



HMP & YOI BELMARSH

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE
INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD
1 July 2013 – 30 June 2014**

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:
 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.**
- 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 (CNA) is 781 and the Operational Capacity i.e. the maximum population it can safely and decently hold is currently 938.
- 3.4 In April 2014 HMP Belmarsh was reorganised to accept young offenders between the ages of 18 and 24 and officially became known as HMP & YOI Belmarsh.

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 The Board has concerns that budget savings and New Ways of Working (NWW) to comply with Benchmarking, could compromise a prisoner's right to a fair, safe, and decent environment when NWW goes live in September 2014 (third stage), as the transition stage (2nd stage) has already impacted adversely. The Board acknowledges that the prison has done well in security audits during the reporting year.
- 5.2 The Board is concerned that re-deployment of staff, resulting in regime changes, has impacted on all prisoners and prison staff. Both groups have found the changes difficult; decency for prisoners has been compromised by more limited space and increased time spent in cell, and officers have concerns with staffing levels which are continually affected by high staff sickness levels, causing prison officers to be redeployed to cover understaffed areas. As a consequence, attendance by prisoners at gym, education, workshops and chapel has been compromised or sometimes cancelled altogether.
- 5.3 The Board commends the implementation by the Senior Management Team (SMT) of the transition stage of NWW to try and manage prisoners' expectations and staff deployment. The third stage of NWW is September 7th 2014 and the Board anticipates no resolution of the staffing or prisoner problems by then.
- 5.4 The Board has concerns with regard to decency in cell. The number of prisoners cell sharing has increased since last year's report and screening of the toilet, by a plywood screen, together with lack of storage and living space, compromises decency, particularly when 3 prisoners share a cell designed for 1 or 2 prisoners.
- 5.5 The Board is concerned that, in the future, the interim regime and NWW may mean that prisoners spend longer periods in cell and this could result in an increase in self harm.
- 5.6 The prison received 60 young offenders in September 2013. Initially there was a spike in violence amongst this age group but this has now diminished.
- 5.7 During the reporting year the London Pathways Progression Unit (LPPU) has continued to grow in size; this unit accommodates prisoners with personality disorders, due to be released within 2 years. The regime in this unit allows more time out of cell but this also has been affected by the transition stage of NWW.

- 5.8 Delays in Counter Terrorism Clearance (CTC) have also contributed to difficulties in recruitment for workshops and education. Recruitment for these areas has also been affected by pay scales offered not being comparable to those offered outside the prison. As a result, some workshops continue to be run by uniformed staff which will impact on stage three of NWW.
- 5.9 It is again disappointing to report that there has been no improvement in the delay of cases in the Coroner's Court. This issue has been raised annually for consecutive years by the Board and, in spite of the appointment of a second Coroner, still persists. The impact of such delays on both prison staff and relatives is unacceptable.
- 5.10 Movement of Category B Vulnerable Prisoners (VPs) has improved with the change in role of HMP Rye Hill and it is hoped that the remaining delays will be improved as a result of the national scoping exercise. Life-sentenced prisoners continue to wait overlong for suitable places in the dispersal estate.
- 5.11 The prison has operated a Special Security Unit (SSU) for part of the reporting period to accommodate a small number of exceptional risk prisoners. Security is paramount in this unit but does not affect the core business of the rest of the prison. Lack of opportunity for purposeful activity in this and the High Security Unit is a cause for concern.
- 5.12 The Board is supported by an efficient clerk. 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. However, the Board has observed that staff morale is low. The Board appreciates the good working relationship it has with the SMT and staff in general which facilitates its ability to carry out its work.
- 5.13 There have been 15 Board members during the reporting year, in spite of efforts to increase the number. Long term sickness and delays in CTC have resulted in there being only 12 active members. Whilst the importance of CTC is recognised, it has taken a year for prospective board members to reach the second of three stages to obtain clearance and take up post. This is unacceptable.
- 5.14 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

- 5.15 The Board is concerned about the impact that the budget savings and NWW have upon staffing in the prison. The effect of staff shortages leads to the prison being compromised in providing a safe and decent

- Learning and Skills and the ability to provide sustained levels of purposeful activity and to develop education to the agreed standards. (Ref 7.1 – 7.2, 7.4, 7.6, 12.5);
 - residential areas where staff redeployments have frequently necessitated the cancellation of attendance at activities (education, library, workshops, gym, chapel). (Ref 7.12, 12.5);
 - residential areas where the regime has been curtailed so that time out of cell is reduced, access to showers and telephones is limited, and mail delivery is delayed. (Ref 12.5);
 - the Offender Management Unit (OMU) where there is a backlog of OASYs forms impacting on the ability of prisoners to make progress with their sentence. (Ref 12.21);
 - the Foreign National (FN) clerk not replaced after leaving her post resulting in a poor process for the management of FNs. (Ref 12.22);
 - the reducing reoffending programme has been seriously affected leading to closure of some programmes and curtailment of others. (Ref 14.3).
- 5.16 The Board remains concerned about the time taken for recruitment of staff and Board members due to the length of time taken for security clearance. Whilst it is appreciated that this security clearance is imperative, the Board urges that resources be provided to enable these checks to be completed more quickly. (Ref 7.2, 15.7).
- 5.17 The Board is very concerned about the delay in Coroners' Inquests and urges the Minister to improve the process. This issue has been raised repeatedly over the last few years and the Board does not consider that appropriate action has been taken. (Ref 9.3).
- 5.18 The Board is concerned about the reduction and / or removal of public funding for prison law cases making it more difficult for convicted prisoners to obtain legal advice and urges the reinstatement of this legal aid. (Ref 10.9).

Points for the Prison Service

- 5.19 The Board requests that NOMS investigate the number of places available in Close Supervision Centres (CSCs) in order to limit the delays in finding appropriate locations for these individuals with complex requirements. Similarly the Board is concerned about the length of time some prisoners are kept in the Segregation Unit for their own protection. (Ref 10.5 - 10.6).

- 5.20 The Board urges NOMS to minimise the length of time prisoners are kept in the Segregation Unit within the HSU/SSU. (Ref 11.5).
- 5.21 The Board urges NOMS to give consideration to reducing the number of multi-occupancy cells, given that cell-sharing compromises privacy and decency. Also where cell-sharing is in place, the Board requests that adequate screening is provided around the toilet. (Ref 12.1, 12.3).
- 5.22 The Board urges NOMS to review and improve the process for moving life-sentenced prisoners to the dispersal estate. (Ref 12.8).
- 5.23 The Board urges NOMS to ensure there are sufficient suitable places in the prison estate for Category B vulnerable prisoners to enable them to complete courses to address their offending and therefore make progress with their sentence plans. (Ref 12.12)
- 5.24 The Board urges NOMS to consider the process for the completion of OASYs reports and ensure prisons have adequate resources to complete these reports as time delays cause serious problems for prisoners making progress with their sentence plans, with categorisation and Home Detention Curfew (HDC) requests. (Ref 12.21).

Points for HMP Belmarsh Management

- 5.25 The Board asks the SMT to ensure that initiatives are carried out to promote activities within equalities streams. (Ref 6.2)
- 5.26 The Board would like to see additional training given to staff taking on the role of Disability Officer. (Ref 6.3)
- 5.27 The Board urges the reinstatement of art classes which are considered valuable to the rehabilitation of prisoners. (Ref 7.6).
- 5.28 The Board urges the prison to provide purposeful activity for prisoners in the Segregation Unit, HSU and Healthcare. (Ref 7.11, 11.3).
- 5.29 The Board urges the prison to carry out the refurbishment work in the showers that is urgently required in the Segregation Unit. (Ref 10.2).
- 5.30 Whilst poor behaviour in the Segregation Unit is managed and well documented, positive behaviour is not always similarly recognised. The Board urges the prison to improve the recording of positive behaviour by prisoners. (Ref 10.3).
- 5.31 The Board requests that more be done to ensure that convicted prisoners have adequate access to their legal representatives when preparing for adjudications. (Ref 10.9).

- 5.32 The Board urges the prison to introduce firm guidance on the completion of Use of Force reports to ensure that these are completed in a timely manner and written independently by each witness. (Ref 10.11).
- 5.33 The Board urges the prison to strengthen the guidance given for filming planned interventions to ensure that the camera provides the best unrestricted view possible. (Ref 10.12).
- 5.34 The Board urges the prison to improve the process for the transfer of prisoners' property from the houseblocks to the Segregation Unit. (Ref 10.13).
- 5.35 The Board urges the prison to improve the arrangements for prisoners in the HSU to access visits, post and authorised telephone numbers. (Ref 11.4).
- 5.36 The Board urges the prison to carry out repairs to broken extractor fans in cells. (Ref 12.2).
- 5.37 The Board urges the prison to provide the necessary materials to ensure that toilets are kept in a clean and decent state and that, where possible, prisoners can themselves carry out the cleaning. (Ref 12.3).
- 5.38 The Board requests that the prison reinstate the personal officer scheme with officers assigned to individual prisoners. (Ref 12.7).
- 5.39 The Board urges the prison to improve allocation of purposeful activities to life-sentenced prisoners. (Ref 12.9).
- 5.40 The Board urges the prison to improve the IT connectivity in the Education department to assist prisoners in carrying out their work and also to provide broadband access to enable Job Centre Plus to improve the service provided. (Ref 7.14, 14.6);
- 5.41 The Board urges the prison to consider ways to improve attendance at intervention meetings. (Ref 14.4).
- 5.42 The Board urges the prison to consider allowing Category C prisoners to work in the gardens and to gain horticulture qualifications. (Ref 14.8).

6 DIVERSITY REPORT

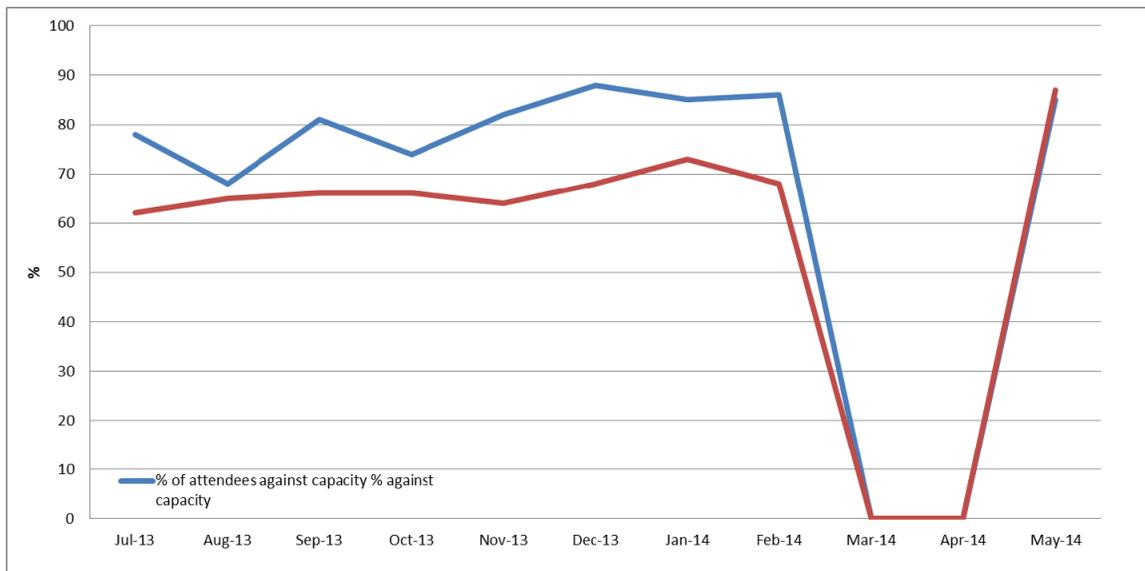
- 6.1 The Board is pleased to observe that Diversity continues to be well-managed in Belmarsh. There is good representation from all areas in the prison, including prisoners, and all issues are effectively investigated, managed and actioned.
- 6.2 In relation to the equalities streams, although responsibility for each stream has been assigned to an individual SMT member, the Board would like to see some action taken by these stream leaders to promote initiatives within their areas.
- 6.3 The Board would like to see some additional training offered to staff taking on the role of Disability Officer to assist them in carrying out their duties more effectively.

7 LEARNING AND SKILLS

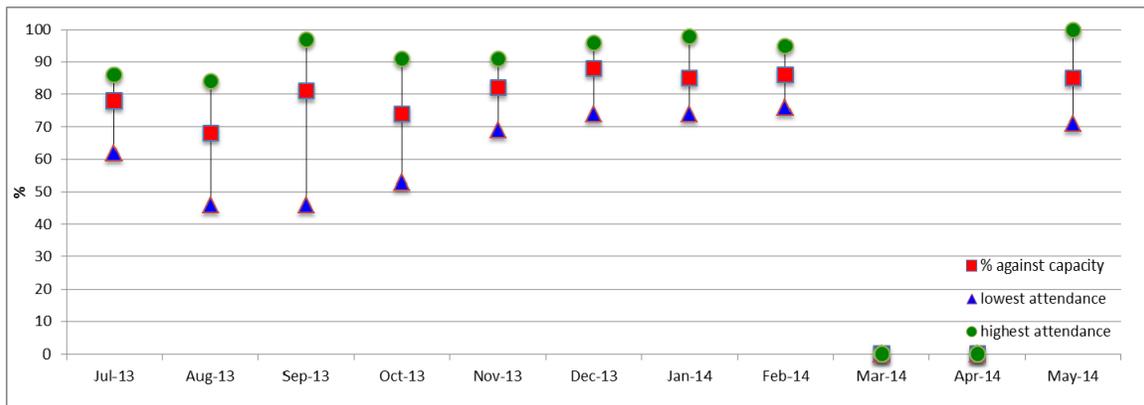
- 7.1 Staffing issues have significantly affected all areas throughout the prison. This has inevitably impacted on the ability consistently to provide and sustain the planned levels of useful and productive activity for prisoners during the year.
- 7.2 The Board is concerned to note that ongoing A4E staffing issues have made it very difficult to sustain, let alone develop, education to the agreed standards. This has impacted on the delivery of the education contract, leading to shortfalls in their ability to purposefully engage prisoners. For more than six months the department has been operating with at least six teaching vacancies. Successful recruiting has taken place but, as it is currently taking over six months for security clearance, a number of appointees have found alternative jobs and have not taken up appointments when clearance has been granted. Staff are under considerable strain.
- 7.3 Uncertainty over funding has made it difficult to implement all planned curriculum developments but those which have been implemented, have resulted in a curriculum which is more supportive of functional skills and future employability. Much of the curriculum is now organized into short modules, which ensures that all prisoners can more easily complete a module and gain recognition for their achievement. Progress is recorded against their Unique Learning Number and can be recognized if prisoners are transferred.
- 7.4 The Board regrets that the functional skills classes planned to take place in the workshops have been delayed due in part to problems with recruitment.

- 7.5 The Board regrets that the planned installation of Virtual Campus has been delayed throughout the year. It is now being installed.
- 7.6 The Board is disappointed that art classes are no longer available given that this subject is valuable in rehabilitation for prisoners.
- 7.7 A new Education Manager was appointed. She appeared to have a clear understanding of the work needed to drive up standards across the department. However the Board understands that the A4E contract is not being renewed and the Board will continue to monitor education carefully.
- 7.8 The Board is concerned that attendance at classes fluctuated during the year because of non-attendance of tutors, prisoners' unwillingness to attend, and difficulty in escorting prisoners to classes. The Board is encouraged that the prison is working to improve attendance by a variety of means. These include strategic, pro-active encouragement and sanctions where necessary to promote a more positive attitude and better understanding of the value of education. Attendance issues will continue to require close monitoring.
- 7.9 The Board notes that it has been regular practice to book more prisoners into classes than there are places available. The justification for this has been the expectation that some prisoners would not attend due to having alternative pressures on their time.

Graph 1: Shows percentage of scheduled attending and percentage of total capacity attending. (A security breach elsewhere in the prison estate resulted in the use of ICT in teaching being suspended for five weeks during the spring)



Graph 2: Shows percentage of capacity attending each month.



- 7.10 The Learning and Skills Manager has focused successfully on developing opportunities for higher level learners not available through the A4E contract. The Prisoner Education Trust is now funding over forty prisoners with the potential for additional prisoners who are currently being assessed. The Board is pleased that one prisoner has recently graduated with a degree in mathematics from the Open University.
- 7.11 It is a continuing concern to the Board that there is currently no purposeful activity for prisoners located in special areas of the prison, i.e. the Segregation Unit, HSU and Healthcare. Three HSU prisoners are doing Open University courses.
- 7.12 The library continues to be a well organised and valuable resource. It is unfortunate that visits from the houseblocks have frequently been cancelled throughout the year due both to officers being re-deployed and absence of the librarian.
- 7.13 Last year the Board mentioned plans for developing activities for older prisoners. Regrettably there has been limited progress.
- 7.14 The Board is concerned that IT connectivity has been a problem throughout the year making it impossible for prisoners to have access to CD Roms, Open University materials and word processing.

8 HEALTHCARE CENTRE (HCC)

- 8.1 The Board is pleased to report that this year has seen a more settled environment in HCC as Care UK completed its first full 12 months as the healthcare provider. There have been some changes in the management structure most notably the retirement in March 2014 of the Head of Healthcare with whom the Board has worked productively for many years. The Board would like to thank him for his cooperation and assistance. The new Head of Healthcare has been appointed and brings

- 8.2 The staffing position continues to improve with a reduced vacancy level currently standing at 7%. There are some Agency staff in Primary Care but recruitment to fill vacancies is well advanced. This is a welcome improvement.
- 8.3 In last year's report the Board mentioned the provision of funding by Greenwich PTC for replacement of medical equipment and refurbishment. Some of that has been carried out this year: all the treatment rooms on the houseblocks have been refurbished and those on in-patients are currently undergoing refurbishment. Disappointingly, the badly needed refurbishment of the dental surgery has again been delayed. Care UK has assured the Board that this work will start in the autumn and be completed within two weeks. Also disappointing is the underused telemedicine facility. This equipment needs an expensive upgrade which NHS England is looking into. The Board hopes this upgrade can soon be carried out as at present it represents a wasted resource.
- 8.4 Applications to the Board about Healthcare continue to top the list of subjects but the gap is narrowing and there is good news to report. The percentage of total applications has reduced significantly to 15%, the lowest figure for some years. The reduction may well result from improvements made by Care UK in its own handling of complaints:
- complainants are seen in the first instance by a healthcare professional;
 - there is a follow-up by administration staff to ensure that all issues have been resolved;
 - the setting up of a Prisoner Council meeting which Care UK attend in order to pick up any health-related problems.

The Head of Healthcare has been trying to set up Patient Consultation Meetings on the houseblocks and the Board hopes this can be achieved in the coming year.

- 8.5 The Board welcomes the introduction by Care UK of a permanent patient evaluation survey. At least 10% of patients in all areas of healthcare are given forms to complete about the treatment they have received. The current return rate of 27% is encouraging. The Head of Healthcare examines the completed forms and notifies the patients of the issues which are being followed up. The Board regards this as a very positive step.
- 8.6 The Board has previously reported on the disappointingly high number of prisoners who fail to attend outpatient appointments. This year there has

- more effective triaging;
- the management by the healthcare professionals of their own clinics and waiting lists;
- the hand delivery of appointment slips by Healthcare assistants;
- a concentration on establishing the reason for the non-attendance;
- the completion of service level agreements with the suppliers (dentist, opticians etc.).

8.7 As reported last year, the Long Term Conditions service is well established with clinics operating for, among others, diabetes, respiratory and cardio-vascular conditions, and sexual health. All prisoners are screened for TB on entry to the prison and plans are in hand to assess the impact of this 100% screening procedure.

8.8 There has been an increase in the number of prisoners given In Possession (IP) medication (from about 80% to 85%). Care UK has decided to extend from houseblocks 1 and 2 to houseblocks 3 and 4 the practice of pharmacy technicians handing out the medication and is currently recruiting the two additional technicians required. The new regime (due to Benchmarking) has placed some pressure on the IP policy but an action group has been formed to resolve the conflict. The Board welcomes this cooperative working.

8.9 The number of prisoners with mental health problems continues to concern the Board. The Board is encouraged, therefore, that the new Head of Healthcare has a background and a particular interest in this area. She is herself conducting the ongoing Mental Health Awareness training for staff; and has plans to seek accreditation by the Royal College of Psychiatry of the mental health facilities in Belmarsh. The latter entails meeting a set of standards and there is much work to be done to achieve it. The Board looks forward to developments.

8.10 The Board highlighted in last year's report its concern that the method of calculating the waiting times for the transfer of mentally ill prisoners to secure units did not accurately reflect the actual time a prisoner spent in prison before transfer. The Board understands that consideration is being given to the method of collecting the data and the Board will continue to take an interest in this aspect. In the meantime, the Head of Healthcare has set up a system to better monitor transfers and the Board welcomes this.

8.11 Two other initiatives undertaken this year by Care UK are worthy of mention:

- the formation of a Health Awareness Action Committee to address issues such as mental health; sexual health; smoking cessation; and healthy eating;
- the formation of a Risk Management Forum for Care UK staff led by a senior professional.

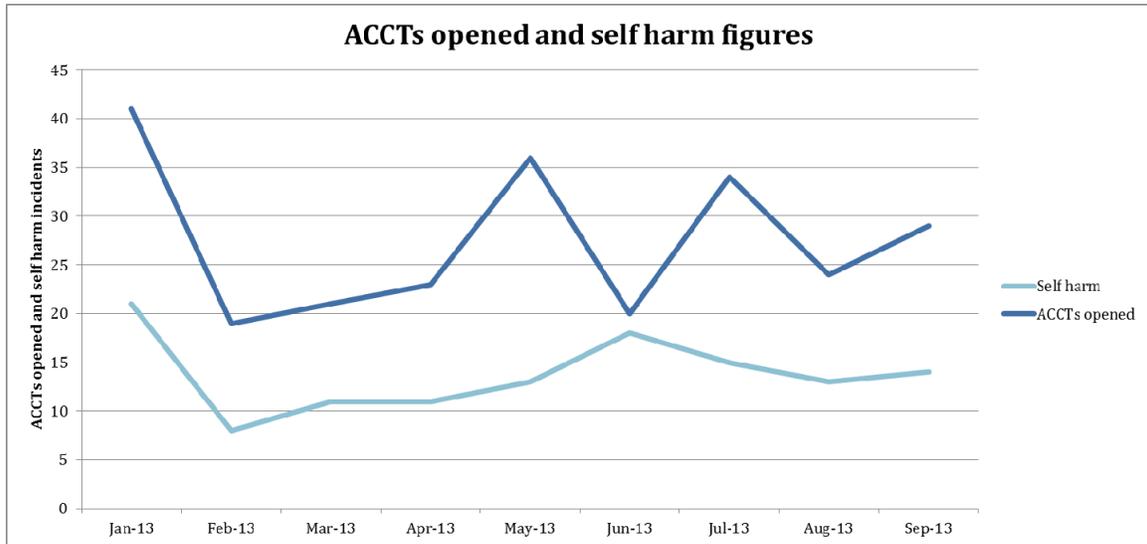
8.12 The Board wishes to thank Care UK for their cooperation this year.

9 SAFER CUSTODY

Prisoners at risk of self-harm

9.1 There has been a drop in the incidence of self-harm. Some of those who self-harm do so repeatedly, thus skewing figures. There has also been a reduction in the number of ACCTs.

Graph 1 provides a comparison between ACCTs opened and self-harm statistics



Listeners

9.2 It remains difficult to train and retain enough Listeners. These prisoner volunteers do a vital job as first line contacts. The Listeners' phone continues to be available although there were episodes of abuse and security concerns.

Deaths in Custody

- 9.3 For many years the Board has criticised the delay in carrying out Coroners' Inquests. There are currently eight outstanding, one dating back to 2011. This is unacceptable.
- 9.4 There have been two Deaths in Custody in the reporting year. The Ombudsman's report on one death raised concerns about procedures and practices around the Reception of new prisoners. The prison has begun to address those areas.
- 9.5 Much good work continues to be done by prison staff to keep prisoners safe, but there are concerns regarding the impact of benchmarking and regime change and the Board hopes the good work will continue under NWW.

10 SEGREGATION (CARE AND SEPARATION) UNIT

- 10.1 The Segregation Unit saw significant pressures on its limited capacity during the reporting year. This was due to a combination of factors including the fluctuating and unpredictable population and the fact that some of the cells on the lower level were out of use again having been damaged by prisoners.
- 10.2 Regrettably, the number of multi – unlock prisoners occasionally means that the staff cannot afford a full regime in terms of daily access to showers, exercise and telephone calls. The Board understands that there are plans to section off the exercise yard so that more than one prisoner can make use of it at any one time, which should help to facilitate a more flexible regime. The showers have been in a poor condition for some time and anticipated refurbishment work is urgently needed.
- 10.3 The Board attends almost all Good Order and Discipline (GOOD) Review Boards and is often impressed with the efforts that staff make to engage with prisoners and attempt to re-integrate them. However, there is no doubt that more could be done in the recording of these daily interactions.
- 10.4 The Board noted in its last report that security investigations often delay progress being made with particular prisoners, especially if the police are involved. This can result in stays in the unit being extended unnecessarily and it is hoped that the Security Governor will continue to prioritise these cases.
- 10.5 The unit regularly houses two or three CSC prisoners. This generally occurs for a limited period during trials but there are often significant

- 10.6 During the reporting period, one prisoner was held for several months for his own protection. It is hoped that a long term solution to this and other similar cases can be found in the near future, as it is far from desirable for the unit to be used for this purpose.
- 10.7 The special cells, which contain no furnishings, were used to hold prisoners on four occasions for very short periods as a way of managing particularly volatile individuals. When the Board has witnessed the use of this facility, it has been managed professionally by the officers involved.
- 10.8 Governors have highlighted delays in the adjudication process which have apparently occurred due to the non-attendance of the relevant officers. The Board hopes that the prison can find a solution to this in the near future as prisoners should not be held in the Segregation Unit for any longer than necessary because of administrative failures.
- 10.9 The Board is concerned that the reduction and / or removal of public funding for prison law cases in December 2013 has meant that it is more difficult for convicted prisoners to obtain legal advice on adjudications or on other issues connected with the Segregation Unit. The Board believes that more can be done to reduce the effect of this by, for example, facilitating short telephone calls between prisoners and their legal representatives which can often short-circuit matters and reduce delays.
- 10.10 The introduction of a young adult (aged 18 to 24) population into the prison in September 2013 initially led to an increase in the number of fights and assaults leading to adjudication. Encouragingly, this number has now dropped significantly.
- 10.11 The Use of Force records for the whole prison are collated by the Custodial Manager in the Segregation Unit. Whilst staff have enabled access to these documents, the Board is concerned that many files are incomplete. There continues to be a significant backlog at the time of writing. It is obviously preferable for officers to be afforded sufficient time to complete their statements shortly after the incident in question so that the relevant records can be properly maintained. In addition, the Designated Search Team was failing to submit its Use of Force paperwork but the Board understands that measures have been taken to ensure that this problem does not occur in future. In addition to the delay in completing the reports, the Board has observed that the reports do not appear to have been written independently, thus compromising their validity.

- 10.12 When Use of Force is part of a planned intervention, best practice provides that the whole event should be filmed. The Board believes that there is room for improvement in this area. From reviews of recent footage carried out by senior staff, it is apparent that the camera is sometimes too far away from the prisoner or the view into the relevant area is blocked. On one occasion, a Custodial Manager closed a cell door during an intervention. The obstruction meant that the use of the camera served no useful purpose. Generally, however, the camera is used effectively.
- 10.13 The Board has, in the past, frequently raised the issue of delays in the transfer of segregated prisoners' property from the houseblocks to the unit. The Board is aware of several instances where the hold ups have lasted for over a week. Unfortunately, this continues to be the most regular complaint from prisoners in the unit and is completely unacceptable, especially where legal papers are involved.

11 HIGH SECURITY / SPECIAL SECURE UNIT

- 11.1 The number of exceptional risk prisoners during the first part of the reporting year meant that this area of the prison remained a Special Secure Unit (SSU). It reverted to a High Security Unit (HSU) in spring 2014. The Board has commented in the past on the proficient way in which the staff in the unit manage this particularly challenging group of prisoners.
- 11.2 The Board is pleased that additional officers were drafted into the unit to maintain a reasonable regime but it remains to be seen whether this will be continued following the benchmarking reorganisation. Fortunately, the relatively high staff prisoner ratio means that many issues are resolved through the normal application process without the need for any involvement from the Board.
- 11.3 As the Board has reported previously, there is no integration with education or the workshops and purposeful activity is therefore non – existent unless a prisoner chooses to engage in some form of distance learning with the assistance of the library. The Board notes that attempts made to address this problem in the last year have been unsuccessful.
- 11.4 Prisoners in the unit continue to complain of delays in arranging visits, receiving post and obtaining approval to call their requested telephone numbers. While the Board acknowledges that security issues can cause delays, it is imperative that the prisoners held in such an isolated place are permitted timely and reasonable contact with their family and legal representatives.

- 11.5 The Segregation Unit within the HSU / SSU is primarily there to address short term issues of indiscipline in a similar way to the main unit. However, it was used during the reporting year, for extended periods, to house certain prisoners with particularly complex issues. Fortunately these individuals have now been moved. The Board recognises that security concerns can cause some delays but it is imperative that the length of these stays is minimised where possible.
- 11.6 The future strategy for the unit remains under discussion, as it has been for several years. The Board hopes that a coherent plan for this will emerge shortly.

12 RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

Residence

- 12.1 The prison has 857 prisoners in normal location and with an operation cap of 938 which has risen since September 2013. There are four houseblocks and, in spite of staff managing potential conflicts and unrest, the Board continues to have concerns about cell-sharing, given that this compromises privacy and decency. Each crowded cell at maximum capacity (3) should have space for beds (1 two tier and a single bed), storage which may be compacted, a chair and table area and room for circulation and movement (PSI C.11). The Board does not consider that there is sufficient space in crowded cells to comply with this PSI. The following conflicts could arise between prisoners as a result of cell-sharing:
- washing (in preparation for prayers) in a multi-occupancy cell;
 - use of sinks for purposes other than personal hygiene, such as washing dishes;
 - arguments between prisoners if one wishes to watch TV and the other(s) want(s) 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 use during mealtimes;
 - space for only one prisoner to eat their meal at a table;
 - use of the cupboard as a table during mealtimes;
 - different standards of cell-cleaning by prisoners;
 - confidentiality of legal papers;
 - the third prisoner in a 3 occupancy cell has no cupboard for storage and clothes and papers are stored under the bed.

- 12.2 Several cells appear to have broken extractor fans which is unhealthy and inhumane as prisoners (apart from the LPPU) eat in cell. The Board has very recently been informed that these fans have been repaired. Checking this is a time consuming exercise which the Works Department cannot carry out on a regular basis due to staffing levels.
- 12.3 The Board is concerned about the state of toilets in cells. Toilets should be screened in multi-occupancy cells but the plywood screen does not contain smell or noise. Toilets are not clean and prisoners cannot clean them themselves because suitable materials need specialist outside-contracted cleaning companies. This is not decent.
- 12.4 The Board commends the reinstatement of prisoner forum meetings.
- 12.5 The Board is concerned about the impact of NWW on residential services:
- prisoners are unable to receive showers every day;
 - the recommended 10 hours out of cell a day is often not possible;
 - attendance at activities (education, library, workshops, gym etc.) is not always possible;
 - mail delivery is delayed.
- 12.6 Staffing throughout the prison continues to be impacted by high sickness levels. Staffing levels are sometimes short, resulting in officers being re-deployed to other areas.
- 12.7 At present, the personal officer scheme operates by designating officers to be responsible for the occupants of specific cells. The Board would prefer officers to be assigned to specific prisoners.

Life Sentenced Prisoners

- 12.8 At the end of the reporting year there were 116 prisoners in Belmarsh serving life sentences. This is higher than any previous year and the Board has concerns over the length of time that these prisoners are spending in a local prison. The Board recommends that, following sentencing, life sentenced prisoners should be moved quickly to a dispersal prison so that they can undertake appropriate training.
- 12.9 A Lifer Forum is run regularly and representatives attend so that specific questions can be answered and the expectations of life-sentenced prisoners can be structured. The Board has concerns about the selection process for this group and whether this group of prisoners have access to appropriate purposeful activity.
- 12.10 A Lifer Day is held quarterly and family and friends can visit all day. This is well-attended by a range of departments and agencies from the prison

Indeterminate Sentenced Prisoners

- 12.11 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 to be considered for parole.

Vulnerable Prisoners

- 12.12 Vulnerable prisoners are held on a spur in a houseblock and not in the general prison. The Board is pleased to report that, contrary to last year, the overspill accommodation has not been much used. There is little time out of cell in this overspill area so less use is beneficial. The Board notes that the movement of Cat B VPs has improved with the change in role of HMP Rye Hill. It is hoped this will continue in the next reporting year.

Kitchen

- 12.13 The food budget per head remains at £1.96. The Board continues to receive applications and verbal statements from the prisoners regarding the quality and portion control of meat. Notwithstanding, the Board believes that the kitchen does an excellent job.
- 12.14 A breakfast pack is handed to prisoners when the evening meal is served. The Board thinks this is a disincentive for prisoners to get up for daily activities.
- 12.15 Staffing levels in the kitchen, including chefs and prisoners, continue to be a problem, being regularly below complement. Additionally, prisoners working in the kitchen are able to gain only basic hygiene qualifications and this is considered an underused opportunity. The Board commends the plans to bid for a new kitchen and hopes this will result in improved use of the facilities.
- 12.16 The Board commends the kitchen on the provision of specialist diets, for example during Ramadan, 260 meals were provided each day, in specialist hot boxes, which was well-managed.

London Pathways Progression Unit

- 12.17 The LPPU was first introduced to HMP Belmarsh in 2012 and has just completed its first full year of operation. It was set up nationally to improve the management of offenders with personality disorders prior to release. The unit has a capacity of 41 places for mainly Cat A and B prisoners. It is located in houseblock 1 in a separate spur and is now firmly established as part of the daily regime. There has been a gradual

- 12.18 Staff for the unit volunteered and successful applicants were provided with training from the Knowledge and Understanding Framework. The staff appointed have shown a professional and empathetic approach leading to a clear strategy for prisoner and staff involvement in the running of the unit. The prison officers are ably supported by a clinical team both medical and psychological, and all work closely to support the prisoners.
- 12.19 Since opening, there has been a minority of prisoners who felt that the unit was not suitable for them and they have been allowed to relocate. The majority of prisoners are involved in the programmes designed to assist with a successful release into society; several have already made a positive transition.
- 12.20 The unit provides an important service to meet the needs of many prisoners throughout the estate and the Board will continue to monitor its progress. The LPPU has been thoughtfully introduced and well managed.

Offender Management Unit

- 12.21 The Board is concerned that the number of incomplete OASYs reports has risen during the reporting year. The reasons for this are:
- all prisoners serving 12 months or more must now have OASYs documentation; previously this applied only to high risk prisoners;
 - there has been a shortage of staff in the OASYs group ;
 - it can take 6 hours to complete an OASYs form and conduct interviews. As the form assesses the risk factor of an individual prisoner with regard to HDC it is vital to take the time to make the right assessment;
 - there is an increase in prisoners arriving at Belmarsh without completed OASYs forms from the sending prison.

Foreign Nationals

- 12.22 The FN population in Belmarsh has exceeded 250 but as at the end of June 2014 stood at 218, representing 25% of the Belmarsh population. This is twice the national average. The Home Office Immigration Service provides staff to work in the prison on average one day a week. The Board is concerned about the process for managing FNs given the impact of disposing of the following:

- the weekly immigration surgeries;
- the Detainee Advisory Service (DAS);
- FN group meetings;
- FN orderlies;
- the post of FN clerk.

12.23 Belmarsh has 9 prisoners with completed sentences. Several of these persist in dirty protests which the Board understands cost the prison service over £600 per cell clean per prisoner, which can be carried out up to twice a week. One of the prisoners on dirty protest is nearly 5 years over his expired sentence. This has arisen over difficulties in establishing nationalities by Home Office Immigration and because prisoners who are on dirty protest are not moved to other establishments.

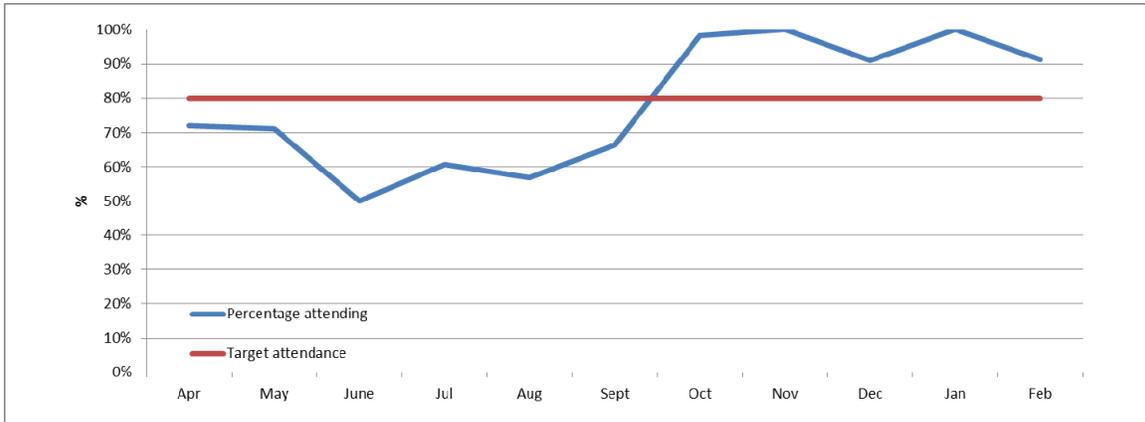
13 RECEPTION

- 13.1 The reception area could benefit from some refurbishment and does not necessarily give the prisoner a good first impression of Belmarsh.
- 13.2 When a prisoner arrives for the first time it is usually during a period of high activity and the Board is concerned that sensitive questions are asked in front of officers and prisoners, which could compromise the information given.
- 13.3 Staff shortages at weekends have led to backlogs of prisoners' property being allocated, as officers who are detailed to manage this may be re-assigned to other duties. Due to time constraints, it is often not possible to deal with all of prisoners' property as they arrive and it can end up in storage. Property issues account for a high number of applications to the Board.

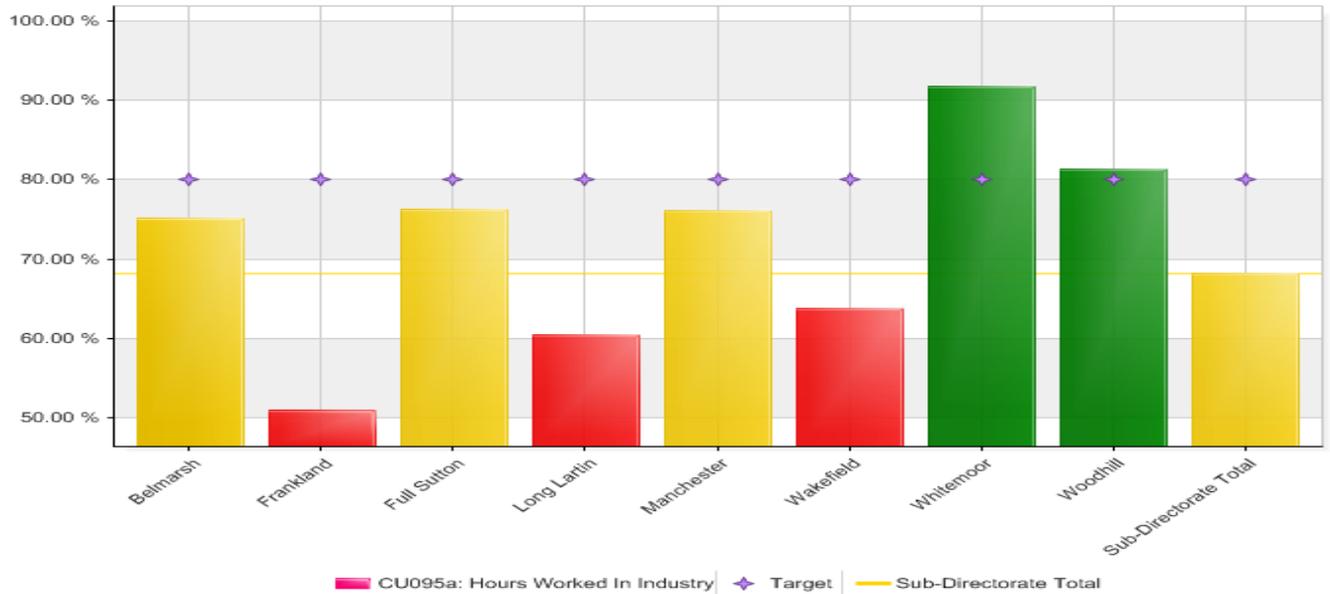
14 REDUCING REOFFENDING

- 14.1 The prison is currently recruiting civilian staff to replace officer instructors in the workshops. The process is slow because of low pay rates and better job opportunities outside the prison service. The Board is disappointed that workshops are frequently closed so that officers can be redeployed in other parts of the prison.
- 14.2 The breakfast pack, teabag, punnet and the new lighting workshops are now well attended, averaging 86% which is above the target attendance measure of 80%. The VP workshop recycling toner cartridges which started in August 2013 has been a great success and output has far exceeded expectations. Belmarsh is the only prison in England currently

Graph 1 shows the number attending workshops compared with the target attending.



Graph 2 shows the workshop attendance chart across the High Security Estate. HMP Belmarsh is at 86.34% YTD and has achieved 25,741.43 hours out of a possible 29,813.00.



14.3 The Board regrets that the shortage of staff has impacted across the reducing reoffending programme, as demonstrated below:

- the “Bricklaying” workshop has closed. This follows a decision from the Benchmarking report that local prisons should not concentrate on accredited vocational courses. The education provider A4E was not interested in taking over the course as part of its contract;
- the Family Man workshop, which was extremely popular and successful, has closed because it was a non-accredited course. The Board hopes that this course can be restarted;
- “Storybook Dads” sessions have been intermittent;
- the Gym has sometimes had insufficient staff to oversee sessions;
- the Chapel has had cancelled courses and sessions, often at very short notice.

14.4 Working Links and Job Centre Plus continue to deal with through the gate issues such as housing, employment and education for prisoners about to be released. The Board is concerned that prisoner, and sometimes relevant staff, attendance at intervention meetings relating to release is often poor, especially in relation to the Job Centre and the Discharge Board.

14.5 Working Links Officer Instructors are being gradually replaced by lay instructors and this is a slow process.

- 14.6 Job Centre Plus has been unable to provide an acceptable level of service, e.g. job searches, building CVs and job applications, due to there being no broad band access to available computers.
- 14.7 The Board is pleased that approximately 200 prisoners have been supported to open bank accounts during the year. Belmarsh has the best record for this across the estate.
- 14.8 The Board is disappointed that still no progress has been made regarding employing Category C prisoners in the gardens.

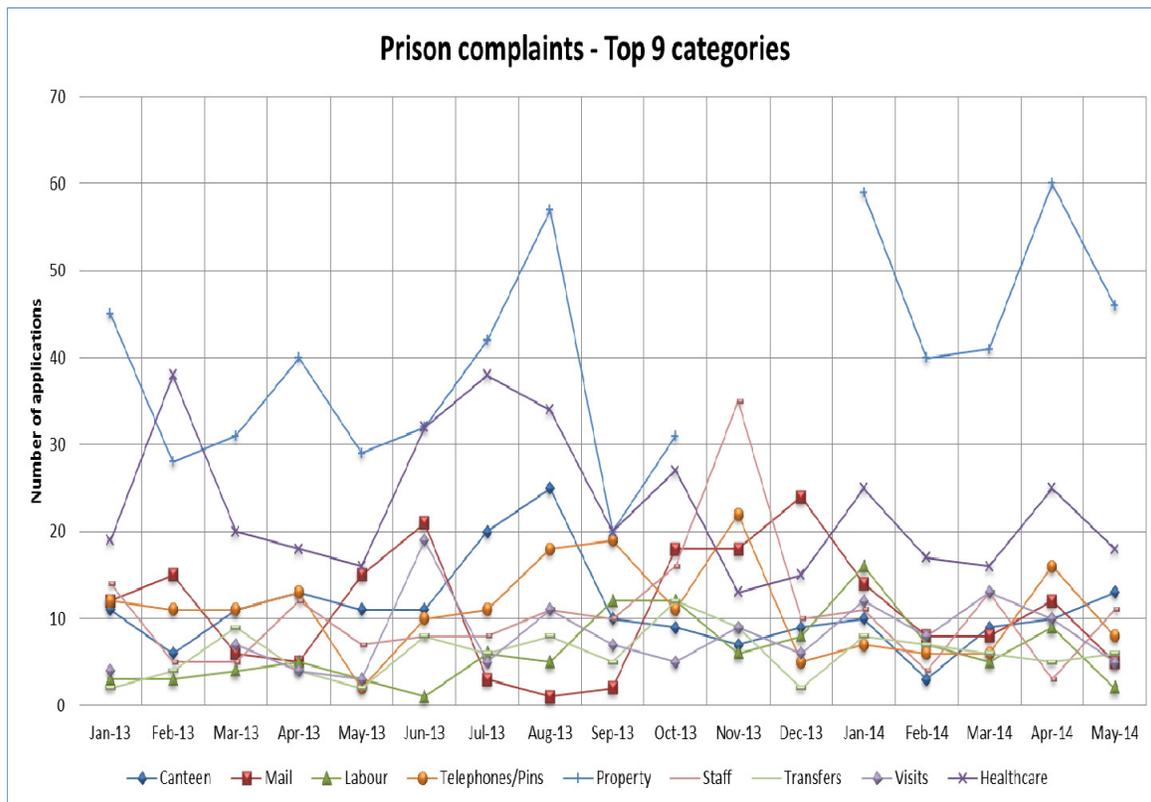
15 BOARD DEVELOPMENT

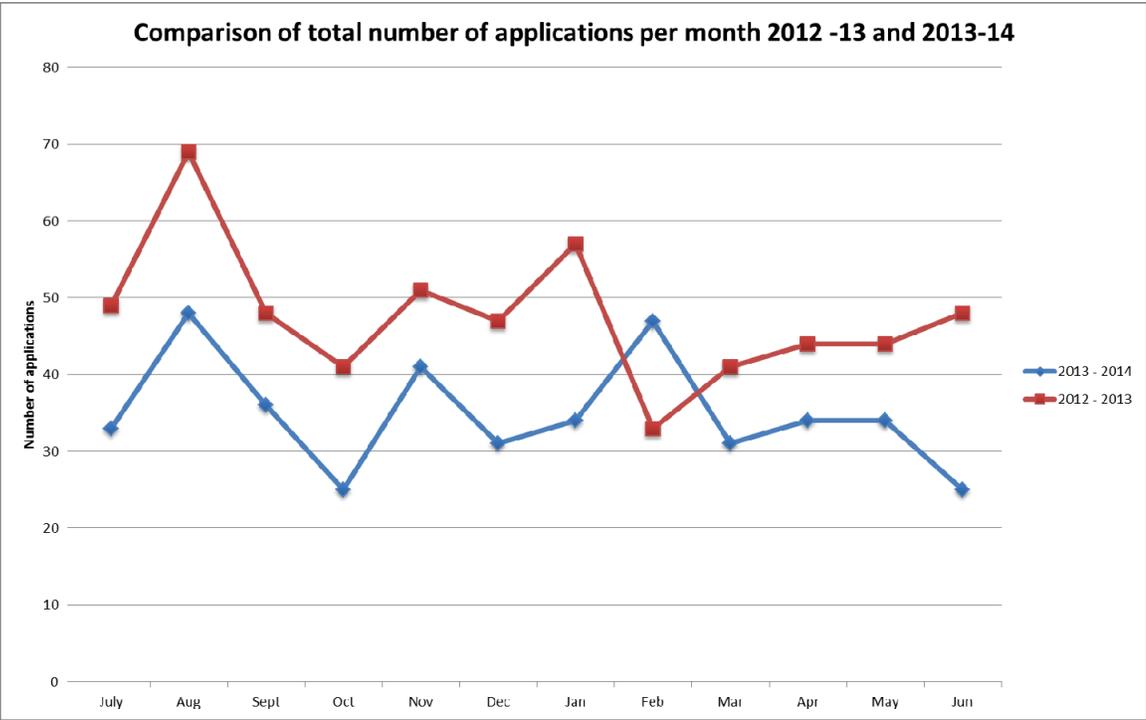
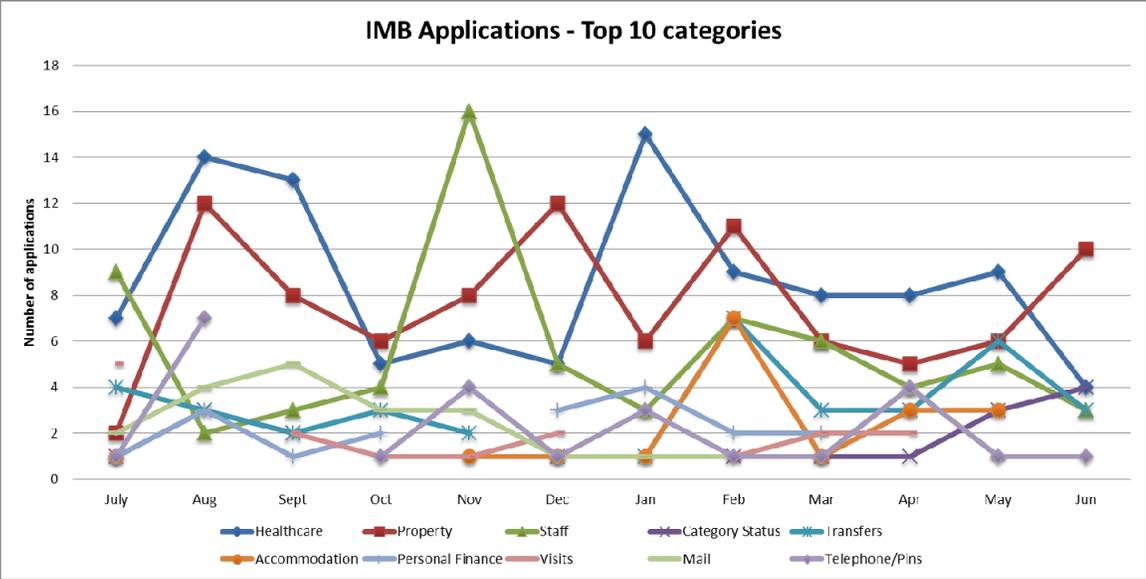
- 15.1 During the year the Board invited a number of guest speakers to explain and discuss their roles in the Prison enabling members to gain a clearer understanding.
- 15.2 The Board made visits to HMP ISIS and HMP Thameside, which share the adjoining sites to Belmarsh. Several members of the Board are dual boarding with these prisons to assist in the development of their IMBs .
- 15.3 Three new members successfully completed their probationary year and all attended their New Members courses. They are now making a valuable contribution to the work of the Board and have accepted areas of special interest as part of their responsibilities. Other members of the Board have attended National Experienced Members courses and given valuable feedback about their extended knowledge and appreciation of the courses.
- 15.4 The Board has plans to make use of Intensive Monitoring, including monitoring the First Night provision with particular attention to the health care of prisoners.
- 15.5 Members have made night visits to continue the monitoring programme developed at previous training days.
- 15.6 The Board holds a training day each year which gives the opportunity to develop skills and plan for special activities in the following year.
- 15.7 Delays in processing new members CTC applications have resulted to difficulties in recruiting new members.

16 BOARD STATISTICS

16.1 The following charts detail the top 9 categories of prison complaints and top 10 IMB applications.

16.2 In the comparison chart, Canteen and Labour are missing from the IMB top 10 as the two categories are joint ninth. Additionally the IMB applications include Category status, Accommodation and Personal Finance are not in the top 9 of prison complaints.





17 GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACCT	Assessment, Care in Custody Teamwork (formerly F2052SH)
CSC	Close Supervision Centre
CSRA	Cell Sharing Risk Assessment
CTC	Counter Terrorism Clearance
DAS	Detainee Advisory Service
FNC	First Night Centre
FN	Foreign National
GOOD	Good Order or Discipline
HCC	Healthcare Centre
HDC	Home Detention Curfew
HSU	High Security Unit
IMB	Independent Monitoring Board
IMR	Inmate Medical Records
IP	In Possession
LPPU	London Pathways Progression Unit
NOMS	National Offender Management System
NWW	New Ways of Working
OMU	Offender Management Unit
PCT	Primary Care Trust
SMT	Senior Management Team
SSU	Special Security Unit
VP	Vulnerable Prisoner
VPU	Vulnerable Prisoner Unit