

**Independent Prison Monitoring Bulletin**  
**HMP Open Estate**  
**January to March 2018****7 Independent  
Prison  
Monitors****14 Prison  
Monitoring  
Visits****7 Prisoner  
Requests****Key Findings**

- **Cell sharing:** Prisoners have complained about sharing cells, suggesting that the move from single cell arrangements in closed conditions to shared cells in the Open Estate was felt to be a 'downgrade of privileges'. Complaints around this mostly related to shared TV use or lack of peace and quiet. One further point of concern was raised by a prisoner who felt that sharing a cell could lead to exposure to drugs. The prison is looking at the possibility of reducing cell sharing, but stated that there isn't capacity to remove it completely.
- **Reception:** Monitors found that the reception process appears to be efficient and reasonable. A proportion of prisoners returning from placements and other external activities are subject to random searches. Prisoners are searched with dignity, with two officers always present. Officers reported that searches do result in illicit items being prevented from entering the prison.
- **Health and wellbeing:** IPMs have expressed concern that the process for prisoners requesting repeat prescriptions does not work well for those involved in home leave. Repeat prescription requests must be submitted on a Monday and prisoners have reported that they can't submit a request form if returning from home leave later in the week. This appears to have left some prisoners without medication for a period of time. Management have confirmed they will seek to improve this situation.
- **Personal safety:** Prisoners reported to Monitors that they feel safe at the prison, generally, but some expressed concern at the availability of drugs and worry about 'giving in to temptation'. Prison management have advised that if any individual feels particularly concerned they can, and should, discuss with their personal officer in the first instance.

**Updates and Actions**

- **Transition to the community:** Monitors found that there was a lack of clarity amongst prisoners around the Home Detention Curfew assessment process (including the timescales for conduction the process). The prison has now produced a document which seeks to clarify this process, setting out eligibility criteria, timescales, and how it fits with the Parole process. Prisoners can request a copy of this document.

**IPM Focus in the Next Quarter**

- **Health and wellbeing:** Monitors will check how improvements to the repeat prescriptions process are progressing.