



# **H.M.P. BELMARSH**

## **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD 1 July 2012 – 30 June 2013**

# **1 STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB**

- 1.1 The Prisons Act 1952 requires every prison to be monitored by an independent Board appointed by the Home Secretary from members of the community in which the prison is situated.
- 1.2 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 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.**
- 1.3 To enable the Board to carry out these duties effectively its members have right of access to every prisoner and every part of the prison and also to the prison records.

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### **3 DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON**

- 3.1 Belmarsh opened in April 1991 at a cost of over £105m. It occupies some 60 acres on the old Ministry of Defence Woolwich Arsenal site in South East London, 47 acres of which are within the perimeter wall.
- 3.2 It is a local prison but combines those functions with those of a high security establishment. It primarily serves the Central Criminal Court and Magistrates' Courts in South East London and parts of Essex, as well as holding high security risk prisoners on remand and awaiting trial.
- 3.3 The Certified Normal Accommodation (CAN) is 799 and the Operational Capacity i.e. the maximum population it can safely and decently hold is currently 910.

### **4 IMB EQUALITY STATEMENT**

- 4.1 IMBs will not discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital and civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race including colour nationality, ethnic or national origins, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, in recruitment, in the treatment of members, and in the way they monitor the treatment of people in custody.

## **5 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Chair's Introduction**

- 5.1 I am pleased to report that Belmarsh continues to keep prisoners in a safe and secure environment, they are treated decently and broadly speaking are prepared for release within the budget constraints. The prison is clean, in good order and well managed on a day to day basis. The Security Audit produced a result of 96% - an excellent outcome.
- 5.2 It is disappointing that the implementation of Fair and Sustainable has meant that from April 2013, prisoners have only had association during the evening and this in turn has inevitably been impacted by high staff sickness levels resulting in the closure of spurs during the evening that were due to open. The SMT is continually striving to lower staff sickness rates.
- 5.3 During this year a London Pathways Progression Unit has been opened to accommodate prisoners with personality disorders, due to be released within 2 years. There were some difficulties in prisoners being referred to this unit, but this is slowly being rectified by the hard work and intervention of the Custodial Manager. Belmarsh is one of the London Prisons designated to receive Young Offenders in September. The SMT is proactive and has carefully planned the implementation of these two new initiatives.
- 5.4 The number of board members has been increased from 12 to 16 and monitoring has been proportionately easier with less onus on individual board members. Problems with the incompatibility of the Counter Terrorism Clearance Forms with Windows 8 and Apple Mac still persist, but once completed, clearance is obtained more speedily.
- 5.5 The Board is well supported by a very efficient clerk.
- 5.6 It is disappointing to note that there has been no improvement in the delay of cases in the Coroner's Court – ministerial replies to last year's report indicate that there would be "no listings for the next year or for the foreseeable future for any Belmarsh inquests" due to the need to appoint police officers. The impact incurred by such delays on both prison staff and relatives is unacceptable.
- 5.7 There has also been no improvement in the speed of movement of life-sentenced prisoners, category B vulnerable prisoners, or prisoners with serious mental health problems to suitable places in the dispersal estate, Medium Secure Units or High Secure Hospitals. Whilst the Board commends the prison's efforts to try and move these prisoners, the issue of insufficient spaces throughout the prison estate should be addressed by NOMS or the Government.

- 5.8 The prison is still operating an SSU to accommodate a small number of exceptional risk prisoners. Security is paramount in this unit but this does not affect the day to day running of the rest of the prison.
- 5.9 The “Fair and Sustainable” initiative has increased staff costs and has therefore impacted on the budget; the budget savings set for Belmarsh have been met in spite of this. The implementation of Benchmarking in 2014 will help Belmarsh, like other public sector prisons, to remain a competitive entity. However, the Board has concerns that, if the budget cuts are continued year on year, a prisoner’s right to a fair, safe, secure and decent environment may be compromised.
- 5.10 I would like to record that staff in Belmarsh perform their duties competently and do a great deal of effective day to day work not specifically mentioned in this report. Staff morale, however, is low pursuant to pension changes, implementation of Fair and Sustainable and concern over the impact of forthcoming Benchmarking.
- 5.11 The Board enjoys a good working relationship with staff and the SMT which facilitates our ability to report independently.
- 5.12 The Board’s report sets out the principal issues to be addressed by the Government, the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and the prison.

### **Points for the Minister**

- 5.13 The Board has concerns about the way the transfer waiting time is managed for referrals to Medium Secure Units and High Secure Hospitals and requests a review of this process (8.8).
- 5.14 The Board again urges the Minister to take action to speed up the time taken after a death in custody to carry out Coroners’ Inquests (9.7 – 9.8).
- 5.15 The Board requests the speedier dispersal of life-sentenced prisoners to establishments better suited to their needs (12.6).

### **Points for the Prison Service**

- 5.16 The Board again requests a review of the rates of pay for unemployment and pension (£2.50 and £0.75 respectively). Where prisoners are unable to work and attend activities, as a result of their age or disability, the payment received is very low (6.5).
- 5.17 The Board asks that consideration be given to the inclusion of higher education courses within the A4E contract (7.5).

- 5.18 The Board recommends the use of multi-occupancy cells to be reduced in order to ensure decency for residential accommodation for prisoners (12.4)
- 5.19 The Board requests that Foreign National prisoners are placed in suitable establishments within the prison estate, or are deported quickly once they have completed their sentence. The Board does not consider that Belmarsh is a suitable establishment to house sentence-expired detainees (14.2, 14.3).

**Points for HMP Belmarsh Management**

- 5.20 The Board requests that some additional training is given to staff taking up the role of Disability Officer (6.2).
- 5.21 The Board requests that COMP1 forms with the check boxes ticked (violent and threatening behaviour or discrimination, harassment, victimisation) should be handled in the same manner as DIRFs (6.6).
- 5.22 The Board requests that consideration be given to reinstating cookery classes (7.6).
- 5.23 The Board urges the prison to strengthen the importance of the role of personal officer (7.10).
- 5.24 The Board recommends the prison to provide accommodation for small group Occupational Therapy work (8.10).
- 5.25 The Board requests that the process for passing on information from Reception to Listeners, about potentially vulnerable prisoners is strengthened (9.4).
- 5.26 The Board recommends the prison to provide accommodation for large Listener meetings (9.5).
- 5.27 The Board urges managers to minimise the occasions where Review Boards are held in the absence of the prisoner (10.3).
- 5.28 The Board requests the prison to ensure that, for times when prisoners are held in Segregation on an open ACCT, these exceptional circumstances should be fully recorded and understood by staff (10.9).
- 5.29 The Board urges the prison to re-examine the process for the transfer of property from houseblocks to the Segregation Unit to minimise the delays experienced (10.10).
- 5.30 The Board urges the prison to provide more purposeful activity for prisoners in the HSU/SSU (11.3).

- 5.31 The Board recommends that, following sentencing, life sentenced prisoners should be moved to a dispersal prison more quickly (12.6).
- 5.32 The Board considers the handing out of breakfast packs to be a backward step and recommends this to be reviewed so that prisoners are obliged to get up to collect their breakfast (12.13).

## **6 DIVERSITY REPORT**

- 6.1 The Board is pleased to observe that Diversity is well-managed in Belmarsh. There is good representation from all areas in the prison, including prisoners and all issues are effectively investigated, managed and actioned.
- 6.2 The Board would like to see some additional training offered to staff taking on the role of Disability Officer to assist them to carry out their duties more effectively.
- 6.3 The prison has purchased two self-propelled wheelchairs and some further electric wheelchairs are being purchased by HCC.
- 6.4 The prison is intending providing fixed shower chairs in certain houseblock locations for use by disabled prisoners.
- 6.5 The Board would again like to raise a concern about the rate of payment made to those with disabilities and/or of pensionable age. It is understood that the unemployment rate is £2.50 and the rate for those over 60 is £0.75. Although the pay rates are reviewed annually, there has been no recent increase. Where prisoners are unable to work and attend activities due to their age or disability the payment received is very low.
- 6.6 The prison has a robust process for the management of DIRFs supported by an excellent record-keeping system. However there is still an area of concern where prisoners raise discrimination and/or bullying complaints using the general COMP1 forms and tick one of the two check boxes (violent and threatening behaviour or discrimination, harassment, victimisation). The Board has been given examples where complaints have been raised concerning a specific manager and the COMP1 form has been assigned to that same manager to give a response. The Board considers these complaints should be handled in the same manner as DIRFs.

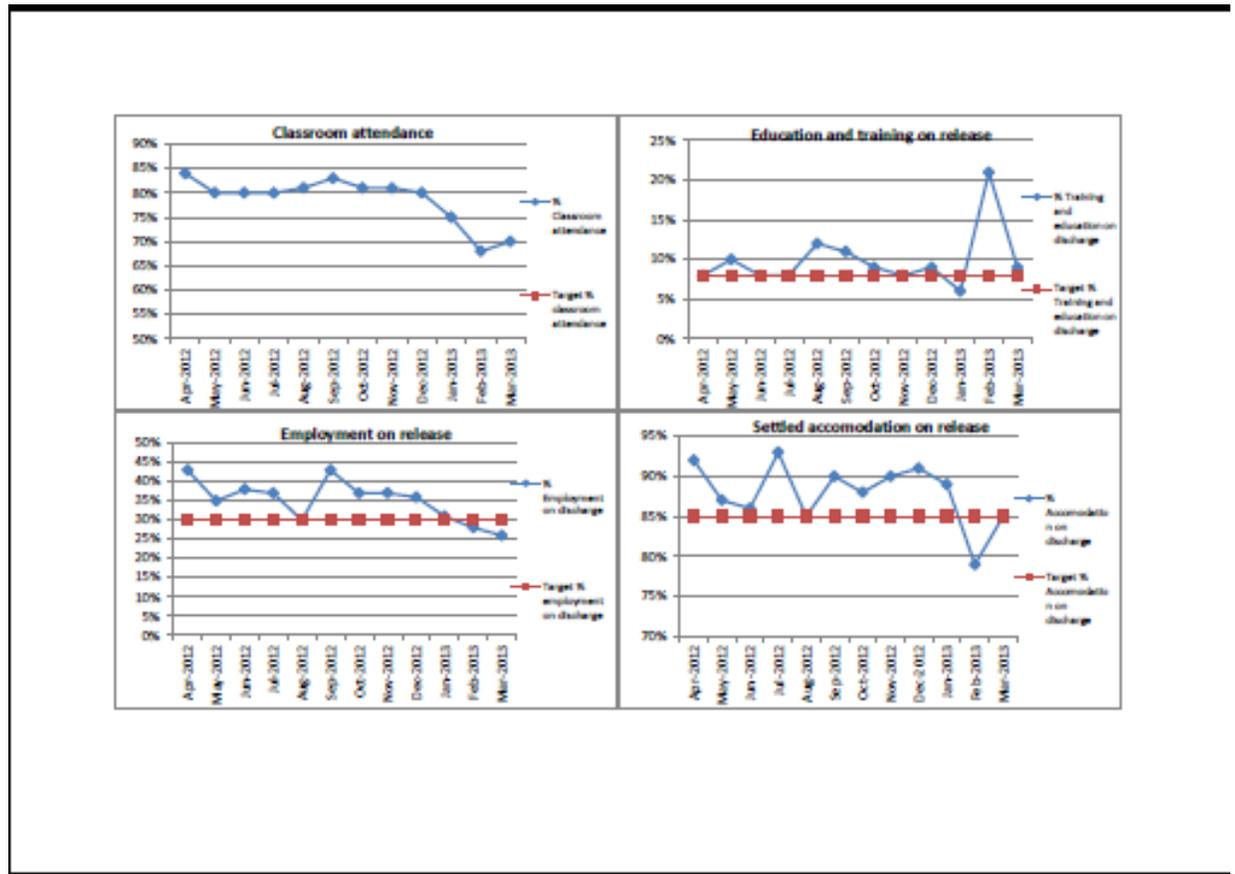
## **7 LEARNING AND SKILLS**

### **Education**

- 7.1 This has been a year of change in the Education Department with the new education contract awarded to A4E taking effect from September 2012, leading to review and evaluation of practice. The Board hopes that new ways of working will focus more closely on the individual needs of prisoners.

- 7.2 Issues identified from previous ways of working which would benefit from planned improvements include:
- A curriculum which has not always been focused on “functional skills”;
  - Long courses which are unsuitable or impossible for prisoners to complete during their time in the prison;
  - Poor tracking and passing on of progress/achievement of prisoners particularly when they are transferred or released;
  - Prisoners not available or missing classes for a variety of reasons.
- 7.3 A4E has been working to address the above issues. It is planned that the curriculum for each subject will be based on the teaching of functional skills; everything will be taught in context to support the prisoner’s ability to put his skills and knowledge into practice on release.
- 7.4 Learning will be organised into short modules which will lead to qualifications. Each module will consist of units of work which will be approximately 20 hours long, enabling completion in two weeks. A computer based system is now in use to track prisoner progress and it should be possible for up-to-date information concerning a prisoner’s education record to be transferred to any new establishment when/if he is moved.
- 7.5 The Board regrets that there is limited funding available from the Prisoners’ Trust to support higher education courses, which makes access difficult for anyone over the age of 25 years. The Board is concerned that the current A4E contract does not include funding to support higher level learning.
- 7.6 The Board regrets that the cookery class has been discontinued due to issues of security. Cooking is an essential life skill and it is hoped that it might be possible for this class to be re-instated in the future.
- 7.7 The A4E target for completion of courses is 80% and it is expected this will be achieved by implementation of the changes mentioned in 7.4.
- 7.8 Average attendance at classes is only 62%; this low attendance throughout the reporting year is due, in part, to different departments competing for a prisoner’s time, i.e. attendance at offender programmes, court, legal and social visits, health care appointments, gym sessions and employment commitments. Staffing problems occasionally necessitate class cancellations. The Board commends the regular meetings led by the Reducing Reoffending Team to coordinate the demands on a prisoner’s time in order to try and achieve higher attendance at classes and the participation by prisoners in focus groups and surveys to ensure that

7.9 The following statistics demonstrate that the percentage of prisoners in employment on discharge is falling fast. Classroom attendance is also falling.



7.10 The Board is concerned that prisoners sometimes do not engage with enthusiasm in classes and prefer to remain in cell even though they may benefit from some classes on offer. Even when prisoners are persuaded to join a class they can be very casual in their attendance. Education is a pivotal part of reducing re-offending and a pathway to resettlement and employment on release. Personal Officers could play a key role in encouraging prisoner participation but the Board has concerns that the personal officer scheme has suffered due to cutbacks and is not consistent throughout the houseblocks.

7.11 Education staff take part in pre-release days to celebrate achievement and to try to ensure that prisoners are put in contact with relevant organisations on release.

7.12 The library, a highly-used resource (weekly average 250 users and increasing), is well organised and reasonably well stocked with a variety of

7.13 Toe by Toe (a prisoner-to-prisoner assisted reading scheme) operates well and there are plans to try to increase the number of trained prisoners available to support others who want to improve their reading ability.

7.14 There are plans to:

- Investigate Braille resources and books for a recent sight impaired prisoner;
- Develop the use of board games particularly those that enhance reading skills;
- Develop activities to try to engage older prisoners; reminiscence work might be a possibility.

## **8 HEALTHCARE CENTRE (HCC)**

8.1 In last year's Annual Report the Board reported on the first full twelve months of the transfer of responsibility for Healthcare to Harmoni for Health, a private provider. This year has seen further change with Care UK acquiring Harmoni for Health as part of their purchase of the Harmoni parent company. The acquisition was formally declared in February 2013 but rumours of change were circulating in the prison from July 2012. That led to anxiety, uncertainty and insecurity among staff which is not an ideal environment in which to provide a good healthcare service. The Board hopes that the future will be more settled.

8.2 The other major change this year has been the handover of healthcare commissioning from Greenwich PCT to the London Commissioning Board. A positive outcome has been the provision of some transitional and additional funding from the PCT for replacement of medical equipment and refurbishment of clinical rooms in Outpatients and on the houseblocks. Much of this work has agreed start dates. Wheelchairs are in the process of being replaced and some self-propelled wheelchairs acquired. The Board welcomes these developments.

8.3 One of the advantages of the arrival of Care UK is that it has access to the resources of a much larger company and the experience of providing healthcare in more than 20 other prisons. The Board's concern expressed in last year's Annual Report about the recruitment of suitable staff is being addressed by Care UK and the Board is pleased to report that, at the time of reporting, the vacancy level stands at 10% - a much improved figure. That is partly a reflection of the situation in the community but the Board

- 8.4 Applications to the Board about healthcare continue to outnumber all other subjects and this year, perhaps not surprisingly given the upheavals, they rose slightly from 17% to 19% of the total. The Board is disappointed to report that the prisoners' forum which Harmoni was to set up in September 2012 has been further delayed and has not yet been formed. One of the difficulties has been the disbanding of PALS who were to be asked to act as co-ordinators. The present position is that volunteers are being sought to step into the breach. The Board hopes to be able to report more positively on this next year.
- 8.5 The Board has pressed Care UK on its plans to improve the quality of healthcare provision and welcomes the following initiatives:
- The employment of fewer nurses at Band 5 (routine tasks) and more nurses at higher grade;
  - The development of nurse specialists to take the lead on, for example, long term conditions;
  - More conditions to be treated within the prison rather than externally;
  - A patient evaluation survey carried out by giving every prisoner who has had a personal contact with medical staff a form to complete about their experience;
  - Action on the report produced following a survey of 150 prisoners carried out in August 2012 which resulted in 90 replies (a much better response than the survey reported on in last year's report);
  - The introduction of telemeds (external outpatient appointments conducted by telephone/video conferencing).
- 8.6 The Board will monitor these areas with interest. Care UK has reported to the Board a robust attitude to dealing with inefficient staff and a strict policy on appraisals, performance management, staff development and training. The Board welcomes that and hopes to see it result in improvements in the delivery of healthcare to prisoners.
- 8.7 Prisoners' failure to attend outpatient appointments is a continuing concern for the Board given the effect it has on the efficient and effective running of the appointments system. The Board is pleased, therefore, that Care UK has plans to focus on this area in the coming year with attention

- 8.8 The Board continues to have concern about the long-term accommodation of prisoners with serious mental health problems in the Healthcare In-patients. Transfer times from In-patients to suitable medium or secure hospital have not improved significantly over the year, despite every case being individually case-managed. The Board's view is that the transfer waiting time should be calculated from the moment a referral is made to a MSU (Medium Secure Unit), where all referrals must be made in the first instance. It is understood that, if the MSU referral is deemed unsuitable for a patient then a new referral has to be made, to a high secure hospital, with all the attendant necessary procedures of assessments and reports, when the clock starts ticking again. Hence referrals are often in real terms taking 4 months and at worst up to a year, which is not reflected in the transfer time statistics. In extremely serious cases/emergencies an immediate referral can be made.
- 8.9 With regard to mental health services in the prison, the Board understands that there is a review taking place by the Head of Healthcare (and other members of a multi-disciplinary team) of what takes place at the FNC and also on the house blocks. The aim is to have a new system in place by September 2013. This will be a fundamental change which the Board hopes will lead to improvement.
- 8.10 It is noted that small group work of a therapeutic nature, run by the part-time OT, has still not been available during this reporting year, though suitable accommodation, with the necessary supervision, is being sought.
- 8.11 The Long-term Conditions service is well established, with 3 clinics running: Diabetes, Epilepsy and Asthma.
- 8.12 About 80% of medication is given as In Possession (IP), ranging from daily prescriptions up to 6-monthly ones. The Head of Healthcare has informed the Board that there has been an improvement over the last year with a reduction (from 500 to 250) in face-to-face contact, allowing better use of nurse time. The new Care UK policy has been adopted and managed by the cluster-wide Medicines Management Committee. A three-month pilot project on houseblocks 1 and 2 is currently running, where pharmacy technicians are handing out IP medication. Some security issues related to the timing are still to be ironed out and the Board will be interested to know how this project and the subsequent implementation across the other houseblocks will impact on the use of released nurses' time.

- 8.13 The Board is pleased to report on the new Minor Ailments Clinic, held three times a week and run by the pharmacist, who is able to give advice on medication. This must be a useful development and should help reduce the need for GP appointments.
- 8.14 The Board has noted the good working relationship between staff and discipline staff in Healthcare.

## **9 SAFER CUSTODY**

### **Prisoners at risk of self-harm**

- 9.1 The incidence of self-harm has risen overall this year. Cutting and scratching again predominate as methods. A number of prisoners are repeat self-harmers and this affects statistics. Healthcare continues to have the largest number of incidents. Safer Custody Staff have started to analyse peak times for incidents in areas and will form a clearer picture over time.
- 9.2 The number of Assessment Care in Custody treatment (ACCTs) has reduced even though the number of prisoners transferring in with Open ACCTs has increased.
- 9.3 A Violence Reduction questionnaire devised by staff for prisoners has raised some issues around the impact of bullying which the Board hopes the prison will address.

### **Listeners**

- 9.4 The Samaritans train and support the Listeners, who are volunteers. There are 30 Listeners, some of whom are trainees. It is difficult to maintain an even distribution of Listeners as some are transferred. Some areas are more problematic than others but efforts are made to allow movement from one area to another if there is a crisis, especially in Health Care. The Board considers that liaison between Reception and Listeners should be improved to ensure that prisoners, who have just received long sentences and who therefore may be especially vulnerable, are adequately supported.
- 9.5 There have been problems in finding suitable venues for large Listeners' meetings.

### **Deaths in Custody**

- 9.6 There were two deaths in custody this year.

- 9.7 The news from the Ministry of Justice that following recommendations from IAP, Coroners' Inquests should happen no longer than six months after the death is welcomed. However the minister's response to this matter, as raised in last year's Annual Report, seems to ignore this development. Coroners' Inquests are still taking an inordinate amount of time and the Board are dissatisfied with the response received from the Minister.
- 9.8 There are four outstanding inquests and two new ones due. The next inquest will be in November, some three years after the death; the Board finds this unacceptable.

## **10 SEGREGATION (SEPARATION AND CARE) UNIT**

- 10.1 The small Segregation Unit is professionally run by well-trained staff, but has seen some significant pressures on its limited capacity in the last 12 months. It receives prisoners requiring a high level of control from other London prisons and the High Security Estate, as well as the usual internal intake. It is not easy to anticipate changes in population. Some cells also had to undergo repair when they were damaged by their occupants.
- 10.2 At Good Order and Discipline (GOOD) Review Boards and other occasions, the Board often see officers, governors, health professionals and psychology staff actively working to improve relationships with prisoners and hasten their return to normal location. This is often a very difficult task and is sometimes dependent on a level of co-operation from the individuals concerned, who may understandably be unwilling to discuss their offence or disciplinary matter.
- 10.3 The Board has previously noted that Review Boards occasionally take place in the absence of the prisoner (because of court or other commitments). This is considered undesirable, as it seems to the Board that effective management of the segregated prisoners is dependent on positive engagement with them without compromising relevant time limits. This cannot be achieved by sending them a record of the hearing or asking for written representations, as few prisoners will take this opportunity.
- 10.4 Two prisoners have been held in the Segregation Unit for extended periods of longer than six months. Whilst this is not ideal, because of the very limited opportunity for purposeful activity, their circumstances are regularly reviewed. The Board did not have cause to object to the reasonableness of their continued segregation in the particular circumstances.

- 10.5 Security and police investigations continue to delay progress with segregated prisoners, but the Unit Governor has sought to move matters along as quickly as possible on most occasions.
- 10.6 The Unit regularly holds Close Supervision Centre prisoners, often from HMP Woodhill. The need to maintain multi-unlock regimes for these and some other prisoners has from time to time placed an extra burden on the staff, but the Board usually finds that the basic elements of the regime (including showers and exercise) are maintained.
- 10.7 The special cells, which contain no furnishings, were used to hold two prisoners on two occasions for short periods following incidents of indiscipline. From the Board's observations, they were utilised effectively to de-escalate the situation.
- 10.8 The Segregation Unit has sometimes been used to house prisoners on dirty protest, although it is generally thought that they are better managed in Healthcare despite the element of indiscipline.
- 10.9 In the last Annual Report, the Board commented on the requirement that prisoners on open ACCTs (Assessment, Care, Custody and Teamwork) at immediate risk of self-harm should only be held in the Segregation Unit in exceptional circumstances, for example, where there is repeated and extreme anti-social behaviour associated with the self-harm. In this rare situation, the Board is concerned that the exceptional circumstances should be properly recorded and staff should be in a position to explain what they are.
- 10.10 The Board observes that segregated prisoners continue to experience significant delays in the transfer of their property from the houseblocks to the Unit. These delays are considered unacceptable and can be measured in days or weeks rather than hours. Fortunately, the hold-ups do not seem to have involved legal papers or medication as often as before. The Board is advised that it is generally the responsibility of the houseblock officers to bring the property across unless it has been retained for some reason by the DST (Dedicated Search Team).
- 10.11 It remains to be seen whether relatively new initiatives such as the Managing Challenging Behaviour Strategy (MCBS) and the LPPU will have a long - term impact in reducing pressures on Segregation Units. The dispersal of young adults (aged 18 to 24 years) from HMP YOI Feltham in Autumn 2013 may also have an effect on the unit that will need to be carefully monitored.

## **11 HIGH SECURITY / SPECIAL SECURE UNIT**

- 11.1 The High Security Unit (HSU) remained a designated Special Secure Unit (SSU) throughout the reporting year. Staff have successfully managed a

- 11.2 The Board has previously commented on the potential long-term psychological effects of holding prisoners in what remain very austere and isolated conditions for extended periods, bearing in mind the obvious security considerations, and hopes that more work can be completed in this area in future.
- 11.3 Occupants of the HSU / SSU have regular access to exercise (including the gym) and association (within the spur), but purposeful activity is virtually non-existent beyond some Offending Behaviour work and input from the Psychology Unit. There is no integration with education or the workshops. The Board would like to see more effort made to provide purposeful activity for prisoners in the HSU/SSU.
- 11.4 The high concentration of officers means that many issues are addressed at an early stage. The temperature of the food has been a recurring theme for the past few years, in large part due to the additional time that it takes to transport from the kitchens. However, there is certainly no lack of willingness on the part of the kitchen staff to resolve problems when they arise.
- 11.5 HSU and SSU prisoners frequently encounter delays in arranging visits and obtaining authorisation to call particular telephone numbers. Whilst there have been some longer than reasonable hold-ups, much of this is unfortunately inevitable. The prison is dependent on the police to carry out various checks and many enquiries have an international dimension. The content of conversations during visits and telephone calls often has to be translated for obvious security reasons. It is important that the need for this does not unnecessarily inhibit prisoners' constructive contact with relatives and their legal discussions.
- 11.6 The Segregation Unit within the HSU / SSU was made use of during the reporting year for short periods as an effective way of managing particular prisoners following indiscipline. There were signs that it may be utilised to house prisoners for an extended period. The Board will of course continue to monitor the reasonableness of any decision that particular individuals cannot be held on normal location within the HSU / SSU.
- 11.7 The Board has experienced a problem with the times of GOOD reviews for prisoners in the HSU Segregation Unit and this has now been resolved.

## **12 RESIDENTIAL SERVICES**

### **Overview**

- 12.1 Staffing throughout the prison has been impacted by high sickness levels
- 12.2 There have been occasional closures of chapel, library and other areas. On the two occasions when visits have been cut short due to late arrival of prisoners, the visiting orders have been re-issued to compensate prisoners. The Board is concerned that the future possibility of reduction in staffing levels due to Benchmarking, which will be implemented in April 2014, and the high level of staff sickness despite strenuous efforts to deal with this, may result in prisoners being locked up for longer periods.
- 12.3 Finally, the Board wishes to congratulate Governor Wragg and his staff for implementing change in a sensible and pragmatic fashion but the impact of this may lead to lower staff morale and prisoner discontent.

### **Residence**

- 12.4 There are four houseblocks in the prison and the Board continues to have concerns about cell-sharing. The Board considers that, as a result of this, privacy and decency are compromised. The following conflicts arise between prisoners, as a result of cell-sharing:
- Washing (in preparation for prayers) in a multi-occupancy cell;
  - Usage of sinks for purposes other than personal hygiene, such as washing dishes;
  - Times when one occupant wants to watch TV and the other wants to sleep;
  - Communication difficulties between prisoners where more than one language is spoken;
  - Practice of more than one religion, leading to problems such as where one prisoner may be eating pork in a cell with a Muslim prisoner;
  - Toilet usage during mealtimes;
  - Different standards of cell-cleaning by prisoners;
  - Confidentiality of legal papers.
- 12.5 Officers complain to the Board that the number of staff assigned to residence is below complement; this is not a view supported by the SMT. Houseblock officers report that it is impossible to carry out all the duties and profiled tasks. Sometimes prisoners miss out on showers and movements and have reduced time for domestic periods, exercise and access to officers for assistance with problems. However, the Board has only had 36 applications from prisoners throughout the year complaining about regime and accommodation; a small number with an operational capacity of 910 prisoners.

### **Life Sentenced Prisoners**

- 12.6 At the end of the reporting year there were 78 prisoners in Belmarsh serving life sentences. This is higher than in previous years and the Board has concerns over the length of time that these prisoners are spending in a local prison; it is not unusual for a prisoner to wait 12-15 months for trial and then to be kept at Belmarsh for a period in excess of 12 months, thus giving a total time spent before moving to the dispersal estate in excess of two years. As a local prison, Belmarsh offers no structure for life sentenced prisoners. The Thinking Skills Programme and Alcohol and Drug Intervention Programmes are the only suitable courses on offer. Life sentenced prisoners wait too long to go to a dispersal prison and some prisoners are moved to venues that may not be best suited to their individual needs. The Board recommends that, following sentencing, life-sentenced prisoners should be moved to a dispersal prison more quickly.
- 12.7 Although houseblock surgeries are already held by appointment to answer questions and structure the expectations of life sentenced prisoners, the Board commends the proposal to start a regular Lifer Forum which will enable these prisoners to meet together to discuss their issues jointly.

### **Indeterminate Sentenced Prisoners**

- 12.8 These prisoners must serve the full tariff as determined by the Judge. ISPs can be considered for parole only after completion of the full tariff. The Board is pleased to report that this group of prisoners is moved to the dispersal estate reasonably quickly after sentencing; thus enabling them to complete the relevant courses for them to be considered for parole.

### **Vulnerable Prisoners**

- 12.9 Vulnerable prisoners are held on a spur in a houseblock and have token access to a workshop and education delivered in the houseblock. Any overspill of vulnerable prisoners which occurs, means that prisoners are located on a spur in a different houseblock and have very little time out of cell as they cannot mix with other occupants on the houseblock. Every effort is made to move VPs on the overspill to fill places vacated on the VP designated spur when individual prisoners go to court. This should mean that no one prisoner spends an excessive amount of time on the overspill spur.
- 12.10 The Board still has concerns, as raised in our last year's report, that there are insufficient places in the whole prison estate to move category B vulnerable prisoners sentenced for sex offences. The same difficulties are experienced by category B prisoners with a life sentence for non-sex offences; there are too few places in the estate. There has been no

### **Kitchen**

- 12.11 In this reporting year, the food budget per head, has fallen from £2.10 to £1.96 a day, nearly a 7% reduction at a time when food prices are increasing.
- 12.12 The central contract, which requires purchases to be made from a designated supplier creates inflexibility and, as reported by the Board for many years now, additional costs for Belmarsh.
- 12.13 Breakfast has changed this year. A breakfast pack is given with the previous night's evening meal. The Board considers that this removes the incentive for prisoners to get out of bed and participate in daily activities.
- 12.14 Applications to the Board about food numbered 12 in the reporting year. This is very few given the total number of meals supplied.
- 12.15 The Board has received some verbal complaints about the quality of meat and the portion sizes. The Board monitors this on a regular basis and it is observed that the kitchen provides meat and portions within the accepted criteria.
- 12.16 During Ramadan, the kitchen produced an average of 134 special meals per day, served in special containers to keep the food warm, included in the total meal count of 768. Special thanks are due to all the staff and prisoners who work in the kitchen for their efforts in producing the food for Ramadan, the other religious festivals and the food supplied for the Family Days at Belmarsh.
- 12.17 Staff shortages are sometimes a problem. Between 10 and 16 prisoners work in the kitchen areas every day, but this varies due to visits, gym etc.

### **London Pathways Progression Unit**

- 12.18 The Board is pleased to note that a new unit was established in April 2013 to house prisoners within 2 years of release and with indications of personality disorders potentially affecting reoffending. This is a

## **13 RECEPTION**

- 13.1 Reception is busy, as expected since the prison is a local remand prison serving several local courts and those in Central London. Taking on prisoners coming from Camberwell Magistrates Court has presented extra problems due to the volatile nature of the prisoners and a high proportion that are dependent on alcohol and non-prescription drugs. Their arrival has also resulted in a number of late finishes for the officers, a problem that the prison has not had for several years.
- 13.2 Prisoners are moved quickly from reception to the First Night Centre, which has resulted in their property not being able to go with them more often than the Board would like to see happen. The officers that would deal with this at the weekend when reception is quieter are often moved to work in another part of the prison, which has exacerbated the original problem. This is not new.

## **14 FOREIGN NATIONALS**

- 14.1 The FN population had been averaging 160+ over the last 6 months but is now 200+ of which the following are now the largest nationalities:
- Jamaica:-25  
Romania 17  
Poland:- 15  
Nigeria:-15  
Lithuania:-10  
Pakistan:-11
- 14.2 There has been a notable increase in East Europeans, most of whom serve very short sentences (between 7-28 days). They are of little interest to the Home Office unless their sentence fits the criteria for deportation (2 years or more) or it can be established they are not exercising their treaty rights in which case they could be removed; this does appear to be a trend across the entire prison estate and creates an anomalous situation where convicted FNPs are allowed to remain.
- 14.3 Belmarsh currently has 21 detainees. Both the LIT (Local Immigration Team) and CCD (Criminal Casework Directorate), part of UKBA, are

- 14.4 CCD PORT, who are interested in deportation cases only, have 2 immigration officers in for 1 day a week, primarily to interview at the Immigration Surgery held on a Thursday morning. The Board considers this a welcome addition to the Surgery.
- 14.5 Repatriation requests have declined in the last year but this may change if the Government implements the recently agreed prisoner transfer agreement across member states of the European Union. This agreement provides for the compulsory transfer of prisoners. Not all member states have implemented the agreement yet, although all are expected to have done so by the end of 2013.
- 14.6 It is pleasing to note the ILED has recently increased its presence in Belmarsh. The Prison now has a LIT immigration officer working 3 days a week. This is as a result of the significant number of foreign national prisoners on remand and testimony to the strong links nurtured between the FN Coordinator and ILED. The FN Coordinator is to be congratulated for her work, especially the FN Group meeting that drives policy and ensures equity of treatment cross prison.

## **15 REDUCING REOFFENDING**

- 15.1 The work of the Reducing Reoffending team has been reorganised under a new centralised administration hub as a result of the implementation of Fair and Sustainable. There have been some staffing and operational problems but the new team appears now to be on its way to running smoothly.
- 15.2 The workshops have undergone a difficult period recently and have been hit hard by budget constraints.
- Staffing levels have been a problem as a result of the need to redeploy workshop staff to other parts of the prison as needed e.g. as escorts for the movement of high-profile prisoners, resulting in closure of workshops or minimal attendance;

- Reduced numbers at workshops are often as a result of the competition between education and workshops for prisoner attendance i.e. payment by results. However from April this year the average attendance has been around 100 per session in Workshops and 75 in Education;
- Transfers out can mean that courses are not completed and credit for courses is not gained;
- Prisoner numbers involved in the tea bag workshop have been reduced by half as a result of the closure of seven prisons earlier in the year which has resulted in high stock levels at the warehouse;
- The carpentry workshop was discontinued because there were not enough instructors to provide a safe workplace and the qualification took too long to deliver;
- Qualification for the CSCS (Construction Skills Certification Scheme) card scheme, a well-regarded passport for obtaining a job on release, is now computer based and requires a high level of online security which is not at the moment being provided to Belmarsh (nor to 74 other prisons). New computers in one of the workshops are therefore lying idle.

15.3 The prison may introduce an employability skills passport based on experience gained in workshops for released prisoners to show potential employers. Similarly a proposed resettlement passport would show how prisoners have addressed addictions while in prison.

15.4 Bricklaying, multi-skills, BICS and the contract for making breakfast cereal kits still provide training and activity. However, new workshops and contracts are being introduced shortly, including

- A workshop for the filling of black and colour ink cartridges (34 VP prisoners), run by a local firm who would like to employ VPs on their release;
- A workshop for stripping down and recycling ink cartridges (34 prisoners);
- A contract for assembling containers for soft fruit (34 prisoners);
- The waste recycling workshop which began in 2012 was discontinued for a number of months on security grounds, but restarted in October;
- It is hoped that a gardens work party may be introduced within the coming year;
- A number of firms have shown an interest in employing prisoners on release and these links are being investigated.

15.5 Prisoners' post-release housing needs are now met by a staff member funded by the prison after Greenwich Council withdrew its funding. Belmarsh will be included in the tendering process for London Regional housing provision which will be offered to a private contractor. Partnerships with Working Links and Job Centre Plus, among other

- 15.6 The successful STAR (substance treatment alcohol recovery) program, which is unique to Belmarsh, has secured funding from Greenwich Council for a further two years, and the course may be accredited. There are plans to introduce RESOLVE, a program designed around violent offenders, later this year. Man Up, a 10-session course which better meets the needs of a local prison with a changing population, is being piloted to sit alongside the longer 10-week Family Man course. TSP (Thinking Skills Program) is the only course which has results monitored for Key Performance Targets (KPTs), and is therefore the only program which is not affected by re-deployment of staff.
- 15.7 A new and innovative post involves a staff member being seconded to Greenwich Council as part of a tendering process to commission contracts for drug services and embed them into prisons. CRI (Crime Reduction Initiative) won a bid and its Foundations of Recovery drug treatment and recovery service will go live with a new contract in August in Belmarsh, and replaces the CARATs service. NHS for England will oversee the contracts. AIP, a high-level alcohol misuse program, has also been introduced.
- 15.8 There is a possibility that a number of prisoners with less than a year to serve may be released on temporary licence to work in the Visitors' Centre making sandwiches and cleaning. Other ROTL release possibilities are being explored.
- 15.9 Long-term strategic planning has been difficult owing to the unknown impact that Benchmarking may have. It will therefore be important to continue to monitor progress during the coming year.

## **16 BOARD DEVELOPMENT**

- 16.1 Throughout the year guest speakers were invited to attend the monthly Board meetings to advise the Board of their work in the prison. Areas such as Healthcare, Security, Dog Drug Searching, Work Links for prisoners, Personal Protection and Prison Benchmarking all provided a clearer insight for members.
- 16.2 During the year the Board successfully supported our four new members to complete their probationary year and all have attended the National Training for new members. Several other members have attended the National Training for experienced members.

16.3 The Board organised their own training day in November 2012 where attention was given to the group performance in dealing with Applications and Rota Visits.

## 17 APPLICATIONS TO THE BOARD

Area	Number	%
Healthcare	110	19
Property	68	12
Bullying of Staff	18	3
Bullying of Prisoners	7	1
Complaints about Staff	46	8
Racial Discrimination	1	0
Regime & Adjudications	27	5
Category Status	11	2
Sentence Planning	25	4
Licence Recall	10	2
Legal Matters	7	1
Foreign Nationals	9	2
E List	9	2
Drugs and DST	7	1
Transfers	19	3
Resettlement	0	0
Accommodation	9	2
Food	12	2
Personal Finance	20	3
Visits	18	3
Housing Issues	10	2
Others	67	12
Canteen	18	3
Mail	20	3
Telephone/Pins	24	4
<b>Overall total for the year</b>	<b>572</b>	<b>100</b>

## **18 GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ACCT	Assessment, Care in Custody Teamwork (formerly F2052SH)
BICS	
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
BSA	Basic Skills Assessment
BSKB	Basic and Key Skills Builder
CARAT	Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice and Throughcare
CASS	
CBDT	Compact Based Drug Testing
CCD	Criminal Casework Directorate
CLAIT	Computer Literacy and Information Technology
CPN	Community Psychiatric Nurse
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
CSCS	Construction Skills Certification Scheme
CSMA	Comprehensive Substance Misuse Assessment
CSRA	Cell Sharing Risk Assessment
CTC	Counter Terrorism Clearance
C&R	Control and Restraint
DAS	Detainee Advisory Service
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DIRF	Discrimination Incident Request Form
DST	Dedicated Search Team
ECR	Emergency Control Room
ERS	Early Removal Scheme
ETS	Enhanced Thinking Skills
FNC	First Night Centre
FNO	Foreign National Orderly
FNP	Foreign National Prisoner
GOOD	Good Order or Discipline
GUM	Genito-urinary Medicine
HCC	Healthcare Centre
HMCIP	Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons
HSU	High Security Unit
IAPT	Improving Access to Psychological Therapies
IDTS	Independent Drug Treatment System
IDO	Inmate Documentation Office
ILED	Immigration Law Enforcement Division
IMB	Independent Monitoring Board
IMR	Inmate Medical Records
IPP	Indeterminate Sentence for Public Protection
LIT	Local Immigration Team
LPPU	London Pathways Progression Unit
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
LTC	Long Term Conditions
LTCS	Long Term Conditions Service
MAPPA	Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements
MCBS	Managing Challenging Behaviour Strategy

MDT	Mandatory Drug Testing
NOMS	National Offender Management System
OCN	Open College Network
OMU	Offender Management Unit
OT	Occupational Therapy
PACT	Prison Advice and Care Trust
PCT	Primary Care Trust
PIANO	Providing Innovation and New Opportunities
PMU	Population Management Unit
PO	Principal Officer
RID	Receive Inspect Dispatch
ROTL	Release on Temporary License
SDP	Short Duration Programme
SIR	Security Information Report
SMT	Senior Management Team
SO	Senior Officer
SSAFA	Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association
SSU	Special Security Unit
STAR	Substance Treatment Alcohol Recovery
UKBA	United Kingdom Border Agency
VDT	Voluntary Drug Testing
VP	Vulnerable Prisoner
VPU	Vulnerable Prisoner Unit
YOI	Young Offenders Institution