



## **UK National Preventive Mechanism Submission to Special Rapporteur on Torture Thematic Report on Current issues and good practices in prison management**

**November 2023**

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The UK's National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) was established in March 2009 after the UK ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT) in December 2003. It is made up of 21 statutory bodies that independently monitor places of detention. In coordination across the four nations of the UK, the NPM focuses attention on practices in detention that could amount to ill-treatment.

Prison management is devolved in the United Kingdom, which means our membership cover three independent prison systems in England & Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. The NPM members who principally inspect and monitor prisons are:

- HM Inspectorate of Prisons England & Wales
- HM Inspectorate of Prisons Scotland
- Criminal Justice Inspectorate Northern Ireland
- Independent Monitoring Board England & Wales
- Independent Monitoring Board Northern Ireland

This submission briefly summarises key findings relevant to the Special Rapporteur's themes for consideration. The UK NPM will be pleased to provide further information where helpful to the Special Rapporteur's report.

We have divided our response into geographical jurisdictions as the findings are based on inspection and monitoring in that location – however many of the findings will be relevant across the UK.

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### **Measures to reduce overcrowding**

#### **Northern Ireland**

Overcrowding continues to be a significant issue in Northern Ireland. Increasingly prisoners are doubled up in cells designed for one person. Accommodation which had previously been found to be unsuitable and earmarked for closure have been reopened to accommodate the increasing population size, leading to prisoners being held in poor conditions. The increase in pre-trial detention has placed pressures across the system, 37% of the prison population in Northern Ireland were unsentenced detainees – higher than comparable jurisdictions. There has been a lack of adequate management information on assessing prison population and the length of time individuals were spending on bail and remand. The upward population trend is a significant concern.

#### **England & Wales**

There are plans to increase prison capacity to manage overcrowding – however the estate plan cannot keep up with the growth in population. In September 2023, 66% of establishments reported overcrowding. Effective, long-term planning is key.

The surge in prison population has meant the Prison Service has struggled to accommodate prisoners safely and decently. The practice of doubling up cells originally designed for single occupation is widespread – and cell sizes regularly fall short of internationally accepted standards. Doubling up in cramped cells (often with unscreened toilets) also takes a toll on prisoners mental health – spending 23 hours or more locked in close proximity with no privacy. Boards have reported prisoners paired with unsuitable or dangerous cellmates, such as vulnerable prisoners sharing with known aggressive prisoners.

The physical condition of the estate and its suitability for purpose has been widely criticised. These problems were particularly acute in Victorian prisons (which make up a third of the current prison estate), but they were also reported in prisons built as recently as the 1990s. Significant issues with ventilation, intolerably hot or cold temperatures, unusable showers, flooding and frequent sightings of rats and cockroaches have all been reported.

In addition, the population pressures mean that cells could often not be taken out of use for routine maintenance, such as window or plumbing repairs, as there was nowhere to move the occupant.

Increases to the population have also contributed to further poor outcomes for prisoners, including:

Poor time out of cell and a shortage of activity spaces. These shortages are often significant – for example at HMP/YOI Brinsford and HMP Stocken there were only enough full-time activity spaces for one-third of their population.

Poor preparation for release in some prisons, in particular a lack of key work, inadequate resettlement provision for individuals on remand, a lack of availability of accredited programmes and family ties being negatively impacted due to prisoners being held far from home.

Safety concerns, including prisons having to locally manage new risks due to population changes e.g. managing cohorts of prisoners who would not otherwise mix (e.g. HMP North Sea Camp) or managing tensions that were being exacerbated by overcrowding (e.g. HMP Leicester).

Variable provision for older prisoners, despite MoJ analysis indicating for some time that prisoners over 50 will continue to rise.

## **Scotland**

Population continues to rise in Scotland and overcrowding is a chronic issue that affects almost every outcome of an establishment. The Scottish Prison Service are reviewing population management arrangements to better align accommodation to the changing demographics with the aim of optimising capacity and in so doing establish a maximum threshold. This has led to some improved use of spare capacity at HMP/YOI Polmont, for example. Implementation is still ongoing and so it is too early to judge success.

Issues of overcrowding is not solely a prison service issue and decades of scrutiny have highlighted the dangers of sustained overcrowding; the recidivism rate is evidence of failure. There have not been any visible successful outcomes to date that would indicate a coordinated justice agency and parliamentary commitment.

## **Designing daily life in prisons to be focussed on meaningful and productive activities, rehabilitation and reintegration, and achieving good physical and psychological health**

### **Northern Ireland**

In line with other UK jurisdictions, the pace of recovering from the pandemic has been far too slow. Staff shortages have led to the redeployment of specialist staff who provided support for sentence management and progression.

### **England & Wales**

Following the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions, prisoners continue to face extremely limited regimes at many prisons. There continue to be lockdowns of entire wings due to insufficient staffing and cancellation of education and work are common. Prisoners not in work or education frequently spent 23 hours a day or more in their cells, only being unlocked for essential tasks such as collecting meals or showering. This was particularly common for prisoners on remand, who were less likely to be engaged in work or education. Remand prisoners comprised 18.5% of the prison population in September 2023, the highest proportion for 50 years.

All but one of the adult male prisons inspected in 2022-23 were rated poor or not sufficiently good for purposeful activity. Many prisons did not allow prisoners sufficient time in the fresh air, and some exercise yards were bleak environments. Recreational activities were very limited and overall, there was little for prisoners to do when unlocked.

Most prisons simply did not have enough activity spaces for all prisoners, which had a substantial and detrimental impact on their access to education and work. This situation was often exacerbated by overcrowding. Overcrowding also contributed towards obstacles to progression and rehabilitation - prisoners held in inappropriate prisons, such as prisoners with long sentences spending several years in a reception prison or being released directly from prisons not resourced to provide resettlement support. Prisoners also struggled to obtain transfers to prisons which were suitable for their progression and were therefore unable to access behaviour programmes mandated in their sentence plans, or specialist units from which they could benefit.

However, some leaders have started to introduce broader curriculums and more ambitious options to challenge prisoners and encourage them to progress and develop their skills and knowledge. In some establishments, education, skills and work had increased the breadth of the curriculum, improved the quality of learning in prison workshops and developed careers information, advice and guidance. At HMYOI Aylesbury unemployment had reduced from 40% to 25% after leaders made efforts to make use of all the activity spaces they had.

### **Scotland**

While much of the comments above relating to purposeful activity and lack of engagement apply to Scottish settings too - The Construction Academy at HMP Perth, while not yet fully evaluated, looks to be an excellent initiative working with a local construction firm to offer training in skills that will be relevant to finding a job on release. This focus on vocational skills has made some good steps in improving the offering in Scotland.

**Challenges and innovations for providing mental health provision, including for different groups of prisoners such as those with pre-existing psychological issues, victims of Torture, persons with neurodiverse conditions etc.**

**Northern Ireland**

The use of segregation for individuals experiencing mental distress when they should be accommodated in a mental health unit has been a repeated concern. As has the time it takes to transfer an individual from prison to a mental health unit once the decision has been made to move them.

Personality disorders are not recognised in legislation under the Mental Health (NI) Order 1986 which leads to a lack of services in prison custody. While steps have been made to improve this following an RQIA review, funding is a constraint.

**England & Wales**

Mental health issues are extremely prevalent in prisons across England and Wales and many Boards reported that these appeared to be exacerbated by the overcrowding, obstacles to progression, restricted regime and/or widespread drug use found at their prisons. It is difficult for prisons to adequately meet this level of need, as mental healthcare teams are particularly understaffed; in some regions, a third or more Boards raised mental healthcare shortfalls as a key issue so far in 2023.

We found an over-reliance on pharmacological treatments, which prevented patients addressing underlying trauma and improving health outcomes. Mental health training for prison officers continued to be very fragmented and non-existent in some establishments.

Poor mental health is a particularly prominent issue in the women's estate, where self-harm is considerably higher than in the men's estate. Self-harm rates in the women's estate rose every quarter between Q4 2021 and Q1 2023; in June in 2023 the rate was 65% higher than it had been a year before.

More positively, at HMP Coldingley and HMP Wayland there was strong consideration of mental health in arrivals. At Coldingley a mental health professional saw all new arrivals, which is not a practice that we routinely see in Category C establishments. This made sure that all arrivals had an early opportunity to discuss their mental health and well-being, which enabled prompt referrals to appropriate services. At Wayland the excellent health reception packs given to all prisoners on arrival provided health promotion leaflets and information about health services at the establishment.

At HMP Berwyn mental health peer champions worked alongside professional staff to offer advice and support to prisoners across all houses. Novel wing-based mental health cafes on every house enabled prisoners to be seen promptly. At HMP Hewell a targeted care pathway pilot provided intensive oversight of patients with the greatest mental health needs and was demonstrating improved outcomes for patients. At HMP & YOI Bronzefield through-the-gate support for women with mental health issues provided emotional and practical assistance on the day of their release and up to three months afterwards, enabling women to establish positive links and access help in the community.

**Scotland**

Neurodiversity in prisons is an increasing challenge where we have not seen particularly innovative practice. There is also an overreliance by courts and the NHS on prisons as a

'safe place' for assessment and containment until a bed becomes available in health or community alternatives are available, realistic and credible. The high percentage of women with ABI and significant prior trauma in prison argues against the effectiveness of diversion using community based preventive practices.

Overall, we see a picture in prison where too many individuals are held in settings not suited to their needs, where their health deteriorates, and they may be isolated for prolonged periods of time.

### **Measures taken to mitigate the use and impact of solitary confinement and the development of alternative approaches for both disciplinary and non-disciplinary segregation**

#### **Northern Ireland**

Those held in segregation are subject to greater vulnerability. The Special Rapporteur may wish to read <https://www.cjini.org/TheInspections/Inspection-Reports/2022/Jan-Mar/A-Review-of-into-the-operation-of-Care-and-Supervi>

Some identified good practice would include the increased use of technology to support enhanced governance and oversight of those held in Care and Supervision Units. There has been some encouraging development of a reintegration programme on exit from a CSU, and improvements in staff training and supervision.

#### **England and Wales**

There have been repeated findings of concern around inadequate conditions and limited regimes in segregation units. For most prisoners in segregation, their day consisted of a shower, 30 minutes of exercise and a telephone call.

The high level of non-disciplinary segregation was an acute and national issue. Many units are full, or nearly-full, and some prisons reported that prisoners were being segregated on wings because of this.

It is far too common for mentally ill prisoners to be held in segregation units for extended periods of time while awaiting transfers to secure mental health units. At some prisons it was usual for prisoners to be held beyond 42 days; stays of over 100 days were not uncommon, and at one prison a seriously unwell prisoner was segregated for over 550 days before transfer. At HMP Bristol, acutely mentally unwell patients were being held in segregated conditions whilst facing unacceptable delays waiting for transfer to secure inpatient facilities.

The picture is similar in women's prisons where segregation units are often used to hold those in mental health crisis, which is clearly detrimental to their health and wellbeing. Weak oversight and monitoring at some women's prisons meant we were not always able to see justification for the prolonged segregation of a small number of women, some of whom were at risk of self-harm.

There is some good staff-prisoner relations and reintegration planning has improved but still not good enough. At HMYOI Brinsford, a learning suite had recently been introduced in the unit, which gave prisoners access to a laptop so they could take self-development courses, such as CV writing.

#### **Scotland**

We have identified some serious concerns about the use of segregation in Scottish prisons and potential breaches of article 3. The Special Rapporteur is invited to read the report of HMIPS here, and the follow up work being carried out by the UKNPM.

[https://www.prisonsspectoratescotland.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publication\\_files/A%20The%20matic%20Review%20Of%20Segregation%20In%20Scottish%20Prisons.pdf](https://www.prisonsspectoratescotland.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publication_files/A%20The%20matic%20Review%20Of%20Segregation%20In%20Scottish%20Prisons.pdf)

**Laws, policies, special measures and management innovations adopted for groups with specific needs, such as women and girls, children and youth, indigenous peoples, members of national, ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities, LGBTQI+ persons, and people living with past trauma and/or people with neurodiverse conditions.**

## **Northern Ireland**

More needs to be done to develop and deliver interventions in a gender-responsive way and ensure criminal justice outcomes are responsive to women and girls' needs for example, community service that takes account of childcare needs. A greater focus is required on establishing the reasons behind women's imprisonment, particularly short-term sentences, and the development of appropriate targets to reduce this. We have found accommodation in the community for women leaving prison a significant concern and a delivery of a small custodial unit for women first recommended in 2011 has not been met.

Over-representation of Catholics in the justice system, including young males, as well as those from the Travelling Community has been identified as recurring themes in a number of CJI inspections. Although the NIPS and YJA had commissioned research on this, specific concerns around treatment of Catholic prisoners and staff were reported in the most recent full inspection of Maghaberry Prison (2022). Perceptions of staff victimisation, identified during the 2017 inspection of Magilligan Prison (2021) had not been addressed.

That said, there has been some encouraging good practice. For example, a women's Support Worker had been supporting the most vulnerable in Ash House Women's Prison during custody and on release. The rewards and sanctions scheme at Maghaberry had been adapted to better meet the needs of those who required additional support due to behavioural and learning difficulties.

## **England & Wales**

Work to promote fair treatment of prisoners from different groups has been slow to resume following COVID-19 restrictions, which limited the support available, but progress was also hampered by a lack of dedicated resources in some prisons.

Data on equality outcomes were sometimes limited to only a few areas of prison life, and we frequently found little evidence of action to make improvements, even when they showed disproportionate outcomes for specific groups of prisoners.

The management of discrimination complaints was inconsistent, with responses often late or not addressing the issues raised. In some prisons, allegations of discrimination were not recorded as such and instead dealt with as general complaints, masking the scale of the issues. Responses to discrimination reports tended to be better where the prison had commissioned quality assurance from an external or independent body.

Religion and faith

Work to encourage prisoners to practise their religion was slow to recover following the pandemic, with a delay in the resumption of corporate worship in most prisons. Many continued to limit the number of prisoners who could attend each service, meaning they could often only attend once every few weeks. In most cases, this was because there were not enough staff to escort prisoners to services. Having said this, in 2022-23, 70% of prisoners in men's prisons who had a religion said they were able to attend services if they wanted.

Many prisons had vacancies for chaplains, some of which were long-standing. Despite this, we found that almost all chaplaincies went beyond their statutory duties and offered a wide range of pastoral support, including bereavement counselling.

## Women

Self-harm rates have continued to increase considerably across the women's estate. In 2022-23 good multidisciplinary support was provided to the most vulnerable at each site, but there was an over-reliance on use of ACCT case management, with too little attention to preventing women getting into crisis in the first place.

In prisons inspected in 2022-23, we were concerned about the number of times staff had resorted to physical force to stop self-harming behaviour. With limited staff use of body-worn cameras, it was difficult to evidence if it was always a proportionate or appropriate response to women in crisis. A recent IRP at HMP/YOI Eastwood Park revealed an increase in the number of times force had been used since our last inspection, with a large proportion involving women who were either self-harming or expressing self-harm threats. Of great concern was the use of force used against women to strip them of their clothing and replace it with anti-rip clothing.

We continue to find remanded and recalled women held in prison for 'their own protection' as well as other women who are in prison as a 'place of safety' while waiting for an assessment under the Mental Health Act.

Far too many women are released without a sustainable place to live. The support for remand prisoners varies, and in some prisons remand prisoners were excluded from services that were available to sentenced prisoners, such as housing assessments or debt advice. More positively, the impact of trauma and abuse is increasingly taken into account with good support offered at each prison.

Overall, support for women to maintain relationships with their children and families was slow to recover after the pandemic. However, HMP & YOI Foston Hall had made progress in response to our previous concerns, and the mother and baby units at HMP & YOI Bronzefield, HMP & YOI Eastwood Park and HMP & YOI New Hall supported women and their children very well.

## Children

The population of children (under 18s only) in young offender institutions (YOI), secure training centres and secure children's homes remained at historic lows with an average of 438 children in custody throughout 2022-23, improving staff to child ratios at all sites.

Despite this, outcomes for children in custody varied dramatically between establishments. Levels of violence remained much too high in almost all YOIs and secure training centres we

inspected throughout 2022-23, with the exception of Parc YOI, which remained the safest and most productive institution.

Elsewhere regimes continued to be limited; no other YOI got children out of their cells for longer than 6.5 hours a day, with even less time at weekends. No YOI in 2022-23, or any inspection since then, met our expectation that children should be unlocked for 10 hours a day. Parc came the closest with between eight and 11 hours on weekdays.

The fear of violence had created a vicious circle that meant children were more likely to carry and use weapons, ostensibly for self-protection, but which predictably resulted in further incidents. YOIs have reverted to extensive and complicated 'keep apart' lists to prevent children in conflict with each other from mixing. During our inspection visit to Cookham Wood, 90% of boys were being kept apart from other prisoners, with nearly 600 keep apart instructions. While these seem expedient in the short-term, prisons that adopt this policy usually remain the most violent, and regimes inevitably are reduced because different groups have to be locked away before others can be let out. The boredom leads to children calling out through windows or cell doors and creating further hostility.

By contrast, at Parc good relationships between staff and children provided a strong foundation for effective behaviour management, which enabled leaders to deliver much more time out of cell and access to education than at the other sites.

The quality of relationships varied across children's prisons, but overall too few children felt cared for by staff. At Werrington, just 33% of children in our survey said they felt cared for by most staff, and we found that interaction with staff was transactional. We saw reduced levels of force in prisons that had better behaviour management processes.

#### Black prisoners

In December 2022 HMI Prisons published a thematic review about the experiences of adult black male prisoners and black prison staff. While inspectors found evidence of direct, explicit racism, black prisoners and black prison staff told us that subtle and insidious racism affected them more and that this was widespread and persistent. The review, based on interviews with 100 black male prisoners, 27 black prison staff, 17 senior managers and 39 other prison staff, found that disproportionality, such as in the use of force, and ineffective systems aimed at addressing discrimination, were persistent issues that negatively impacted on black prisoners' experiences of custody.

#### Gypsy, Roma and Traveller

Prisoners from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities told us that they sometimes felt overlooked by prison staff. However, at establishments such as HMP Wayland and HMP Featherstone, where there had been dedicated consultation with these prisoners, outcomes were better and some issues were being addressed.

#### Foreign national prisoners

Some prisons we visited had high numbers of foreign national prisoners, including those held under immigration powers who had finished serving their sentence. Professional interpreting services were not used enough in many establishments to communicate with prisoners.

Although Home Office staff had returned to working in prisons, many foreign national prisoners continued to tell us that they felt confused and helpless about their immigration status. A short thematic review on the experience of immigration detainees, published in



October 2022, highlighted the prevalence of these problems and their negative impact. It was nonetheless positive that some establishments were providing targeted support, including foreign national prisoner representatives, support from external organisations, and additional phone credit to keep in touch with family and friends overseas.

#### Prisoners with disabilities

Some prisons did not have enough adapted cells for prisoners with physical disabilities or used cells that were in a poor condition. While most prisons used personal emergency evacuation plans, they were not always of a high quality and we found documentation that was out of date or inadequately detailed, and instances where staff were unaware of which prisoners required support.

Many prisons used peer support workers to assist prisoners with disabilities. This was positive, but we saw some concerning instances of peer workers with insufficient training and oversight, or who were providing inappropriate personal care.

In our survey conducted in 2022-23, children with disabilities responded more negatively than those without disabilities about their perceptions of safety.

#### Neurodiverse prisoners

In our 2022-23 Annual Report, we identified that the education, training and work on offer did not meet prisoners' needs, especially those with learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD). Although we commonly saw LDD needs identified during induction, tutors did not then always use this information to adapt materials or lessons to help prisoners overcome barriers to learning. However, there was better provision at HMP/YOI Portland, where specialist staff provided one-to-one support for prisoners with LDD needs, and HMP Chelmsford, where three specialist inclusion support co-ordinators provided valuable support to teachers.

Some prisons had appointed lead managers or established multidisciplinary committees focused on improving support for prisoners with neurodivergent needs. More recently at HMP Grendon, the Diversity & Inclusion team had led on work to raise the profile of neurodiversity, including marking autism awareness month, and hosting discussion ('Let's Talk') and hidden disability events. Other pockets of positive practice included a neurodiversity pathway at HMP Lowdham Grange, as well as quick identification of neurodiverse conditions and the use of individualised care plans that were drawn up by a nurse at HMP/YOI Stoke Heath. Care plans were designed to help staff understand how they could better manage this cohort of prisoners.

#### Older prisoners

We found some good provision for older prisoners such as separate residential units, specialist gym sessions, day centres and regular games nights. At North Sea Camp, a weekly seniors' support club was valued, with a good atmosphere and well-planned activities, although there was not enough to occupy older prisoners at other times.

However, at many establishments, support was underdeveloped or was yet to resume following the pandemic. At a number of establishments, designated gym sessions served as the sole additional support for older prisoners.

#### LGBTQI+ prisoners

Support for LGBTQI+ prisoners was often lacking, with many establishments offering no formal consultation or links with community organisations. Some establishments had been more proactive and this had led to positive outcomes.

Transgender prisoners:

Transgender prisoners continued to experience varying levels of care, but we mostly found them receiving at least some tailored support, including case management boards.

## **Scotland**

Apart from the Human Rights legislation – the Prison Rules determine the roles that prisons play in managing specific needs. However, the Prison Rules are outdated, not aligned to current understanding, particularly around understanding trauma, women, children, remand, searching, alcohol and substance use.

### **Preparing for next pandemic (what worked and what didn't in COVID-19 responses to prison management? Any negative consequences of those measures?).**

## **Northern Ireland**

Unlike prisons in England and Wales, and Scotland, prisoners were not confined to their cells but permitted to associate in house bubbles.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the increased use of video-linking reduced the need for prisoners to be transported for short hearings and resulted in reductions in interruptions to normal routine, education/work, reduced likelihood of mistreatment in terms of sitting in court cells for hours on end etc.

However, the pace of recovery lacked ambition and had been impacted by rising prison numbers and staff shortages.

## **England and Wales**

At most prisons, our inspectors found effective measures in place to prevent the spread of infection and the rate of prisoner deaths was far lower than was initially projected. Prison staff provided an invaluable service on the frontline as keyworkers. Implementation of mass vaccination for prisoners, which began to be rolled out from March 2021, was impressive, although we did note that despite concerted promotional efforts by health services, uptake for vaccinations in most adult male prisons was lower than in women's prisons and the community.

However, there were early indications that limiting the spread of infection had been achieved at significant cost to the welfare and progression of prisoners. We found many prisoners spent the pandemic locked in their cells for 22.5 hours a day, unable to access classroom-based education or programmes specified on their sentence plan to enable progression. Prisoners had also faced considerable waits to see mental health practitioners, and many were unable to see family or friends for prolonged periods, despite regular contact being critical to holding families together and preventing reoffending.

Many of these themes persisted in 2021-22. Prisoners continued to experience extremely limited time out of cell and there appeared to be very limited thinking about alternative ways to motivate prisoners and encourage positive behaviour in its absence. During this period our inspectors reported on the considerable variation in how individual prisons were interpreting guidance from both Public Health England and the prison service, with leadership often being a central factor as to whether a prison was restarting activity or not

and how well or otherwise this was being communicated to prisoners. A good example was Parc YOI (a private prison) where, even in April 2020, children were able to spend more than three hours a day out of their cells, rising to 10 hours a day in April 2021, more than double what was being offered to children in YOIs at the time being run by the Youth Custody Service. Classroom education had also carried on throughout almost all of the pandemic at Parc YOI, unlike at other YOIs.

As well as limited time out of cell, we also reported on work to promote fair treatment of prisoners from different groups being slow to resume following COVID-19 restrictions and some prisons continuing to cap visits at a lower number than before the pandemic for no clear reason. In the youth estate leaders continue to unpick the increased conflict created by splitting children into small groups throughout the pandemic. Too often this was managed by keeping children apart from each other, with significant negative implications for access to education and other activity for many children.

In the event of future pandemics, risk assessments ought to be as dynamic and responsive to emerging developments as possible, taking care to incorporate both immediate safety considerations as well as other factors, such as prisoner access to purposeful activity. For many staff now working in prisons, post-pandemic levels of purposeful activity are all that they will have experienced. Ensuring that acceptance of poor outcomes in areas such as purposeful activity does not become the norm will be vital.

## **Scotland**

The SPS in conjunction with NHS did an excellent job in keeping prisoners safe from COVID during the pandemic, a relatively small number of COVID related deaths.

However, the negative consequence of the measures was a drastic reduction in opportunities to interact with others, with increased risk of isolation and a consequent rise in issues of mental health. Nevertheless prisoners felt safe, with a reduction in assaults, as a consequence of the very restricted movements within the prisons. The pandemic forced creativity, with the introduction of 'virtual visit' video technology and use of authorised mobile phones (now replaced by in-cell telephony).

The pace of recovery out of the pandemic back to a more rehabilitative and less restricted regime has been glacial, with too many prisoners struggling to access any purposeful activity, progress through their sentence and get adequate time out of cell. There is clearly a need to learn the lessons of the pandemic, continue the creativity and ensure in-cell learning technologies are maximised, prison numbers are reduced, and health is given the priority it needs.

## **Responding to climate-change effects on prisons and prison populations and climate-proofing prison management and conditions of detention.**

The design of new establishments takes this seriously and there is a pleasing attempt to build this into future planning.

## **Maintaining human rights standards in prisons outsourced to private companies.**

The UK NPM bodies apply the same standards and expectations across public and private sector prisons – adherence to human rights standards are scrutinised in the same way.

In case of use to the Special Rapporteur, below are the scores for private prisons that HMI Prisons has inspected since 2021. A score of 4 means we considered outcomes for

prisoners to be good, 3 means outcomes for prisoners to be reasonably good, 2 means outcomes for prisoners to be not sufficiently good and 1 means outcomes for prisoners to be poor.

Inspection date	Prison	Safety	Respect	Purposeful Activity	Resettlement and Release Planning
May 2021	HMP Oakwood	4	4	3	2
Nov 2021	HMP Altcourse	2	3	3	2
Nov 2021	HMP Thameside	3	3	1	2
Jan 2022	HMP & YOI Bronzefield	3	3	3	3
Feb 2022	HMP Forest Bank	2	3	1	3
Feb 2022	HMP & YOI Doncaster	3	3	2	4
Mar 2022	HMYOI Parc	4	4	4	4
Jun 2022	HMP Parc	3	3	4	3
Aug 2022	HMP Northumberland	3	3	2	1
May 2023	HMP Lowdham Grange	2	2	1	2

**Ends.**