



**Independent Monitoring Board  
HMP Blundeston,  
Blundeston, Suffolk**

**Annual Report  
July 2011 to June 2012**

**for the Secretary of State  
at the Ministry of Justice**

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## Statutory Role of the Independent Monitoring Board

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

The Board is specifically charged to:

1. Satisfy itself as to 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 which is has
3. **To 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 custody.**

To enable the Board to carry out these duties effectively its members have right of access to every prisoner and every part of the prison and also to the prison's records.

## The Prison.

HMP Blundeston is a category C prison situated in North East Suffolk, about 4 miles north of Lowestoft. The prison was opened in 1963 with four wings of single cell accommodation intended for 288 prisoners. The cells in the original 4 wings are of minimal size, with two further wings of multiple cells being added, to the main prison block, in the 1970s. Two further wings, prefabricated in structure, have been added to the prison accommodation, the latter being opened in 2008. Both of these wings provide a good standard of accommodation with integral sanitation and showers.

The CNA is now 526, there has been no increase in the past 36 months and although a new kitchen was built in the 1990's, other areas of the prison such as the gymnasium, workshops and office block still have the same capacity as when the prison opened in the "60's". An artificial surface football pitch was provided a few years ago and also a fitness room which is available to prisoners. The volley ball court has been removed. A prefabricated classroom provided for gymnasium teaching courses has finally been made ready. Prefabricated class rooms/meeting areas were added a few years ago for use by the Therapeutic Community on I wing and also a computer workshop. The HMIP report in January 2011 said that a new gymnasium should be provided but the IMB (formerly BOV) have repeated the same recommendation since 1993.

A great deal of investment has been made into the prison buildings in the past year or so, with new roofs on all the workshops and the central area of the prison and also the new heating system has been put in place. There has also been a significant investment by the local Primary Care Trust in refurbishing "Healthcare", providing the new IDTS suite and at the current time J wing is being upgraded. It would seem tragic, with so much investment, if there was ever any thought of closing the prison, as the new investment is coupled with high performance.

The biggest problem, building wise, with the prison is the sanitation provision on A, B, C, and D Wings but some progress is being made to resolve this problem. These four wings **do not have integral sanitation**, access to toilet facilities being available, on application, to a duty officer, by remote unlocking of the cell, during times, of course, when prisoners are locked up. Prisoners with reduced daily regimes, due to staffing cuts over recent years, spend more time being locked behind their cell doors. This means that they spend more time subject to the "Nightsan" operations This system was considered to be "state of the art" when first introduced in the 1960's, but with the rapid progress of conditions within the prison estate is now "way behind the times" and works as follows. The Nightsan" provides a system where a time limit (6 minutes) is set for prisoners in turn, having access to the toilet facilities. Only one prisoner on each landing of 24 cells is allowed access to the toilet facilities at a time, so a stacking system comes into operation. Prisoners therefore have to wait to use the toilet and some complain that they may wait more than an hour to get the

access they require. "Pots" are provided for use within the cell but this is highly unsatisfactory. The whole stacking process has to be reset if an officer, as part of the night patrol, for example, has to go on the landing. This causes more frustration and delays for prisoners and makes A, B, C and D wings unsuitable for prisoners who need constant monitoring due to "self harm risks" during night hours. The intention was that in recent weeks a system would be operational on one wing for enhanced prisoners. New gates have been introduced to further control prisoner movements on this landing but to allow prisoners access to the toilet facilities at all times, with their cell doors remaining unlocked. The gates allow only small numbers of prisoners to have access to each toilet and prisoners have been risk assessed to minimise any control issues. Prisoners will be warned that if they abuse this privilege, just once, then they will be immediately removed and placed in cells without such access. If the new system works, then it will be rolled out slowly across all the other 4 wings, but funding is an issue and the IMB is informed that the funding is given and then taken away and then given again, so the whole matter is not resolved. In addition £20,000 is required to upgrade the current electronic system to cope with a number of cells being opened at the same time and this is also delaying progression of the new innovative idea, developed by the Governor which has, in his own words, "Is taking longer to bring into operation than he would have liked". The problems with the electronics is just another hindrance, but when all the issues are resolved and funding provided the changes will mean a huge step forward for these wings and demonstrates courage to trust prisoners to behave and not to abuse their privileges.

It is worth repeating, in this report, that the lack of integral sanitation has been mentioned in a the House of Lords debate over 12 months ago following the publishing of the National IMB report on cell sanitation; Blundeston has 278 of the 2000 cells without "in cell sanitation" still within the prison estate. Something has to be done at Blundeston as the system is beginning to fail electronically and the Governor's idea has, we hope, real possibilities. The IMB still believe however that when the new heating system was being put in place over the past year or so, it would have been an ideal opportunity, and cheaper in the long term, to provide in cell sanitation into A, B, C and D Wings at the same time. The IMB is also led to believe that a court case where a prisoner sued HMPS over "Night sanitation" being "Degrading and inhumane treatment" failed. It was to be a test case and there would have been concern that the "Door would have been opened" for many prisoners to sue HMPS on a similar basis. That door is at present closed, but for how long? Perhaps Blundeston prisoners may have a better case in the future, if it could be said that HMPS failed to take the opportunity to provide in cell sanitation, when there was a clear opportunity to do so at the time when the heating was being refurbished.

The Laundry has been upgraded in the past 2 years or so to take laundry from other establishments in the Eastern Area, but it is still not fully operational. There are inadequate fans in the building, with the working temperature becoming unacceptably high during

warm summer days. When the roof was replaced, the IMB understands, the number of extraction fans was reduced and no fan is near the area which gets hottest. This matter has been raised with the Deputy Governor and action is being taken to attempt a resolution.

The multiple occupancy cells, on F and G wings, provide poor accommodation, but some prisoners like this arrangement, as they appreciate the opportunity to share a cell with others. F and G wing cells do at least have integral sanitation, even though it is shared by several prisoners. The shower facilities on F and G wing are very poor and constantly have to be refurbished to cope with peeling paint etc.

More work has been completed by the local Primary Care Trust to improve the facilities in "Healthcare" this is in addition to provision, last year, of a dispensary and other facilities for prisoners on the Integrated Drug Treatment Service (IDTS). "Healthcare" is nice and new and clean inside with better facilities for staff and prisoners. The IDTS unit, located adjacent to D wing, where prisoners on the drug maintenance scheme are located, includes a supervised consumption area for those on IDTS, office space for IDTS staff plus waiting room, two interview rooms and a group room. The group room includes facilities for teleconferencing and has four cameras, two static and two mobile, so that prisoners should not need direct supervision by an Officer when being given their Methadone/Subutex. Please see comments on IDTS later in the report. Observation however of all the administration of IDTS medication is essential. The IMB assumes that the Primary Care Trust would be less than impressed if the prison were to be closed following all this recent investment and would wonder if the money should have been better spent elsewhere.

Between 16 and 18 prisoners go out, each day, to work in the community, released on temporary licence. Some go as far as Norwich to work and others in and around the prison locality. This project provides an excellent opportunity looking towards the rehabilitation of offenders, giving them opportunity to do a proper day's work and to get some reward for their work. It is also a bold step taken by the Governor as this sort of experiment, if that is the right word, has never been tried at Blundeston prison before. The prisoners have responded extremely well to the opportunities they are given and, in spite of one or two challenges in recent weeks, all has gone very well. The prisoners are located on a separate wing, which has some extra facilities, to improve the quality of life, while in the prison on evenings and weekends. The location of these prisoners on a separate wing reduces the pressures to bring illicit substances into the prison.

The prison provides work and training in a number of workshops. Courses in welding, carpentry, painting and decorating, printing with its ancillary computer requirements, are all available within the prison. The welding workshop won the Elton trophy for best workshop in the whole of the prison service in 2011. The winning of the trophy is a huge achievement by staff and prisoners in the welding shop, against very strong opposition, and just demonstrates the value of training for prisoners coupled with devoted and able instructors.

The prison also boasts an excellent, award winning, Recycling Unit. Prisoners are able to work toward qualifications including NVQ's and the Preparation for Employment Qualification, the latter looking at Health and Safety in the "Work environment".

The gymnasium provides not only exercise for prisoners but also runs courses leading to sporting qualifications. Re-specification of the gymnasium in recent months has led to the loss of 52 workplaces per week for prisoners. This loss is providing a huge challenge to the prison management to try and find another 52 work opportunities for prisoners against the background of funding cuts. Prisoner Education needs are provided by "A4e".

Ipswich Housing Trust provides a debt counsellor within the resettlement facility. The IMB are aware that debt problems are a large factor, quite often, in offending behaviour and would reiterate these comments in last year's report. **The Government in its pursuit of reducing re-offending should look more closely at the relationship between debt and offending behaviour and increase the availability of debt counsellors and make them part of rehabilitative pathways.**

"Aquila" provided a computer workshop for prisoners with 14 places. They have lost the funding for this work, which means the loss of 14 workplaces places for prisoners.

"Tribal" does excellent work as part of the induction procedure for prisoners, when they arrive at the prison. This is to ensure positive outcomes for prisoners and give them motivation and purpose during their time at the prison. They can go back periodically to monitor how they are progressing and then Tribal helps with their resettlement plan on release. Only 3 interviews are funded for each prisoner.

The prison has its own internal television station, Channel 7, which also provides a great deal of information for prisoners in their cells watching the TV. Even the IMB have a slot each day telling the prisoners what we can do for them. Such an idea shows the sort of innovation currently operating within the prison, demonstrating that every method possible is being used to help prisoners and provide them with information.

East Coast Health is responsible for Medical and Dental care in the prison. (See section on Healthcare), Suffolk Probation Service has a contract to provide services. The member of the Probation Team, who has looked after MAPPA information for many years and more recently the VISOR system, was formerly an officer in Blundeston. He is leaving soon and we wish him well with grateful thanks for his work over the years. "Job Centre plus" visit the prison regularly.

The "Ormiston Trust" runs the Visitors Centre. "Citizens Advice" also provides advice to prisoners in the Resettlement Centre. The Samaritans provide outstanding support to the prison and training for the "Listeners" within the prison.

Unfortunately, because Prison Governors have no managerial control over the external contractual services there are frequently difficulties which require long periods of negotiation. We are fortunate that our Governor is skilled in that area and negotiations are consequently reduced to a minimum.

The recruitment freeze, which has been in operation for some months, makes it very difficult for the prison to recruit staff when they need to. During most of the year a Health and Safety officer has been coming from Norwich prison on a part time basis, towards the end of the year a different officer is contracted to come one day per week. However, the IMB are told, if there us were to be a serious incident the lack of such a fulltime officer may make the prison vulnerable to criticism and claims. However the recruiting freeze prevents the appointment of the required person. The post of Health and Safety Officer, so the IMB understands has been advertised internally within HMPS and will be advertised fully once “Fair and Sustainable” comes into operation.

The IMB, of course, is aware of “Fair and Sustainable”, the new employment conditions for staff and the desire by the Prison Service not to recruit any staff, under the old contract arrangements. However the practicalities of such delay can make life very difficult for any prison endeavouring to maintain courses and a safe environment for prisoners and staff. As ever, it appears that money is more important than people.

## **Report Summary and Overview and issues raised by the report**

Blundeston prison is currently a high performing prison. It reaches “level four”, based on its performance over the last few months. This is a remarkable achievement considering the continuing cuts in the budget over recent years. Last year’s report mentioned a challenging year following a report by the Chief Inspector of Prisons. The prison has put that “Behind” and moved on to a much improved performance in the past year.

Following the Chief Inspector’s report the then new Governor, David Bamford, produced a long and detailed action plan to improve the prison’s performance and resolve the criticisms in the HMCIP report. At the IMB Board meeting about three months ago the Governor produced the action plan showing that almost all of it had been completed within just over 12 months. The original plan was to run for two years, but has been accelerated to fit in with required timescales. About the only issue unresolved is that of the night sanitation and the wish to have dormitory arrangements being rolled out, if successful, on A, B, C, D wings. This matter is in hand but has not, in the Governor’s own words, happened as quickly as he would have liked.

The improvement in the performance of the prison demonstrates shrewd and careful management, with a real understanding of the issues involved and how to resolve them. This success in management has been matched by the performance of staff responding to

the need to ensure that HMP Blundeston is a high performing prison and so secure its future. These comments do not mean that everything is perfect and that there are not times of difficulties and challenges, which would be expected in any prison, but the performance is a credit to the professionalism of all levels of prison staff.

The IMB are kept fully informed of the issues of concern within the prison. We are extended every courtesy by prison staff and the Governor, his deputy, and all members of the Senior Management Team who respond to our concerns, both small and large. This openness enables us to monitor effectively and be sure that there is nothing hid from us.

This good performance does not mean that the IMB are happy with the staffing cuts over recent years. The concerns about security and the response available, if there were to be a serious incident must still remain, such is the thin covering of uniformed staff. Discipline grade officers have been reduced from over 140 to 104 in the last 2 years, as mentioned in last year's report. The professionalism of staff provides a good and constructive atmosphere within the prison, at most times, and this works to prevent serious disruption of the prison regime with the consequential security implications. To provide training for staff, particularly, to maintain their control and restraint requirements, the prison has to lock up prisoners for a whole day once per month. There are just not enough officers to provide cover on the wings and carry out training with meaningful numbers at the same time. Further on this point, it is quite clear following recent events, in a serious incident where 3 members of staff, are required to deal with each prisoner, coupled with all the other staff required at the incident, there are not enough staff remaining on the wings. It is quite possible that in certain circumstances, not mentioned for security reasons, part of the prison could be lost as a result of the need to deploy of a number of staff to deal with a serious incident.

Recently some of the "ROTL" prisoners, who go out on day release told IMB members how much the prison had deteriorated in the past 2 years. They speak of prison officers having less time to listen to prisoners, as there are fewer staff and those officers that remain are under much greater pressure and their morale is not good. Those were prisoner comments, but considered fairly genuine and not malicious, but just their point of view. On the other hand, a staff survey carried out during the year showed a very high level of staff satisfaction with their work at Blundeston prison.

What is clear, and the IMB has been saying this for many years, one of the most valuable functions within a prison is the relationship between staff and prisoners which can often have a more positive outcome on "rehabilitation" than offending behaviour courses, work and education. It is such a vital part of the function of a prison when working to constructively promote law abiding behaviour both inside, and outside the prison on release. With the reduction in uniformed officers and those that remain having to "Plug the gaps", and also spending more time on computers, the level of communication between

staff and prisoners is reducing, making prisons, Blundeston still does well, less effective and is an inevitable consequence of funding cuts to the Prison Service.

The prisoners also told the IMB that Blundeston is a good place to do your “bird” as the time passed quickly. They could give no reason for this fact but “time passes at Blundeston”, so we are told, more quickly than at other prisons.

Following the completion of the replacement of the heating system the prison returned to full operational capacity. There was a rapid influx of prisoners, and it seemed that other prisons had sent some of the most difficult prisoners to Blundeston. There was a period of some difficulty within the prison with an increase in incidents particularly within the segregation unit. The challenges were managed well and everything has settled down again but it does indicate how difficult things can be and the potential risks from having fewer uniformed staff in place.

The prison continues to meet its Key Performance Targets, with the exception of sickness levels. This target was only narrowly missed but demonstrates how difficult these things are to manage. The IMB is aware that some 8 staff on “Long term sick” have been removed from their posts through proper procedure. This where there is no prospect of the person returning to work.

Industrial relations are generally good. Prison staff are keen to promote the long term future of the prison and of course their own jobs. There was the “National day of action” in May with uniformed staff returning to work after lunch. They also ensured adequate staffing for prisoners to receive their lunch. Everything settled down very quickly and there were no incidents as a result of this action, in fact it was said that the prisoners probably quite enjoyed having a morning off. The implications and arrangements for “Fair and sustainable” have been well managed by the Governor and his Senior Management Team. It has been recognised and that they have managed “to get their head around the system” and been able to provide a reasonable amount of information for prison staff on which they are able to decide their futures. Some uniform staff, who have been employed in the Prison Service for many years, find the implications of “Fair and sustainable” difficult to work out and in particular their pension entitlements, under both the new and old arrangements, and therefore how best to promote their careers in their last years of service. Many staff are concerned of the requirement to work till 68 years of age and how they will cope with strong young men when their own strength and speed has diminished with age. Even some officers express concern now they have reached 40 years of age, let alone 68. It is not that they are weak, or not prepared to work and deal with prisoners under C&R procedures, but they are realistic about the toll that the passing of years brings on their bodies.

The IMB’s understanding is that the management structure within prisons is to be standardised. The assumption is that this is based on some Activity Based Costing (ABC)

model. The implications of this at Blundeston are that one Grade F manager will be surplus to requirements. *(This manager, since the end of the reporting period, we are delighted to hear has found employment in another prison, but he will still be a loss to Blundeston).* This is highly regrettable, the IMB are aware of the vast experience and capabilities of staff at this level, and for them to be, possibly, lost to the Prison Service is highly regrettable. There are some of us who believe that there are many flaws in the ABC costing models, bench marking etc. which do not take into account individual situations and are naive in their conception.

The proportion of prisoners who come from East Anglia and are accommodated at Blundeston has increased over the past year. There are approximately 250 prisoners from Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex, although there are still prisoners from other parts of the country and some foreign nationals within the prison. Some prisoners don't want to be at the prison because of its geography and difficult access for relatives for visiting. This has always been the case, although because of the low level of drug availability and the positive regime many prisoners are pleased to be at the prison. The wish not to be at the prison should have improved with more local prisoners being accommodated at HMP Blundeston but there are requests to move away from the prison soon after arrival. Some of the East Anglian prisoners, in reality, come from the west of the region and their families have a 6 hour round trip to Blundeston. The IMB tends to encounter these prisoners who want to move away, as they seek our help in doing so.

The success of the ROTLs allowing prisoners to go and work outside in the community in response to the Government's green paper "Breaking the cycle" continues. The whole project has been remarkable, being such a bold step for Blundeston prison, and such an encouragement to prisoners wishing to work towards rehabilitation and employment on release. All the prisoners on day release are accommodated on H wing which keeps them from the rest of the prison, so minimising the pressure to bring in illicit substances and items. H wing has had some encouraging improvements to its facilities to add to the motivation of prisoners and soon their cells will remain unlocked all the time.

The requirement to have prisoners working a full working week, again required in the Government's green paper, has been achieved for 12 prisoners in the printing workshop. It proved quite challenging to provide adequate security and the provision of food for prisoners, who would not return to the wings during the day. There are plans to bring a full week working in to the laundry and possibly the welding workshop and the kitchen. The goal is to have 100 prisoners working a "Full working week".

The loss of the contract and funding by Aquila for one of the Computer Laboratories has meant the loss of 14 workplaces for prisoners and the re-designation of the gymnasium hath has meant the loss of a good number of places of purposeful activity for prisoners. The IMB's last information was that only 85% of prisoners had purposeful activity during the day

and the prison, against the background of all the cuts, are really struggling to provide additional work/training/education places for all prisoners.

The accommodation of prisoners on day release for work in H wing has meant that prisoners on induction, i.e. new receptions, are located on the first landing of A wing. Although the IMB realise that prisoners on induction need to be located somewhere, this arrangement has not been without its difficulties. There was, for a period of time, quite a degree of bullying and taxing of new reception prisoners, some of which has been reported to the IMB. This relates around the canteen supply for prisoners arriving at Blundeston. (Please see the section on canteen). This has led to a small increase in prisoners asking to go to the segregation unit for their own protection. This however should be balanced against a 40% reduction in prisoners being segregated over the past 12 months. This statistic would show that Blundeston is safe place for prisoners. Some of the bullies have been dealt with; in fact there was a period of time during the past year when a number of controlled removals of the bullies from various wings was undertaken under the violence management protocol. The Governor's plan to resolve the issue on A Wing is to have enhanced prisoners on the other landings, in recent weeks the problems do seem to have reduced.

The recruitment freeze, presumably imposed prior to the introduction of "Fair and sustainable", provides real difficulties for prisons trying to maintain their regimes. For example Blundeston prison has been unable to recruit a Health and Safety manager. This manager is required for all sorts of legal reasons and to provide some sort of cover, a manager has been loaned from HMP Norwich for two days a month in recent times. Just towards the end of the reporting period a Health and Safety Officer has been employed one day per week. Our Governor would say but this is not ideal, but the best possible re-arrangement he can make, and makes the prison vulnerable to litigation should there be any major Health and Safety issues. The loss of psychological assistants, as last year, can undermine the provision of offending behaviour courses and so affect the rehabilitation of prisoners and the prison's performance. **Recruitment, in any event, takes far too long, particularly with all the security checks which have to be undertaken. It seems amazing to the IMB that as all are Government departments there is not better communication between them.** The new manager for the Therapeutic Community has been appointed, but that appointment had to be approved by the Director General. The prison is grateful for such intervention, which prevented the loss of someone highly suitable for the job.

The IMB's information is that the prison received over 700 prisoners in the last 12 months and released over 300 prisoners back into the community. Budget cuts mean that there is no fulltime resettlement officer. More prisoners on shorter sentences are now coming to the prison as part of the move to make Blundeston "A prison for those prisoners who lives in East Anglia".

A much more improved protocol has been introduced to deal with prisoners under restraint being taken to the segregation unit. (More details about this are given in the section on safer custody).

There are now approximately sixty prisoners accommodated on D wing, who are on the IDTS “Drugs Programme”. Last year the new dispensary etc. was opened adjacent to D wing to facilitate this arrangement. The whole operation is really very challenging to the prison, with sixty or so amateur pharmacologists all located in one area. Many of these prisoners are also on other medication. The IMB is informed, as we’ve had a number of applications from prisoners about their medication, as part of our investigations, that there is a good deal of swapping of medication and experimentation between prisoners. The recent very thorough search of D wing has uncovered lots of items, medication and hooch, and sent out the strongest message possible to prisoners that unhelpful behaviour will not be tolerated. The misuse use of prescribed medication remains one of the major issues to be resolved in the prison. Please see more in the section on Healthcare

Transportation of prisoners to and from the prison continues to major be a problem. There is less availability of “Moves”, with the consequence that segregation moves are prioritised, meaning that agreed transfers for prisoners as part of the progression in their sentence are delayed, with the subsequent delay in their rehabilitation and progress through the prison system. Even “segregation moves” can take too long with the limited transport available and this is another demonstration of poor contractual arrangements coupled with cost cutting.

Property issues, really the loss of property, still provoke the largest number of applications to the IMB. (Please see the section on property later in the report).

There also continues to be difficulties around the awarding of D categorisation and the Home Detention Curfews for prisoners. Please see the section later in the report.

### **Concerns raised for the Minister.**

1. This comment was made last year and is still totally relevant for the current year. Will the Minister kindly review the proposed budget cuts, realising that prisons will no longer be able to fulfil the requirements of the “Rehabilitation Revolution” with reduced funding. The further budget cuts proposed will mean cuts in the regime the prison can offer towards rehabilitating offenders. The internal security of the prison is put at an increased risk. It is little point making political statements of intent, even when those statements are well meant, without providing the funding to support the intentions.

2. Look into building contracts and their poor procurement to ensure better value for money and greater efficiency into contract fulfilment. Require HMPS to provide funding to replace the “Night San” with integral sanitation. **Please see the section on Building work for more information.**
3. Improve and speed up the recruitment procedures, especially the time taken for security checks, which seems to take an amazingly long time, considering it is all “Government Business”
4. Look at ways of improving and simplifying the D Cat , ROTL and HDC procedures
5. Review the requirement for Healthcare to send a representative to every segregation review, when there are clearly no health issues. This is a waste of the Healthcare staff’s time and while such representation may be required in local prisons, due to the turnover of prisoners and the differing needs, such representation may not always be necessary in a training prison. To prevent an IMB member “signing off” a review if Healthcare are not there, when there are no issues seems perverse and some flexibility should be given to the IMB member in such circumstances. If there are medical issues of course Healthcare must be represented.
6. Improve the availability of transport for prisoners to and from the prison.
7. **Consult with the Office of the Commissioner for Public Offices to resolve the 15 year maximum term of office to be imposed on all IMB members. This will mean the loss to the IMB of all its most experienced members, many members of the National Council and National Trainers. This will weaken the effectiveness of many IMB Boards, with the loss of such vast experience in prisons, which are totally unique environments, at a time when we are needed more than ever, demonstrated by the ever increasing number of applications. The IMB understands that other organisations, lay observers and even the scouts, are also struggling with the imposition of time limits. With the Prime Minister talking about the “Big Society” where is the encouragement for people to be involved, if they will be discarded after 10 or 15 years, having devoted valuable time and gained huge experience, then be thrown on the scrap heap? It is not as if people are queuing up to join IMBs; recruitment becomes increasingly difficult. (Please see further comments on the section on the Board).**

### **Concerns to the Prison Service ;**

Items 1 to 5 identical to last year, things have not changed.

1. Find the funding to provide integral sanitation for A, B,C,D wings

2. Improve the design and planning of building contracts, so the problems encountered with the replacement of the heating, laundry and J Wing will not reoccur
3. Resolve the issue of prisoners' property in general and particularly a protocol should put in place to identify the responsibility for damage incurred to property in transit between prisons. A protocol ought to be put in place too when prisons argue about whether property was sent from one and received by the other. IMB's try to resolve the issues but often it proves impossible and then the Ombudsman becomes involved. Proper protocols would save time and money.
4. Reduce the amount of "Management information" required from the prison in accordance with the reduction of KPT's. Reducing such a requirement would free up managers and officers to spend more time with prisoners, which is what they are really paid to do. The only statistic that really matters is the re-offending rate and that is such a hard thing to properly calculate and relate to each prison.
5. As requested in the 2011 HMCIP report, provide funding for a new gymnasium. The IMB is realistic enough to understand that this is very unlikely to happen in the present time of austerity. However requests have been made for the past 16 years all to no avail, but perhaps we should just keep asking.
6. Not to contract out printing work, so that enough work is provided for prisoners in printing workshops, not only Blundeston suffers in this respect.
7. Resolve the issues with DHL over the slow return of funds to prisoners' accounts when goods are ordered but not received. See section on "Canteen"

### **Concerns to the Governor**

1. Look at the eligibility for ROTLs for prisoners who do not work outside the prison.
2. Watch carefully the developments on D wing with IDTS prisoners and the drug misuse in that area of the prison in particular.
3. Work to ensure that the "new doctor" makes a "good start" at the prison and gets all the support required to address some to the outstanding health care issues.

### **Concerns to the Ombudsman.**

Please read the comments re property.

## **Mandatory areas of reporting.**

### **Equality**

With the introduction of the Equalities Act diversity now becomes more about equality, with many more areas of possible discrimination to be considered. In spite of this there seems to be very few problems in any of these areas within the prison. There is still a high percentage (50%) of prisoners from non-white ethnic groups, this has reduced as Blundeston prison has become less of a London overspill. However racial tensions and difficulties seem to be few and far between. This must be to the credit of staff, who demonstrate an equity in the way they handle prisoners. The IMB has only had one matter to deal with in the past 12 months. That related to a prisoner refused access to a gym course because of his Rastafarian turban. Through the good offices of the Deputy Governor, Equalities Manager and IMB the issue was resolved. Enquiries were made at one of the London prisons, where there are many more Rastafarian prisoners, for advice as part of the process. The issue provided a learning curve for everyone involved.

Impact assessments are made in relation to any changes that are proposed within the prison and the Equalities manager works hard to ensure all matters are thoroughly and properly investigated. Reports, SMARG data, are provided for all the different committees which meet as part of the prison regime. Committees include Safer Custody, Use of Force, Segregation, Lifers, Security and Adjudications. This is to ensure that there are no signs of discrimination, at least from a statistical point of view, in all the various functions of the prison. For example, are more white prisoners receiving adjudications or are there more non-white ethnic prisoners against which "Use of force" has been used. In general the statistics show that there are no issues of concern. Sometimes the sample is so small as to make the statistics unreliable. The HMCIP report back in 2011 found no evidence of racial tensions and difficulties and the IMB would suggest that such a situation still remains.

It should be noted that HMP Blundeston is not suitable for prisoners with mobility issues as the vast majority of the accommodation is not on the ground floor and there are no lifts, just stairs. There is some "flat" accommodation on H, I and J wings but these wings are used for ROTL, TC and Lifer prisoners, respectively, and therefore not available for "normal" prisoners. Prisoners with mobility issues can be accommodated on I wing, if they are to be part of the Therapeutic Community. In general the prison's criteria should prevent prisoners who are unsuitable through mobility issues, and those who could be discriminated against because of their age, coming to the prison in the first place. The Prison Service therefore meets the requirements of discrimination by providing suitable accommodation in other prisons.

The IMB has very few, if any complaints at all, about access to different parts of the prison. If we do then we check with Healthcare to see if there are genuine medical reasons for such a complaint.

A member of the IMB sits on the Equality Action Team.

## Segregation

A new segregation policy was introduced last year. The unit continues to be a very well run operation, staffed by officers both dedicated and with the skills to manage some of the most difficult prisoners. The strict and well controlled environment of the unit provides a message for prisoners who are determined not to cooperate with the prison regime and are accommodated under the GOOD limb of rule 45. A lot of good work is done with this type of prisoner, with the intention of them returning to normal location, having learned to behave in such a manner that does not disrupt the prison regime. The unit also provides a safe haven for prisoners under threat requesting their "Own protection".

The segregation committee meets every two months, chaired by the Deputy Governor, to look into all aspects of the work of the unit.

The segregation reviews take place appropriately and 14 day reviews always take place on a Monday afternoon when the IMB duty member will be in attendance. The IMB have been able to attend the vast majority of Monday afternoon reviews in the past 12 months. The reviews are carried out thoroughly and fairly and there are no issues of concern as far as the IMB is concerned. The additional requirement for Healthcare to provide a representative at each review is fairly well complied with. In accordance with our instructions we will only sign to say the review has been carried out properly, if a member of the Healthcare staff is present. While the IMB at Blundeston appreciates the need to safeguard the medical health of all prisoners, but in particular those who are segregated, it would question the need for a blanket requirement for Healthcare always to have a representative present at a segregation review. There is a limited number of Healthcare staff on duty at any one time and for a member to have to attend a segregation review, means that they cannot be doing other work. Most segregated prisoners at Blundeston do not have medical issues and for the majority of the time the nurse, it is usually a nurse who attends, will say "no issues or problems". Nursing staff visit the unit and every prisoner every day, in any event, so any medical issues will already be in their domain. (A doctor visits 3 times per week.) Blundeston IMB would respectfully suggest some flexibility in the requirement of Healthcare to always have to be at a segregation review, in order for the form to be signed to say the procedure has been carried out correctly. There is no desire to reduce standards, but rather to make best use of the limited resources of Healthcare within the prison. Of course, if there are health concerns for a prisoner Healthcare staff **must** be at a review.

When the prison had its few weeks of difficulties following a return to full capacity the segregation unit was a busy place. A number of difficult prisoners were allocated to the unit, and on a number of occasions cells were smashed by the prisoners resulting in them being located, but not for more than 24 hours and in most situations for only one or 2 hours, in the special cell. Things have now settled down again but there is a blip in the statistics for this time. The HMCIP expressed concern back in 2011 that the special cells had been used nine times in 12 months. Prior to this time of difficulty, there had been no prisoner in the special cell for a number of weeks, rather months, but this all changed and it is difficult to see how else the prison can have managed and the IMB would robustly oppose any criticism based on statistical analysis. We have the advantage of being in the prison all the time and being aware of current operational issues.

In last year's report we mentioned the prisoner who was able to remove the flap on the outside of his cell door in the segregation unit. We thought we'd seen everything, but this year a different prisoner not only managed to remove the flap but was able to make a hole, where the small window would have been almost big enough to put his head through, and was able to throw things at prison staff in the segregation unit corridor. This horrendous damage happened in the early hours of the morning but happily the prisoner was unable to get out of his cell. A whole team of officers, in their protective equipment, remained in the segregation unit, just in case, until the early afternoon when the prisoner was placed in a vehicle and moved to another prison. Three members of the IMB spent time with prisoner, working in shifts, to reassure him. The whole operation went off very successfully as the prisoner walked to the van and needed no restraint. The cellular vehicle had to be fetched from HMP Hollesley Bay, this meant a long delay in moving the prisoner.

Perhaps this demonstrates how difficult some prisoners can be to manage and what a task the Prison Service has keeping them in a secure environment, where many prisoners are all living closely together, and also to be expected to rehabilitate the prisoners and release them as reformed characters. To see the door was to believe it, but the damage was really quite incredible. Much credit goes to all involved in the uneventful removal of this prisoner.

During the refurbishment of the heating in the prison the segregation unit was located in H wing. Although the only possible accommodation available, H wing was less than ideal, and although prisoners were managed well, a number of cells were damaged during this time and the IMB will remember the large flood in the unit, the prisoner having pulled the radiator off the wall and the radiator lying in the middle of the cell completely unattached. Happily in spite of the limitations of H wing there were no really serious problems while the segregation unit was operational there.

As mentioned earlier in the report there has been a change in practice with planned removals of prisoners to the segregation unit, this also applies to any prisoner being removed from the unit. The intention is always, either to de-escalate the situation and

allow the prisoner to walk to the Segregation Unit, the preferred option, or to place the prisoner in ratchet handcuffs, to produce the control required, and then allow the prisoner to walk himself to the unit. This very much reduces a degree of force required, prisoners are very much more compliant, and it also means that they are not necessarily taken to the special cell on immediate arrival in the segregation unit. At the last "Use of force" meeting it was stated that 86% of or removals were now carried out with prisoners in ratchet handcuffs. Overall there has also been a considerable reduction in the "Use of force" in the past year. This demonstrates the success of the violence reduction programme making Blundeston a safer place for both prisoners and staff. As part of the violence reduction programme more prisoners, who are known bullies are removed to the unit, when "In the old days" it was often the victim, who ended up being in the segregation unit for his own protection.

The issue still remains of the searching requirements for prisoners being taken into the segregation unit. The danger of course is that prisoners may have weapons, razor blades or illegal substances hidden on their person. A thorough risk assessment must always be made, but the IMB would suggest that in the majority of cases a search is required, better safe than sorry. Any search safeguards the prisoner against himself and any potential self inflicted harm while under immense stress and probable emotional upheaval at being removed to the unit.

The IMB has produced improved paperwork for its own recording of both prisoners visited in the unit and segregation reviews. We also complete the daily record of every prisoner we see, when we see them, and any other paperwork such as ACCT forms. Every prisoner will be seen at least once a week by the duty IMB member and all prisoners coming into the unit will be seen during that week. This ensures that very regular and thorough monitoring of segregated prisoners is undertaken and any issues which arise can be dealt with immediately and do not wait for the next review.

The IMB are extremely grateful to all the segregation staff for their cooperation and assistance in our visits to the unit, taking us to see every prisoner and keeping us up to date, as much as they can, with the current information about each prisoner

The no smoking policy in the cells of the unit works surprisingly well. The IMB did have a concern about its affect on prisoners, who are now only allowed to smoke in the yard on exercise once a day, but those concerns no longer remain. Nicotine patches are available on request by the prisoner. Prisoners were tempted to go to the segregation unit as a back door way out of the prison when they were unhappy at being located at Blundeston. The non smoking policy tends to work against that sort of action, as does the move of prisoners, who try such a tactic, to a prison other than the one, sometimes well removed, from where the prisoner wants to be.

## **Healthcare and Mental Health**

The basic Healthcare within the prison is provided by the local Primary Healthcare Trust. Mental health provision is by a different trust. The contract for the Healthcare provision via the PCT terminated at the end of June. A doctor's practice in Oulton Broad, Lowestoft has provided the medical cover, with doctors visiting the prison on a rota basis and also in recent months providing doctors visits to the Segregation Unit 3 times per week. A new doctor has been found who has previous experience of working in prisons and will be based in a GP Practice in Gt. Yarmouth, who will in addition provide cover for the doctor's holidays etc. It is hoped, with all the experience the doctor has, the problems of the abuse of prescribed medication, one the prison's major issues, will be tackled and the problems solved. The issues are most acute on D wing where the IDTS prisoners are located. It is essential that the new doctor gets the maximum support possible from the prison, especially the SMT to assist in settling in and enable an excellent level of cooperation for the benefit of all.

The IMB, in relation to the prescribed drug abuse issues, is informed that Pregabalin and Gabapentin are the drugs of concern, Tramadol too is popular among prisoners, and therefore become a "currency" within the prison, with the dangers of overdose and abuse, but also of bullying and taxing over the supply, with some prisoners wanting to control the supply for their own ends. The shortage of staff reduces the supervision of medical clinics and hinders managing this issue. A risk of a death in custody has been put to the Board as a possible outcome from the drug abuse and every effort should be made to prevent such an occurrence. The separation of contracts for different provisions of services within the prison makes all this so complicated with all the meetings etc. that have to go on to reach a solution. The one advantage of course is that the PCT may have funds to help improve Healthcare where it is clear the Prison Service does not have additional funding

The requirement for the same standard of medical care to be provided in prison and outside has to be balanced against the completely different culture and environment in which the medical care is provided. If Drug A, would be given to a patient in the community why not inside prison? In theory yes, that would be reasonable, however the availability of Drug A in the prison, because of its currency value, may work against the general overall health of the all the prisoners. A community view should be taken and if Drug B is effective but has less implications for the prison then prescribe Drug B. The IMB is aware of all the pressures, some unending, which are applied to get medication so the whole issue is difficult and complicated and the hope is the new contract will improve matters.

The IMB is of course aware of the challenges of providing Healthcare for prisoners where there is the conception, but in general a misconception, that prisoners get a lower standard

of Healthcare in prison than they would on the outside. Often access to hospitals and appointments are better, but the idea that you cannot get immediate medical treatment because you are behind bars, creates a morbid fear in prisoners and sometimes is mentioned to the IMB when prisoners believe they have been badly treated.

The comparison of the prescribing profile for the prisoners at Blundeston, compared with an equivalent sample of men on the outside would show a large difference with many more prisoners being on some sort of medication. The IMB has been told that 87% of prisoners are on some form of medication. Of course there is much more likely to be more prisoners in the profile with mental health issues than in the outside population, as some prisoners find themselves in prison because there is no other provision for them, nevertheless there is still a huge difference in prescribing levels. This shows how much prisoners rely on some sort of regular medication to get them through their prison sentence.

The Healthcare Unit has been refurbished during the past year. A different entrance has been provided and the office arrangements altered inside and also a proper reception area, with a desk behind a window, has been constructed to provide better facilities for staff and prisoners. This together with the new IDTS suite adjacent to D wing demonstrates the commitment of the local Primary Care Trust to Healthcare within the prison and is to be welcomed and this commitment must be a good basis for resolving the above issues, which are in many ways more difficult than providing a refurbished building.

The IMB has great sympathy for all the Healthcare staff working under such pressure. They have to remain professional in their work and ever watchful to make sure they don't miss anything in a prisoner's health, with subsequent serious consequences knowing at the same time that many prisoners are doing all they can to "Work the system".

Both inpatient and outpatient treatment is provided in the local general hospital at Great Yarmouth This means lots of escorts and bed watches, again making demands on the limited uniformed staff, still operational in the prison.

The "Mental Health Inreach Team" had, at one time, only one operational, yet highly effective nurse who only deals with "Secondary Mental Health needs". The demands are huge, as mentioned above; so many prisoners have some sort of mental health need. Some prisoners suffer depression from just of being in the prison and knowing the situations of their families on the outside. The Mental Health Team also gives advice on lifers and many other issues within the prison. A consultant psychiatrist visits the prison on a monthly basis. The provision of a "Pain Clinic" within the prison, on a regular basis, would be a huge boost and reduce the number of escorts required and perhaps rationalise some of the prescribing.

As far as the IMB is aware two complaints procedures, PALS and ICAS provided by the Healthcare Trust still operate within the prison. In the first instance, the IMB recommend that prisoners use these procedures with their Healthcare complaints and we will deal with

issues once they have been explored through these avenues. Sometimes we go and talk directly to the Healthcare staff. The IMB is grateful for the help and advice given by the Health Care manager and the nurses when we regularly go and talk to them about various prisoners. Sometimes we need to talk to Healthcare staff because of our own concerns dealing with segregated prisoners and prisoners on application. We find the Healthcare staff are always willing to talk to us and help us, as much as possible, to understand the prisoners and their needs and why a particular action being taken. Often their wisdom and insight is of real value.

There is still a long waiting list for check-ups and for routine dental treatment among prisoners. Emergencies are dealt with fairly quickly, but that often leads to delay in routine work, appointments are cancelled to make way for the prisoner with toothache. There is no suggestion that the standard of treatment is not very good, it is just the waiting times which are very long and possibly unacceptable. There seems to be little change in the waiting list, the IMB would have expected, by now, that some plan had been put in place to try at least to bring about some reduction. Last year the IMB suggested that any new contract for dental treatment, due to be negotiated this year, should contain an element of reward based on the amount of work carried out, as well as the dentist just being paid for each session that he or she works.

## **Learning and Skills and Interventions**

The welding workshop won the Elton trophy for being the best workshop in the whole Prison Service in 2011. Considering the competition, that is a huge achievement. It was particularly poignant as one of the instructors was just about to retire and for him as for the other instructors, the prisoners and the prison it was really the “icing on the cake”. Showing one of the potential new IMB members around welding workshop, she later joined the Board, was quite interesting, she had never had the concept that such a workshop producing such a high standard of work, instruction, training and rehabilitation could be operating in the prison.

Last year it was the carpentry workshop which was in the news, with the boat made for Oxborough Hall, all this demonstrates the capacity of prisons and prisoners to produce high quality work helpful to the community, but also as a preparation to meaningful employment for prisoners on release.

The prison also provides workshops, with training of course, in Painting and Decorating and Printing where, as mentioned earlier in the report, there is some full week working in operation. The laundry is now running again, but not to full capacity after major repairs, not long after opening. This produced huge logistical issues for the prison, not of their own

making. The prison takes in laundry for a number of other prisons in the Eastern Area, which is why the breakdown was so unhelpful. The award winning recycling unit still works well and helps to reduce costs for the prison and there is a really helpful unit of “greenhouses” adjacent to the recycling unit. With restorative justice in mind the re-cycling unit is using recycled wood to provide bird boxes and bat boxes for local nature organisations. The work is done internally and are taken out and fitted by staff members. This is indicative of the practical use of the prison’s resources and manpower to put something back into that community through the efforts of prisoners.

That is the good part, indeed excellent part of the story, however the prison is struggling to provide work/training/education for all the prisoners. The figure given to the IMB is that there are places for 85% of prisoners, rather than the 95% which would be desirable. The reasons are the loss of 52 places in the gymnasium through its re-specification. The IMB assumes this relates to its size, and possibly due to staffing levels, but also relates to the perceived usefulness of the qualifications provided. We are told that the first modules of the qualification are transferable so why re-specify the gym? The IMB, and the BOV as we were previously called, have campaigned for a new/larger gym and the last HMCIP report said it was far too small and one of the worst in the prison estate. Over 10,000 of purposeful activity per month had been produced in the gym but this is now very much reduced. 52 places is almost one wing. The “Tailors workshop” has moved to HMP Norwich, the IMB are told that this is an “Area Agreement” as it was considered of more use at HMP Norwich and did not lean towards qualifications; however “Tailors” did provide simple straightforward work for prisoners and now it is not there. Finally “Education” is not running to full capacity. Against the background of funding cuts and decisions, as above, it is so hard for the prison to provide meaningful purposeful activity for enough prisoners, in what is a training prison, and surely this works against the principles the Government set down in its Green paper, “Breaking the Cycle”. It won’t work if the funding is not provided.

As mentioned in the opening of the report 16-18 prisoners go out of the prison on Temporary License (ROTL) to work in the Community. Some go as far as Norwich. The scheme has been a huge success and every prisoner is assessed as to their suitability to work on the “outside” and so far the ambitious project is working well. The commitment of the prisoners to this “privilege” has been high. This is demonstrated, possibly, by a prisoner who took the wrong train. He arrived in Norwich instead of his intended destination. On realising the error, the prisoner immediately reported to the transport police and was safely returned to the prison. All the prisoners are located on H wing, separated from the rest of the prison, with the intention of reducing the pressure to bring back illicit substances. Prisoners who successfully complete 8 weeks on ROTL for working outside can then apply for ROTL for home leave. This is where the IMB have learned that problems have occurred with a couple of prisoners having breached the terms of their ROTLs and have been removed from the privilege of working outside. One prisoner has been moved to another

prison. The more rapid move of “D Cat” prisoners to “D cat” prisons means that the most suitable prisoners for ROTL and work outside are moved on quickly and not available to Blundeston for such deployment, so prisoners with a potentially slightly higher risk are being given ROTL. This may account for the recent difficulties

Interventions are working well with the Healthy Relations Programme (HRP) “Calm” and TSP (Thinking Skills Programme) which try and look at offending behaviour and develop methods of “not offending”; “Think first” is the basis of the courses. There is a long waiting list for the HRP courses as so many prisoners have to address “Domestic Violence” as part of their offending behaviour. Some life sentence prisoners come to Blundeston just to do HRP and then return to their original establishment. There is therefore more demand than places and the delays have a knock on effect for Life sentence, IPP and other prisoners seeking parole and D category decisions etc. The provision of such a wide range of courses and the excellent workshops is good reason why the closure of HMP Blundeston should not even be considered.

There is no availability at this time for “Victim Awareness” within the prison. The IMB were recently asked about this. There was provision on a “One to one basis” from the Probation Service. Other options for provision are being looked at. Any prisoner having such a requirement, as part of his Sentence Plan, will have to transfer and should, at least in theory, not be sent to the prison at all. One to one work for prisoners with a psychologist is very difficult to access due to lack of funding, but is provided for a very limited number of prisoners.

The Therapeutic Community (TC) also provides an accredited method, within the Community, of dealing with offending behaviour. The minimum time to be spent on the TC is 18 months. This can be a huge challenge to prisoners themselves, apart from the challenge to their behaviour, but it can take months for prisoners to settle, resolve health and sleeping issues and be ready to address their offending and its roots. A new manager of the “TC” has just come to the prison. The danger with all courses is they can be “tick boxes” for prisoners looking to progress their sentence plans and course facilitators have to be constantly aware of the issues to really challenge prisoners. We meet prisoners on applications who tell us they have done this course and that, not necessarily at Blundeston, but they still seem to have many issues of anger etc. in their lives. The same concerns were recently mentioned to the IMB by the Senior Psychologist.

The induction process works well and much is provided by TRIBAL, although the TRIBAL worker was ill for some of the year but is now back full time. Prisoners are given a plan of action for their time in the prison and can go to back to TRIBAL to check on progress as required. This gives prisoners ownership of their time in the prison and works to develop responsibility. Channel 7 the dedicated internal TV channel provides a huge amount on information for prisoners, even the IMB have a daily slot.

The Labour Control/Resettlement room still offers a splendid facility for interviews by outside agencies and a drop in centre for prisoners with queries. The debt counsellor from the Ipswich Housing Trust is still funded to come to the prison regularly. Again the IMB would reiterate the need to look at debt as part of offending behaviour and look to provide help in this area for prisoners before release, as a practical way of reducing the risk of reoffending on release. Something straight forward and practical can be of real assistance and with some prisoners of more relevance than offending behaviour courses.

## **Safer Custody**

As mentioned in last year's report there have been many improvements in the prisons methods of dealing with bullying within the prison as part of the Violence Reduction Programme. This has very much worked to make Blundeston a "Safer place". The targeting and challenging of bullies by prison staff is so important to the prison regime. VIRF forms are available for information about prisoners gathered from the prison staff. There is a three stage process for prisoners once identified as needing to amend their behaviour in the prison. Stage one is a notice that the prisoner will be watched closely by staff over the next 14 days. If there are no more incidents, no more information, then that is the end of the matter, but if things do not improve the prisoner will go to stage two, where they will be placed on "Basic" regime. Further deterioration will mean the prisoner being removed to the segregation unit, at stage three in the process.

This has obviously brought about some improvements, there is more room for improvement though, the task is very challenging, and now more often it is the bully who is found in the segregation unit, rather than the victim, who was gone there for his own protection. The IMB is also aware, that following "intelligence", prisoners running bullying, taxing etc. on their wings and in the prison as a whole, prisoners have been and are removed to the segregation unit. These moves were carefully planned and researched operations and one was observed from start to finish by the Vice-chair who was highly complimentary of the way the matter was handled.

All this does not mean that bullying and taxing has ceased altogether in the prison and with the IMB sitting in on Segregation Reviews we hear of the reasons why prisoners have sought "Own Protection". We have already mentioned the problems on "A" wing for new receptions. This has not helped them settle into the prison and is a poor start to their stay at Blundeston. The IMB raised the issue with the Governor who has, in order to reduce the bullying located all "Enhanced" prisoners on the upper landings on A wing. The use of H wing for ROTL prisoners removes its use for reception prisoners. It would be nice to have had 2 H wings but the prison does not have 2 H wings.

The current big issue is new receptions who arrive without their "canteen". This will have been ordered a few days before to be delivered to them in the sending the prison. The

money for the supplies is removed by DHL, the contractor for Canteen supplies, from the prisoners' accounts when the supplies are ordered, this will be 4 days before delivery. If the prisoner is moved he arrives with nothing and yet his account is depleted, money having been removed for goods not received. It then takes DHL, so the IMB is informed, 3 weeks to put the money back in the prisoners' accounts. The prisoner will borrow from other prisoners, tobacco is the chief need for heavy smokers, but the pay back is double and works on a geometric progression pattern, 2, 4, 8, 16 and so on. With the lack of job opportunities for new prisoners and unemployment pay being only £2.50 per week prisoners cannot pay back their loan and so get into debt with the subsequent threat of violence. The very geography of the prison and wings makes it almost impossible for officers to monitor all the actions of prisoners and see what is happening on the landings. The prison are managing this by staff ringing the previous prison and checking the state of the canteen supplies and if the prisoner has paid out monies and received nothing, Blundeston is providing "Bridging Loans" to make good the deficit, to allow prisoners to purchase canteen items on arrival at the prison and also the prison is providing emergency "smokers packs". Why DHL have to take 3 weeks to replace prisoners' monies is the question? In these days with so much computer technology refunds should be able to be done at the touch of a button. Is this another example of the problems of contracting out services?

This scenario told to the IMB, at a segregation review, of the difficulties around medication misuse must be mentioned to demonstrate how such matters can impinge on "Safer custody". The prisoner was known, by other prisoners, to be prescribed medication which is of currency in the prison. He was required by those controlling him, presumably to allow him to keep some of his medication, to collect "Burn" (tobacco) from other prisoners. When those other prisoners were unable to pay their debts, our segregated prisoner, the former "runner" was told that he must now pay the debt. He was unable to do so and his only course of action was to seek sanctuary in the segregation unit. The prisoner will have to move to another prison and this will disrupt his courses and his work. Many prisoners are, of course, unwilling to give the names of those who are bullying them, as this is likely to get them the reputation of being a "Grass". Once this reputation is gained it will go from prison to prison, making it so difficult for such a prisoner to ever settle in one establishment. The whole scenario is very sad and demonstrates why prison can be a very hard place to survive, not because of the building but because of the people the prisoner is incarcerated with.

ACCT documentation for prisoners likely to self harm are well presented and looked at by the IMB. A member of the IMB is on the "Safer Custody Committee". ACCT assessors come from all sections of prison staff, which is a huge credit to their commitment to their work and the IMB assumes adds more interest and a feeling of "Ownership" for office staff when they are practically involved with prisoners.

There have been no deaths in custody in the past 12 months, but there have been some incidents of serious self harm, which had it not been for the swift and excellent actions of staff, could have had much more serious consequences. There has been a reduction of 28% in incidents of self harm during the past year. These prisoners take up so much time and sometimes are eventually “sectioned” under the Mental Health Act and moved to secure hospitals. Should they be in prison is the first place is the question? The swapping of medication does raise serious concerns about a possible death in custody; it would be so easy for a prisoner to overdose at night time when staff would be totally unaware.

The Listeners Scheme within the prison provides excellent support for prisoners who just need “someone to talk to”, at any time of day or night, about some of the many issues which affect them behind bars. The Listeners themselves gain a great deal from helping their fellow prisoners giving them an outlet beyond their own little world; putting something back into society is a very constructive thing to do. The local branch of the Samaritans provide the training for the Listeners, training that is really tough to get through and any prisoner who qualifies to become a Listener deserves great credit. The whole prison is grateful to the Samaritans for their support and commitment. A member of the Samaritans is regularly found in the prison helping the Listeners in their work.

### **Issues of concern and/or excellence**

**These areas in the report are only mentioned if they are of real concern or really very good. It should not be assumed that just because a subject is not in this section and was last year that the issue(s) are resolved.**

### **Building Work**

The heating system refurbishment has been completed on all the wings apart from I and J, which are more recently erected prefabricated units. The work was completed behind schedule partly due, as mentioned in last year’s report, to the poor original design leaving many pipes accessible. This design had to be changed with the inevitable knock on effect in timing. Why the design was not checked before it started is a mystery to the IMB.

Once the heating was finished it needed a lot of fine tuning to make it effective, with some areas being really hot and others really cold. Officers on night duty talked of sitting in shirt sleeves in a hot office while prisoners complained of cells being cold. There have been fewer complaints of late, but what is the cost to the fuel bill with so much heat being wasted? The heating is already on a “PFI” scheme with very high prices being paid per unit of gas so the wastage has even more significance.

The Laundry has at last re-opened with modifications, but there was such a delay while it was all sorted out and a cost to the Prison Service and the laundry is still not running to full capacity and providing “proper work for prisoners”. So much money was spent on the

laundry and this is all so disappointing and is not the fault of the prison, who as a result of all the difficulties, struggle to find work for prisoners. During the summer months, not that we have had much summer, the temperature in the laundry is reaching unacceptable levels of 33° centigrade and above. When the roofs were refurbished the number of fans in the laundry was reduced, particularly the one over the hottest area. This is being looked into by the Deputy Governor but again demonstrates poor thinking when planning such work. It is not the prison and the local management who are at fault, but they bear the brunt of the problem having to work with the consequences.

J Wing was only erected 3 years or so ago and already needs all cells refurbishing. The IMB are told that the wrong type of wood was used which has warped and gone rotten and some of the fittings for the showers, wash basins etc. were poor and have leaked. This design of prefabricated unit has, we understand, been used in a number of prisons and all have similar problems. Refurbishment is taking place at 12 cells at a time to prevent decanting of the wing, which houses mainly life sentence prisoners. This would disrupt these prisoners by allocating them to other wings and then bringing the back again.

The IMB would suggest all of the above demonstrate the inability of “Procurement” in the Prison Service to suitably contract for works/buildings etc. which when constructed are properly designed, reliable and actually work and contracts are finished on time. If people ran their private businesses in the same way the Prison Service runs its procurement they would soon go bankrupt.

## **Canteen**

As mentioned earlier in the report there have been some bullying issues around the supply of canteen. When a prisoner is suddenly transferred to Blundeston, they may have already ordered their canteen at the previous prison, but this may not have been given to the prisoner, so the prisoner will arrive with little or nothing. This is a particular problem for heavy smokers who then borrow tobacco and are unable to pay back the double, then the quadruple etc., repayment required. Of course prisoners should not borrow from other prisoners, but there are realities in life on the wings which go beyond prison rules. These prisoners get into debt, get bullied and eventually end up in the segregation unit. Much of the problem relates to the delay of the contractor, DHL, to return the prisoners money to his account. The money will have been taken out immediately on the order being received and even though the goods are not supplied, it can take three weeks for the money to be returned to the prisoners account. This deficiency prevents the prisoner buying canteen at Blundeston at the earliest opportunity and so be able to pay back items borrowed. Blundeston is providing “bridging loans” in such circumstances to overcome the problem, having contacted the sending prison to confirm the situation. However this is time consuming, especially if it has to continue for many months.

As mentioned earlier in the report new prisoners take a while to find employment, IMB members were told of a six week delay recently for one prisoner, and while prisoner is unemployed the £2.50 per week unemployment pay is inadequate to prevent a prisoner getting further into debt.

The three weeks' time lag for the return of funds may well be in the contract for the provision of canteen, but the IMB would suggest it could and should be done much quicker and that DHL should be requested to do so and if necessary agree to a change in contract. It seems in this modern day, when transactions take place almost instantly, that the three weeks' time delay is totally inappropriate.

HMP Blundeston continued to provide its own canteen for as long as possible, before having to submit to the DHL contract. The only time slot then available, for the delivery of the canteen, was a Friday afternoon. This arrangement, the IMB is told, is very inconvenient and unhelpful for prisoners and also difficult for the distribution of the canteen so late in the week. It would be most helpful to Blundeston prison to have another day in the week and perhaps now that every prison in the area has canteen on the DHL contract, that the delivery days should be reviewed and better options provided for Blundeston prison, which is almost certainly, because of its geography, at the end of a delivery run.

Prisoners complain that the costs of some of the items in "canteen" are too high, and it is fairly safe to say that they are often higher than could be purchased in the local supermarket. Prisoners, at least many of them, have limited funds and are penalised by the high prices. We also receive complaints about the lack of fresh salad items etc. by those prisoners who wish to supplement their diet with fresh food as part of keeping fit. We are told that providing such items is difficult within the contract, as there is likely to be a good degree of waste and some items not arriving in a fresh condition and therefore having to be thrown away. It would seem good for the contractor to improve services, so that fresh items can be made available for prisoners, at a reasonable cost, and still arrive for in an acceptable condition.

## **IEP**

The Incentives and Earned Privileges scheme has been much improved in the prison and where there were too many enhanced prisoners this is no longer the case. Better use is made of the "Basic regime" for prisoners to promote improved behaviour, rather than use the adjudication process. The IMB would wish to ensure that "Boards" for regime change and warning notices etc. are carried out with equanimity within the prison so that there are not inconsistencies between wings and officers on how they deal with prisoners. It is not right for a prisoner to receive a warning notice for an action in one circumstance and a prisoner elsewhere in the prison not to receive a notice for a similar action. The continued involvement of the IEP in the Violence Reduction Programme is to be applauded and

although the prison went through a difficult time after returning to full CNA things have very much quietened down again.

It is necessary to be realistic about such issues and the placing 500+ prisoners, many with severe offending behaviour problems and some having committed crimes of extreme violence, in one place and have them living in such a confined environment provides many challenges to ensure behaviour is good and violence does not break out. The outcomes for the prison are quite remarkable against such a background. Blundeston has always had a good relationship between staff and prisoners and this is maintained.

## **D Categorisation, ROTL and HDC**

The IMB received many complaints during the past 12 months about being Re-categorisation, Release on Temporary Licence, and Home Detention Curfew. These complaints have reduced in recent months; they were in some ways related to differing views of members of the team involved in making decisions. To be awarded the Re-categorisation to open conditions is one of the great prizes for prisoners at Blundeston. Failure to achieve the required result causes much frustration for prisoners and yet in the majority of cases the IMB would support the decisions made.

The IMB received a helpful presentation by one of the Prison Governors about the decision making process and discovered that different criteria are relevant to making a decision re – re-categorisation, ROTL and HDC. This causes misunderstandings and confusion for prisoners, as they assume that if they are eligible for one of these awards, they must be eligible for all of them. Attempts to educate prisoners in this area have been undertaken but there is still a challenge to get prisoners to really understand, especially when they have their heart set on what they want to achieve.

With this confusion the IMB wonder whether one assessment could and should cover all there 3 applications. Clearly differing criteria would have to be used and more areas covered by the assessment. Someone for ROTL application for a weekend visit, for example, would need to have their domestic violence issues looked at, and that would be unnecessary for re-categorisation. However if the one assessment covered all, a prisoner would know, for example, if he was suitable for “D cat” but not for weekend ROTL, if that was the outcome of the assessment. Doing one assessment must also be less time consuming than doing three, even though it would take a little longer; but one assessment would surely prevent the much of the same ground being covered again and again.

The IMB chair was invited to sit on a ROTL Board as an observer. The prisoner fitted the criteria and was granted his ROTL, but on the attitude and demeanour of the prisoner, the IMB chair would confess that he would not have granted the ROTL, for the prisoner to work outside the prison.

It was mentioned by prisoners that the staged process to obtain ROTLs discriminated against prisoners who did not want to work outside the prison. The process involves being granted ROTL for release to work on one of the outside work projects, perhaps in Norwich or Lowestoft, and if that works successfully for a period of eight weeks, the prisoner can then be considered for a ROTL for day release and then for a weekend home visit. The IMB appreciate the incentives provided by such a system, however, it is clear that some prisoners do not wish to work outside the prison and yet would like to be eligible for day release and a weekend home visit. We would request that other criteria can be applied, so that enhanced prisoners who clearly have a good behaviour record, including working to a high standard within their work environment and have no previous breaches of ROTLs, licenses etc. should also be considered for ROTLs for day release and home weekend visits, when this is appropriate within the terms of their sentence and release dates.

### **Foreign National Prisoners**

In general, this year, there have only been one or two prisoners accommodated at Blundeston past their release date because of delays by UKBA, although last month the number was 5. This is an improvement on previous years. A UKBA clinic still takes place at the prison on a regular basis and must be working well as the IMB have had fewer complaints, related to immigration issues, in the past 12 months.

### **Resettlement and Short term prisoners**

Blundeston continues to receive prisoners with a short time left to serve. Some are just on short sentences and previous to the last year or so would not have come to Blundeston. This situation makes things very difficult for the resettlement officer and his team to find accommodation, work, training etc. in such a short time and works against the success of a prisoner being released and not re-offending on release. The IMB appreciates that local prisons have little choice but to pass prisoners on, but sending prisoners, with just a few days to serve, cannot help them or give staff time to provide something constructive for their release. **Does this bear relation to the increased offending rate for short term prisoners?**

### **IPP and Life Sentence Prisoners**

The IMB is still aware of the issue of IPP prisoners serving sentences well in excess of their tariff and the difficulties of adequate information being available to allow IPP prisoners to be released, even though their behaviour in prison is excellent and all the prison authorities' express the view, are that they should be released. While the IMB is of course aware of the need to ensure that the public are protected and proper risk assessments are undertaken, for a prisoner to keep having his hearing adjourned again and again for information to be provided, is heart breaking and demoralising and unhelpful for his family. The IMB would

strongly urge that the whole system is reviewed to speed up and simplify the process. Our understanding is that an indeterminate sentence cannot now be passed unless the tariff would be 10 years, and it is suggested that prisoners who have a tariff less than 10 years and are over tariff by at least 1 year should have their release “fast tracked” looking to immediate release on license. This would free up a number of prison places and reduce the work of the Parole Board. The prisoner would be on license and always subject to immediate recall.

We are also aware of problems over missing documents for a life sentence prisoner on transfer from another prison. HMP Blundeston had to report the serious loss to the proper authorities, as the loss of data had not been reported missing by the other prison. The IMB at the other prison kindly looked for and confirmed the absence of the documents. The loss has again delayed the prisoner’s move to “D cat” conditions for which, staff at the Blundeston prison, believe he is suitable.

Electronic working for all documents, i.e. reports, for the Parole Board starts on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2013, and the clerk who deals with the matter has already been on the training course to prepare for the start. This, hopefully, will speed up the process and the hope is that solicitors who represent prisoners will be on cjsm.net and also be able to receive and send electronic files and be part of the “quicker process”.

The first Life Sentence prisoner has been repatriated from Blundeston under the TERS (Tariff Expiry Removal Scheme). He went back to Jordan. HMP Blundeston, so the IMB is informed, has 7 prisoners, “Lifers and IPPs”, who are possibly eligible for the scheme. The IMB’s information is that such prisoners are released into the community once returned to their home country, having differing criteria for release than a prisoner being released in the UK. The scheme of course is helpful in reducing the UK prison population but we cannot but feel it will be challenged under the equality legislation. The scheme, we would suggest, discriminates against prisoners who would be released into the UK on the basis of their nationality, by applying differing criteria for their release than the foreign national prisoner being repatriated. This when both have committed the same crime and received the same sentence.

One prison in the area having agreed that lifers could be moved to that prison, had a new lifer manager appointed who then insisted on reviewing all the moves. This is not only time wasting to both prisons but above all unhelpful and demoralising for the prisoners concerned when their agreed move is delayed. There are many, many small injustices in prisons.

## **Property**

Lost property and other property issues still remain a major headache for the IMB, one assumes for all or the majority of IMB's in the country. We are regularly emailing other IMBs, not only in our region, but in other parts of the country to try and get them to help find property, when all normal channels have failed. Regrettably the property is rarely found.

Prisoners coming from the segregation unit from one prison in the East have regularly come without all the property. It is clear from communications sent to the IMB and other communications, plus a meeting, that this prison had major problems with its cell clearance protocols. To be fair things have now improved, but claims for compensation for lost property have been slow to be dealt with and at least one financial offer was very low, almost derisory. This seems totally wrong when it is clear that the prison itself was responsible for the loss.

An IMB member from the above prison asked us to look into some lost property and we discovered that the cell clearance has not been carried out properly at Blundeston. Paperwork was sent to the IMB and our Governor informed of the regrettable incident, which, to be fair, is an uncommon occurrence at Blundeston.

This situation is shared with the agreement of the prisoner. He came from Dartmoor to Blundeston with a number of overnight stops. His stereo system was damaged en route and a request was made for compensation to the company providing the transport. This was declined and the IMB chair here spoke to 2 officials at the transport company, both gave different answers, but neither agreed to pay any compensation to the prisoner.

The IMB suggested the Prison Ombudsman, who carried out a thorough investigation including talking to the IMB here, who tried to assure the Ombudsman that we felt the claim was genuine, on the basis of our examination of the damaged equipment. The outcome of the Ombudsman's investigation was that "As there was no proof that the stereo was not damaged before it left Dartmoor they could not require compensation to be paid".

While the IMB respect the way the rules may be written, it provides little protection or justice for the prisoner. If every prisoner asked for their stereos to be checked before leaving a prison "just in case" of future damage, they would be likely to be unpopular with over stretched prison staff, trying to deal with lots of prisoners on the move. That suggestion is totally impractical and yet if that is the only safe course of action for prisoners then maybe it should be an available option.

Possibly the alternative would be for the matter be decided on the "balance of probabilities", as it would be in any civil court deciding on a matter. On the balance of

probabilities was it more likely than not that the stereo was undamaged when it left Dartmoor?

The IMB would respectfully suggest that the Ombudsman should look at deciding these issues on the balance of probabilities; it is the normal standard of proof required. This would be applied if the prisoner of course took the matter to court. That possibility is difficult for a life sentence prisoner and surely the “system” should not be so loaded against prisoners to make things unjust.

The whole issue of prisoners’ property and its control, management and safe keeping is still a major concern and HMPS has never seemed, to the IMB, to be willing to really “grasp the nettle” and take decisive enough action on a national basis to “rein in the problem”. We would still encourage such action to be taken, in the long term it may be more cost effective than the time wasted by so many prison staff apart, from IMBs, to resolve property issues. Little issues become big ones to prisoners, when incarcerated, and the loss of an item, especially of sentimental value and irreplaceable, can be very saddening to a prisoner and also to the IMB member who has to report such a reality to a prisoner.

## **Mail**

There have been a number of issues about mail at the prison. Some of the issues related to legal mail and complaints that clearly marked mail had been opened. As a result the whole matter has been investigated by the prison and a new directive made to simplify and clarify the whole system, which was found to be over complicated. No complaints since have been received by the Board, and the requirement for full recording of any circumstances when mail is opened inadvertently, helps to support the need for mail to be managed with a great deal of rigour.

Prisoners have also been reminded that that legal mail must be in two envelopes with the outer one clearly marked and with the address of the solicitor remitting the mail to be clearly marked on the back. The inside letter can then be handed to the prisoner. Any legal mail required to be opened, must be opened in the presence of the prisoner.

The Prison Service has changed the rules in the past year or so removing the requirement for “Registered Mail or Recorded Delivery” mail to be opened in the presence of the prisoner. This mail would now be “Special Delivery” or “Signed for”. The requirement is now that 2 officers have to open the mail together and sign to say so. There have been a number prisoners complaining that money has gone missing and complaints to the IMB, are still coming in. In some cases the prison has reimbursed the prisoner.

The whole situation is totally unsatisfactory. The IMB can appreciate that the rules were brought in to cope with the reduction in staff and minimise the work involved. The reality is that more work is involved investigating the complaints, than is saved by the rule change.

Even having 2 staff working together is open to question and unsafe and the IMB would strongly recommend that the rules are reverted and that all “Special Delivery Type” mail, especially that containing money must still be opened in the presence of the prisoner.

### **“RAPT” Suffolk Recovery Service**

The prison has an excellent “Carats” team working to advise and support the many prisoners with substance misuse. This team has been taken over by “RAPT” Suffolk Recovery Services. This will mean a team of 14 “drugs workers” in the prison, but the IMB’s information is that although the posts have been advertised, so far there have been no or possibly few applications. This is the fifth different organisation to have the contract over the past 12 years or so and this contract is for 2 years with a right to extend for another year. The prison has nowhere to put all these workers, and our information is that there will be reductions in numbers in 2 years time. This could mean the prison may have to find all the room for this huge influx in workers, only to find it not needed in 2 years time, the problems of short term contracts. With all the issues of prisoners on the IDTS scheme much help is essential and important, and the increased input into this area is to be welcomed

MDT levels are running at between 3% and 4% at the end of the reporting period, and still well within the prison’s target. With the increase in more free flow within the prison and prisoners being released on temporary license to work outside the prison etc. there is a risk of an increase in drugs being brought into the establishment. The Governor is well aware of the risk and the IMB is assured all will be done to prevent the concerns becoming a reality.

### **Requests and Complaints.**

This item has been now placed in 3 IMB reports in the hope that some notice will be taken of this concern. There is the problem of Request and Complaint forms (R&C’s) often being dealt with, in the first instance, by the person, or their action, against whom the complaint is made. Then the prisoner has to fill in a comp 1a form to appeal the original R&C reply as the result will almost always confirm the original decision. The whole system working in this way is perverse. Staff at whatever level should not answer complaints against themselves but should pass them on to the next level in management, so as to expedite the response to the prisoner. Will be HMPS listen and resolve this perverseness?

### **Energy and Environmental Committee**

This committee continues to function, according to its requirement to do so, and to seeks to find increasing economies in the use of energy and materials by the prison. The IMB understand that the issues over water usage by the laundry have been resolved and targets are being met. A member of the IMB sits on this committee.

## PMU

One of our members contacted the PMU, in early July 2012, about a prisoner who had been in the segregation unit for 4 weeks and nothing had been done to arrange a move for him. As the situation started in the reporting period it is relevant to this report. Examination of the paperwork at Blundeston assured our member, beforehand, that all was in order and the problem lay with a failure of PMU. Our member tells of an interesting conversation, the eventual outcome was that a fax/email arrived 10 minutes later with the move arranged. The IMB have never before encroached on the work of PMU, but it is clear, from the above scenario, that perhaps we should do so more often as things are clearly not always done properly and on time there. It is clear that the long term retention of prisoners in the segregation unit is not helpful to anyone and that when PMU are responsible for arranging the transfer, the matter should be expedited at the earliest opportunity.

## The Board

The Board is delighted to announce 5 new members, who were appointed in March 2012, and are making rapid progress in Board membership and some have already completed the initial requirements of the induction process and are included in the current rota. This new intake puts the Board at full strength for the first time in some years. It is interesting to note that it took almost 2 years from showing the first of the new members round the prison to get the group of 5 together, and then to carry out the interviews and wait for the appointments.

In these days of austerity people are not “queuing up” to join IMBs and all the new members, but one, are of retirement age, as it is such people who now, happily, have the time to devote to the ever increasing demands of IMB membership. People in employment are unlikely to be given time off from their work, in spite of the requirement of companies to do so. Those who are self-employed are likely to be too busy making a success of their business to be able to give time to IMB work. The Board is also aware that most of the IMBs in the Eastern Area are low in numbers, some have barely 50% of their full quota and most are actively or needing to actively recruit members

**It is against this background that the Board is very concerned to hear of the imposition of a 15 year time limit for IMB membership, as IMB is now considered a public office. We are aware that most of the National Council and the National Trainers have served for more than 15 years service and will be lost to IMB. Also some Boards seem to have a couple of members who continue for many years, as other members come and go for various reasons, and provide the continuity of experience that is essential for all IMB Boards. If there were lots of people wanting to join the IMB, a time limit would seem reasonable and prevent members just carrying on and preventing new members coming into office; that is simply not the case. It is quite clear therefore that members remaining**

**in office for more than 15 years are not denying the opportunity to join the IMB to others. Blundeston IMB has taken 2 years from the first visit by one of 5 new members to them all being appointed and at last get us back to full compliment. But for how long as people's availability can suddenly change. Each Board has to be appointed every 3 years so there is a robust examination of performance which allows the removal of a member "not pulling their weight" and so ensures Boards are no clogged up with ineffectual members. All the safeguards are in place.**

**Prisons are a unique culture, so different from the outside world and the culture takes many years to learn. It takes a good while for members to be able to properly communicate with prisoners and to earn their trust and also gain the respect of prison staff at all levels. Both are required and essential to receive the cooperation needed to do the work effectively and get the information required about all sorts of issues.**

**The experience of long term members is essential to the functioning of Boards, maintaining the levels of trust, confidence and respect and to be able to pass all the information and good practice on to new members, to hasten their effectiveness following appointment.**

**We would strongly request a re-think of this whole policy which is too "Broad Brush" in its approach, it seems to us quite mad to lose so much invaluable experience.**

The IMB sits on the following committees, Safer Custody, Security, Life Sentence Prisoners, Resettlement, Segregation Unit, Use of Force and Foreign National Prisoners.

We are as ever grateful to our excellent clerk, who still manages to cope with us all together with her ever increasingly workload, due to the ever decreasing number of administrative staff. The one advantage of her increasing workload is her knowledge of so many aspects of the prison's operations and the ability to answer our questions and point us in the right direction.

We would point out our increasing workload too, at least as regards the number of prisoner applications we deal with. Whether this is due to the reduced staffing and therefore the reduction in time staff have available to answer prisoners' queries or a change in prisoner population with more "East of England Prisoners" who have different demands and expectations is difficult to know. The reality nevertheless is there.

## The Board's Statistics

<b>BOARD STATISTICS</b>	
Recommended Compliment of Board members	13
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	8
Number of Members at the end of the reporting period	12
Number of new members joining in reporting period	5
Number of members leaving in reporting period	1
Number of Board meetings in reporting period (one cancelled on day of industrial action but normally 12)	11
Average attendance  (please note one member has a course, as part of her employment which always clashes with the Board meeting in term time)	6.54
Attendance at other meetings apart from Board meetings	306
Total Number visits including all meetings	378
Total Number of applications received	357
Total Number of Segregation Reviews held	209  137: 72 hour  72 : 14 day
Total Number of Segregation reviews attended.  All 14 day reviews are held on Monday afternoons when the duty IMB member will usually attend. 72 hour reviews by their very nature are held when needed and are unlikely to be attended by the IMB, unless they are carried out on Mondays with the 14 day reviews then the IMB are in attendance. The varying times for 72 day reviews is due to the availability of Governors.  The IMB see ever prisoner in the segregation unit at least once per week and see every new arrival during the week so there is constant monitoring and any issues are raised immediately and do not wait for	78  60: 14 day and  18 :72 hour

the reviews.	

## **Applications**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>07/08</b>	<b>08/09</b>	<b>09/10</b>	<b>10/11</b>	<b>11/12</b>
A	Accommodation	0	4	3	13	8
B	Adjudications	0	2	7	4	4
C	Diversity Related	2	6	7	1	4
D	Education/Employment/Training Unemployment Pay	3	7	18	6	12
E	Family/Visits	15	10	11	6	10
F	Food/Kitchen/Canteen	3	0	7	2	4
G	Health/Healthcare/Medication	28	15	16	14	35
H	Property, including money, Clothing and property loss	56	78	63	87	80
I	Sentence Related, including I.E.P, D Cat, Remission days, Parole, Probation and Re-categorisation Sentence Calculation	34	53	56	64	50
J	Staff/Prisoners  Includes Security, IEP, Violence Reduction, Added Days, R&Cs etc	0	19	10	15	38
K	Transfers/Repatriation/TELS	42	19	29	34	53
L	Miscellaneous, Phone calls, Human Rights and Private Matters/Post	28	41	40	45	59
	<b>Total Applications</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>357</b>

Comments on Applications. This year's figures reflect the same concerns of previous years. The loss of property, mainly at other prisons, and difficulties with money and private cash are the major problems together with sentence issues mainly around re-categorisation concerns. There is an increase (55%) in concerns about transfers and delays in transfer..

**There is a 17% increase in applications this year, but over the past 2 years the increase is 40% based on the 09/10 figures.**