



Annual Report

HMP High Down Surrey

December 2009 to November 2010

STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

1.1 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 Home 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; and
- (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.

HMP HIGH DOWN IMB DIVERSITY STATEMENT

1.2 The members of High Down IMB have all read and understood the HMP High Down Diversity Statement below. We recognise our work should be consistent with the statement below, and behaviour which conflicts with it is not acceptable.

"HMP High Down is fully committed to all Diversity and Equal Opportunities Policies and procedures.

Discrimination, prejudice, harassment, bullying and negative stereotyping on the grounds of colour, ethnic or national origins, religious belief, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, gender or any other factor is unacceptable.

Everyone who lives, works in, or visits HMP High Down should treat each other with respect, decency and kindness.

We do not accept, and aim to change, any behaviour that does not meet these high standards."

Section 2

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Section 3 DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

3.1 HMP High Down is a Category B male local prison, serving the Crown Courts of Guildford and Croydon, and the surrounding Magistrates Courts. It holds Categories B & C prisoners, sentenced and on remand. With two new house blocks opened in 2008/9 it is certified to hold 999 prisoners though with the doubling up of some single cells it can currently hold 1103. During this past year the prison has again held a large number of foreign nationals and young offenders (YOs).

3.2 High Down is the only adult male prison in the Greater London area holding young adults. The categories of YOs held are sentenced, remand, Rule 45 (own interest), lifers and indeterminate sentence for public protection.

3.3 A large number of prisoners coming in to High Down have mental health problems, legal and illegal drug use problems and/or physical and learning disabilities. Many have a low level of literacy and numeracy skills.

3.4 Healthcare is now managed by the Surrey Primary Care Trust. Manchester College manages education and training within the prison. Voluntary and community sector organisations play a significant part in underpinning the work of the prison.

Section 4 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overall judgement

4.1 In response to its key statutory function (section 1) the Board is satisfied that High Down treats prisoners humanely and fairly. It is a well run prison, with a continuing and committed focus on safety and security. The prison in general, and the Governor in particular, have been especially active and innovative in developing resettlement, which is an essential component in reducing reoffending. This is a key element of Government penal policy, and High Down has taken a dynamic, independent lead. They have built up partnerships with a range of organisations to help prisoners both in prison and on release. The prison has a very good reputation, and has attracted media interest.

4.2 In last year's report the subject of budgetary cuts was emphasised. As with other prisons further efficiency savings were required during the year. This inevitably led to reductions in what the prison was able to do. In terms of staffing, High Down concentrated on reducing management grades, operational support grades and some specialist posts. There was also some reduction in the resources they were able to put into areas such as voluntary drug testing, education, training and

employment. At times, staff shortages were often caused by other factors such as sickness and annual leave. 'Cross deployment' of staff, and overtime were used. Staff often commented to Board members about consequential pressures, and that they could only 'do the basics'. Related matters are referred to throughout this report. However, crucially, in regard to the impact on prisoners, the Board is satisfied that these developments did not jeopardise safety and decency. Proper attempts were also made to maintain the basic regime and 'the core day.' Nonetheless, the implications of further budget cuts on the treatment of prisoners have to be a matter of concern.

4.3 In fact, despite budgetary constraints, the prison continued to perform very well across a number of areas. In addition to resettlement, the report refers to many other examples of real improvements and good practice – for example, in diversity, health care, safer custody and the Separation and Reintegration Unit. It is perhaps interesting to note that the number of applications from prisoners to see Board members fell by almost 300 (Table 2).

4.4 The Board did have concerns about a number of aspects, and again these are mentioned throughout the report. The chief one relates to the significant underuse of the Stephen Pryor Centre (SPC), which is a large, relatively new 'state of the art' education facility. The Board has consistently raised this issue during the year, and escalated the matter to senior prison service managers (via Area Chairs' meetings). For a time aspects of the dentistry service were unsatisfactory, and the Board remains concerned about the treatment of prisoners who have alcohol related problems. Yet again the Board must also highlight the unsatisfactory consequences of overcrowding, which has resulted in prisoners having to share 'doubled up' cells in unhygienic conditions (see paragraph 6.13), and the fact that YO's are held in High Down - an adult local prison - where no separate facilities are available to meet their particular needs.

Issues for the Minister

- The possible impact on prisoners of further budgetary cuts (paragraph 4.2).
- Continuing delays in reaching immigration decisions by UKBA (paragraph 5.10) and uncertainty about how 'SPOKE' will operate at High Down (paragraph 5.11).
- Continuing placement of mentally ill people in prison (e.g. paragraphs 5.28 and 5.41).
- Delays in holding Inquests (paragraph 5.35)
- Overcrowding, leading to doubled up cells (paragraph 6.13)

Issues for the Prison Service.

- Problems concerning Manchester College (paragraph 5.16).
- Disadvantages associated with the change to a central food supplier (paragraph 6.3).
- Prisons reluctant to accept transfers of prisoners who have drug problems (paragraph 6.9).
- Inclusion of prisoners with alcohol problems in appropriate treatment programmes (paragraph 6.11)
- The holding of YO's in an adult local prison such as High Down (paragraph 6.26); and consideration given to holding YO's in one system from remand to release, and their age bracket (paragraph 6.30).

Issues for the Prison

- The underuse of the SPC (paragraph 5.17).
- Problems associated with staffing levels and equipment in the laundry (paragraph 5.20).
- To consider avoiding the term 'near miss' to describe near fatal accidents (paragraph 5.34).
- Variable walkway management (paragraph 5.37).
- The continuing problems of default meals (paragraph 6.4)
- Delays in dealing with home detention curfew (HDC) issues (paragraph 6.15).

Section 5. SPECIFIC AREAS.

High Down Equality Team (HEAT) and Foreign National Prisoners (FNPs).

5.1 There was little change in the population mix since last year's report. Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) prisoners represented almost half of High Down's population at 46% and Foreign Nationals almost a quarter at 24%. Disabled and older prisoners each represented less than 8% of the prison's population. Despite the structural changes detailed below, the Board is again satisfied that High Down worked effectively to promote racial equality and diversity within the prison.

5.2 The main developments were the amalgamation of the Diversity and Foreign National Prisoner teams into one management structure and the renaming of the new group Equality/FNPs to reflect national policy. There was a change in manager and a loss of two from the management team, due to budget cuts. The team was, however, supported by a strong network of 17 prisoner orderlies and representatives. They were proactive in collecting information on individual prisoners and feeding it into the Equality team for any necessary action.

Equality.

5.3 The monthly HEAT (High Down Equality Action Team) meetings were chaired by the Deputy Governor and continued to be well attended by staff at all levels and from the many departments prison-wide. These meetings were also attended by prisoner orderlies and representatives. The

numbers attending varied from meeting to meeting but those present raised issues of concern across the prison. The Equality Manager also held regular meetings with prisoner representatives. She was focussing on forums to discuss the needs of the older prisoners. Towards the end of the reporting year there were 66 prisoners over 50, 27 aged between 50 and 55, 13 were over retirement age, and the oldest was 78. Most of the older prisoners opted to work.

5.4 The needs of disabled prisoners were addressed. Improvements to the old house blocks (1-4) were made to bring facilities nearer to the standard of the purpose-built disabled cells in the newer house blocks (5 & 6). Of the 56 disabled prisoners towards the end of the year the top three categories were mental illness (10), dyslexia (8) and reduced mobility (8). The number of disabled prisoners towards the end of the year appeared to be half that at the same time last year. The Board understands that the reason could be that the disability register was not kept up to date when the officer tasked with this was redeployed in April, without a replacement. To address the problem the Equality Manager introduced a new system of collecting the information using the prisoner orderlies. It is too early at this stage to comment on the success of this scheme. However, although the register was not kept up to date, there is no evidence to suggest that disabled prisoners were not identified or their needs not properly addressed.

5.5 The Equality Manager investigated 100 racial incidents. This is a decrease of 46% over the previous year. The reason for this significant drop was not clear and was being investigated. The equality representatives were, however, successful in resolving a lot of issues before they became formal complaints.

5.6 High Down endeavoured to work closely with the local community on cultural awareness. In October a series of events was planned to celebrate Black History, culminating in the final few days when a group of ethnic minority prisoners cooked a range of buffet style food from all over the world. The Equality Manager and her team/prisoner orderlies served the dishes to prisoners in workshops and those attending education. This was much appreciated. Unfortunately, the concert planned for the final day had to be cancelled at short notice due to staff shortages. Everyone involved was very disappointed, particularly in view of the interest from outside speakers and other visitors. The Equality Team also organised, for example, a well attended, and appreciated, Gypsy, Roma, and Travellers' event in June.

5.7 Over the course of the year the ongoing problem about the contamination of the Halal food was addressed by the kitchen management providing specific training for the hotplate workers on each house block. Complaints about this issue have since decreased.

FNPs.

5.8 During the earlier part of the year the FN population rose to a peak of 30% falling from summer onwards to a level of 25%. The population consisted of 43 disclosed nationalities, the top four being Jamaican, Nigerian, Irish and Vietnamese, a slight change from last year when the third highest was Indian. The number of detainees at the end of the reporting year was 14, having reached an all-time high of some 22 in the summer.

5.9 The Equality/FN Orderlies and Representatives also supported the Equality Team in dealing with issues raised by this diverse group of prisoners. Induction material continued to be offered in 20 or so languages and translation software was readily available. The problems with the FNPs telephone contact with their families abroad, raised in the last report, was resolved and complaints on this matter were few.

5.10 The plan for UKBA Immigration Officers to be based at High Down four days a week did not materialise because of their other commitments outside the Prison Service. They generally attended the Thursday Resettlement Clinic and maybe one other day a week to deal with individual cases and to serve any necessary paperwork. However, as the decision-making still rested with UKBA case owners, based elsewhere, there was not a discernable improvement in the length of time it took for decisions to be made. The onus still seemed to rest with the Equality team to contact UKBA when an FNP reached his release date, automatic or conditional, to establish whether they should either be released or their detention authorised under immigration powers.

5.11 Last year's report noted that High Down had been designated a SPOKE establishment. However the Board is no clearer about what this should deliver. It certainly seems to have had little impact on speeding up CCD's decision making. However, as far as the responsibilities for the management of foreign nationals within the prison are concerned, there was no evidence to suggest that cases were not being properly processed or paperwork was not being served on time. Few complaints were received from FNPs about their immigration situation. The Prisons Minister asked IMBs nationally to inform him directly about hold-ups in repatriation arrangements.

5.12 The Facilitated Return and Early Removal Schemes were explained to all FNPs during their induction on arriving at the prison. High Down had no accurate figures of the numbers applying since some applied directly to UKBA Immigration Officers. When decisions were reached it was often the case that the prisoner had been moved to another prison, IRC or been released on HDC or under other early release arrangements.

Conclusion

5.13 Although the Equality Team lost two posts, there was no evidence that prisoners were adversely affected. The manager and her team, supported by the prisoner representatives, worked hard to keep up to date with all aspects of their diverse responsibilities and were conscious of priorities.

Learning and Skills

Education

5.14 High Down has 'state of the art' educational facilities in its Stephen Pryor Centre (SPC), with approximately 220 spaces available; and a further 48 places in computer studies in Workshop 2.

5.15 Staff provided a broad spectrum of courses. These ranged from basic literacy courses, including those for whom English is a foreign language, to a wide selection of skills and interests, including the popular workshops giving instruction in construction techniques. The annual public exhibition of Art and Poetry by the prisoners took place at Sutton Library and the exceptional standard of entries was a credit to the help and guidance from the tutors.

5.16 Unfortunately, the changeover in education provider in August 2009 proved to be an on-going problem throughout this year. It was unsettling to both SPC staff and prisoners. It was seven months before the Operations Manager of Manchester College made a first visit to the SPC to discuss with staff likely changes. In May staff started to hear about redundancies. The Head of Learning and Skills, who retired early in the year, has not been replaced and there were reductions at all levels. High Down was not in a position to recruit generally. The original 40,000 teaching hours allocated for the SPC was reduced to 30,000 hours permanently, and teaching vacancies (e.g. in Media and ESOL) disrupted classes. Manchester College altered the curriculum to emphasise "employability" skills. Without criticising this policy, the Board would highlight the loss of some valuable life skill courses. Construction, music and art, among the most popular courses, were fortunately not affected by the changes.

5.17 The Board considers the poor take-up of the educational opportunities in SPC to be one of the most disappointing aspects of the prison. Throughout our monitoring in 2010 empty classrooms were a regular feature. There appeared to be many causes. Some could be attributed to the nature of a local prison's population, which is highly transitory and with many prisoners on remand awaiting trial. Earlier in the year late arrivals to classes, especially from the Detox house block 6, was an issue but this improved. In the latter part of the year it became noticeable that large numbers of

prisoners were leaving classes soon after their arrival. The numbers registered first thing in the morning often bore little relation to those actually observed in the SPC a little later. Various reasons were given (e.g. induction, sickness, healthcare appointments, legal visits, library, gym etc). Although most were valid, it possibly throws some doubt on the SPC's actual attendance figures.

5.18 Management was aware of these problems and worked creatively to resolve them. The number of prisoners choosing to be left 'in cell' in the morning were collated for the daily management meetings, and it was emphasised that house block officers, and in particular Personal Officers, could play a key role in encouraging prisoners to opt for out of cell activity. The allocation of education places was passed to the Job Shop so that work and education opportunities were rationalised in the one section. Tutors attended the house blocks and SRU reviews weekly to promote their courses. Prisoners were appointed as education orderlies to do the same. Electricity to cells during working hours was even cut off so that staying in to watch television was no longer an attractive option. The challenge to get results is there for the coming year and the Board hopes that these measures produce the solution.

Library.

5.19 The Library recovered from a difficult time last year while it was being refurbished. It provided a valuable and popular activity and sessions were usually full. Although certain house blocks occasionally missed their scheduled library sessions, the situation improved. The Head Librarian has now been at High Down for over a year. The Board was concerned about the safety aspects when only one librarian was on duty. Fortunately, a fourth librarian joined the staff so that there should now be two on duty. A high number of books continued to go missing.

Laundry.

5.20 The laundry also continued to provide an essential service, holding contracts for the laundry of two other prisons. It was the only place in the prison where prisoners from the Vulnerable Prisoner (VP) Unit were employed. Despite sterling efforts by civilian managers and the VPs who operated it, the laundry was hampered by failing machinery and pipe work leaks throughout the year, leading on occasions to backlogs, sometimes in relation to High Down's own washing. Often it was working to half-capacity. While 34 prisoners could normally be provided with employment, there was a ratio of 17 prisoners to one member of staff. One instructor absent on annual or sick leave meant that 17 VPU's remained in their cells. It is important that this matter, and problems about the maintenance and replacement of equipment, is addressed. The laundry is one of the prison's few profit centres.

Workshops and Recycling.

5.21 The Board is extremely impressed with the workshops and recycling unit which provide excellent opportunities for training in a friendly and supportive environment. Workshop 5, which was used by up to 12 prisoners for furniture recycling and woodwork, obtained outside contracts. It also

repaired garden tools and made them available to local schools. Workshop 6 had some 20 prisoners dealing with textiles and recycling bed linen. Sadly, Workshop 4, which dealt with industrial cleaning and offered 10 prisoners work and qualifications, was - and remained - closed for a lengthy period due to lack of an instructor. The recruitment freeze made replacement difficult. The Board understands the prison hopes to recruit internally and reopen the workshop as soon as it can. The recycling workshop offered prisoners 14 places. Everything possible was recycled and a wide variety of different items from cans to clothing were managed there. Cooking oil from the kitchen was turned into diesel fuel to run prison vehicles. The bio-fuel machine cost £2500 and saved the prison £2500 per year. The plans to transform waste food into compost were well-advanced and only required the Works Department to complete the necessary construction to house the machinery.

Health and Mental Health.

5.22 The Board is again pleased to report that healthcare in the prison maintained its high standards throughout the reporting period. In our estimation prisoners at High Down were given at least an equivalent level of care to that which they would receive in the community. In fact, in many cases it was an opportunity to access various medical services through the wide range of outpatient clinics offered. It is common for men to enter prison with a swathe of medical problems that have not been addressed through often chaotic lifestyles. High Down prisoners have the opportunity to leave the prison in a healthier state than on their reception. Through attendance at many of the health-related meetings the Board has observed the hard work by management and staff working in conjunction with the Primary Care Trust for Surrey to improve the provision of healthcare within the constraints of the budget.

5.23 Recruitment of nursing staff was again challenging at periods and in certain departments during the year. Nursing managers identified the link between motivating staff to stay and offering opportunities to train. They pursued an active policy to raise the profile of training, delivering a wide range of courses to upgrade skills and techniques and encourage nurses to take on new responsibilities. It was reported that this had considerable effect on the retention of staff, and the number of vacancies was very low at the year end. A particular concern of the Board last year was the continually changing agency nurses on the house blocks. It is pleasing to note that by the end of November most blocks had the continuity provided by having one permanent nurse.

5.24 Last year's report also highlighted shortcomings with the GP service. This unsatisfactory state of affairs continued through the early part of the year but the Board is happy to report that,

following a tendering process, a local practice of GPs with experience of prison work took over the contract in April, since when there was a real improvement.

5.25 Dental services became problematic again half-way through this reporting year. Long-term staff sickness, annual leave and computer training, coupled with the absence of funds to pay for locum cover meant months of long waiting lists for both urgent and routine appointments to see the dentist. In April/May there was a nine week wait for a routine dental appointment. By August there were 58 on the routine list; and the 40 on the urgent list had a six to eight week wait. It must be made clear that 'emergencies' **were** dealt with within 24 hours. Those triaged by the HB nurses as 'urgent' could only be offered pain-killers. It was no surprise that complaints from prisoners to Healthcare about this delay escalated from one in February/March 2010 to 14 in April/May and 19 in August/September. The Board also received a number of applications from prisoners who had been in pain for weeks. The extraordinarily high dental needs of the prison population were not being met in a reasonable time frame. Eventually the Board asked for its concerns to be taken to the Partnership meeting chaired by the PCT. In the last month of our reporting period extra funding was made available to pay for a locum dentist and the waiting lists were shrinking fast.

5.26 Last year the Board expressed considerable concern about the apparent inability to resolve the long-standing problem of large numbers of prisoners who routinely failed to attend their designated outpatient appointments. This had associated costs. It is, therefore, highly encouraging that the appointment of a dedicated OSG in May, paid for from the HC budget, to distribute appointment slips directly to the prisoners the previous day and chase up non-arrivals with house block officers reduced a 50% 'no-show' to a much more acceptable 15-20%.

5.27 A new computer system for healthcare was introduced this year to all Surrey prisons by the PCT in conjunction with the Healthcare managements. It is a tribute to all concerned that the training and start up was achieved with relatively few problems and those adjustments that were discovered necessary were tackled in a positive manner. The end result was a much safer system for keeping patients' medical records and for expediting referrals electronically from one department to another.

5.28 The Mental Health In-Reach Team has continued to perform an important role in High Down. A significant number of prisoners have mental health problems. The transfer of prisoners needing the specialist care of mental health establishments, on the whole, proceeded smoothly. Delays sometimes occurred due to difficulties in ascertaining which health authority was financially responsible for hospitalisation. Recognising that there was sometimes a lack of understanding between the role of In-reach and discipline staff, efforts were made to work more closely with house

block officers and, in particular, with the SRU. An In-Reach worker usually attended SRU reviews, to support staff who had to manage challenging behaviour. In-reach also played a key part in the training of discipline staff in connection with ACCT assessment and awareness (self-harming).

5.29 Other achievements that deserve special mention are the eventual completion of the garden in the Healthcare Centre which gives a much more pleasant environment where the patients can take exercise in better weather; the introduction of red polo shirts for discipline officers to give a more relaxed feel to the unit; and the hard work put into preparing the contingency plans for Norovirus and swine flu in the early part of the year - in the event High Down had few cases.

5.30 The Prisoner Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) introduced towards the end of last year by the PCT in order to hear and resolve prisoners' complaints about their healthcare at the earliest stage was particularly slow to establish at High Down. As the Board prepares its report problems finally appear to have been resolved with the appointment of healthcare orderlies on the house blocks and hopefully the system will have the same success in resolving issues as at the other Surrey prisons. The rationale for the Step Down Unit on House Block 6 was sound. However, the Board is not convinced that the unit has fully realized its potential and suggest that this might be reappraised.

Safer Custody SC)

5.31 The Board is satisfied that SC remained a high priority and that staff made strenuous efforts to maintain a prison environment safe for prisoners and staff alike. They must be praised for their organisation and persistence in working to improve procedures in the reporting of incidents and the monitoring of documentation. It is noted that while there is a robust system in place to support staff following a traumatic incident, there is no similar system for prisoners who may have been affected.

5.32 SC officers were rostered more often to work at weekends, and this often left them short of time to cover their core responsibilities. This appears to be one of the consequences of cuts to budgets across the prison service as a whole. Monitoring the quality of ACCT documents was an ongoing problem. Staff time was reallocated, and until the end of the year there was no administrative support. Despite this, staff made great efforts to encourage better quality entries and to notify deficiencies. This led to improvement in quality. It is anticipated that more regular monitoring should be possible now that administrative support is in place.

5.33 Up to October, incidents of self-harm numbered 83 for YO's and 195 for adult prisoners. HB6 and HCC accounted for 40% of these. Over this period there were more incidents than in 2009. This might, however, reflect improved reporting. Newly developed incident packs were made available in

all areas. They contained full instructions and all necessary paperwork. This was a major undertaking for SC staff, and the Board believes it will lead to much more consistent and accurate reporting of all such incidents. The data collected can then be fed directly into IRS.

5.34 There were a few incidents where a prisoner's attempt at self-harm almost resulted in death had it not been for the swift and efficient action of officers and medical staff. Incidentally, the prison (and possibly other establishments) refer to such incidents as 'near misses.' The Board considers that, although clearly not intended, this term somewhat underplays the unfortunate and distressing nature of such episodes. The Board notes, with approval, that the prison introduced a complex case management process to more effectively manage prisoners with multiple problems. The evidence to date indicates that this was a productive and worthwhile measure.

5.35 There were two deaths in custody at High Down in this reporting period which Inquests determined were due to natural causes. Overall, there were four Inquests into deaths. At one the Coroner congratulated staff on the support they had given. Such deaths are always traumatic for those involved – relatives, staff and fellow prisoners. While understanding some of the reasons, the Board feels it is again worth emphasising the unacceptable length of time between a death in custody and Inquest, which can take place approximately two years later. Significantly, in each case the Board noted that the prison carried out its own investigation and instigated recommendations long before the official outcomes were available.

5.36 The excellent Listener system was organised and run by the Samaritans to provide a group of trained prisoners able to respond 24 hours to the needs of fellow prisoners who wished to talk to someone they feel likely to understand them. Listener numbers fluctuated, falling as low as eight at one point. Calls to see Listeners run at between 100 and 150 per week. The Samaritans felt that 26 Listeners was a reasonable number for a prison of this size. By the end of the year numbers increased. A programme of regular training courses was agreed for 2011, and Listeners were made available on the VP Unit.

5.37 In the year since November 2009 there were 215 violent incidents - consistent with the annual average for a prison of this nature. There were 56 assaults on staff, of which 43 were serious, resulting in 12 officers being injured. Other serious assaults on prisoners caused the same number of injuries. There is no evidence to suggest that YOs were disproportionately involved compared to previous years. Analysis indicates a drop in gang activity later in the year. From its own observation the IMB occasionally expressed concern about the management of walkways when prisoners were on "free flow" to and from activities, especially waiting to enter the SPC. There were incidents and officers were not always visible.

5.38 New anti bullying procedures were being introduced. It was noted that house block representation at SC meetings was sometimes variable, and when officers did attend they were occasionally unprepared.

Separation and Reintegration Unit (SRU)

5.39 In the Board's last report it was noted that practical plans were in place to make the SRU (comprising 24 standard cells and two 'Special Accommodation' cells) a fully functional re-integration unit. The formation of the Segregation, Monitoring and Review Group (SMARG) during the course of this year was a positive development in this regard; among its terms of reference is the implementation of the revised PSO 1700 on segregation. Chaired by the appropriate Governor and meeting quarterly, various interests are represented on the group, including the IMB. This facilitated communication and coordination between interested parties on a range of related matters. Notification to IMB of a prisoner's segregation improved.

5.40 In the first part of the year the SRU was often relatively full. A disproportionate number of 'own interest' (OI) prisoners, many of whom were vulnerable, were still being held there. The reason was usually because the Vulnerable Prisoner Unit (VPU) on House Block 2 had no available spaces. (This, in turn, often related to overcrowding in the prison estate generally). In most cases SRU was an inappropriate setting for such prisoners, not least because it is not possible to provide an appropriate regime and full range of entitlements for them. The situation improved during the course of the year. Despite inevitable fluctuations, there was a reduction in the number of prisoners held in the SRU, including both OIs and 'good order and discipline' (GOOD) prisoners. In the last quarter of the year prisoners were, in the main, either awaiting adjudication, or on 'cellular confinement' following adjudication.

5.41 Despite lower numbers overall, a disproportionate amount of SRU staff time continued to be spent managing a relatively small but intractable number of demanding, disturbed and occasionally violent prisoners. Some prisoners required several prison officers to be present when they were unlocked. There were a number of assaults on staff. From time to time restraint methods had to be applied, and on occasions certain prisoners had to be placed in the special accommodation cells for short periods. There were also a few 'dirty protests'. The Board closely monitored several of these incidents, and commend staff for the professional way they handled them. There were also comprehensive and well managed multidisciplinary case reviews. The relatively recent prison-wide 'managing complex cases' initiative should also prove beneficial. Clearly, some of the prisoners concerned had mental health problems. Again, the Board would express serious concern that some of them should be in prison in the first place rather than receive a mental health disposal.

5.42 During the course of the year the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman upheld an SRU prisoner's complaint that he had not been allowed one hour's exercise a day in the open air, contrary to the relevant Prison Service Order. The Board subsequently monitored this aspect, and is not aware of any further shortcoming. That aside, there was no evidence that prisoners did not receive basic entitlements. Staff listened to their concerns and took appropriate action. In general, the regime for each prisoner was progressive and aimed at returning them to normal location as soon as possible.

5.43 The Board members attended nearly all SRU reviews during the year. There were over a 100 less than last year (Table 1). On rare occasions towards the beginning of the year it was felt that some parties present (including HCC nurses) at reviews were either not sufficiently aware of the prisoner's specific needs or of what had been agreed at previous reviews. Certain previously agreed actions could, at times, have been pursued more vigorously. However, on the whole reviews were productive, and always conducted in an appropriate and respectful manner. Various departments, including Education, made valuable contributions; and the presence of In-Reach was a welcome development.

Section 6 OTHER AREAS OF THE PRISON

Catering and the Kitchen

6.1 The kitchen produced 2000-plus hot nutritious meals daily with the team of chefs and prisoner orderlies. There were a high number of special requirements, vegetarian, lactose-intolerant and Halal meals for the 80-90 strong Muslim population. This was a major undertaking by any standard and the Board commends the dedicated work performed there - often under major constraints. Nevertheless, there are areas of concern that the Board feels it must mention.

6.2 The quality of catering was for many years one of the outstanding features of High Down. The large population increase following the building upheaval coincided with the opening of the 'cordon bleu' "Clink" restaurant, the economic recession and the move to a centralised ordering system. The IMB's monitoring through the year suggests a deterioration in the standards of meals served: the temperature of food served sometimes fell below acceptable levels and, unlike previous years, there was a notable absence of fruit and vegetables to form a balanced diet.

6.3 As noted in last year's Annual Report, kitchen staff managed for long periods without numerous items of essential kitchen equipment which were often awaiting repair, including the trolleys which took the food to the house blocks. The change to a central supplier for all food items

except bread cut down on the number of items which could be ordered. It is difficult to argue convincingly that this was always cost-effective as the catering manager could no longer take advantage of fresh local produce and supermarket gluts. This is a national IMB concern and was brought up by several Boards at their national conference in September as something which should be investigated. To know that the current food allowance per head is only £1.93 could explain why there were complaints that portions were smaller and choice of fresh fruit and vegetables at a minimum.

6.4 Kitchen-related complaints to the IMB remained unchanged since last year while in most other areas there was a significant reduction. Prisoner complaints were also frequently heard at Prisoner Consultative Committees and Diversity meetings attended by Board members. 'Default' meals (which were served when the prisoners' menu sheets were not read correctly by the kitchen scanner) was a major area of dissatisfaction. It could lead to ugly scenes, which staff had to manage, at servery hatches on the house blocks. The kitchen's explanation that default meals were due to the prisoners incorrectly filling in the forms seems a partial explanation only.

The Clink

6.5 The Clink restaurant, run within High Down, completed its first year. The initiative has to be applauded for its success. Crucially, it provided training and opportunities for a change in lifestyle upon release. Figures released at the end of the year showed that 38 prisoners completed City and Guilds Food Service and Food Preparation courses; and of the 10 found catering employment upon release seven were still in employment. Another benefit was that it brought the community into High Down to see what prison and resettlement initiatives comprised. Attempts were being made to make the restaurant more appropriate to the needs of staff.

Chaplaincy

6.6 The Board acknowledges the important role this department plays in supporting and comforting those who needed help. The staff, which represented various faiths, provided regular services for worshippers and, for example, memorial services. The Muslim fast of Ramadan was a challenge in a prison context. In High Down there were approximately 80-90 Muslim prisoners. Special flasks were provided to keep food hot for the required length of time so that prisoners could have a hot meal at the end of their fast, and the Imam worked with the kitchen and specialty trained Muslim prisoners in preparing and serving the meals. While this year was not completely problem-free, the new system appeared promising.

The Gym

6.7 The gym provided an essential service throughout the year. Prisoners had proper access to its facilities and were encouraged to use them. It was a popular venue for them.

Legal and Illegal Drug Use

6.8 In common with most prisons in the UK, drugs were a major concern for both Healthcare and Security at High Down. Much hard work continued to be done by the Drug Strategy team which combined the Drug Substance and Misuse Team, CARATS, Mandatory Drug testing Unit and others. It worked closely with Security and other relevant units.

6.9 The Board expressed its concern in last year's Annual Report at the policy of keeping prisoners on a maintenance dose of methadone or Subutex rather than moving them towards detoxification. This has now become official government policy. A prisoner on a drug substitute is reviewed at 13 weeks with a view to encouraging him to opt for a detox programme. In the summer, 44 out of a total of 168 drug users were actively detoxing. Obviously, further work was needed. The Detox Unit was operating under major staffing difficulties for much of the year. A recent problem-solving audit by Surrey PCT revealed that the ideal complement of staff for the number of patients was 16.46, whereas the actual staffing was 10.85 and 3 vacancies. A further difficulty was that despite best efforts by medical staff and management, other prisons proved reluctant to accept the transfer of High Down drug users. This caused a major blockage. The desired solution - the opening of HMP Coldingley's own detox unit – was held up by its own problem recruiting nurses.

6.10 The presence of illegal drugs in the prison remained an issue, and drugs being thrown over the perimeter wall appeared to be on the increase again at the end of the year. Visitors were thought to be another source of small quantities despite searches and the work of the three drug dogs and their excellent handlers. Surrey police worked with staff over the year to tackle both of the above problems and a number of arrests were made. A further source of illicit drugs involved new prisoners arriving from court with illegal drugs in their possession, especially men previously in High Down and rearrested for relatively minor offences. There was a trade of prescribed Subutex on the house blocks. The Board is satisfied that healthcare and discipline staff were combating all these problems as best they could.

6.11 A concern raised in the Board's last two years' reports was the exclusion of treatment for alcohol abusers. It is disappointing that plans to include prisoners who abuse alcohol in new abstinence-based projects remained to be implemented. It is understood change is probable in 2011. An exciting new development in the pipeline was to make one of the new house blocks drug free, and to initiate RAPT (Rehabilitation of Addicted Prisoners Therapy) courses for former drug

users. This is part of the prison's new plans to prioritise the resettlement of offenders back into the community.

House Blocks.

6.12 The prison contains six house blocks. Throughout the year at various times, and on differing house blocks, staffing levels varied. This was due to a variety of inter-related factors, including annual leave and sickness. Obviously, staffing levels had to be established within the limited and prescribed budget available. Many (but by no means all) staff on house blocks - and elsewhere in the prison - often complained to IMB members about shortages and lack of adequate cover: they felt that they were unable to provide the support and service they would like. This was a source of some discontent. Association occasionally had to be 'rotated' across house block spurs; and, for example, there was an on-going issue of devoting sufficient staff time and effort to encourage prisoners to engage in meaningful activity. Given the circumstances, the situation was managed as effectively as possible, often by means of 'pay plus' (overtime). 'Cross deployment' was also a common feature. Nonetheless it is commendable that the agreed basic regime and core day were largely maintained. The Board is satisfied that staff did in fact try to meet prisoners' needs whenever possible. Indeed, many went 'the extra mile' to help them. The Personal Officer scheme was relevant in that regard, and additional time was allowed to enable them to devote more time to this responsibility. However the effectiveness of such a scheme was inevitably limited by the transient nature of the prison population.

6.13 The prison remained overcrowded (but to a lesser degree than many other prisons). This occurs when a prison holds more than its 'certified normal accommodation (CNA)'. This represents the good, decent standard of accommodation which the service aspires to provide. As mentioned in section 1 of this report, High Down's CNA is 999. It invariably holds more prisoners than that. (In October, for example, the average figure was 1022). Men eat, sleep and use the lavatory in their cells and are often confined in them for 14 hours at a stretch. For several years some cells designed for double occupancy held three prisoners in overcrowded conditions. The Board consistently expressed concern about this. It is therefore glad to announce the end of this practice during the reporting period. However, the price that had to be paid was 'doubling up' the occupancy of some cells designed for a single prisoner to avoid an overall loss of accommodation. There is no room in such cells for a separate WC, and inadequate space for property. The provision of a curtain around the WC can only be described as a degrading and unhygienic solution, particularly as prisoners eat all their meals in their cells.

Probation

6.14 The Probation Department worked in conjunction with the Sentence Management Unit, now both reorganised as the Offender Management Unit (OMU), to reduce the numbers of life sentence prisoners ('lifers') and those with an indeterminate sentence for public protection (IPP) held at High Down. The numbers became more manageable (at one stage during the year there were 14 lifers and 15 IPPs). However, it is important that they should be moved on quickly to more suitable establishments. This was a major concern of the Board in previous reports. Delays caused much frustration, especially to YOs, who were unable to progress their sentence plans and felt stuck in the system. The OMU Manager also chaired the MAPPA (Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements) meetings, where a range of agencies, both within and outside the prison, attend to discuss and assess at risk prisoners coming up for release. The IMB attended these meetings and can vouch for the thoroughness of this liaison work.

Home Detention Curfew (HDC)

6.15 Towards the end of the year there were some delays in dealing with applications and queries from prisoners about HDC (tagging). This was attributable to staffing issues. Some prisoners complained to the IMB about the lack of information regarding progress.

Property

6.16 The Board is pleased to report that the chronic and apparently insoluble problem of prisoners' property being lost or failing to follow them, especially during transfers between prisons or from courts, ceased to be such a major issue for the Board. That is not to say that property does not still get lost, but applications to the IMB on this subject have halved (see Table 2). One innovation allowed prisoners to collect property brought in by their visitors as they left the Visits Hall. Overcrowding in the prisons leading to more lockouts, more redirects of prisoners from court to spaces in distant prisons and the general pressure on the system, could account for many property related problems.

Reception

6.17 Reception worked effectively processing prisoners entering and leaving the establishment. Occasionally prisoners arrived late in the evening from outside High Down's catchment area, particularly on Fridays, when other prisons were full. This placed additional pressure on staff, and had implications for the various vital procedures, including cell share risk assessments, which were carried out there.

Resettlement

6.18 The Board commends High Down's work to reduce reoffending. Resettlement is a key component. Budgetary cuts did not appear to affect resettlement work to a significant degree because many of the courses provided were either free or had charitable funding. In fact, the prison continued to increase interventions available to prisoners by such means.

6.19 There were excellent links with various charitable agencies such as The Forgiveness Project, Time for Families, St Giles, Tribal, Surrey Jobmatch, Aspire, SMART, Lighthouse Mentors, Stepping Stones, Royal British Legion, Samaritans, Salvation Army, Detention Advice Service, Southside Partnership. Firm arrangements were established with other agencies. They provided assistance to offenders in prison and following release, much of which did not incur a cost to the prison. Prisoners had the opportunity to receive help from such bodies with education, training and employment, housing, and benefit claims through Job Centre Plus, which attended weekly resettlement clinics. Advice was also available at the Resettlement Clinic from Citizens Advice Bureau, Healthcare and Probation. Plans were being made for a new course in debt and benefits for prisoners within three months of release, and a "one off" Geese Theatre initiative for 12 prisoners, funded by the Michael Varah Memorial Foundation.

6.20 An intervention successfully run over the last few years was the 'Short Duration Programme' (an accredited course based on a cognitive behavioural therapy/harm minimisation model) for prisoners with a history of drug misuse. It was aimed at remand prisoners, and those with less than six months to serve. It identified prisoners who were ready to give up drugs by providing them with information on areas of support within the prison and a gateway for further treatment on release. The aim was to reduce reoffending and promote successful resettlement into the community. The course was intensive. The rolling year to date had a target figure of 55 completions while 63 prisoners actually completed the course. Extra funding was secured to run 12 Forgiveness Project courses a year (instead of eight). Although a budgetary cut did result in the loss of the employment part of St. Giles, this was covered by three new initiatives: Surrey Jobmatch, Apsire and Eco-Actif, which were also free to the prison. Targets were being met.

6.21 Well over 1,000 prisoners completed the various courses during the year. This is impressive by any standards. For example, 765 prisoners attended 44 resettlement clinics, and 68 couples completed the 'Time for Families' course.

6.22 Figures from 2007 showed that 71% of prisoners serving less than a 12 month sentence reoffended. About 26% of prisoners serving 12 months or over reoffended. Since then resettlement has become much more of a priority. In that regard, the Board learned, with great interest, of a

proposed 'consortium' for early in 2011, which would be a partnership group with Surrey and Sussex Probation, St Giles and RAPT. It would centre on High Down prisoners most likely to benefit from rehabilitation initiatives. It is likely that the eligible group would be prisoners serving up to two years. Reoffending patterns following release would be tracked.

Visits

6.23 Throughout 2010 concerns about matters associated with visits continued, but not to the same extent as last year. Complaints about the visits booking line reduced over the year, although some visitors still had a problem getting through, particularly at week-ends. Other methods of booking were introduced and were increasingly used by prisoners and visitors. A substantial number were booked by prisoners themselves. About 20% of those visitors failed to appear and as the prison was not notified in advance it was unable to reassign the vacancies.

6.24 On average there were around 70 - 80 visitors per session. Cancellation of Friday afternoon visits - a nationwide efficiency saving measure - continued. Morning visits for enhanced visitors, which was partly a compensatory measure, increased slowly and averaged around 30 a week towards the end of the year.

6.25 The recently extended Visits Hall, which includes a play area, provided a comfortable environment for visits. Separate mention must be made of the volunteers who help to run both the Visits Centre outside the prison (where visitors check in) and the Visits Hall within the prison. Staff and volunteers alike helped to make High Down a welcoming place where families and friends could be reunited for a few hours. The introduction of a new method of handing property brought in by visitors to prisoners proved successful. Appropriate checks were completed during the visit and property was handed to prisoners as they left the hall.

Young Offenders (18-21 year olds)

6.26 In successive years the Board has raised concerns that remand and sentenced YOs were held at HMP High Down, which is an adult category B local prison. As this happened by default, the prison was not funded to provide for them. There was no special provision available for this group and no courses run specifically for them. They had to join in with adults. This situation continues.

6.27 Officers do their best to work with, and help, this vulnerable and needy group of prisoners. They will often say that they chose to become prison officers so that they could try to make a difference to such prisoners' lives. Their interest and involvement can make all the difference to a prisoner and his progress on release. However, for reasons already set out, it is difficult for officers

to be more proactive. While a proper and active interest is taken by the Security Department, which ensures a reasonably safe environment for this diverse group, few other departments in the prison devote special attention to this group.

6.28 YO's have a high reoffending rate. A significant proportion have a low level of essential literacy and numerical skills, few life skills, low self-worth, and little hope. But all can improve, and some can achieve academically. It is important that YO's should be given the opportunity to continue their educational studies in prison so that they have the best chance of employment on release. This is especially important in view of the difficulties that ex-offenders face on release. Without a properly funded and concerted effort by the prison service to improve skills, change learnt behaviour and change life style, there is no hope of rehabilitation and reducing the reoffending rate of this group of prisoners. These considerations need to be factored into the earlier section in this report on resettlement.

6.29 Once sentenced, and when a space in the YO estate becomes available, the YO's are transferred to a suitable establishment to progress their sentence. The time spent at High Down is thus very variable and at the time of this report may range from **one week to two years**. The usual transfer prisons are HMP Rochester (18-21 year olds) and, since August, HMP Isis (18-25 year olds), both being outside the catchment area and a significant travelling time from High Down. This makes it difficult for family and friends to visit. It is known that maintaining, sometimes tenuous, family contact whilst in prison can make a difference to the rehabilitation of the prisoner and reduce the rate of reoffending.

6.30 Currently there is no one system for holding Young Offenders (18-21 year olds) in the prison estate. The Board would like to see proper provision made for Young Offenders from the time of remand until the time of release.

SECTION 7 THE WORK OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD.

7.1 Board meetings take place monthly. The Governor prepares a report for the Board, and either he or the Deputy Governor attends the meeting. Three members of the Board monitor the prison every week on rota. Their duties involve talking to prisoners and staff, looking at all aspects of prison life, and ensuring that prisoners are held in a fair and decent environment. Individual prisoners can apply to see a Board member if they have any concerns. Members no longer cover applications separately: the Board opted to change its practice this year to reflect changes of demand, and to improve efficiency generally. Members also have special areas of interests linked to the Annual Report. They attend relevant meetings and report to the Board.

7.2 Training usually takes place before Board Meetings. It includes helpful presentations by either prison staff or representatives from other services within the prison. In addition, all members attend appropriate National IMB courses. New members receive in-house training in the form of shadowing experienced members and each is assigned a mentor. A formal review of the Board's work takes place annually, when working practices are reviewed. Board members also visit other establishments during the year. Among other events, the Board hosted a visit from a sizeable group of Russian officials who were interested in how IMBs operate in this country.

7.3 The recommended full Board membership is 20 and the year finished with this number. The Board successfully recruited and trained six new members this year. In part to attract - and retain - a more diverse membership, the Board chose to adopt a flexible approach to its working practices and appoint members with outside work commitments.

Table 1

| | |
|---|-----------------------|
| BOARD STATISTICS | |
| Recommended Complement of Board Members | 20 |
| Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period | 22 (incl. 7 trainees) |
| Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period | 20 |
| Number of new members joining within the reporting period | 0 |
| Number of members leaving within reporting period | 2 |
| Number of attendances at meetings other than Board meetings | 85 |
| Total number of visits to the prison (including all meetings) | 805 |
| Total number of applications received | 556 |
| Total number of segregation reviews held | 250 (est.) |
| Total number of segregation reviews attended | 242 |

Table 2 Applications to see the Board

| Code | Subject | 2006/7 | 2007/8 | 2008/9 | 2009/10 |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| A | Accommodation | 10 | 12 | 27 | 13 |
| B | Adjudications | 5 | 10 | 7 | 10 |
| C | Diversity related | 17 | 8 | 16 | 8 |
| D | Education/employment/training | 19 | 52 | 62 | 33 |
| E | Family/visits | 49 | 115 | 126 | 79 |
| F | Food/kitchen related | 3 | 14 | 18 | 18 |
| G | Health related | 54 | 83 | 77 | 54 |
| H | Property | 107 | 131 | 204 | 111 |
| I | Sentence related | 78 | 66 | 88 | 61 |
| J | Staff/prisoner/detainee related | 31 | 64 | 84 | 80 |
| K | Transfers | 40 | 38 | 56 | 32 |
| L | Miscellaneous | 55 | 63 | 73 | 57 |
| | Total number of applications | 467 | 656 | 838 | 556 |

Section 8

GLOSSARY OF PRISON-RELATED ABBREVIATIONS USE

ACCT Assessment, Care in Custody & Teamwork – replacement for self harm document F2052SH (see below)

BME Black & Minority Ethnic

CARATS Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice & Throughcare Scheme – drug & alcohol team.

F2052SH Record for prisoner currently at risk of self-harm

FN Foreign National

GOOD Good Order or Discipline – Segregation under Rule 45/49 (historically GOAD)

HEAT High Down Equality Team

HCC Health Care Centre

HMCIP Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons

IDTS Integrated Drug Treatment Systems

IEP Incentives and Earned Privileges – Prisoners can be on Basic, Standard or Enhanced

IMB Independent Monitoring Board

IPP Indeterminate Sentence for Public Protection

IRC Immigration Removal/Reception Centre

MAPPA Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements

MDT Mandatory Drugs Testing

OASYS Offender Assessment System – computerised risk & needs assessment

OMU Offender management Unit

OI/OR/OP Own Interests/Request/Protection – Segregation under Rule 45/45

PALS Patient Advice and Liaison Services

PCT Primary Care Trust – National Health component responsible for healthcare

PSI Prison Service Instruction

PSO Prison Service Order – see

www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/resourcecentre/psispos/listpsos

REO Race Equality Officer

SPC Stephen Pryor Centre

SCT Safer Custody Team

SIR Security Information Report

SRU Separation and Reintegration Unit

VDT Voluntary Drugs Testing

VO Visiting Order – sent out by prisoners

UKBA United Kingdom Borders Agency
(Immigration)

VP Vulnerable Prisoner

YO Young Offender