



Independent Monitoring Board

HMP Onley

Annual Report (Final)

March 2009 – February 2010

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. After a brief spell as Regional and National Escort 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.
- 3.2 In March 2008 the prison had a CNA of 640 prisoners – 240 Young Offenders and 400 Adults. This increased following the building of a new wing (L) which was opened in early 2009. This wing added a further 70 to the roll making a new total of 710.
- 3.3 The Board were notified at the end of the year that the Young Offender population would be moving from the prison and that the prisons' role would be categorised as "adult" only. This process had just begun at the writing of this report.
- 3.4 All residential wings apart from I wing 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. G (YO) and H (Adult) Wings are the Induction wings. E (Adult) Wing is a Drug and Alcohol Support Unit (DASU). 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). It has table tennis and pool tables.
- 3.5 The regime at Onley is designed to give the prisoners training through a structured sentence plan. The Offender Assessment System (OASys) which generates a full profile of individual prisoners, provides the sentence plan where possible – priority given to Prolific and Other Priority Offenders (POPO's) and those serving more than 12 months. For offenders without OASys records Onley produces an internal resettlement plan. Opportunities exist for education work placements and offending behaviour programmes with emphasis being given to resettlement.
- 3.6 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, Industrial Cleaning, Waste Management, Goods Again (domestic white goods recycling) and assembly work in the development unit. The prison also offers Market Gardening. This provision had to be withdrawn in the previous year due to security concerns, but following security enhancements the area has

- been reclaimed and is in its first year of production. The kitchen provides opportunities for NVQs in catering and food hygiene certificates. Other workshops are planned to provide additional work places. Recognised qualifications are available, and those who successfully achieve an external accredited qualification are rewarded with an achievement bonus.
- 3.7 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.
 - 3.8 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
 - 3.9 Onley has gained an Investors in People Accreditation Award as well as an improving OFSTED report.
 - 3.10 Healthcare is currently provided through Northants PCT, which includes Dentistry.
 - 3.11 Education providers changed over the reporting period, with Manchester City College handing over the contract for education provision to Milton Keynes College and Lincoln College. They provide a wide range of education courses ranging from basic literacy to Open University qualifications.

Section 4: Executive Summary

4.1 General Commentary on HMP Onley

- 4.1.1 Overall the Board are 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 Governor and Senior Management Team who are implementing an effective recovery plan.
- 4.1.2 Our members do report of a genuine culture of decency and care within the prison.
- 4.1.3 The Board have a high level of confidence in the Senior Management Team.
- 4.1.4 In our view the prison compares favourably when judged against HMCIP's Healthy Prison Criteria (safety, respect purposeful activity and resettlement)
- 4.1.5 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.
- 4.1.6 We have found a committed and well co-ordinated workforce creating, allocating and delivering a wide range of activities – education, training, employment, health promotion, PE, faith activities and offending behaviour programmes.
- 4.1.7 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.
- 4.1.8 As in previous years we have found an unacceptable number of prisoners arriving at Onley with either missing or damaged property. This seems to be a national problem.

4.2 Issues for the Minister

- 4.2.1 The budgets set for the IMBs to function effectively are unrealistic and impractical and therefore the duty imposed on the Chair to balance the budget and carry out mandatory monitoring activities is unworkable.
- 4.2.2 IPP 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. The prisoner then needs to be transferred, which in the

current population climate, is not always achievable, thus considerably disadvantaging the prisoner. We find this unacceptable.

4.2.3 The current IDTS system is considered under resourced and subsequently flawed.

4.3 Issues for the Prison Service

4.3.1 Property claims

Throughout the Prison Service complaints about property have remained high. For HMP Onley complaints re property consistently appear as one of the top five areas for complaint within the prisons' monthly Performance Report. It appears that there is a culture of negligence with regard to property in some prisons and /or escorts. We have seen a small improvement in the latter part of the year and hope this will continue but are still concerned by the flagrant misapplication of the rules by some establishments.

4.3.2 Canteen

The Board are concerned that the prices for goods available through the canteen appear in many cases to be much higher than those in the private sector. We feel this is unacceptable.

4.3.2 Diversity

This is a huge area within the service. All policies need to be 'impact assessed' against national standards. This has been done at a local level at considerable cost in time and effort. It is felt that a more co-ordinated national approach would have been beneficial. We have witnessed little evidence of support from the National Prison Service Diversity personnel in this area. It is perverse that each prison is devising its own impact assessments when they should broadly be the same across the estate thus saving countless hours of work.

4.4 Issues for the Regional Custodial Services Manager

4.4.1 Building Work

Over the past 12 months we have seen the completion of a number of building works in the prison; the take over of a new wing (L) and the redesign of the pharmacy being two examples. Both of these projects experienced problems which caused delays or discomfort for the prison population. Although the handling of the subsequent challenges was commendable, it is felt that these could have been avoided in the first place through a more thorough approach to the management of these projects.

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 Management Team (DMT) meet bi-monthly on alternate months and focuses on staff issues.

- 5.1.1 The meetings are very well attended by all departments including the IMB. The minutes are always circulated around the Board members.
- 5.1.2 A diversity training package was rolled out to all departments in July of this year, including the IMB.
- 5.1.3 Over the year the Board dealt with only 8 Diversity related applications representing approximately 1.5% of all complaints received. This is a reduction on the previous year.
- 5.1.4 The Board would like to commend the Diversity Manager and her team for the efficient way she has dealt with the ever changing picture.
- 5.1.5 There have been issues over the year in the accuracy of the SMART data used to produce exception reports. This has been rectified.
- 5.1.6 A calendar of events has been drawn up which reflects the various religious festivals. Activities and meals are aligned to these dates.
- 5.1.7 Despite HMP Ranby and HMP Wellingborough being designated as hub prisons for Foreign National prisoners, HMP Onley continues to hold a small number of Foreign National prisoners some of whom have remained past their sentence expiry date. All have been held lawfully on an IS91 warrant.
- 5.1.8 The translation of documents has remained an issue. There is a language line available but this is limited in its ability to translate larger documents. We feel that Region could have been more supportive in this area.

5.2 Learning and Skills

The Learning and Skills department within the prison have continued to build on the excellent work begun last year and stand 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 The contract for the provision of staff for training moved from Manchester City College to Milton Keynes College and Lincoln College in July 2009.
- 5.2.3 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 colleges and the prison.
- 5.2.4 During the year we saw the opening of a further set of workshops which are working well. The prison has the authority to offer City & Guilds qualifications in Carpentry.
- 5.2.5 The market garden area within the prison opened this year, having been closed for some 18 months. The area has been reclaimed and is becoming productive. The Board are disappointed at the time it has taken for a greenhouse to be supplied. We feel the prison should have been given more external support in this matter.
- 5.2.6 A Memorial Garden has been built by prisoners during this year. It has been an excellent project involving many trades (gardens, bricklaying etc.).
- 5.2.7 Rota reports have identified 20 complaints or issues which are education / employment related, representing 3.8% of all complaints received.

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 have been the abuse of Subutex and the continued size of the Dental waiting list.

- 5.3.1 The Board received 51 applications over the reporting period, a significant increase on the previous year, representing 10% of all applications. The vast majority were regarding waiting list issues.
- 5.3.2 The unit has operated very well over the year despite being under staffed for a long period.

- 5.3.3 The death of a healthcare assistant in October 2009 affected the team, who were very well supported by the prison and prisoners alike. The chaplaincy was particularly supportive.
- 5.3.4 A GP was appointed at the start of the year, which ended a twelve month wait for a permanent Doctor and this has had a positive effect on the unit with a wider range of treatments being able to be performed in house.
- 5.3.5 A principle issue throughout the year has been the size of the dental waiting list which at one point rose as high as 175. Extra sessions were scheduled and this has now reduced the list to fewer than 100. PIN 005/2009 has proved useful in managing the abuse of the 'emergency' waiting list.
- 5.3.6 The Swine Flu epidemic had little or no impact on the prisons operating capability and Healthcare had drawn up effective contingency plans.
- 5.3.7 P-ASRO teams have struggled with staff shortages but are now fully staffed and courses are running well.
- 5.3.8 A major concern was raised during the year at the prescribing of Subutex over Methadone by the IDTS doctor. This caused several problems throughout the prison due to the high 'tradability' of Subutex. This appears to have been addressed now, but the Board was disappointed that the situation was not solved earlier and believe this to be another area where Region or indeed the Prison Service as a whole (as the problem appears to be widespread across other prisons), could have provided greater support and guidance.
- 5.3.9 The Board are concerned the IDTS should be a reducing programme and not a maintenance one.
- 5.3.10 A particular highlight was the running of several Health Fayres for all prisoners. Held in the Gym or on the wings, they were extremely well attended. The stalls were highly relevant and imaginatively put together in an interactive manner and all staff concerned should be commended for what the Board considers to be an outstanding effort.
- 5.3.11 The Healthcare Team was short listed for the East Midlands Health & Social Care Awards for Addressing Inequalities.
- 5.3.12 The CARATs team has been severely under staffed throughout the year affecting the establishment's ability to carry out its duties. The establishment has significantly missed its target as a result.
- 5.3.13 The policy regarding the management of bed watches was reviewed and improved in areas found to be weak.

5.4 Safer Custody

- 5.4.1 Rota reports did not highlight any Safer Custody issues.
- 5.4.2 The inquest into the death of a prisoner was attended by members of the IMB. This was a very difficult time for staff but they were well supported by managers and the Care Team.
- 5.4.3 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.
- 5.4.4 The withdrawal of YOs is being sensitively managed and all young prisoners are being kept informed of any decisions made.

5.5 Segregation Unit

The Segregation Unit 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 population within the unit has been reasonably high throughout the year with approximately 50% of the cells available in use at any one time. (Can we have some stats to back this up?)
- 5.5.2 There is a policy to segregate prisoners who are found 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.
- 5.5.4 There was one incident where a prisoner made a serious attempt on his own life whilst in the Segregation Unit; however the procedures followed ensured that the prisoner was properly cared for and the appropriate support provided
- 5.5.5 Over the year the average number of adults in the unit was 4 per month and YO's x3. Cellular confinement lasted on average 6 days, GOOD length of stay averaged 8 days whilst OI/OP averaged just over 12 days.
- 5.5.6 Adjudications averaged 128 per month with a fairly equal split between adults and YOs.

Section 6: Other Areas

6.1 Accommodation and Wing Life

- 6.1.1 The Board generally feels that the accommodation and wing life is satisfactory with no exception to report.
- 6.1.2 The Board received 24 applications relating to accommodation. This equates to 4.5% of all complaints received. Cell sharing was an issue but the Board are satisfied that the Cell Sharing Risk Assessments are carried out appropriately.
- 6.1.3 The planned withdrawal of YO prisoners has allowed redecoration of wings to welcome adult prisoners into a clean environment.

6.2 Adjudication and IEP 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 17 applications with regards to Adjudication matters which equates to 3.2% of all applications.
- 6.2.3 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 5 complaints which were food and kitchen related.

6.4 Complaints

- 6.4.1 The Board is content that the complaint and application process is being adhered to and that timescales are generally being met. There are 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 Only four complaints were received under Confidential Access, two from the same prisoner. All were resolved.

6.5 Drugs

6.5.1 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 attended almost all inductions held on H wing through to December, thus allowing prisoners contact with the IMB from the outset. This has continued to add quite a considerable amount of workload and commitment to the Boards' activity, especially during a time of low Board numbers. By the end of the year we had to introduce an emergency rota and attendance at these inductions had to be reduced.

6.6.2 The reception process is considered to be a smooth process with no exceptions to report.

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 has an excellent relationship with the deputy Governor who has supported us during any investigations involving the need to access information which may have a security implication.

6.8 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, by far the largest single group. IPP sentences and parole hearings formed the largest part of this figure.

6.8.3 IPP 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.

6.9 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 11 active members. Over the year two new members have joined with four leaving, all for personal reasons. One member has been unable to fulfill their duties due to ill health, but is due to return back to us later in 2010.
- 7.2 Throughout the year the position of Chair was held by Mr Keith Stanton who attended most of the Senior Management Team meetings, by invitation. 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 have been 468 visits to the prison and 527 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 Two members attended the Annual Conference, the Chair and Vice Chair, and reported back to the Board accordingly.
- 7.9 Members of the Board hosted a visit from HMP Wellingborough, 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 The Board was unable to keep within the allocated budget, which it feels is set at a highly unrealistic level. It was extremely disappointing that the budget was not provided to us until late in the year making effective management difficult to achieve. Unless there is a considerable rethink of this area, the Board fully expects to exceed its budget in the following year, even providing the very minimum of statutory regulatory activity. The budget is insufficient for a full complement of members.