



Independent Monitoring Board

HMP Onley

Annual Report

March 2010 – February 2011

The Prison Act 1952 requires every prison to be monitored by an Independent Board appointed by the Home Secretary from members of the community in which the prison 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 records.

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Section 3: The Prison and its Function

- 3.1 HMP Onley is situated between Rugby and Daventry. Onley opened as a Borstal Recall Centre in 1968 changing in 1973 to a Training Borstal (300 prisoners). In 1976 it became a Young Offender Prison (420 prisoners) and in 1983 a closed Youth Custody Centre. Onley reverted to being a Young Offender Institution in 1988. Capacity was increased to 520 detainees in 1991 and to 640 prisoners in 1998. For a period the establishment held a mixture of Young Offenders and Juveniles. In 2004 the prison was re-rolled to Category C Adult /YOI and in 2010 an additional wing (L) was opened increasing the maximum roll to 710 prisoners. Over the last year the Young Offender population was moved to several YOIs including HMP Littlehey and on 2nd April 2010 the prison became an Adult only Category C Training establishment.
- 3.2 In March 2011 the prison had a CNA of 710 adult prisoners, housed over 12 wings labelled A-L.
- 3.3 All residential wings apart from I and L wings have 60 single cells, each with internal sanitation and in-cell electricity. There are showering facilities, association and dining areas and a laundry room with industrial style washing machines and dryers. H Wing is the Induction wing whilst F Wing houses the Care and Support Unit. I Wing holds 100 Adult prisoners in 50 double cells all with internal sanitation and comparable facilities to the other wings (except for having no dining area). L Wing holds 74 Adult prisoners in cells with internal sanitation and showering facilities. All wings have adequate social areas, generally stocked with table tennis and pool tables.
- 3.4 The regime at Onley is designed to give the prisoners training through a structured sentence plan. Opportunities exist for education work placements and offending behaviour programmes with emphasis being given to resettlement.
- 3.5 Training is offered across a wide range of industries and activities. These include workshops for Painting and Decorating, Motor Mechanics, Concrete (including forklifts), Information Technology, Bicycle and Wheelchair Refurbishment, Bricklaying, Multi Skills, Industrial Cleaning, Waste Management, Goods Again (domestic white goods recycling) and assembly work in the development unit. The prison also offers Market Gardening, using the sizeable garden areas within the perimeter. This area was reclaimed last year, having been closed due to security concerns and is now flourishing. The kitchen provides opportunities for NVQs in catering and food hygiene certificates. Recognised qualifications are available, and those who successfully achieve an external accredited qualification are rewarded with an achievement bonus.

- 3.6 Physical well being is catered for through the Physical Education Department which offers prisoners competitive, recreational and remedial activities as well as the opportunity to gain qualifications in sports coaching and leadership.
- 3.7 Support for prisoners is available from the probation team, psychology department, drugs team, chaplaincy, foreign nationals' representative, legal services officer and healthcare department as well as resettlement support from NACRO and Citizens Advice, although the latter organisation is about to leave the establishment due to losing out in the tender process (see later comments).
- 3.8 Onley has gained Investors in People Accreditation Award as well as an improving OFSTED report.
- 3.9 Healthcare is currently provided through Northants PCT, which includes Dentistry.
- 3.10 Primary education providers are Milton Keynes College and Lincoln College however they are further assisted by North Warwickshire and Hinckley College. Between them they provide a wide range of education courses ranging from basic literacy, courses with qualifications and up to Open University qualifications.

Section 4: Executive Summary

4.1 General Commentary on HMP Onley

- 4.1.1 Overall the Board is satisfied with the way and manner in which the prison is run. The prison has dealt with difficult circumstances in previous years, but over the last 12 months we have seen a continued development and enhancement of operations within the prison. We feel that this is due to the strong and effective leadership demonstrated by the Governors and their Senior Management Teams. The prison saw a change in Governing Governor in November of 2010. The handover appeared to be efficient and smooth and did not affect the operation of the prison. There was also a change in Deputy Governor in February/March 2011.
- 4.1.2 Our members do report of a genuine culture of decency and care within the prison.
- 4.1.3 In our view the prison compares favourably when judged against HMCIP's Healthy Prison Criteria (safety, respect purposeful activity and resettlement)
- 4.1.4 This year's annual report reflects areas of commendation and areas of concern. The Board's view of the establishment is generally positive and it gives prisoners the opportunity for a successful release into the community.
- 4.1.5 We have found a workforce creating, allocating and delivering a wide range of activities – education, training, employment, health promotion, PE, faith activities and offending behaviour programmes.
- 4.1.6 The prison is particularly commended for its active approach to racial equality, its commitment to healthcare and health promotion, its focus on worthwhile education and employment opportunities and the high priority it gives to safer custody issues.
- 4.1.7 The movement of the Young Offender population from HMP Onley to HMP Littlehey was conducted in a planned and orderly manner and the transition to an adult only prison has been relatively smooth.

4.2 Issues for the Minister

- 4.2.1 IPP sentenced prisoners are required to complete courses before consideration is given for release but because HMP Onley does not offer all these courses we are unable to complete the requirement. A prisoner on an IPP sentence needs to be transferred to gain release, which in the current population climate, is not always achievable, thus considerably disadvantaging the prisoner. We find this unacceptable.

4.2.3 There is concern within the Board over the tendering process for some services provided within the prison. Specifically we are disappointed at the loss of Citizens Advice and the movement of their services to NACRO. There appears to be a bias towards larger more functional organisations, whose driver is cost reduction rather than quality service provision.

4.2.4 The Board has evidence that Parole Hearings are frequently delayed and have contacted the Parole Board on this issue. The lack of Judicial time is one reason given for the delays. Whatever the reasons, the delays are considered unacceptable.

4.3 Issues for the Prison Service

4.3.1 The Board is concerned over the number of prisoners now arriving at the prison from the London area, which is causing difficulties for families to visit.

4.3.2 There are gangs within the prison and information about the membership of, particularly the London gangs, is difficult to access and therefore makes the appropriate allocation of accommodation difficult. This could lead to members of the same gang placed on the same wing and who then become a strong unit. Conversely gang members from different gangs can be placed together and create antagonism affecting the good order and discipline of the wing.

4.3.3 The issue of drugs within prison remains a challenge and it is felt that many more resources should be placed in combating its prevalence and use within the system.

4.4 Issues for the Regional Custodial Services Manager

4.4.1 As with previous years there remains a constant problem of prisoners arriving at the establishment with either too much property and not compatible with the list of allowed items in the PSO, or with missing and incomplete property. This is particularly identified as a problem if a prisoner arrives from an establishment in the private estate. The Board feels that regionally this is still not being dealt with in a robust manner.

4.4.2 Although handled well, the Board is concerned that the Governing Governor has changed this year, along with the Deputy Governor changing twice. This unsettled approach to senior management succession planning is not ideal.

Section 5: Key Areas

5.1 Diversity

The Diversity Equality Action Team reflects all aspects of diversity. This committee focuses on prisoner issues.

The Diversity Equality Action team (DEAT) meets bi-monthly on alternate months and focuses on staff issues.

- 5.1.1 The meetings were initially very well attended by all departments including the IMB, however it was noticed that attendance appeared to drift off towards the end of this reporting period. At the last meeting within the reporting period it was strongly reiterated that full attendance from each function was essential. We expect this to improve in the coming year.
- 5.1.2 All SMART data is scrutinized and a process was put in place to provide comment on each month figures prior to the meetings. As with above, this process appears to have fallen away during the reporting period.
- 5.1.3 The minutes are always circulated around the Board members.
- 5.1.4 The Diversity Manager changed in the early part of the year. The new manager appears to have pulled together the numerous strands of diversity successfully, in a cohesive way and the Board commends him for the thorough way this has been done by him and his team.
- 5.1.5 All strands of diversity are now covered in the prison and issues relating to them are discussed at the meetings. There are focus groups for gypsy/travellers, prisoners with disabilities, prisoners over 50 years of age, Muslim prisoners and gay prisoners.
- 5.1.6 Various issues have been raised by these groups ranging from the cost of phone calls for gypsy/travellers due to the fact that most of their family members use mobile phones only, to extra blankets for the elderly prisoners who may feel the cold more.
- 5.1.7 The Disability Liaison Officer (DLO) has compiled a data base of prisoners with disabilities and a record of any adaptations required to accommodate the needs of these prisoners is kept. The Board feels that the DLO should be commended for the proactive approach she took in her role, prior to resigning the post due to pressure on her officer role.
- 5.1.8 At the time of writing there are 9 Personal Evacuation Escape Plans (PEEP) in operation.
- 5.1.9 Over the reporting period there have been 95 Racial Information Reporting Forms submitted of which 16 were proven. The Board is satisfied with the handling of these cases.

- 5.1.10 Of the issues raised in last year's report, we can confirm that the vast majority of Foreign National prisoners have now been relocated and at the time of reporting there are only two Foreign National prisoners remaining. As a consequence the translation of documents is no longer a major issue, however the equipment is in place and available for use by prisoners and staff.
- 5.1.11 The themed months commended last year appear to have dropped off during the year. We are not aware of any specific reason for this.
- 5.1.12 The issues that existed with the SMART data appear to have been resolved.

5.2 Learning and Skills

The Learning and Skills department within the prison have continued to build on the excellent work begun over previous years and stands out as an area of excellence. The policy, driven by the Governor and ably supported by the Head of Learning and Skills, of ensuring as many prisoners as possible are engaged in worthwhile work and education, leading to recognised qualifications and skill sets, preparing them for work outside, is pursued with vigour.

- 5.2.1 Classroom attendance has continued to increase over the year to 86.5% against a target of 80%. The prison has delivered approximately 90% of its Education contract. Again the Board feels the Head of Learning and Skills should be commended for the enthusiasm and energy he has brought to this area.
- 5.2.2 Recruitment of qualified staff appears to be a constant challenge, but one the prison and contract holders, are dealing with. The Board observed a good working relationship between the staff of both the colleges and the prison.
- 5.2.3 Rota reports have identified 31 complaints or issues which are education / employment related which is a small increase from the previous year. These complaints represent 6.5% of all complaints received. The majority of the complaints related to the loss of documentation on transfer and the inability to access training they desired.

5.3 Healthcare and Mental Health

Overall the Healthcare within the prison, which is run by the Northants PCT, is run effectively, despite experiencing a number of staffing problems. Our primary concerns over this period has been the continued size of the Dental waiting list.

- 5.3.1 The biggest challenge for the Healthcare team has been the shift to an all adult population and the increase in complexity of prisoner needs. Areas such as Chlamydia clinics were no longer required, however other areas needed to be expanded, such as the Over 50's group. The ophthalmic budget is in overspend

- due to the fact that older prisoners need more glasses and often more complex lenses.
- 5.3.2 The Board has a continued concern over the size of the Dental waiting list, which we believe is not acceptable. The move to an all adult prison caused an increase in dental treatment with the waiting list increasing to 179 at its peak. It has reduced slightly over the recent months to 154 as a further 20 appointments have been added per month. All dental complaints relate to the waiting list rather than the treatment offered.
- 5.3.3 Staffing of the Healthcare area has been a problem, with the department always understaffed by some key professionals. The Board is concerned that the PCT has not given this the priority it deserved. The death of a healthcare worker and the resignation of the Primary Care Manager have all impacted on the department's workload. The Primary Care Managers position will be filled with a Band 6 rather than Band 7 employee; however at the time of writing this position has still remained unadvertised.
- 5.3.4 The PCT did not monitor the transfer of prisoners to HMP Onley during its re-role in April 2010. The result was that many outpatient appointments were cancelled by the original prisons and had to be rebooked by HMP Onley, increasing the expense imposed on the prison and its budget for escorting. If further amalgamations are to be overseen by Northants PCT it is hoped the same situation will not arise, and it is understood that this matter has been identified by them for further discussion with other prisons who may be involved.
- 5.3.5 The PCT assumed responsibility for IDTS and Mental Health Care in April 2010 and this seems to be working well. The numbers on detox has increased since the introduction of the holistic detox support group. There was a problem earlier in the year with the prescription and subsequent abuse of subutex as a drug replacement option. Subutex has now been withdrawn. The Governor has requested a review of the Mental Health services and this is being compiled at present.
- 5.3.6 The waiting area has had a simple but highly effective makeover, making it a more comfortable and relaxed area. The prison should be commended for this excellent change as it has had a beneficial effect on both staff and prisoners alike.
- 5.3.7 Each year the Healthcare team runs a Health Fayre within the prison, with all areas relating to fitness and well being represented. The fayre in 2010 was outstanding and the Healthcare team should be commended for their enthusiasm and drive in making this event the success it was.
- 5.3.8 The Health Champions within the prison, supported by the Health Improvement nurse are proving very successful and has led to the prison becoming a registered centre to deliver the Royal Society for Public Health Level Two qualification.

This is a recognised qualification within the NHS and prisoners attaining this assist with support groups and undertake 1:1 sessions if required.

- 5.3.9 The IMB received 44 healthcare related complaints last year representing 9.2% of all complaints received.

5.4 Safer Custody

- 5.4.1 Rota reports did not highlight any Safer Custody issues.
- 5.4.2 The low number of ACCT documents open at any one time indicates a safe environment. The Board have observed the positive interaction between staff and prisoners enabling vulnerable prisoners to be readily identified.
- 5.4.3 In June/July 2010 there were two rooftop protests within the prison. These were dealt with calmly and efficiently by the staff involved. The IMB attended both incidents and reported no concerns.
- 5.4.4 The Constant Watch cell is located on the first floor of K Wing. In 2010 we had an incident where a prisoner on constant watch bolted from the cell and threw himself off the balcony, landing on a dining table below. Although not fatal, the prisoner was obviously injured. The Board questions whether the cells location on the first floor is appropriate.

5.5 Care and Separation Unit (CSU)

The CSU continues to be a well run, calm and humane unit within the prison and the staff are commended for their efforts throughout the year.

- 5.5.1 The unit had to deal with a number of difficult prisoners over the last year, with one particular prisoner putting the whole unit under considerable strain over a period of about four weeks. This prisoner needed 24 hour attention and caused immense disruption before he was eventually relocated to another prison. During this time the staff in the unit were outstanding, and are highly commended for their work with the prisoner, and the other residents of the wing at the time.
- 5.5.2 There is a policy to segregate prisoners who are thought to be concealing items. This tactic appears to have been very successful with a number of mobile phones having been recovered.
- 5.5.3 Reviews are attended by Healthcare and IMB on a rota basis thus complying with PSO 1700. When a prisoner enters the CSU on Rule 45 OP, the Board is always notified.
- 5.5.4 There were 1327 adjudications over the last year.

Section 6: Other Areas

6.1 Accommodation and Wing Life

- 6.1.1 The Board generally feels that the accommodation and wing life are satisfactory with no exception to report.
- 6.1.2 The Board received 14 applications relating to accommodation. This equates to 3% of all complaints received which is a reduction on the previous year. Cell sharing only occurs on one wing and the Board are satisfied that the Cell Sharing Risk Assessments are carried out appropriately.
- 6.1.3 The withdrawal of YO prisoners allowed redecoration of wings to take place and it has felt that wings are clean and in good standards of repair.

6.2 Adjudication and I and EP Scheme

- 6.2.1 Adjudications have been observed regularly by Board members who are satisfied with the fairness of the process.
- 6.2.2 The Board received 15 applications with regards to Adjudication matters which again was a small reduction on the previous year.
- 6.2.3 The Board has questioned whether the I&EP scheme is being used enough by wing staff before removing prisoners to the CSU. It is an area we continue to monitor.
- 6.2.4 The Board believes there are no exceptions to report.

6.3 Catering and Kitchen

- 6.3.1 The kitchen has operated well over the year with the Board receiving only 6 complaints which were food and kitchen related, a fact which is testimony of the hard work all staff put in to regularly produce good food.
- 6.3.2 When problems do occur, the Board are satisfied that they are dealt with efficiently and rectified as soon as possible.
- 6.3.3 Throughout the particularly poor weather in December, the kitchens had to cope with a number of difficult scenarios, such as loss of power, but coped extremely well producing over 700 meals each time.
- 6.3.4 The Board believes there are no exceptions to report.

6.4 Complaints

- 6.4.1 The Board is content that the complaint and application process is generally being adhered to and that timescales are being met. There is a plentiful supply of forms available to prisoners and the staff generally are well briefed and assist the prisoners with their problems.
- 6.4.2 The Board has raised a concern in the traceability of the Wing/Governor Application process and this has been raised at our meetings with the Governor who is investigating improvements.
- 6.4.3 Only eight complaints were received under Confidential Access, four from the same prisoner. All were resolved.

6.5 Drugs

- 6.5.1 Drugs, and mobile phones, which allow some prisoners to carry on their drug business in prison, remain a source of great concern to the Board. Whilst there are strenuous efforts made by the security staff to locate both drugs and mobile phones there are too many ways drugs can enter the prison for this battle to be won. More resources such as mobile blockers, X-ray machines and scanners would support the intelligence led security measures.
- 6.5.2 The devastation drug use causes to prisoners, families and lives makes the resources all the more important. Over the year we have observed an increase in prisoners appearing in the CSU on 'own protection' having got themselves into debt funding their habit, causing extra work to be created.
- 6.5.3 The Board was concerned with the amount of time it appeared to take for a suitable policy to be enforced which reduced the effect of Subutex on the prison regime.

6.6 Reception & Induction

- 6.6.1 The IMB stopped attending inductions held on H wing as we could not guarantee to meet the commitment. The Board is satisfied however with their visibility in the prison and the profile given to them by the prison staff
- 6.6.2 The reception process is considered to be a smooth process with no exceptions to report.
- 6.6.3 Prisoners continue to arrive at the prison with property in excess of their allocated allowances as laid down in the PSO. This is notably the case regarding prisoners arriving from the Contracted Out estate. Furthermore property remained the single largest area of complaint which the Board has had to deal with, despite major

efforts by the Governor to involve the Wing Staff in sorting these matters. The Boards time remains wasted, as indeed is the case of the staff, in dealing with problems which are the responsibility of the dispatching prison and we feel that this matter is not given the due concern or diligence at the Regional level.

6.7 Security

- 6.7.1 Security is an obvious priority and the Board is satisfied that all the necessary measures are being taken. The Board had a good working relationship with the Deputy Governor who has supported us during any investigations involving the need to access information which may have a security implication.
- 6.7.2 There appears to be an increased challenge in preventing drugs and mobile phones entering the prison. The Board are very satisfied with the increased emphasis on security issues surrounding these areas and welcome the considerable finds recently made and the proactive approach to intelligence within the prison.

6.8 Sentence Planning

- 6.8.1 Prisoners serving under a year and some identified as low risk do not have an Offender Supervisor. Contact with outside Probation appears in many cases to be problematic and release plans not being started until six weeks prior to release can cause high levels of uncertainty.
- 6.8.2 Over 22% (117) of all applications received were related to 'sentence' issues. IPP sentences and parole hearings formed the largest part of this figure.
- 6.8.3 IPP sentenced prisoners are required to complete courses before consideration is given for release. Many of these courses are not available at HMP Onley and therefore transfers are necessary but difficult to achieve given the prison population pressures. This disadvantages all prisoners including those subject to an IPP sentence and is unacceptable.
- 6.8.4 The Board has evidence that Parole Hearings are frequently delayed and have contacted the Parole Board on this issue. The lack of Judicial time is one reason given for the delays. Whatever the reasons, the delays are unacceptable.
- 6.8.5 The Board received many applications during the latter part of the year citing that the prisoner had applied for Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL), in line with the regulations, but their application had not been processed. Before Christmas the backlog was over 100 for 3 months. We consider this to have been unacceptable as a prisoner, rightfully, has the expectation that the prison will be able to meet its commitments. We understand that the backlog was caused by staff illness however cover should have been provided.

6.9 Visits

- 6.9.1 Visitors are received in a bright clean Visitors Centre near the Gate. There they are processed with efficiency and courtesy. The searching before entering the prison visits room can take up to 20 minutes.
- 6.9.2 Inside the prison the visits room is a spacious, well lit room with a comfortable feel with refreshments available. The prisoners are well supervised.

Section 7: The IMB of HMP & YOI Onley

- 7.1 The Onley Independent Monitoring Board has a recommended complement of 19 and we currently have 14 active members three of whom were recruited this year and are completing their probationary period.
- 7.2 Throughout the year the position of Chair was held by Mr Keith Stanton who was invited to attend the Senior Management Team meetings. He also was able to attend the Area Chairs Meetings. We have held 12 Board meetings with an average number of 10 members attending.
- 7.3 Over the year there were 475 applications received.
- 7.4 The Board carried out training at each of the Board meetings and held a Team Performance Review (TPR) off site at Newbold Revel, which proved useful.
- 7.5 An improved system of reporting and recording has worked well and the Boards' record keeping has improved.
- 7.6 The Governor or his designated representative attended our monthly Board meetings, presenting a report on the previous months activities.
- 7.7 Monitoring is divided into sub teams across the Board with teams reporting by rota at the Board Meeting.
- 7.8 No members were able to attend the Annual Conference, which was a shame considering its proximity to the prison.
- 7.9 Members of the Board hosted a visit from HMP Huntercombe, a local category C establishment, with a view to compare areas of commonality. It was a highly informative visit. The Chair was also able to visit HMP Rye Hill.
- 7.10 There has been co-operation between the Boards of HMP Rye Hill and Onley around the matter of recruitment. A joint advert was placed in the local press and 30+ applications were filtered to 12 interviews held over three days, producing 4 new members for each Board. Although Onley lost one applicant the remaining three have begun their probation year with promise.
- 7.11 The Board was able to keep within the allocated budget, though primarily due to the goodwill of the Board members. The budget process has been much improved this year, though budget reports still arrive later than we would prefer.
- 7.12 There has been concern within the Board at the red tape which surrounds the operation of the Board, the recruitment process and administrative requirements. These place an undue strain on the very limited resources.

7.13 The Board completed its Triennial Review this year.

7.14 Breakdown of applications received:

Code	Subject	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11
A	Accommodation	11	25	17	24	14
B	Adjudications	24	13	14	17	15
C	Diversity Related	3	8	11	8	7
D	Education / Employment	45	36	26	20	31
E	Family visits	65	48	62	49	47
F	Food / Kitchen	8	1	6	5	6
G	Health	28	20	38	51	52
H	Property	88	71	114	84	89
I	Sentence Related	137	111	80	117	72
J	Staff / Prisoner Related	35	28	51	47	36
K	Transfers	62	24	24	52	67
L	Miscellaneous	47	10	59	55	39
	Total No of Applications	453	396	502	529	475