



H.M.P. HEWELL

MALE

CATEGORIES:

'B' LOCAL, 'C' TRAINING
AND 'D' OPEN

Report
of the
Independent Monitoring
Board

1st December 2009 – 30th November 2010

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

HMP Hewell Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) is committed to diversity. This encompasses and promotes greater interaction and understanding between people of different backgrounds, including race, religion, gender, sexuality, marital status, disability, age etc. Members recognise that diversity is also about respecting and responding to needs and differences that cut across social and cultural groups, such as mental health, literacy and drug addiction.

All Board members value this approach to diversity - both within their recruitment process and Board development practices - as a way of increasing their repertoire of skills and the awareness of the diverse needs and perspectives of the population within HMP Hewell.

When undertaking their duties, all members of HMP Hewell IMB will act in a manner that is accessible to everyone within the establishment, regardless of their background or social situation. The Board will monitor to establish that the experiences and interaction between staff, prisoners (or detainees) and visitors is fair and without prejudice. Where this is not the case, the Board will alert appropriate authorities/individuals, including the Governor, Senior Management, Regional Manager – Custodial Services and the Prisons' Minister.

1. STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

The Prisons Act 1952 and the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 require every prison and IRC to be monitored by an Independent Board appointed by the Justice Secretary from members of the community in which the prison or centre is situated.

The Board is specifically charged to:

- (1) 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
- (2) Inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority as it judges appropriate, any concern it has
- (3) 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 also to the prison's records.

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3. DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON AND ITS FUNCTION

HMP Hewell is situated close to Redditch in Worcestershire and contains three sections: Category B Local, Category C Training and Category D Open. All sections are contained within a large area of parkland. The Category B and Category C sections are adjacent to each other, with the Category D a short distance away, across the parkland.

HMP Hewell is a Public Sector Prison, but it operates under a Service Level Agreement (SLA). As a single prison, it is under the jurisdiction of one Governor, with a Deputy Governor and a Senior Management Team. The majority of prisoners are from the West Midlands area, though overcrowding in the South has led to prisoners from that part of the country being sent to HMP Hewell on overcrowding drafts, albeit in smaller numbers than during 2009. It has a Certified Normal Accommodation (CNA) of 1431.

The prison has 8 residential units, referred to as Houseblocks.

Houseblocks 1-6 form the Category B section and each houseblock is divided into spurs. One, on Houseblock 2, known as Houseblock 5, is specifically set-aside for own protection prisoners, these being sex offenders and individuals concerned about their own vulnerability. Houseblock 6 has access for disabled persons. All the residential units have cells that are either single or double occupancy and all have in-cell sanitation.

Houseblocks 1 - 6 hold prisoners remanded by the courts (including those awaiting/on trial), those awaiting sentence and convicted prisoners (including those sentenced to life imprisonment, up to Category B status) whilst waiting transfer to Training prisons. Prisoners will generally be age 21 or over. Wherever possible, prisoners are allocated to a houseblock according to their status, e.g. remand, sentenced.

Houseblock 7 forms the Category C section of the prison and is divided into 5 Wings. Prisoners are, in the main, housed in single cell accommodation, although D Wing has some dormitory facilities. There is very little in-cell sanitation, with access to sanitary facilities after lock down being by auto-call controlled release. Entry to the Category C regime is normally by selection from the Category B section (Houseblocks 1-6).

Houseblock 8, as the Category D section, falls within the Open Estate. The time prisoners spend in Houseblock 8 can range from a few days to three or more years. A small number are coming to the end of long sentences. Prisoners come from other Houseblocks within HMP Hewell, as well as from other prisons.

In addition, on Houseblocks 1-6 there is a Segregation Unit with a capacity of 26, which includes 2 special cells. There is a small segregation unit, with 3 cells, in HB7.

Healthcare within the prison is provided by the Worcestershire Primary Health Care Trust and is available equally to all prisoners. The Healthcare unit within Houseblocks 1-6 provides 24 hour care and has single cell accommodation and there are satellite facilities in Houseblocks 7 and 8, where clinics are held on a daily basis.

The education provider at HMP Hewell is Manchester College, with careers information and advice from JHP and/or Outreach – the latter having an office at the farm. The last two organizations are funded by the Learning and Skills Council, through OLASS (Offender Learning and Skills Service). The library service across the site is operated by Worcestershire County Council.

The prison farm includes a dairy herd, a pig unit, arable farming and a market garden and all areas provide work for prisoners from Houseblock 8, although financial cutbacks have meant that less land is cultivated and at the end of the reporting year the dairy herd was due to be reduced. Men from HB8 also work on the estate itself.

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The Hewell Association is a charity that exists to supplement training and support for prisoners in Houseblock 8 (formerly Hewell Grange). The majority of applications to it during the year have been driving related requests.

Voluntary help, co-ordinated by the Chaplaincy, extends across the prison with input from various organizations. (A detailed report of the Chaplaincy's work can be found in section 6.4)

4. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

4.1 Particular issues requiring a response

4.1.1 Issues requiring a response from the Minister

- (a) The prison has suffered budget reductions year on year, particularly since clustering in 2008, and continuing cuts are expected. The Board urges that there is a clear demonstration, by the Government, that any further proposed budget cuts will not affect the prison's ability to deliver courses, or disadvantage those in prison who need the range and adequacy of programmes necessary to prepare them for release.
- (b) Whilst the Board acknowledges that uncertainties remain over budget cuts which have to be made in all areas of Government, it believes that it is important to retain a balanced, fair, and equitable approach to IMB budgets to ensure that the full range of both mandatory and non-mandatory duties can continue to be undertaken to assist in providing Ministers with advice on the standards of fairness and humanity of those placed in custody.
- (c) The Board has concerns about the length of time it takes for prisoners with severe mental health problems to be transferred to a secure hospital. (See 5.2)

4.1.2 Issues requiring a response from the Prison Service

There are no issues of concern requiring a response from the Prison Service

4.2 Other issues of concern or excellence not requiring a response

During the reporting year, the Board acknowledges the successes achieved in the following areas of the prison:

- a) Learning & Skills (See 5.3)
- b) Education – Koestler Trust Awards (See 5.3)
- c) Segregation Unit (See 5.5)
- d) Foreign Nationals (See 6.1)
- e) Chaplaincy (See 6.4)

4.3 Overall Judgment

At the end of the last reporting year, the Board expressed concerns that further reductions in the prison's budget could have an adverse effect on any future consolidation or improvements. Reductions in budgets have continued. The prison has repeatedly met these demands with diligence. There is little indication that budget reductions are having a direct effect on offenders. However, as cuts continue, it is hard to see how they will not have an adverse impact.

Despite the great efforts of the Governor, Management and Staff the Board has considerable concern about budget reductions and will closely monitor the impact of further cuts to the prison's budget.

It was stated in the previous Report (2009, 4.3) that the written report following the HMCIP inspection in November 2009 had not been published. Following its publication, and that of the Action Plan, the Board notes that many of the recommendations have been implemented and the remainder are on track.

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The Board also applauds the Segregation Unit staff who, working with Safer Custody staff and members of the Mental Health Team, have arranged for parents and other family members to be present at ACCT reviews. This approach has also been followed in Lower Medical.

In July, the then Governor, Mrs. Alison Perry, moved to a new position within the Prison Service and a new Governor, Mr. Kieron Taylor, was appointed. Mr. Taylor has continued with an open approach and with the 'One Prison One Vision' statement throughout the prison. The Board acknowledges that all issues it has raised with the Governor have been investigated and addressed.

5. AREAS THAT MUST BE REPORTED ON

5.1 DIVERSITY

At HMP Hewell, the Diversity team includes a Diversity Manager, a Race Equality Officer (REO), who is a uniformed member of staff, and an Administration Officer. They work across all the Diversity strands, i.e. disability, race, religion, age (older prisoners), gender and sexual orientation and with Foreign Nationals. Each strand has a lead person, who holds a senior position in the prison, and reports are produced for the bi-monthly meetings (with the exception, so far, of gender and sexual orientation). The 2010 Equality Act will add two further strands (Marriage & Civil Partnership and Pregnancy & Maternity) plus the concepts of perceptive and dual discrimination. This will lead to changes when the new PSI is published in January 2011. The Board will closely monitor these.

The Board is satisfied that prisoners are made aware of the diversity complaints procedure and the documentation to be used when making a complaint.

The venue for the bi-monthly meetings of the Diversity & Race Equality Action Team (DREAT) rotates across all three sections of the prison, allowing prisoner representatives for Diversity from these sites to attend at least one DREAT per year. The REO collects information regularly from those unable to attend, so that all voices are heard.

The Board considers that prisoner representatives continue to make a real contribution at the meetings. For example, their suggestions have led to the introduction of more authentic foreign cuisine, more tinned vegetables for Chinese and Vietnamese prisoners and some Black Minority Ethnic (BME) magazines being re-instated on canteen lists.

The REO runs monthly BME focus groups, enabling the attendees to have an input on areas of specific needs such as canteen and religion.

With regard to Sexual Orientation and Gender issues, there is little official guidance in the form of Prison Service Orders and more research is required to make progress on these issues. A lead person has been appointed and a progress report is expected shortly. The IMB will monitor these issues during the next twelve months.

The Board recognises there is still a need for Prison Officers to attend diversity training. By the end of the reporting year, only 36% (13% in November 2009) had completed the "Challenge it Change it" training course, due in part to a shortage of trainers.

Board members have monitored Racial Incident Reporting Forms (RIRFs) during the year and are satisfied that issues have been responded to within the prescribed time limit and have been thoroughly investigated. Staff training on RIRFs continues to be carried out by the REO.

Much progress has been made during the year in respect of Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs). Four of these (Discharge, Catering, Canteen and Pastoral Care) have been completed and published and the remaining eight, with the exception of education, are on target. The Board considers that the aim of the assessments - to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to promote equality and good relations between people of different groups - is being achieved. However, the Board is disappointed with the low response from prisoners. For example, 400 questionnaires were issued to prisoners, as part of the EIA for catering, but only 26 replies were received.

Over/under BME representation in mandatory areas continues to be monitored through SMART figures. The Board is satisfied that consistent variances are fully and adequately investigated, for example in accommodation in HB1, HB6 and HB8 and in education and gym. There is now a new gym application system in operation.

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The Board notes that the Black History Month exhibition in the HB1-6 Chapel during October 2010 was a great success as were the smaller displays in HB7 & HB8. These are to be repeated next year, hopefully with full exhibitions on all sites.

The problems relating to c:nomis being unable to produce analyses of the prison population have been largely cured and only disability figures are currently not available.

The Muslim Prisoner Scoping Study has been subject to consideration by a focus group. The 10 key areas, which include "Ensuring Fair Provision of Faith Needs for Prisoners", have been thoroughly examined and the necessary recommendations made; there is no training requirement for this.

Training is in hand for "Detecting and Managing Racism in Prisons". The Education Department is delivering this to prisoners and Security is responsible for staff training.

Problems with Ramadan food and Halal dishes have been largely resolved, but there is now a concern about the contamination of Halal food with non-Halal food and consideration is being given to the erection of a screen in the serveries or changing their layouts. The Board will monitor the situation. However, the Board notes that comments from prisoners preparing food in the kitchen in Houseblocks 1-6, during the period of Ramadan, indicated they were satisfied with the way the situation was being managed.

5.2 HEALTHCARE INCLUDING MENTAL HEALTH

Healthcare continues to be available to all prisoners and detainees, with all undergoing a medical examination within 24 hours of arrival in Reception. The Board is satisfied that prisoners' medical consultations, including dentistry, are conducted in such a way as to ensure privacy for the patient.

The heaviest loaded clinics have been those for the GP, general nurse and dentist (i.e. in September 2010, of 2593 prisoners seen: GP clinics – 1280 appointments (49.3%); general nurse 1177 appointments (45.4%) and dentist 136 appointments (5.3%).

During the early part of the reporting year, refurbishment of the dental suite in Upper Medical, Houseblocks 1-6, resulted in some disruption to Primary Care Services. The Board can report that the completion of this work, together with the introduction of the dental triage has produced benefits. However, Healthcare has not consistently been able to reach the target that over 95% of prisoners on the waiting list for dental work are seen within six weeks, but it is working to improve this. A scheme to ensure that there is always cover for all designated dental sessions (including sickness absence and holidays) is in hand and the Board will monitor the situation.

With such a high demand for services, Healthcare has put into place new procedures to reduce the numbers of those who do not attend an appointment; for example the new system for ensuring appointment slips go to houseblocks in time for appointments the next day. This is also an operational matter and the Board will continue to monitor the situation. It goes without saying that fewer missed appointments will reduce waiting lists further.

Work is still continuing to improve the accommodation used for consultations; for example, during the reporting year, in Lower Medical HB1-6, two rooms have been identified, and funding obtained, to provide better waiting facilities for vulnerable prisoners and a new consulting room. The IMB will monitor this and the refurbishment of treatment rooms in HB2/5.

Staff appointments during the year have ensured there is now a substantial Mental Health Team, with a Mental Health Manager being appointed during the Board's reporting year. Staff from the team attend all Assessment Care in Custody Teamwork (ACCT) reviews. (See also report on Safer Custody 5.4 and Segregation & Separation Unit 5.5.) There is good support from the consultant psychiatrist, who attends the prison on a weekly basis.

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The Board is still concerned that there can be a long wait (extending to months) for identified prisoners to be transferred to a secure hospital. This is of particular concern if the prisoner has to be kept in Segregation, because his condition is such that it is difficult for him to be managed in Lower Medical, HB1-6. This also puts additional pressure on staff in Segregation.

Lower level psychological services are not commissioned by the Primary Care Trust (PCT).

The Healthcare Manager attends Prisoner Forums, where various issues are discussed and at the end of the reporting year, dedicated Healthcare Forums, to meet on a quarterly basis, were due to have begun. The Board will monitor the latter, as it does the former.

When carrying out Rota duties in Upper and Lower Medical during the reporting year, the IMB has been pleased to record that the whole area is cleaner.

During the year, recruitment for the Integrated Drug Treatment System (IDTS) team has continued. Meetings have been held with the Prison and members of the CARAT team (Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice and Throughcare – relating to drugs). As the anticipated implementation of the system had been put back until after the end of this reporting year, it will be included in the next Annual Report.

Problems caused by the incompatibility between c:nomis and SystemOne have continued within Healthcare, particularly as the system has to be updated manually. Compatibility would enable staff in Healthcare to check whether, for example, a prisoner who had a dental appointment had been released, thus enabling his place to be taken by someone else.

When the last IMB Annual Report (2009) was written, neither the HMCIP Report, following the inspection in early November 2009, nor the subsequent Action Plan, had been published. Since publication, many of the recommendations have been implemented and the remainder are ongoing.

The IMB continue to find staff in Healthcare approachable and helpful.

5.3 LEARNING AND SKILLS

Yet again, the Board is able to report that during the last twelve months continued progress has been made within the Education, Training and Employment pathway.

One area highlighted during the *OfSTED* Inspection (November 2009 and noted in the Board's 2009 Annual Report 5.3) was the lack of opportunities for vulnerable prisoners in HB1-6. The Board is pleased to note that during the current year this matter has been addressed, with work also being undertaken in the lower part of Industries Education.

Last year, the Board reported (5.3) that prisoner attendance at education had improved and is pleased to report that this has continued during the current year.

The refurbishment of the kitchen in HB7, that is used for prisoners' courses, is almost complete.

The Board is also pleased to note that instead of having to be transferred from HB7 (Category C) to HB8 (Category D) mid-way through a course, prisoners are able to have their move deferred in order to complete their work and gain the relevant certificate.

Further courses have been introduced, including a plastering course in HB8 and the opening of a motorcycle workshop (for Harley Davidson bikes) also in HB8. Prisoners have expressed their satisfaction at having undertaken courses.

The Library at HB8 has relocated to a larger room, with a considerable amount of the work undertaken to refit the new location being carried out by prisoners, under the supervision of prison staff. It is an area that is well-used.

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As a result of this, the old library in HB8 has become a Community Art Room, with art projects being undertaken both for the prison and the community, as part of the Restorative Justice work that is carried out at Hewell.

A garden, designed by prisoners, described as 'Path of Progression' won a Silver Gilt award and 'Best in Show' at the Royal Horticultural Society's Autumn Show, held at the Malvern Show Ground. This success was down to the work of prisoners and the support and encouragement from the staff of the Manchester College and the Market Garden, from the design stage to the finished product.

Recycling is now an established part of Industries, particularly in HB8. One outcome of this is that all prison farm vehicles run on bio-diesel recycled on site, thus saving money. In addition, with the availability of space, larger amounts of goods for recycling can be stored. This has resulted in either a reduction in the cost of the disposal of the goods, or the obtaining of a higher price for them, due to larger loads costing less to transport.

Several prisoners have attended outside ceremonies; for example, one prisoner received a certificate for gaining employment and completing elements of the National Grid programme.

This year, prisoners at Hewell have amassed a record number of Koestler Trust Awards – 24 in total.

The prison acknowledges that recently there has been some delay in prisoners getting to education for assessment, following hold ups in induction. The Board will monitor this regularly.

During the reporting period, budget cuts have not had an impact on prisoner employment places or on certified training. However, on occasions, especially in the workshops, staff shortages – through leave or sickness – have led to reduced prisoner numbers at work. The Board will continue to monitor this situation.

5.4 SAFER CUSTODY

The Board remains satisfied that staff at HMP Hewell have continued with a constructive approach towards the maintenance of low levels of violence, self harm and bullying within the prison.

The Board is satisfied that ACCT/2052SH procedures are maintained at HMP Hewell. The inspection of ACCT records during Rota visits and observation of Houseblock routines indicate that care plans are followed and Case Reviews are conducted in accordance with prison rules and protocols. All staff now undergo refresher training every 12 months in the maintenance of an ACCT. Through the reporting year, Board members have attended ACCT Reviews, as observers.

The Safer Custody team meets each month, with Listeners and Insiders attending and having an input. Also attending are representatives from the Samaritans and Reliance Prisoner Transport Services. A Board member attends, as an observer.

The Board continues to be satisfied that Listeners are being recruited from prisoner volunteers whenever numbers fall below the calculated requirement of 1 Listener to 50 prisoners. All potential Listeners receive formal training to enable them to undertake the role, with the next training course scheduled to be held in January 2011. By the end of the Board's reporting year, 33 applications had been received.

The prison is aware of the importance of safer cells and first night requirements. The Board remains satisfied that every attempt is made to meet these requirements and will continue to monitor the protocols during this next year. At present all new arrivals are seen in Reception by an Insider or Listener.

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An Insider, who is multi-lingual, attends inductions in Houseblock 6 and sees all newly-arrived Foreign Nationals. In addition, a dedicated Listener in HB7 deals with procedural issues raised by Foreign Nationals there.

The system for Tackling Anti Social Behaviour (TAB) has continued and the Board notes the work carried out by staff to detect and overcome such behaviour. The procedures which centre on interventions and support, with supporting documentation, have proved to be effective in reducing violence. TAB remains an important item on the agenda at Safer Custody meetings.

Sadly, during the reporting period there have been four deaths in custody. On each occasion, a Prison and Probation Ombudsman investigation was commissioned, but at the end of the reporting year no reports had been completed. The inquest for a prisoner, who died in 2008, took place in January 2010, with the verdict being that he had died from natural causes.

5.5 SEGREGATION & SEPARATION UNIT

Segregated accommodation is where prisoners are held in conditions of greater isolation than the rest of the prison and where the prisoner's vulnerability is often most extremely displayed.

It was noted in the 2009 Report (5.5) that the Board was very satisfied with the conditions, facilities and regimes within the Segregation Unit and it is pleasing to report that these high standards have been maintained during 2010.

Board members have continued to be impressed by the quality of care, understanding and compassion provided by the staff in the Segregation Unit, in what can be a very demanding area of the prison, when dealing, at times, with extremely difficult individuals. Board members have been contacted on a number of occasions to observe prisoners being transferred to the Segregation Unit and at all times these transfers have been conducted in a professional and controlled manner.

The Board is satisfied that both Rule 45 Reviews and Adjudications are well-conducted, with prisoners having all the procedures explained to them. All are given ample opportunity and encouragement to speak and to ask questions of all agencies present, including the IMB. When Board members speak with prisoners, it is most unusual to hear adverse comments regarding the way they are treated.

All documentation is accessible to Board members, who regularly inspect it and who sign and write a comment in the visits' file, following a visit to each Segregation cell on a weekly basis.

Rule 45 Reviews are held three times a week and a Board member has been present on all but one occasion. The Chair, Vice-Chair and Board Development Officer are notified, within 24 hours, of prisoners' arrival in Segregation. In addition, members, by attending the Rule 45 Review on a regular basis, ensure prisoners are being seen by the Board within the statutory 72 hours.

A full Segregation review is carried out at least once during the week, during which Board members have the opportunity to speak to prisoners in confidence.

Applications to the IMB from prisoners in Segregation are infrequent. During the period of this report there have been a total of nine.

It was noted in the 2009 Report (5.5) that the Segregation, Monitoring and Review Group (SMARG) was due to be set up. This has now been convened and by the end of the reporting year two meetings had been held, with a Board member attending (as an observer). At the meetings, Segregation documentation, which has been revised since the group was formed, has been reviewed against laid-down criteria.

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The staff in Segregation work very closely with members of the Mental Health Team, when prisoners with mental health issues are located there.

The Board regrets the decision of the Probation Service, made in May 2010, not to attend Rule 45 reviews.

6. OTHER AREAS OF THE PRISON REGIME

6.1 FOREIGN NATIONALS

At the end of the reporting year, there were a total of 134 Foreign Nationals - covering the various status categories - from 41 different nationalities, with Vietnamese, Irish and Polish making up the highest numbers. This represents a reduction of 90 (40%) from the 2009 figure of 225.

With the presence of UKBA (UK Border Agency), the prison continues to develop as a 'hub' for Foreign Nationals. Great efforts have been made to keep the numbers of sentence expired detainees to a minimum, with a structured procedure for transfer to the Immigration Removal Centres (IRCs) in place. At the end of the reporting year, there were only eight Foreign National detainees being detained beyond the completion of their sentence, compared with 12 in November 2009.

Foreign Nationals within the prison generally continue to feel safe when they remain at Hewell if no space is immediately available within the Immigration Estate. Foreign National Forums are held on a regular basis.

The Board acknowledges the complexities of this type of work and applauds the continuing efforts being made to ensure that the specific needs of Foreign Nationals are met, including representing their views and offering peer support.

6.2 PRISONER FORUMS

The prison continues to hold Prisoner Forums, on a monthly basis, in the three sections of the prison. In addition, dedicated Prisoner Forums are also held in relation to Foreign Nationals. A wide variety of subjects including catering, healthcare, the gym and education have been covered. The meetings are attended by staff from various areas of the prison and, as a result, many issues have been resolved.

The IMB attends meetings as observers. The Board remains impressed by the efficient, but informal, organisation of the meetings. The Board is also satisfied that the issues raised have gone some way to reducing the number of Applications it has received during the reporting year.

6.3 REDUCING RE-OFFENDING

As stated in the 2009 report, the Board acknowledges the progress that has been made in preparing prisoners for a settled and law abiding life upon release. Initiatives and progress are reported upon on a quarterly basis by the Reducing Re-offending Strategy Group.

Examples of initiatives progressed during 2010 include:

- A driving simulator has been transferred from Swinfen Hall. This has been located in the Forklift Truck training area at HB1 – HB6. A Forklift Truck package has been purchased to assist with training.
- An approach by National Grid to run a gas training programme. Each 13 week course, which can accommodate 10 prisoners, consists of five weeks' classroom training and 8 weeks spent in the community. At the end of the course successful prisoners gain a recognised qualification.
- A tiling workshop has been created in HB7 and tiles have been donated by a number of local companies.

The IMB are welcomed at the group meetings where fully documented progress reports and minutes are produced. The Board continues to be impressed by the dedication and commitment of the staff and support given to the work by the Governor.

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6.4 CHAPLAINCY

Chaplaincy work is very varied. Apart from providing worship, study groups, music groups and pastoral support for all prisoners, the Staff Care Team is headed by the Chaplaincy. The Children and Families Pathway comes under its remit. Prison Visitors are facilitated through the Chaplaincy and it is also part of the ACCT Assessor Team.

Two members of the Children's Team, who are partially employed by the Prison Service, liaise with organisations such as Children's Services and volunteer groups within the community to support the families of prisoners experiencing problems, as part of the Common Assessment Framework. All the Children's Team are trained in the Common Assessment Framework

The Children's Team facilitates weekly Family Time on Houseblock 1-6, in the Visits' Room. All participating prisoners must have completed the 'Me and My Dad' or 'Play and Language' workshops before taking part in this.

Family Time takes place once a month in both Houseblocks 7 and 8. These visits are for fathers, grandfathers and uncles who have regular contact with the children visiting and are organised by the Early Years' Practitioner, the Play Co-ordinator and Chaplaincy. Refreshments for these visits are funded by Mothers Union on HB7 and the Quakers on HB8 and are supplied by prisoners who are undertaking catering qualifications.

At the 'Play and Language' workshop, fathers and their partners learn how to communicate with their children. Some prisoners, in Houseblocks 1-6, take part in the 'Storybook Dads' workshops, where they write, illustrate & record their own stories for their children

Baby bonding visits, organised by the Early Years Practitioner, are available to prisoners with new babies.

In August, in Houseblock 8, prisoners and their children, with support from the Children and Families' Team, took part in the prison-wide 'Nursery Rhyme Challenge' which was held during extended Family Time visits. Children were encouraged to learn nursery rhymes. HMP Hewell achieved joint first place in the competition.

Funding for courses is provided by Worcestershire County Council, and is distributed by the Mothers Union and the prison benefits from the services of over twenty volunteers from the community.

Various voluntary organisations work within HMP Hewell. The Primrose Hospice provides refreshments in the Visits Room in Houseblocks 1-6, with the Mothers' Union providing them during Family Time visits in HB7 and in the Visitors' Centre.

The Board commends the work of the Chaplaincy Team members who have put tremendous effort into the provision of their services.

6.5 OPERATIONS

The Board can report that Security and Drug Strategy staff have continued to be vigilant. This also applies to staff across the prison.

Increased patrols within the prison – in all Houseblocks, work areas and visits – the use of dogs and the introduction of a mobile security camera have proved very effective in finding mobile phones, SIM cards and drugs. The use of monthly intelligence objectives has continued to prove effective, as has the review and implementation of other policies designed to prevent contraband coming into the prison.

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The Board considers the effort involved by prison staff in preventing banned items and substances from entering the prison should not be underestimated.

Security has been heavily involved with the continued preparation of the houseblock to be used for IDTS.

The Dog Team has achieved much success and has been awarded the Sir Richard Tilt trophy and the Board congratulates those involved on their efforts.

6.6 COMPLAINTS

The Board can report that there has been a reduction of approximately 25% in the number of prisoner complaints - to 3122 - during the reporting year, compared with those of 2009 (4044). (See, also, 7.2, for a similar percentage reduction in Applications to the Board for 2010.)

It agrees with Prison Managers' comments that one reason for this is that the prison regime has bedded-down, following the creation of HMP Hewell from three separate establishments in late June 2008. Effective Prisoner Forums also result in a reduction of Complaints to the prison and Applications to the Board.

In addition, the Board can report that the Management undertook a prisoner survey across the whole site to assess prisoners' understanding, and use, of Hewell's General Application system and also the Complaints' system (following the acceptance of the Action Plan after the HMCIP Inspection in November 2009). The 5% return, although low, resulted in a detailed report, which was made available to prisoners, and in the modification to the information in the Prisoner Induction pack.

After attending a meeting of a BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) Forum a prisoner took the initiative to design a questionnaire about prisoner complaints, which, with the support of staff was issued and collected by him. The results, analysed by staff, resulted in further modification of prisoner information in respect of General Applications and Complaints. Although the numbers of prisoners involved in the second survey was smaller, the response, at 82.5%, was excellent. The result of this survey was also made available to prisoners.

At the same time, the IMB information in the Induction pack was reviewed.

The Board is pleased that this work has been undertaken, having discussed with staff that prisoners had spoken of waiting longer than expected for replies to General Applications. It is anticipated the prisoner-run surveys will be expanded across the site and the Board will continue to monitor this procedure.

7 THE WORK OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

7.1 BOARD STATISTICS

Subject	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Recommended complement of Board members	24	20	
Number of Board members at start of reporting period	14	17	
Number of Board members at the end of reporting period	17	15	
Number of new members joining within reporting period	9	7	
Number of members leaving within reporting period	6	8	
Number of Board meetings, including the Annual Team Performance Review	13	13	
Number of attendances at meetings other than Board meetings	68	28	
Total number of visits to the prison (including all meetings, except Board meetings)	574	466	
Total number of applications received (excluding confidential applications)	524	382	
Confidential Applications	30	21	
Total number of Segregation Reviews	154	136	
Total number of Segregation Reviews attended	154	135	

7.2 APPLICATIONS TO THE BOARD

Code	Subject	2008*	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11
A	Accommodation	3	6	13	
B	Adjudications	3	5	2	
C	Diversity related	4	10	13	
D	Education/employment/training	9	13	14	
E	Family/visits	20	44	42	
F	Food/kitchen related	12	6	3	
G	Health related	25	61	82	
H	Property	110	155	81	
I	Sentence related	32	76	45	
J	Staff/prisoner/detainee related	32	30	28	
K	Transfers	3	34	15	
L	Miscellaneous	20	84	44	
	Total number of applications	268	524	382	

*NB. Statistics for 2008 are for 5 completed months only: 25th June – 30th November (i.e. from the opening of HMP Hewell to the end of the Board’s reporting year).

The number of Applications for this reporting year (382) shows a reduction of 27.1% over last year’s figure of 524. The highest number of Applications to the Board for this year (82) relate to Health issues, representing a 21.5% increase over last year’s figure of 62.

Applications to the Board in respect of property - either related to previous establishments or to HMP Hewell - have shown a reduction of 47.7% from 155 in 2009 to 81 this reporting year. Whilst the Board recognises and welcomes the work carried out by staff in improving this situation, it notes that Management is taking steps to further improve it and monitoring is continuing.

7.3 THE WORK OF THE BOARD

The Board has a complement of 20 members. However, it has never achieved its full complement during the reporting year. The reporting year began with 17 members and ended the year with 15 members. A number of members resigned, because of relocation, work commitments and personal reasons and there has been a fair burden of interviewing for new members by Board officers and experienced members.

A protracted recruitment process began in February, with the end result being the appointment of 5 new members in late August. A further 2 were appointed in September. The Board accepts that part of the delay in appointments was a result of the period of Purdah. However, it continues to be dissatisfied with the length of time it takes for new members to be appointed and to receive security clearance.

Board members are encouraged to attend appropriate national training. The Board Development Officer organized in-house training sessions prior to monthly Board Meetings. The Board is kept up-to-date with changes in the prison and various departments by way of the Chair's attendance at the monthly Senior Management meetings, as an observer, and through the regular receipt of minutes, measurement indicators and the Governor's monthly report to the Board.

The Board has continued to review, monitor and update its policies and working practices with the following being undertaken: Death in Custody Protocol, Serious Incident Procedure, Applications Procedure and Code of Conduct for Members of IMBs/Handling Conflicts of Interest.

As usual the Board carried out a formal Annual Team Performance Review in November to fully evaluate its effectiveness in carrying out its duties. The Board is satisfied that the objectives set for this reporting year, had in the main, been achieved. However, it could not guarantee the objectives set for 2010/11 being met in the present financial climate.

Although the Board's budget for 2010/2011 was not finally announced until well into the financial year, the Board was aware at an early stage of the need to work effectively and efficiently and within budget. The Board took an early decision to concentrate on the 'statutory duties' only. The Board's concern was confirmed when the budget was announced.

The quality of the 'statutory' work has remained consistently good and the Board continues to work well as a team. The 'non statutory' work of the Board which, in many cases, is just as important as the 'statutory work' has been virtually non-existent due to the budgetary constraints.

Some money saving steps undertaken include:

- Although all members were assigned an Area of Special Interest, very little work has been undertaken in this responsibility.
- Members visited the prison less frequently (-18.8% when compared with the previous reporting year).
- Members attended fewer prison committee meetings, as observers (-58.8% when compared with the previous reporting year). Minutes of meetings are still received.

The Board's relationship with the Governor, Management and Staff remains good. Without the professionalism of everyone, their courtesy and approachability, the Board's role would be more difficult to undertake.

The Board acknowledges the continued hard work of our Clerk, who makes a contribution to the smooth administration of the Board

The Board would like to take this opportunity to thank the previous Chair, for her immense contribution and for maintaining a stable and effective Board throughout her three years in post as Chair of HMP Hewell Grange, Shadow Board, and HMP Blakenhurst, and her two years as Chair of HMP Hewell.