



**The Independent Monitoring Board  
HMP Bristol**

**Annual Report  
1 August 2013 – 31 July 2014**

## **SECTION 1**

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### **1 STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB**

The Prisons Act 1952, and the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, require every prison and IRC (Immigration Reception Centre) 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:

- a. Satisfy itself to the humane and just treatment of those held in custody within its prison and the range and adequacy of the programmes preparing them for release.
- b. Inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority, as it judges appropriate, any concerns it has.
- c. Report annually to the Secretary of State on how well the prison has met the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have on those in its custody.

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

- 3.1 HMP Bristol is a Category B local, adult male, prison with an operating capacity at the end of the reporting year of 614. The majority of prisoners are either on remand (approximately 60 per cent) or serving sentences of less than three months.
- 3.2 The establishment is located in the district of Horfield, a residential area with local amenities. Much of the existing accommodation was built in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, although B and C wings were added in the 1970s.
- 3.3 The Brunel Unit provides healthcare for prisoners with acute mental health needs or learning disabilities. It also houses the Segregation and Reintegration Unit. Primary healthcare is now delivered in treatment rooms on the residential wings. There is a first night centre and recently expanded induction facility on one residential wing (D). Another residential wing (C), with a capacity for 148 prisoners, receives all newly admitted drug and alcohol dependent prisoners.
- 3.4 The Governing Governor of the prison is supported by a Deputy Governor and a team of senior managers

### 4 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

4.1 HMP Bristol continues to meet the challenge of an exceptionally high turnover of prisoners, the majority serving short sentences or on remand. The most recent Adult Prisons Quarterly Report published by Public Health England indicates that there are in excess of 2,000 movements (receptions and exits) per annum.<sup>1</sup> During this reporting year the prison has implemented major budgetary cuts following the national Benchmarking exercise. At the same time the Governor and her staff have had to deal with additional demands following the closure of Gloucester and Dorchester prisons, which the Board understands was not factored in to the Benchmarking exercise. *New Ways of Working* (NWoW) has reduced the running costs of the prison, but the financial constraint has had a clear detrimental effect on many aspects of prisoners' lives. A number of the issues highlighted below have been raised in previous annual reports and have yet to be resolved. They concern the basics required to enable prisoners to maintain decency and self-respect, remain in contact with their families, and prepare for their release.

#### Particular Issues Requiring a Response from the Minister

4.2 Reduced staffing levels, as a result of Benchmarking and Profiling, exacerbated by the requirement to cover for shortages of staff in other prisons (detached duties), has undermined relationships between prison officers and prisoners. There is no longer an effective Personal Officer scheme; officers have little opportunity to get to know the prisoners on their wing and prisoners complain that officers are too busy to help them with basic requests and concerns (para 5.7.2). Some officers and nursing staff feel unsafe when prisoners are out of their cells. With current prison officer profiles there is often no margin, as evidenced by the recent decision of the Governor to put the prison in a patrol state at short notice. As a result, residential wings were placed in lockdown to ensure the safety of the establishment.

4.3 Senior managers and Prison Staff are generally motivated to provide a decent and safe environment for prisoners. During their sentence prisoners should be supported to maintain links with their families, to address their offending behaviour, and to spend their time in productive activities, meaningful work and education or training. Frontline staff should feel safe in carrying out their daily routines. The Board considers that senior managers lack sufficient resources to fulfil these basic requirements. The high turnover and presence of a large number of remand prisoners at HMP Bristol calls for a degree of flexibility in the staffing profile to allow for unforeseen problems. This appears not to have been taken into consideration in the Benchmarking exercise.

#### Particular Issues Requiring a Response from the Prison Service

4.4 Without exception, the following issues were noted in the previous year's report but have not been resolved to the satisfaction of the Board. Some have been raised as issues of concern in two or more consecutive reports:

- 4.4.1 Wing toilets/showers on certain wings and in the kitchen are in poor condition and difficult to clean to an acceptable standard. Cockroach infestation is a particular concern (para 5.7.1).
- 4.4.2 Inadequate response to litter and debris being thrown from cells (para 5.7.4).
- 4.4.3 Visitors and prisoners continue to report substantial problems in trying to book visits. Visitors report phoning daily with no reply. Staff confirm that when only one person is

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<sup>1</sup> Adult Prisons Data Quality Report 1 April – 30 June 2014, Public Health England

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available to answer calls (which is not uncommon), deal with legal visits and other tasks allocated, the phone is unanswered for long periods (para 5.8.10).

- 4.4.4 Insufficient cover for administrative staff handling certain key ancillary roles especially pin phone requests and queries (delays in arranging these for new prisoners); applications/complaints and sometimes correspondence. All are central to the prison's responsibility for maintaining prisoners' contact with their families. The Board considers that these functions need to be protected and adequately resourced (5.7.3).
  - 4.4.5 Staffing levels leave insufficient flexibility to provide escorts for prisoners with medical appointments outside the prison, resulting in the cancellation of several hospital appointments (para 5.4.7)
  - 4.4.6 Prison kit is a longstanding unresolved issue. Shortages when allocated at Reception exacerbate failings in weekly kit exchange; staff and prisoners regularly report shortages in clothing and bedding. The quality is often poor and there is little scope for obtaining clothes of the correct size (para 5.7.5).
  - 4.4.7 Inability to access personal property or its loss during transfer continues to be a frequent source of complaint to the Board. The Board was asked to resolve many such requests during the reporting year. There were, for example, 110 applications relating to property, a marked increase on the previous year (Table 7, page 19). Time taken to process personal property and transfer it to the prisoner can be lengthy. There is some evidence of improvement in clearing the backlog and effort has been made to transfer property to the wings promptly and to ensure that it leaves with the prisoner if he is transferred.
  - 4.4.8 Prisoners complain to the Board of delays in receiving a substantive response to a written Request or Complaint ( R & C) or of an unhelpful replies, often in relation to basic issues, such as access to property (as above).
  - 4.4.9 Equality and Diversity Action Team (EDAT) meetings have been held more regularly than last year but are still relatively infrequent; responses to discrimination report forms (DIRFs) are not quality assured; input to EDAT meetings from prisoner equality reps has lapsed; the Equalities Officer has no dedicated time to carry out the role; Forums for prisoners with protected characteristics have not met since the end of 2013 (para 5.1.4).
  - 4.4.10 Significant shortcomings in the recording of violence and bullying are a cause of concern. The Board's lack of confidence in these crucial figures - which is shared by senior prison staff - brings into question the reliability of data supplied by the prison in other areas (para 5.5.9).
  - 4.4.11 The Board is concerned that performance data compiled by external agencies responsible for delivering several resettlement pathfinders is not available to the prison or the IMB (para 5.8.4). This situation needs to be remedied. Moreover, with the outsourcing of all resettlement work from October this year it is vital that robust systems for gathering and disseminating information are implemented without delay.
- 4.5 There have been important improvements during the reporting year in the first night and induction process for new prisoners. There has also been an increase in activity places, albeit many of these are for part-time work. Despite substantial reductions in resettlement resources - notably the removal in October 2013 of two full time experienced housing officers - all prisoners continue to be offered pre-release help and advice, which is focused on the main hurdles they are likely to face on their return to the community. Changes to meet Benchmarking requirements in these and other areas are still in progress and will be closely monitored by the Board.

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4.6 The Governor and her Senior Management Team continue to provide a secure regime, but staff shortfalls, in both front line and administrative roles, have had adverse effects on prisoners' daily routines and on perceptions of safety among staff and prisoners. With the demise of the Personal Officer role it is crucial that the strong prisoner/staff relationships are not further eroded.

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### 5 AREAS TO BE REPORTED ON BY THE IMB

#### 5.1 Equality and Inclusion

- 5.1.1 The main forum for monitoring equality throughout the prison is the Equality, Diversity Action Team (EDAT). EDAT meetings have been taking place every two/three months. Although an improvement on the previous reporting year, in the Board's view they should be held more often. Attendance at the meetings has been poor. Monitoring data is now produced in an Equalities/Safer Custody Newsletter each month, which provides a breakdown of the prison population by age, ethnicity, whether of foreign national status, religion and disability. However, as noted in last year's Annual Report, there is no attempt to record information on the particular needs of those with 'protected characteristics' and on the prison's response to these.
- 5.1.2 The Board has a number of other concerns regarding the prison's support for prisoners from minority groups. There has been an increase in discrimination incident report forms submitted by prisoners (DIRFs), but these are not brought to the EDAT meetings in order that staff responses can be quality assured. There is merely a record in the minutes of the meeting of how many DIRFs were submitted for that period. Moreover, input to the EDAT meetings from Prisoner Equalities Representatives has declined. Indeed, the appointment of Equality Representatives has lapsed, although the Board understands that they have recently been appointed on some of the residential wings.
- 5.1.3 In the IMB's last two Annual Reports concern has been expressed that dedicated EDAT staff had been deployed to general wing duties. This situation has not improved; with 'New Ways of Working' the Equalities Officer no longer has time to carry out any duties in respect of this role.
- 5.1.4 Forums representative of a range of minority groups (including minority ethnic groups, older prisoners, and those with disability), which were introduced at the beginning of 2013, were highlighted in last year's Annual Report as a potentially valuable mechanism for raising awareness and reducing disadvantage. As with equality representatives, however, the forums have lapsed (since the beginning of 2014). The Board has been advised that this is due to the fact that they are not resourced under benchmarking.

#### 5.2 Learning and Skills

- 5.2.1 The Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) 4 contract, implemented in August 2012, has bedded in over the last year, with Weston College as the provider. The contract focusses on stated outcomes (i.e. attendance and achievement), rather than hours provided and there is a stronger emphasis on employability skills and meeting resettlement needs. Learning and Skills is seen as integral to the prison's objective of reducing reoffending. Other organisations such as National Careers Service, New Futures, N-Ergy contribute towards the provision of employability and vocational skills. The Board welcomes a more focused and integrated approach to learning and skills.
- 5.2.2 The Prison Service's PE department continues to provide valuable and well-used physical fitness and sports training. However, the gym is closed when there are staff shortages and PE trainers are required to cover wing duties. The Prison Information, Communication and Technology Academy (PICTA) workshop, offers worthwhile qualifications such as the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) to Level 2, and Information Technology Essentials.
- 5.2.3 The Board notes with sadness that 'softer subjects', such as art and music, are no longer provided under the OLASS contract as they are not accredited, despite the fact that they are widely believed to have a positive and therapeutic effect on prisoners. Outside agencies are, however,

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now involved in provision of courses: Changing Tunes is running a music course, and other agencies are being asked to provide art. The Chaplaincy is running a drama therapy course.

- 5.2.4 The Board understands that, in order to increase provision for literacy and numeracy training, functional skills classes are held once a week for 8 learners in each session, one session in the morning, another in the afternoon. Two weekly pre-entry classes for prisoners who are unable to read and write or have very low level literacy are being provided each with a capacity of 8 students. Also a tutor attends the wings to do Outreach Classes; these are one-to-one lessons on twice a week, aimed at prisoners who are unable to attend the education building.
- 5.2.5 Attendance on Weston College courses is usually around 80%, and the aim is to maintain this. Attendance has, however, at times dropped to around 70%. Officers are expected to follow up prisoners who do not attend but have not done so consistently; this, the Board understands, is being addressed. The opportunity for prisoners to attend both work and education sometimes means that prisoners attend work, but not education. The Board has been told that this will be also be addressed. Revision to the gym timetable to allow access outside education hours should also help. Delays in delivery of applications for education, and of notifications back to prisoners, also contribute to low attendance, and Learning and Skills staff have now set up their own delivery system to obviate these delays. Most courses now last for two weeks to match the high turnover of prisoners, though a small number are four-week (e.g. for IT). A two day food safety course is being run in Kitchen. Courses in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) are available as required for foreign prisoners with poor skills in English.
- 5.2.6 D Wing has been re-rolled as an 'induction' wing, where all prisoners arriving at HMP Bristol are allocated - apart from those requiring drug treatment programmes, who are allocated to C Wing. Having a wing specifically for induction is a welcome development and if properly resourced should allow better opportunity for assessment of prisoners' learning and skills and resettlement needs. For example, the National Careers Service has, as a result, been able to invite all prisoners to induction sessions and attendance at these is now about 75-80%.

### 5.3 Purposeful activity

- 5.3.1 In response to the Board's 2013 report, NOMS indicated that 'prisoner activity places for full and part time work will increase significantly from 320 to 577 by April 2014 as part of the regime refresh'. The Board is disappointed that this has not been achieved. It is understood that in July 2014 there were only 521 spaces available for work and education, of which 466 spaces (89%) were filled. The Board notes that the aim is to provide a total of 614 spaces, though understands that this has not yet been achieved during the reporting period. Workshop spaces are currently affected by changes and closures: not all of the Textiles Workshop is in use, the Waste Management Workshop is closed for re-modelling, and the PICTA workshop is closed due to a national security breach.<sup>2</sup> The Board also notes that the increase in activity spaces is being achieved through part-time working. While this means that more prisoners have the opportunity to participate in work/education, the amount of time each prisoner spends on activity is considerably reduced.
- 5.3.2 The high turnover of prisoners at HMP Bristol, coupled with the increasing proportion of prisoners on remand, continue to present a challenge in the allocation of prisoners to activities and in opportunities to offer transferable skills and qualifications. The numbers of prisoners in places such as Induction, Segregation, Landing C3 (drug treatment) and the Brunel Centre (Healthcare) contribute to the challenge. The recent reduction in the numbers of prisoners involved in

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<sup>2</sup> Purposeful activity figures do not include prisoners attending the gym or chaplaincy.

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purposeful activity is nevertheless a matter of serious concern and the Board will continue to monitor availability of places, attendance levels, and opportunities to acquire employment-related skills

### 5.4 Healthcare and Mental Health

- 5.4.1 Primary care services and some specialist clinical care continue to be commissioned through Bristol Community Health (BCH). Mental Health care is the responsibility of Avon and Wiltshire Partnership Trust (AWP).
- 5.4.2 On arrival at the prison, prisoners are given a health screening and referred for a mental health assessment or for substance misuse services where appropriate. Most health services are provided on the residential wings, in line with the community model of care. The main health care department offers some specialist clinics. Prisoners are able to see a nurse every day on their wings, for example, to collect medication, and they have access to treatment for minor illness or injury. They can see a GP on the same day for any urgent needs.

#### ***Brunel Unit***

- 5.4.3 In creating the Brunel Intervention Unit in 2012 the aim was to adopt a new approach to healthcare with a reduced inpatient facility, a greater emphasis on short-term interventions, day care, and measures to achieve a speedier return to wing location. The Unit currently has 14 beds. It is integrated with the Segregation and Reintegration Unit and is located in the same building. The IMB welcomes this initiative and the larger role being played by prison officers alongside nursing staff in supporting prisoners who spend their time there.
- 5.4.4 The IMB has regularly commented on the good work the nursing staff and uniform staff have achieved in the Brunel Unit, both in working with prisoners with significant mental health needs, and reintegrating them onto the residential wings as quickly as appropriate. A team of community psychiatric nurses includes dedicated primary mental health nurses, a learning disability nurse and two clinical sessions from a consultant clinical psychiatrist. There is good joint working and care planning between prison and mental health staff. The mental health, primary care and substance misuse referrals teams appear to be well integrated. Self-referrals are screened through a single point of entry and are considered for appropriate interventions through a weekly multi-professional meeting, which also includes representation from other prison services.
- 5.4.5 A service user forum has met regularly during the reporting period.
- 5.4.6 Therapeutic group work, conducted in the Unit, enables prisoners on the wings to join activities and discussions covering such topics as: current affairs, assertiveness and mental wellbeing. The Board notes, however, that groups have sometimes been cancelled due to unavailability of prison officers.
- 5.4.7 There was a reduction in the number of IMB applications received by the Board relating to health issues during this reporting year (66) compared with the previous year (80). These applications cover a range of issues, including complaints from drug dependant prisoners about reductions in substitute medication, and the length of time taken to arrange appointments or supply medication. The Board is concerned that inability to provide escorts for external appointments due to staff shortages – noted in last year’s report - has resulted in the cancellation of several external appointments: 11 were cancelled between January and July 2014. Appointments are rescheduled, but there may be a long wait if the person is required to go to the back of the queue. Benchmarking has evidently exacerbated this challenging situation. The combination of low staffing levels and a higher than expected demand for escorts resulted in a lockdown of the residential wings. The

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Board will continue to monitor the number of cancellations and the impact this is having on prisoners and the regime

### 5.5 Safer Custody

- 5.5.1 The report of the HMCIP unannounced inspection (September 2013) observed that too many prisoners said that they felt unsafe, and that prisoners reported high levels of victimisation and bullying by staff and other prisoners. The Board was disturbed at this finding, as it had not been borne out in written applications or conversations held with prisoners during Rota visits. As a direct result of the HMCIP's comments, during this reporting period Board members have spoken to a wide range of prisoners about their perceptions of safety and experience of bullying. It is puzzling - but reassuring - that that we can find no clear evidence that a high proportion of prisoners feel unsafe or that victimisation is widespread. Prisoners have acknowledged, however, that, for some the atmosphere of a busy, overcrowded prison can feel unsafe; a typical observation by one prisoner was: '...it's a prison, what do you expect?'
- 5.5.2 Such perceptions underline the importance of strong prison officer/prisoner relationships and an effective violence reduction strategy based on robust evidence of the extent of prisoner-on-prisoner and prisoner-on staff assaults. The Board is concerned that the procedures for monitoring violent incidents and threats of violence are unreliable. As the Board has observed in previous reports, the figures that are generated by the prison do not inspire confidence. Whilst this may not indicate conclusively that the prison is not safe, it may be one reason why Bristol has been flagged as 'Red' on the NOMS regional security and performance hub on two occasions in 2014.
- 5.5.3 Notwithstanding these concerns, the Deputy Governor stated at the June IMB meeting that, while he had little confidence in some of the figures recorded, in his view the prison had improved its procedures significantly and provides a safe environment. The Board acknowledges the Safer Custody audit of May 2014 rating of 'Green', together with the prison's on-going 'improvement plan' and new terms of reference (see below), implemented in response to the recommendations of the audit. The No. 1 Governor has stated to the Board, however, that in her view 'benchmarking is too tight' to allow for unforeseen problems. A national shortage of prison officers has meant that officers from HMP Bristol have been on 'detached duty' in other prisons, further reducing front line staffing. In last year's report the Board expressed the concern that levels of staffing on the wings are at times insufficient to ensure a safe environment for prisoners and staff. This remains the case. There are also perceptions among wing officers that current levels of staffing allow little opportunity to engage one to one with prisoners, listen to their concerns, and address the factors known to be associated with high risk of self-harm.
- 5.5.4 New terms of reference agreed April 2014 place emphasis on the requirement for comprehensive monitoring of all components of Safer Custody:
- To advise the Governor on all aspects relating to the Management of prisoners at risk of harm to self, to others, and from others.
  - To monitor the maintenance of good standards and procedures in suicide prevention related matters.
  - To monitor the ACCT Plan procedures and implement national amendments.
  - To monitor the work of the Listener scheme (operational issues, security considerations etc.) and to encourage representation at monthly meetings.
  - To monitor incidents of attempted suicides, and self-harm, and identify trends and themes.
  - To provide a formally minuted record of matters discussed.

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- 5.5.5 Reports from wing staff, Custodial Manager attendance, and wider representation at the monthly meetings have been unsatisfactory. With a view to raising the profile of these meetings and improving attendance, The Deputy Governor assumed chairmanship from June 2014, replacing the Head of Safer Custody (although the June meeting was in fact chaired by a Safer Custody Liaison Officer and the July meeting by the Head of Safer Custody).

### ***ACCTS (Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork)***

- 5.5.6 Board members monitor ACCT books on the wings during ROTA visits and take part in quality control checks at the Safer Custody management monthly meetings. The number of ACCT books opened remains generally consistent with recent years.

ACCT books opened PA since 2010

**2010 - 565**

**2011 - 579**

**2012 - 557**

**2013 - 568**

**2014 - 206 (Jan to May)**

- 5.5.7 The quality control checks and audits are a response to previous audit team criticisms. The booklets are selected at random and critiqued by all those present. There has been an emphasis on improving the closure review processes. However, uninformative and anodyne entries remain prevalent - for example 'collected his lunch'- in contrast to more informative entries conveying that the officer had engaged the prisoner in conversation. The May 2014 HMIP Safer Custody Audit noted:

*'We reviewed ACCT documents throughout the establishment and found they were not all fully maintained and the correct process was not always followed.'*

- 5.5.8 As noted above, wing staff have commented to Board members that with current staffing levels it is difficult to find time to carry out this essential task to the required standard. However, Custodial Managers have recently been reminded of the importance of checking ACCT entries and procedures, and of challenging officers where there are shortcomings.

### ***Violence Reduction Statistics***

- 5.5.9 The Board is satisfied that there is openness to the challenge and a commitment to address the issue of inconsistent recording procedures by those responsible for managing safer custody. A member is regularly represented at the monthly Safer Custody meetings, where this matter has been discussed at length. For example at the May meeting it was noted The NOMS HUB data, drawn from PNOMIS, showed that there were no 'prisoner on prisoner' fights recorded, when there were in fact four fights recorded on the Incident Reporting System (IRS). A cross check of the two data sources revealed that cases are often recorded on one source but not the other, and that there is some under-recording on the PNOMIS system. Moreover, in May 2014 IRS recorded 11 referrals to the police, whereas the NOMS hub record just one. Inputting procedures underlie these gaps and unexplained discrepancies. These shortcomings undermine the Board's confidence in prison derived figures for this crucial area of investigation and intervention. Indeed, given the importance of accurate monitoring of violence and other forms of anti-social behaviour, if a senior manager expressed lack of confidence in these figures the Board must question the veracity of data supplied by the prison in other areas.

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- 5.5.10 Efforts have been made to correct the figures and the Safer Custody management is in the process of devising a system of recording that is less prone to error. The Board welcomes this initiative as members are concerned that this situation hampers effective management of violent and abusive behavior.
- 5.5.11 There have been no deaths in custody during the reporting period although the inquest of on prisoner, who died in HMP Bristol, took place between 25<sup>th</sup> June and 1<sup>st</sup> July. The Jury arrived at a verdict of suicide with 'no narrative'.
- 5.5.12 Self-harm incidents are recorded according to the ethnicity and age of the prisoner, the location and time of day. The Board noted in last year's report that the recording of self-harming had improved. The total for figure for 2012 and 2013 were 160 and 162 respectively. In the first half of 2014 there have been 79 incidents, suggesting that there has been no significant increase over the past 2 ½ years. Nevertheless, the Board considers that effort should be made to reduce these figures through the ACCT process and ensuring that prisoners have ready access to Samaritans and Listeners.
- 5.5.13 The Board is concerned that arrangements have yet to be made for prisoners to access the Samaritans at night via a portable or 'DECT' phones, to ensure privacy. At the time of reporting an estimate is being sought to install secure 'DECT' phones' to all wings, but this may not take place if it is considered to be too costly.

### **Listeners**

- 5.5.14 Listeners, prisoner volunteers trained by Samaritans to support those in crisis, can play an important role in respect of their fellow prisoners. During 2014 a number of concerns have arisen, including the lack of suitable accommodation for private conversations on some wings, and the time taken to return Listeners to their cells following a 'session'. The latter is being addressed through the proposal that Listeners receive 'Red Band' (enhanced) status, subject to security clearance. The number of trained Listeners fluctuates and there is sometimes a shortage, which is hardly surprising given the substantial population turnover. The average term of service is typically between two and six months.

## **5.6 Separation and Reintegration Unit**

- 5.6.1 Now part of the Brunel Intervention Unit, the Segregation and Reintegration Unit has 12 furnished, two unfurnished and one 'safer' cell. The staffing profile for the unit has been reduced following the implementation of *New Ways of Working*. A senior officer is no longer present in the Unit and the number of other officers has been reduced by one on some shifts. The current profile is thus:
- Mornings: three officers
  - Afternoons: two officers
  - Weekends: three officers each morning, two each afternoon, one overnight.
- 5.6.2 For this reporting period a total of 344 prisoners have been located in the Segregation Unit compared to 365 for the same reporting period last year.
- 5.6.3 Three prisoners who displayed extreme behaviour were placed in unfurnished cells during the reporting period (compared to two in 2012/11 two 2010/11, and six in 2009/10). Each placement in an unfurnished cell, which usually only lasts for a just few hours, is monitored by the IMB. There have been no major incidents or a requirement to use enhanced restraints.
- 5.6.4 Six prisoners have carried out a 'dirty protest,' compared to fourteen in the previous report. Officers in the unit have handled these situations with great sensitivity as well as a certain amount

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of forbearance. The prisoners concerned have been provided with regular showers and are seen on a daily basis by a member of the Healthcare Team. The cell which is usually used to house prisoners making a dirty protest has been thoroughly cleaned on a regular basis.

- 5.6.5 A member of the IMB visits the unit each week. The main purpose of this visit is to speak to every prisoner in the unit on that day and check that the paperwork. Reviews of prisoners held in the Segregation Unit are held weekly, and a member of the Board attends whenever possible. Those that have been attended have been conducted in a thorough and fair manner. They are held at varying times during the week as and when required. The lack of a fixed time has, however, led to a reduction in the number monitored by the Board. .
- 5.6.6 A total of 931 adjudications (including prisoners with multiple adjudications) have been conducted during the reporting period (compared to 1,142 in 2011/12, 1,006 in 2010/11, and 1,303 in 2009/10). The Independent Adjudicator (a District Judge) has dealt with 131 prisoners who had 202 adjudications (compared to 211 in 210/11). IMB members generally attend adjudications taking place at the time of their visit to the Segregation Unit. The Board reports that during their attendance adjudications are conducted fairly and follow agreed guidelines.
- 5.6.7 Whereas in the previous reporting period the Board expressed concerns about the wellbeing of five prisoners held in segregation for considerable periods of time, in this reporting period no prisoner had spent longer than 3 months in the Unit. The problems associated with 'long stayers' on the Unit, the care of prisoners with mental health issues, and other issues of concern are discussed with the Board's regular representative at the Segregation Monitoring and Review Group (SMARG) meetings.
- 5.6.8 It is the opinion of the Board that the Segregation Unit continues to be well run. In spite of dealing with some of the prison's most challenging residents, and bearing in mind the reductions in staffing levels, the officers provide a high level of care and conduct their work in a cheerful and thoroughly professional manner. They are generous with their time when dealing with enquiries from prisoners and the IMB. Staff make every effort to facilitate visits from members of the Board and keep them apprised of the situation in the unit. A system, introduced the previous year, whereby the IMB member on duty rings the unit every day for an update, continues to work well for all parties.

### 5.7 Residential Services (including accommodation, food and kitchen)

#### *Residential Wings*

- 5.7.1 The standard of cleanliness in the communal areas of residential wings has generally been just adequate but it is not helped by the poor condition of many of the facilities, such as missing and cracked tiles, leaking or broken toilets. This observation was made in the previous report, as was the concern expressed about the inadequacy of the changing/toilet/handwashing facilities for up to 30 prisoners in the kitchen, with its need for food hygiene priority. The ongoing presence of cockroaches in cells, serveries and landings, particularly on A and G wings, has been noted by the Board and remains an issue in spite of attention being drawn to this issue in previous annual reports and in a survey carried out by a specialist company.
- 5.7.2 The introduction of *New Ways of Working* has been effectively managed but the Board has concerns about lower staff to prisoner ratios. A frequent observation in members' rota reports is the increased difficulty experienced by wing officers (often on rotational deployment) in maintaining relationships with a larger number of prisoners, who now have increased time out of cells during the daily 'domestic period' and in association. The Personal Officer role, judged as "undermined" by staff shortages in last year's annual report - before NWoW - has virtually disappeared. The Governing Governor has spoken of the continuing importance of a rehabilitative culture at HMP

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Bristol, but this remains difficult to deliver given the frequently reported concerns of staff that they are “being stretched too thinly”. In the judgment of the Board this situation is made worse by the fact that there is no longer a Senior Officer on each wing. Under NWoW Wing Supervisors cover several wings and have limited authority, while the Custodial Manager is necessarily detached from the day to day routines. The problem is exacerbated by the absence of a settled team of officers on each wing. The loss of continuity means that officers are less well equipped to spot issues of concern and deal with them before they get out of hand. It is also evident to the Board that lack of familiarity with the prisoners undermines the ACCT process.

- 5.7.3 The service provided by administrative staff in response to requests/queries from front line staff can be slow, as for example when assisting prisoners with the authorisation of telephone PIN numbers, arranging visiting orders, or locating personal property. Delays can be lengthy - reflecting staff shortages/absences in these key ancillary roles – and this can present a further obstacle to effective staff-prisoner relationships. The Board has observed grievances being aired on the landings and/or a skeleton number of wing officers being under pressure to deliver on these basic requirements.
- 5.7.4 The volume of litter thrown from cell windows on A wing and more particularly G wing, continues to be a feature at HMP Bristol in spite of concerns being expressed in previous annual reports. Whilst a more routine approach to picking up litter has been implemented, it is by no means failsafe and this anti-social behaviour by prisoners seems too often to go unchecked with no lasting deterrent sanction apparently in place. The Board understands that the IEP system is used where the culprits are identifiable, but the daily throwing of food waste, soiled kit and paper/plastic indicates that this approach is of limited effectiveness. Indeed, throughout the reporting year the Board has noticed a sense of defeatism in respect of this problem.

### ***Prison kit***

- 5.7.5 Shortage of prison kit, and the poor quality of much of the clothing and bedding, has been a high profile issue for most of the year. Concern has been at its highest on the detox/stabilization unit of C wing, where the need for regular kit change is greatest but where there is often a shortage. Prisoners have not always received their normal weekly change for a variety of reasons. Sheets, towels, underwear and even toothpaste have frequently been unavailable and are distributed on an irregular basis. Once again, this concern about one of the “basics” in prison life was highlighted in last year’s report, but the situation has now deteriorated and has been a frequent complaint to the Board – from prisoners and staff – throughout the reporting year. Typical is the prisoner who complained of having to wear the same t-shirt to work on three consecutive days, and inattention to size at kit exchange. The supply of incomplete “starter packs” in Reception exacerbates the problem when it comes to weekly exchange. HMP Leyhill (where kit is laundered) and the suppliers of new kit (Branston) continue to be blamed for shortages and poor quality of kit. Responsibility for resolving this kit deficit has been assigned, but problems continue and the Board will continue to monitor this issue closely over the coming months. Despite a high level of spend in this area the Board does not consider the service offered by Leyhill and/or Branson to be adequate nor sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of a prison with such a high intake of prisoners.

### ***First Night Centre***

- 5.7.6 The First Night Centre has maintained a good reputation and additional interview facilities are being built to take pressure off the small and relatively public space of Reception. This new facility should be adequately resourced to respond to a higher throughput of new arrivals and improve confidentiality for prisoners. Given the high turn-over of the prison, staff are working long hours to assess and induct a constant influx of new prisoners. Overall, a professional approach towards new arrivals has been observed by the Board in what can be challenging circumstances. These should be improved by the restructuring plans for both the building and staffing.

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### *Kitchen and catering*

- 5.7.7 The kitchen operates smoothly at HMP Bristol. Productive relationships between staff and prisoners exist with induction/training well received. The daily requirement to produce meals for over 600 prisoners based on a recently changed, monthly rotational menu within a strict but manageable budget is challenging but effective. Equipment failure, however, can result in unexplained long delays for repair and impact on food quality/variety. The kitchen deals sensitively with dietary requirements, including Ramadan and other faith obligations.
- 5.7.8 Prisoner satisfaction with food remains at a relatively high level although there are sometimes complaints to the Board of small portions and of inadequate supervision of the Servery. The Servery Comment Books seem elusive, though apparently scrutinised by kitchen staff on a weekly basis. The allocation of inappropriate prisoners to kitchen work has become a little more apparent recently given the failure of some to meet health & safety requirements and the team discipline needed in this particular environment. Overall, systems (e.g. knife security) in the kitchen are well established and it continues to provide a high standard of process and product for one of the basics in prison life. The internal fabric of the kitchen is however very tired and washing and toilet facilities are barely adequate considering the importance of the kitchen in the smooth running of the prison.

### **5.8 Resettlement**

- 5.8.1 The national 'Reducing Reoffending Strategy', delivered through a focus on the seven resettlement 'pathways' for preparing offenders for release, informs the prison's resettlement activities. The prison is directly responsible for funding two of these pathways (accommodation and employment) and part funds support for children & families jointly with PACT (the voluntary organisation that assists prisoners' families), Bristol City Council and the Troubled Families Scheme. The remaining pathways: health & mental health; substance misuse; finance, debt & benefits; and attitudes, thinking & behaviour, continue to be financed by external agencies.
- 5.8.2 Significant attention and time has been paid to establishing relationships with over thirty corporate, civic, voluntary and faith organisations in the community to share or underpin delivery of support, advice, education and training workshops covering all Pathways.
- 5.8.3 A new First Night Centre (FNC) will shortly open within D Wing (summer 2014) which, as noted above (para 5.7.6), should provide much improved facilities for the Induction of prisoners. The opening is presently delayed awaiting installation of IT facilities. The induction programme will incorporate a full explanation of all available 'resettlement' assistance for prisoners commencing their first prison sentence and a tailored version for those having served a previous term in prison. Individual needs will be recorded electronically for use in subsequent sentence planning by the Offender Management Unit (OMU). The FNC will also carry out a risk assessment previously conducted by Reception.
- 5.8.4 Pre-release workshops are held every Friday morning and all prisoners are invited to attend five weeks before their release. Attendance is not mandatory and averages 60%.

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- 5.8.5 The Board is only able to obtain performance data on three pathways: **settled accommodation on discharge** (target 80.5%), **employment on discharge** (target 21%) and **education/training on discharge** (target 7%).<sup>3</sup> The low targets for employment and education recognise the difficulty in achieving these outcomes for prisoners leaving HMP Bristol. The IMB understands that the external agencies responsible for delivery of the four remaining pathways record their own performance data separately from the prison system and that this is not available to the prison or the IMB. The Board is very concerned at this situation and considers that greater transparency is needed for adequate monitoring of all aspects of resettlement, irrespective of whether it is delivered internally or through external agencies.
- 5.8.6 Targets for accommodation, employment and education/training are recorded as having been exceeded on a year to date basis as at February 2014:

### ***Accommodation.***

February 2014 the Year to Date (YTD) outcome - settled accommodation provided - was 83.07%. March and April YTD outcomes had reduced to 76.83% (amber) and 73.33% (amber) respectively. May and June figures are not yet available but are verbally reported as "on target" by an Administrative Officer (AO).

These figures reflect the introduction of Benchmarking, which removed the posts of two full time Housing Officers in October 2013. During the reporting period there was no full time trained housing advice worker in post. The role was subsequently taken on (end of April 2014) by an AO with no previous relevant experience. A prison officer who provided valuable part-time specialist housing advice and support for prisoners discharged from the substance misuse Wing (C Wing) was removed to other prison duties under Benchmarking, and was not replaced. The losses have been offset to some extent by St Mungo's housing outreach workers, who attend the prison weekly to support prisoners at risk of homelessness. In addition, a task group has been set up with Bristol City Council and wider agencies to improve support for prisoners on release.

***Employment on Discharge:*** March outcome was 21.37% (green).

***Education/Training on Discharge:*** March outcome was 2.56% (red)<sup>4</sup>

- 5.8.7 Links are being established with retailer, Timpson, to provide employment skills training. However, as noted above (para. 5.3.2) the high turnover of prisoners (60% every 3 months) prevents a high quality of work/training in preparing for release. Moreover, remand prisoners are not currently included in resettlement planning. This is set to change as such prisoners are often left, after sentencing, with little or no time to serve before their release. Without the benefit of the help and support they are likely to require on discharge the risks of reoffending are high.
- 5.8.8 Some prisoners are now trained to be 'Health Champions'. Those selected are employed by the prison to raise awareness of health issues and to provide advice and information on social care. This can also provide work opportunities on release.
- 5.8.9 The Board notes the HMIP report of September 2013 was generally favourable in relation to resettlement issues but highlights inadequacies in the support provided for **Children and Families**. 'Story Book Dads' - a programme which enables prisoners to record stories on DVD for their children - was successfully re-introduced in March 2014 at the rate of about 6 p.w. 'Animation'

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<sup>3</sup> Targets are set by NOMS for HMP Bristol and achievements are recorded by prison staff and entered onto P-Nomis.

<sup>4</sup> Data for April and May are unavailable at the time of writing this report.

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has recently been added. During the reporting period there have been times where the library was not opened due to a lack of staff.

- 5.8.10 The Visits Booking Line continues to give rise to regular complaint by both prisoners and their visitors. The advertised times of operation (Daily: 08:30 - 12:30 & 13:30 - 16:30 (13:00-17:00 weekends) are frequently not supported by staff availability, and are thus misleading and the advertised Sunday booking service is not available. PACT report 10-15 complaints daily about the visits booking facility. For visitors without access to the online service, the inadequacies of the telephone service can be costly and stressful. Board members regularly listen to family members of prisoners waiting for visits and a recurring complaint is the time taken to make a telephone booking, whereas visitors who use internet booking report a much speedier outcome. Visitors are however generally positive about the way they are treated by staff whilst visiting.
- 5.8.11 The prison has been working on design of a through the gate 'Domestic Violence' intervention programme for perpetrators in conjunction with local specialist health services, Probation and local charities. This has so far raised the awareness of prison staff and will now be piloted for prisoners in custody and as a programme for prisoners on release within the next few months.
- 5.8.12 HMP Bristol has been a part of a Restorative Justice (RJ) pilot delivered over the last 3 years within a national programme. Avon & Somerset Police have provided a full time Police Officer who delivers face to face victim/offender conferencing at the prison. This is said to have been a 'huge success' and received positive feedback from victims. Sadly despite the success of the initiative the funding for the Police Officer has now ended. Pre-sentence RJ has also recently commenced at the prison.
- 5.8.13 The Board has been informed that a new Reducing Reoffending Strategy Team will convene its initial meeting in August 2014. It is anticipated there will be a focus on the outsourcing of resettlement activity to CRC's (Community Resettlement Companies), due to commence in October 2014. An IMB representative has been invited to attend the meetings.



### 6. Substance misuse treatment and supply reduction

- 6.1 Levels of drug use among new arrivals to HMP Bristol are high. HMP Bristol has developed an effective and now well established substance abuse service for all prisoners while they are in custody. There have been numerous staff changes during the year and at times a shortage in senior clinical staff has been a cause of concern to the Board. At the end of the reporting year the clinical team, based in the stabilisation unit (on C wing), is short of four nurses for this demanding but essential role. Places have recently been filled and the new appointments include nurses with mental health training, which will enable the team to re-establish dual diagnosis (this service has lapsed) and reduce the interval between arrival on the wing and assessment of the prisoner's mental health needs. Currently drug/alcohol dependent prisoners do not see a member of the mental health team until they are deemed to be stable.
- 6.3 During the reporting year external funding has been withdrawn for certain key posts, one of which was for designated prison officer trained in relapse intervention. This crucial service was under threat, but the clinical team and substance misuse workers have continued to support prisoners who do relapse and regular clinics have been re-established. The Board commends the efforts made by the prison to maintain a strong partnership with community based criminal justice integrated teams (CJITs). On their release the majority of prisoners continue contact with CJIT or with a treatment provider (GP and/or drug clinic). Also noteworthy is the fact that currently some 46% of prisoners who receive treatment on C wing leave the prison drug or alcohol free.<sup>5</sup>
- 6.3 Statistics compiled by the prison for mandatory drug testing (MDT) indicate that illegal drugs continue to circulate in the prison. The percentage of tests with a positive result between April 2013 and March 2014 is almost twice that for the same period in 2012/13 (17% compared with 9.6%). Cannabis accounts for most of the increase. Reasons for the sharp increase are unclear although the ending of voluntary drug testing and voluntary drug free compacts offered to prisoners on B wing may be a factor. Moreover, MDT results may well underestimate the extent of drug use as synthetic psychoactive substances, such as 'Spice', cannot be detected in current drug tests, or by dogs. Prisoners' reactions to these substances are a cause of concern. These can be severe and can result in hospitalization, adding to the existing pressure on staffing levels. The clinical team also report concerns about the rise in prisoners with alcohol dependency, many of whom are very unwell with sclerosis of the liver and associated mental health problems.
- 6.4 The number of prison officers on C wing has sometimes fallen to a level at which wing nurses feel unsafe. At such times they are advised not to unlock prisoners. This situation is unsatisfactory as it interrupts the work of clinical staff and reduces contact with prisoners undergoing treatment. Also of concern to clinical staff – and to the Board – is the reduction in cell searches on C wing, despite strong suspicions that drugs are prevalent on the wing. The recent recruitment of a dog handler and dogs trained to search for drugs (actively in cells, passively at the visits hall) is a positive development. Targeted cell searches, in response to intelligence, have recently increased and have been successful in intercepting illegal substances.

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<sup>5</sup> Quarter 4, 2013/14 Adult Prison Quarterly Treatment Report, Public Health England.

**SECTION 5****THE WORK OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD**

<b>BOARD STATISTICS</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>
Recommended complement of Board members	16	16
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	15	13
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	13	14
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	1	6
Number of members leaving within the reporting period	3	5 <sup>6</sup>
Total number of Board meetings during the reporting period	12	12
Average number of attendances at Board Meetings during the reporting period	12	11
Number of attendances at meetings, other than Board meetings	Not recorded	74
Total number of visits to the prison/IRC (including all meetings)	381	348
Total number of applications received	477	464
Total number of segregation reviews held (14 day reviews)	Not recorded	Not recorded
Total number of segregation reviews attended	5	4

The Board has lacked the support of an experienced Clerk for a large part of the reporting year. The absence of a regular minute taker at monthly Board meetings has caused difficulties.

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<sup>6</sup> Four of the five have transferred to other prisons: two to Erlestoke, one to Ashfield, one to Belmarsh.

**SECTION 7*****Applications to the Board***

<b>Code</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>
A	Accommodation	8	11	14
B	Adjudications	0	10	4
C	Equality & Diversity (inc religion)	0	8	12
D	Education/employment/training inc IEP	4	20	12
E 1	Family/visits inc mail & phone	13	38	48
E 2	Finance/pay	Not recorded	Not recorded	13
F	Food/kitchen related	5	20	14
G	Health related	66	80	66
H 1	Property (within current establishment)	37	57	56
H 2	Property (during transfer/in another establishment)	H1 & H2 combined	32	54
H 3	Canteen, facilities, Catalogue shopping, Argos	Not recorded	27	16
I	Sentence related (inc. HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re- cat etc)	5	33	44
J	Staff/prisoner/detainee concerns inc. bullying	25	25	35
K	Transfers	2	2	30
L	Miscellaneous	154	55	46
	<b>Total number of IMB applications</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>477</b>	<b>464</b>