

INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

HMP/YOI ELMLEY



ANNUAL REPORT 2010

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INTRODUCTION

This report covers the period November 2009 to October 2010 inclusive.

Views of the Members and factual comments of the Governor have been taken into account in order to ensure balanced reporting.

The current temporary CNA is 925, and the Operational Capacity 1234. This will rise to 943 and 1252 respectively when work on some of the cells is finished. Actual occupancy has been running somewhat below the OPCAP level.

The establishment is the local prison for most of Kent housing remand and sentenced prisoners (Category B & C), and remand Young Offenders. At least one of the Kent Courthouses which used to feed Elmley now sends its prisoners to Belmarsh.

It should also be noted here that the prison continues to house Vulnerable Prisoners (remand), Foreign Nationals (both remand and sentenced) and Lifers. This eclectic mix is not conducive to excellence in all fields and tends to stretch resources to the limits. Whilst Management and staff continue to do first rate jobs, it is impossible for them to achieve total success in every area.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the start of this reporting period the question of merging the three Sheppey prisons into a single designated prison had been shelved – for the time being. However, further clustering of certain services, in the hope of creating cost savings, was to continue.

The Board has no issue with the clustering of services; indeed it makes sense in many areas, though we still take issue with the Governing Governor not having jurisdiction over staff and facilities within the walls of the establishment.

We have highlighted problems surrounding clustering in the past and it will serve no purpose to re-iterate them. The question of a single prison is a different matter. The question must be asked: “If you designed a 3000 prisoner single prison from scratch, would it look like this?” The answer would be a resounding ‘No’. It is our opinion that to get physically from the current position to an effective single prison would not only take a great deal of capital expenditure, but would also need a re-rolling of the three prisons from where they are now – otherwise they would simply continue to operate as three individual prisons with a single name.

The IMB Chair attends meetings with the Area Manager quarterly. These meetings should be chaired by our National Council representative, but currently this position is vacant. Meetings between the three IMB Chairs of the Sheppey prisons and the Cluster Executive take place quarterly.

Board members still spend too much time dealing with matters that should have been addressed by staff. This is in part due to the ineffectiveness of the personal officer scheme, which can only get worse in the case of financial cuts.

Budget cuts would seem to be the focal point going forward. We feel we must make two general points here: any cuts that result in prisoners spending more time in cell can only increase tensions; any cuts that reduce or eradicate prisoner incentive can only increase tensions.

Some of the proposed areas that cuts may be expected or savings gained would in our opinion be false economies. Reducing prisoner unlock hours at weekends, closing workshops, reducing staff training hours, reducing the number of cell searches, closing the staff mess, reducing the number of Offending Behaviour Programmes and charging for the use of visitor's car parks would all appear to be ideas that would in some instances decrease the Prison Service's chances of achieving one of its aims of rehabilitating prisoners, and in other instances simply aggravate staff, prisoners and visitors – which may accrue problems, and costs, for the future.

We do not believe that anyone would want to run prisons simply as warehouses, but there is a danger that this will happen.

The Board is deeply concerned about the number of employment places available to prisoners. The PICTA workshop has closed and the T-Boat workshop has moved to HMP Swaleside. PICTA provided much-needed vocational training and the T-Boats was a big employer. Much has been said of increased education classes, hairdressing, brick-laying and motor mechanics, but they have yet to materialise.

We are happy to report that this year has seen no deaths in custody, but once again we must highlight the delay that occurs between when there is a death and the necessary inquest. The inordinate amount of time between the two events only gives rise to more suffering for families and does not allow them timely closure. Despite this point being raised year after year, the situation does not improve and we receive no satisfactory answers. Elmley still has inquests outstanding from deaths in previous years.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Board numbers are now sufficient to effectively monitor the prison. Continued success in recruitment, despite one resignation, has made this possible. We are still hampered, though, by the rationalisation of some of the administrative functions and their physical location outside Elmley due to clustering. It has made the work of the Board more difficult in terms of solving problems and has resulted in delays in replies to prisoners.

The prison has been largely calm over the reporting period with lower use of the Segregation Unit, Special Accommodation and a greater staff emphasis on decency. For this latter aspect Senior Management are to be congratulated on several initiatives including a new Decency Agenda and the Prisoner Council. It is early days as yet, but the signs are very encouraging.

Again we will emphasise that, regardless of the operation of the cluster, all Prison Services statistics need to be maintained on an individual establishment basis, as any disparity in service delivery between the sites, which cater for a disparate population

with different needs, could be clouded by aggregation. This, given the different nature of the three prisons could cause inequalities which would be inappropriate, unfair and could ultimately cause problems. We have already seen that there is a very low probability of any sentence planning for prisoners with under three year sentences at Elmley, as the resources in this area are concentrated 'up the road'.

Issues for the Minister

Potential effect of budget cuts on prisoner regimes (**page 5**)

Time delay to inquests after deaths in custody (**page 5**)

Lack of purposeful activity (**page 5 & paras 62-67, 81 & 127**)

Limited mental health resources and dropping of Day Care Centre (**para 16**)

Shortage of staff (**paras 7 & 15**)

The work of staff in the de-escalation of incidents is to be commended (**paras 6 & 35**)

Number of Lifers held in a Local Prison (**para 50**)

Number of Foreign Nationals being held beyond their release date (**paras 51 & 57**)

Prisoners housed far from home (**para 76**)

Increase in the number of violent incidents (**para 94-98**)

Issues for the Prison Service

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Lack of trained staff and disabled facilities in Visits Hall (**para 78**)

Library use and stock loss (**paras 82-85**)

Increase in the number of violent incidents (**para 94-98**)

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SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN PAST YEAR

1. This year saw the completion and opening of Houseblock 6, raising the Operating Capacity of the prison from 985 to 1252.
2. Our acting Number One Governor at the start of the period was suspended, then there followed the appointment of a different individual, our current Governor, and many other Management changes. The DPSM grade was introduced, with the phasing out of the PO rank.
3. The year was played out under threat of severe budget cuts, new staff profiles, implementation of a new computer system, staff shortages and much detached duty.
4. The new Governor implemented several new initiatives, including: a new decency agenda, a canteen consultative group and the introduction of a Prisoner Council.

TREATMENT OF PRISONERS

5. Elmley presents a secure environment for both prisoners and staff.
6. The use of Special Accommodation continues to remain at a low level and staff are to be commended for their ability to 'de-escalate' situations that could otherwise result in increased use of these facilities. Increased use of force gave some cause for concern towards the end of the period, but showed signs of levelling out.

Staff

7. Generally staff are still under pressure. Staff sickness has been at more reasonable levels, but Management will need to remain vigilant in this area. The prison relies far too much on inexperienced POELTS, officers on detached duty and Payment Plus to fill gaps. There are also an inordinate number of Agency staff working in Healthcare. None of these situations can possibly be optimal, as staff are either inexperienced generally or have little experience of Elmley.
8. Again it has been noticeable in certain positions that there is a lack of experienced cover when members of staff are off sick or on holiday. This is noticeable in areas where staff have specialised in a particular role. Excessive delays in response times from these areas can only cause frustration among the prisoners affected and exacerbate any tensions that already exist.

Security

9. Statistics for reported incidents, assaults and SIRs submitted fluctuated throughout the year. Violence related incidents increased and this is discussed later in this report. Drug testing (VDT & MDT) largely met the required targets, though the Board would worry about any budget cutting proposal that would eliminate all Voluntary Drug Testing (VDT). This is one area of achievement that some prisoners aspire to that is recordable and certifiable.

10. The number of mobile phone and SIM card finds continues to give rise to concern. The anecdotal price of mobiles fell dramatically during the period which was not a good sign, however as the year went by it was on the rise again.
11. CCTV coverage has been planned for the upper walkways for some time and it is hoped that this will be implemented before long. The Board understands that the equipment has been acquired but that the problem now is the cost of fitting.

Healthcare

12. Patients have many complex and challenging needs which the healthcare staff do well to cope with. In addition the housing of lodgers has increased this year reversing the trend from last year. Changes in the administration of the healthcare facility at Elmley will be a cause for concern going forward.
13. Cluster provision for some services is stretching Elmley's facilities at times.
14. The new regimes employed due to the addition of Houseblock Six seem to be settling down to providing an adequate service.
15. The high number of agency staff employed is still a worry for the Board. Regular staff fit better into routines and hold a continuing level of responsibility for their patients. Agency staff are very expensive.
16. Resources for the care of prisoners with mental health issues is still limited, lack of day care provision and the leaving of prisoners with obvious problems to their own devices is a concern to the Board. The Board is extremely disappointed that the planned Mental Health Day Care Centre has now been dropped.
17. Overall the Board's opinion is the healthcare unit is providing an adequate service to patients. The number of applications to the board from healthcare patients has risen from last year and this is extremely disappointing as we would have liked to have seen an improvement.

Diversity

Achievements:

18. Although it is a broad area to monitor, the Board has no problem in assessing the impact of differences such as age, disability, sexual orientation, as well as religion and race of prisoners. The Board is fully aware that the prison is fully committed to the implementation of Diversity in the fullest sense. The prison has a full time Diversity manager in post who recognises and addresses problems whenever and wherever they arise. The Diversity meeting covers all aspects of DEAT & REAT
19. Cultural events and Religious celebrations are well celebrated with families in the visits hall/chapel/wings.

20. The prison Ethnic population:

White British: 70.5%; White Irish / White Other: 11%; Black / Black British: 9.8%; Asian /Asian British: 4.7%; Mixed: 2.0%; Not Stated: 1.1%; Chinese or Other Ethnic Group: 0.9%

21. Prisoners requiring extra care:

Total no. of prisoners who have declared disabilities: 202

Total no. of prisoners with learning disabilities: 75

Total no. of prisoners declared mobility disabilities: 54

Total no. of prisoners declared other disabilities: 73

Total no. of prisoners 60 years of age and over: 36

Total no. of prisoners 65 years of age and over: 19

Total no. of prisoners requiring a care plan: 31

Total no. of Wheelchair users and those walking with the help of sticks: 8

22. SMART Monitoring indicator:

- a. That the under representation of the BME Community at Enhanced level of the privilege system is within range, which is an improvement.
- b. That BME prisoners are underrepresented in certain forms of work on the wings and Equality Impact Assessment may be warranted as there is a significant concern.

23. The Disability Focus Group is making slow progress in meeting individual needs where possible with various aids.

24. Access to enhanced work and wing cleaners is no more a concern as it is coming into range.

25. The prison is actively engaged in disseminating information regarding the rules on Re-categorisation of prisoners.

26. Impact Risk Assessments are continually reviewed.

27. MQPL – Measuring Quality of Prison Life survey completed.

28. The Diversity bi-monthly meetings are well attended by prisoners' representatives from all the Houseblocks who are given the opportunity to raise issues of concerns.

29. Training programme has been prioritised: Challenge it, Change it, Manual Handling, Pre-Social Modelling Training.

30. Information well advertised – about Race Relations, Decency Strategy.

31. The Board is pleased to note that prisoners at this prison feel safe and respected and the Governors are striving to put in place access to facilities and regimes equally, within the current financial restraints.

32. There is an independent verifier of complaints from the community who visits the prison and attends Diversity meetings.

33. Concerns:

- a. There is a significant rise in the use of GOOD
- b. Equalities Impact Assessment not achieved are:
 - i. Need to improve Access of & Management of Foreign National prisoners
 - ii. Need to improve regime for older prisoners.
- c. DREAP actions deficient:
 - i. Provision of suitable toilet facilities for wheelchair users in visits, chapel, workshops, education.
 - ii. Find more suitable work for older prisoners in wheelchairs.
 - iii. Prisoner telephone installed to a suitable height for wheelchair users in the Houseblocks
 - iv. Provision of beds of a suitable ergonomic height for prisoners with limited mobility
 - v. Awareness training on the needs of wheelchair users in the Reception and Induction units especially for foreign nationals
 - vi. No formal training for all DREAP members.
 - vii. Communication Strategy missing action of future work
 - viii. Racial Equality Annual Report not published yet
 - ix. 8 identified prisoners with disabilities i.e. wheelchair users unable to access narrow cell doors, showers, ramp and DDA lift, and therefore are unable to access all aspects of full regime in the prison
 - x. RIRF investigations are falling behind due to the increase of prison population and only one individual from the Community visits the prison to monitor the complaints
 - xi. Retired prisoners are not offered alternative regimes.
 - xii. Prisoner representatives have received no appropriate training to carry out their role

Segregation Unit

34. We still have prisoners refusing to locate, believing that they will achieve a faster move to an establishment of their choice if they refuse to move to a Houseblock.
35. Special cells have been used less frequently this year, which is a tribute to the attitude of staff and management in handling problem prisoners. The Board is always informed of their use and the number of calls to members is noticeably down. Staff must also take credit for returning prisoners to normal accommodation as quickly as possible, and indeed the Board has seen some of the lowest levels of Segregation cell occupancy for some years.
36. SMARG meetings should take place quarterly to ensure the smooth running of the Unit. This has not been happening.
37. Board members randomly attend adjudications held both by Governors and the District Judge. The Board can report that these sessions are held professionally and that awards are uniform and fairly applied.

38. GOOD reviews take place on a regular basis. Members have sat in on virtually all of these and will continue to do so whenever we have a presence in the prison.

39. The SOs and their staff are always professional and helpful to anyone visiting the Unit, and particularly the Board would again like to thank them for the time given to prospective IMB members when they have shown them around the Unit.

REGIMES & ACTIVITIES

Houseblocks

Houseblock 1/First Night Centre

40. Prisoners this year have referred to this Houseblock as the VP Unit – replacing HB4! Despite efforts by staff, integration of VPs has still not been fully implemented.

Houseblock 3

41. There are still ongoing concerns in respect of the IDTS scheme at HMP Elmley relating to the treatment and maintenance programmes. We are pleased to be advised that there is a reduction programme starting soon for those prisoners who are sentenced to six months or greater. We hope that it will lead to a compulsory detoxification programme, especially for the people with longer sentences.

42. At present all prisoners in Houseblock 3, with the exception of six, are on an IDTS medication. Although this provides a calming influence for the majority of the daytime it remains a concern that so many are dependent upon the system. Clearly this does not take into consideration Houseblock 1 with its Vulnerable Prisoners who also require daily medication.

43. Overall the system of Healthcare/Maintenance works but there have been quite a few staff difficulties and we detect an uneasy alliance between prison officers and the IDTS team.

44. It should be noted that the optical unit that performs the iris recognition has been broken for some considerable time with no immediate repair plans. As a result of this there have been reported instances of incorrect or duplicate medication given.

45. We understand that the Narcotic Anonymous meetings held weekly on A Spur are well attended and appear to address many issues. We have not visited when a meeting is in session but there are plans to do so.

46. It would appear that the IDTS has brought the prisoners a recognised support network but there are still concerns that too many prisoners have reliance upon the system.

47. One major concern is that with the standard 28 day licence recall system, there is a likelihood of prisoners knowing that they will be assessed and be

automatically placed on Houseblock 3 and will therefore be immediately well placed to bring in illegal drugs either by stuffing or swallowing. With the value of the commodity being higher in prison than on the streets there is a good incentive to smuggle drugs in knowing that there is a ready market for them.

Houseblock 5

48. The Board noted a marked increase in the number of applications from this Houseblock during the year, but this gradually fell away. There was no trend to the applications, so any reason for the rise is unclear. The Board will continue to monitor the situation.

49. The long-term issues with the decor on Houseblock will apparently be put right towards the end of 2010. Given the length of time that this work has been outstanding the Board will be forgiven for being somewhat sceptical about this. It is, and remains until dealt with, a health hazard.

Lifers

50. Elmley still continues to house an inordinately large number of 'Lifers'. Whilst the Board is fully cognisant of the population pressures in the Lifer estate, and the increasingly good work carried out within Elmley, it is constantly apparent that this prison cannot provide the regime that these prisoners need. At the end of the reporting period the breakdown was as follows:

ISPP	50
Mandatory	27
Discretionary	8
Automatic	5
Total	90

Foreign Nationals

51. Current positions:

Foreign National population at HMP Elmley up end of October 2010:

Total number to date is: 182 of which 28 have completed their sentence awaiting to be deported.

52. Recorded number of the Foreign Nationals:

Other: 21%; Lithuanian: 13%; Polish: 10%; Irish: 7%; Latvian: 4%; Indian: 4%; Nigerian: 4%; Iranian: 4%; Pakistani: 3%; Vietnamese: 3%; Czech: 3%; Congolese: 3%; Afghan: 2%; Dutch: 2%; Albanian: 2%; Algerian: 2%; Bulgarian: 2%; Jamaican: 2%; Moroccan: 2%; Turk: 2%; Portuguese: 2%; Zimbabwean: 2%; Unknown: 1%

53. UKBA surgeries are held every Friday

54. Provisions of food from the kitchen meet the dietary requirements of the Foreign Nationals

55. Non Foreign Nationals help each other as much as they can in completing general application forms in the prison

56. One Foreign National attends every Diversity meeting.

57. Concerns:

- a. Language barriers creating lots of problems i.e. How to apply for Enhance status, general information including immigration clinics
- b. No Foreign National Co-ordinator in the prison.
- c. Foreign Nationals are not recruited as Red Band team which is vital for those with language difficulties.
- d. Registered letters Foreign Nationals are pampered with money taken off letters sent to the prison
- e. On-going problem with the 'Call for five' system of five minutes; free call-time Phone cards do not last the allocated duration.
- f. No full time Foreign Nationals clerk in post
- g. Board is concerned of the number of F/N prisoners who completed their sentences are not deported or discharged to a detention centre
- h. Impact assessment still not completed.

Reception

58. There is little to add about the Reception area to last year's report. The Board is impressed that the excellent standards achieved last year have been maintained in spite of continued high numbers of movements (in excess of 20,000 per annum).

Drugs

59. The IDTS programme is now conducted on Houseblocks 3 and 5. When the year started there was some concern over its funding. Numbers remain around the 250 level.

60. The Board continues to be concerned about the amount of 'hooch' discovered.

61. Illegal use of methadone may have become an issue as there is no official testing for it and therefore no real idea of how rife its misuse may be.

Employment

62. Last year's Report praised the laundry for its commercial enterprise and for its pre-release training which enabled prisoners to qualify as laundry technicians. The laundry remains productive, though it could undertake a greater volume of work. Sadly there has been no pre-release training for the last 12 months; the Board have been advised that this is under review, but it remains unclear who is undertaking this, or when a decision is likely to be made.

63. In contrast the new Industrial Cleaning workshop is a positive innovation with training certificates integral to its output. It also ensures that all servery and wing cleaners are given a basic introduction to correct procedures, and 160 were trained in the first few months. Wing staff are also being trained in order that they are aware of the standard they can expect from the cleaners. Specialist cleaning programmes have been undertaken by a core group of prisoners, so that the

need to call in specialist commercial firms to clean for spillages etc is no longer necessary.

64. The downside is that the workshop is located next to the laundry and suffers from high noise levels and constant dust, which is not ideal for a teaching environment. We are told that little can be done due to the need for ventilation in the laundry. The other aspect is that after a good start the number of prisoners allocated to the shop is now well below its capacity, which does seem a waste of an excellent resource. It is to be hoped that this can be improved.
65. Last year's Report also indicated that in view of the expansion of the prison with an additional wing, there was a pressing need to extend the workshop provision to create more purposeful activity for prisoners. In fact the opposite seems to have happened, the T-Boat shop, which employed 40-45 prisoners was closed on 8th October and transferred to Swaleside. The reason for this is unclear, but the proposed replacement by a brick-laying course will take time to set up and will employ far fewer. Judging by the time it has taken to bring the former classrooms back into use, there could be a considerable gap with 40 more prisoners unemployed.
66. The proposal to open a hairdressing salon, with certificated training, is a welcome innovation, it is to be hoped that it will be given a priority and open this calendar year.
67. Finally the centralising of the Employment Clerks at Swaleside has not assisted Elmley, the busiest of the 3 prisons in terms of turnover, and the user friendly service that was in place seems to have been lost. Certainly filling vacancies is now taking longer.

Chaplaincy

68. The chaplaincy at HMP Elmley continues to operate as a multi-faith centre where a whole range of activities take place to meet all the prisoners' religious and cultural needs. There is a strong and cohesive Chaplaincy Team under the leadership of Rev. Ken George – Minister of Free Church. The prison faiths population has increased this year due to the opening of the new Houseblock.
69. The population break-down is as follows:
No religion: 30%; C of E: 27%; RC: 16%; Muslim: 9%; Not specified: 4%; Christian: 3%; Mormon: 2%; Buddhist: 1%; Sikh: 1%; Greek Orthodox: 1%; Others: 1%.
70. Achievements:
The head of the chaplaincy team and the diversity manager ensure that all faiths are catered for and prisoners have the opportunity to attend a large range of religious services and celebrate religious events. Some of the events held as per Interfaith Calendar:
- a. Christmas
 - b. Easter
 - c. Family day
 - d. Black history exhibitions

- e. Black Culture and history celebrations
- f. Musical concerts written and performed by black prisoners which included Rap Reggae Blues and soul with number of compositions.
- g. EID Celebration – in the visit hall with families
- h. Foot bath installed for Muslim prisoners.
- i. Divali festival celebration

71. On-going events take place according to the Interfaith Calendar and nobody is left unheard.

72. Prisoners attend prayers as per time table displayed for each faith and don't have to apply to attend any services held in the chapel.

73. The Board is pleased to note excellent support, services and programmes provided by the chaplaincy team

74. Concerns:

- a. No disabled toilet in the chapel
- b. Poor physical access to the chapel

Visitor Centre and Visits

Visitor Centre

75. There have been numerous improvements regarding the capacity for accommodating the increase of visitors to the prison since the opening of the new wing this year. They are as follows:

- a. Internal improvements - additional seats, wheelchairs and prams access, lockers for families to keep personal belongings and proper arrangement system for booking at the desk which provide more privacy.
- b. New extension of children's play area with a secure garden area for children to engage in play activities
- c. Visitors increased: adults: 31,152 and children: 7,845 compared to last year adults: 26,223 and children: 6,608.
- d. Opening time changed from 11.00 am till 4.30 pm is changed to 12.00 noon till 4.30 pm.
- e. The security Governor is actively supporting the staff team. (2 x SGO from Monday to Friday and weekend 2 x volunteers).
- f. New entrance door for visitors to the main prison for speedy search procedures, working well.
- g. Security Governor responsible for the visitors centre actively involved in all the changes made to make visits as pleasant as possible.
- h. The staff has access of their own photocopy machine.
- i. Re-launch of OSG training package.
- j. Implementation of Decency Strategy

76. Concerns:

- a. Beverages and hot and cold snacks are too expensive (this issue was previously raised with the Security Governor by IMB; the prison is

apparently unable to do anything as these sales are run by a private company who are a profit making organisation).

- b. VO forms need to be more simplified
- c. No forum in place for staff to discuss issues or concerns
- d. Travelling to the prison is still a problem for families who travel from far out of the county - although it is a local remand there are many prisoners from out of the county from as far away as Birmingham. This leads to shorter visiting times for families. This has already been raised with the prison Governor.
- e. Shorter length of visiting times and reduction in visit days a possibility because of financial constraints
- f. Disabled toilet provision lacking.

Visits

77. Improvements during the year:

- a. Increase in the volume of visitors with the opening of the new unit this year
- b. Visit hall is refurbished with additional seats and replacement of old furniture.
- c. Families with additional members are accommodated by assembling two tables together with chairs
- d. More staff deployed to visit hall during visiting hours
- e. DDA compliance on-going
- f. Religious celebrations for families and prisoners held proved a success (Approximately 150 Islamic family members and prisoners attended in the visit hall to celebrate EID).
- g. No complaints received from families visiting prisoners in the visit hall.

78. Concerns:

- a. No trained staff to supervise children in the visit hall.
- b. Due to budgetary constraint days and length of visits may be reduced
- c. Up-to-date, accurate and well-produced information booklets in different languages for visitors should be provided in all visitor areas
- d. No disabled toilet facilities

Education

79. Despite a change in contract for staff employed by Manchester College and a one day strike, the Board have not been aware of a significant rise in applications.

80. The ongoing dispute between Manchester College and its employees has inhibited the progress in education that had been promised, both in terms of hours allocated and types of course. There remain staff shortages and therefore not all classes are running.

81. Elmley would benefit from its own dedicated education block. Instead, classrooms are scattered around the site. This is not an effective use of time.

Library

82. The library, run by the Kent County Council, continues to be an exceptional resource for the prisoners. During the reporting year, library use has improved, then stagnated and latterly fallen away. On the figures that the Board has available the average usage shows at 178 (last year 200), with a range of between 90 and 300 per week. This is particularly disappointing as the prisoner population has risen by about 20 per cent. This may be partly as a result of apathy from a transient population, but there are also many occasions when movement officers are not available to bring prisoners to the library. Library staff are also concerned that this situation will worsen with new profiles being introduced which may curtail or even eliminate the evening sessions.
83. Prisoners usually have between ten and twenty minutes total time in the library per visit. Given the fact that many reference books cannot be removed from the library, this represents very little time for a prisoner engaged in educational or legal research to complete any assignment. This is particularly problematic when prisoners require access to PSOs – they simply do not have time to research the information required, though it is their right to do so.
84. With the opening of Houseblock 6, the library now houses an increased number of books (approximately 2000 extra) for which new shelving has been purchased and installed.
85. Loss of stock is a major concern with the running rate at between 17 and 20 per cent. This could amount to over 2000 books and gaps are now beginning to appear on the shelves. The Prison Service is contractually bound to cover losses in excess of the public average, if and when they are claimed by the Kent County Council. This could amount to between £10,000 and £20,000 – an amount that the Prison Management would do well to bear in mind.

Physical Education

86. Activities run by the gymnasium staff are as popular as previous years and with the additional facilities added due to the Houseblock Six expansion gym use has increased by around 25% year on year.
87. Users referred via health training are currently running at around 150 hours per month.
88. Staff and prisoners continue to undertake activities to raise sponsor monies for local causes.
89. Purposeful activities include C & R for staff, First Aid, Manual Handling and Team Building.
90. Continued efficiency savings still threaten the total use of the gym but it is still catering for staff and prisoners 12 hours per day and is extensively used at all times.

Kitchen & Food

91. This reporting period has once again been a very busy time for the catering services. The new Houseblock, together with the other establishments in the cluster now sees the total meals produced by the kitchen at around 3200 per day.
92. As highlighted in the previous report the budget cost per head per day is still £1.95p. Once again the Board commends the catering staff's ability to continually produce high standard and varied meals for such a small amount.
93. While staff shortages still remain an issue, which is unlikely to be resolved in the near future, the Board is pleased to report that much of the faulty equipment in the kitchen has been, or is in the process of being, replaced. The Board is given to understand that this work will be completed by the New Year.

Violence Reduction

94. Over this reporting period there has been a marked increase in reported violence related incidents covering the whole spectrum of: intimidation, bullying, fighting and assaults etc. A proportional increment was anticipated due to the addition of Houseblock 6 which came on line at Elmley in May 2010.
95. There is however concern that the trend and statistics indicate an overall increase over the past 12 months, in particular assaults by prisoners on other prisoners and to a lesser degree, on prison staff.
96. The statistics show that from a "low" of 20 recorded incidents in a single month in 2009 a "high" of 77 took place in September 2010, with a further 60 incidents recorded in October 2010. It should be noted that the interface and performance of the Violence Reduction Reps throughout this period with both prisoners and staff has been effective and productive.
97. A proportion of the overall increase therefore could be attributable to prisoners being much more confident than in the past in reporting their problems in the knowledge that supporting and preventative action will be taken by both Houseblock staff and the Violence Reduction Team.
98. It is understood that the situation will be addressed imminently by the prison management, working with the Violence Reduction Team to re-focus the strategy required to both counter and improve this position in the future. The IMB would fully support any such initiative.

Safer Custody

99. There has been an increase in reported self harm incidents over the past 12 months. From the statistics and data produced by the Safer Custody Team it is

evident that this is mainly due to the additional number of prisoners since Houseblock 6 opened in May 2010. There have been no deaths in custody.

100. Currently the standard of completion of Assessment Care in Custody Teamwork (ACCT) documentation is rated "poor." It is understood that all uniformed prison staff should undertake formal training on this topic, in compliance with PSO 270, Ch 1-1.2.1. On the plus side however, the number of ACCT Assessors has increased to 28, spread across the Houseblocks and all other relevant departments throughout the prison.

101. At present there are 15 Listeners providing cover throughout the prison on a rota basis. These are trained by the Samaritans who conduct 3 courses per year on behalf of both Elmley and Standford Hill. The performance of the Listeners is judged to be "excellent" and the Samaritans continue to interface effectively with all agencies within the prison.

102. An external audit of Safer Custody will take place in December 2010 which will encompass the whole Sheppey Cluster.

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS

Works

General

103. Planned Periodic Maintenance (PPM) is currently running at 96%. It is understood that the shortfall is mainly due to the present national staff recruitment moratorium. At this time the department is understaffed by 4 tradesmen.

104. New installation of general and fire alarms was completed late last year throughout the prison. It is noted that the smoke sensor system (ICAM) has experienced problems due to repeated filter blockage, possibly caused by overcrowding. This has, at times, caused severe problems for prison staff due to the constant noise in the Houseblock Command Posts. Currently this issue is being addressed by works department staff routinely cleaning the fire alarm filters at weekends.

105. Toilets and footbaths for Muslim prisoners have been installed in the chapel complex, during this reporting period.

106. Dedicated medical rooms were completed late last year in all Houseblocks for use by Healthcare staff.

Specific Areas & Locations

107. Houseblock 2 – Reinstatement of damage caused by a fire in February will be completed in Dec 10.

108. Houseblock 5 – Due to paint flaking off the ceiling on both Spurs and falling into prisoners' food high level re-decoration will be completed in Nov 10.

109. Houseblock 6 was completed on time and “open for business” in May 10. Snagging by the contractor (Kiers) is ongoing, the main issues being plumbing and eco units. The Bio Mass Energy Unit which will supply the power exclusively to the Houseblock is not yet in service due to contractual issues. In the interim power is drawn from the main prison gas supply.
110. The Education Department Admin Block has been extended to include offices for IDTS staff and this work will be completed in Dec 10. A new classroom block has been built on the upper floor of the extension to the Gymnasium and will be in use from Nov 10.
111. Workshops – funding is in place to re-designate the workshops for plumbing, bricklaying, motor mechanics and hairdressing training in the future. The installation of a double door firebreak in the main corridor will be completed in Dec 10. The Print shop, located on Houseblock 2, has been completed and is up and running. A classroom in the former education area opposite the Officers Mess is currently being converted into a Hairdressing training salon. The planned completion date for this project is early Feb 11.
112. Visitor Facilities – The Visitor Centre (outside the prison) has been extended to include a Conservatory which has appreciably enhanced the ambiance and aesthetic appeal of the facility. The work will be completed in Jan 11. The Visits Hall has been extended by approximately 30% capacity by Kiers under the terms of the Houseblock 6 contract. Work on a new Visitors Entrance to the prison has also been completed during this reporting period.
113. Car Parking - although car parking facilities for prison staff were extended last year as part of the Houseblock 6 construction project, currently there are insufficient spaces, mainly between the hours of 9am – 5pm. This has resulted in staff having to park on the kerbs creating congestion on entry and exit. Additionally there are probable legal issues relating to this practice.
114. Gymnasium - the extension to the gymnasium was completed in Sep 10 and includes a new weight training room.
115. Reception – the porch at the entrance to the reception area was completed in Sep 10 after 2 years of delays due to contractual issues.
116. Custody Office – the rebuild of the Custody Office was completed in May 10.

New Projects

117. Funding has been secured to upgrade the prisoners’ showers on all Houseblocks. This work will also include disability access to shower rooms and servery areas. Additionally funding has also been obtained for CCTV to be installed in all the Houseblocks and on the upper walkway.

Grounds

118. The gardens have been well tended and at times, throughout the summer, they have looked spectacular.

119. The outside areas surrounding the Houseblocks are awash with litter on most mornings.
120. Works parties are employed to clean up the mess each morning, but from the IMB perspective this operation appears inconsistent. It is appreciated that this problem is not exclusive to HMP Elmley.

WORK OF THE BOARD

Board Meetings

121. The Board held 12 meetings during the period 1st November 2009 to the 31st October 2010. There was an average of 72% membership attendance. This low figure is reflective of particular problems suffered by three of our members.
122. Mindful of maintaining a level of expertise whilst keeping down costs, the Board includes a regular guest speaker slot at its meetings to cover areas of particular concern or interest.
123. During the year the Board acquired a new clerk, who is doing a good job and will be undertaking her formal training during 2011. We also agreed a new Service Level Agreement with the new Governor after some years of trying with previous Governors.

Rota Visits

124. There were 179 rota visits during the year to 31st October 2010, an average of 15 per month. With Board numbers now up, this has allowed members to visit in pairs on more frequent occasions, meaning that areas that the Board has in the past neglected can now be given closer attention. Members also attended on other occasions, for meetings such as Violence Reduction, Drug Strategy and Course presentations, Diversity etc. as well as for training, interviewing, escorting visiting Boards and administrative duties, though with one eye on expenditure, members tried to ensure that these coincided with Rota commitments as far as possible.

Applications

125. The Board dealt with 667 applications during the year to 31st October 2010; a decrease of 1 from the previous year. Although we still have to return a percentage of applications where officers should have intervened on the prisoners' behalf, the Board is pleased to note that these instances are becoming fewer, and that the number of applications received by the Board is at its lowest level for 5 years. However, the change in emphasis shown in the analysis of the applications indicates that services to prisoners have shown a marked decline in certain areas, seemingly where decisions have been made to reduce manpower/facilities.
126. As with many establishments we see the usual reason for applications at the top of the list – property. However, transfers has dropped down the table and,

worryingly, Healthcare issues have again increased and rank second in the list. This underlines the anecdotal evidence of members who find it difficult to challenge diagnosis and prescription, even where they believe there may be grounds for complaint – though it must be stressed that this is a very rare situation. Most of the issues revolve around delays in receiving, and type of, medication.

127. The biggest increase by far came in the employment category. Reasons varied, but most revolved around the difficulty in getting work, or work of choice. It must be noted that the permanent closure of the PICTA and T-Boat workshops, coupled with delays in increasing the number of education places will have led to increased frustration among employment applicants. Whilst focus has been on increasing the number of available workplaces at HMP Swaleside, for understandable reasons, something must now be done to compensate for this loss of places at Elmley.
128. Categorisation again showed an increase. There were mainly two reasons for this: delays in categorisation, and prisoners whose category had been changed from D to C on return to closed conditions. The former can be partly attributed to staff shortages and computer systems issues, and the latter generally showed no grounds to uphold any complaint
129. The large increase shown last year in applications concerning location have dropped right back again as staff have better managed those prisoners who try to circumvent the system in order to try to acquire a single cell.
130. There was a fairly large increase in the applications complaining about the complaints process. Mostly these centred on lack of response, or material response, and delays. Re-organisation of GST should partly address these issues.
131. The 60% increase in applications concerning Legal issues highlights an area of extreme frustration for a lot of prisoners where the IMB have little or no hope in helping. A lot of the time they are seeking advice that we cannot give, because of the lack of response, or delay in response, from their solicitors.
132. Most other categories show a decline.
133. The miscellaneous category showed a wide array of issues that individually displayed little statistical relevance.

134. The complete analysis of our applications was as follows:

	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>+/- % over 2009</u>
Property	102	15.29%	8.51%
Health/Hygiene	91	13.64%	54.24%
Categorisation	55	8.25%	52.78%
Transfers (In/Out)	49	7.35%	-24.62%
Employment	41	6.15%	156.25%
Release/HDC etc.	35	5.25%	-27.08%
Visits	33	4.95%	-8.33%
Complaints Process	29	4.35%	70.59%
Staff	25	3.75%	-19.35%
Money	24	3.60%	-25.00%
Legal	21	3.15%	61.54%
Telephone	19	2.85%	26.67%
Confidential Access	17	2.55%	-43.33%
Mail	16	2.40%	-15.79%
OMU	16	2.40%	-15.79%
Canteen	14	2.10%	-46.15%
Location	9	1.35%	-60.87%
Bullying/Violence	8	1.20%	-33.33%
Diversity	7	1.05%	-22.22%
Immigration Issues	7	1.05%	-41.67%
Adjudications	5	0.75%	-44.44%
Catalogue Purchases	2	0.30%	-33.33%
Miscellaneous	42	6.30%	10.53%
	667	100.00%	-0.15%

Recruitment

135. Recruitment has again been good this year with two more new members taking up post, and the new ones from last year finishing their probationary periods successfully. We have had, however, one resignation, so we will hope to recruit one or two more members over the coming year.

Training

136. Board Members have attended all compulsory and voluntary training.

CONCLUSION

It is the view of the Board that in the year under review the prison has maintained a standard in most areas of care. We would re-iterate our uneasiness with remote management of certain areas where the Governing Governor does not have jurisdiction within her own prison. We do believe that at times the prison is operating at or below minimum staffing levels – maybe not technically, but realistically – plus a lot of the staff are inexperienced. Any further budget cuts would only exacerbate this situation. Issues remain about employment and education for prisoners. Our main concern would be the cuts that are advocated over the next few years, their impact on staffing levels and regimes, and the potential for unrest to develop amongst the prisoner population, exacerbated by decreases in purposeful activity. This would appear to be a recipe designed to create problems.

RECOMMENDATION

The Secretary of State is recommended to note the quality of work undertaken at Elmley during yet another difficult and changing year.

Mr. R. C. Chapman
Chair
IMB HMP/YOI Elmley
February 2011