HMP RISLEY INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

ANNUAL REPORT

April 2009 – March 2010

1 STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

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

The Board is specifically charged to:

- (1) Satisfy itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in custody within its prison and the range and adequacy of the programmes preparing them for release.
- (2) Inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority as it judges appropriate, any concern it has.
- (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 the right to access to every prisoner and every part of the prison and also to the prison records.

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3 DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

HMP Risley is one of the largest Category "C" training prisons in the UK, currently housing an average of 1080 male prisoners with an operational maximum of 1085.

During the reporting year, the prison was designated as the hub for foreign national prisoners in the North West. UKBA staff are now permanently based in the prison. The population profile showed that, at the end of the reporting year, there were approximately 140 foreign nationals, 180 sex offenders, 155 IPPs and 100 lifers.

The Risley estate consists of 7 residential wings, two of which house vulnerable prisoners/sex offenders. There is also a segregation unit with its own outside exercise area. There are 12 workshops and 22 education classrooms plus a library. There is a health centre with a full time doctor and nursing staff. In addition dental, ophthalmic, physiotherapy and podiatry services are provided. Other facilities include a sports hall, a gym and a multi-faith centre.

4 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Issues for the Minister:-

Accommodation and Maintenance

Birchwood wing continues to deteriorate and needs to be at the top of the priority list for demolition and reconstruction. At this time of financial constraint, money is being spent in necessary repairs to keep the building functional. The issue requires capital funding.

Some of the shower areas on Appleton and Daresbury wings continue to be unusable due to problems with drainage; this requires more expenditure which is not available at this time. This is a symptom of other accommodation units becoming older and requiring major capital expenditure.

Healthcare

There are major discrepancies between amounts of money received from PCTs across the North West to fund healthcare in prisons. The funding at Risley is one of the lowest amounts per prisoner, resulting in delays for prisoner appointments and over stretching of staff resources.

Mental Health Issues

Once again a prisoner has been detained in a gated cell on constant watch; this is not suitable accommodation for a person with mental health issues. As in previous years it is the opinion of the Board that the prison system will not operate effectively until facilities are created to house and treat prisoners with serious mental health problems.

5.1 DIVERSITY

The diversity manager has provided an important and necessary focus to ensure that quality of standards of fairness and equality are practised throughout the prison.

There were a total of 143 RIFs submitted during 2009/1010; the breakdown was as follows

Prisoner on Prisoner	=	20	Staff on Prisoner	=	37
Prisoner on Staff	=	83	Other	=	2
Staff on Staff	=	1			
Total - 1/13					

(It should be noted that the first reference is to the person reporting the incident).

Type of incidents range as follows

Abuse/Verbal Bullying Assault Total = 143 Outcomes	= = =	48 6 6	Discrimination Other	= =	76 7
Proven Not proven Discharged Total = 143	= = =	29 99 1	Withdrawn Ongoing	= =	14

The Board have monitored a sample of RIF forms and are satisfied that all incidents have been dealt with promptly and correctly. A Board member has attended a sample of REAT meetings, which are held monthly and chaired by the deputy governor. The diversity manager has provided diversity training for 136 members of staff during the year.

The disability committee meets bi-monthly and is chaired by the diversity manager. Risley has an excellent disability policy in place and all staff are aware of its contents and procedures. As far as possible, elderly prisoners or mobility restricted prisoners are housed on the ground floors of the residential wings.

There is no purpose-built accommodation for disabled prisoners and access to facilities is limited by the environment.

A small wing (Farnworth) is used entirely to house older prisoners.

5.2 LEARNING AND SKILLS

The HMCIP report of April 2008 drew attention to both the inadequacy of the number of purposeful activity places available and their quality. At that time some 25% of prisoners were unemployed and some of those working in contract employment workshops were undertaking unskilled work that did not lead to any qualifications. Following their report, a full review of the regime and activities was undertaken by the prison. Initiatives taken as a result of this review have now been fully implemented and as a result the most recent figure for unemployment is 11.5% but there is still a shortfall of some 100 places in order to ensure that everyone who is fit to work does so. The number of purposeful hours activity averages 24.9 hours per prisoner per week, just exceeding the target of 24.5 hours.

There has been a shift towards provision of places leading to formal qualifications and skills in demand by local employers. The new bathroom and kitchen fitting workshop typifying the trend. The construction skills academy is now able to deliver level 2 diplomas as recommended by the HMCIP report. The increase in the number of foreign national prisoners has led to an increase in the demand for ESOL courses. The educational courses are provided by Manchester City College with whom the prison has a good relationship.

Currently 55% of available places lead to educational and vocational qualifications and 45% are in contract employment workshops. The most menial tasks such as CD scratching have been phased out.

The head of employment and skills is always seeking to increase the number of regime places in conjunction with outside partners but he is having very limited success in the current economic climate. At the same time, funding for the provider "The Training Partnership", which delivers non OLASS accredited learning, has had its LSC funding cut by 50%. This may affect the NVQs being delivered in the laundry and PICTA.

The Board recognises the huge effort of the prison in trying to achieve their employment and learning targets, the fundamental constraint being funding for additional courses such as a white goods refurbishment workshop. The Board remain concerned that in a prison, which is designated as a training prison, there are not enough training places for all the prisoners.

The Board is satisfied that all prisoners have been properly assessed on their basic numeracy and literacy skills and that appropriate courses are provided for those in need of them. Activities are rarely shut down due to lack of escorting staff or instructors. There were some PASRO courses cancelled this year due to the difficulty in recruiting replacements for staff that had resigned.

5.3 HEALTHCARE INCLUDING METAL HEALTH

Healthcare facilities are provided by Warrington Primary Care Trust. A survey of a small sample of prisoners by the Board found that they all had high praise for the healthcare services and that the standard of care was comparable with that available in the community. There were some issues arising relating to the length of time taken to get appointments, but on investigation it was found that they were just within reasonable limits. The Board received only 16 applications this year about healthcare related issues and all were resolved satisfactorily.

The Board is concerned by the discrepancies in funding for healthcare facilities in prisons across the North West. The funding the HMP Risley together with the neighbouring YOI Thorn Cross is £2.2 million, to care for about 1400 prisoners. This is roughly £1500 per prisoner. This is the one of lowest figures for any prison in the North West and compares unfavourably with others e.g. HMP Wymott which has a similar prisoner population and has a sum of approx £2500 per prisoner. This means that although the unit is fully staffed, the staff are working under extreme pressure to deliver a high standard of service.

Warrington PCT finances 3 beds for HMP Risley prisoners at HMP Preston. The beds at HMP Preston cater for both mentally and physically ill prisoners who require care in an "in patient" facility. Following a review of the criteria for acceptance by HMP Preston, the referral process has been speeded up and the whole process has run much more smoothly with no disagreements between health care professionals at the two centres.

Mental health issues continue to be a high priority area. Those prisoners with urgent needs are seen promptly and, where necessary, transfers to other institutions are now made more speedily. Those prisoners with less urgent needs can still face a lengthy wait for an appointment despite an increase in the amount of mental health practitioner time.

The PCT now holds the funding for bed watchers and escorts and, in an attempt to reduce these costs, they are keen to bring services into the prison rather than transport prisoners to outside hospitals. One area that the Board feels should be given priority is the introduction of an onsite service for sexual health as prisoners are often reluctant to discuss their sexual history whilst handcuffed to an officer at an outside establishment. The healthcare facility at HMP Risley does not have enough room to provide adequate accommodation for many extra visiting staff.

Funding of £30,000 has been received from the Kings Fund to provide a new prisoner waiting area and a larger administrative office. This will provide a safer waiting environment and the re-organisation will provide some much needed extra space for visiting staff.

The increase in the number of foreign national prisoners at HMP Risley has huge cost implications for the healthcare services. The incidence of some types of viral infection is much higher amongst this group than in the general prison population and the drugs required to treat such infections are costly.

5.3 (continued)

In July 2009, IDTS was introduced at HMP Risley; facilities were adapted on Culcheth wing and after some initial teething problems, the system is now running smoothly. The programme is receiving high praise from prisoners participating in it and has been recently cited as an example of best practice by the NTA. When the programme was rolled out it was anticipated that up to 300 prisoners would want to enrol on it, currently some 140 prisoners are undergoing detoxification programmes.

Following criticism in the HMCIP report of 2008 about the lack of interventions for prisoners with alcohol related problems, the prison have secured the services of an Alcohol worker for one half day per week, although this is a start, the Board feels that this provision needs to be increased.

5.4 SAFER CUSTODY

During the reporting year there were 2 deaths in the prison one through natural causes and one self-harm. The Board's condolences go out to the families concerned. The Board chair attended one inquest at Warrington Coroner's Court and was able to make a valuable contribution to it.

A training programme for prison staff has resulted in an improvement in the way that the Board is informed whenever an ACCT is opened. Board members have attended a sample of ACCT reviews and are satisfied that the all relevant standards are being met. A Board member also attends a sample of the monthly safer custody meetings.

The first night centre continues to provide newly arrived prisoners with all the necessary support and information relevant to the prison regime. A thorough assessment of all aspects of individual needs is carried out with respect and sensitivity before allocation to a wing. The first night centre receives very favourable comments and is considered to be an example of good practice.

Board members have visited the CSU (Croft Unit) frequently and have been impressed with the standards of care. They have monitored segregation reviews and adjudications and spoken to prisoners individually. During the year prisoners trashed a number of cells and some flooding occurred, this resulted in considerable cost in repairs.

The Board is concerned that Croft Unit is being used for quite a large number of prisoners who are on open ACCTs.

The reintegration unit houses approximately 12 prisoners who, for various reasons, are unable to be placed in normal locations. A small dedicated staff manages this unit. During the year a workshop has been established within the unit so that the prisoners can participate in purposeful activity and the wing painting team have completely painted it. The unit provides a useful alternative to keeping prisoners in Croft Unit. The Board do not feel this unit is a suitable location for lifers.

Instances of bullying are being firmly addressed by the officers using the TAB system and this is having a major impact within the establishment. The IEP system is being used to great effect with much stricter criteria for attainment of and removal from the various levels. The Board have received a number of applications on these subjects but on investigation have found in all cases that the new criteria have been applied correctly.

The input from Education, CARATS, Psychology, Healthcare and the Gym staff have all shown good outcomes during the year with more active engagement of prisoners, this contributes towards safer custody for all prisoners.

Violence reduction planning days have been held by the safer custody team for both staff and prisoners. The safer custody staff have been involved in a number of support initiatives for HMP Styal and NOMS Probation service approved premises.

5.5 CSU (CROFT UNIT)

The number of prisoners located to Croft Unit during the year was 183 and the average length of stay was 8.7 days. This compares favourably with the figures for the previous year. The decrease in the number of prisoners held in Croft Unit reflects the policy of the prison in managing challenging behaviour on the wings where possible.

A breakdown of the reasons for relocation to Croft Unit is as follows:-

Rule 45a	OI	29
Rule 45b	GOOD	65
Rule 53	Pending Adjudication	84
Rule 55	CC	5

Those prisoners relocated pending adjudication formed the majority and most of these cases were speedily concluded and the prisoners moved from Croft Unit. There were some prisoners held in Croft Unit for lengthy periods but no prisoner's stay exceeded three months, although there was one case, which came very close to the limit. The reasons for lengthy stays in Croft Unit were mainly a refusal to relocate to normal location or where a decision had been made to transfer a prisoner to another establishment. It was difficult to find places for them if they had a history of poor behaviour or were near to their release date.

The special unfurnished cell was used on only two occasions and mechanical restraints also used on two occasions. Use of force protocol was implemented on thirteen occasions, this yearly figure includes eight times in one quarter mainly attributed to one prisoner. There were three dirty protests during the year.

There were 37 prisoners on open ACCTs held in Croft Unit; this includes 11 opened by Croft Unit staff themselves. The greatest number of prisoners on open ACCTs at any one time was four and this entailed a great deal of extra work for Croft Unit staff. All of the prisoners on ACCTs were well managed and the documentation correctly completed. There were eleven incidents of self harm and two prisoners were deemed unsuitable to be held in Croft Unit due to mental health issues. The Board members attended a sample of ACCT reviews and were satisfied with the standard of care and the protocols in place.

With few exceptions Board members have attended segregation reviews and all have been properly conducted. Where prisoners were being held for lengthy periods the Board is satisfied that the prison staff explored every avenue to try to speed things up. Communications with the Board have been good and the procedure for informing the Board of prisoners being relocated to Croft Unit has worked well.

The regime within the unit is basic but fair with access to exercise, showers etc all as detailed in the relevant PSOs. There have been only thirteen complaints from prisoners held in Croft Unit of which only two related to Croft Unit itself. The Board have received only 3 applications from prisoners whilst being held in Croft Unit. The relationships between staff and prisoners are in general excellent and the Board continues to be impressed by the conduct and dedication of Croft Unit staff. They care for some of the most challenging prisoners under difficult circumstances.

5.5 (continued)

There have been some occasions when their job has been made more difficult by the failure of other prison staff to ensure that prisoners being relocated to Croft Unit have access to those belongings which are permitted as quickly as possible.

The accommodation in Croft Unit is not ideal. Both the unit office and the adjudication room are small and cramped; the outside exercise yard is also tiny. The Board repeat the recommendation that when Birchwood wing is rebuilt it should incorporate a new CSU.

6.1 ACCOMMODATION

HMP Risley still suffers with buildings such as Birchwood wing, which was described as unfit for purpose in the HMCIP report of April 2008. This has also been stated in previous reports by the Board but the situation remains unchanged. As the estate continues ageing, more capital funding will be required to maintain the current standards, therefore it will be unable to better standards without a large amount of capital expenditure.

The shower areas on Appleton and Daresbury wings are continuing to deteriorate and will need capital expenditure to allow them to be fully utilised, at present only 7 out of 24 showers on Appleton wing can be used. The prison is aware of this but do not have the necessary funding to repair them.

Another area of concern is that the main personnel gates that keep failing and staff are having to use the vehicle access gates to leave and enter the prison. The locking system appears to be past its best; again capital expenditure will be required to replace the aged system.

During the past 12 months, the high voltage cable has been replaced to the boiler house as the original failed, causing the use of generators to maintain heat to the establishment

The IDTS suite on Culcheth wing has been created with money spent on the extensive works to the area, making it suitable for use.

The visits area has had some work done on the voice transfer system on closed visits, this is now of an acceptable standard, allowing conversation between prisoners and visitors.

The prison still maintains its numerous in house painting parties, without these parties the establishment would have deteriorated to an unacceptable state. Prisoners and staff alike now have some pride in the establishment.

The working conditions for some wing staff are very poor with offices, locker rooms and kitchens all in dire need of refurbishment. This needs to be addressed as it has an impact on staff morale.

If the prison is to maintain current standards then consideration will need to be given to on going expenditure.

6.2 CANTEEN

The change of contract for the prisoners' canteen from Aramark to DHL/Booker resulted in higher prices for the prisoners, extra work for the officers and extra cost for the prison. Initially the canteen bags were being packed at HMP Kirkham. This proved to be unsatisfactory with bills frequently not matching goods supplied, Board members observed the canteen being distributed and witnessed a task that had previously been accomplished in an hour take over four hours. Residential staff have now devised new systems for the issue of canteen and the process is now much faster.

The packing was moved to a civilian warehouse in Manchester. This proved very satisfactory but costly and the packing was then transferred to HMP Wymott where it remains. This is proving to be much more reliable.

One area of concern in respect of the new contract concerns "out of stock" items. Orders for such items are no longer carried forward but refunds are given and the prisoner needs to reorder the item. If refunds are not made very promptly a prisoner may be unable to reorder the item through lack of funds.

There is an urgent need to address the matter of the high prices being charged for items from the canteen list. If prison headquarters believe that the prices are fair they should at least publish lists of prices being charged by equivalent outlets so that prisoners can see the price comparisons.

6.3 CATERING

The food budget for 2009-2010 was £2.00 per day per prisoner. The rise in the prices of many basic foodstuffs presented enormous challenges for the catering manager and the prison moved from a hot meal to a snack style lunch, the consequent saving was £25,000 which helped to offset the these rises. Further savings were achieved with the loss of one civilian caterer's post. The Board continues to be impressed with the wide range and good quality of food provided by the catering staff on such a limited budget. Specific food requirements such as vegetarian and halal meals are being well catered for.

A cause for concern for the Board is that the move to centrally negotiated contracts has resulted in a lower quality of some products being supplied. e.g. minced beef.

The Board hope that the current need for further efficiency savings will not affect the food budget as this would seriously impact on the quality and choice of food able to be supplied to the prisoners.

It is also a cause for concern that the prisoners working in the kitchen are unable to obtain any formal qualifications. The prison has explored the possibilities to provide such qualifications but funding is unavailable at this time.

6.4 CHAPLAINCY

The chaplaincy team continues to play a major part in helping prisoners to cope with bad news such as bereavements and seriously ill relatives. They visit all newly arrived prisoners within 24 hours of their arrival. Those prisoners on open ACCT's and prisoners in the CSU (Croft Unit) are also visited daily.

This year there has been a necessary reduction in the sessionally employed chaplain's hours but this has been partially offset by the employment of one new chaplain.

The chaplaincy has been running the Sycamore Tree Course in the prison during the last two years. This is a course that aims to reduce reoffending. The chaplaincy does not have any specific budget to cover the cost of this course for the future and are exploring the possibility of outside funding.

6.5 FOREIGN NATIONALS

In May 2009, HMP Risley became a hub for the United Kingdom Border Agency. Since this date 187 foreign national prisoners have been transferred into Risley and 106 foreign national prisoners have been removed. There are a total of 9 sentence served foreign national prisoners currently being held in Risley. The longest serving foreign national prisoner sentence served, had a release date of November 2009, but is currently still held in custody, recently loosing an appeal to stay in the UK, and is awaiting deportation. It is expected that this will take a further four months.

The UKBA being based in Risley has helped to speed up the process of Foreign National prisoners being repatriated. The improvement of video conferencing facilities within the prison could speed up the process further as staff from embassies is reluctant to travel to Risley to see just one prisoner preferring to wait until there are several of them to see.

There is video conferencing equipment available in OMU to which the UKBA team can sometimes get access however there is also further video conferencing equipment available in the prison which is currently not being used because funding is not available to get it connected.

6.6 STAFF

The Board is pleased to report that during the year there was a significant and sustained reduction in staff sickness within the establishment. For the first time the establishment achieved it's KPT for staff sickness absence with a sickness absence year to date of 10.5 days per member of staff against a target of 11.5 days.

This has been achieved due to the robust management of sickness in line with PSO 8404. The cooperation of the POA, the close involvement of the number one governor and of the HR business partner have all contributed this major improvement.

6.7 SECURITY

During the reporting period security has improved in most areas with a recent audit score of 90% being achieved.

Continued efforts are being made with a view to reducing drugs within the establishment, with the installation of overhead security netting and staff training. This has led to a reduced MDT of 4.6% against our target of 10.5%. Also, the arrival of the BOSS chair in reception has improved searching of all new inmates. This area will always be of great concern, but staff are tackling the situation with vigour and obvious success.

Mobile phones are still an area of concern; staff are continuously searching, with the help of the area search team and the local police. The police are using new and innovative methods of detection, with external searching as visitors arrive in the public car park, prior to entering the establishment. Intelligence-led searching on the wings and general observance has led to a general decrease in their availability. Another initiative that has been proposed is to play a recorded loop in the visitors waiting area reminding them of the regulations concerning mobile phones.

Relationships with the local police force have been strengthened, with the local police taking an active interest in the perimeter of the establishment, thus reducing items being thrown over the walls and some people being arrested.

Overall, the security team have done an excellent job, making HMP Risley a better and safer establishment.

6.8 VISITS

The Board consider that maintaining contact with family and friends is of the utmost importance to all prisoners. They are concerned that they have received a number of applications from prisoners highlighting the difficulty that their visitors have in contacting the prison to book visits. In a survey of visitors carried out by POPS staff over 50% of visitors stated that they had experienced problems in booking visits. Early on in the year this was brought to the attention of the prison and a second phone line dedicated to booking visits was promised. The introduction of P NOMIS did disrupt the process further as staff needed to get additional information from the visitors. However the problem still seems to remain, Board members have themselves tried contacting the visits booking line number on a number of occasions without success.

The Board are also concerned about the excessive noise levels in the visits room. At popular visiting times this means that it is difficult to conduct a conversation without shouting. The visits area is in need of refurbishment and a review is currently being carried out to see if the layout can be improved particularly with the accommodation for visitors waiting to be processed and a reduction in the noise levels. A carpet and a change from hard seating to softer furnishing would be welcomed by all.

Only a small percentage of the foreign national prisoners receive visitors and consequently only about 60% of the 450 available visit slots are utilised each week.

7.1 BOARD STATISTICS

Recommended complement of members	20
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	10
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	10
Number of new members joining during the reporting period	4
Number of members leaving during the reporting period	4
Total number of Board meetings during the reporting period	11
Average number of attendances at meetings during the reporting period	7
Number of attendances at meetings other than Board meetings	26
Total number of visits to the prison	399
Total number of applications received	271
Total number of segregation reviews held	226
Total number of segregation reviews attended	226

Applications

Code	Subject	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010
A	Accommodation	8	10	9
В	Adjudications	17	6	5
C	Diversity related	5	3	6
D	Education/employment/training	93	19	25
Е	Family/visits	73	31	33
F	Food/Kitchen related	4	4	3
G	Health related	28	15	16
Н	Property	104	91	39
I	Sentence related	18	23	31
J	Staff/prisoner related	15	14	29
K	Transfers	94	35	23
L	Miscellaneous	111	126	52
	Total	570	377	271

7.2 THE WORK OF THE BOARD

The Board meets once a month at a formal Board meeting, to discuss any issues arising from rota visits or applications received in the preceding period. Prior to the start of the Board meeting, a half hour slot is allocated to a member of staff to give details of work within their department or specialist area, therefore continually updating information to the Board members.

Apart from the main duties of the Board, members have special areas of interest where they attend meetings as observers and report back to the Board.

During the reporting period the Board had an away day, allowing members to formulate an action plan to provide effective monitoring for the next twelve month period.

In addition two Board members attended the IMB National Conference at Keele University. Board members have continued to update their skills by attending training courses organised by the Secretariat.

Applications from prisoners have continued to reduce, thus easing the workload on the Board and allowing members to focus more time and attention on specialist areas.

In March the Board hosted a visit organised by AMIMB of over 20 members from other Boards. The visit was a great success and showed other establishments the positive progress that Risley has made in the past 12 months.

The Board would like to record its thanks to all the members of staff for their help and co-operation during the year. Their determination and dedication has made HMP Risley a better and safer place.

The chair would like to thank all the Board members for there continued hard work and commitment.

8 GLOSSARY

ACCT Assessment, Care in Custody & Teamwork –

Replacement for F2052SH

CARATS Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice & Throughcare

Scheme - drug & alcohol team

CSU Care and Separation Unit (segregation)
ESOL English for Speakers of Other languages

HMP Her Majesty's Prison

HMCIP Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons

IDTS Integrated Drug Treatment Service
IMB Independent Monitoring Board
LSC Learning and Skills Council
NTA National Treatment Agency
NVQ National Vocational Qualification
NOMS National Offender Management Service

OLASS Offender Learning and Skills Service (part of LSC)
PASRO Prisons Addressing Substance-Related Offending

PCT Primary Care Trust

REAT Racial Equality Action Team

RIF Racial Incident Form

UKBA United Kingdom Border Agency YOI Young Offender Institution