



2010 Annual Report to
The Secretary of State

covering the period 1 April 2009 – 31 March 2010

The Independent Monitoring Board

HMP Pentonville

1 THE STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

The Prison Act 1952 requires every prison to be monitored by an independent board appointed by the Secretary of State from members of the community in which the prison is situated. The Board is charged to:

- 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.
- inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority as it judges appropriate, any concern it has.
- 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.

This is the report of the Independent Monitoring Board of Her Majesty's Prison Pentonville for 2010. It covers the period from 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010.

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3 DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

Her Majesty's Prison Pentonville is a Category B local prison serving the courts in north east London. All prisoners are male and over the age of 21; Pentonville also houses some Category C and, on rare occasions, Category D prisoners. It has a Certified Normal Accommodation of 913 and an Operational Capacity of 1,152 prisoners, held in 813 cells.

Roughly 60% of prisoners will be on remand at any one time and will have to attend court. Those given long sentences are transferred to other establishments. The joint effect of this is a high turnover in the prison's population, with major implications for assessment, education and treatment programmes. Daily prisoner arrivals often number 100 or more, some 7,500 men a year starting a period of custody at Pentonville.

4 BACKGROUND TO REPORT

As our recent Annual Reports have noted, HMP Pentonville's performance declined for several years. But after a low in early 2007, there were signs that the prison's record was improving.

Our assessment was backed up by the recent report by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons. This, based on a full, announced inspection from 11th to 15th May 2009, stated: "The last two inspections found that the prison performing poorly and failing to reach acceptable standards of safety or decency. This inspection found considerable improvements in [both] areas".

Unfortunately, while the report focused on improvements at Pentonville, it emerged that six men had been temporarily transferred to HMP Wandsworth during the inspection. In return, Pentonville had received some vulnerable and self-harming prisoners during the Wandsworth inspection three weeks later. The inspection report noted:

"This is deplorable not only because of its effects on individuals, but because of the underlying mind-set: that prisoners are merely pieces to be moved around the board to meet performance targets or burnish the reputation of the prison."

We have been kept informed of the outcome of the resulting investigations and new arrangements for the temporary transfers of prisoners.

We welcome the new Governor, who took up his duties in mid-October. We would like to record our appreciation for the efforts of the previous Governor, who arrived in April 2007 and left in August 2009, to improve the prison's performance.

5 THIS REPORT

This report records the working of HMP Pentonville from 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010. It is intended to monitor progress, or lack of progress, in that period.

Each section details the work of a particular area of the prison and is broken down into three parts:

A summary of our report on the topic from the previous year

A summary of the response from the Minister or Prison Service, where provided

This year, we report that:

The Executive Summary identifies particular issues which the IMB considers a priority and in need of a response. We list specific questions for the Minister, Area Manager and the No 1 Governor.

6 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

This year has seen progress in several areas, and the Board has been impressed by the dedication and professionalism of managers and staff. Nevertheless, there are points of deplorable failure which we wish to highlight, not all of them in the control of the prison.

- Illegal drugs and mobile 'phones are still too readily available.

- The Education Department has performed badly, with inadequate lines of management control and supply of management information.
- Learning and skills programmes at Pentonville are highly inadequate. This lack can only be properly addressed through a fundamental review of the allocation of learning and skills resources across the London prison estate.
- The Healthcare Centre is too small for the number of severely mentally ill prisoners, who should be transferred more speedily to psychiatric hospitals.
- Programmes for helping the estimated 50-80% of prisoners with personality disorders are inadequate, and staff need further training.
- Flaws in the design of the Healthcare Centre make it intolerably hot and humid in summer. This problem has been obvious for years, and funding to mitigate it was allocated before the end of 2009. Yet adequate steps have not been taken.
- It has been obvious for years now that the Kitchens are at the end of their operational life, and need replacing.
- The introduction of indeterminate sentences and growth in numbers of licence recalls has led to a backlog of cases for the Parole Board. This results in prolonged, costly and unjust delays in the transfer or release of prisoners.
- The backlog of foreign national prisoners, whose sentences have expired but who cannot be returned to their countries, needs to be actively addressed.
- Overcrowding and under-funding have led to an even smaller proportion of prisoners' time being used constructively to prepare them for a non-criminal life after release.

Current Assessment

We said in our last Annual Report that we are regularly reminded of the many and difficult problems faced by management and staff at Pentonville. Even with their best efforts, the prison's mixed and transitory population, old and overcrowded buildings and inadequate facilities hamper the delivery of a safe, decent and purposeful environment for prisoners.

These problems are made worse by Pentonville's challenging mix of short and longer-term inmates. It is widely felt here that this situation would be alleviated were Pentonville to be re-structured solely as a short-term local prison and remand centre, offering courses and interventions appropriate to that population.

The general overcrowding of the prison system continues to place intolerable burdens on prisoners and staff at Pentonville. Effort to rehabilitate offenders are made more difficult, with prisoners wasting far too much of their time spent in custody. That two inmates have to eat, sleep and defecate in cells originally built for one is an assault on decency.

We remain apprehensive about the impact on the regime at Pentonville of the very considerable budget reductions to be implemented this and subsequent years.

6.1 PARTICULAR ISSUES REQUIRING A RESPONSE

6.1A Questions to the Minister

1. Government policy on Foreign National prisoners appears piecemeal and arbitrary, with a long-awaited PSO on the matter yet to appear. For much of the year UK Border Agency representation in the prison has been inadequate. What are your proposals to: (a) help the prison cope with the large number of Foreign National prisoners it is required to hold; and (b) quickly transfer its sole detainees to more appropriate accommodation?
2. What have been the practical improvements within the prison system so far, arising from last April's Bradley Report on mental health in the criminal justice system? What further changes are planned for this year, and with what benefits in Pentonville?

3. The prison's health services have had long-standing difficulties in recruiting permanent staff. What are your proposals for improving incentives to encourage appropriately qualified healthcare workers to work in the prison as part of their health service careers?
4. The IDTS programme is hugely demanding of resources, and there are doubts as to the efficacy of methadone in treating drug dependence. What is the rationale for the current policy, and when is it to be reviewed?
5. There appears to be no coherent Education strategy for Pentonville. Why is this? What are your proposals for: (1) a more effective educational regime in the prison; and (2) a fundamental review of the allocation and use of learning and skills resources across the London estate?
6. For years our Annual Reports have stressed the urgent need for new kitchens, the existing ones having been closed for 10 weeks this year on health grounds. Maintenance problems persist, and there is an urgent need for a complete kitchen refurbishment at the very least. When will this work begin and what will it consist of?
7. The introduction of IPP penalties and increased numbers of licence recalls has led to a backlog of cases for the Parole Board and costly and unjust delays in the transfer or release of prisoners. What are your proposals for reducing these?

6.1B Questions to the London Director of Offender Management

1. The heat and humidity of the Healthcare Centre impact badly on staff and patients. How is this to be permanently remedied?
2. What would be the benefits, and problems, of establishing a drug-free wing in Pentonville, perhaps on B or D Wings?
3. The VPU is often full, with overflow VPs housed in cells on other landings. Is this a particular problem in Pentonville, or are there insufficient VP places within the London region? How is the problem at Pentonville to be permanently remedied?
4. Too few prisoners in Pentonville engage in purposeful activity. Last year we were told that the Governor had identified this as a priority for improvement in 2009/10. What has been the result?
5. Last year you said that a more accurate data capture system had been put in place to monitor time spent on purposeful activity. What do these data show about Pentonville's performance compared with similar prisons?

6.1C Questions to the No 1 Governor

1. Are you satisfied with the current cell bell response times and monitoring arrangements, and, if not, what actions do you propose?
2. Although there have been improvements in the quality of regime in the VPU, the Unit often overflows onto other wings. What is being done to improve the regime of VPs located on other landings?
3. What is being done to reduce the availability of drugs and mobile phones in Pentonville?
4. For how much longer will VP education classes take place at open desks out on the wing?
5. What are your proposals for increasing the amount and quality of purposeful activity for prisoners?
6. The Visits Hall is under pressure from a growing number of visitors. What are your proposals for expanding the capacity and comfort of the Visits facilities, and when do you expect to see them implemented?
7. How is the increasing need for education classes to be met, and what is being done to ensure that prisoners signed up for education classes and workshops actually attend them?
8. You told us some time ago of your plans for introducing a personal officer scheme. Do you expect to start this soon? If so when, and what form will it take?
9. The IEP scheme strikes us as having been ineffective in influencing prisoners' behaviour. Is this your view, and if so how is it to be improved? Is the current regime for enhanced prisoners a sufficient incentive?

10. Much effort has gone into responding more quickly and relevantly to prisoners' applications and complaints, but to seemingly little effect. When will we see benefits from the review of the Prisoner's Applications/Complaints system now underway?
11. The introduction of the Prison NOMIS programme in mid-April led to a number of problems, eg with sentence calculations. How quickly is P-NOMIS bedding in, and are these problems being dealt with?

7 EQUALITIES (incorporating Race and Diversity)

Last year we reported that:

The No. 1 Governor had made race relations a priority in the prison, instituting personal weekly surgeries with Race Reps. MQPL (Measurement of Quality of Prisoner Life) scores for Race Equality at Pentonville rose significantly.

The response we received was:

No specific response.

This year we report that:

- Race at Pentonville has been made part of a wider Equalities strategy (the Race Equality Action Team (REAT) having been replaced by a three-man Equalities Team under a dedicated manager). The new team co-ordinates policy on the treatment of Foreign National, BME and older and disabled prisoners, and is beginning to look at the problems of LGBT inmates.
- This change reflects criticisms in the last HMCIP report, which commented unfavourably on Pentonville's treatment of disabled prisoners while praising its handling of race.
- The over-representation of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) prisoners on IEP basic regimes and on Segregation and Use of Force statistics declined over the period, as did the number of complaints made by these prisoners. BME inmates currently make up 52 per cent of Pentonville's population.
- The intense, but probably unrepeatable, focus of the outgoing No. 1 Governor on Race at Pentonville has left staff and prisoners with a sense that the issue is now being neglected. The ex-Governor's weekly surgeries with Race reps have been replaced by monthly meetings which are larger, more formal and possibly intimidating to the (few) inmate Reps who attend. Several of these new meetings were cancelled sequentially, none taking place between November 2009 and March 2010.

7.1 FOREIGN NATIONALS

Last year we reported that:

The No. 1 governor took the chair of a Foreign Nationals Management Committee, bringing together senior managers, outside agencies and prisoner reps. Two UKBA staff were in the prison three days a week. Nonetheless, there were too few Foreign National co-ordinating staff to cope with inmate numbers, and foreign national prisoners on IPPs had problems of access to English-only TSP parole courses.

The response we received was:

No specific response.

This year we report that:

- Although Pentonville has 350 Foreign National prisoners on average – more than a quarter of the population – it counts as a “spoke” prison under Ministry of Justice guidelines of May 2009. (“Hub” status arbitrarily requires 400 FN prisoners, regardless of overall population size.) This limits dedicated UK Border Agency presence in the prison to two agents two-and-a-half days a week, rather than the full five-day-a-week team of a hub prison. One of Pentonville's UKBA agents had, as at March 2010, been on sick leave for several months.

- The number of Sole Detainees (foreign national prisoners whose sentences have been completed, but who are held in jail pending deportation) rose from five at the beginning of the period to 22 in December 2009. It now stands at 17. Statistics suggests that hub prisons have an average of two Sole Detainees each, spoke prisons an average of 16, a disruptive few of whom can absorb grossly disproportionate staff resources. One of Pentonville's detainees has been awaiting deportation since 2008, although he was given a fixed sentence in 2004. As of March 2010, he was on dirty protest.
- Despite a lack of support from outside the prison, Pentonville's Foreign Nationals team has formulated and, as far as has been possible, implemented an impressive in-house strategy over the year. Staff-awareness seminars were held in the Chapel, and Foreign National staff reps have been appointed in Visits and Workshops rather than just on the wings.
- Community support teams have been set up, providing information on matters such as immigration, resettlement and safer custody to separate ethnic groups, including Chinese, Latin American and Caribbean prisoners. Support provided takes into account particular cultural and linguistic needs. Where relevant, this support is extended to inmates' visitors. Foreign national prisoners can book their own visits, with an interpretation service provided for bookings.
- Government policy on Foreign National prisoners remains piecemeal and apparently arbitrary, with a long-awaited PSO on the matter yet to appear. This hampers the work of Pentonville's Foreign Nationals team.

8 EDUCATION

Last year we reported that:

The loss of a long-standing Head of Education and prospective change of contract provider made for a difficult year. Classroom space had not kept pace with increased inmate attendance, which was ill-monitored.

The response we received was:

The current contract has been re-tendered and the sub-standard performance of Education noted. Managers have undertaken to improve movement to Education, and to address problems of non-attendance.

Prisoner activity places at Pentonville should be increased. The prison lacks activity spaces but the Governor and his staff have strived to improve availability, eg by converting an unused workshop to a fully operational Gym, introducing more flexible work arrangements in workshops, extending the use of the Day Care Centre, increasing temporary release arrangements and monitoring the attendance of prisoners on courses. The Governor has identified this as a priority area for improvement this year, where it is hoped the regime will provide a work period and association period for the majority of prisoners within this business plan year.

This year we report that:

- It has been another difficult year for Education with low staff morale and class attendance, problems of delivery of prisoners and friction between the prison and the education provider.
- After a six-month hiatus, a new education provider, Kensington and Chelsea College (KCC), was appointed on 1 October. It appears that the contract with KCC does not include formal statistics on attendance, making the contract difficult to manage.
- The prison's Head of Learning and Skills left in November. His replacement brought new energy to the role but has been on sick leave since February and is not due back until May at the earliest. On the provider's side, there has been no Head of Education since March 2009. The acting head has resigned and is leaving in May after 12 years at Pentonville.
- As last year, it is impossible to provide any statistics on education take-up as there is no accurate Management Information System.
- The Media Centre, which was welcomed in our last report, has yet to open fully. As of mid-March 2010, the prison newspaper, *Voice of the 'Ville*, was produced there, although there has been no further progress with the radio station. However, the Deputy Head of Learning and Skills, who takes up her appointment in April, has been to Brixton to study their award-winning station.

- The partnership with *The Guardian* newspaper and NUJ continue, and are positives in an otherwise bleak educational landscape.
- The Education room on the VPU was vacated in January to make way for a dispensary, although the room has yet to be converted and stands empty. Education for VPU prisoners takes place on the landing, with no computers or privacy and with constant interruptions.
- We understand that there is to be an increasing focus of Education's limited resources on short-term prisoners. There are plans to consolidate Education classes (currently on two wings) into the old Workshop 1 on G Wing by June. The far end of G Wing will become the Education area, with all prisoners attending Education housed here, thus easing access and delivery.

8.1 WORKSHOPS

Last year we reported that:

There was a shortage of work places at Pentonville. The three main workshops employed only 140 prisoners, with work prone to disruption from staff shortages. More than 200 prisoners achieved accreditation, but almost as many (196) were not completed. A Jobs Fair, attended by 80 prisoners, was held in September 2008.

The response we received was:

No specific response.

This year we report that:

- In March 2010 the three main workshops employed only 122 prisoners (109 fewer than in March 2005), although a planned reconfiguration of Workshop 3 promises 25-30 new places, with training in practical skills such as tiling, by summer 2010.
- Productive time is still lost because supervisory staff are deployed on other duties. At times, workshops are closed for all or most of the day.
- There are five pay bands, ranging from £2.50 - £12.50 a week – a complex system that causes confusion among prisoners.
- With 100-150 job applications to handle each week, the Labour Board has little time to encourage non-working prisoners into employment or education, even if there were sufficient suitable vacancies.
- Workshop 5 currently houses four-week resettlement classes, offered three months before release and covering topics such as CV writing and interpersonal skills. There are plans to turn the Workshop into a "Job Club", run by Resettlement rather than Education and bringing together agencies such as Nacro and St Mungo's.
- The Industrial Premises Cleaning (IPC) Workshop, with 12 BICSc (British Institute of Cleaning Science) -accredited jobs, continues to provide good training for prisoners, with Pentonville's cleaning team again doing well at the national cleaning competition in March 2010.

8.2 PHYSICAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Last year we reported that:

The Gym and Sports Hall were popular with prisoners and staff, running a wide range of accredited courses and classes for inmates with health issues. An outdoor exercise area was proposed.

The response we received was:

Funds for the PE Department's outdoor exercise area have not been secured, and are unlikely to be this year.

This year we report that:

- The Gym, opened in March 2008, is stocked with excellent equipment. This much improved facility accommodates up to 50 prisoners per session. There is also a new weights Gym in the basement of F Wing, with morning and afternoon sessions each weekday for 10 prisoners at a time. Up to 100 prisoners can now use the Gym in two sessions between 8:00am and 11:30am each weekday.
- Staff ran a wide range of accredited courses, including First Aid and CSLA (Community Sports Leaders Award). They are also running the pilot for 'Street League', a gang-leader-to-peer-leader initiative leading to coaching jobs on release. Over 350 accreditations were successfully completed by prisoners during the year. There were special classes for prisoners with healthcare issues, among them PASRO (Prisons Addressing Substance Related Offending).
- Showers remain a problem in the Gym, the men's shower area suffering badly from broken tiles, peeling paint and dirty lavatories. We have been told that this is a priority for action, with work to be completed by May 2010.

8.3 LIBRARY

- The new Library is a welcome addition to the prison, and the Librarian has taken some excellent initiatives, buying in better stock, making daily newspapers available for the first time and taking forward the 'Toe by Toe' scheme.
- Although there are no accurate statistics for Library issues, figures show monthly visitor numbers up from around 400 in the year from March 2008 to 800 in the year from March 2009.
- Despite these encouraging figures, delivery of prisoners remains a problem. Prisoners in Education have had no access to the Library since July 2009. The new Education provider, KCC, will not insure their staff to escort inmates and the prison itself is too short-staffed to do so – yet another example of the strained relationship between provider and prison having a detrimental impact on prisoner life.

9 HEALTHCARE & MENTAL HEALTH

Last year we reported that:

Nursing levels were inadequate, with a high number of vacancies; GP cover on the wings was poor. A shortage of beds in Healthcare meant that candidates for mental health treatment were managed on the wings. Waiting lists for dentistry ran at up to a 100 prisoners at a time. Facilities for disabled prisoners (wheelchairs, prosthetic limbs, bathing facilities) were poor.

The response we received was:

The Government referred to the Bradley report and the subsequently formed National Health and Criminal Justice Board to publish a National Delivery Plan by October 2009. This plan is then to be delivered by the London Offender Health Partnership Board. No specific response was given with regards to the situation in HMP Pentonville.

This year we report that:

- The Healthcare Centre (HCC) is poorly designed, with grossly insufficient ventilation in the hot summer months. Prisoners and staff suffer greatly from heat and humidity and safety is compromised. Portable air conditioners do little to help. We find it unthinkable that this long-standing problem has not been addressed. Yet, despite funding being allocated before the end of 2009, adequate steps have not yet been taken to deal with it.
- The new Health Service provider, a consortium led by Islington PCT (Primary Care Trust), started on 1 April 2009. For various reasons, they have struggled to fill a significant number of vacancies. The post of lead GP was vacant for 10 months. Agency nurses were hampered by having no keys.
- We are pleased that prisoners awaiting transfer to secure hospitals faced significantly shorter waiting times over the year. Even so, there is a large group of patients with at times very disturbed behaviour. Up to 75% of the patients in the HCC are there for mental health reasons.

- There is a gap in the provision of care for prisoners with varying degrees of behavioural or personality disorder (PD). A recent study by the Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health suggests that 60-80% of male prisoners may have PDs. However they are deemed untreatable by the mental health in-reach team and no talking therapies are available. They usually remain on the wings (where they absorb a vastly disproportionate amount of staff time), and further resources for staff training, and improved liaison between staff on and off the wings, are vital to increase their opportunities for improvement.
- There have been three instances of forcible medication. Despite repeated requests, paperwork required under mental health legislation has yet to be seen by the IMB.
- Waiting lists for dental treatment remained a problem.

10 SAFER CUSTODY

Last year we reported that:

Reported incidents of self-harm halved, although access to Listeners remained patchy. More attention is being paid to response times to cell bells. The prison's Violence Reduction strategy was seen as ineffectual.

The response we received was:

Response time to cell bells has been monitored and shown improvement.

This year we report that:

- There was one self-inflicted death in custody in the period.
- Reported incidents of self-harm stood at 195, a slight increase over the previous year.
- The freedom of Listeners (inmate Samaritans) to move around the prison has improved, with a matching increase in their effectiveness.
- There is still no system for monitoring response-time by officers to emergency cell bells. Such a system seemed to have been developed, but now appears inoperative.

11 THE WINGS

Last year we reported that:

Among rare improvements in the quality of prisoner life was the refurbishment of the First Night Centre and facelift of A (Reception) Wing – changes of particular importance to first-time inmates. Planned opening of the Substance Misuse Unit on F Wing was delayed.

The response we received was:

F Wing opened on 6 July and is now running smoothly. The delays were mainly due to the water supply and legionella issues, which have now been fully resolved.

This year we report that:

A Wing

- Prisoners arriving via Reception should be moved off the wing within five days. Staff report that only 70 per cent are.
- Pressure on space from the new use of beds for Appeal Court prisoners means that small cells on each floor, traditionally kept for single inmates, are now frequently doubled-up.
- Staffing pressures of First Night Induction mean that there is no evening association.

B Wing

- With the opening of F Wing in July 2009, B Wing's role changed from Detoxification to Resettlement.
- Bringing accommodation and employment agencies together under one roof, the new B Wing was aimed at prisoners on top IEP bands who had less than six months to serve. Due to pressure of numbers in the prison, the wing has, in practice, come to house a standard mixed population. There are currently no ROTL (Release on Temporary Licence) prisoners on B Wing.

C & D (Enhanced) Wings

- These wings run well, with prisoners largely positive about their treatment. The main complaint was from officers over staffing levels, currently five short on a complement of 46.

E Wing

- With the opening of F Wing next door, E Wing has increasingly come to house overspill prisoners on the long-term Integrated Drug Treatment System (IDTS). IDTS prisoners on the wing rose from 25 in September 2009 to roughly twice that number by March 2010. With the dispensing of methadone requiring close monitoring, two officers are effectively out of action for two hours a day, often leading to curbs on association across the wing.

E1 (Segregation)

- There was a self-inflicted Death in Custody on E1 on 8 January 2010. The prisoner was on a 30-minute-watch ACCT, which the IMB considers was properly observed. Soon after, the Governor imposed a rule requiring his personal signature for an open-ACCT prisoner to be held on Segregation.
- The Special Cell was used five times during the period, for three different prisoners.
- Although handling of paperwork on E1 has become more rigorous, there are still no accurate records for the frequent (and largely unavoidable) curtailment of prisoners' exercise time. We welcome plans to keep such records.

F Wing

- After long delays, F Wing opened in July 2009. An initial shortage of nurses has been resolved, and the IDTS appears to run well. However, the numbers being treated are far greater than those planned for, or funded by, the Primary Care Trust – up to 250 prisoners at a time, with only 120 beds on F Wing. The effect of this on E Wing has been noted (see above). Whether the IDTS can continue to be well run and funded under these pressures is a matter of serious doubt.

11.1 VULNERABLE PRISONERS' UNIT / G1

Last year we reported that:

Induction on G1 was inadequate, and there was poor access to employment. Staff shortages led to a reduced regime, while a shortage of cells meant vulnerable prisoners (VPs) being housed on A Wing, without a reasonable regime.

The response we received was:

Small numbers of VPs are housed on A Wing when the VPU is full. The regime provided to VPs on A Wing is better than that on the only other alternative, which is the Segregation Unit.

This year we report that:

- It is unfortunate that, due to pressure of space, VPs are regularly housed on other wings, where they are subject to threats from other inmates. Additionally, the mix of sex- and non-sex-offenders in the VPU remains toxic, with evidence of intimidation of the former by the latter.
- In August 2009, the G1 overflow moved from A Wing to G2, allowing those affected to spend their days on the VPU. A lack of communal lavatories on G1 made life difficult for these prisoners.
- There have been several serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults.
- Induction on G1 has improved and most new arrivals receive their induction within two days. However, constant changes of staff mean that new arrivals are occasionally not identified and their inductions are missed.
- Access to PIN phones has been problematic and MAPPA inmates, whose caller-lists must be cleared by Offender Management, have faced particularly long delays.

12 KITCHEN AND CANTEEN

Last year we reported that:

The kitchen is temporary structure requiring urgent replacement. There were concerns about the growing cost of food, given a proposed budget cut to £2.10 per prisoner per day.

The response we received was:

Following the closure of the kitchen in April, emergency work was carried out to provide a safe work environment until the new kitchen is built. Lack of funding makes plans for this uncertain.

This year we report that:

- For years our Annual Reports have stressed the need for new kitchens, the current ones being housed in a temporary structure built in the 1970s. Our report for 2005/06 warned that “a complete failure seems inevitable. If this should happen, the cost of providing alternative facilities will surely be significantly higher than the cost of taking remedial steps now.”
- This ‘complete failure’ occurred on 23rd April 2009, when levels of carbon monoxide were found to be dangerously high and the kitchens closed without notice. Two field kitchens were installed the next day, but it was ten weeks before the main kitchens reopened. Pre-select menus were cancelled and the type and amount of food on offer severely restricted.
- Maintenance problems persist. The kitchen roof leaks and equipment regularly breaks down, sometimes for months at a time. Yet despite a clear, desperate and long-standing need for new kitchens, we have not been told that plans for a replacement have been agreed.
- Until May 2009 the Canteen (prison shop) was run successfully in-house. Since then, Canteen services have been outsourced to DHL / Booker, with deliveries made late in the week. There have been frequent complaints, largely to do with the time taken to reimburse inmates for damaged goods or to pay telephone credits into their accounts. We were told of one prisoner who was billed £100 for a £10 item and was left without funds until the mistake was rectified. Procedures are inflexible, entire orders being cancelled if prisoners marginally overdraw.
- DHL’s logistics appear not to have been designed for a transient population such as Pentonville’s. Keeping up with inmate movements around the prison or between prisons requires constant re-packing, resulting in frequent delays and errors. Although the number of complaints had fallen by February 2010, it was telling that the supply of Valentine cards arrived after 14 February.

13 ADJUDICATIONS

Last year we reported that:

The organisation of Adjudications had improved, with fewer adjournments. The system continued to be run carefully and humanely.

The response we received was:

No specific response.

This year we report that:

- Mobile phones and drugs continue to dominate adjudications. All cases of both (except those involving IPP prisoners) are now automatically referred to an external adjudicator who, owing to his case load – 54 cases on one recent day – has increased his visits from once to twice a month.

14 VISITS

Last year we reported that:

Telephone bookings were proving problematic, and the Visits Hall was too small. The system of Closed Visits was perceived by prisoners as arbitrary and unfair.

The response we received was:

Minor improvements were made to extend the visits capacity/use. Eg a policy of over-booking has been introduced to allow for average non-attendance. Also, it is planned to introduce split visits sessions, which should increase the capacity by up to 132 visits a week.

This year we report that:

- 35,000 visitors were processed in the reporting period. The Visits Hall, already too small, will come under additional pressure from the growing number of visitors expected this year. The coffee and play areas are particularly inadequate.
- Prisoners are now allowed to book their visits from inside, alleviating long-standing problems with telephone bookings.
- Doubts persist about the use of closed visits, which prisoners widely see as unfair [see below, Section 17].

15 RECEPTION

Last year we reported that:

Better staff numbers and the provision of prisoner-interpreters improved the Reception process. Allowing inmates to take their property to court reduced complaints of loss.

The response we received was:

Waiting times have continued to fall, and the system works well.

This year we report that:

- Moving medical examinations from Reception to the First Night Centre has speeded up the arrival process. Nurses can now prescribe methadone to arriving prisoners with a proven need.
- The BOSS (Body Orifice Security Scanner) chair is in regular use. Prisoners who own up to concealing mobile 'phones when detected by the chair, or to hiding drugs, are given reduced penalties.
- A pilot for the so-called Virtual Courts scheme, begun and ended in early 2010, was little used and short-lived.

16 OFFENDER MANAGEMENT (Psychology, Probation & Parole, IPPs & Lifers, Resettlement)

Last year we reported that:

Probation was under-staffed and lacked focus. The processing of IPP prisoners appeared to have improved. There were 12 lifers and 37 IPP prisoners in Pentonville.

The response we received was:

With a population of 1,200 prisoners at Pentonville, the number of lifer and ISPP prisoners is not deemed excessive (23 of whom have been held for more than 12 months). Long term prisoners are located at Pentonville post-sentence until risk assessments are completed, sentence plans are opened, allocations to other prisons are arranged or, following recall, awaiting parole hearings.

Though only one part of the resettlement planning process, the programme for offender learning and resettlement information services (POLARIS) has yet to fulfil its potential at Pentonville. The system, when operating fully, has some benefits for resettlement planning, and the Governor hopes that these will be clear by the end of this business plan year.

This year we report that:

- As of March 2010, the Head of Psychology was on long-term leave and other vacancies remained unfilled. This hampered the vital work of the department, which includes assessing risks of reoffending and self-harm among prisoners, and providing data for Parole Board sentence planning.
- This shortage also meant that the complex demands of assessing the many prisoners with personality disorders were not being met.
- A lack of resources led to too few courses being offered to address offending behaviour and / or satisfy Parole Board requirements. This was a particular problem for prisoners given an Indeterminate Sentence for Public Protection (IPP). Removal of IPP prisoners and lifers to more appropriate prisons was considerably delayed and numbers grew unreasonably, there being 50 IPPs and 20 lifers in Pentonville as of March 2010, diverting staff from what should be their primary roles in a short-term prison and remand centre for the London Courts.
- The ending of CALM (anger-management) courses at Pentonville, of relevance to many inmates, was a matter of particular regret. The existing CALM course had received a 100% audit score shortly before its termination.
- All prisoners on B Wing should take the prison's four-week Resettlement course, covering the writing of CVs, job applications, etc. In practice, only 12 inmates at a time can attend, meaning that many miss the course entirely or fail to complete it. There are currently no ROTL (Release on Temporary Licence) prisoners.
- IPP prisoners required by their sentence plans to attend a Cognitive Self-Change Programme (CSCP) are currently unable to do so as no Category B prison offers one. This restricts the ability of the Parole Board to release such inmates, a problem that is likely to increase.
- The Parole Board's workload has grown massively with the introduction of IPP sentences, and no additional resources have been provided to help them cover the increase. Additionally, inmates out on licence can be recalled to prison for apparently trivial reasons and, once back inside, their release is often delayed by months. These combined problems mean that an increasing number of men are held in prison for far too long and without adequate treatment.

17 DRUGS & SECURITY

Last year we reported that:

Flows of contraband into the prison remained high, despite new security measures. There was one escape from custody.

The response we received was:

A senior Governor has been appointed to head drug strategy and a revised good practice guide published. The blocking of mobile 'phone signals is being tried out in high security prisons and may be extended, budget permitting.

This year we report that:

- Despite the use of a new metal-detecting Body Orifice Security Scanner (BOSS) chair in Reception, the number of mobile 'phones found in the prison (193 in the period) showed no significant fall.
- MDT (Mandatory Drug Testing) figures suggest that the availability of drugs at Pentonville remains unacceptably high. Pentonville topped the MDT league of London prisons between May 2009 and February 2010, with positive-test figures running at 17½-22%.
- While appreciating the urgent need to reduce drug use, we are concerned at the rigid use of Closed Visits to achieve this. A prisoner is placed on closed visits if drugs are found in his cell, whether or not he is deemed responsible for their being there at a subsequent disciplinary adjudication. The customary term for closed visits is three months, and while the PSO requires monthly reviews, the practice at Pentonville is that it is never reduced. The system is widely seen by prisoners as arbitrary and unjust, and closed visits perceived as a punishment.

17.1 USE OF FORCE

Last year we reported that:

The prison struggled to reach required levels of Control & Restraint (C&R) training. There were preventable incidents, and a need for more de-escalation.

The response we received was:

No specific response.

This year we report that:

- C&R training levels have improved.
- Monitoring of Use of Force was made more difficult by the IMB having received no UoF statistics after the departure of Governor Bryant in September 2009.

18 MAKE-UP OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

Pentonville's IMB consists of 20 members. Due to resignations and leave of absence, effective numbers in the year at times fell as low as 12. This added considerably to the workload of remaining members. Four new members joined during the year, one – transferring from another Board – only briefly. As required, the IMB at Pentonville completed its Triennial Review in October 2009.

18.1 WEEKLY ROTA VISITS

Members on rota duty monitor the prison's facilities and treatment of prisoners, giving a sense of how Pentonville is running. Key areas (the Segregation and Vulnerable Prisoners' Units and Health Care Centre) are reviewed each week, with other areas visited regularly but less frequently. The IMB member on rota will visit the prison several times in the week and write a report at the end of it. This is

sent to the No 1 Governor, who responds in writing to specific issues and concerns in time for the monthly Board meeting.

18.2 APPLICATIONS SURGERIES

On Wednesday afternoons, members speak to prisoners who have applied to see them. In the period of this report, the IMB received 419 written applications. The 91 applicants who failed to attend were at court, on visits, or otherwise engaged. Such prisoners are invited in writing to attend the following week.

Applications

The areas covered by written applications were as follows:

<i>Area</i>	<i>Approximate proportion of applications, to 31 March 2010</i>	
Property and Cash	77	18%
Medical	35	8%
Visits	35	8%
Miscellaneous	31	7%
Transfers/Category	28	7%
Licence recall, etc	18	4%
Telephones	15	4%
Foreign Nationals	12	3%
Sentence Calculation	11	3%
Bullying	7	2%
Probation	7	2%
Regime	7	2%
Requests Complaints	7	2%
Food	6	1%
Work	6	1%
Adjudications	5	1%
General IMB advice	5	1%
Assault	4	1%
Racial abuse/incident	4	1%
Legal issues	4	1%
Mail	2	<1%
Education	1	<1%
Housing/Resettlement	1	<1%
E-man status*	0	0%
Library	0	0%
Did not attends	91	22%

* Prisoner regarded as at high risk of escape.

These statistics are for written applications and do not include the significant number of questions addressed to IMB members when walking around the prison. The single biggest issue concerns prisoners' property and cash.

Annex 1 - Board Statistics

Part 1 - General Statistics

Recommended complement of Board Members	20
Number of Members at the start of the reporting period	16
Number of Members at the end of the reporting period	14
Number of new Members joining during the reporting period	4
Number of Members leaving within the reporting period	6
Number of attendances at meetings other than board meetings	433
Total number of visits to the prison (including all meetings)	568
Total number of applications received	419 (328 attended)
Total number of segregation reviews held	About 50
Total number of segregation reviews attended	About 35

Part 2 - Member Attendance, 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010

<i>Member</i>	<i>Monthly Board Meetings</i>	<i>Weekly Rota *</i>	<i>Applications</i>	<i>Other</i>
William Anderson ¹	2	-	-	2
Alan Bevan	12	12/4	11	23
Barbara Byer ²	-	-	-	1
Gordon Cropper	10	15/4	6	18
Charles Darwent	9	19/5	8	3
Bashir Ebrahim-Khan	7	16/4	6	3
Michael Farrant ³	2	-	2	2
Mary Fulton	8	14/5	6	17
Jeremy Killingray ⁴	6	16/5	6	7
Sarah Lowry	11	17/5	8	3
Robyn Lyons ⁵	2	4/1	-	-
Anna Macer	7	8/2	5	7
David Miller	12	12/3	9	20
Jacqueline van Oosterwijk	6	11/4	5	2
Uzma Qureshi ⁶	5	3/1	2	4
Georgina Rhodes ⁷	4	4/1	2	2
Amanda Ross ⁸	4	6/2	2	1
Helen Sarkany ⁹	-	-	-	-
Jean Silkoff	9	13/5	11	3
Rose Stringer ¹⁰	-	-	-	-
Tom Tickell	9	18/4	4	8
Ann Waters	11	11/3	9	12
Mollie Weatheritt ¹⁰	-	-	-	-

* Attendance figures in weekly rota column denote, eg, 18/4 means that 18 visits were undertaken during 4 rota weeks.

¹ On leave of absence from March 2009 to January 2010.

² On leave of absence from February 2009 to October 2009; resigned in September 2009.

³ Transferred from HMP Wormwood Scrubs in April 2009; resigned in September 2009.

⁴ Resigned in November 2009.

⁵ Resigned in July 2009.

⁶ On leave of absence from December 2009 to May 2010; resigned in March 2009.

⁷ Resigned in September 2009.

⁸ On leave of absence from October 2009 to May 2010.

⁹ Resigned in April 2009.

¹⁰ Appointed in March 2010.