u>	

Average age	37.1	37.8	38.6	38.4
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### Ethnicity

	Jun-21		Jul-22		Jun-23		Jun-24		Jun-25	
White British (W1-W9)	249	55%	245	52%	246	49%	272	54%	321	62%
Black (B1, B2, B9)	130	29%	145	31%	158	31%	136	27%	108	22%
Asian or Asian British (A1-9)	35	8%	35	7%	50	10%	47	9%	34	7%
Mixed heritage (M1, M2, M3)	33	7%	34	7%	38	7%	41	8%	36	8%
Other or not stated	5	1%	12	3%	15	3%	12	2%	9	2%
	<u>452</u>		<u>471</u>		<u>507</u>		<u>508</u>		<u>508</u>	

### Religion

	Jun-22		Jun-23		Jun-24		Jun-25	
Christian	210	45%	202	40%	207	41%	219	43%
Muslim	127	27%	168	33%	158	31%	128	25%
Rastafarian	4	1%	14	3%	9	2%	12	2%
Bhuddist	10	2%	10	2%	12	2%	10	2%
Sikh	4	1%	2	0%	3	1%	2	0%
Jewish	3	1%	4	1%	2	0%	7	1%
Hindu	113	24%	3	1%	6	1%	1	0%
Other/None	<u>471</u>		<u>104</u>	21%	<u>111</u>	22%	<u>129</u>	25%
			<u>507</u>		<u>508</u>		<u>508</u>	

### Sentence Type

	Jun-23	Jun-24	Jun-25
Determinate	355	341	334
Lifer	121	140	146
IPP	23	27	26
Immigration	1	0	0
	<u>500</u>	<u>508</u>	<u>506</u>

### Recalls

	Jun-23	Jun-24	Jun-25
Life sentence	11	14	12
IPP Sentence	16	20	20
Determinate	31	46	74
	<u>58</u>	<u>80</u>	<u>106</u>

### Duration of stay at Coldingley

	Jun-23	Jun-24	Jun-25
Less than 1 Month	50	40	59
1 Month - 6 Months	162	174	183
6 Months - 1 Year	97	82	96
1 Year - 2 Years	99	92	73
2 Years - 4 Years	55	82	60
4 Years+	37	38	37
	<u>500</u>	<u>508</u>	<u>508</u>
Average stay (years)	1.28	1.42	1.23

### Category

	Jun-23	Jun-24	Jun-25
Cat C	485	496	494
Cat D	15	12	14

### Determinate Sentences

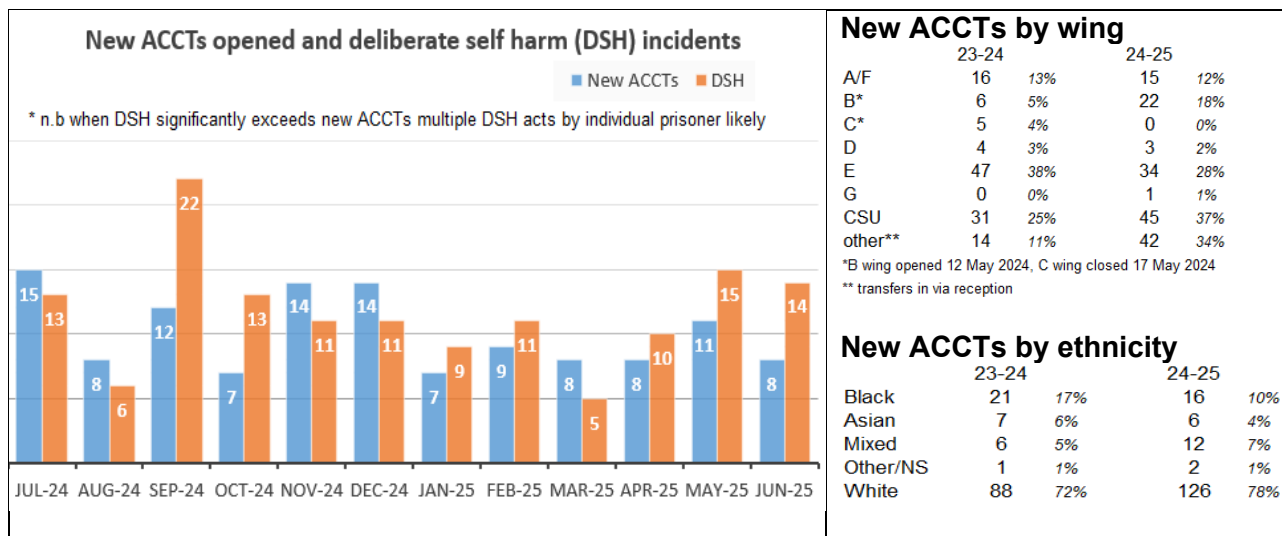
	Jun-23	Jun-24	Jun-25
Less than 6 Months	1	0	2
6 Months to less than 1 Year	1	3	7
1 Year to less than 2 Years	11	8	25
2 Years to less than 3 Years	45	41	49
3 Years to less than 4 Years	31	38	36
4 Years to less than 10 Years	150	156	167
10 Years or more and Less than Life	130	116	90
Average sentence length (years)	8.80	8.77	7.57

## Annex 4: Safety data

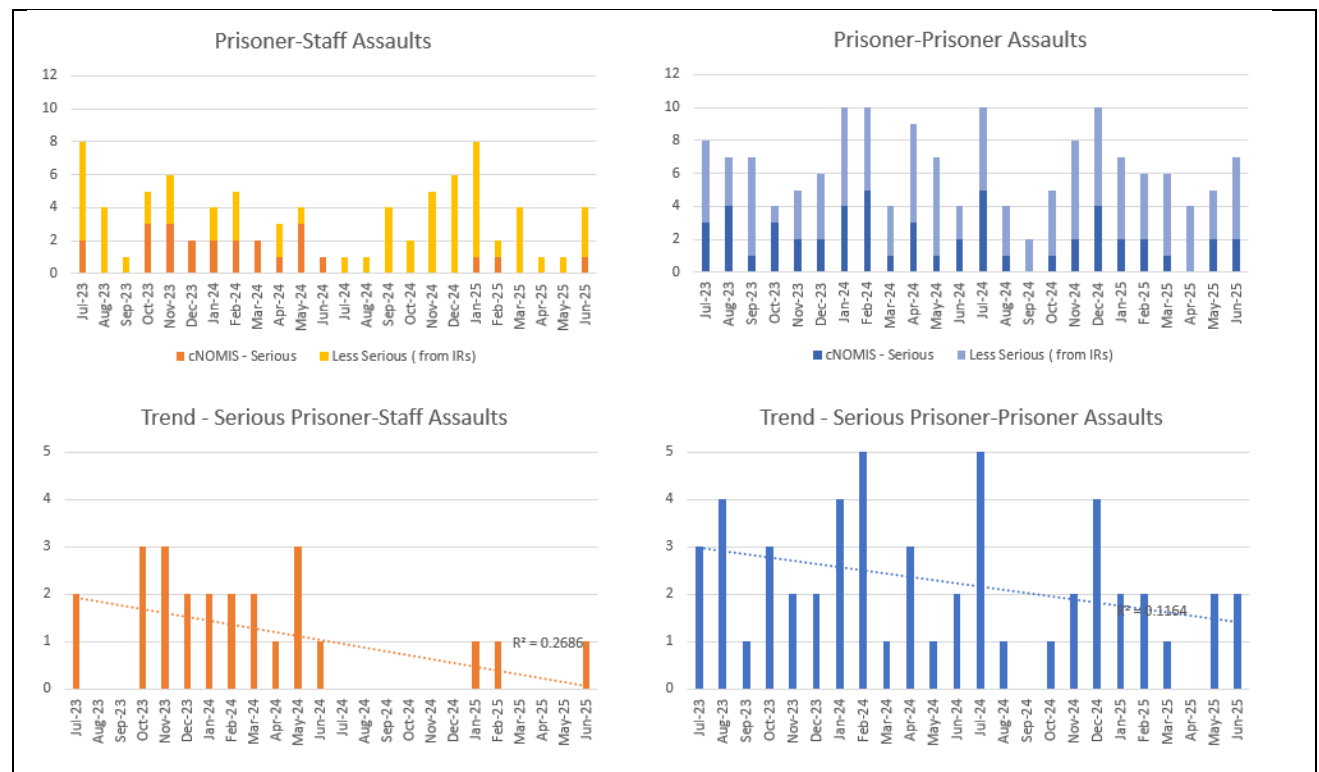
### 4.1 Reception: prisoner movement

	22-23	23-24	24-25	
Court	31	29	26	-3
Release	182	231	326	95
Temporary Absence (in & out)	1341	1091	1081	-10
Total Admissions	576	516	656	140
from A Cat	1	0	2	2
from B Cat	402	381	506	125
from C Cat	134	86	90	4
from D Cat	35	49	53	4
Other	4	0	5	5
Total Transfers Out	342	256	314	58
to A Cat	0	0	1	1
to B Cat	55	33	26	-7
to C Cat	158	108	115	7
to D Cat	129	115	172	57
Total	2472	2123	2403	280

### 4.2 ACCTs & deliberate self-harm

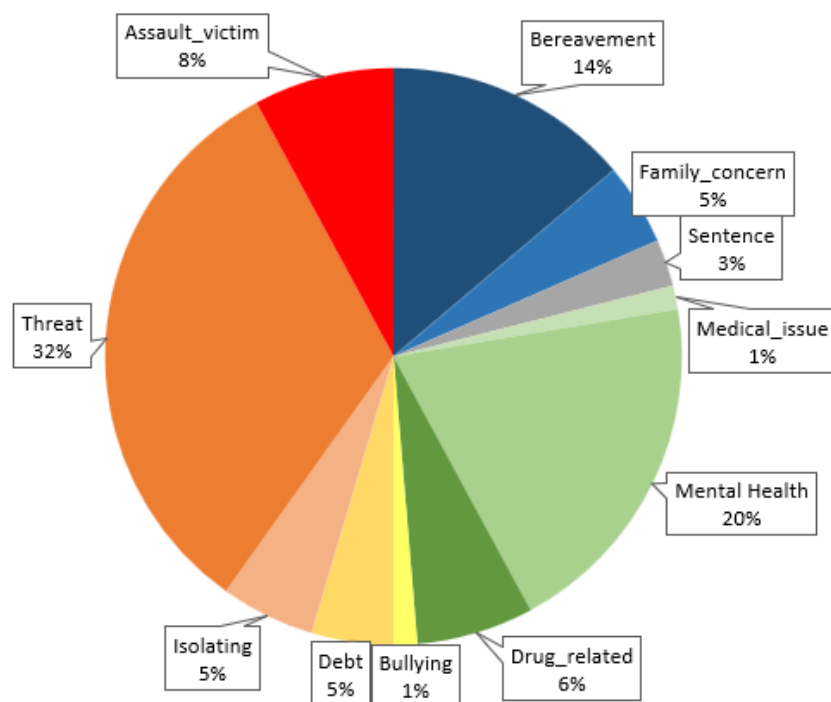


### 4.3 Assaults, violence, threat



### Main reason for opening support plans, Jul-24 to Jun 25

Excluding 16, 10% general/other



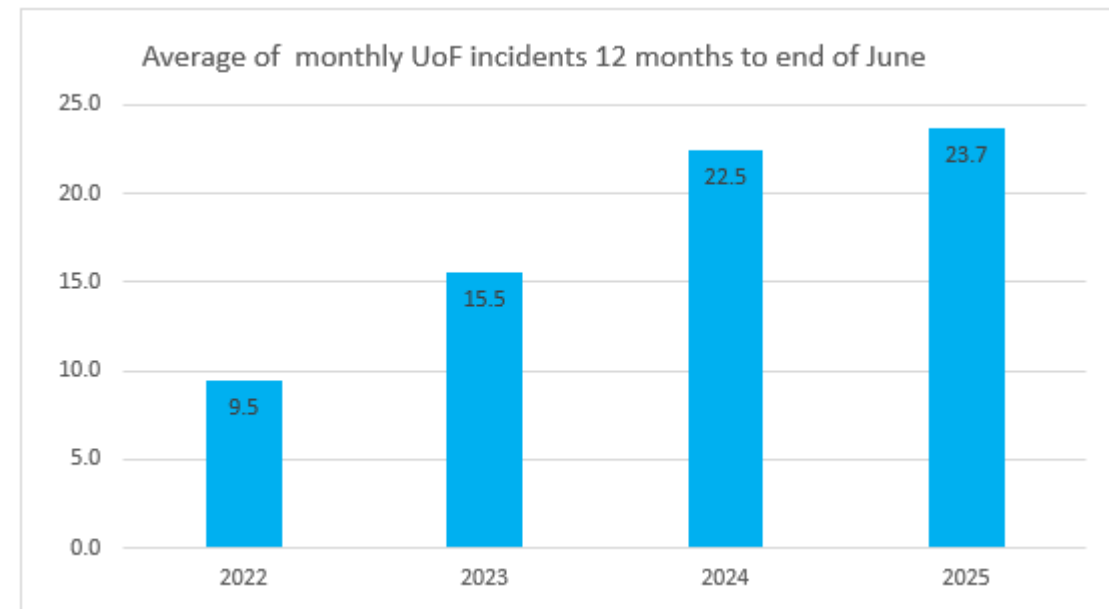
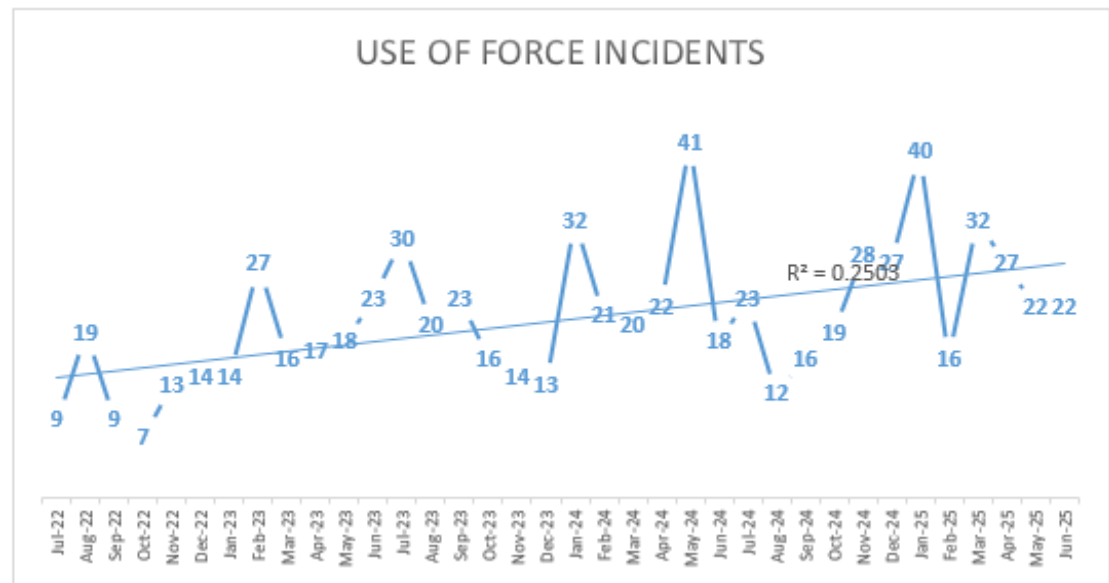
#### Support plans by ethnicity

	Asian	Black	Mixed	White	Other	Tot
23-24	9	35	10	131	1	186
	5%	19%	5%	70%	1%	
24-25	11	16	13	127	1	168
	7%	10%	8%	76%	1%	

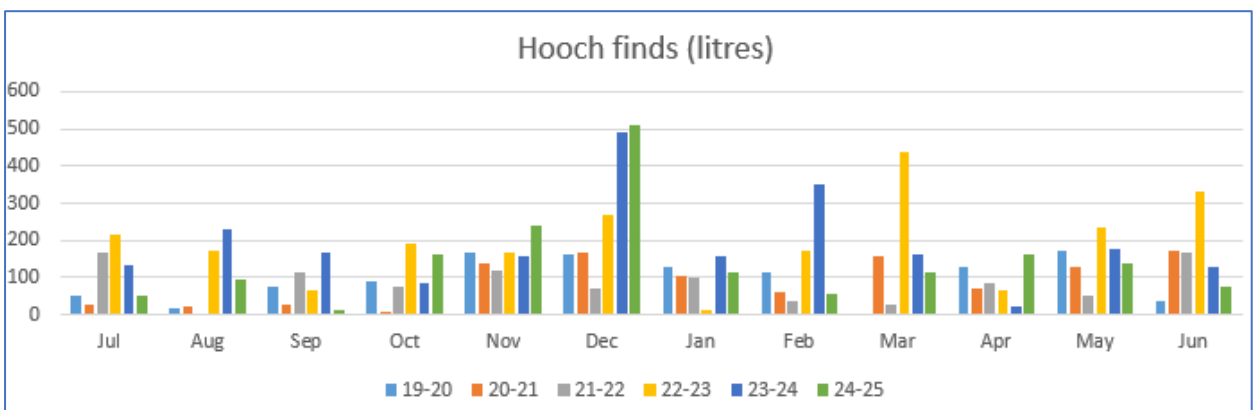
#### CSIPs by ethnicity

	Asian	Black	Mixed	White	Other	Tot
23-24	4	36	10	42	4	96
	4%	38%	10%	44%	4%	
24-25	5	25	9	39	1	79
	6%	32%	11%	49%	1%	

#### 4.4 Use of force



#### 4.5 Preventing illicit items



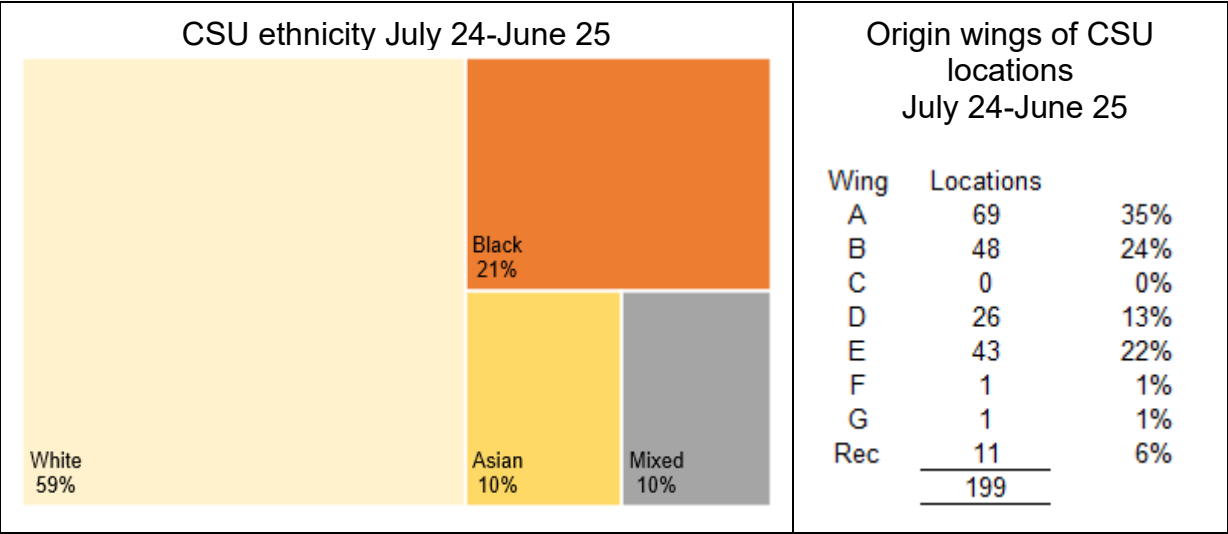
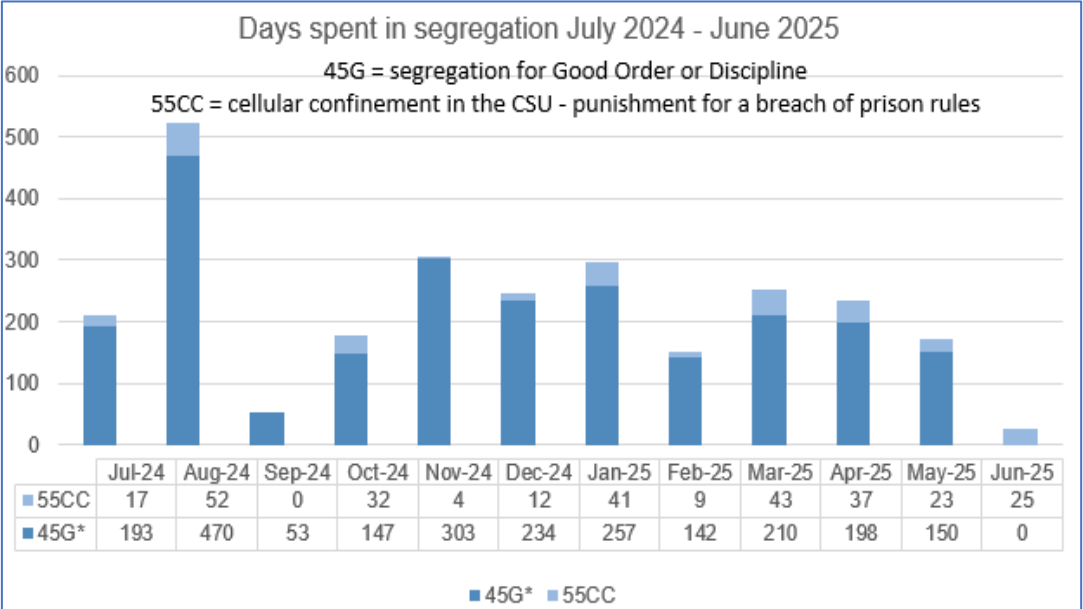
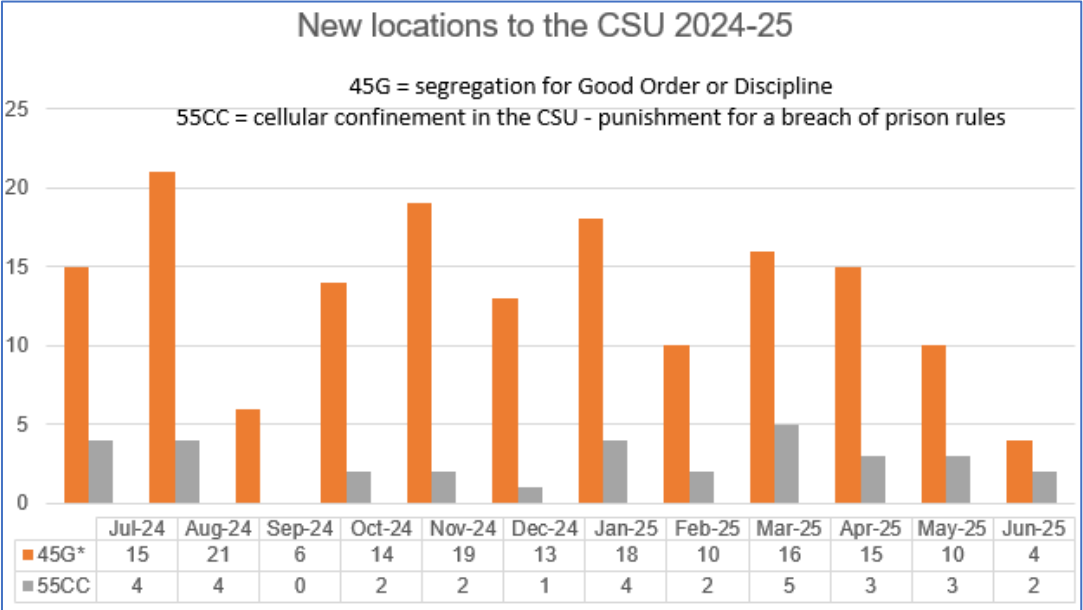
## **Annex 5: Fair and humane treatment data**

### **5.1 Accommodation**

#### **Schedule of refurbishment work**

- Night sanitation (A-D wings): installation of a combination WC and wash hand basin in each cell with existing toilets converted to shower cubicles.
- Cell call system (A-D wings, CSU, and F wing): replacement of the existing system with a new cell call system.
- Cell windows (A-D wings, CSU, and F wing): replacement of the existing single-glazed cell windows with new Mk8 windows and box section bars.
- Re-wiring: replacement of all surviving original wiring, distribution boards and associated accessories.
- Fire safety improvements: a full compliance review to identify issues with the existing fire safety measures in all site buildings to define and implement all necessary improvement works.
- Heating main distribution: installation of air source heat pumps and the replacement of associated pipework to improve the heating supplies.

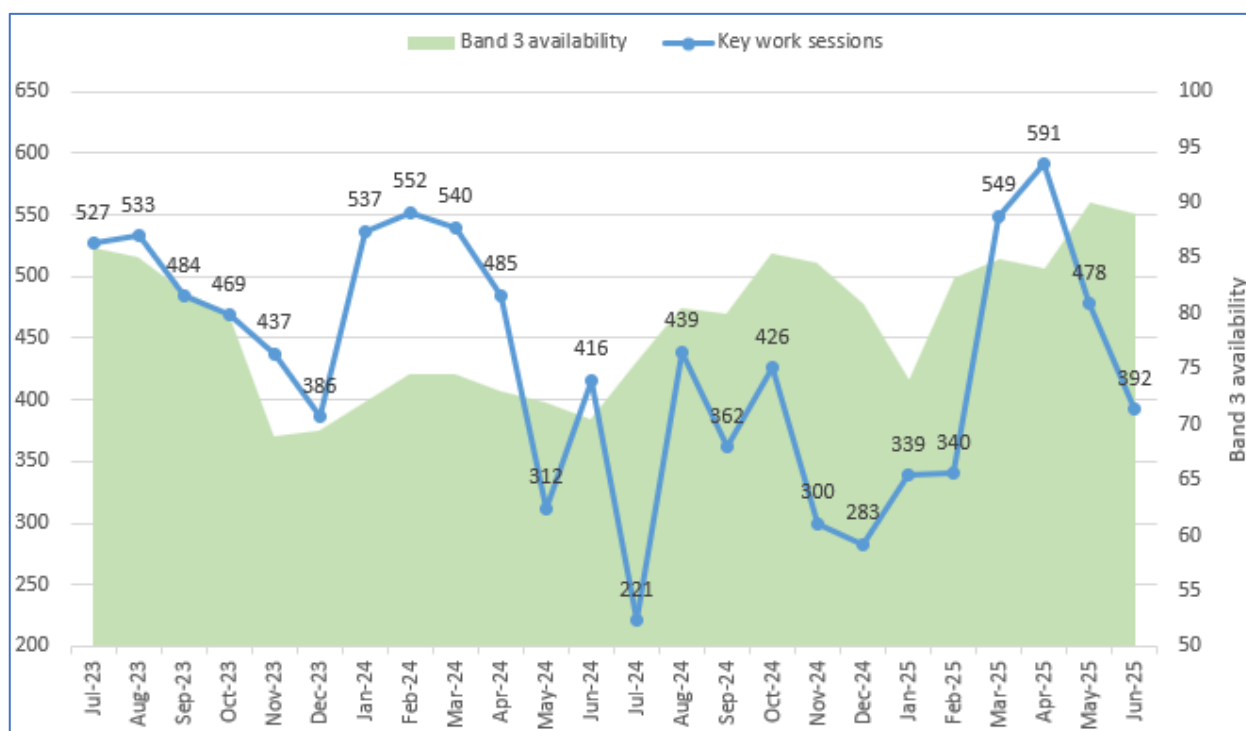
5.2 Segregation





### 5.3 Staff and prisoner relationships, key workers

**Key work sessions recorded on Nomis: July 2023 – June 2025 and the effective availability of Band 3 prison officers.**

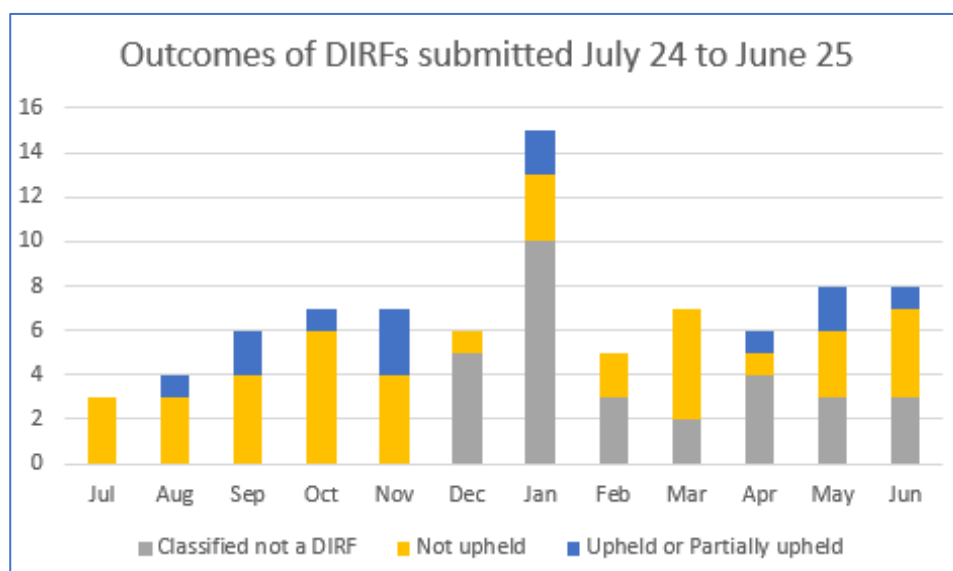
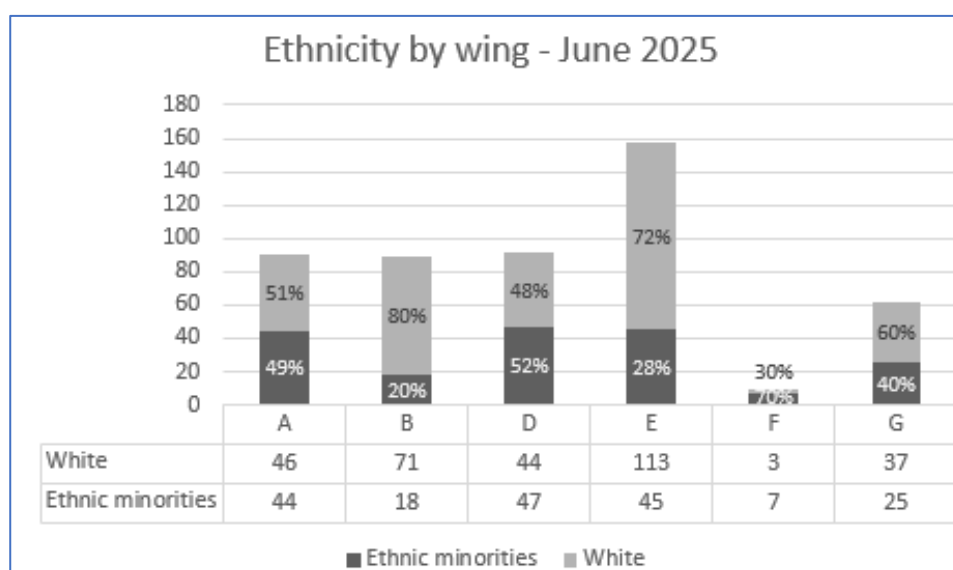


	22-23	23-24		24-25	
Total key work sessions	8036	5678	-29%	4720	-17%

The latest survey, repeating much of a 2023 survey, interviewing 69 prisoners and 16 staff about key work and examining 84 NOMIS reports involving 57 prisoners, found:

- the average resident had 0.9 sessions that month, half the target fortnightly delivery rate, but with considerable variability in delivery from wing to wing
- the quality assessment using HMPPS guidance found 25% of session reports evidenced a good quality session, while 12% were deemed poor or not a proper session an improvement on the 20% found two years ago
- of the 69 interviewed prisoners, 43 knew who their key worker was, although not necessarily their name
- 29 said they were getting what they felt was about the right number of regular sessions
- but about a third (22) of those asked said they had never had a key work session while at Coldingley - or were not aware they had had one.
- officers and men agreed that the level and frequency of key work need to be flexed depending on sentence stage – it was much more important in early days or approaching milestones than, for example, in the middle of a long sentence.
- only 2 of the 16 officers said they were able to spend the allocated 2.25 hours per week on key work, only 5 could recall receiving any feedback whatsoever
- nobody had ever met with both keyworker and prison offender manager (POM) at the same time or knew whether POM and keyworker had ever spoken face to face about them.

## 5.4 Equality and diversity



## 5.5 Incentives schemes status

	Jun-22		Jun-23		Jun-24		Jun-25	
Enhanced	323	68%	314	62%	319	63%	289	57%
Standard	128	27%	160	32%	171	34%	165	32%
Basic	21	4%	32	6%	18	4%	54	11%
Total	472		506		508		508	

### Incentive scheme ethnicity distribution

	Enhanced		Standard		Basic		All Prisoners
Black	73	25%	31	19%	4	7%	22%
Asian	13	4%	17	10%	4	7%	7%
Mixed	20	7%	10	6%	6	11%	8%
Other/NS	7	2%	2	1%	0	0%	2%
White	176	61%	105	64%	40	74%	62%
Total	289		165		54		

## 5.6 Complaints

Subject	12 months to June 2024		12 months to June 2025		Change
	Complaint Numbers	Rank	Complaint Numbers	Rank	Numbers
Property	510	1	338	1	-172
Residential/Wing Issues	149	2	172	2	23
Against Staff	71	5	116	3	45
Confidential Access	65	6	98	4	33
Canteen	95	3	69	5	-26
Employment	80	4	60	6	-20
Security	44	8	59	7	15
Offender Management	47	7	56	8	9
Finance	41	12	50	9	9
IEP/Reviews	43	9	47	10	4
Adjudications	42	11	37	11	-5
Miscellaneous	41	12	36	12	-5
Categorisation	43	9	28	13	-15
Visits	35	16	20	14	-15
Kitchen	36	14	19	15	-17
HDC	17	19	19	15	2
Transfer	36	14	16	17	-20
Accidents	13	21	13	18	0
Letters	25	17	12	19	-13
Care and Separation Unit	16	20	11	20	-5
Gymnasium	23	18	7	21	-16
Bullying	2	25	4	22	2
Education	8	22	3	23	-5
Offending Behaviour Programmes	3	23	2	24	-1
Medical	3	23	1	25	-2
Total	1488		1293		-195

### Complaints by ethnicity July 2024 –June 2025 \*where ethnicity was recorded

	Total	White	Black	Asian	Mixed	Other
Accident	13	69%	23%	0%	8%	0%
Against Staff	113	59%	24%	4%	10%	3%
Canteen	69	83%	9%	1%	3%	4%
Categorisation	28	54%	29%	7%	7%	4%
Education	3	33%	33%	0%	33%	0%
Employment	60	73%	17%	0%	7%	3%
Adjudications	34	47%	32%	9%	6%	6%
Gymnasium	7	57%	43%	0%	0%	0%
Bullying	4	25%	75%	0%	0%	0%
HDC	19	42%	42%	5%	5%	5%
IEP Reviews	47	38%	21%	0%	4%	36%
Kitchen	19	58%	32%	0%	5%	5%
Security	59	69%	22%	2%	5%	2%
Medical	1	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Miscellaneous	36	67%	31%	3%	0%	0%
Finance	50	52%	28%	10%	8%	2%
Care and Separation Unit	11	0%	73%	9%	18%	0%
Offender Management	56	45%	30%	9%	4%	13%
Letters	12	58%	25%	0%	8%	8%
Property	333	45%	29%	8%	11%	7%
Residential/Wing Issues	172	54%	28%	5%	3%	9%
Offending Behaviour Programmes	2	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Transfer	16	38%	19%	0%	0%	44%
Visits	20	65%	25%	0%	0%	10%
	1184	54%	27%	5%	7%	7%

## Annex 6: Healthcare data

### 1 Substance Misuse Service providers (SMS)

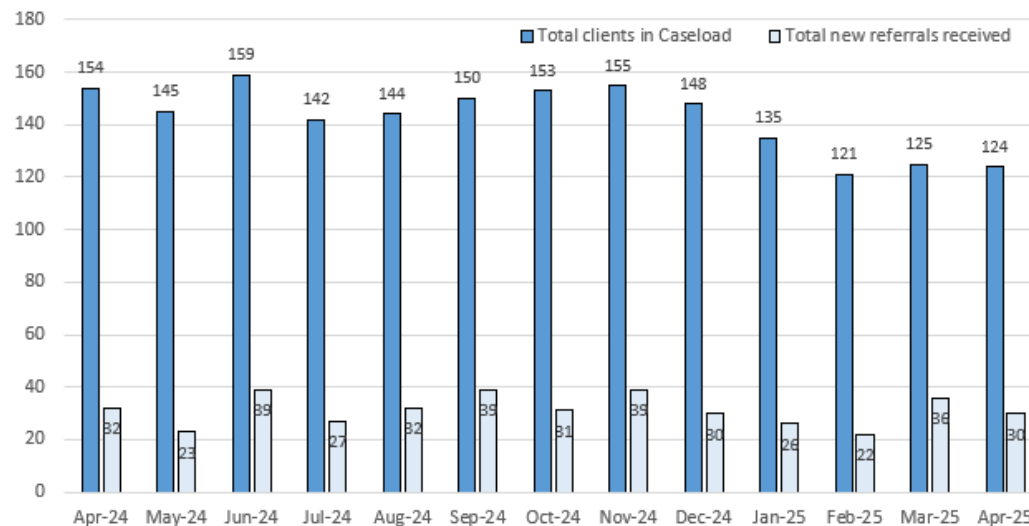
#### Internal provision

- The Bridge Programme (a high intensity 6-week programme)
- Stepping Stones (a medium intensity 3-week programme)
- Living Safely (a 1-week low intensity programme)
- Social Skills (a 4-day programme)
- 1-day workshops on PS and relapse prevention
- Auricular acupuncture
- Peer Mentor led support groups
- Gamblers Anonymous (GA) bi-weekly
- Surviving & Thriving in Category D workshop – runs 4 times per year.

#### External provision

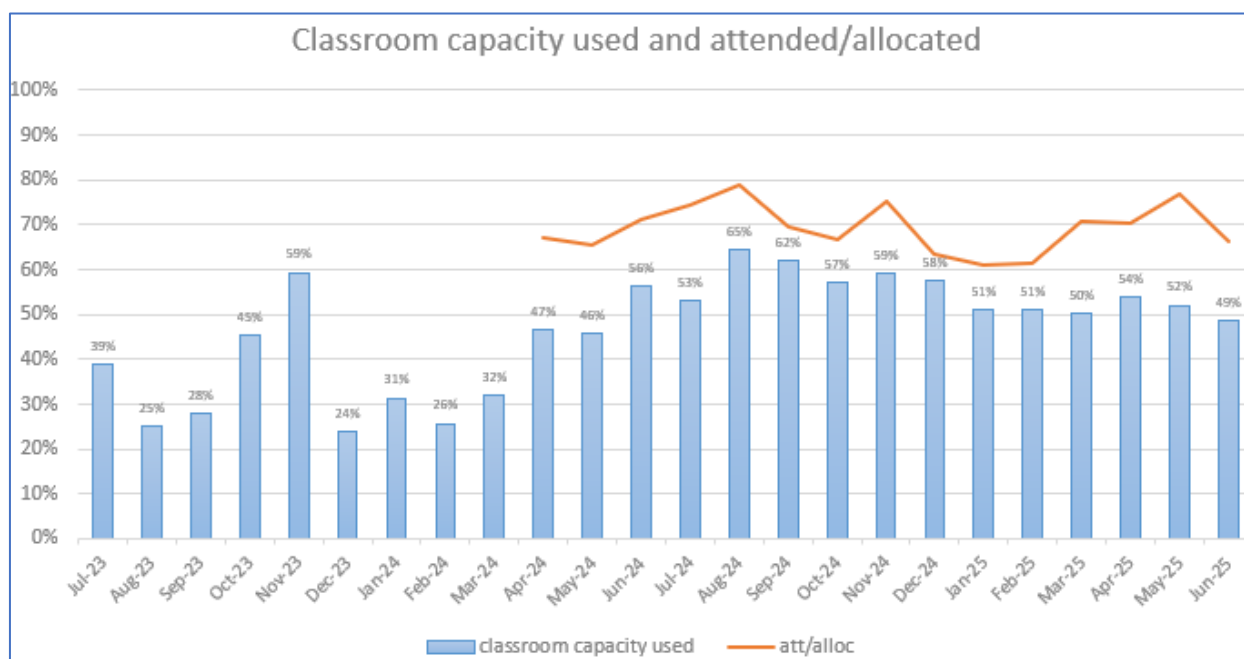
- Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) weekly
- Narcotics Anonymous (NA) weekly
- Pet As Therapy (PAT) dog visits (monthly)
- Lived Experience workshops (invited speakers with lived experience - monthly)
- Al-Anon – monthly

### 2 SMS caseload and monthly referrals

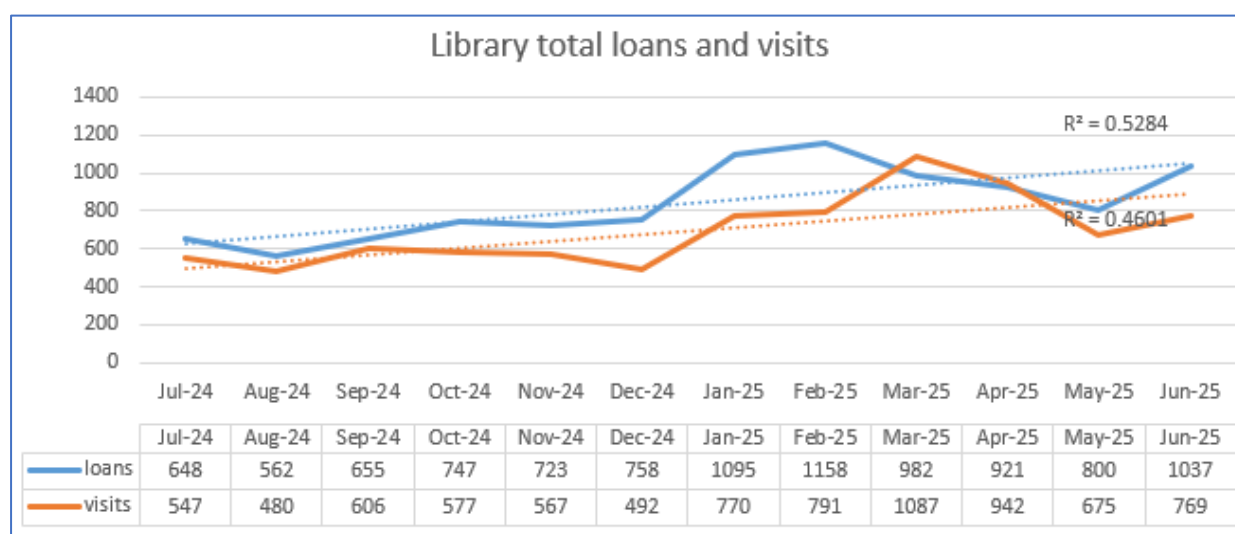


## Annex 7: Progression and resettlement data

### 1 Education attendance rates



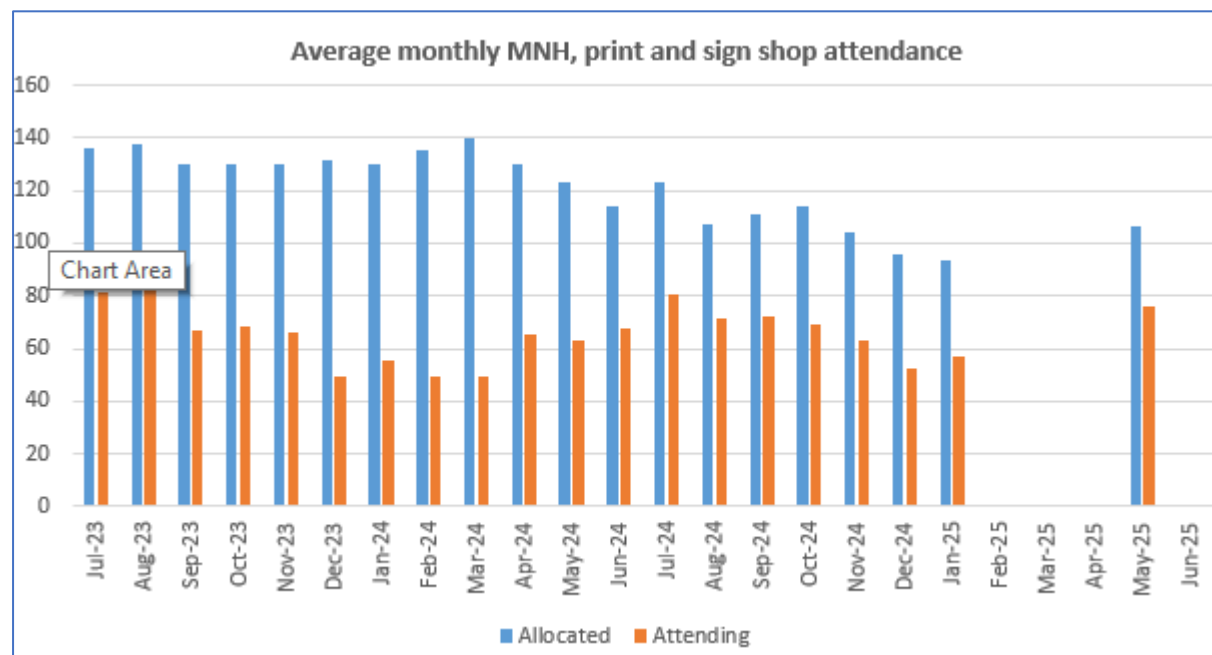
### 2 Library visits and loans July 24 – June 25



### 3 Industries attendance rates

(MNH, Signs, Print)

Average attendances per day			
Month	Allocated	Attending	% attending
Jul-23	136	81	60%
Aug-23	137	82	60%
Sep-23	129	66	51%
Oct-23	130	68	52%
Nov-23	130	66	51%
Dec-23	131	49	37%
Jan-24	129	55	42%
Feb-24	136	50	37%
Mar-24	140	49	35%
Apr-24	130	65	50%
May-24	123	63	51%
Jun-24	114	68	59%
Jul-24	123	81	66%
Aug-24	107	71	67%
Sep-24	111	72	65%
Oct-24	114	69	61%
Nov-24	104	63	60%
Dec-24	96	53	55%
Jan-25	93	57	61%
Feb-25			
Mar-25	MNH data lost		
Apr-25			
May-25	107	76	71%





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