



HMP/YOI CHELMSFORD ANNUAL REPORT



1st September 2010 - 31st August 2011

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2. STATUTORY ROLE OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

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

The Board is specifically charged to:

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

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

At Chelmsford the IMB consisted of:

Tony Evans (Chair)

Lyndall Collins (Vice Chair)

Andrew Johnson (Board Development Officer)

Kate Abbott

Nick Adams

Chris Bendon (resigned July 2011)

Gill Castle

James Evans (resigned May 2011)

Ronan Falsey

Keith Fellowes

Graham Finch

Stephen Harriman

Graham Herbing

Rob Hunt

Ma On Li (resigned April 2011)

Russell Pearson (on sabbatical leave since April 2011)

Diana Platts

Robert Seymour

Lady Rosemary Ruggles-Brise (on sabbatical leave from April 2011)

3. Description of HMP/YOI Chelmsford



There has been a prison on this site in Chelmsford since 1819. The Prison in its current position was built in the traditional “spokes of a wheel” design and is now on three storeys – once four when part was below ground.

Chelmsford at present is a Local Category B prison with an Operational Capacity of 695 and a Certified Nominal Accommodation of 594. It now houses Remand Prisoners, Young Prisoners aged 18-21 (YPs) and Adults with sentences ranging from a few weeks to life.

The prison’s facilities include:

Seven accommodation wings

Full-time Healthcare Centre

Day Care Centre

Education through various agencies

Well-equipped Gymnasium and multi-sports artificial grass pitch

Multi-Faith Room

Kitchen

Library

Laundry

Workshops

Visitors Centre

4. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

4.1. The Board is pleased to note that improvements at Chelmsford Prison have been recognised by the recent HMCIP inspection. This IMB report does not cover all the areas mentioned in that report and, in the interests of brevity, reports on changes we have seen and does not necessarily report areas of often very good practice where there has been no significant change.

4.2. The Board notes improvement in the relationships between staff and prisoners, especially Young Prisoners (YPs), which has involved extra costs and significant effort. This has included improvements to the facilities in the Wings where many young prisoners are housed. It is of concern that the level of violence, particularly between YPs, is higher than is desirable which in part may be due to the high numbers of YPs in the prison.

4.3. The Board acknowledge the efforts being made to improve the provision of Healthcare but are concerned about the occasions when medicines seem to have been unavailable for individual prisoners. We are also concerned that the careful observation of boundaries between the various Healthcare contractors, on occasion, may not have been in patients' best interests.

4.4. The Board observed last year that the delayed inquests on individuals who died in custody was a problem then and remains so now.

4.5. The Board commented in last year's report on the holding in prison of Foreign Nationals who have completed their sentences. In the past year the number held at any one time has varied but it has been as many as eight. We still believe that it is unjust to discriminate between ex offenders by holding one group in prison and continuing their punishment and releasing the other group. In our view it is unjust to hold ex offenders, being held for deportation, in prison.

Tony Evans *Chair*

5. ISSUES REQUIRING A RESPONSE

5.1. Response required from the Minister.

The principal Healthcare contract is currently out for tender. Our concern is whether the result will address the issues raised in this report and who will supervise the contract when the PCT is abolished.

5.2. Response required from the National Offender Management Service (NOMS).

The high number of Young Prisoners in Chelmsford Prison/Young Offender Institution (YOI) is a source of concern. We understand that institutions with only young offenders receive higher funding per capita. Whilst Chelmsford has managed its YPs relatively well, the level of resources available is of concern given the high level of violence between young offenders.

6. Introduction

6.1. This report is based on the data collected by Members on rota duty and the applications received from prisoners. In addition the Board took note of prisoners' views on bullying in order to acquire an alternative perspective to both the Prison's collection of data and the HMCIP questionnaire approach.

6.2. This small exercise across the prison generally mirrored the outcome of the more structured surveys conducted by both the prison and recently by HMCIP. The Board welcomes these positive outcomes but accepts that bullying/negative pressure is likely to exist at some level, particularly covertly, and recognises that constant vigilance is required especially with a fairly rapidly changing population.

6.3. One of the observations from the study mentioned above was that a high proportion of adult prisoners felt 'uncomfortable' around YPs both on Wings and elsewhere, seemingly anticipating trouble. Conversely, other adult prisoners indicated quite strong support for the co-location of YPs and adults in terms of positive role modelling.

6.4. There were no claims of bullying by Staff or of bullying based on cultural issues. Only two Prisoners expressed personal concern about prisoner/prisoner bullying - one was transferred to the Vulnerable Prisoner (VP) Wing while the second had a diagnosed mental health condition and the incidents he considered to be bullying could arguably not be classified as such.

6.5. This year budget limitations resulted in the Board making fewer visits to the Prison.

6.6. The Board appreciates the continued cooperation of the Governor and his staff.

7. DIVERSITY

7.1. The Board notes that during the last twelve months, the Diversity Manager and her team have continued to raise the profile of this area. For example posters and other literature providing details of the work of the Diversity team, including the Wing's prisoner diversity representatives, are available.

7.2. The Chaplaincy continues to provide care and support for most of the wide range of religions observed by prisoners and those without religion. Their efforts are well respected by prisoners, staff and the IMB.

7.3. Older Prisoners and those with physical disabilities make up a relatively small proportion of the prison population. In the newer Wings and the refurbished D Wing, facilities are, by and large, adequate. Gardens have been established in the exercise yard of G Wing where many of the Older Prisoners are situated. Some Older Prisoners have commented on the benefit of being placed on G Wing and separated from YPs who were seen as the source of most problems.

7.4. The Prison generally has well over a hundred Foreign National Prisoners and there have been up to 8 in number, who have completed their sentence and are awaiting deportation, at any one time.

7.5. The Board noted the responses to their comments regarding Foreign National Prisoners held beyond their sentences in their 2009/10 Annual report. Whilst the Board accepts this legal position, it continues to feel it is morally unjust to keep prisoners in prison beyond their release dates irrespective of their nationality. One of the two deaths in custody in the reporting period was a Foreign National.

7.6. There are on average 220 YPs in Chelmsford, which is 60-70 above the designated level. It appears that as an Adult/YOI prison, Chelmsford does not receive the higher funding for the YPs that they would attract in YOI establishments.

7.7. There have been considerable advances in managing YPs, since some negative comments in the HMCIP inspection in 2009. These include Enhanced landings, the revision of the IEP process to match that of Adult Prisoners, forums, the LEAP programme and a more tailored approach to prisoners at GOOD reviews.

7.8. A sample of YPs reveals they generally feel safe. However, the level of violent incidents between YPs reported in prison statistics remains higher than either the IMB or Prison management would like.

7.9. The Board has received only one application about diversity, a reduction from 10 last year.

8. RESETTLEMENT, LEARNING & SKILLS

8.1. Over the reporting year the Resettlement provision has continued to improve with a 'Reducing Re-offending Committee' providing some impetus. The Resettlement team's approach to working with outside agencies and the local community seems to be providing useful skills and employment opportunities. It is not possible for the Board to judge their effectiveness of the Resettlement Team in reducing re-offending. However, the Board recognises the very positive efforts made by them.

8.2. The Board notes that the Integrated Drug Treatment System (IDTS) team has worked very closely with the Essex Drug and Alcohol Partnership (EDAP) and the Community Drug and Alcohol Teams (CDATs) who do similar work after release. This is important for the resettlement of those prisoners who were under CDAT coming into the prison or on an IDTS programme before being released particularly into the community in Essex.

8.3. There seems to be reasonably high attendance of appropriate prisoners at the various courses available. However, the needs of the relatively high number of remand prisoners and the short average stay in the prison means that unexpected vacancies often occur. The lack of consistent course packages nationally leads to some prisoners only part-completing courses with consequent loss of potential qualifications. Whilst it is accepted that some divergence is inevitable, the lack of a common approach to qualifications seems to be an issue.

8.4. The Gym continues to provide a good service to the prison population. The provision of equipment for the out of doors 'Trim Trail' in addition to the indoor facilities have been appreciated by Older Prisoners.



9. HEALTHCARE

9.1. Healthcare is a difficult area to monitor given that much of its work is necessarily covered by patient confidentiality. The Board received some thirty complaints over the year regarding various aspects of healthcare (including IDTS). Although this is a big change a high proportion came from a very few prisoners. During the year there were a number of complaints about delays in dental care. A further issue is the pharmacy where some prescription drugs do not appear to have always been in stock with consequent problems for individual prisoners. On one occasion this may have contributed to a category one incident.

9.2. There appear to be five contractors delivering various aspects of Healthcare with resulting difficulties in coordination. The Board has anecdotal evidence which suggests that this may have caused difficulties for a few patients. There have been three Healthcare managers over the last year. The current manager is working hard to resolve the above and other issues. The Board remains concerned about the number of contractors and consequent risks of boundary problems. This is set to continue for some time: though the main healthcare contract is being renewed in 2012 others will remain in place for some time to come.

9.3. The IDTS percentage of prisoners on a reduction plan from prescribed medication has risen from 21% to over 40% with an aim of being drug free when they leave the establishment.

9.4. A current concern is the inability to transfer prisoners on the IDTS programme to Category C establishments. Some other prisons are putting a cap on their figures and refuse to take prisoners prescribed with Subutex. The successful resettlement and potential reduction in reoffending often relies on prisoners being able to serve their sentences in appropriate prisons to meet the needs of their offender management plans.

9.5. The Board has noticed that on occasions, difficulties for patient care have been caused by the inability of Healthcare Departments to access records on different departmental computer systems.

10. SAFER CUSTODY

10.1. The importance of Safer Custody is apparent throughout all areas of the prison and many aspects of it are included in other sections of this report.

10.2. The Safer Custody team has been observed to be working effectively. Self-harm data is well recorded and analysed and then discussed at the monthly Safer Custody meetings where future developments for working practices are decided. Recorded statistics indicate there has been a decrease in self-harm incidents primarily in the adult population. However there is some concern surrounding the number of self-harm incidents among white Young Prisoners.

10.3. Regrettably, there were two deaths in custody (DICs) during the reporting period. On both occasions the incidents were handled professionally and investigated thoroughly and learning points followed through. There were also six inquests this year following DICs that took place between two and five years ago. This included one that had been opened and rescheduled. The Board continues to be concerned about these delays and the impact on the prisoners' families and all others involved.

10.4. Vulnerable Prisoners (VPs) accommodation has moved to D Wing successfully creating a more compact unit/work area. There is now direct access to their working area in the laundry and an extra door to the Multi-faith room for separate access by all other prisoners. The move from G Wing was welcomed in reducing the level of verbal abuse experienced.

10.5. Perhaps not unsurprisingly the VP population seemed more concerned about safety than other prisoners. D Wing was seen as a 'haven' and VPs spoke in glowing terms of the absence of bullying on their Wing. Some felt uncomfortable in the Gym when staff were not immediately present.

10.6. There has been progress in the management of violent behaviour, bullying and gang problems during the year. New policies and systems are in place and although a database is in its infancy it is beginning to show trends, i.e. most violent behaviour is perpetrated by young prisoners on B and C Wings and some appears gang related. The Board will continue to monitor the emerging trends and their impact on the management of violence.

10.7. The Board has some evidence in Rota Reports that the Personal Officer scheme has on occasions been put to good use. However the increasingly limited resources and high prisoner turnover limits the effectiveness of the scheme.

11. SEGREGATION

11.1. In the Segregation Unit staff/prisoner relationships are supportive as evidenced in the many comments in the Board's weekly Rota Reports on how well difficult and troubled prisoners are handled, especially those with suspected mental health issues. Skilful and productive approaches have been recognised. For example, the use of a phased return to normal location from the Segregation Unit is now an accepted part of good practice and was mentioned positively in the recent report by HMCIP. (This approach has also been duplicated to return prisoners from Healthcare to normal location, where appropriate, as a consequence of the success in the Segregation Unit.)

11.2. GOOD Reviews are now more consistent largely due to the same Governor Grade Manager being responsible on a regular basis. The analysis of Adjudication data and paperwork and the standardisation in Adjudications has contributed to a more proactive approach to prisoner activity.

11.3. The Board does not feel that the Segregation Unit is an appropriate place for prisoners with severe or even moderate mental health problems but it sometimes seems to be used for such prisoners when Healthcare is unable to manage their behaviour and meet

their needs.

11.4. The Wing housing the Unit is old and rundown and in some places dilapidated. The northerly aspect of the cells on the ground floor allows little daylight and they are very cold and draughty in winter weather. Replacing broken or damaged facilities in the downstairs cells is an expensive but often a very slow process as the specialist damage-proof fitments are not designed to be repaired.

12. RECEPTION & FIRST NIGHT IN PRISON

12.1. Reception seems to be working well despite the pressures involved in handling the high level of prisoner movements involved with a local prison.

12.2. The problem of late arrivals continues to be an issue. Hot meals are made available for those prisoners who do arrive late.

12.3. Difficulties have arisen in progressing some prisoners from F Wing, the First Night in Prison Wing (FNI P) on to other Wings after Induction. Some have remained in FNIP accommodation for well beyond the two day induction period resulting in restrictions on their association and other activities. It is not unknown for prisoners on short sentences to complete their sentence on FNIP wing regime.



13. VISITS & VISITORS CENTRE

13.1. Prisoners no longer wear identifying bibs in the Visits' Hall which has improved the atmosphere. The Board also notes that the Children's Play Area in the Visits' Hall is now staffed at all Visits sessions.

13.2 The Chelmsford Prison Visitors Centre Trust staff and volunteers have continued to offer support and advice to families and friends of prisoners prior to Visiting Sessions while administering the biometric processing of visitors to the Prison. Many visitors have complimented the Centre, and favourably commented to IMB members.

13.3. The various booking systems generally work well though cover of the telephone and email systems during both staff holidays and staff illnesses led to complaints by some Visitors.

14. BOARD STATISTICS

2009/10 2010/11

| | | |
|--|-----|-----|
| Recommended Complement of Board Members | 18 | 18 |
| Number of Board Members at the start of the reporting period | 11 | 16 |
| Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period | 16 | 16 |
| Number of new members joining within the reporting period | 7 | 3 |
| Number of members leaving within reporting period | 2 | 3 |
| Number of Board meetings during reporting period | 12 | 11 |
| Average attendance of Members at Board Meetings | | 13 |
| Number of attendances at meetings other than Board meetings | 46 | 27 |
| Number of rota visits within the reporting period | | 189 |
| Number of other visits to the prison (Board officer, special interest and induction) | | 69 |
| Total number of visits to the Prison | 386 | 285 |
| Total number of applications received | 171 | 157 |
| Total number of GOOD Reviews attended | 76 | 120 |

15. APPLICATIONS

IMB Chelmsford - Application Statistics

| Category | 2008/2009 | % | 2009/2010 | % | 2010/2011 | % |
|----------------------|------------|-----|------------|-----|------------|-------|
| Accommodation | 7 | 4% | 6 | 4% | 3 | 2% |
| Adjudications | 9 | 5% | 4 | 2% | 4 | 2.5% |
| Diversity | 12 | 7% | 10 | 6% | 1 | 0.7% |
| Education/employment | 17 | 10% | 5 | 3% | 16 | 10% |
| Visits | 6 | 3% | 9 | 5% | 10 | 6.3% |
| Food/kitchens | 5 | 3% | 3 | 2% | 3 | 2% |
| Healthcare | 22 | 13% | 22 | 13% | 34 | 21.5% |
| Property | 33 | 19% | 36 | 21% | 25 | 16% |
| Sentence related | 13 | 7% | 6 | 4% | 1 | 0.7% |
| Staff/prisoners | 11 | 6% | 14 | 8% | 23 | 15% |
| Transfer | 14 | 8% | 15 | 9% | 9 | 6% |
| Miscellaneous/other | 27 | 15% | 41 | 24% | 28 | 18% |
| Totals | 186 | | 176 | | 157 | |

16. GLOSSARY

| | |
|---------------|--|
| CDAT | Community Drug and Alcohol Teams |
| CNA | Certified Nominal Accommodation |
| DIC | Death in Custody |
| EDAP | Essex Drug and Alcohol Partnership |
| FNIP | First Night in Prison |
| GOOD | Good Order Or Discipline |
| HMCIP | Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons |
| HMP | Her Majesty's Prison |
| IDTS | Integrated Drug Treatment System |
| IMB | Independent Monitoring Board |
| IRC | Immigration and Removal Centre |
| NHS | National Health Service |
| NOMS | National Offender Management Service |
| OMU | Offender Management Unit |
| OP CAP | Operational Capacity |
| VP | Vulnerable Prisoner |
| YOI | Young Offenders Institution |
| YP | Young Prisoner (aged 18 - 21 years) |