



HMP/YOI Elmley

Annual Report 2014

November 1, 2013

to

October 31, 2014

Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody

SECTION 1

STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

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.

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.

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.

SECTION 2

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SECTION 3

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

The baseline Certified Normal Accommodation (CNA) is 995 and the Operational Capacity (OPCAP) is 1252. Actual occupancy continues to run just below the OPCAP level, approaching the 1250 mark, but on occasions falling short of this by 20 or 30 allowing some room for manoeuvre. The establishment is the local prison for the whole of Kent housing remand and sentenced adult prisoners (Category B & C), and remand Young Offenders. The prison continues to house Vulnerable Prisoners (sentenced and remand), Foreign Nationals (remand, sentenced and those whose sentence has expired) and Lifers.

SECTION 4

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. During the reporting year, HMP Elmley was subject to Fair & Sustainable, Benchmarking and then New Ways Of Working (NWOW) during the second half of the reporting period - yet another initiative to improve efficiency. The launch date for NWOW was fixed at 23 March 2014. The Board were informed that timetabling old style schedules were ready and that everything was 'good to go' and that benchmarking targets would be met. However, having been implemented, it hit a brick wall due to low staff numbers. With elements of the regime being curtailed at very short, or even no, notice, management came up with the solution of an Emergency Regime throughout the summer months. Although this entailed cuts to the normal regime, these were scheduled and prisoners were kept informed. This created more certainty and resulted in a much calmer acceptance of the status quo - and allowed the prison to function effectively.
2. The Board continues to be concerned by high levels of staff sickness. HMP Elmley has had one of the highest sickness rates in the prison estate. Combined with a concurrent staffing gap, this has had a significant impact on the operation of the prison, including increased lockdowns in the Houseblocks and the Segregation Unit. Staff have had to be deployed from areas such as Reception and the Offender Management Unit (OMU) to cover, causing delays in the processing of prisoners property and delays in administrative tasks that impact on vital issues for, and expectations of, prisoners, such as OASYS and HDC. There was some amelioration in the sickness levels over the latter period of this report.
3. Throughout this report there is a recurring theme of shortage of staff. Sickness levels were mentioned above; however the prison has not been able to maintain a baseline staffing level even allowing for this. Staff attrition levels are high, with current recruitment unable to keep pace.
4. HMP Elmley continues to house prisoners with mental health problems who would be better served in dedicated secure mental health facilities. These prisoners remain at HMP Elmley because of the shortage of places in such facilities.
5. It is extremely sad to record that this reporting year has seen six deaths in custody, three of which appear to be self-inflicted. This marks a significant increase in numbers over previous years.
6. The Board finds that the current delay in inquests, resulting from deaths in custody is still of concern. There has been some improvement over recent months, but delays are still excessive and the Board has a great deal of sympathy with families who have to wait an inordinate amount of time before achieving closure.
7. At the time of writing there are around 70 triple occupancy cells, which are designed for two prisoners. Whilst this is a decrease from the last annual report, the Board still continue to find this unacceptable and believe it to be a breach of human rights. There are also a large number of double occupancy cells which were designed for single occupancy.

8. The prison IT platform was changed during the year and this was almost a complete disaster. Very slow response times and a resulting system that relied on cobbling together part of the new and part of the old, in order to maintain a usable interface, was the outcome. At the time of reporting there is still no complete resolution.
9. There appears to be increasing indifference with regard to some meetings, with Diversity meetings and Prisoner Consultative Committee meetings, cancelled and/or rearranged, with confusion as to who should be present, and as to who should take the Chair. Segregation Management and Review Group (SMARG) meetings rarely take place – only one, in February, this year.
10. It is particularly difficult to see how HMP/YOI Elmley can possibly function as a Resettlement Prison until the staffing issues are resolved.
11. In June, HMIP made an unannounced inspection of the prison. At the date of this report the outcome of that inspection is still to be published.

PARTICULAR ISSUES REQUIRING A RESPONSE

Policy matters on which a reply from the Minister is sought

12. When will triple occupancy of cells be eliminated from HMP Elmley? **(Para. 7)**
13. What measures can be taken to address the issue of staff shortages and resulting negative effect on the regime, with re-deployment of staff within the prison, constant deployment of detached duty staff and use of Payment Plus. **(Paras. 1, 2, 3, 60, 68, 69, 122, 124, 138)**
14. Staff shortage has a knock-on effect on purposeful activity – education provision, decline of the workshops. How is this going to be addressed? **(Paras. 37, 41, 47, 48, 90)**
15. Continued re-deployment of staff from OMU has caused a massive back-log in OASYS and HDC How is this going to be addressed? **(Paras. 69, 79, 110, 111, 112, 141)**
16. What will be done to bring about the elimination of the retention by the prison of Foreign National detainees who are being held beyond their release dates? **(Para. 89)**

Other matters which require the attention of the Minister

17. Prisoners suffering with Mental Health problems. **(Paras. 4, 45)**
18. What measures are going to be taken to address the increase in instances of self-harm? **(Para. 57)**
19. What measures are going to be taken to address the increase in instances of violence and bullying? **(Paras. 54, 56, 66, 68)**
20. Although there has been some improvement, there is still an inordinate time-lag between deaths in custody and their inquests. Why? **(Paras. 6, 58)**
21. Why does Elmley continue to hold Lifers, when it clearly cannot support the full regime to satisfy their needs? **(Para. 97)**

Operational matters requiring responses prepared or commissioned by the Prison Service

22. What measures can the prison implement to establish a long-term and sustainable solution to the issues of the management of prisoner property? **(Paras. 80, 81, 82, 139)**
23. How can the prison ensure prisoner access to Library reference material? **(Para. 95)**
24. What measures are being taken to reduce the amount of contraband entering the prison? **(Para. 85, 118)**
25. How is the lack of commitment to meetings going to be addressed? **(Para. 9, 34, 38, 62, 119)**
26. How are the failure of kitchen equipment and the subsequent lack of investment in repair or renewal going to be addressed? **(Paras. 71, 72)**
27. The IMB have noted a decline in the quality of prisoners' food. What measures are being taken to address this? **(Para. 73)**

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28. The conservatory in the Visitor Centre was unusable for around three months of this year. How is this matter going to be addressed? **(Para. 129)**
29. The IMB has highlighted the high levels of prescription of certain drugs. Will this be investigated? **(Para. 44)**
30. The IMB are concerned about the continuing issues with the IT platform. **(Para. 8)**

Areas of Excellence

31. The positive impact of the new Healthcare service provider. **(Paras. 43, 44, 140)**
32. Exemplary working practices in the Laundry. **(Para. 50)**
33. The recent Security audit rated Amber/Green. **(Para. 120)**

SECTION 5

MAIN AREAS OF THE PRISON

EQUALITY & INCLUSION

34. Diversity

DEAT (Diversity Equality Action Team) meetings are held bi-monthly chaired by the Governor and take responsibility for monitoring each protected characteristic group. Attendance at this meeting is poor, not all key departments are present at the meeting, although they are all invited to discuss Diversity issues. No data is provided for staff training (SMART which is now turned off). There is a new proposal for an Equality and Diversity Prisoners' Forum to be established, which will meet monthly.

35. Complaints:

All DIRFs (Discrimination Incident Reporting Forms) are logged in by the complaints team who check and investigate complaints received from prisoners and staff.

Complaints from prisoners: 37, complaints from staff: 14

There are six on-going complaints to be investigated; and a few have been referred to the Police Liaison Officer.

The breakdown and nature of complaints received to date is as follows: Race: 12, Abusive and insulting language: 7, Racist behaviour: 1, Disability related: 7, Age related: 1, Sexual Orientation: 8, No Equality issues evident: 8

Breakdown of complaints logged by Houseblock: Houseblock 1: 5, Houseblock 2: 10, Houseblock 3: 4, Houseblock 4: 4, Houseblock 5: 0, Houseblock 6: 17, Healthcare: 10 and Segregation Unit: 1.

36. Chaplaincy:

The Chaplaincy Team has to be applauded and complemented for the work it is involved in. It also forms part of the Senior Management Team. The chaplains fulfil numerous other commitments for the welfare of the prisoners and their families when needs arise. The team attends various meetings, arranging events/celebration/worship and teaching. It also visits families when there are deaths in custody.

37. Race Equality:

No forums are held for Gypsy & Travellers/Elderly Prisoners (aged 60+). It is endorsed in the DEAT meeting minutes that elderly prisoners are locked up most of the time without any purposeful activity.

38. Consultative Committee:

Elmley has a Prisoner/Staff Consultative Committee which is a very useful sounding Board for the atmosphere in the prison. Due to all the other problems already listed, it has not met for some time. At one meeting, despite the depletion to the regime, the fact that Elmley has had to take in several difficult prisoners from other prisons, the higher number of Foreign Nationals, and the national problem with the movement of prisoners' property, the picture they presented was remarkably sanguine. There was a sense that the prison itself was doing

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its best under difficult circumstances, possibly as a result of the Emergency Regime that was put in place. This is a credit to the local management and staff, but it should not be presumed that this attitude will continue into the foreseeable future unless continued progress can be made in restoring all of essential elements of the regime.

EDUCATION, LEARNING AND SKILLS

39. The service provider is The Manchester College. At the beginning of the year Elmley Education Department provided 304 part-time places and 42 full-time - the equivalent of 194 full-time places. However the initial allocation rate was only 70% and the attendance rate was running at only 50% of that.
40. As noted in last year's IMB Report, the new Offenders' Learning And Skills Service (OLASS) contract, and the appointment of a designated Learning and Skills Manager for Elmley, had begun to address both aspects. By April 2014, the allocation rate had reached 81% and attendance was up to 60%. There were plans to both enhance and develop the syllabus on many fronts.
41. However, Education has suffered an even greater decline in its provision; it has reduced from the 194 full time places it previously provided to about 30, although some degree of 'outreach education' has been able to expand. On a review of the 30 places still available there are further negative aspects. On a recent spot check it was found that only 14 prisoners of the 30 allocated were in attendance. It appears that on some days it is even lower. In a busy local there is always going to be a degree of 'non-attendance' for a variety of reasons. It is, however, disheartening that the steady progress that was being achieved earlier in the year has all been lost. It is to be hoped that the staffing shortfall that has inflicted so much negative impact on the regime will be addressed with urgency and sustained on an on-going basis.

HEALTHCARE & MENTAL HEALTH

42. The Healthcare provider is Central & North West London NHS Foundation Trust, Integrated Care 24 Ltd (IC24). Other service providers are Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust and Minster Medical Group.
43. Outpatients:

All Houseblocks now have treatment rooms; this has resulted in the prison regime not being impacted by prisoners attending Healthcare for regular medication. Long term chronic disease management is now well monitored. Complex case patients are now seen by the head nurse for regular reviews. A prisoner forum with the head nurse is held every two months. A representative from every Houseblock is invited to attend. Triage/head nurse clinics are now held Monday to Friday, which has resulted in a further 60 patients being seen per week. Extra outside services have been commissioned. NHS checks are being carried out.
44. Inpatients:

The ban on smoking has had a significant effect on inappropriate admissions to the department since it no longer provides a smoking area for prisoners.

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The Board has concerns about whether the cleaning materials supplied to the department are effective.

Custodial Managers and Governors are supportive of the staff. The Board are concerned that officers are not allocated on a daily basis, resulting in nurses having to assess the risks before unlocking.

The number of Prisoners on the following drugs is of concern to the Board: PREGAB, GABOP, TRAMADOL, CLANAZEPAM, QUETIOPINE, and DIAZEPAN.

45. Mental Health:

The provision of mental health treatment continues to be of great concern since, despite approval by a psychiatrist; it takes such a long time for patients to be sent to a special unit thus increasing the pressure on the Inpatients department to continue to accommodate these prisoners. Inreach services are provided by Oxleas, who run a good service but are kept extremely busy with some very difficult patients. This is of concern to the Board.

PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY

46. Industries engaged a potential 230 prisoners, and there were plans to expand the workshop spaces. Industries generated in the region of £234,000 of commercial income, whilst the laundry generated a further £826,000 of 'soft income' for the laundering of other establishments washing. In addition, the Industrial Cleaning Training workshop is saving the prison £160,000 a year by undertaking all specialist cleaning needed 'in house', and not having to bring in specialist commercial companies.

47. Unfortunately this relatively bright start to the year was not to be sustained. The demands of implementing firstly 'Fair and Sustainable' followed immediately by 'Benchmarking', compounded by a drastic shortfall of the required staff in post and a high sick rate, was to prove dramatic in its negative impact on the regime. An 'emergency regime' to get through the 'summer leave' months had to be agreed, which resulted in a much reduced education programme, and the virtual shut down of all workshops except the laundry and T-Boats. Eventually some help in the form of 'detached duty' staff was provided. Management then embarked on restoring such elements of the regime where it was safe and contingent to do so. The FloPlast workshop which has been associated with the prison for 10 years was one of the casualty closures and remains shut. It is unclear whether the work will return, as the firm has had to make other arrangements, and even if the work returns it will be February or March 2015 before these shops can re-open; and then it has to be assumed that they will require assurances concerning maintenance of sustained production.

48. So the expansion of the workshops and thus prisoner places which were planned for 2014 have had to be abandoned, and all that remains is to try and retrieve the former position; not the most successful year for industries.

49. The Bricklaying Training workshop did survive and is going to remain in place with plans to expand and offer basic courses in other trades such as painting & decorating. This is to be commended, but the slow process of getting this up and running is rather frustrating when such skills are in demand and are clearly an aid to rehabilitation.

50. The vital work of the laundry was fortunately sustained, and it has continued to both increase its tonnage output and gain more commercial contracts. Training for a qualification in association with the Guild of Cleaning and Laundry has also been introduced in conjunction

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with Education. As many of the prisoners working in the laundry are Foreign Nationals, short remedial education sessions have commenced in the workshop, so that prisoners in need can improve their basic education whilst still operating as laundry workers. All those working in the laundry spend the whole day working and take their lunch at their workplace. This remains a shining example of 'good practice', and the instructors are to be congratulated.

RESETTLEMENT

51. Resettlement comprises a small band of staff who have suffered by the frequent substitution of uniformed officers with civilian personnel, as they are frequently seconded to other temporary duties, leaving the department short of manpower. This puts pressure on everyone. Staff do, though, manage to get through the heavy workload.
52. However these staff issues do present a problem. There is a lowering of morale due to work pressures with personnel depleted by deployment to the Houseblocks for long periods.
53. In early 2014 Elmley was re-designated as a Resettlement Prison. At the time of reporting, there had been no evidence of this taking place. The Resettlement element was being outsourced; the bidding process had been completed; a preferred provider had been identified -- SEETEC. The company will be taking over this area in March of 2015. 2 to 3 of the current staff will be transferred to the new provider. One of the aims will be to re-deploy all of the Foreign National prisoners and the sex offenders, and only retain prisoners with 12 months to serve or less, whilst still serving the Kent courts.

SAFER CUSTODY

54. Violence Reduction: Trends indicate that there has been a rise in violent incidents in the prison during the course of this reporting period. Serious incidents are reported to the National Operations Unit from which a formal prosecution of the perpetrator/s may ensue.
55. Over the past few months a new Violence Reduction & Safer Custody Team has been put in place, along with the implementation of a new and proactive system in targeting and challenging violent behaviour. The upshot of this initiative has resulted in offenders being either split up and moved around within Elmley or transferred to other prisons. So far this is proving to be an effective countermeasure in reducing violent behaviour.
56. The effect of staff shortages at the start of NWOW led initially to an increase in "opportunist" violent incidents. However it has been observed by the Board that this appears to have led to "tighter grouping" amongst the staff in addressing the problem. The Board has some concern with regard to the process of selection/recruiting and training of prisoner VR Reps on the Houseblocks. It is understood that currently this is not a "profiled task" for operational staff to carry out.
57. Self-Harm: There has been a significant increase in the number of self-harm incidents over this reporting period, the lowest number being 32 in January, peaking at 85 in July. The number of ACCT documents opened reflects a similar trend.
58. There have been 6 deaths in custody during the past 12 months, the breakdown being: Natural causes 3, Self-inflicted 3, although it must be stated that all are currently awaiting inquests. It is also apparent that these statistics reflect a significant increase in deaths in custody when compared to the previous 3 to 4 IMB reporting periods.

59. Listener selection and training continues effectively and is conducted by the Samaritans.

SEGREGATION

60. The Segregation Unit remains a very stressful place for the staff and the situation there has not been helped by the absence of regular personnel. Despite this, the officers work with dedication, discipline and feeling towards the prisoners. They are to be commended for their hard work with the rehabilitation of the prisoners. It is of some concern that so many prisoners are kept in Segregation because of their refusal to locate to a Houseblock in the hopes that this will give them a way out of the prison to another location. The Board is concerned that due to the shortage of staff, showers, exercise and phone calls are not always provided and this leads to the prisoners venting their feelings towards the staff. The Board is concerned about detached duty officers being put on duty in the Segregation Unit as they are not familiar with the regime or the prisoners and this leads to a certain amount of discord within the block.
61. The Board attends as many GOOD reviews as possible; 76 in the last year. There have been instances during the year where the GOOD reviews have not been conducted in line with the required procedure. Some have gone ahead without Healthcare present, some have been delayed for a day, and some have been completed as a paper exercise without the prisoner present. Also on occasions the Governor presiding has turned up so late that other attendees have left before the Governor arrived.
62. Segregation Monitoring and Review Group (SMARG) meetings should be held quarterly. This has not been happening. There has been only one meeting held during this reporting period.
63. When it is deemed necessary for a prisoner to be placed in Special Accommodation, IMB has been informed in most cases. If a member is present in the prison at the time, they are called to observe. Staff conduct has always been exemplary in these cases.
64. During the year the Board has made continuing representations about the state of the exercise yards. In July the Board were assured that these would be cleaned on a regular basis (daily), however, this is not now happening and the exercise yards are in a parlous state again.

RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

65. Houseblock 1

First Night Centre and Residential Unit. Please see Induction for information on this aspect.

66. Houseblock 2

Remand and Convicted Adults and Young Adults. There is no common denominator amongst the prisoners on this block, thus making it a difficult Houseblock for officers to handle. This leads to a considerable amount of bullying among prisoners and this is of concern to the Board. The shortage of staff, especially permanent staff, often restricts unlock times which leads to frustration amongst the prisoners. There are very few Violence Reduction reps on this Houseblock. There are shortages of equipment and bedding and this problem needs to be addressed in order to improve the general atmosphere on the Houseblock.

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67. Houseblock 3

Integrated Drug Treatment System (IDTS). Substance misuse and recovery unit. Offenders with drug and alcohol issues are identified in Reception and then assessed in the first night centre prior to location onto this Houseblock.

There have been challenges with offenders misusing prescribed medication and illicit substances but multi agencies have been working to minimise risks and this has been very effective.

68. Houseblock 4

Remand and Convicted Adults and Young Adults. This Houseblock has a mixture of 1 and 2 bedded cells.

The Houseblock is generally clean and tidy and has sports equipment on the ground floor. However, due to both the overcrowding, staff shortage and time locked-down, tensions have run high and, anecdotally, assaults on officers have reached an all-time high, though they may not all have been reported.

Detached-duty personnel are not present long enough to build up a rapport with the prisoners, and the Board hope that permanent staff can be put in post as soon as possible.

69. Houseblock 5

Category C Resettlement Unit. The Houseblock has just about survived as the Cat C Unit; but due to the constant pressure on capacity, the strict criteria established for selection to this enhanced regime unit has had to be 'watered down' in order to house a constant flow at full capacity. A Spur has managed to remain as planned, but B Spur has had to house a more eclectic mix including more difficult and recalcitrant prisoners. This has resulted in a higher rate of incidents on B Spur.

As all prisoners on A Spur are in full time employment and only have access to the gym at weekends, the frequent closure of the gym at weekends due to PE staff having to be re-deployed to general duties, has caused a degree of friction and dissention amongst the residents during the summer months. Also HDC processing has been under heavy pressure due to the back-log of work in the Offender Management Unit, again mostly caused by staff re-deployment. This has increased significantly the number of applications to the Board by disgruntled prisoners.

70. Houseblock 6

Remand and Convicted Adult and Young Adult Vulnerable and Foreign National prisoners. IMB receive and process the largest proportion of applications from this Houseblock compared to other Houseblocks. There have also been 17 complaints via DIRF forms.

Towards the end of the reporting period there was an infestation of bed-bugs that needed specialist treatment.

Kitchen & Catering

71. Equipment: The original kitchen facilities were designed and built for a prison population of 650. Even though some new equipment has been added, it now has to prepare meals for nearly double that number. However, some of the equipment is dated and susceptible to breakdown. The refrigeration units of both main fridges broke down. Due to their age the

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refrigerant gas that was being used in the units could not be replaced. There was also no budget immediately available for repairs/upgrade. As an interim measure the cold store was used, but this was only just cold enough. During this interim period one of the two cold store pumps failed, putting more pressure on the operation of the backup. The main fridges have now been repaired. This particular situation was close to becoming critical and without refrigeration the kitchen would not have been able to operate.

72. The kitchen has lost two of its three waste disposal units due to breakdowns and these have currently not been replaced. New models have a higher power requirement than the old units, and this cannot be accommodated by the ageing electrical circuits in the kitchen, which would require modernising. Through active waste reduction the kitchen is just about coping with this situation. However, the location of the only remaining unit is close to food preparation areas, so is not ideal. The Board is very concerned about the lack of investment in the kitchen facilities.
73. Food Quality: Throughout the Board year there have been several issues with the quality of produce supplied by 3663, through its national supply monopoly. The prison has no choice but to purchase its supplies through 3663. There have been complaints from prisoners about the quality of the bread baguettes (with which the IMB agrees), and on several occasions goods have been delivered damaged due to packing errors and fruit and veg have been rotten. To replace these goods, the prison on occasion has had to place orders for special deliveries, at extra cost. There is then extra administration work to raise the necessary paperwork in order to obtain compensation.
74. Staffing Levels: Prisoner staffing levels have continued to be a problem. The Kitchen's full prisoner complement is 36; however it can operate effectively with around 20. The staffing numbers can fluctuate from approximately 12 to 33. Both insufficient and excessive prisoner numbers can make it operationally difficult for the kitchen. The high security vetting level required by the Kitchen and the prisoner turnover associated with being a local prison both contribute to this problem.
75. Lunch: In the previous Board year the kitchen experimented with the introduction of a cold sandwich lunch, to replace a hot meal. This was unsuccessful and was abandoned. Due to the operational constraints of New Ways of Working, this has again been introduced, in line with the majority of other prisons. Even though it has been successfully implemented it has increased the cost per capita, as it is more expensive to prepare cold sandwich lunches than it is to cook a hot meal. The overall per capita cost is now approximately £2.20 per day, against an original target of £1.96.
76. Audit: The Kitchen passed its annual audit by the Area Catering Manager in January. The main issues raised were to do with monitoring of food quality by the Governors. There is an expectation that a member of the Senior Management Team will taste the food in the kitchen every day and in the serveries once a week, at which point the food complaints log would be inspected and signed. This has not been happening consistently. Following the audit the situation improved, but has since become irregular again. The Board believes that the quality of the food served to prisoners is important and that the Governors should monitor it more closely.

OTHER AREAS OF THE PRISON

INDUCTION/RECEPTION

Induction

77. Induction on House Block One has remained under pressure throughout the year with the prison operating up to its OPCAP and having to lock out on a number of occasions. It was anticipated under NWOW the induction process could be both expanded and improved by operating over a 14 day period with all departments contributing. As part of this, Education were in the process of developing a revised induction assessment process which would have included a course on self-assessment which would have given those undertaking it some responsibility for planning their own 'learning journey'. The outcomes from the initial assessments were to be incorporated in each prisoner's sentence plan; something that has not been happening to date.
78. Benchmarking appears to have halted all of this development. Even the 2 day Induction/Assessment Course developed by Education, which was operating at only 50%, due to new receptions having to be moved to another Houseblock within 24 hours as a result of the pressure of numbers, has had to be postponed for a period as it included non-funded elements under the current OLASS contract. This has now been revised to meet the required OLASS standard, but is still not operating as it is awaiting a coding before it can be implemented.
79. The Board does have some reservation as to whether a 14 day Induction Process is viable in such a critical and busy Local Prison. Once further evaluation has taken place and a viable and agreed Induction Course set up, the Board fully support such an initiative, and would want to see the requisite resources in place as this is crucial to Elmley's declared new role as a Resettlement Prison. The early identification of each prisoner's needs, and the use of the Sentence Plan to highlight this, is crucial to this process. Planning is a useful exercise, but the establishment requires adequate resources and ongoing support to turn it all into a practical reality. Problems have been somewhat alleviated by the use of Insiders (who should be commended for their efforts in assisting their fellow prisoners), however at times they are overseen by staff from other areas who are not familiar with the induction process.

Reception

80. The Reception area deals with around 22,000 movements each year – which also includes the prisoners' property. When properly staffed, this area runs relatively smoothly; the storage of property can be problematic, with some issues being outside of the prison's control – such as when property does not arrive with the prisoner.
81. These inter-prison transfers of property have been further compromised by Geoamey refusing to carry more than two bags of property per prisoner, and stating that any number in excess of two was the responsibility of the prison, and not theirs.
82. There is a major difficulty when prisoners need access to their property and the staff levels cannot accommodate this; the waiting list has been over 100 at times this year mainly due to staff levels being depleted as they are deployed to other areas of the prison. This has been relieved slightly by the addition of detached-duty staff but they have required familiarisation so are not as effective, and then, of course, they move on.

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83. The need to clear cells has also been excessively delayed with some cells staying out of use and property being lost at times after emergency movements.
84. All of the above causes the IMB to receive a very high number of applications about property which with the low staff numbers can be difficult to resolve.

DRUGS/SUBSTANCE ABUSE

85. Security searches continue to produce substantial drug finds, amongst other things. This highlights the problem of illicit substances finding their way into the prison. Their success must be applauded, but the fact that they are regular finds may simply be indicative of a larger problem.
86. Houseblock 3 continues to be used to house those prisoners who either require maintenance prescriptions, or those who wish to be weaned off whatever substance they are using.
87. There have been challenges with offenders misusing prescribed medication, however with effective multi-agency working this has reduced.
88. The number of programmes being delivered on the Houseblock has expanded to ensure that the broad needs of a local prison are met. Fellowship meetings are also held on the Houseblock to support those in various stages of recovery.

FOREIGN NATIONALS

89. The number of nationalities has decreased from 56 to 54. Apart from British the next largest national groups are Romanian and Polish prisoners. There are 204 foreign nationals who make up 17.28% of the prison population and most of them are located on Houseblock 6. 13 of these have completed their sentence and are being held on behalf of UKBA. This is a much lower number than previous years, but it is still regrettable that these detainees are being held at the tax payers expense. UKBA hold weekly surgeries but there are no other agencies within the establishment to support and deliver on Equality and Diversity issues. There are no Foreign National forums, therefore no meetings have been held.

GYM & PHYSICAL EDUCATION

90. Although the gymnasium and courts are popular the shortage of staff does not always allow the movement of the prisoners to access the facilities, which are sometimes curtailed at short notice.
91. The additional equipment in Houseblock 5 is not used due to the lack of trained supervision.
92. Purposeful activities continue as and when possible and include certificated courses for prisoners and staff training in C & R, First Aid, Manual Handling and Team Building.

LIBRARY

93. Last year we were advised of a dedicated officer for library duty. This has not happened.
94. Attendance at the library has fallen to an all-time low. The prime cause is the lack of officers for escort cover. There has been at least one month when no Houseblock visited the library, and other months where visits have been almost non-existent.

95. Prisoners have a statutory right to access reference and legal documents including PSOs and PSIs. The Board had been assured that with no access to the Library, staff would be copying relevant documents for prisoners. If this had been the case, it would still be unacceptable given the cost to the prisoner and the almost impossible task set to the prisoner of knowing which pieces of which documents were required. However, it is not the case; prisoners do not have access to the Library, documents are not being copied, and therefore they are being denied a statutory right. This has been highlighted to us by one particular prisoner who has stated that this denial of access has affected his appeal against conviction. He is now pursuing this through the office of the Ombudsman. The non-attendance has a disheartening effect on the staff and this, with the unknown future of the Kent County Council library service, is affecting their morale.
96. The library staff initiative to take books on a trolley to Houseblocks has been helpful, but it is limited by the size of the trolley and the attendance of an orderly. However, the Board would not wish to lose this facility.

LIFERS

97. All of the reports required for impending parole Boards have been met on time due to the prioritising this work-load. Despite the pressure in OMU, this section of prisoners does not appear to have suffered. IMB has, however, received a number of applications regarding transfers to more appropriate Lifer Units which would be able to provide a more suitable regime.

OFFENDER MANAGEMENT UNIT (OMU)

98. During this year, NWOW has been implemented, which was prefaced by Benchmarking, and went live in April 2014. The biggest adjustment was the New Core Day, and a staff information book was produced, which is very detailed, giving the daily timetable for each of the six Houseblocks, the Segregation Unit, Healthcare, Central Services and Operations. There is a timetable for Gym use and for the Library and Chaplaincy.
99. Under NWOW the resource [manpower] follows the risk [prisoners]. For example when the prisoners go to work they will be escorted by Houseblock officers who will supervise them at work. This leaves a reduced number of officers on the Houseblock, with a reduced number of prisoners there. This makes the best use of resources and gives maximum efficiency at the lowest cost to the Prison Service.
100. The revised structure of OMU was described in last year's report and may be summarised as follows:
101. The alphabet is split into 3 and a pod will have a segment each. A pod is managed by a Band 5 member of staff; under them is a Band 4 Offender Supervisor, who is also a Houseblock SO; then comes a Band 3 Business Administrator [case worker]. The Band 4 will visit the Houseblocks when needed whilst the Band 3 will remain in the office. Band 4s are uniformed officers. Band 3s are civilian. We now have one person dealing with all aspects of an offender's needs and not a plethora of staff who have to be drawn together to get a result.
102. The Job Evaluation System [JES] in their audit said that Elmley's OMU was the best practice in the service and is replicating the system in other establishments.
103. Work now assimilated into OMU:

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Assessment for ROTL

Generic Parole Process – the preparation of all Parole Board reports.

OASYS - Sentence Planning. This has various routes to assist the reduction in re-offending.

MAPP - Public Protection, liaison with all outside agencies, including the police, child protection, and restriction in respect of the most dangerous persons.

Foreign Nationals - liaison with the Home Office.

104. OCA is now housed in the main OMU office. Initially all sentenced prisoners are assessed and allocated to suitable training establishments, which is completed within the first 16 weeks of their arrival.
105. OMU annually review all categories of sentenced prisoners and arrange transfers in and out of Elmley – it is worth mentioning that some 2400 transfers were arranged for sentenced prisons and 2100 for non-sentenced prisoners in this year.
106. OCA handles the booking to and from the Crown and Magistrates Courts, with all the documentation, which includes Production Orders.
107. They also prepare the CAT D reports for the Review Board when considering the suitability for open conditions.
108. In the last year they also answered some 2131 applications addressed to them on a variety of topics.
109. This increased workload is handled by a small number of people who are understaffed, but the systems and processes are in place, and have been tested.
110. The main cause for concern is that, despite there now being a number of uniformed officers in the department, they are often re-deployed to other duties considered more critical. Though effectively giving the prisoners a more decent regime, e.g. showers, exercise, family contact, as part of the Summer Emergency Regime (set up due to the shortages of staff), it comes at the expense of a massive backlog in OMU work. Apart from prisoner frustration, the effect on staff morale of seeing a half-empty office and piles of work 'pending' is palpable.
111. At the end of last year's review there was a backlog of work which had a planned clear up programme, but that did not happen and there is now a backlog which has grown to approx. 300 OASYS reports.
112. Also, as a result of the pressure, work is prioritised and HDC is deemed the lowest priority, and often totally ignored. This causes anxiety among the prisoners as their expectation is tied to their tag date. This is unfortunately usually a false hope as tag dates are exceeded by weeks or even months.
113. Staff morale is low. However, despite this, personnel are generally helpful and good-humoured with the IMB, although there are a few staff members who, when other staff are absent, are reluctant to deal with matters that do not relate to their specific area of responsibility i.e. prisoners falling under a different alphabetical remit.
114. The Board understands that recruitment is under way for Band 4 and promotion to Band 4 which will cause a void lower down which should be easier to fill by recruitment. The priority of the new personnel, and the detached duty officers in use at present, will be to tackle the backlog.

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115. Again it is hoped that by the year end there will be no backlog and a full complement of staff; however there are plans in hand to bring in outside resources to help with OASYS.
116. October 2014 should see Phase 3 of the Benchmarking in Basic Custody Screen Tool implemented.

SECURITY

117. The current security policy is based on a “Local Security Strategy Document” drawn up from the National Security Framework to meet the bespoke requirements of HMP Elmley.
118. The import of drugs, mobile phones and SIM cards continues to comprise the main security threat. The regular implementation of planned intelligence led searches has been particularly successful. It is however the view of the staff that there is a significant amount of contraband accessing the prison that is currently not being found. It has been determined that Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) operating on mobile phones within the prison are mainly responsible for this situation. There are a number of countermeasures available to the staff, with phone detectors pinpointing users, especially when offenders are charging them up in the early morning hours. Although there were many instances of contraband finds following intelligence led searches, for which staff should be congratulated, the Board have similar concerns to staff about this being the tip of the iceberg.
119. The monthly Security Meetings are reasonably well attended, the main absentees being senior members of staff from the Houseblocks. The shortfall, particularly over the past few months may be attributed to staff shortages, and to the introduction of NWOW.
120. The recent Security Audit was graded “Amber/Green.”
121. The Board had generally been informed of all serious incidents occurring throughout the reporting period; however, there were a few occasions when no Board member was informed of an incident. This situation improved towards the end of the reporting period. When informed, Board members attended serious incidents when they were able, although where this was not possible, the incident was recorded and then followed up when feasible.

STAFF

122. The Board must express its concern at the sustained periods of understaffing during the reporting period. The Prison Service continually attempted to tackle this issue with the use of detached duty staff and Payment Plus working (overtime). This ‘sticking plaster’ approach has not been entirely successful, with many staff weary from the overtime, and others not willing to take it up because of the continued reliance on it and its effect upon them; and although detached duty staff make up the numbers, they are not familiar with the workings of a busy local prison. As an example, when asking for assistance in Reception, one of our members received the answer: ‘no idea mate’ and was indicated an epaulette, which clearly showed that the officer was from another prison. It is noted that recruitment of permanent staff to the prison is difficult because of its location. Staffing has also been hampered by prolonged high sickness levels. During the year staff complement has been short by up to 60% because of shortage of full-time staff, sickness, exacerbated by the voluntary redundancy scheme (VEDS). Bed watches have also been an issue, with up to six to cater for at any one time. This puts a tremendous strain on resources.

123. During the period the Staff Mess ceased to offer a range of cooked meals. A restricted menu was introduced; however, there have been instances during the year where the Mess has been closed due to shortage of manpower, with no notice given to staff.
124. There were a number of instances during the year when the complaints clerk was absent and her position was not covered, thereby resulting in prisoners complaints not being handled in a timely manner. This matter was addressed by Management towards the end of the period.
125. The Board noted that there were times when Confidential Access complaints to Management were responded to with what in effect was not an actual answer, but simply a holding statement, which then allowed the response time to exceed its statutory limit. This in effect gave no response to the prisoner but allowed the prison to reflect these as responses in its targets.

VISITS & VISITOR CENTRE

Prisoner Visits:

126. In line with NWOV prison visits were extended to 7 days per week, but for a shorter time per visit, now between 2.00-3.30pm.
127. In November 2013 the existing system of paper Visiting Orders (VO) was abolished and booking for both legal and social visits was transferred to Sheppey Group Visit Booking - a centralised booking system for Elmley, Swaleside and Standford Hill. The new system removes the need for prisoners to apply for each visit using a paper VO. Approved visitors are now able to book directly by phone. The Board believes that this a positive move. However, there have been ongoing issues with the performance of the central booking facility. Staff at the Visitor Centre receive numerous complaints from visitors that it takes a very long time to get through on the dedicated telephone number and that these delays mean it can be costly when calling from a mobile phone. The Board is concerned that as the central booking facility is outside of HMP Elmley, it cannot monitor its performance as it would any other department.
128. In June 2014 a new national 24/7 online booking service was introduced, which runs in tandem with the telephone service provided by Sheppey Group Visit Booking. Again the Board believes that this is a positive step and after a few teething troubles, again reported by visitors, it appears to have bedded in.

Visitor Centre:

129. At the back of the Visitor Centre is a conservatory that is used as a play area. The rear door can be opened, but this provides little ventilation. The Board continually pressed during the year for the acquisition of blinds for the conservatory because the heat generated through the unshaded windows becomes unbearable during warm summer periods. Finally, at the end of our reporting year, the answer came back that this request would not be facilitated because of the cost of implementation. The Board feels strongly that providing a safe and comfortable environment for visitors and their families awaiting their visit is vitally important and urges the Governor to re-address this problem. Without shade this area becomes unusable for protracted periods in the summer.
130. Of the two hundred lockers used by the visitors to store personal items that cannot be taken into the prison, only about 30 or so have keys and are working properly. This means

that in addition to booking in visitors, the two members of staff in the office have to now bag and tag visitors' personal belongings for safekeeping. These are then returned when the visits are over. This takes extra time and can be demanding at busy times, increasing waiting times for visitors. There can be as many as 100 visits booked on any given day. This issue has been raised with the Governor.

WORKS & GROUNDS

131. The national contract for maintenance is about to commence and the staff are ready to transfer to the new contract.
132. This year has been another successful one and most planned maintenance is up to date despite the increase in high priority work mainly caused by damage by prisoners and ageing equipment, for example in the kitchen.
133. The major schemes this year have all been completed except for the modernisation of the boiler house which is on-going. The Tracker key controls system is working well and CCTV additions and shower block refurbishing continues.
134. The gardens are at first sight very well kept and the flower beds are a credit to the staff and prisoners, but the amount of rubbish, mainly coming out of the cell windows, is a continuous problem, and it can build up and become a serious health hazard. There are still areas around the grounds and under stairways where litter is not regularly cleaned and which is also unsafe and unsightly.

SECTION 7

THE WORK OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

BOARD MEETINGS

135. The Board held 12 meetings during the period 1st November 2013 to the 31st October 2014, with an average of 68% membership attendance. One member completed their probationary period. This brings Board numbers to 11 (soon to become 10). The Board is concerned about the difficulty of recruitment. Having lost three members last year due to tenure, added to the three others that we lost due to resignations, plus a further resignation which will become effective just after this reporting period, the two campaigns run have proved fruitless. Only one new member was recruited and that was via word-of-mouth. The Board is due to lose two more experienced members at the end of next year due to tenure, and should we fail to recruit during the next few months, matters will become critical. Currently we have effectively 9 members and find it difficult to cover meetings and serious incidents, which are becoming more frequent.

ROTA VISITS

136. 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, serious incidents and administrative duties. Board members attended the establishment 413 times during the reporting period.

137. It is the aim of the Board to have at least one member visiting the prison every weekday, but this is becoming difficult to accomplish.

APPLICATIONS

138. The Board dealt with 857 applications during the year to 31st October 2014; a small decrease from the previous year. This figure remains high and simply reflects the fact that, due to lack of staff, prisoners' issues are not being addressed in a timely manner and prisoners are therefore turning to the IMB and other agencies to vent their frustrations and to attempt to resolve matters. Also, the Board feels that many prisoners do not have faith in the prison application process and so bypass it by raising Applications with the IMB in the first instance, as well as inappropriate Confidential Access complaints.

139. The Board is concerned that property issues have now trebled in the last two years. With Reception staff being continually re-deployed at weekends, the only time that prisoners are called up for property, prisoners often wait for weeks or months before they can collect or exchange property. Added to that there are less frequent complaints, such as when items are lost in transit from other establishments, and at cell clearances.

140. Applications related to Healthcare have dropped from last year's high, which reflects an improvement in the service, now provided by IC24. There are still issues related to long waiting times for appointments for outside services such as the dentist and optician.

141. Sentence related applications are at an all-time high. This reflects the systemic problems in the OMU department, where lack of staff result in the prioritising of work which means that there is a huge back-log of OASYS reports and HDC paperwork. This only adds to the frustrations of the prisoners.

TRAINING

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142. Members of the Board attended National Training courses, visits to other establishments and received presentations from different functions within the Prison during the regular Board Meetings.

BOARD STATISTICS	
Recommended Complement of Board Members	20
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	13
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	11
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	3
Number of members leaving within reporting period	5
Total number of Board meetings during reporting period	12
Total number of visits to the Establishment	413
Total number of segregation reviews held	Figures not available
Total number of segregation reviews attended	76
Date of Annual Team Performance Review	Aug 2014

IMB Applications:

Code	Subject	Year 2011	Year 2012	Year 2013	Year 2014
A	Accommodation	22	5	15	11
B	Adjudications	11	4	35	17
C	Equality & Diversity (inc religion)	6	9	8	4
D	Education/employment/training inc IEP	15	28	46	32
E 1	Family/visits inc mail & phone	96	78	64	35
E 2	Finance/pay	25	24	26	11
F	Food/kitchen related	3	3	23	14
G	Health related	81	60	125	108
H 1 & H2	Property	84	73	144	196
H 3	Canteen, facilities, Catalogue shopping, Argos	5	8	6	11
I	Sentence related (inc. HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-cat etc)	169	98	161	187
J	Staff/prisoner/detainee concerns inc bullying	73	47	68	45
K	Transfers	59	74	98	73
L	Miscellaneous	56	74	65	113
	Total number of IMB applications	702	582	882	857
	Of total: number of IMB Confidential Access was:	25	29	10	11

SECTION 8

GLOSSARY OF ESTABLISHMENT RELATED TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS REPORT

The convention used in this report is to record a term in full on the occasion of its first use followed by, in brackets, the abbreviation, which is used thereafter.
