

INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

HMP/YOI ELMLEY



ANNUAL REPORT 2012

STATUTORY ROLE OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD (IMB)

The Prisons Act 1952 requires every prison to be monitored by an Independent Board appointed by the Secretary of State from members of the community in which the prison is situated.

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 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 and every part of the prison and also to the prison's records.

**HMP/YOI ELMLEY
INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD
ANNUAL REPORT 2012**

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INTRODUCTION

This report covers the period 1st November 2011 to 31st October 2012 inclusive.

Views of the Members and factual comments of the Governor have been taken into account in order to ensure balanced reporting.

The baseline CNA is 995, and the Operational Capacity 1252. Actual occupancy continues to run just below the OPCAP level, at around 1150.

The establishment is the local prison for most of Kent housing remand and sentenced adult prisoners (Category B & C), and remand Young Offenders.

It should also be noted here that the prison continues to house Vulnerable Prisoners (remand), Foreign Nationals (remand, sentenced and those whose sentence has expired) and Lifers. This eclectic mix is not conducive to excellence in all fields and tends to stretch resources to the limits. Whilst Management and staff continue to maintain good standards in their roles, it is impossible for them to achieve total success in every area.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The IMB Chair attends meetings with the Area Manager quarterly, as well as with the lead Governor of the Sheppey Group. The Area meetings are chaired by the IMB Area Representative.

The continued budget cuts are a great concern to the Board. Whilst HMP Elmley is not to be market tested for privatisation, the Governor is expected to achieve anything up to a 20% cut in their operating budget due to Competition Benchmarking this year. The vast majority of areas are at specification and benchmark level. The Board is worried that the main way to achieve such cuts will be that prisoners spend more time in their cells and that this will result in increased tension.

Innovative resettlement and rehabilitation projects, such as Bedgebury and the Village Hall will all cease by the end of March 2013, in order to reach benchmark.

It is sad to report that this year has seen five deaths in custody, three of which appear to be from natural causes, and two which would seem to be self-inflicted.

The Board finds that the current delay in inquests resulting from deaths in custody is unacceptable. It is therefore strongly recommended that a response and proposed solution is sought from the Minister responsible as a matter of priority.

The Board has also noticed an increase in the number of prisoners returning to HMP Elmley from the open estate.

The introduction of the new Prison Service structure under the heading of "Fair and Sustainable" will be challenging. Staff satisfaction is a very important part of the functioning of a prison - staff shortages have a debilitating effect on the delivery of programmes, the maintenance of regimes and importantly on the morale of staff and consequently this may lead to unrest and frustration among the prisoners.

At the time of writing there are currently 149 triple occupancy cells, which are designed for two prisoners. The Board believe this to be beyond the bounds of decency and whilst the Governor intends to reduce this number, it remains an area of great concern.

PARTICULAR ISSUES REQUIRING A RESPONSE

Time delay to inquests after deaths in custody (para 89)

Prisoners housed in triple occupancy cells (page 5)

Diversity issues (number of sole detainees) (para 62)

Number of lifers held in a local prison (para 59)

OTHER ISSUES OF CONCERN OR EXCELLENCE

Concern:

IMB tenure (para 99)

Staff shortages (paras 2, 4, 9, 56, 74 & Page5)

Prisoners' mail (paras 63 & 105)

Gym (para 82)

Foreign Nationals' phone calls (para 63)

Prisoners' personal property (paras 35 & 36)

Library use (para 74)

Effect of "Fair and Sustainable" (page 5)

Legal Services (para 43)

Segregation Unit restricted regime (para 32)

Time to process Visit Orders (para 69)

Loss of OMU and Public Protection Surgeries (para 56)

GOOD reviews (para 26)

Healthcare (Paras 6, 7, 8 & 9)

Excellence:

Prisoners' Consultative Committee (para 64)

Part-time working (para 66)

Amber/Green Security Audit (para 5)

6x6 Book Challenge (para 75)

Organisation of substance abuse prisoners (para 46)

Catering Newsletter (para 84)

Houseblock 5 resettlement programme (para 51)

Segregation Unit staff (para 28)

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

It is the view of the Board that in the year under review the prison has maintained a good standard in most areas of care. The prison has had a positive HMIP inspection and its best ever Security Audit achieving a grade of Amber/Green.

We do believe that at times the prison is operating at or below minimum staffing levels, a situation that is exacerbated by sickness and inexperienced staff.

TREATMENT OF PRISONERS

Staff

1. Staffing levels have been short of optimum, often running at between 15 and 25 below full staffing levels. This has exacerbated by sick leave which on occasions has doubled this deficit. On-site staff have generally met this challenge well. The Board recognises however, that the Governor is taking positive steps to monitor and reduce staff absenteeism.
2. Again it has been noticeable in certain positions that there is a lack of experienced cover when members of staff are off sick or on holiday. This is particularly evident in areas where staff have specialised in a particular role. Excessive delays in response times from these areas can only cause frustration among the prisoners affected and increase any tensions that already exist.

Security

3. The import and trafficking of drugs within the prison continues to be the main concern of the security staff, along with mobile phones and SIM cards, this situation being endemic in the majority of prisons in England & Wales. The prime task of the staff is therefore to identify the personnel involved in the passage of these items both into the prison and within. To this end there has been several successful intelligence led large scale searches carried out over the past few months. Additionally there continues to be regular planned and reactive searches conducted of individual cells, including weapons and also full body searches of selected personnel visiting the prison. It is concluded that the proactive use of intelligence is the way ahead, based on the success of the countermeasures carried out over this reporting period.
4. Currently there is some concern that staff shortages are impacting on the flexibility in deploying fully trained personnel on cell searches at short notice. The monthly Security Meetings are well attended with the majority of key members of staff in attendance. At present there are no concerns of a terrorist nature associated with the prison.
5. It is worthy of note that HMP Elmley achieved a grade "Amber/ Green" as a result of a recent Security Audit.

Healthcare

6. Elmley healthcare is going through a very difficult time due to the delayed takeover by South East Health Authority. This has been on-going for several months because of a problem with the nurses' pensions. This certainly is not an ideal situation and is causing a great deal of unrest within the workforce.
7. There has been a distinct lack of mental health counsellors, general therapists and additional healthcare within the prison, IDTS use clinical rooms as there are no alternatives for them to use. More GP sessions are needed in order that prisoners do not have a long wait to see the doctor. More minor operations could be done on site if the relevant staff and space were available. Chronic disease clinics are much needed also in the prison.
8. Cleanliness generally is acceptable, but the whole of the in-patients department would benefit from decoration, but due to financial restrictions this will not be done in the foreseeable future. General cleaning is carried out every day.
9. Staff morale is very low due to the changes that are pending and staff shortages mean extra hours under difficult circumstances. Despite this Healthcare staff are always very helpful. The Board will be monitoring the new healthcare provider closely to ensure they start to employ more permanent staff replacing many of the agency personnel currently employed.

Diversity

10. The Board is satisfied that the Ministry of Justice Equality Policy Statement is well displayed in all appropriate places across the establishment and reviewed by the DEAT Team as and when required.

The Prison Service has a positive duty under the Equality Act 2010 and is committed to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote Equality of opportunity and good relations between people of different racial group. Unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation on the basis of:

- Colour/Race
- Nationality
- Ethnicity
- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Religion / Belief
- Disability
- Sex
- Gender-assignment is prohibited

The prison policy on Diversity along with the information about the function and membership of the DEAT team and advice on how to report Equalities Incidents can be found on the notice boards in prominent areas throughout the establishment.

11. Photographs of all DEAT members, including the REO and the Governor, are displayed across the establishment. Similarly the prisoner representatives' photographs are displayed in appropriate places across the establishment.
12. The establishment has a good monitoring system in place regarding complaints identifying trends, complaints held if any and refused, protected characteristics, location, type of prisoner, quality of responses and outstanding final replies. All complaints dealt with investigated and outcome reflects in the bimonthly DEAT minutes.
13. 73 out of 421 staff employed in the establishment during the past 3 years have attended "Challenge It, Change It" training.
14. It is good to report that the DEAT team overall work very hard and ensure that greater attention is given to the Diversity agenda.
15. The Kitchen should be commended for meeting the dietary requirements, which cater for the Religious, Cultural, Ethnic and Medical needs of the Prisoners.
16. Complaints: The establishment has a good monitoring system in place regarding complaints identifying trends, complaints held if any and refused, protected characteristics, location, type of prisoner, quality of responses and outstanding final replies. All complaints dealt with and investigated are reported in the bi-monthly DEAT minutes.

Total number of complaints: 73, broken down as follows:

- Racist: 44
- Insulting Language: 4
- Religion: 3
- Disability: 4.
- Sexual Orientation: 5
- Unspecified: 13

17. Concerns: The Board is concerned that Healthcare does not attend the bi-monthly DEAT Meetings.

18. Chaplaincy:

- a. There is a dynamic chaplaincy team representing a wide spectrum of faiths and all prisoners practice their religion fully and in safety.
- b. Prison Population Faiths:
C/E: 26%, No Religion: 32%, RC: 17%, Muslims: 9%, Christians: 6%
Mormon: 1%, Not Specified: 3%, Buddhist: 1%, Jewish: 1%, Pagan: <1%,
Russian Orthodox: <1%, Other: 2%.

19. Race Equality:

- a. Population breakdown by Ethnic group:
White British: 70%, BME: 29%, Not Stated: 1 %

20. Disabilities & Older Prisoners:

The Board is pleased to report that all prisoners with disabilities are identified and assessed at Reception. Formal care plans are carried out by the Diversity Manager and are used on the wings. Specific needs of Elder Prisoners are being more recognised and met.

21. Concerns:

- a. Not all elder prisoners are able to access all aspects of the establishment regime (wheelchair and walking aid users)

22. Sexual Orientation:

- a. The Board is pleased to report continued success in the establishment with measures that are taken to identify and support prisoners with sexual orientation issues.

23. Gypsy / Traveller / Roma Community:

- a. Average number in the establishment is 25.
- b. There is a forum set for these prisoners, which meets every other month where all issues identified facing this group are discussed. Prisoners access education and Toe by Toe is available. The Travellers' Church visits the establishment.

Segregation Unit

24. The Segregation Unit consists of 26 cells in the main block and 2 special accommodation cells. Of the 26, 23 are in regular use, 2 are used as holding cells for prisoners awaiting adjudication and 1 cell is used for storage. These last 3 cells would also be available for normal accommodation if required.

25. The Board ensures that the Segregation Unit is visited every time a member is in the prison and that all prisoners are seen as soon as possible after being segregated, almost always within 24 hours, and then as frequently as possible, which is at least three times a week. The Board attends the majority of GOOD reviews and Segregation ACCT reviews. GOOD reviews are usually attended by all the requisite parties, promptly at the scheduled time; however, we should note that on occasions other parties have suffered from the late arrival of the reviewing Governor. The Board also notes that a Healthcare representative is not always present, despite this being a statutory requirement.

26. The Board has expressed some concern, on a number of occasions, at the number of prisoners held in the Unit on GOOD. On one occasion 13 were recorded. We are pleased to note that Management has confronted this issue and that the numbers have dropped considerably.

27. During the year, up to 7 cells have been out of commission at any one time for one reason or another. The reasons include maintenance, fitting of CCTV, cell damage and the results of dirty protests. Two of these dirty protests occurred at the same time. The lower washroom was also trashed, twice, and is now being re-styled into a wet room with shower only.

28. Staff are to be commended that, despite these issues, and with some very difficult prisoners, they have maintained a level of professionalism and courtesy towards the individuals in their care that the Board considers exceptional in the circumstances.
29. There have been, and are, several longer term residents in the Unit, which is of some concern to the Board. It is noted, however, that the management do their utmost to re-locate these prisoners, if not onto the Houseblocks, then to other prisons - though the latter is becoming increasingly difficult given the current estate population, particularly with Category C; the Board also accepts that it is undesirable to give way to prisoners who are using bad behaviour in order to force transfers.
30. Adjudications are held in a bespoke room within the unit and all those attended by Board members have been conducted justly and professionally; that is both those conducted by Governors and those conducted by the Independent Adjudicators. The number of adjudications has been fairly consistent and commensurate with the size and character of the prison.
31. There have been occasional issues over the food in the Unit, where deliveries from the kitchen have been short of requirement, but it is difficult for the Board to state where the fault lies. At those times there has been an obvious communication break-down, but examples are becoming rarer, and when they occur, they are rectified.
32. There have been instances during the year when there have been restrictions on the prisoners' regime. Though not common, they occur as a result of Segregation Unit staff being deployed elsewhere in the afternoons and mainly when the number of segregated prisoners is high. The most obvious manifestation of this is a restriction of exercise time, either to 15 minutes, or to none at all if there is no S.O. present. This is a concern to the Board as it could lead to frustration and tension.
33. It should also be noted that the cleanliness of the outside exercise areas leaves something to be desired.
34. CCTV has been installed in the Segregation unit.

REGIMES & ACTIVITIES

Reception

35. The Reception area processes over 20,000 movements per year. It runs relatively smoothly, with occasional late arrivals who are coped with well. Members are still called upon to investigate a very large number of problems with property. This would be better handled in the first instance by Houseblock staff. Reception staff are co-operative and largely the issues raised are outside their sphere of influence.

36. One area that is of some concern is the difficulty that prisoners have in accessing stored or newly arrived property. There is a half hour window in the mornings when prisoners can be called to Reception to collect or exchange property. Very often staff are not available to accommodate this, because they are being utilised to process released/outgoing prisoners, or elsewhere in the prison. Also the distribution of property at weekends has to be postponed because of calls on staff to man other more critical areas. This has meant that some prisoners who have transferred in from as close as Standford Hill have not received their transferred property for several weeks.
37. Staff advise that GEOAmy are not moving 'transfer' prisoners until the afternoons which often ends up with prisoners arriving at HMP Elmley for an overnight stay because of early lock downs by the 'receiving' establishments.
38. Reception has managed to run an effective Unit despite the new profile in April 2012 which changed the Unit from a 10 pm shutdown to 9 pm. The staff cannot process prisoners' kits.

Houseblocks

Houseblock 1/First Night Centre (FNC)

39. Painting of the cells has been on-going throughout the year.
40. Induction of prisoners has, in the main, run well thanks to the collaborative work of officers and Insiders (prisoners) who are committed to the working of the FNC. There have been problems at various times during the year with the Induction of Foreign Nationals and those on IDTS on HB3 due to shortages of staff.
41. Peer Support Workers, attached to AIG (Resettlement), attend Healthcare to deliver Induction to those unable to attend HB1.
42. FNC are still yet to have a computer software 'translator' which would be extremely helpful for staff/Insiders and new Foreign National prisoners.
43. The Board regrets the loss of Legal Services, previously residing in Houseblock 1.

Houseblock 2

44. This Houseblock runs a Trust Scheme for new prisoners. They are selected at induction if it is felt they would benefit from help and guidance in prison life. Many of the men who take part in the scheme are prisoners inside for the first time. This scheme continues to work well and does provide a vital part of the prison regime.
45. There is an issue with the shower block but because of financial restrictions this has not been dealt with and does cause problems for the prisoners.

Houseblock 3/IDTS

46. Houseblock 3 contains the majority of substance users in the prison. For this reason the counselling and treatment organisation is set up on site. This service is provided by Kent and Medway Substance Misuse Team (RAPT & CNWL), having taken over the contract from Integrated Drugs Treatment Service on 1st October 2012. Currently there is spare capacity on the Houseblock and there is an aspiration to draw in substance dependant prisoners from other locations who, for a variety of reasons are not keen at present to be transferred to Houseblock 3. Centralisation of treatment would effectively reduce the workload on both members of staff and the contractor who are currently engaged in dispensing medication on a daily basis throughout the prison. In addition there is also an aspiration at management level to grade Spurs A, B and C - "Induction/Assessment", "Reduction/Detox" and "Substance Recovery". The amenities would then be enhanced to a higher degree of comfort for prisoners who are situated on the recovery spur. It is the view of the Board that this proposal is both progressive and innovative and has potential to lead to a reduction in substance dependency/abuse and ultimately, re-offending.
47. With regard to the fabric of Houseblock 3, as with the remainder of the prison the plumbing in a number of areas is in need of repair. This is particularly relevant with regard to the showers which at times, over this reporting period, have been both unserviceable and a health hazard!

Houseblock 4

48. This house block is designated as a Foreign National unit, although there are foreign national prisoners on other Houseblocks, mainly Houseblock 1. This is due to non-compliance with the prison regime / age / or mobility issues. There are also some British prisoners on the Houseblock.
49. The staff have been successful in setting up all the resources, training and translation services in 13 different languages and have been trained in working with foreign national prisoners by the UKBA.
50. Most showers are not in good condition.

Houseblock 5

51. In May Houseblock 5 was again formally designated as a Cat C wing, for many years it had been described as a Category C Resettlement Unit, but in reality the regime had been little different to the rest of the jail. There is now in place a major project to make it firmly focused on progressing prisoners to Cat D, with a clearly defined regime and set apart with an emphasis on work and progress, it aims to be an enhanced resettlement and community wing. It is envisaged that the prisoners will have a greater say in the running of the wing, longer core day, eating out of cell and be drug free. The first stage of the project was to define the allocation and acceptance criteria in order to house the right type of prisoners there. The criteria finally established for allocating prisoners to the wing were:

- Enhanced status
- Employed, having reached L1 in literacy and E3 in numeracy or be working towards this
- No positive MDT's in last 6 months
- Committed to being drug free and willing to participate in compliance testing
- No escape/abscond or attempts on current sentence
- At least 6 months left to serve
- No security concerns

By July the project was beginning to take shape to ensure those living on HB5 met the new criteria. This involved a significant number of prisoners having to move, but this was all handled well. It is a bold project and there remain a good number of elements to be done; sensibly it is being taken in stages. HB5 has two distinct wings; B spur will be the 'induction' route for C/D prisoners into A spur, and will be therefore a progression wing and where they can be further assessed while awaiting a place on A spur. A spur will be the enhanced resettlement unit and prisoners there will have an increased number of privileges including additional items on the facility list and more time unlocked. It aims to provide more individually tailored advice and assistance in dealing with housing, employment, education and benefits. There may even be opportunities to participate in community projects through accompanied temporary release. For those who meet the risk assessment criteria for temporary release the opportunity of attending local Probation offices to undertake identified offending behaviour courses or attending local training colleges. A small gym is being created on A spur supervised by a trained orderly, and which will be open to all on the wing.

Staff on the wing are composing an information booklet and application forms and all this will soon be available.

If all this is achieved it will be a major innovation contributing significantly to positive 'resettlement'. It is to be hoped the current momentum to succeed will be sustained and not lost in the ever present population and financial pressures.

Houseblock 6

52. During 2012 HB6 was taken over by new senior staff. They have implemented several changes to the general running of the Houseblock. More staff meetings now take place and this is proving very beneficial to both staff and prisoners.

53. Staff are now frequently seen on all the various spurs of the Houseblock, thus making themselves known to all the prisoners, resulting in a more stable regime.

Offender Management Unit (OMU)

54. OMU now oversees Custody, Life Management, Sentence Planning, Management of Immigration and Observation Classification & Allocation (OCA).

The type of prison that HMP Elmley is, gives rise to a very large movement of

prisoners and this puts a strain on the OMU staff and the Board recognises them as a hard pressed and hard working group of officers and administrative staff.

55. OCA has a small number of personnel and as they still deal with the three establishments on the Isle of Sheppey they are to be commended for their throughput of work. To enforce this, Initial Categorising, which has to be completed within 4 days, numbered over 1,900 in the year. While transfers in and out totalled 3,399 in the year.
56. It is regretted that the OMU and Public Protection Surgeries that were held in the Houseblocks have been 'suspended' due to staff resources.
57. In April the work pattern was changed from the '9 to 5 Mon - Fri' to the shift pattern worked by all officers. This has settled in now and gives cover at weekends and evenings and has allowed desk space to be freed up for further personnel and reduced the build-up. The Board has been frustrated, on occasion, by not being able to get important information because relevant staff that are sick or on annual leave are not covered.
58. The new initiative of Managed Custodial Sentence, which commenced in October 2012, has given a swath of prisoners serving 12 months or more access to Sentence Plan support.

Lifers

59. The Board is concerned by the number of Lifers and ISPP's housed in a local prison, which has increased since the last reporting period. The necessary courses required to complete their sentence plan may not be available at Elmley.

a. Life Sentenced Offenders	38
b. ISPP Offenders	60

Foreign Nationals

60. Foreign National Population:
Afghan: 3%, Czech: 2%, Dutch: 2%, French: 2%, Cameroonian: 1%, Ghanaian: 1%, Indian: 1%, Iranian: 2%, Iraqi: 2%, Irish: 6%, Ivorian: 2%, Jamaican: 2%, Latvian: 2%, Lithuanian: 10%, Moroccan: 2%, Nigerian: 3%, Pakistani: 4%, Polish: 8%, Romanian: 9%, Slovak: 4%, Sierra Leonean: 2%, Vietnamese: 2%, Zimbabwean: 2%, Other: 24%
61. Average number of Foreign Nationals throughout the year was 174.
62. Average number of Sole Detainees (held beyond sentence expiry) was 30.
63. Board concerns reported last year, but still not resolved:
- a. Free 5 minute phone call insufficient.
 - b. Loss of mail containing money sent in by relatives who are unable to visit.
 - c. A decline in the number of prisoners achieving "Enhanced" status due to lack of access to relevant translated information.

Employment & Education

64. Some concern was expressed last year on the proposed initiative to make all employment part time and linked to attendance at part time education. In addition the prison was losing basic work to another prison. Since then there has been a sweeping review of prisoners pay rates, with reductions in pay of up to 60%. It is of credit to the establishment that by having an on-going 'open dialogue' with prisoners through the newly created **Prisoners Consultative Committee**, on these matters that it has all been implemented with only minor hiccups.
65. The T-boats workshop returned, which was welcomed by the prisoners and shop instructors alike, and labour allocation returned to the prison instead of being managed from elsewhere. The piece rate shops did for a while demonstrate their non-acceptance of the new low wages by a continued go slow and below level production. This was rectified by an imaginative tweaking of the shop pay rate by the Governor.
66. The other positive factor has been a sensitive and careful approach to part time working. The planned hours of purposeful activity are 104,565, and the hours achieved in a typical month are 81,880, which it is 85% of target - very creditable for a local prison. There are, perhaps, 2 slightly disappointing features to this, one that a large number of the jobs are in cleaning or orderly work (over 50% including the kitchen) and the second is the failure rate of inmates to attend education. It's felt that this was improving, especially with the new emphasis on learning basic skills, but random checks raise serious doubts as to how effective this has been. There will always be some 'non attendees' in a local prison, but the degree of absence is worrying in the present climate, particularly as there did not appear to be any serious follow up to the situation by education staff. The Board understands that OLASS 4, the new education contract, will focus on full attendance.
67. Numbers on the industrial training courses, with the exception of industrial cleaning, have been low, averaging no more than 50%. This is not good use of an expensive investment that should be providing the maximum number of what are good employable skills for prisoners.
68. There has also been concern by Ministers that education was not focusing sufficiently on employability skills, that Governors did not have sufficient control over offender learning, and that there was too much emphasis on inputs and insufficient on outputs. As all education contracts were up for renewal, it was decided these issues should be addressed and new criteria will be encapsulated in OLASS 4. The Board will closely monitor this situation.

Visitor Centre and Visits

69. The Board has been concerned at the length of time taken to process Visit Orders. This was raised with the Governor and the process is now being reviewed.

70. Visiting is no longer allowed on Mondays.
71. The prisoner visit protocol has been reviewed and prisoners can now only make contact with adult visitors at the beginning and end of the visit, this was due to security concerns and the potential for trafficking.
72. It is very expensive to purchase items from the vending machine / snacks / beverages in the Visitor Centre and Visits Hall. This concern was raised last year but so far there has been no improvement, as this is run and manned by outside caterers and not the establishment.

Library

73. The Board has been concerned with the low numbers that are using this facility, and have monitored the take up. There is a great disparity between the number of visits from the various Houseblocks and workplaces. Some use it well others less frequently.
74. The introduction of a time table for attendance has shown slight improvement in the take up, but the shortage of officers to supervise is a major problem. However, the Board has also recorded library closures due to KCC staff being not available. Non-use due to KCC staff absent and lack of officers, is now being monitored.
75. Despite this the library won an award for the 6x6 book challenge - read 6 books to obtain a prize.
76. Book losses are still running at a too high a rate, and the Board can see no solution to this on-going problem.
77. The Board would not like to see the prison lose this facility due to lack of use.

Physical Education

78. The gymnasium and courts provide a very popular service to Elmley, the facilities are well used and now include a satellite gym in Houseblock 5.
79. Activities both by staff and prisoners continue to raise funds for local causes. This culminated with a joint prize giving afternoon in which a large number of certificates (over 50) were awarded to inmates for their efforts in many disciplines including purposeful training, which are recognised outside the prison. Representatives of local charities came and received the monies raised for their causes; representatives from the Gillingham football team presented the awards that day.
80. Users referred via the health centre for exercise training continue at a high level.
81. Purposeful activities include C & R training for staff, First Aid, Manual Handling and Team Building. The Bedgebury Project continues, being pioneered by the

Gym staff in conjunction with the Forestry Commission at Bedgebury Pinetum and Stamford Hill Prison.

82. Efficiency savings still cause concern as the prison regime and in particular mass movement delays cause loss of use of the facilities. The proposed new staff levels would mean only 56% of the prisoner population will be able to access the facility twice a week and a number of accredited training courses will be discontinued.

Kitchen & Food

83. Low staffing levels with both prisoners and caterers has again been an issue this year. This is due to long-term illness of staff and insufficient numbers of low security risk prisoners available to work in the kitchen.
84. The Board applauds the kitchen manager's initiative of launching a monthly catering newsletter circulated to all prisoners. This contains news and views and gives a forum for ideas and 'grumbles'.
85. The Board is pleased that accredited food hygiene training at levels one and two is carried out on a regular basis. This is being done in conjunction with education avoiding cost to the establishment.
86. Ramadan was again a success with the use of hot containers ensuring that all those taking part enjoyed a hot meal after sunset.
87. HMP Elmley currently feeds 1700 people per day with a budget of £2.09 per head. This will become increasingly challenging with proposed budget cut to £1.80 per head for 2013/14.
88. Over ordering by HMP Standford Hill of lunches is causing waste and pressure on budgets.

Safer Custody

89. There have been 5 deaths in custody during this reporting period, 3 from suspected natural causes and 2 from suspected self-inflicted death. At present the prison is awaiting dates for inquests on no less than 11 cases, the longest delay at the time of writing being 5 years. Why, when the majority of these cases are eventually judged "death from natural causes," does it take so long to reach a conclusion? In our opinion the current system demonstrates a flagrant disregard for the feelings and rights of the families of deceased prisoners.
90. There has been a slight decrease in the number of Assessment Care in Custody Teamwork (ACCT) documents opened over the past 12 months and notably the statistics show a reduction in the number of prisoners self-harming. The overall standard of the completion of documentation has improved and 6 members of staff have recently completed an ACCT Assessor Course. Listener training, conducted by the Samaritans takes place every 6 months. Currently there are 24 trained Listeners, spread throughout the prison.

91. The prison management incorporated a new Violence Reduction Policy during the last reporting period. This now appears to be well established and coordinated across all the Houseblocks, with the number of reported violent incidents showing a marked decrease over the past 3 months, a trend which will hopefully continue. The current situation reflects well on staff at all levels and also the prisoner Violence Reduction Representatives.

Works & Grounds

Works

92. Planned Periodic Maintenance is substantially up to date; the shortfall in tradesmen is being made up as needed by contract workers. General repairs average around 450 per month.

93. The fire alarm system installed 2 years ago is still very high maintenance mainly due to the filters needing attention and this is covered by a contractor and runs at about 24 each day. This reflects on false alarms indicating in the Houseblock Command Posts.

94. Finance is very tight again and there is around an £80K shortfall halfway through the financial year. With this type of maintenance the final outcome of the budget is dictated by the work arising through the year.

95. Specific Areas and Locations:

- a. Damage and breakages that occur throughout the prison and very often in the Segregation Block take a high level of resources to repair.
- b. The Segregation Block has required additional work this year with the complete destruction of the lower shower room, entailing a rebuild to a safe wet room, and redecoration of cells after dirty protests. Also installation of new safe cell ramps are in hand and an addition of extra CCTV coverage in this area.
- c. The gradual shower replacement started in Houseblock 5 last year is continuing and Houseblock 1 A and C spurs are in hand at present and will progress through the prison.
- d. The Kitchen water boilers replacement was completed. As also was the Communication Suite air conditioning renewal.
- e. Many new projects are in hand including, a new staff radio system, CCTV in additional areas and a new Key System.
- f. The staff are apprehensive at this time as this area is expected to go to a national contract over the next year or so.

Grounds

96. The gardens have been a credit to the ground staff again this year in particular the flower beds and displays.
97. The large amount of litter outside the Houseblocks most mornings is unsightly and if left could be a health hazard. The cleaning work parties are tasked to clean up this and some days this is carried out more efficiently than others and of course inclement weather hinders at times.

WORK OF THE BOARD

Board Meetings

98. The Board held 12 meetings during the period 1st November 2011 to the 31st October 2012. Allowing for members on sabbatical there was an average of 82% membership attendance. One member completed their probationary period and their appointment was confirmed, two new members were appointed and there were three resignations. This brings Board numbers to 14.
99. The Board is still actively recruiting as we are extremely concerned by the impact of the new membership tenure regulations, which have been imposed by OCPA, without consultation. The Board at Elmley will lose two valued and very experienced members at the end of 2013 and two more the following year.

Rota Visits

100. Each Board member visits the establishment at least three times a month, to fulfil the Board's duties. Members also attended on other occasions, for meetings such as Violence Reduction, Drug Strategy and Course presentations, Diversity etc. as well as for training, interviewing, escorting visiting Boards and administrative duties.
101. It is the aim of the Board to have at least one member visiting the prison every weekday.

Applications

102. The Board dealt with 582 applications during the year to 31st October 2012; a decrease of 120 (-17%) from the previous year. The Board believes that the reduction in applications relates directly to a more effective prison General Application system, introduced during the reporting period.
103. Applications relating to Transfers In/Out of the prison have shown a marked increase. This may be related to the difficulty that OCA has in finding available spaces in other establishments around the country.
104. There has been a marked increase in applications relating to Employment. This may have in part been due to the change in prisoner pay policy, which resulted in a radical reduction in their weekly wages.

105. Applications for Mail issues have also increased considerably. The Board is concerned by a number of problems that have arisen with the Mail, including; changes to the way Recorded Deliveries are handled and the time taken for both sent and delivered mail to be processed.

106. The complete analysis of our applications was as follows:

Subject	Total	% of Total	+/- over 2011
Transfers (In/Out)	74	12.71%	25.42%
Property	73	12.54%	-13.10%
Health/Hygiene	60	10.31%	-25.93%
Release/HDC etc.	59	10.14%	-6.35%
Confidential Access	29	4.98%	16.00%
Employment	28	4.81%	86.67%
Legal	27	4.64%	12.50%
Categorisation	26	4.47%	-67.50%
Visits	26	4.47%	-35.00%
Money	24	4.12%	-4.00%
Bullying/Violence	20	3.44%	-16.67%
Mail	17	2.92%	88.89%
Staff	14	2.41%	-26.32%
Complaints Process	13	2.23%	-56.67%
Diversity	9	1.55%	50.00%
Telephone	8	1.37%	-65.22%
Canteen	7	1.20%	133.33%
OMU	7	1.20%	-46.15%
Immigration Issues	6	1.03%	-53.85%
Location	5	0.86%	-77.27%
Adjudications	4	0.69%	-63.64%
Catalogue Purchases	1	0.17%	-50.00%
Other	45	7.73%	45.16%
Total	582	100.00%	-17.09%

Training

Board Members have attended all compulsory training and essential voluntary training.