



**HMP/YOI
CHELMSFORD
ANNUAL REPORT
1st September 2011 – 31st August 2012**



Statutory role of the IMB

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

1.2 The Board is specifically charged to:

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

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

At Chelmsford the IMB consisted of:

Tony Evans (Chair from Jan 2011)

Russell Pearson (Chair from Jan 2012)

Lyndall Collins (Vice Chair from Jan 2011)

Keith Fellowes (Vice Chair from Jan 2012)

Graham Herbing (Vice Chair from Jan 2012)

Kate Abbott

Nick Adams (Information Officer)

Gill Castle (Board Development Officer)

Ronan Falsey (resigned Autumn 2011)

Graham Finch

Stephen Harriman

Rob Hunt (on sabbatical leave from Jan 2012)

Andrew Johnson (on sabbatical leave from January 2012)

Diana Platts

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

Robert Seymour

Danyl Fletcher (appointed May 2012)

Maureen Findlay (appointed May 2012)

Karen Hardaker (appointed May 2012, resigned July 2012)

Emma Hewat (appointed May 2012)

Claire Wiltshire (appointed May 2012)

Section 2

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Section 3

Description of HMP/YOI Chelmsford

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 Over time, there have been the addition of three further wings, the Prison’s facilities include: Seven accommodation wings, Full-time Healthcare Centre and Day Care Centre, Education through various agencies, Gymnasium and multi-sports artificial grass pitch, Multi-Faith Room, Kitchen, Library, Laundry, Workshops, Recycling Centre, Visitors’ Centre, and Video Link.
- 3.3 Chelmsford is at present a Local Category B prison with an Operational Capacity of 710 (was temporarily up to 752 during the year under review), and a Certified Nominal Accommodation of 538. The approved capacity is 150 for Young Prisoners aged 18 – 21 (YP’s).
- 3.4 It now houses Remand Prisoners, YP’s and Adults with sentences ranging from a few weeks to life. In the review year, the population peaked at 743 on a number of occasions. Since the latest peak at the end of February, the population has steadily declined to 653. This is largely a function of the change in policy of London courts, with YP’s now being directed to other prisons.

Executive Summary

- 4.1 The Board is pleased to note the continued improvements at Chelmsford Prison and the efforts made by management to maintain these improvements. Of particular note is the achievement of Gold status for Investors in People, reflecting the priority of the prison in recognising the value of its Human Resource. During this reporting period the Security department achieved the highest audit rating, with many instances of 'best practice'.
- 4.2 During the reporting period, the prison has managed to cope with a rapidly fluctuating population. With an operational capacity of 710, the prison has managed to cope with peaks of almost 750 prisoners without extra significant resources.
- 4.3 The installation of CCTV in many parts of the prison has had a marked positive effect on behaviour on the wings. This has resulted in a reduction in the number of applications for all types of bullying.
- 4.4 The reduction in the number of Young Prisoners has also had a marked effect on the incidence of bullying.
- 4.5 Last year we commented on the problems with the provision of healthcare, and noted the changes that were being made. During the course of this reporting period, the Healthcare provider has changed, but problems persist. In particular there seem to be shortages of staff. It appears that the contractor have been unable to recruit to their full staff complement across the Chelmsford and Bullwood Hall sites. There seems to be a shortage of dedicated management presence at Chelmsford and a continuing reliance on agency nurses and Doctors. This inhibits service development because of the very high turnover of staff and subsequent lack of staff consistency and local knowledge. We will continue to monitor the delivery of the healthcare contract closely.
- 4.6 The Board commented in the last two reports 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. 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.
- 4.7 Tobacco debt is an important issue in the context of prisoner safety. We are aware that this is becoming a national issue, and that a robust approach across the sector is required to tackle this important issue.
- 4.8 A substantial part of the prison accommodation is in early Victorian buildings that are rapidly becoming unfit for purpose, with maintenance costs running at a high level. We support the prison's bid for funding to refurbish this accommodation.

4.9 Issues requiring a response:

- a) Why is it still taking so long to release Foreign National detainees who have completed their sentence?
- b) What is the Prison Service doing to tackle the issue of tobacco debt?
- c) Why is there still an unreasonable delay in the refurbishment of the older parts of the prison?
- d) What is the prison service doing to monitor the effectiveness of healthcare contractors, and the sanctions for not meeting agreed standards?

Russell Pearson
Chair

Equality and Inclusion

- 5.1 The Prison's Equality team works well, particularly with Wing Officers, to ensure that Equality is given a high profile throughout the prison and to encourage best practice.
- 5.2 Whilst Young Prisoners (a high proportion of which are BME sent from London Courts) continue to account for the majority of disciplinary issues, current data indicates that the Prison's Violence Reduction initiative has significantly reduced the number of Adjudications resulting in fewer CC awards. Since the opening of other prisons in London, this population has declined markedly.
- 5.3 The Prison continues to hold a number of Foreign National Prisoners some of whom are on remand or being held after the end of their sentences, e.g. pending completion of extradition proceedings. The Equality team identifies potentially vulnerable FNP's at an early stage and take action to try to keep them safe. The Board remains concerned that FN's continue to be held after their sentences have been served.
- 5.4 The Prison as a whole addresses the needs and requirements of older prisoners and those with disabilities. A significant amount has been achieved e.g. a stairlift in the gym and grab bars in the showers on all wings. Work continues on adapting cells for wheelchair access in all accommodation areas. The Prison is to be commended on the progress made to date and that many older prisoners and those with disabilities are able to participate in work, education and training.
- 5.5 The Board recognises the contribution and involvement of the Equality team in the Prison. Equality Impact Assessments should prove useful tools to keep Equality issues under review.
- 5.6 A programme of activities specifically aimed at older prisoners has been introduced at the Gymnasium on Friday afternoons and has proved to be very popular.

Learning & Skills and Resettlement

- 6.1 The provision of Learning and Skills can be difficult as around 20% of those detained are in the establishment for less than a week and almost 40% for less than a month.
- 6.2 The range of Education, Learning and Skills courses provided at Chelmsford is acknowledged, by the Prison Service, as being the best in the East of England region, including that which is available at Category C training establishments.
- 6.3 Over 90% of sentenced offenders are involved either in formal classroom or workshop activities and, although not compulsory to do so, many inmates held either on remand or awaiting sentence also participate in one activity or another.
- 6.4 Courses, activities and staff that regularly receive informal prisoner appreciation include the Barber's training course, IT opportunities and the Art tutors.
- 6.5 Attendance at courses throughout the year has run at over 80%, and waiting lists are generally low, with prisoners encouraged to study literacy or maths if they are waiting for a place on an oversubscribed course
- 6.6 Where possible, courses are delivered in a modular fashion, which should ensure that learning can be continued at other establishments. In addition, the clustering with Highpoint, Hollesey Bay and Bullwood Hall, and the delivery of services in the East of England and London by A4E will mean a more consistent education offer across establishments. However Board Members have noted disappointing situations, for example when there has been a delay between the completion of a course and the introduction of a new course, such as occurred in the IT Skills area, or in the use of the cookers being not allowed in the Life Skills Cookery course. Education staff have coped well at such times but Course Providers could be more proactive in anticipating such occurrences, and when dealing with tutors' unexpected absences.
- 6.7 The availability of vocational courses has increased over the reporting year. Prisoners working in the kitchens, the yards party, the laundry, the library, as cleaners, and in other areas are all able to gain either NVQ or City and Guilds qualifications.
- 6.8 Over the reporting year the Resettlement provision has continued to improve. The use of 'Pathways' continues. Prison staff work closely with outside agencies to provide the best opportunities to prisoners upon leaving. It is not possible, however, for the Board to judge the effectiveness of the Resettlement Team in reducing re-offending but the Board recognises the very positive efforts made by them.
- 6.9 The Board has received positive prisoner feedback about the services offered at the Discharge Board two weeks prior to release.

Healthcare & Mental Health

- 7.1 A new Healthcare contract came into operation in the spring 2012. The Board has concerns about the new provider's ability to deliver satisfactory healthcare to the Prison population. It is not clear how the issues raised in last year's report will be addressed and others have arisen since.
- 7.2 The long delay in appointing the Healthcare Manager and the failure to ensure availability of doctors on site on two occasions early in the contract have been examples of the concerns noted by the Board.
- 7.3 The Board commends the Prison's actions in tackling concerns about management of medications in the pharmacy.
- 7.4 The Board has noted that there are occasional difficulties in transferring prisoners with severe mental health difficulties into appropriate institutions especially if the prisoner is not from within the local mental health area. Prisoners, whom professionals deem need to be sectioned, are often subject to significant delays in being moved into appropriate institutions. It appears to the Board that the sectioning is being delayed until an appropriate bed is found.
- 7.5 In this reporting year more than 25% of Applications to the Board relate to Healthcare (2009/10 = 12.9%. 2010/2011 = 21.7%. 2011/2012 = 26.2%). Some of these Applications are regarding medical matters which limit the actions the Board can take due to patient confidentiality. The formal NHS complaints procedure seems ill suited to a prison environment and some more locally based system monitored by an independent medical professional might be more effective.
- 7.6 The Board is now routinely invited to attend reviews of prisoners on Constant Watch in Healthcare beyond the eight day point, in line with PSI 64/2011. The Board has noted the improvement in outcome for such prisoners with the assembled involvement of many agencies.

Safer Custody

- 8.1 The importance of Safer Custody, Violence Reduction and the ACCT process is continually apparent throughout all areas of the prison and many aspects are also included in other sections of this report.
- 8.2 Current Violence Reduction data indicates a downward trend between the reduction in the number of YP's and the number of violent incidents. The Board will continue to monitor this area with the potential changes in the prison population. The Safer Custody meetings reflect the team's work effectively from their strategic approach to the care of individual prisoners.
- 8.3 There has been one death in custody (DIC) during this reporting period. The prison has not yet received an initial report by the PPO and does not anticipate receiving this until April 2013. However it is understood that the Police investigation found no suspicious circumstances and a date for the inquest is awaited. There were no Inquests into DICs at Chelmsford during the period leaving three outstanding. The Board has regularly expressed its concern at these delays and the impact on all involved particularly families.
- 8.4 There has been an ongoing reduction in the number of self-harm incidents over the year in line with a similar reduction in the number of ACCT documents opened. However the reduction in YP population will also have had an effect.
- 8.5 Progress has been made to improve communication between prison staff and the Fire Brigade. For example, prisoners now receive formal warnings for setting cell fires.
- 8.6 During the reporting period the Board has monitored the impact of tobacco as currency between prisoners and the effect upon their safety. There is an acceptance locally and nationally that tobacco is the primary form of prison currency and that access to it via bullying is common. The Board gained evidence from prisoners and SAFE representatives that there is a reluctance to admit to being drawn into tobacco debt and an acknowledgement of the power issues and potential violence involved.
- 8.7 The Prison's Violence Reduction Committee has identified a trend for some prisoners to deliberately get into tobacco debt as a route to achieving a move within the prison. The Board acknowledges the progress the Prison has made in developing a co-ordinated approach that includes fast track tobacco purchases for new arrivals, improved tobacco quality and input by the Safer Custody Team and Healthcare in running smoking cessation courses.
- 8.8 The Board considers tobacco debt an important issue in the maintenance of prisoners' safety. The Board recognises that this is not just a local issue and that a robust national approach is required to tackle this particular area of prison life.

Segregation, Care and Separation, Close Supervision Units

- 9.1 In the first half of the reporting period the additional population of the Prison, as a consequence of the London civil disorder of August 2011, was reflected in the large number held in A Wing which also houses the Segregation Unit. However, though the Prison was above its standard operating capacity, in the early months of 2012 there was a significant decrease in the number of prisoners spending time in the Segregation Unit and a number of weeks when there were no prisoners on GOOD at all. Factors which contributed to this significantly improved situation include a Prison-wide focus on interpersonal skills. All Officers operating on Wings received training on how to address challenging behaviour and LEAP training, which impacts most on Young Offenders, was expanded. Links with several outside organisations involved with Gang issues were formed following visits by senior staff to East London neighbourhoods. The Board has been impressed by the dynamic way the Prison dealt swiftly and pro-actively with these challenging circumstances and the impact on those held in the Segregation Unit.
- 9.2 Investing in CCTV cameras on more Wings has also been significant in all aspects of indiscipline or unruly behaviour and protects both staff and prisoners. The Board continues to monitor and consider the impact on the Segregation Unit of such prison-wide strategies and the prison's ability to maintain the immediate and flexible response to changing situations.
- 9.3 Prisoners' needs and issues in the SEG are generally handled very well and regimes are tailored to each offender. Staffing has been tightly managed so that SEG prisoners' treatment has been consistent and productive. The close involvement of Residential Managers has assisted in this. IMB Members have been appropriately contacted when a prisoner is referred to the SEG and attend reviews, planned removals and other situations. SEG data is regularly analysed by a multi-disciplinary team: trends noted and acted on. The Board feels that their enquiries and the pursuit of its interests are dealt with professionally by most SEG staff.
- 9.4 Phased returns to normal location have continued to assist prisoners to manage themselves calmly. SEG staff have accompanied prisoners on GOOD to the Visits Hall so that links with the outside world are maintained. Weekly IMB Rota Reports frequently contain positive comments on the staff handling of GOOD Reviews and other staff interaction with SEG prisoners. The Governor and Deputy Governor are keen to record and act on any matter which involves the Segregation Unit. Difficult prisoners have often spoken to IMB Members with praise for SEG staff and the way they feel individual issues have been dealt with.

- 9.5 Adjudications also take place on A Wing in the SEG unit. The impact of the numbers being adjudicated on those in the SEG with individual regimes is only minimalised by additional and continued efforts of the staff. IMB Members have taken a particular interest in the Independent Adjudication practice and will continue to monitor the importance of punctuality and how the Adjudication requirements affect the running of the SEG and the wellbeing of all prisoners held on A Wing.
- 9.6 The physical environment of the Segregation Unit in the oldest part of the Prison continues to be very poor for both prisoners and staff – as stated in previous Reports. It remains to be seen that improvements will be adequate if and when the proposed refurbishments take place. At least one cell is usually out of order with the Works Department taking quite some time to address (often plumbing) problems. There are understandable difficulties when replacing expensive ‘permanent’ fittings. The Board will continue to monitor the developments.
- 9.7 Overall the Board is impressed by the commitment of the staff and the care that is shown to individuals.

Residential Services

- 10.1 During the year the prison has had to deal with considerable pressure on accommodation. The operating capacity of HMP Chelmsford was 695, and following the London civil disorder, the prison has had to accommodate significantly higher numbers, peaking at 743 several times during the year. This figure has only reduced in the previous few months during June/July and August.
- 10.2 The problem of overcrowding has been doubly problematic, as many of the peak numbers have been at very short notice, leading to pressure on physical facilities and staffing. The prison has now settled into a revised operating capacity of 710, with no increase in resources.
- 10.3 It is commendable that most wings now have cells accessible by wheelchairs; two are still awaiting minor works, but will be operational shortly.
- 10.4 It is unfortunate that a substantial part of the prison occupies the early Victorian buildings that are rapidly becoming unfit for purpose. The maintenance costs of keeping this part of the prison running are high. The Board supports the Prison bid to refurbish all of the Victorian wings to bring them up to a reasonable, modern standard.
- 10.5 The move of the VPs from the newly built G wing to D wing in the Victorian part of the prison has brought benefits to the Prison and also to the VPs as they are now closer to their work and other facilities, but the Board has concerns that the VP prisoners have moved to poorer accommodation and there is often overflow onto A wing because of the limits on accommodation on D wing.

Young Prisoners

- 11.1 At the end of the reporting period the Prison was operating within its recommended YP capacity of 150, following the reduction in numbers being sent from London courts.
- 11.2 The YP population peaked at 212 in mid-January and represented more than 28% of the total population. The average remained well above the recommended capacity until August (121) falling to 77 by the end of that month.
- 11.3 It appears that YPs are still over represented in self harm and violence, use of force and adjudications. In part this is attributable to a small number of YPs who required more intensive management. Therefore in spite of the reduction in the YP population they remain the largest category in reportable incidents.
- 11.4 Anecdotal reports from the YP Forum regularly indicate that YPs 'felt generally safe' in the prison.

Security

- 12.1 The Security Department achieved the highest rating in all departments in the recent (June 2012) Security Audit: 'The best Cat B' Prison the Audit Team had seen with many instances of best practice.
- 12.2 The Intelligence Officers and Intelligence practice show a keen awareness of proactive procedures. These have had a good impact on the activities of gang members and the arrival of drugs into the Prison – two specific examples which have led to fewer fights and low RDT finds. Intelligence has also been used to target bullying, particularly around tobacco.
- 12.3 The IMB has been given prompt, clear and well-substantiated responses to their enquiries.

Visits and the Visitors' Centre

- 13.1 The Ormiston Children and Families Trust has continued to provide a valuable service for prisoners in helping to maintain family contact through well-run monthly children's visits, an accredited parenting course run over eight half day sessions and supporting visitors through the Visits' experience.
- 13.2 In April the operation of the well-run, voluntary-funded Visitors' Centre was taken over by the Ormiston Trust. The Centre's atmosphere, facilities and staff have been much appreciated assets of the Prison, with Visitor biometric processing performed by salaried Members of the team. Many prisoners as well as their families and friends have commented favourably to Members on the considerate treatment of those who pass through.
- 13.3 The Board has noted the smooth transition from the Trustees to the professional Ormiston Trust organisation borne out by the reduction in Applications concerning Family/Mail/Phone/Visits in general and no Applications about the Centre during the reporting period.

Reception and Induction Wing

- 14.1 Reception continues to work well. Generally the staff were found to be fair and efficient in conducting their duties in checking in prisoners, and helpful to Members of the Board when they visited on rota duty or otherwise.
- 14.2 Moreover, staff are to be commended for their flexibility in remaining open for two 24 hour periods in order to receive prisoners during a busy time. This related to a period when the crime rate increased due to matters which arose from last year's London civil disorder.
- 14.3 Holding cells were found to be clean during inspection and the issue of hot meals being available for prisoners arriving late seems to have been resolved.
- 14.4 Difficulties still remain in progressing some prisoners from F Wing (the First Night in Prison Wing) on to other Wings after induction. On occasion, some have stayed well beyond the two day induction period which has led to restrictions on their association and activities. It is not unknown for prisoners to complete very short sentences on this Wing.
- 14.5 Some elements of the induction process are delivered by experienced prisoners (Insiders) supervised by prison staff. The Board has monitored this process and will continue to do so.
- 14.6 Wincanton/SERCO assumed responsibility for prisoner transport in August 2011. Significant problems were experienced by the prison during the first three months of this new contract. The Board's monitoring of the situation indicated that Wincanton/SERCO had not been adequately prepared to fulfil the task, particularly in the area of communications. The resulting delays, late arrivals, including at Court, and excessive time spent on transport by prisoners had a negative impact on the welfare of the prisoners involved. Resultant prisoner frustrations made the overall situation difficult for the staff who were already coping with a poor service. The prison had anticipated 'teething' problems and had made efforts to minimise the impact, but ultimately it was necessary for a prisoner manager to spend two days at Wincanton/SERCO's operations centre before a satisfactory level of service was achieved in January 2012.
- 14.7 Late arrivals in the evening do still occur but owing to changes in shift patterns, staff appear to accept the inevitability of this occasionally more readily than before.
- 14.8 The attendance of Wincanton/SERCO at Safer Custody meetings has been limited. The Board considers their attendance to be important and have raised the issue with Prison management.

Section 15

Board Statistics

Recommended Complement of Board Members	18
Number of Board Members at the start of the reporting period	16
Number of Board Members at the end of the reporting period	19
Number of new Members joining within the reporting period	5
Number of Members leaving within reporting period	2
Number of Board meetings during reporting period	12
Number of rota visits to the Establishment	195
Number of other visits to the Establishment	68
Total number of Segregation Reviews attended	63

Statistics (cont.)

Subject	2009/10		2010/11		2011/12	
Accommodation	6	3.5%	3	1.9%	12	9.5%
Adjudications	4	2.3%	4	2.5%	3	2.4%
Equality & Diversity (inc religion)	10	5.8%	1	0.6%	3	2.4%
Education/employment/training inc IEP	5	2.9%	16	10.2%	9	7.1%
Family/visits inc mail & phone	9	5.3%	10	6.4%	2	1.6%
Food/kitchen related	3	1.8%	3	1.9%	5	4.0%
Health related	22	12.9%	34	21.7%	33	26.2%
Property	36	21.1%	25	15.9%	21	16.7%
Sentence related	6	3.5%	1	0.6%	2	1.6%
Staff/prisoner/detainee concerns inc bullying	14	8.2%	23	14.6%	14	11.1%
Transfers	15	8.8%	9	5.7%	9	7.1%
Miscellaneous	41	24.0%	28	17.8%	13	10.3%
Total number of IMB applications	171		157		126	

Glossary of establishment related terms and abbreviations used in this report

BME	Black and minority ethnic
CNOMIS	National Offender Information System
CDAT	Community Drug and Alcohol Teams
CNA	Certified Nominal Accommodation
CSU	Care and Separation Unit
DIC	Death in Custody
DREAT	Diversity Race Equality Action Team
EDAP	Essex Drug and Alcohol Partnership
FNIP	First Night in Prison
GOOD	Good Order and 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
IPP	Imprisonment for Public Protection
NACRO	National Association for the Care and Rehabilitation of Offenders
NHS	National Health Service
OMU	Offender Management Unit
OP CAP	Operational Capacity
PE	Physical Education
PSO	Prison Service Order
RDT	Random Drug Testing
ROTL	Release on Temporary Licence
SAFE	Safety and Fear Free Environment
VP	Vulnerable Prisoner
YOI	Young Offenders Institution
YP	Young Prisoner (aged 18 - 21 years)