



HMP BUCKLEY HALL ROCHDALE

Prison Rules 2010 (consolidated)
Paragraph 80

Annual Report to the Secretary of State for Justice

Year Ending: 30th June 2013

INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD (IMB)

ANNUAL REPORT 2013

1. STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

1.1 The Prisons Act 1952 and the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 require every prison to be monitored by an independent Board appointed by the Secretary of State for Justice and from members of the community in which the prison is situated.

1.2 The Board is specifically charged to:

1.2.1 satisfy itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in custody within its prison and the range and adequacy of the programmes preparing them for release.

1.2.2 inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority as it judges appropriate, any concern it has.

1.2.3 report annually to the Secretary of State on how well the prison has met the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have on those in its custody.

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

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2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

2. The prison is a Category C training prison for men. It is built on a steep site on the edge of the Pennines, near Rochdale. Most of the prisoners are from the north-west and the majority are serving long-term sentences; that is four years or more.

3. The prison opened in 1994 as one of four contracted prisons and was managed by Group 4 for a period of 5 years. In 2000, a ten year contract was put out for tender and won by the Prison Service. During this contract, the prison held Category C men, then Women and then Category C men again. In 2011, the Prison Service was successful in its bid for the latest contract which will run, initially, for the next six years.

4. Buckley Hall is a Level 3 performing prison and in terms of the separate Performance Measures, scores mainly levels three or four. On the criteria of Safer Custody, the Availability & Quality of Custody Regime and Staff Sickness the prison performs particularly well.

5. Five services are sub-contracted:

Education	Manchester College
Catering	ESS Criminal Justice Division
Healthcare	Pennine Care
Visitors' Reception	Partners of Prisoners & Families
Library Service	Rochdale Council

6. There are four Residential blocks with a certified normal capacity of 441 and an operational capacity of 445. Some 80% of prisoners are in single cells and the new block has a capacity of 60 single cells, each with its own shower and toilet. The Multifaith moved to the Multi-Faith building in October 2011. Towards the end of the reporting year, one of the existing residential units was commissioned as a dedicated Drug Recovery Wing.

3. Executive Summary

3.1 Yet again, a year in which the Prison experienced considerable staffing and organisational changes and it is creditable that Management and Staff continue to respond in such a professional and constructive manner. Indeed, the results from a recent survey showed the level of staff engagement was the highest in the North-West and, indeed, among the very best in HMPS. Staff absence has been significantly improved and is now also the lowest in the North-West. In no small part, this is because the Governor and Senior Management continue to make a real effort to promote and develop meaningful channels of communication with staff. For example, there have been a number of 'Listen to Improve' exercises during the year and an updated People Plan to which staff have been encouraged to contribute.

3.2 The Board has confidence in the commitment and performance of the staff but has some concerns about how well current staffing levels can cope during periods of staff leave and illness. Staffing levels are extremely 'lean' and, more than once during the year, Management had to make temporary cut backs to the period of Prisoner Association. Whenever these situations arose, Prisoners were informed in advance of the need for the regime change and accepted the situation with good grace. To date, the tight staffing levels do not appear to have jeopardised the safety or rationale of the environment but, in the opinion of the Board, the scope for any further staff reductions is questionable.

3.3 The management is committed to introducing a smoke-free prison. From the outset, Staff and prisoners have been fully informed of the plans, the rationale and the timeline.. In the first phase, smoking was banned in the Care & Separation Unit compound, from May 2013. This first phase was carefully, thoughtfully and successfully introduced in an effective collaboration between the Prison and Healthcare. Prisoners allocated to CSU who smoked, are offered smoking cessation advice or nicotine replacement therapies. Despite, some inevitable complaints this first phase has been remarkably trouble-free and is testimony to the careful planning which preceded it. The next phase will start this September and extends the non-smoking ban to the whole prison – the only exception being to allow prisoners to smoke in their own cell. Again, the ban includes staff. This second phase is likely to prove a more challenging policy to police and garner staff and prisoner support for.

3.4 Taking the 'Four Tests of a Healthy Prison'

"All Prisoners feel safe"

The arrangements for Safer Prisons work well and suitable procedures and protocols are in place. Surveys show that the majority of prisoners feel safe and believe staff are approachable when there is an issue. The recent Safer Custody Audit, confirmed that the Prison performs particularly well on this criteria.

3.5 ACCT documents are treated with importance and procedures followed carefully. In the opinion of the Board, staff have a good knowledge of the vulnerable prisoners and discharge their duty of care to them - within the constraints they face – compassionately. Debts between prisoners have the potential to threaten the safety of some but there are initiatives intended to address this issue. In the opinion of the Board, the Safer Custody team is proactive, effective and has a high profile throughout the prison.

3.6 *"Prisoners are treated with respect as individuals"*

The prison prides itself on the relationship staff have with prisoners. The majority of Prisoners are positive in their views of how they are treated by prison staff at all levels and surveys confirm that they feel staff treat them fairly. This year has been typical in the very low number of Applications to the Board complaining about the ill-treatment prisoners claimed to have received from staff.

3.7 *Prisoners are fully and purposefully occupied and expected to improve themselves”*

On occasion during the year, rates of unemployment have been higher than might be expected in a Training Prison. In terms of the Education provision in the prison, the quality, provision and completion rates of Courses are sound. In the opinion of the Board, the current IEP scheme has weaknesses which need to be addressed, if more prisoners are to ‘improve themselves’.

3.8 *“Prisoners can strengthen links with their families and prepare themselves for release”*

The Board’s judgment is that families and friends enjoy a particularly friendly and positive experience when they visit the prison. However, the Visits process experienced significant problems during the year. As a consequence of transferring the Visiting Orders to the electronic kiosks, the Visits Hall experienced considerable under-occupancy and new prisoners had to wait a matter of weeks before they could have their first visit. Management has responded to the problem and suspended the use of the electronic kiosks for arranging Visits until a suitable IT fix can be found.

3.9 Greater emphasis is now being placed on resettlement. Efforts are being made to increase the number of employment ROTL opportunities with local employers and community organisations. However, it is acknowledged, changes in this area are likely when the reconfiguration of the Prison System and the Transforming Rehabilitation Agenda alters the profile of prisoners here..

3.10 In the judgment of the Board, the prison performs well on each of these four criteria and, in doing so, provides the taxpayer with excellent value for money.

3.11 The Board wishes to place on record its appreciation for the patience, courtesy and cooperation shown to its members by all grades of staff. The Board is particularly grateful that the members of an extremely busy Senior Management of the prison are so approachable and prepared to engage positively with the Board. In addition, Members of the Board appreciate the invitations they receive to observe the desk-top and contingency exercises. These invitations reflect the fundamentally open and transparent culture of the prison

Matters for the consideration of the Secretary of State

4.1 Any prisoner who assaults an IMB member, should not be subject to internal prison disciplinary procedures but instead should face criminal charges placed before the Courts.

4.2 Referring finds of mobile phones to the Police and CPS for further investigation is adding considerable delays to the Adjudication process and leading to a number of cases being dismissed as 'out of time'. The present situation is common knowledge among prisoners and continues to frustrate staff.

Matters for the consideration of the Chief Executive of the National Offender Management Service

5.1 Staff complain to the Board that a number of Prisoners are being allocated to Buckley Hall who have completed, elsewhere, the Offender Behaviour programmes on offer here. This duplication of resources within the prison service is inefficient, does not help prisoners to progress through their sentence plan and makes it difficult for the prison to meet its targets for Offender Programmes. It is to be hoped that the intended reconfiguration of the Prison Service will address this problem.

6. REPORTS

6.1 Equality & Inclusion

6.1.1 Issues of diversity are taken seriously by staff and a positive, open attitude towards it exists. Members of The Equalities agenda is under the overall responsibility of the Safer Custody Team. The team is enthusiastic and undoubtedly committed to their work. The recent Equalities Audit on which the Prison scored a Level 2, confirms that it performs satisfactorily on this criteria. A survey of BME Prisoners showed that the majority of them feel safe and believe the staff are fair and approachable. There has been a slight increase in the number of racial complaints investigated but, Prison Management believe this is because prisoners are now better informed about their right to complain. Complaints are taken seriously and the recent Equalities Audit complimented the team on the high quality of their investigations. In the past year, sixteen Discrimination Information Reporting Forms [DIRF] were submitted. Of these nine were found not proven, five were found proven and two remain under investigation.

6.1.2 The Prison is keen to develop the role of the Prisoner Forums which reflect and articulate the needs of specific groups. There are prisoner forums for Older Prisoners, BME Prisoners, Disabled Prisoners, Younger Prisoners, and Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender Prisoners. The forums meet regularly and one or two of them are held each month. Membership at the forums is increasing and they have already been effective in putting forward a number of proposals. For example, the forum for prisoners over the age of 50 has been developing resources and activities appropriate for this particular group. Another new initiative is the weekly lunchtime 'Equalities Quiz'. The quiz attracts teams consisting of both Staff and Prisoners and the format is proving extremely effective and popular.

6.1.3 It is debatable whether there are sufficient car parking spaces adjacent to the prison entrance for Disabled Visitors. Given the distance and steep hill from the general car park to the Gatehouse, this is an issue for disabled and elderly visitors.

6.1.4 The needs of those of a religious persuasion are well met. A coordinated effort by all staff ensured that Muslim prisoners could observe the period of Ramadan and celebrate the Festival of Eid. Christians are equally well provided for by the Multifaith Team and the major religious festivals receive due attention. It is a matter of observation that attendance at the weekly religious ceremonies is significantly higher among Muslim prisoners than those from the Christian denominations.

6.1.5 Commendable efforts are made to meet the religious needs of prisoners who belong to less mainstream denominations. In addition, the Multifaith Team deliver a number of lunch-time courses, organise a 'Black History' month and arrange occasional meetings for prisoners who are Travellers.

6.1.6 On two separate occasions during the year, a prisoner complained to the Board that Wing Officers had refused them permission to attend the weekly religious service. The prisoners concerned were on Basic IEP and, therefore, confined to their cell during Association. The Residential Governor has confirmed that Basic IEP prisoners do still have a right to attend religious services and this can only be overridden on security grounds and that the decision should be taken by the Duty Governor rather than Wing Staff.

6.1.7 The Chaplain and his team make an extremely positive contribution to the life of the Prison. They are regarded by prisoners as approachable, sympathetic and helpful. Their work is highly valued by staff and management.

6.2 Education, Learning & Skills

6.2.1 The Education Unit which is staffed by Manchester College has expanded its provision, in part to cater for the increased number of prisoners at Buckley Hall. Additional staff have been appointed and new courses established in Barrista Training, Customer Services, Peer Mentoring and Horticulture.

6.2.2 Over recent years, the Education Unit has been assessed consistently as operating at Level 2 [Good] and has aspirations to achieve Level 1.

6.2.3 The Education Manager is keen that all new Prisoners should be required to complete qualifications in Level 1 Numeracy and Literacy, if they have not already done so, before being allowed to apply to any of the prison Workshops. In the opinion of the Board, this idea has considerable merit in terms of improving job prospects on release.

6.2.4 The range of educational provision remains good even though the new funding mechanism – OLASS4 – has impacted on course provision. Courses which do not qualify for funding have been dropped or replaced and it is a matter of some regret that One to One and Outreach provision have officially stopped. The new funding has also meant prisoners are now restricted to enrolling on just one Level 2 Diploma course and in these circumstances, it is important prisoners are helped to make their choice of course wisely and on its completion are offered meaningful opportunities to put into practice and develop the skills acquired.

6.2.5 Over the year, the Attendance Rate in Education Classes averages in the region of 80 – 85% and successful Course Completion Rates are estimated to be some 80%. When Board Members have attended the Labour Board meetings, they have noted that the Education Department can report up to 50 unfilled course places in a week. While it is unrealistic to eliminate all these vacancies, there may be scope for filling some of them.

6.2.6 Because of the new funding formula, a degree of tension exists between the Education Unit and the Programmes Unit. On occasion, both now require the attendance of the same prisoner, at the same time and with the development of ‘payment by results’ it is important each Department ensures that prisoners complete their course in a timely fashion. Fortunately, the managers of the two departments appreciate that this new working environment requires dialogue and the establishment of a new ‘modus vivendi’.

6.2.7 The classroom facilities for the Horticulture Course still remain unfinished a year on from the last Annual Report. On a more positive note, however, the course itself is now established and the first set of prisoners has passed through.

6.2.8 At present, Education staff are not required to make a periodic nor end of course comment on P-Nomis on the progress and behavior of prisoners enrolled on courses. Ready access to regular reports on all students would help build a more rounded picture of each prisoner for those involved in their supervision. A number of the Education staff do not yet have the appropriate training to make comments – negative or positive - directly onto P-Nomis. If they do wish to submit a comment, it is given to the Education Manager, who enters it on their behalf. While this process does ensure consistency and a degree of control; the need to add comments through an intermediary creates at least the possibility that staff will be less inclined to do so.

6.2.9 Literacy and numeracy provision is effective and tailored to individual needs. Toe2Toe is established and well organized in the prison and there is an appropriate range of reading material for those who need help.

6.2.10 Good use is made by prisoners of the Library and new initiatives such as stocking DVD’s and CD’s have proved very successful. However, the Librarian has experienced some difficulties repeating her successful initiative of inviting in outside authors and no events took place this time. It is unfortunate the Reading and Creative Writing Groups, which met weekly last year in the Library no longer operate.

6.2.11 Gym staff offer a number of popular certificated courses together with sessions of a more general nature and the Gym facilities are extremely popular with many prisoners.

6.2.12 Prisoners attending the evening gym sessions have complained they are not able to have the full session because they are not being released in time from the Workshops and Education. The cardio-vascular machines are in high and regular demand from both staff and prisoners. During the year a number have been observed out of action; which may suggest an issue over the adequacy of their maintenance. The Board has some concern that the low Gym staffing levels in the evening sessions and at weekends may leave staff feeling somewhat vulnerable and isolated.

6.3 Healthcare & Mental Health

6.3.1 Prisoners receive a good provision for their medical needs from an efficient and forward thinking Healthcare Department. The Healthcare Manager is committed to ensuring that the level of provision received mirrors, as far as possible, that available to the general public. In the opinion of the Board, Healthcare staff treat the prisoners courteously, professionally and sympathetically. In collaboration with the prison, the Healthcare Department manages complex prisoners particularly well.

6.3.2 All new prisoners are screened promptly by Healthcare and the department provides a number of programmes and clinics covering a wide range of issues including Smoking Cessation, 'Well Man', Asthma, Diabetes, Sexual Health and Older Prisoners. Gym staff provide an input through their contribution to healthy lifestyle courses.

6.3.3 The overall standard of healthcare is good and the length of time prisoners are required to wait for non-emergency dental treatment has improved considerably since the last Annual Report

6.3.4 The concern, expressed in the last Annual Report, over the relatively large number of Prisoners in Healthcare, each morning, waiting for their medication, remains. Prisoners waiting for in-possession medicine have to stand in a queue, often for some considerable length of time. Although some prisoners may not have to queue too many times during the month, such delays can irritate prisoners and cause them to be late or even, on occasion, to miss altogether movements to their Education Class or Workshop.

6.3.5 To reduce the queues in Healthcare and as part of the 'Responsible Prisoner' philosophy, there has been an increase in the amount and range of in-possession medicine allowed. However, this has not been without its problems and there is evidence of trading between some prisoners taking place, with medicines such as Pregabalin being particularly sought after. The Healthcare Management has, responded by introducing a system of 'spot-checks' on in-possession medicines. Prisoners unable to account exactly for the medication in their possession – whether they have either too little or too much of it – will have all this particular medication withdrawn and have no guarantee that a new script for that medication will subsequently be reissued. A number of Prisoners, affected by this policy, have complained that it is draconian and imposed for what they claim can be relatively small discrepancies.

6.3.6 On a night visit by a Board Member, a member of staff commented that night staffing levels were such that the prison would struggle to cope with two separate medical emergencies requiring hospital admissions and with each requiring an accompanying Officer.

6.3.7 A patient representative group meets bi-monthly and PALS provides a vehicle for prisoner complaints about healthcare. Overall, prisoners are satisfied with their access to medical treatment and the quality of care they receive.

6.3.8 The Mental Health staff provide a high level of service. Their work has a high profile in the prison and members of the team have an extremely positive relationship with prisoners. Over the past year, the team has assumed responsibility for some more general nursing duties, such as dispensing medicines to prisoners. It is to be hoped that this additional call on their time will not take them away from their vital contribution and the core of their work in the prison.

6.3.9 When appropriate, Counsellors are made available through the Multifaith team eg for bereavement. Unfortunately, it has not proved possible to reinstate the Lantern Project which offered counseling to prisoners, who were the victims of child abuse.

6.4 Purposeful Activity

6.4.1 The newly appointed Manager in charge of the Workshops has worked extremely hard to introduce new employment opportunities and income generating opportunities and despite the current economic climate has already achieved some considerable success. When establishing these new contracts, the Board is aware of some debate among Workshop Instructors as to which is the better strategy – to commit to large orders from the start or to build up capacity gradually.

6.4.2 The UPVC recycling Workshop has been a great success in terms of generating meaningful employment. However, the relationship with the initial company who supplied the material for processing and paid for the work done was so unsatisfactory that the contract had to be terminated by the prison. Fortunately, a new partner has been found and although this has reduced the income generation target for the Workshop, its future appears much more secure.

6.4.3 In a number of Workshops, the Instructors are taking an active interest in generating revenue for the Prison from their activities. In one Workshop, Garden Furniture is now being made and sold to the staff and there are plans, eventually, to offer the products to visitors. The same Workshop also refurbished a large number of benches and tables from a local Countryside Park. Making such a positive and practical contribution to the local community is a laudable use of prison resources and to be encouraged.

6.4.4 The Gardens Workshop is selling Vegetable Boxes to staff and, in the future, would also like to offer them to the public. The new flock of chickens are probably unaware that their egg laying capabilities and the subsequent sales to staff has made them not merely cost neutral but profitable.

6.4.5 The Board supports the initiative and efforts of these Workshop Instructors and hopes that Prison Management will provide the resources and support needed for such initiatives.

6.4.6 Staffing Levels are not generous among the Instructors and any period of prolonged staff absence can have a significant effect on the morale and output of the Workshop concerned. On a few occasions, Workshops have had to be closed due to staff shortages. Despite an effort to provide cover during the prolonged absence of the member of the Gardening Department, who looked after the Greenhouses, the prisoners working there complained production had been hit.

6.4.7 All job vacancies are advertised on the Wings. The allocation of prisoners to activities is carried out carefully and efficiently at the weekly Labour Board, at which Board Members often sit as observers.

6.4.8 The considerable length of time it can take for new prisoners to obtain security clearance or risk assessments means that significant delays in beginning employment or education continue. During the year, staffing levels in the Security Department were such that these tasks could not always be accorded high priority.

Not only does this lead to enforced and undesirable idleness, any delays in securing a place in either a Workshop or Education, and thereby earning an income, increases the possibility of indebtedness between prisoners. The recent decision that all new prisoners will be classed, from the outset, as low risk, should go some way to alleviate, although not eliminate, this problem.

6.4.9 This year, there have been occasions, during the working day, when it has appeared to the Board that the number of unemployed prisoners on the Wing – rather than being in Education Classes or the Workshops – has seemed noticeably high for a Working Prison. Whether identifying, challenging and responding to this non-attendance is the responsibility of Wing Staff or the Instructors has been discussed on more than one occasion at the weekly Labour Board. It is not apparent that effective sanctions are being generally applied to prisoners disinclined to work or who have particularly poor records of attendance. During the year, Board Members reported going to a Wing on one occasion in order to speak to two Prisoners listed as unemployed. Neither prisoner were in their cell and, somewhat disconcertingly, Wing Officers were unable to say precisely where they might be. Wing Officers suggested two other possible locations but when these were visited by the Board Members, the prisoners concerned were in neither but instead, it later transpired, at a third location.

6.4.10 Management is aware that the current level of Workshop attendance has been around 60% in some months and the situation is regularly monitored with a view to improving it. A number of explanations for the present rate exist; some prisoners miss work due to their involvement in the IDTS programme, some are unable to attend because they have been delayed in Healthcare, some are taking part in Programmes activities and others are affected because the Instructor is absent. However, the suspicion still remains that the non-attendance on the part of some prisoners is wilful, deliberate and requires a coordinated response..

6.4.11 In some of the workshops there is still noticeable underemployment and, it could be argued, the current pay policy offers insufficient incentives for prisoners to work hard or out-perform his peers.

6.4.12 With the exception of the above reservations, the Board still considers the range of vocational training on offer to be good, the quality of instruction sound and the certification appropriate to the needs of the prisoners.

6.5 Resettlement

6.5.1 The prison enjoys good links with the resettlement agencies in the community and continues to develop ROTL opportunities for prisoners with local employers and organisations. Despite the inherent risk involved in granting a ROTL or HDC, the prison has an enviable record of prisoner compliance with their ROTL and HDC conditions. This success owes much to staff in the Offender Management Unit and their effective partnership with partner agencies.

6.5.2 A weekly ROTL / HDC Board is held, chaired by a Governor grade and assisted by a member of OMU. At the Board the prisoner concerned is given every opportunity to explain and outline his application. After discussing all the issues, the Board makes its recommendation to the Number 1 Governor and the prisoner is informed within the week. Some prisoners complain that not all members of OMU then inform them ‘face to face’ of the outcome or offer an explanation for the decision. The Board is impressed by the commitment and efforts of the Offender Supervisors and aware of their high case-loads. However, in the opinion of the Board, whenever possible, it would be preferable for prisoners to be told personally, rather than by letter and particularly so when their application has not been accepted

6.5.3 Each prisoner now has his own Offender Supervisor and the structure has the potential to be of considerable benefit to prisoners. However, some prisoners claim to have had relatively little or, even, no contact at all after Induction with their Offender Supervisor and a number do not have confidence the system will help their cause. The geographical layout of the prison with the Admin Building [containing OMU] at the

bottom of the hill and the Wings at the top does not lend itself to easy and frequent communication between the two. However, the recent decision to send Offender Supervisors, regularly and in turn, to work from an Office on one of the Wings is encouraging and will be monitored by the Board.

6.5.4 A member of 'Achieve' provide a weekly 'Job Club' for those close to release. Prisoner can prepare CV's and access current job vacancies advertised by JobCentre Plus through the Virtual Campus.

6.5.5 Shelter' has the contract for accommodation and debt issues within the Prison and oversight of the work of the Housing Orderlies. Its staff has an outstanding record in securing accommodation for prisoners who are to be released and over the last year, has achieved a success rate of 100%.

6.5.6 A 'Job-Fair' was organized which proved popular with prisoners and drew favourable responses from the outside participants.. 'Get out, Stay out' is a successful initiative which takes place once a month and is open to prisoners close to release. The event attracts some 90% of eligible prisoners and offers them access to representatives from a a wide range of external service providers such as JobCentre Plus, Shelter, Health Trainers, Manchester College, Volunteering organisations and others.

6.5.7 POPS provide a good level of service in the Visitor's Reception and the Visits Hall is a comfortable and welcoming venue. In the judgment of the Board, relatives and prisoners are very satisfied with their experience during a Visit. The newly established Prison Council recommended that prisoners in the Visits Hall should be issued with sashes rather than bibs and Management have responded positively to the request. Not only have Prisoners welcomed this change, the decision has also served to highlight the value of the new Prison Council and the potential contribution it can make on their behalf.

6.5.8 The decision taken during the year that booking prison visits would be transferred to the electronic kiosk system proved unsuccessful. Some Prisoners with a large number of Visiting Orders were found to be making block booking of visits, in order to allow their visitors plenty of options as to when they made their actual visit. Other prisoners used their Visiting Orders not because they had arranged a visit but because they sought a paid alternative to being in a Workshop or Education Class.. Visiting Orders were not lost when these visits did not take place but were re-credited back to the prisoner and so incurred no 'cost'. The result was considerable under-occupancy of the Visits Hall together with difficulty arranging weekend visits and delays of over two weeks before new prisoners could have their first visit. Once the problem became apparent to Management, it was decided to suspend the use of the kiosks for visits and reinstate the old paper based system, until a suitable IT fix could be found.

6.5.9 Prisoners with siblings or children in other prisons have complained to the Board about the difficulty of maintaining contact with them. In theory, inter-prison visits are a possibility but, in practice, staffing and organisational issues conspire to make them an unlikely option. In these circumstances, it might be hoped that inter-prison video links would offer an acceptable alternative. However, it is unfortunate to report that the requests made by prisoners for the use of this facility have not been successful this year.

6.5.10 POPS arranges a bi-monthly Family Forum, chaired by a member of the prison's management and which is attended by partners of prisoners together with relevant members of staff and representatives from some external stakeholders. At a recent Forum, the partner of one long-serving prisoner said she found Visits Staff at this prison – both Officers and Civilian to be "consistently friendly" and praised them as among the very best in her experience of prisons. However, at the same Family Forum, a number of other issues were raised. The distance between the Visits Reception building and the Prison Gatehouse involves a steep uphill walk of some one hundred yards and it was suggested that umbrellas should be provided for visitors, in the inclement weather often associated with the prison's close proximity to the Pennines. Another suggestion, with some validity, is that visitors are unable to purchase any hot food in the Visits Hall. Given that some visitors have travelled considerable distances, trialing a hot food option seems not unreasonable. Finally, it emerged that

some visitors are not prepared to wait their turn for a visit and 'jump the queue'. This behavior clearly causes annoyance among the majority of visitors who abide by the rules.

6.5.11 'Lifer Days' are organized and staffed by OMU personnel three or four times a year. They are extremely successful and reflect very creditably on the staff who give up their own time to arrange them. During the day, staff provide games and activities and the prisoner and their guests sit down to a hot meal, paid for by the prisoner. Family Days are also arranged by POPS and are equally popular. However, the funding of these Family Days is proving a growing problem for the POPS staff and will need to be addressed if they are to continue.

6.5.12 Story Book Dads remains popular with prisoners and a waiting list of prisoners who wish to be involved persists. The scheme provides an invaluable link between a prisoner and their young children, thereby helping to maintain family ties. Board Members have been informed that family photographs are no longer allowed on a Family Day to prevent the relatives of inmates from then posting the photographs on-line, which might cause distress or annoyance to their victims. In the opinion of the Board, any such strictures should not be applied to the Story Book Dads scheme.

6.5.13 The Multifaith team organise 'The Angel Tree' scheme which arranges a Christmas Card plus present for the children of prisoners.

6.6 Safer Custody

6.6.1 The Safer Custody committee has been replaced by a weekly Safeguarding Meeting attended by representatives drawn from across the prison. Public protection, safer custody and complex prisoners are discussed in detail and the multi-disciplinary nature of those present adds considerably to its value. The Board wishes to congratulate the prison on its recent excellent Safer Custody audit report. The multi-disciplinary nature of the approach and the strong and effective processes in place were highlighted by the Audit Team. The Safer Custody team is an enthusiastic and forward thinking unit, highly visible throughout the prison and well-respected by prisoners.

6.6.2 Prison Listeners are available who have been trained by the Samaritans. The arrangements for this are monitored carefully and the procedures are good. A Safer Custody cell exists on one of the Wings, for the use of Listeners.

6.6.3 Prisoners on an ACCT document are well cared for and staff have been well-trained on the new procedures to be followed. The multi-disciplinary approach in the care and supervision of these men and access to peer mentors for them, are examples of good practice. The Staff are good at identifying and knowing who the vulnerable prisoners are and the Board has seen evidence of much informal activity designed to safeguard the interests of such prisoners. Good relationships exist between the staff and such prisoners and it is clear the staff involve these men fully and meaningfully in the plans for their welfare. The improvement which the Board has seen in the behavior and attitude in some of the more complex and demanding prisoners is a credit to those involved.

6.6.4 On those occasions that a prisoner has required a period of close observation by Officers the Board can confirm the prisoners are dealt with sensitively and encouraged to participate in the decisions made about them.

6.6.5 Suspicion of violence between prisoners is dealt with promptly and effectively. Prisoners suspected of an involvement in violence know their Offender Supervisor will be informed of the accusation and that their IEP status will be automatically downgraded while the incident is being investigated. However, the latter has

resulted in a few complaints to the Board from prisoners that where the investigation has led to no subsequent formal action being taken, their initial IEP status has not been reinstated.

6.6.6 A confidential telephone helpline number is available on each Wing for prisoners to report their concerns and the Prison's approach to bullying is given emphasis at Induction and in the Prisoners' Handbook. Prison Management do not consider the current levels of bullying to be a major problem. Incidents of Violence and Use of Force are low and always analysed by Management. In the last year, only one Serious Assault was recorded.

6.6.7 The prison has limited experience and facilities for dealing with seriously ill prisoners and did appear to have some difficulty during the year managing the return from hospital of one prisoner who was in particularly poor health.

6.6.8 When asked, prisoners, in general, have a positive view of the prison, feel safe and that they could approach a member of staff over a problem. However, the effectiveness of the Personal Officer system appears to vary with the Officer concerned and is not consistently valued by prisoners. Some prisoners have even claimed to Board Members they do not know the name of the Personal Officer.

6.6.9 The Board is informed as part of procedure, at the onset of any Serious Incident. In September, there was a major incident on one side of C Wing and some £50,000 damage was caused in the space of a few hours. The Wing was swiftly locked down, the Tornado Team drafted in and the incident brought to an end within the early hours of the following day. The incident appears to have been related to a dispute between two rival groups of prisoners and fortunately, resulted in no serious injuries to staff or prisoners. In the opinion of the Board, Management and staff responded to the incident calmly, effectively and professionally. The Facilities Staff should be particularly commended for their tireless work following the incident, in making the Wing habitable once again for prisoners, within a short space of time.

6.7 Care & Separation

6.7.1 This is a small unit of 12 cells staffed by experienced officers. Board members continue to be impressed by the professionalism of the staff and their ability to manage the most demanding of prisoners with patience and good-humour, on occasion, in the face of considerable provocation.

6.7.2 The Duty Governor, Chaplain and Health Care each do a daily round of the CSU. Board Members are fortunate to enjoy a good working relationship with the CSU staff, who routinely inform the IMB of any moves to the Unit. Board Members attend Reviews on a regular basis and, at which, a member of CPN is always present.

6.7.3 A member of the Board attends the quarterly SMARG meeting {now held in tandem with the Adjudication meeting) as an observer.

6.7.4 The facilities for prisoners in CSU are clean and the unit has benefitted from internal repainting. However, the outside area is drab and offers definite scope for improved landscaping.

6.7.5 There have been a number of successful new initiatives: Prisoners in CSU are now offered a weekly gym session, have the possibility of paid in-cell work, access to a radio and are allowed out of cells to collect their meals.

6.7.6 During the year, there have been instances of wanton and costly damage done to cells in CSU by some prisoners. Board Members feel that the consequences for the prisoners who are responsible does not reflect

adequately the seriousness and disruption caused by their actions. The Board believe that the prisoners involved should pay compensation for the damage they cause..

6.7.7 Members of the Board have monitored a number of the compulsory removals of prisoners from the Wings to CSU which have taken place during the year. These removals have been conducted calmly, efficiently and with a clear intent to deescalate the situation if at all possible.

6.7.8 Some Prisoners held in CSU on 'Own Interest' have complained to the Board that they should not be subject to the same regime as prisoners held there on 'Good Order & Discipline'. The CSU policy does allow prisoners on Own Interest to have joint outdoor exercise and occasionally, this has been observed by the Board. There is, perhaps, scope for even further distinction between the two categories held there. However, the prison is keen to discourage what appears to be a growing number of prisoners from resorting to CSU too easily, sometimes over relatively small debts they have incurred.

6.7.9 While on a rota visit to CSU, a Board member was assaulted, without provocation or warning, by having a container of urine thrown in his face. The prisoner was swiftly recategorised, moved to another prison and the matter immediately referred to the Police. However, the initial reaction of the Police was that the matter should be dealt with by the prison as an internal disciplinary issue rather than through the Courts; on the grounds that the individual was already in prison and no physical harm had been done. The Board is grateful to the prison management for its support in rejecting this view. Only after persuasion, did the Police Force eventually agree to investigate the matter with a view to prosecuting the prisoner concerned. The Board wishes to place on record its gratitude for the sympathy and solicitude shown to the Board Member by staff. A number of prisoners also expressed their concern for his welfare which was also very heartening.

6.7.10 When a prisoner is taken to CSU, their cell is emptied and their property bagged and taken to Reception. There were a few incidents during the year when prisoners in CSU complained to the Board that some of their property was missing. When the matter was investigated by the Board, it transpired that the procedure for the Cell Clearance Forms did not always ensure a high standard of completion. The Board were not always able to identify which Officers had completed the cell clearance or when the property had been sent to Reception. Subsequently, the Residential Governor alerted Wing Staff to this issue and the Board has had no recent complaints about it.

6.7.11 As the first stage in a 'smoke-free' prison, the CSU compound became a non-smoking area for both prisoners and staff. The policy was well publicised in advance throughout the prison and its introduction was carefully planned and coordinated by prison and healthcare staff. Largely as a result of this methodical planning this initial phase has been relatively trouble-free. Prisoners being placed in CSU are offered smoking cessation advice or nicotine replacement therapies. Inevitably, there have been a few complaints from prisoners but, as yet, nothing of any great significance.

6.7.12 Some prisoners still spend longer in CSU than the Board consider desirable. However, this is often due to delays attributable to transport arrangements and to other prisons involved in the potential transfer. Nevertheless, the issue most commonly raised to Board members on their round of CSU is a lack of information about when, or if, a prisoner will be moved to another prison. The Board has been informed that on security grounds, such information cannot be shared with the prisoner until the day of the transfer.

6.7.13 CSU is still seen by some prisoners as a 'departure lounge' before their transfer to another prison. The Management are keen to dispel this view and, as part of this, the Board would welcome evidence of a clear strategy to reintegrate prisoners back onto the Wings and the normal regime, whenever possible; even if, initially, this is only on a partial basis.

6.8 Residential Services

6.8.1 The vast majority of cells appear clean and are maintained in good repair. Prisoners have good access to cleaning materials. The schedule for internal repainting of the Wings has improved the residential environment. Prisoners on D Wing are fortunate to have en-suite facilities but elsewhere there have been complaints to the board from prisoners on other Wings about the unreliability of their shower facilities.

6.8.2 Television reception is poor on a number of Wings and the cause of much low level dissatisfaction among prisoners. The Board has been informed by Management that the system on most Wings is relatively old and the time is coming when its wholesale replacement might be more effective, rather than the present policy of ongoing piece-meal repairs.

6.8.3 It is also debatable whether all the Washing Machines and Driers on the Wings are 'fit for purpose'. Some of the units are intended for domestic use and are unsuitable for the heavy routine demands placed on them. Prisoners also complain to the Board that the maintenance and repairs on the washing machines is not carried out promptly enough. However, prisoners must share some of the blame as Board Members have seen machines being roughly used and with insufficient care taken over the instructions for their use.

6.8.4 At a recent Forum for older prisoners, a number of them complained about the loud noise from the stereo systems of other prisoners in the evening. They claimed that routine offenders did not have their sound systems confiscated, even after warnings. However, on a night visit by a Board Member, there was no evidence to support this particular claim and all the Wings were extremely quiet.

6.8.5 The introduction of an elected Prisoner Council, to replace the Prison Consultative Committee has been an interesting development, breathing new life into the concept of prisoner involvement and consultation. The elections were well organised and attracted a high level of interest among a normally sceptical prison population. The Council meets monthly and the commitment of the Management is shown by the attendance of the Governor or a senior deputy. Members of the Board have attended the Council Meeting as observers and can confirm that the prisoners' proposals have been well presented and considered carefully. Although the reality is that all the requests cannot be met, the Council can already point to a number of early successes.

6.8.6 In terms of the IEP scheme, Board Members have observed excellent examples of Wing Staff, working with a prisoner to try and achieve an improvement in his IEP status. However, in the opinion of the Board, such good practice is not always evident. Some prisoners on Basic IEP do not seem to know precisely what is required of them to move to a higher status. Such prisoners appear to understand what constitutes 'bad' behavior but are less clear about what represents 'good' behavior. The Board has also listened to a number of complaints from prisoners, claiming there is a degree of inconsistency between the Wings over when a prisoner's IEP status should be downgraded. Some prisoners who have had their IEP status downgrade have told the Board they received no paperwork informing them of the decision nor of their right of appeal.

6.8.7 Board Members have commented on the copious possessions some prisoners acquire during their time in prison. This accumulation becomes most apparent on their transfer into and out of the prison. In the opinion of the Board, it is extremely doubtful whether a number would pass the current volumetric test

6.8.8 Use of the electronic kiosk system has been successfully expanded to include the prisoner's weekly canteen order. In addition, to all the Notices to Prisoners being available on the kiosk system it also enables prisoners to make contact with their Offender Supervisor

6.8.9 The Facilities Department provide a good level of service within their financial and operating constraints. The Board finds them to be responsive and well-organised although the policy of holding low levels

of stock - while understandable - can lead to some inevitable delays in maintenance and repairs. The Board hopes the intention to put this service out to competitive tender by the Prison Service, does not lead to any reduction in the quality of the current provision.

6.9 Other Issues

Catering & Kitchens

6.9.1 Meals provided for prisoners are of a high standard, given the serious financial constraints which the Department has to work under. There is a good choice on the menu and those with special diets are well catered for.

6.9.2 A cold meal, instead of a hot one is now being provided at lunch time. This was introduced principally to 'balance the books' following cutbacks to the catering budget. A choice is offered at lunch time but the change has led to considerable complaints from prisoners. Their complaints are directed less at the choices available or, even at the lack of a hot meal but more towards what they feel are inadequate portion sizes. Among Prisoners who can afford to, some are resorting to buying more food on their weekly canteen, to supplement that provided by the prison. Not all prisoners are in this fortunate position.

6.9.3 A particular effort is made by Catering Staff to celebrate the various Religious and National festivals during the year. The Catering Manager holds meetings with Prisoners, has attended the Prison Council and regularly surveys their opinions. Catering staff are prepared to adapt and respond to requests when it is feasible. The electronic kiosk system on the Wings for ordering meals is well-established and the vast majority of prisoners say they are comfortable in its use.

Prisoners' Induction

6.9.4 The procedures for newly arriving Prisoners have been monitored by the Board. The Board can report that Reception Staff are polite, respectful and efficient in their dealings with these prisoners. However, the layout of the Reception area offers insufficient privacy for the prisoner's interview and permitted telephone call. The amount of counter-top for Staff to carry out their checks on the property brought in by the new prisoner appears very limited.

6.9.5 New prisoners are seen at Reception by a member of Healthcare and by a representative from the Multifaith Team. The First Night procedures appear satisfactory and the Induction programme is thorough and systematic.

Prisoner Complaints

6.9.6 Over 90% of Complaints are responded to within the specified deadline. Complaints are categorized monthly and the nature of complaints monitored by Management. A level of Quality Assurance is also carried out on the replies sent to Prisoners. The Governor's 'surgery' conducted on each Wing in turn, is a successful initiative..

6.9.7 The largest number of complaints received by the Board are in relation to Sentencing. In their complaints, prisoners are often critical of the Offender Management Unit and, in particular, the infrequency of the contact with their Offender Supervisor.

6.9.8 Board Members have spent some considerable time this year following up complaints in relation to missing property when prisoners are transferred to Buckley Hall. The Board has successfully assisted a number of prisoners with property complaints which arose in their previous prison but remained unresolved on transfer

to this prison. There has been at least a suggestion that some prisons were dilatory and ‘drag their feet’ when settling compensation claims.

Adjudications

6.9.9 Board Members have observed a number of Adjudications and report that Governors are fair, thorough and consistent. Governors undertake a regular internal scrutiny of the process. A number of Adjudications have been observed during the year when the technology available in the Adjudication Room to view the results of CCTV evidence has proved either unreliable or difficult for staff to operate. Technology which is more straightforward and simple for all staff to use, would be an improvement on the present situation.

6.9.10 Referring finds of mobile phones to the Police and CPS for further investigation adds considerable delays to the Adjudication process and leading to a number of cases being dismissed as ‘out of time’. Not only is this common knowledge among prisoners, it also continues to frustrate staff.

Drugs

6.9.11 Positive MDT results continue to swing markedly. In some months, the figures have been very good but, on other occasions they have been markedly above target. Clear strategies are in place - aimed at both the demand and supply side – and the problem is certainly not confined to Buckley Hall.

6.9.12 Due to alert staff and sound intelligence, a number of significant finds were made during the year, disrupting, at least temporarily, supply lines. The presence of the North West Dog Team on the Wings and at the Visits Hall acts as a deterrent to both visitors and prisoners. Despite this, some prisoners make claims about the easy availability of drugs within the establishment and scaremonger about the existence of a ‘Drugs Culture’. Whatever the reality, it is clear the Prison is engaged in a struggle with which Sisyphus would sympathise.

6.9.13 A worrying recent development is the growth in the availability of the synthetic drug ‘Spice’. The Board has been informed, that not only is this drug relatively cheap, it cannot be identified in the normal urine tests. Some of the prisoners who have taken the drug have experienced serious adverse reactions which, in two cases, proved life-threatening. The Prison has publicised the extreme dangers inherent in the drug and yet, there are still instances when prisoners have admitted to taking it.

6.9.14 In terms of influencing the demand-side the Prison is engaged in a number of initiatives such as RAMP and the one-to-one work of the Lifeline team. The ‘Holding Families’ pilot project of last year – with its holistic view – was judged to have been successful but too expensive to continue with.

6.9.15 A Drug Recovery Wing has been established and the intention is that a number of the prisoners involved are likely to progress from the IDTS programme on to the Recovery Unit. The Prisoners involved will attend specific sessions and have the benefit of peer mentors on the Wing. Officers considered suitable for the initiative have been selected for the Wing and some staff involved in the programme have been trained to offer acupuncture, as a complementary treatment.

Offender Behaviour Programmes.

6.9.16 Securing the bid for the Prison required a sharp increase in the number of completed accredited Offender Behaviour programmes and it represents an exacting but crucial target for the Prison. Therefore, the Department is to be congratulated for achieving its target of 132 completions.

6.9.17 There have been instances when the Programmes Staff and the Education Department have both had designs on the same prisoner and which neither could ignore given the imperative of 'payment by results', on completion of the course. This has required a degree of compromise and a need for dialogue between the two. It has been suggested that at the Induction stage, both Departments will need to be more actively involved in determining and agreeing what the priorities should be for specific prisoners and how best to sequence the opportunities they can each offer.

6.9.18 Staff have told the Board that a number of Prisoners are being allocated to Buckley Hall who have completed, elsewhere, some of the Offender Behaviour programmes on offer here. This duplication of resources within the prison service is not efficient and does not help prisoners to progress through their sentence plan. It also makes it difficult for this prison to meet its Offender Programmes targets. It is to be hoped that the intended reconfiguration of the Prison Service and the new Transforming Prisons Agenda will address this issue.

7. The Work of the Board

Membership

The Board has an allocation of 14 members but by the year end was operating on just 8 members. Given the limited numbers on the Board, some of the Members must be commended for giving a considerable amount of additional time and commitment to its work in order that the Board can fulfill its role at Buckley Hall. It is hoped that the recent advertising campaign is effective in adding to the Board's membership.

Organisation of the Board

Two members are on rota duty each week and, between them, deal with all the Applications, Reviews and Rota Visits for that week. There are additional visits by other members to assist them with Applications and Reviews. If members cannot attend a Review, they ensure the prisoner is seen as soon as possible thereafter and speak to the staff involved.

Recommended Complement	14
Members at start of period	8
Members at end	8
New Members	0
Board Meetings	12
Average Attendance	7
Rota Visits	166
Special Responsibilities Visits	42
Prisoner Applications Visits	92
Prisoner Inductions	10
Care & Separation Reviews	94
Adjudications	46
Vice Chairman	28
Chairman	98
TOTAL VISITS	576

APPENDIX

8.1 Applications to the Board July 2012 – June 2013

Subject	Total
Accommodation	2
Adjudications	3
Diversity related	2
Education / Employment / Training	9
Family / Visits	5
Food / Kitchens	2
Health	9
Property in Buckley Hall	4
Property transferred to Buckley Hall	17
Sentence Related	46
Staff / Prisoner	5
Transfers	7
Miscellaneous	24
TOTAL	135