



# INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

## HMP WORMWOOD SCRUBS

### 2010 ANNUAL REPORT

COVERING THE PERIOD FROM 1<sup>ST</sup>  
JUNE 2009 TO 31<sup>ST</sup> MAY 2010

## Section 1

### STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

The Prisons 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 specifically 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, where 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.

## **Section 2 (to be completed for final report)**

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## **Section 3**

### **1.1 A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON**

HMP Wormwood Scrubs is a Category B local male prison serving the courts of West and North West London. The prison has an operational capacity of 1,281 (increased by 4 in the reporting year).

The population of the prison fluctuates on a daily basis. It has proved difficult in the past year to predict numbers. At times for no obvious reason there have been between 30 and 70 places vacant at the prison giving it a rare period of relative population stability. However for the most part the prison operates at, or very close to, its operational capacity. It holds an unusually high number of foreign nationals – this probably reflects the fact that London has a high foreign national population and that Heathrow Airport falls within the prison's catchment area. At an audit in March of the reporting year there were 443 foreign national prisoners, out of a population of 1224 (36%)

The prison was built between 1875 and 1891. A,B,C and D wings are large residential wings dating from that period. In the 1990s there was an extensive refurbishment programme and a fifth wing, E wing, was completed. The Super Enhanced Unit now re-named the Jan Wilcox Unit which opened in 2007, holds 17 prisoners cleared to a high level of security. The Conibeere unit is a 51-place detoxification unit. The Healthcare centre has a residential unit with 17 beds, some of them in dormitories.

Since August 2006, HMP Latchmere House has been a satellite of Wormwood Scrubs and a resettlement resource for London.

Health services have been commissioned by Hammersmith and Fulham Primary Care Trust since 2006. Most of the education and training for prisoners is delivered by Kensington and Chelsea College.

## Section 4

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### Overall judgement

##### The positive

HMP Wormwood Scrubs is one of the busiest prisons in England and Wales. The average length of stay for prisoners remains 9 weeks while many with multiple cases remain longer. The effects of “the churn” are increased by the efficiency of the Custody department in arranging HDC, the OMU in transferring prisoners out and the UKBA in moving prisoners where possible to removal centres.

Board members received with pleasure the Governor’s report in November of the reporting year that “The prison’s incidence of positive MDTs, prisoner assaults and C and R intervention have remained relatively low, indicating a pro-active approach by the staff, as well as a stable environment for the prisoner”. These are hard measures and are to be welcomed.

Other factors are to be welcomed: the improvement of primary provision in H2 and the refurbishment of H3, the residential unit, the refurbishment of Visits and the promise of a state-of-the-art Visitors’ Centre. Reception screening and induction have improved. Staff-prisoner relationships remain generally good and the Segregation Unit continues to set standards in its care of difficult prisoners. Prisoners’ forums on the wing are used for prisoners to raise concerns with Wing managers.

The prison was the subject of two documentaries screened by ITV in May 2010. The Board shared the general view that the programmes gave a realistic picture of prison life and the work staff do, particularly with difficult and vulnerable prisoners.

##### The negative

While the number of prisoner applications to the IMB has continued to fall for a third year, Board members still receive complaints from prisoners relating to the frustrations of everyday prison life: the shortcomings of the canteen system and the visits booking-line, the failure to locate stored property, property lost or stolen in cell moves, failure to get a job or an appointment with CARATs, the lack of a kettle or a TV that works. Whilst these may be seen as inevitable in a busy prison the reduction this year in complaints about the pin-phone system suggests that these systems are capable of being improved and the IMB will continue to bring them to the Governor’s attention.

Whilst welcoming the refurbishment of the residential health unit, the Board continues to be concerned about the lack of a healing atmosphere in the unit. Inevitably the majority of patients have serious mental issues and/or challenging behaviour but there seems to be a lack of integration between discipline staff and nursing staff which needs to be addressed.

## Issues requiring a response from the Minister

1. The Board maintains the view expressed in last year's Annual Report that present levels of "efficiency savings" demanded of prisons are unsustainable without significant detriment to the decency agenda, the fabric of the building, the welfare of prisoners and the morale of staff. The management of Wormwood Scrubs has identified further savings of almost £1 million in addition to the £535,000 of the previous year. Hitherto the Governor has reassured the Board that budget cuts would impinge as little as possible on the provision for prisoners. He has now warned that it is hard to see how that position can be sustained. **Is it now accepted at Ministerial level that regimes will have to be curtailed as a matter of course to meet the levels of savings demanded?**
2. The Board monitors each month the current national statistics on the prison population and notes that the population in the women's estate has seen a steady, maintained fall. **Can the practices used to reduce numbers in the women's estate, such as sentencing policy and community-based placements, be used to reduce the numbers of male prisoners?**
3. The number of prisoners on methadone maintenance programmes is increasing steadily, possibly at the expense of the number of those choosing a full detoxification programme. **Is it possible for the Integrated Drugs Treatment Strategy to include incentives for prisoners choosing the detox route?**
4. The Board continues to be concerned about prisoners who suffer from mental health issues being held in inappropriate conditions. Whilst we recognise the work done by the prison Healthcare unit, there is an urgent need for prompt transfer to more appropriate mental health care. **What provisions do the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Health propose for a more joined-up approach to the prompt transfer of these prisoners?**
5. Prisoners' rates of pay are low and have not increased since 1996, while the cost of many canteen items has risen steadily. Canteen is a welcome part of a prison's regime providing a wide range of relatively small comforts.. **Is it not time for a review of prisoners' rates of pay to restore their buying power?**

## Issues requiring a response from the Prison Service

6. Prison staff have continued to give many hours a week for the second year running to make the canteen contract work. Board members too have spent hours investigating sudden price rises, missing deliveries and the shortage of goods at Christmas. Canteen is of vital importance to prisoners. **Is NOMS satisfied with the performance of DHL-Booker in what is now the second year of its contract?**

7. Far too much time is spent by landing officers and Board members in pursuing property lost or mislaid in inter-prison transfers. Some stored property is too large to be posted, transport vans deliver some, while other property appears to wait for an officer to drive it to another prison. The system is inefficient and must cost thousands of pounds of public money. The frustrating thing is that no one seems to take overall responsibility for the issue which appears often to have a very low priority within the system. **Has there been a review of the transfer of property system to ensure that it is cost-effective and fit for purpose?**
8. Following the introduction of P-NOMIS there have again been difficulties with the Visits' booking-line, with the constant need to enter new data about visitors onto P-NOMIS. Although the prison took steps to ensure that delays were not charged to the caller and the backlog was cleared, callers are again encountering delays in getting through. Social visitors are still unable to book by email. **How can the present system of booking visits be made more user-friendly?**
9. There have again been staff shortages this summer due to London-wide difficulties with recruitment. The Board is disturbed to hear that contingency plans have been developed to be actioned if staffing levels become critical. These will undoubtedly impact on prisoner regimes. **Can NOMS reassure the Board that difficulties with recruitment in London have now been overcome?**
10. Provision of doctor and nursing staff in Healthcare in the prison continues to operate at about 40-50% below establishment reflecting the challenging nature of the work. This was raised as an issue with the Minister last year who responded that the London Offender Health team was developing a London-wide workforce strategy with PCT commissioners to address known recruitment and retention issues in this area. **The situation with recruitment and retention seems to be as difficult as it was last year. What new strategies can be devised to make healthcare in prisons a more attractive career option?**

#### **Issues requiring a response from the Governor**

11. With respect to purposeful activity the Board continues to be disappointed by relatively low attendance at education and workshops. It is also regrettable that the excellent Painting and Decorating Workshop is not always full. **Can any more be done to ensure that available spaces on education, work and workshops are taken up?**
12. The Board recognises that Wing managers try to offer prisoners guaranteed time out of cell for domestics and association, recognising that prisoners value certainty in this matter. However, with the inadequate number of places for work and education throughout the prison, the Board is

particularly concerned about the Time out of cell for prisoners without work/education.. **Can the Governor give the Board an estimate of the time out of cell per day for such prisoners?**

13. The Board welcomes the news that a local Samaritan group has agreed to work in the prison after almost two years with no Listeners. **Can the Governor assure us that all residential units will work to recommend suitable prisoners for training and that such prisoners will be held in the prison to complete their training>**

## Section 5

### AREAS THAT MUST BE REPORTED ON

#### Diversity

- 5.1 In its last Annual Report the Board reported that an experienced SO in Diversity was due to leave in July. While a temporary replacement was made in January, it was not until the end of May this year that a full-time SO took up the role. The post of Psychological Assistant has yet to be filled. The Board has been informed that the delays were due to a need to make in-year savings. Staff shortages have undoubtedly impacted on the work of this important department.
- 5.2 The Board continues to be impressed by the work of the prisoner forums and Diversity representatives on the wings who seem to be highly effective and pro-active in interceding and defusing potentially troublesome situations.
- 5.3 SMART data continues to be used to identify by ethnicity the involvement of prisoners in aspects of prison life such as adjudications, IEP, segregation, use of force and so on. While it is impressive to see that any disparities are followed up, it remains true that where low numbers are concerned, a difference of one or two prisoners can make a high percentage difference.
- 5.4 In last year's Annual Report the Board expressed the view that Diversity did not have a sufficiently high profile across the residential areas of the prison. It has therefore noted with pleasure the number of staff engaged in the *Challenge it, Change it* training.
- 5.5 From a talk given by the Head of Custody the Board learnt that a lower pro rata percentage of black prisoners had been given HDC. In many cases this was because they did not return the form. This may have been because they were FN prisoners not eligible for HDC. The Board was pleased to hear that the HDC team intended to return to those who had not replied to ask why.
- 5.6 Following its negative comments in last year's Annual Report the Board is pleased to note an improvement in the care given to disabled prisoners and to their access to facilities. Healthcare now makes assessments on all wheelchair-users.

## **Learning and Skills**

- 5.7** While the Board accepted the HMCIP's view (in its 2008 inspection report) that there are insufficient education and training places for the prison's population, it concurred with the prison's response that the priority is to improve allocation and attendance within the existing places. While it was disappointing to note that the target of classroom efficiency of 80% was frequently not met in the early months of the reporting year the Board has noted a considerable improvement recently with the result that the end of year figure is 79%..
- 5.8** The Board has been pleased to see the outreach work of the Education department in contacting hard-to-reach client groups in H3 and the Seg.
- 5.9** The painting and decorating course continues to be effective in preparing prisoners for the world of work. It seems astonishing that the course is often not full and the Board urges the prison to ensure that men are positively encouraged to take up this opportunity.
- 5.10** The Board continues to be impressed by the service offered to prisoners by the Library and continues to monitor instances of a wing's visit being curtailed because of staff shortages.
- 5.11** The Board continues to be impressed by the role that the gym plays in so many prisoners' experience of prison life.

## **Healthcare and Mental Health**

- 5.12** The provision of a PCT-funded post of a second doctor to be available in the First Night Centre for reception screening continues to make a great contribution to a prisoner's experience of reception into the prison.
- 5.13** The PCT has funded a refurbishment of primary clinics to NHS standards. The provision of primary care has undoubtedly improved, with increased screening and increased provision for long-term conditions such as diabetes and respiratory conditions. The Board enjoyed a presentation from the Modern Matron who was enthusiastic about the improvements taking place.
- 5.14** The Board has welcomed the refurbishment of the residential unit (H3). The unit has been repainted and provided with high-quality resin flooring that meets NHS infection control standards. The appearance of the unit is improved.
- 5.15** However Board members continue to express their concern that the atmosphere in H3 is not that of a therapeutic unit. Staff morale is low, the atmosphere is not welcoming and there appears to be a lack of cohesion between discipline and nursing staff. It is very far from being the healing

environment that one wishes to see. This is a matter that needs to be addressed. The Board is keen to see the results of the “Enhancing the healing environment” project with which the prison is involved.

**5.16** Once again the recruitment of permanent nursing and GP staff has proved problematic. Healthcare regularly operates at 40% below establishment. Health services in the prison are heavily reliant on agency staff, albeit long-term regular staff. This is unsatisfactory and does not represent parity of treatment with those outside prison. The client group within prisons is often challenging and demanding. More needs to be done at London and possibly national level to make a career in healthcare within prison more attractive as a career option.

### **Safer Custody**

**5.17** The Board is satisfied that improvements to the initial screening process have made a contribution to the safer custody of prisoners.

**5.18** The Board is represented at meetings of the Suicide Prevention Committee. Residential staff are aware of the risks of self-harm and suicide. By the end of the reporting year the number of open ACCTs had risen to approximately 60 per month. Fortunately the prison has sufficient assessors to manage this number. The quality of entries in ACCTs is regularly monitored and is improving.

**5.19** The situation with regard to Listeners has continued to give the Board cause for concern since there has again been none in the prison throughout the reporting year, following the withdrawal of the local Samaritan group. Listeners in the past have regularly responded to 30+ contacts per month. Prisoners do of course have access to the Samaritan phone. However another local branch of the Samaritans has now agreed to work in the prison, not only recruiting and training Listeners but also visiting residential wings to introduce themselves. The Chair of the Board was pleased to make contact with the person responsible and to discuss the work with her.

**5.20** There have been four deaths in custody in the reporting year. On each occasion the Chair or Vice Chair was informed and attended the prison. The Board is satisfied that in each case the situation was handled appropriately.

### **Segregation Unit**

**5.21** The Board continues to be impressed by the professional way in which segregation staff deal with a wide range of prisoners including those with very challenging behaviour, those on dirty protests and those on ACCTs. The regime is as humane and purposeful as it can be. The Board notes that towards the end of the reporting year the use of the Segregation Unit remained at a high level with some extremely disturbed individuals.

**5.22** The Board is informed when a man is put into the Special Cell and is satisfied that he is returned to normal segregation accommodation as soon as his behaviour permits.

**5.23** While the Board has not had any problem with the transparency of the Segregation Unit's work, the Chair of the Board and the Seg Governor agreed in the course of the reporting year that there was no formal procedure in place to ensure that the Board was informed when a prisoner was put into the Seg . This has now been rectified. The Board attends GOOD reviews..

## **Section 6**

### **OTHER AREAS**

#### **Accommodation**

**6.1** Following last year's changes in the designation of some wings, there have been relatively few changes this year which has led to stability. The Board welcomes the work done by B wing as the induction wing with a 5-day rolling programme. Every month the Board receives reports from the Wing managers which are usually very detailed and helpful to the Board in its monitoring role. The Board would like to thank those responsible for producing such reports and to assure them that they are indeed read and used.

**6.2** The Board raised the issue in its last Annual Report of prisoners being unable to have a shower when returning to their wings after work. Wing managers have often been unable to make special arrangements for such prisoners. However this has been largely addressed by making E wing a working wing.

**6.3** The Board recognises that, with its single cells, D wing continues to house a high number of high-risk prisoners. This places an increased burden on staff who are not trained to deal with prisoners who have mental health issues.

**6.4** The Board is pleased to note that a modest programme of re-decoration has produced a great improvement in residential areas such as the Conibeere Unit and D wing.

**6.5** The Board regularly receives complaints from prisoners who have no kettle or television. The Board recognises that there is a high turnover of these items but it has to be acknowledged that the cells of Victorian prisons are bleak places and these "comforts" are an essential part of a prisoner's life.

#### **Canteen**

**6.6** Board members have spent a lot of time investigating the provision of canteen to prisoners. On a visit to The Mount where orders are processed members learnt that that prison now deals with over 2,500 orders per week, almost half of which come from Wormwood Scrubs. A number of errors occur regularly and these can no longer be called teething troubles. Refunds

can amount to £100 per week; there are always missing items and approximately 50 men per week fail to receive what they ordered.

- 6.7** The Board learnt that the leaflet advertising Christmas Special Offers did not arrive in the prison until mid-December by which time most of the lines were sold out. This seems to ignore the importance that prisoners place upon their canteen and is simply unacceptable.
- 6.8** Prisoners' pay was last increased in 1996, while the cost of certain canteen goods has risen steadily. The Board is concerned about prisoners' buying power in light of their reducing income and increased expenditure on canteen items.

## **Catering & Kitchen**

- 6.9** As in previous years' reports members continue to be impressed by the service provided despite the near-permanent shortage of prisoner workforce and the seemingly inevitable breakdown, repair and replacement of machines. The continuing delay in removing equipment which is no longer in use is just one example of the frustrating slowness that appears to be endemic in many prison systems.
- 6.10** As part of the National Council's survey into prison food, the Board learned that the budget has been reduced by about 10p to £2 per head per day. Though this may seem a small reduction, the PO reports that he is currently adjusting menus, replacing some chicken and fish meals with cheaper burgers and sausages which will inevitably impact on variety and healthier choices. The cost of certain basic frozen foods has risen overnight following the contract with a new supplier. Despite the difficulties he intends to maintain a 6-choice lunch and dinner menu on a 5-week rota.
- 6.11** In addition to its everyday work the kitchen produces food for an ever-increasing number of religious festivals and special buffets. The Board has also noticed an increase in the number and range of specialist diets that are required. The PO pointed out as part of the survey that a single specialist meal can cost as much as £4.46.
- 6.12** Following its criticism last year of the difficulties encountered in providing a hot end-of-fast meal for those observing Ramadan the Board was delighted to hear that, as promised, the situation was remedied this year and good provision was made for the end-of-fast meal for the 260 Muslim prisoners registered.
- 6.13 Chaplaincy**
- 6.14** The chaplaincy has always played a major role in the life of the prison. It has continued to fulfil its statutory obligations despite a cut in its sessional hours.
- 6.15** The Board is satisfied that provision is made for the religious observance of a wide range of faiths. The major feasts and festivals have been celebrated.

Christmas Day was a particular challenge this year as it fell on a Friday, the day of Muslim prayers, but over 600 prisoners attended various services without any problems.

- 6.16** The prison had the honour of hosting the veneration of the relics of St Theresa of Lisieux. Board members attended the ceremony and were impressed by the reverence of the prisoners.

### **Complaints Procedures**

- 6.17** Board members regularly read the responses to Complaint forms submitted by prisoners. While some are detailed and helpful, others are short, dismissive and illegible. These immediately prompt a second complaint from the prisoner which adds to an already burdened system. The Board has raised this with the Governor and been informed of the monitoring process of responses to complaints, but is not convinced that the situation is satisfactory.
- 6.18** In a helpful meeting with a manager in the BMU, the Board learnt that there are on average 250-300 complaints a month, with 364 in the November of the reporting year. Responding to these must generate an enormous amount of work throughout the prison. The Board intends to compare this figure with that of other London prisons.

### **Drugs**

- 6.19** The Board has been pleased to see that the prison's MDT positive rate has been the lowest in London prisons for most of the reporting year, at times as low as 6.5% against a KPT of 12.5%. Many factors seem to be contributing, including intelligence, significant finds in cell searches, the vigilance of Visits staff and the use of the BOSS chair and mobile phone detectors to find the mobile phones that play such a significant part in the supply of drugs.
- 6.20** At a recent Board training session the Drugs Strategy Manager reported that 32% of prisoners are currently problem drug-users. The Integrated Drug Treatment Strategy is continuing to grow within the prison. Numbers on methadone maintenance appear to be growing steadily (136 in Feb.) The programme has had to move beyond the gated area in C wing and there are now up to 12 prisoners on maintenance programmes on A and D wings. Whilst recognising the rationale behind the IDTS some members are concerned that too many prisoners are choosing this programme rather than a detox programme.

### **First Night Centre**

- 6.21** The Board has been delighted to see several improvements to the reception of prisoners. These include the PCT funding of a second doctor post, funding provided by Area to convert a room within the FNC to a doctor's room and increased officer cover to allow screening until 22.00hours. The main problem

now for the Board is the poor state of the showers and toilets in one dormitory. The Governor has assured the Board that the repairs are in hand.

## **Foreign Nationals**

**6.22** Wormwood Scrubs is a “hub” prison with the gold standard service from UKBA with 3.5 staff members plus a Chief Immigration Officer. All FN prisoners are seen within 5 days of their arrival in the prison. A list is given each week to PMU of detainees – usually 15-25. With this level of service Board members are able to obtain quick replies to any applications from FN prisoners regarding their status.

**6.23** However it remains the view of the Board which was first expressed in last year’s Annual Report and followed the Management’s decision not to fill the retiring Foreign Nationals co-ordinator post, that the welfare of prisoners is not the main role of the UKBA team. Care of Foreign National prisoners has been assigned to the Diversity team which for much of the year has suffered from shortage of staff. The Board will continue to monitor the situation.

**6.24** The majority of FN prisoners (54% at an audit in March) do not attend education or work. There must be concern that prisoners who may well already feel isolated are spending long periods of time in their cells.

## **Escort Service**

**6.25** The provision of a second doctor to provide reception screening has improved the situation of late arrivals from the courts. However the issue of late arrivals has still not been completely solved.

**6.26** There has been little improvement in the number of prisoners being held at court for long periods after the completion of their case.

## **Induction and First Night**

**6.27** In its last Annual Report the Board expressed its concern that late arrivals of prisoners in Reception meant that the proper induction of prisoners was rushed. The provision of a second doctor has certainly improved the situation although the Board still receives applications from prisoners who had a rushed induction in terms of food and phone calls to their family. These instances are raised with the Governor.

## **Licence Recall**

**6.28** The prison holds a significant number of prisoners on licence recall. In its last Annual Report the Board expressed its concern at external delays in processing the papers relating to these cases. It was pleased to hear that the situation has now improved and it currently takes about 5 days to receive the dossier. However decision-making remains slow.

## **Life sentenced prisoners**

- 6.29** The prison holds a number of prisoners serving life sentences. There is insufficient provision for these men in terms of a range of programmes to address their offending behaviour. They should be transferred to more appropriate locations without the present delays. This was raised in the Board's last Annual report and received the response that "Unfortunately, due to the current population pressures appropriate places are available as often as they are required". (One assumes that the word "not" was omitted.) These prisoners are often challenging, confused and volatile and their transfer to an establishment that can meet their needs is a priority.

## **Property**

- 6.30** In its last Annual report the Board commented on the many applications from prisoners about their property, in particular their stored property. Members also received urgent messages from IMBs at other prisons complaining that stored property has not been sent on. It appeared that some of these cases have never been satisfactorily resolved. The Governor's observation that the majority of prisoner complaints within the prison's system relates to the facilities list does not reflect the Board's experience. Whilst it is true that differences between facilities lists in different prisons cause needless confusion and anger amongst prisoners, the main problem raised in applications to the IMB concerns lost property, or property left at another prison. It appears that, in many cases, the property is too large to be posted on and must wait until a member of staff can deliver it personally. The lack of priority given to this issue does not reflect the priority it holds in prisoners' lives.

## **Reception**

- 6.31** It is a matter of regret that the video-link is under-used.

## **Regime and Activities**

- 6.32** The Board recognises that the prison strives to give prisoners guaranteed time out of cell. Evening association is an important opportunity for prisoners to telephone friends and families. The Board has raised the issue of only two periods of evening association per week but understands that this compares favourably with other London prisons.
- 6.33** The current reporting year began with the prison fully staffed. However the summer proved a difficult time for recruitment and there have again been staffing shortages, leading to officers having less time for prisoners' issues. This may account for the unparalleled rise in applications to the Board in May (87 as opposed to 35 in the May of the previous year).
- 6.34** The Board is pleased to report that it has received fewer applications regarding the pin-phone system within the prison and no complaints about

the cost of phone calls. This represents a clear improvement in an important aspect of prisoners' lives.

- 6.35** The Board continues to enjoy a good working relationship with the Head of Residence which allows issues to be raised regularly.
- 6.36** The Board has attempted to monitor "Time out of Cell" more closely by consulting wing logs. However these tend to give the times for the whole wing rather than for individual prisoners. The Board remains concerned that prisoners are spending too long in their cells, particularly those who do not attend education or work.

## **Visits**

- 6.37** While the refurbishment of the Visits area has greatly improved the experience of visiting for prisoners' visitors, Board members were distressed to see some visitors having to queue in the open air in bad weather. Having raised this with the Governor, a ticket system was introduced whereby visitors are held at the Visitors' centre until their number is called. The Board is grateful for the care that was given to addressing this problem.
- 6.38** After significant improvements in the Visits Booking-line last year, the Board is frustrated to see the problems have returned following the introduction of P-NOMIS and the need to enter visitors' data – slowly, it appears – into the system. It welcomed the Governor's decision to put an additional member of staff to ring visitors back in order to enter their details on the P-NOMIS system. However this was a temporary measure and thus the delays are now returning. Visits are an essential part of prison life and the present delays are unacceptable.
- 6.39** It is distressing to see visitors turned away because their ID does not match the fairly exacting requirements. The Board has discussed this with the Governor and recognises that, while exceptions can on rare occasions be made, it is important for consistency to be maintained. .
- 6.40** The Board continues to be impressed by the quality of service offered to prisoners' families by the manager of the Visitors' Centre and her staff. After another year of delays the Board is delighted to hear that work is due to start on a state-of-the-art Visitors' Centre.

## Section 7

### THE WORK OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

- 7.1** The Board has a recommended complement of 24 members. It began the reporting year with 17 members, although one of these was on agreed leave of absence and one on long-term sick leave. Both of the latter have now resigned. In August/September 5 new members began their probationary year. Two members resigned in the course of the year citing pressure of work. By the end of the reporting year there were 18 members, one of whom is on a 3-month leave of absence because of pressure of work. There was a recruitment process in Jan/Feb and 5 candidates were recommended.
- 7.2** The Board has been represented on the Suicide Prevention Committee, the Violence Reduction committee and the Race Equality Action Team meetings.
- 7.3** The Board was not able to increase its presence as observers on relevant committees.
- 7.4** Board members made a total of 372 visits to the prison, excluding attendance at Board meetings, compared to 356 last year.
- 7.5** The retiring and present Board Development Officers have arranged a full programme of training for the Board. Board members have visited HMP Wandsworth and HMP The Mount. The Board has hosted visits from the IMB of The Verne and Wandsworth..
- 7.6** The Board has the use of its own room within the administrative block of the prison and the services of a clerk for half of his time. The Board is grateful to the clerk for his unfailing courtesy and support.

#### Applications to the Board

- 7.7** There has been a continuing slight decrease in the number of applications to the Board following the disturbingly high figure of 2006/07. Property dominates the list causing the Board to question whether there are sufficiently robust systems at local and national levels to deal with the transfer of prisoners' property. Recent difficulties with the Visits booking-line account for the rise in applications about Visits.

## Applications to the Board by subject

Code	Subject	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10
A	Accommodation	37	23	33
B	Adjudications	7	11	10
C	Diversity related	17	9	1
D	Education/employment/ Training	38	21	18
E	Family/visits	36	25	55
F	Food/kitchen related	5	9	9
G	Health related	61	53	55
H	Property	88	97	76
I	Sentence related	31	27	47
J	Staff/prisoner related	18	17	28
K	Transfers	31	48	23
L	Miscellaneous:			
	Categorisation	13	23	30
	Immigration	31	16	10
	Canteen	12	12	12
	Telephone	43	38	20
	Finance	30	12	23
	Licence recall	6	10	3
	Drugs	6	7	2
	IEP scheme	14	8	12
	Resettlement	10	5	9
	Others	51	73	32
	<b>Total number of applications</b>	<b>585</b>	<b>544</b>	<b>508</b>

### Breakdown of applications on a monthly basis

	08/09	09/10
July	60	53
August	55	38
September	42	29
October	49	35
November	48	53
December	42	40
January 2009	53	52
February	35	45
March	51	33
April	60	28
May	35	87

## GLOSSARY

<b>ACCT</b>	Assessment, Care inCustody and Teamwork
<b>BMU</b>	Business Management Unit
<b>BOSS</b>	Body Orifice Security Scanner
<b>CARATS</b>	Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice & Throughfare Scheme – drug & alcohol team
<b>FN</b>	Foreign National prisoner
<b>FNC</b>	First Night Centre
<b>GOOD</b>	Good Order or Discipline
<b>HDC</b>	Home Detention Curfew
<b>HMCIP</b>	Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Prisons
<b>IDTS</b>	Integrated Drug Treatment Strategy
<b>KPT</b>	Key Performance Target
<b>MDT</b>	Mandatory Drugs Testing
<b>OMU</b>	Offender Management Unit
<b>PCT</b>	Primary Care Trust