



The Annual Report of

THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

HMP FEATHERSTONE

1st November 2011 – 31st October 2012

HMP FEATHERSTONE
NEW ROAD
SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE
WV10 7PU

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Section 1

STATUTORY ROLE OF THE BOARD

The Prisons Act 1952 and the Immigration Act 1999 require each prison and IRC to be monitored by an independent board appointed by the Secretary of State for Justice and Lord Chancellor from members of the community within which the establishment is located.

The Board is specifically charged with:

- Satisfying itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in custody in the prison and the range and adequacy of programmes preparing them for release.
- Informing promptly the Secretary of State for Justice or any official to whom he has delegated authority and judged to be appropriate of any concerns it has.
- Reporting annually to the Secretary of State on how well the prison has met the standards and requirements placed upon it and what impact this has on those in its custody.

To enable the board to carry out these duties effectively its members have right of access to every prisoner, every part of the prison and to prison records.

Section 2

HMP FEATHERSTONE

HMP Featherstone is an adult male Category C prison located approximately 8 miles north of Wolverhampton. The main section of Houses 1,2,3,4 was built in 1976, as was House 6, and occupies part of the same land complex as HMYO Brinsford. Houses 5 and 7 are later additions.

HMP Featherstone has a nominal operational capacity of 687. It holds only convicted prisoners and is served by local prisons including HMP Birmingham and HMP Hewell as well as other Category C prisons. Prisoners are either released directly or transferred to Category D prisons while very occasionally a prisoner may go to a Category B prison. The majority of prisoners are aged between 21 and 29 years usually serving sentences of between 4 to 10 years for a variety of offences but a number of older prisoners have arrived and the effect of this is noted in various parts of the report. The prison also houses a small number of lifer and IPP prisoners in the later stages of their sentences.

HMP Featherstone is primarily a working prison with well equipped workshops but there is also an Education Department, a library, gymnasium and an all weather sports pitch. The Healthcare Department provides daytime cover but there are no in patient facilities and those requiring them are either transferred to prisons where they are available or to hospital as appropriate. The chaplaincy provides spiritual and moral care for all prisoners.

The appearance of and atmosphere in the prison is often commented on favourably by visitors.

Section 3

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 3.1 This report covers the period 1st November 2011 – 31st October 2012.
- 3.2 HMP Featherstone is now a Level 3 prison following changes to the assessment requirements but continues to perform strongly as shown by score results from good to excellent in the various audits. Directed by Governor Deborah Butler the prison continues to exhibit a clear sense of direction and purpose.
- 3.3 The Governor and her Senior Management Team continue to work hard on the Decency Agenda and on Safer Custody. The Board considers that the personal officer scheme continues to perform effectively, although prisoners do not always follow this route before applying to the Board.
- 3.4 The performance of the Healthcare Department has generally been sound but the staffing situation has varied at times with vacancies and sickness absence creating problems. However the Healthcare Manager and his deputy have responded well to these situations. The Board is still monitoring the availability of dental appointments for which it has occasionally been necessary to add in surgeries outside the normal working week. The standard of care available receives attention at the top level. Applications to the Board on medical matters have reduced with the introduction of a complaints procedure for Healthcare.
- 3.5 The Board continues to monitor the time spent by some prisoners on the Care and Segregation Unit, but occasionally a prisoner has caused concern by exceeding the 3 months at which time a report to the Deputy Director Custody is required. Transfers from the CSU are not allowed other than in special circumstances where the safety of the prisoner or of others is a concern.
- 3.6 The Board is still concerned that the property of some prisoners transferred to Featherstone is going astray and that there are also failures to transfer money which causes prisoner a great deal of frustration.
- 3.7 The extent of the ingress of illegal substances concerns the Board because of its effect on prisoner behaviour, with debt and consequent bullying an issue
- 3.8 The workload on individual Board members increased significantly during the year, with 3 members transferring to HMP Oakwood and another suffering serious health problems. Fortunately a recruitment campaign at the end of the reporting year was very successful and numbers will return to something approaching our full complement.

Section 4

DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY

- 4.1 In our last annual report we praised the work of the Diversity team as it was then and the good work has continued this year, albeit under a different format. There is no longer a Diversity Manager. The administrative functions relating to Equalities are ably handled by an Administration Officer assisted by a prisoner rep. Each of the Protected Characteristics namely Race, Disability, Religion & Belief, Sexual Orientation/Transgender, Age, Gender, Marriage & Civil Partnership and Pregnancy & Maternity, have a Governor level lead and a prisoner rep. All report to the monthly meeting of the Equalities Committee now chaired by the Governing Governor. The Committee has a large required membership and is also open to any interested party. An IMB member generally attends the meetings.
- 4.2 The SMART (Systematic Monitoring Analysis of Race Equality Tool) racial monitoring data is presented at each meeting and perused for any unusual trends. During the reporting period most figures were well within or below range except for the seemingly disproportionate number of White British prisoners located in the CSU. This is mostly explained by the way the figures have to be recorded which means that a few 'long-term' residents will appear to skew the figures. However most long-term CSU residents have tended to be prisoners who have got into debt and these do tend to be White British. The prison is currently undertaking some work to investigate this trend further and identify the reasons behind it.
- 4.3 The leads and prisoner reps present their reports and, as last year, the Board wishes to commend the use of the prisoner rep system. The prison has lost several of its prisoner reps over the year due to release, transfer, etc, but has managed to replace them with equally committed individuals. The prison was lucky to have a particularly well-motivated and hard-working over-50s prisoner rep during the reporting period so that the needs of the older prisoner have been well represented. He has now left Featherstone, but trained up his successor before he went!
- 4.4 The DIRFs (Discriminatory Incident Reporting Forms) for the preceding month are discussed (anonymously) at the meeting. As a snapshot at the July meeting there were 8 DIRFS to discuss and this was fairly typical. Of these particular 8, 1 was under the category of religion/belief, 1 sexual orientation and 6 race. DIRFS under the category of race often concern the use of perceived racist language and here the prison is doing a lot through staff and the prisoner reps in talking to prisoners about what is just not acceptable and would indeed get them into trouble on the outside. The Chaplaincy, Catering Manager and Foreign National Co-ordinators also report to the meeting.

- 4.5 The Board feels that Featherstone is continually examining its own performance in the area of Equalities and always trying to ensure that nothing slips 'under the radar' in terms of inclusion and fairness. Two areas that have seen a lot of attention during the reporting period are the problems particular to the Traveller population and to gay prisoners. The Travellers' meetings are now well attended. GRIP, the group set up for gay prisoners is going well. It holds monthly meetings to which outside guests, e.g. Staffordshire Buddies are invited and is striving to spread the word that homophobic behaviour is unacceptable at Featherstone.
- 4.6 The Board is satisfied that Featherstone continues to be an example of best practice.

Section 5

LEARNING AND SKILLS

- 5.1 The practice of producing a full and detailed list of the education and training courses and programmes that are available to prisoners, as described in previous annual reports, continues. The list is updated regularly and publicised throughout the prison, and it continues to be a very useful document for both staff and prisoners.
- 5.2 The range and diversity of provision is impressive. The prisoners are able to choose from a good range of educational and vocational training programmes. Education courses include a BTEC Level 2 in Music, BTEC levels 1 to 3 in Art & Design, as well as basic qualifications in numeracy and literacy. New resources have been provided in information technology (IT).
- 5.3 The Prince's Trust course offered this year was well received and there are plans to offer another in January of 2013. The vocational programmes that appear to have the best prospects of leading to employment after release are, as in previous years, the most popular. construction courses, such as painting & decorating, woodwork, bricklaying, plastering and the new vocational courses added in 2011; hard landscaping and horticulture attract most applications. Training and workshop sessions observed by Board members in these areas were run efficiently by qualified Instructors. Waste management, cleaning, fork lift truck operation and desk top publishing are also popular options.
- 5.4 Prisoner Development Department (PDD) senior staff hold regular meetings with the various colleges, private companies and agencies which are sub-contracted to provide education and assorted vocational training courses for the prisoners. The prison's main providers of these services are The Manchester College (TMC), Stoke College, Dudley College and Mathew Boulton College. JHP Group Ltd continues to provide career information and advice services.
- 5.5 The business of liaising between providers, monitoring and reviewing is necessary and it is done well, but it is also complex and continues to be very time consuming. The observation made in our previous report that

“keeping track of a prisoner population that is of its nature transient, and which is taught by a large number of tutors and instructors responsible to several employers, raises issues about the management of information and confidentiality that will need careful handling” is still apposite. The ‘key findings’ comments made by the Ofsted HMI who visited the prison at the end of last year in connection with a survey on across-the-board provision of maths skills for prisoners, were very encouraging. The PDD team’s management and monitoring of developments in HMP Featherstone is still taking into account the advice given at the time.

- 5.6 HMP Featherstone’s record as an institution that offers an appropriate educational and training programme is still rated good by members of the Board. Key Performance Targets in training and employment for September of this year, received just before this report was written, were exceeded comfortably. Senior managers of the PDD continue to be very proactive and entrepreneurial in seeking opportunities to extend the range of training and educational courses that the prison offers to meet prisoners’ changing needs.

Section 6

HEALTHCARE

- 6.1 The contract is currently held by Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Partnership NHS Trust alongside which are 6 additional contracts for specialist services. The board is represented at the Clinical Governance and Operational meetings which alternate monthly. Additionally, there is a bi-monthly Medicines Management Meeting.
- 6.2 Issues that have been raised by the board during the year have either been addressed or remain under review i.e. the pressure on dental services and the management of appointments at external hospitals. Funding has been secured for additional escorts and protocols with receiving hospitals are under discussion. Indications are that this is working very well and that the backlog of appointments is being cleared.
- 6.3 During the late spring and summer period there was an acute shortage of staff which prompted the Deputy Governor to meet with the PCT. The board acknowledges and thanks the staff who held the service together during this period. All issues have now been resolved and the board is pleased to hear that an additional primary mental health nurse has been appointed.
- 6.4 Clinical services for prisoners over the age of 55 are commensurate with those in the community and are further enhanced by the excellent work (within the Diversity and Equalities division) of the peer representatives for prisoners who are over 50 years of age. The board has been told that other establishments visit Featherstone to see how this service works and commends all concerned. However, we share the concern of the Healthcare Manager that at the present time statutory social care services are not involved with older prisoners who are held in custody.

- 6.5 The board has developed a positive relationship with Healthcare management and staff who are readily available to respond to questions.

Section 7

SAFER CUSTODY

- 7.1 2011/12 has been a difficult year for the Safer Custody department of HMP Featherstone. Between 56% and 64% of prisoners have been between the ages of 21 and 30 years, many with mental health problems and very challenging behaviour. The staff rely very heavily on the support of Insiders, Violence Reduction and Listeners to cope with so many young men. ACCT (Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork) documents are raised as required, although some entries have been unsatisfactory and further training given. Mental Health Awareness training has also been continued.
- 7.2 For 3 months during the summer reintegration had to be suspended due to staff ill health and holidays. During this period vulnerable prisoners were confined to their cells with light work. No mentoring was possible or general association. Prisoners with a history of self harm or problems with other offenders were closely monitored by the Violence Reduction team and the Insiders who then refer back to officers.
- 7.3 On two occasions during the year Award Ceremonies were carried out with 17 prisoners on each occasion receiving a certificate for having made the most improvements to their lives or "gone the extra mile" to help others as voted for by officers and their peer groups. Their families were invited to witness these proceedings.

Section 8

CARE AND SEPARATION UNIT (CSU)

- 8.1 In the year to November 2012 prisoners were moved to the CSU on a total of 172 occasions, though a significant minority of prisoners appeared more than once. All were seen regularly by members of the Board who were able question them about their treatment by staff and the likely outcome in respect of their stay in the unit.
- 8.2 Board members routinely attend CSU reviews as observers and are required to signify their acceptance or otherwise of the process. Reviews were always conducted in a fair and professional manner as were adjudications and cases put before the Independent Adjudicator; both of which members attended with reasonable frequency.
- 8.3 The robust regime now operating in the Unit is rarely a source of complaint as CSU rules are made clear to prisoners on arrival. Some do still regard movement to the CSU as a means to a transfer, but the refusal to countenance this is generally effective, with some of the most difficult prisoners eventually returning to normal location. Sometimes prisoners have to be moved for their own protection and occasionally a

prisoner close to release will sit out his time in the CSU, but this is exceptional.

- 8.4 While managing the CSU is not an easy task the Board wishes to record its appreciation of the professionalism of the staff in helping prisoners and assisting members of the Board.

Section 9

ACCOMMODATION

- 9.1 At HMP Featherstone a total of 687 prisoners were accommodated in 7 house units. Houses 1 and 2 accommodate 120 prisoners as do Houses 3 and 4; House 5, the Induction Unit, houses 100. House 6 (35 prisoners) is for enhanced regime prisoners and House 7 (72 prisoners) is a healthy lifestyle unit.
- 9.2 Single cell occupancy is the norm, with the exception of House 5 where there are 2 prisoners to each cell. There are also a small number of double cells on Houses 1, 4 and 7. Every cell has integral sanitation, power points and a light switch. Very few issues have arisen because of 2 prisoners to a cell, though at the end of the reporting period a prisoner on House 5 had to be relocated because of his cell mate's disturbed behaviour. The latter was later successfully re-assigned to one of the main houses.
- 9.3 House 6 has a mix of young prisoners and IPP and Lifers. All seem to get on well and behaviour is to the expected standard.
- 9.4 House 7, under the care and guidance of very experienced and dedicated officers, continues to offer prisoners, many of them enhanced status, a place where they can improve their outlook on life during their time in prison. With several disabled prisoners on this House, able bodied prisoners voluntarily take on extra work in looking after those less able than themselves. This gives those volunteering a sense of purpose and the realisation that they can make a useful contribution while in prison. Members of the Board are always impressed by the humour and goodwill apparent on this House.

Section 10

ENVIRONMENT IN THE PRISON

- 10.1 Under the Chairmanship of Governor Edwards the Environment Committee continues to make huge strides in cutting the cost of maintenance, utilities and other areas in the prison. The Recycling system has saved a great deal of money and has been most successful.
- 10.2 Work is continually being done to advance the growing of fruit and vegetables, which it is hoped will provide sufficient produce for the kitchen next year. Trees are being grown from seed and will be used by the woodland projects locally. Allotments will be created and wildlife

areas within the prison will be expanded. The dedicated Governor and his team are providing work for prisoners and giving them added skills which will help them on release.

- 10.3 Together with introducing savings in the utilities used in the prison by comparatively simple methods and managing the recycling and waste reduction more carefully, there will be considerable reductions in Prison operating costs.

Section 11

RISK REDUCTION

- 11.1 Risk reduction figures in many aspects of prison life, such as work placement and Category D review boards, but Pathway 7 (Attitudes, Thinking and Behaviour) is key, with interventions the major element.
- 11.2 The Accredited Programmes, e.g. PASRO (Prisoners Addressing Substance Related Offending), TSP (Thinking Skills Programme) and CALM (Controlling Anger and Learning to Manage it) have run with sufficient frequency to meet targets, though with the recruitment freeze in place the loss of one member of staff has caused some difficulty with CALM delivery.
- 11.3 Area Approved Programmes (Being a parent, Time 4 Families, Coping Skills and Confronting Crime) are all being delivered effectively, but changes are being made to the Alcohol Awareness Programme
- 11.4 Staff turnover caused by young professionals looking for career progression is still a matter of concern as level 3 interventions are a key part of prisoner rehabilitation. The Board will continue careful monitoring.
- 11.5 The changes brought about by some responsibilities moving to region have not caused the difficulties that were feared, with one to one work still done by programme staff. Probation staff deliver the Victim Awareness Programme.

Section 12

CHAPLAINCY

- 12.1 Led by the Church of England Chaplain, with a full-time Imam and part-time priests and ministers from other denominations, all prisoners have the opportunity to see and talk to someone in the Chaplaincy at any time during their time in HMP Featherstone. Regular Services are held for all faiths and prisoners have the opportunity to attend whenever they wish.
- 12.2 The group of musicians and singers formed last year continue to flourish and they take part in the Carol Service and other events held in the Chapel.

- 12.3 Many extra support classes and help groups are run by the Chaplaincy team and daily visits are carried out to most areas of the prison.
- 12.4 The Board members, on their regular visits, are always welcomed into the Chapel and by members of the Chaplaincy team who are on duty. We believe that HMP Featherstone is very fortunate with the forward thinking and supportive Team in the Chaplaincy.

Section 13

CATERING AND KITCHEN

- 13.1 The kitchen produces lunch and dinner for every prisoner daily as well as a breakfast pack, a total just short of 713,000 meals every year.
- 13.2 The department worked on a budget of only £2.10 for each prisoner per day right up to October 2012 when the milk allocation was reduced in order to add to menu selections. Unfortunately the 30 pence saved was required as a saving, so no menu changes took place. Understandably prisoners expressed some frustration. A wide choice menu choice is offered with an emphasis on healthy eating, including 5 portions of fruit and vegetables each day and the Catering Manager is to be congratulated on achieving this. Healthy eating information is displayed on each house, in the library and gymnasium in a number of different languages.
- 13.3 The Kitchen celebrates diversity by contributing to Christmas, Chinese New Year, Ramadan, Eid, Sikh festivals and British Pride Week. There was an issue raised briefly by Sikh prisoners because of the limited number of non-halal meat options available to them The matter was resolved between the Catering Manager and the Imam.
- 13.4 Board members taste the food in the course of rota visits and check House comments books which are also regularly checked by staff. Prisoner views about the food offered are also dealt with at the Prisoner Council which meets regularly and where food representatives make sure prisoners' views are given proper weight.

Section 14

APPLICATIONS TO THE BOARD

Analysis of Applications 1st November 2011 to 31st October 2012

There were 166 Applications to the Board in the period 1st November 2011 to 31st October 2012. In previous years it has been to compare major changes year on year but a change in categories has made direct comparison more difficult for some categories.

Break Down of Applications by Categories is as Follows -

Accommodation	1
Adjudications	3

Equality & Diversity (inc religion)	9
Education, Employment, Training	12
Family visits inc mail and phone	13
Finance/Pay	14
Food/Kitchen related	0
Health related	27
Property (within current establishment)	6
Property (during transfer/in another prison)	11
Canteen, Catalogue shopping, Argos	7
Sentence related (inc. HDC,ROTL, parole, release dates, re-cat etc.)	13
Staff/prisoner/detainee concerns inc bullying	3
Transfers	17
Miscellaneous	25
Withdrawn	5

TOTAL NUMBER OF IMB APPLICATIONS 166

14.1 Every week a member of the Board visits the prison to deal with applications made by prisoners. Every effort is made to resolve these as quickly as possible and to provide as complete an answer as possible, whether verbal or written. The nature of the applications, common theme or trends and any unusual issues, are discussed by the Board at its monthly meetings.

14.2 During the reporting period, members dealt with 166 applications, compared with 159 the previous year, a very slight increase. It is difficult to know why this was as the Personal Officer scheme is working well, as is the Requests and Complaints Procedure, and the increase is not thought to be significant.

14.3 There were 27 applications on medical matters, slightly up on last year but inflated by prisoners not accepting doctors' diagnoses or the medicine prescribed. 17 applications related to transfers down on last year and 13 related to visits and associated items, 1 hardly any change.

There were 13 on sentence related matters, including recategorisation, HDC, ROTL, parole and release dates. Of these only a handful related to recategorisation to Category D, compared with 12 last year, although inability to obtain a speedy move to open conditions was a theme. 17 applications concerned property, with 11 relating to property lost at a previous prison or during a transfer. This problem was highlighted last year and regrettably some prisons seem not able to manage the transfer of prisoners' property correctly causing a good deal of frustration as it is rarely possible to trace the missing items (even though 1 prisoner's clothes turned up at Branston after 8 years) and prisoners have to claim compensation, meaning a further delay.

14.4 The failure of some prisons to transfer prisoners' funds correctly continues to concern the Board, as prisoners understandably find this very frustrating and in a small number of cases it causes hardship. While the matter is invariably resolved, the delays are unwelcome.

- 14.5 The number of applications in the miscellaneous category is much lower than last year, falling from 55 to 25, though this relates to the more detailed breakdown of application categories.
- 14.6 Applications were spread across Houses 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 with applications at a similar level to last year. There were none from House 6, only 4 from House 7 and 3 from the CSU (as against 13 in the previous reporting period).

Section 15

GYMNASIUM AND SPORTS FACILITIES

- 15.1 The gymnasium continued to be one of the most intensively used areas of the prison, with many prisoners appreciating the opportunity to keep fit and to work off stress and tension. The staff provided a wide range of physical education classes, including weight training, kinetic lifting and first aid (usually as part of prisoners' induction) as well as activities for those who want to improve their fitness and well-being.
- 15.2 Competitions were held over Bank Holiday weekends, with the "Mr Featherstone" bodybuilding competition and the annual half marathon featuring.
- 15.3 Prisoners were also able to work towards qualifications in weightlifting development, first aid, football, rugby and badminton. There were also matches against local teams in rugby, basketball and volleyball.
- 15.4 Board members visiting the gym continued to be impressed by the enthusiasm and commitment of PE staff and the response this generated from prisoners.

Section 16

FACTORIES

- 16.1 Featherstone is a working prison where prisoners are able to gain practical skills to help them in their return to life in the community. It also gives them an opportunity to earn money and to purchase canteen items. The "Working Prison Model" is now well embedded with all activity and work areas working to a 32 hour week. Prisoners only return to their residential unit for a one hour lunch break during the working day. This is more reflective of work times in the community and provides prisoners with a greater understanding of that.
- 16.2 The Factory workshops continue to provide a wide range of activities requiring engineering skills such as powder coating, metal work, furniture production and assembly and textiles. A colour print plant is currently being commissioned. Qualified civilian instructors supervise the work, which is performed to a high degree of quality. Both the Engineering and Furniture sections are ISO 9001 accredited. In addition to the prison completing hard charged work, new work opportunities are constantly being sought by Prison managers and this

activity has been greatly developed over the last year. A number of external contracts have been secured.

- 16.3 With the aim of reducing re-offending rates following release from prison, as well as keeping all prisoners actively engaged, more work needs to be sourced. The Board feels that, in the present economic climate, Ministers could encourage their Departmental Procurement Officials to examine the possibility of the prison being invited to tender for more work within the internal market.
- 16.4 In preparation for winning commercial work a number of new activity roles have been created for prisoners to work within the various industries and to ensure performance is tracked, maintained and published. A number of vocational training courses continue to take place, which include motor mechanics, tiling and painting and decorating. Most recently a skills hub has been set up to enable prisoners to complete job applications and CV's, as well as to prepare them with interview techniques.

Section 17

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 17 1 The health and safety of both staff and prisoners is overseen by a Committee chaired by a senior member of the prison staff and is discharged by a small team of Health and Safety professionals. Risk assessments, fire drills and training are carried out regularly and members of the Board are supplied with minutes of Health and Safety Meetings. First aid training is arranged and competency is tested. A high proportion of qualified first aiders is to be applauded. The Department arrange all necessary appointments for injections with Healthcare.

Section 18

THE VISITS CENTRE AND THE VISITS

- 18.1 The John Sandy Visitors Centre, which is outside the prison itself, continues to be managed and operated by Halow (Birmingham). The manager and deputy, along with some sessional workers and a small group of volunteers, continue to provide a courteous, friendly and helpful reception for those visiting prisoners. Maintaining volunteer numbers is never easy and although the average age of volunteers remains high, 5 new volunteers joined in the past year.
- 18.2 During the year approximately 25,200 visitors passed through the Visits Centre, including 6,200 children; this compares with 24,000 visitors (6,300 of whom were children) last year. Funding for the bus service to the prison has remained uncertain for several years but fortunately Community Transport continued to provide the service to Featherstone and Brinsford on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays, with pick ups at New Street, Birmingham and Wolverhampton stations. Only 6-7% of visitors travel by bus to the prison and neighbouring HMP Oakwood

has not been open long enough to indicate whether or not visitors there will help to boost numbers of those travelling by bus and make Community Transport more viable.

- 18.3 Family days have again proved attractive. A number of religious and other festivals have been celebrated in the Centre and activities for children have been provided during school holidays.
- 18.4 A Visits Centre Forum meets every 3 months to review the services provided and to provide the essential link between the prison, the John Sandy Trust and community organisations.
- 18.5 The transfer of bookings for visits to the APVU (Assisted Prison Visits Unit) caused initial problems and confusion in 2011. Improvements were made which ensured that the booking service operated without serious problems from early 2012.
- 18.6 The Visits room in the main prison building has retained a cheerful and relaxed atmosphere, with the tea bar operated by prisoners rather than the familiar volunteers. The Board accepts that careful, properly conducted searching of visitors is necessary to prevent drugs entering the prison, with the use of drug detection dogs and CCTV surveillance as back up. During the past year there has been judicious use of closed visits (usually related to security intelligence re possible drug passing). Where closed visits have been the subject of applications to the Board, investigation has invariably shown these to be justified.

Section 19

DRUGS AND DRUG TESTING

- 19.1 The MDT (Mandatory Drugs Testing) unit has one permanent, full time officer and 8 trained officers who are detailed to work in the unit as required, with a reporting line to a Security SO. The results of the monthly, random testing of 5% of the population have generally been around the 8% KPT (key performance target) for negative tests with identifiable reasons when, on occasions, this figure has been slightly exceeded. However, overall, other types of testing have fallen steadily over the year due to cost implications and staff re-profiling. Reception testing of prisoners who are transferred in from other establishments often indicates drug issues in other prisons. The recent pilot testing for prescribed Tramadol abuse highlighted the existence of a problem but to date there has been no instruction for any follow up action. Responding to solicitors' requests, generating reports and preparing information for the Independent Adjudicator are additional tasks for the staff.
- 19.2 During the reporting year the contract for IDTS (Integrated Drug Treatment System) was held by the South Staffordshire and Shropshire Partnership NHS Trust and was separate from the Healthcare contract, although with shared patient record keeping.

- 19.3 The drug testing manager is part -time and also manages the service at HMP Brinsford. Elements are shared between the NHS (National Health Service) and NOMS (National Offender Management System).
- 19.4 Staffing is by 2 nurses (one the IDTS lead) and a Healthcare assistant. During the reporting year the team had no administrative support, but this will be provided when the contract changes on 1st November.
- 19.5 The service model follows the 2012 National Guidelines to encourage detoxification and stabilise, maintain and reduce substance abuse. Service users see a nurse daily and their treatment programmes are reviewed by the specialist doctor every 8-10 weeks. Liaison with community drugs teams is made when a prisoner who has been on a treatment programme is released.
- 19.6 In addition to team meetings, IDTS is represented at the Healthcare Clinical Governance meeting and at other related prison forums.
- 19.7 During the year there was a significant spike in the numbers on the IDTS caseload due to transfers to Featherstone of prisoners from the contracted-out estate and the increase in the ingress of illicit substances, including those that are legally available on the high street.
- 19.8 The Board acknowledges and thanks staff for their commitment and hard work (described by the manager as excellent and without any additional resources) during this period, to ensure that there was no negative effect on treatment programmes.
- 19.9 The Board applauds the efforts of the prison authorities to control the ingress of illicit substances but there has been an apparent rise resulting in cases of debt and bullying. Additionally, we have been told that when prisoners cannot obtain illicit drugs they may target men who are on prescriptions for medication. This trend gives the board great concern.

Section 20

THE WORK OF THE BOARD

- 20.1 The Board started the year with 10 members but 1 member resigned during the year, leaving the board with 6 vacancies. Following the loss of another member a recruitment effort was put in hand. This raised the membership to 13 (assisted by a transfer from HMP Birmingham and the addition of 1 member previously on the Board there). One new member resigned shortly afterwards but the Board considered numbers were adequate to cover our duties. This situation changed with the opening of HMP Oakwood as 3 members have moved to that Board permanently. Another recruitment campaign was put in train which had a good response, so there should be new appointments in the new reporting year.
- 20.2 The Board meets on the second Friday of each month. Each week one member makes a rota visit or visits while another deals with applications and CSU reviews. All members devote significant amounts of time to their Board duties, which also include attending some of the prison committees and taking additional training when the need arises.
- 20.3 At the annual "Board Development Meeting" the Board reviewed its own performance, discussed working patterns and future strategies. This was very useful in keeping the board focussed and maximising its performance.
- 20.4 The Board is very mindful of the diverse population in its local area which is reflected in the prison population, but having lost its last BME member, regrets that it still has difficulty in recruiting from minority ethnic groups.
- 20.5 The Board appreciates the good relationship it has with Governor Butler, her senior management team and the prison staff generally whose co-operation makes our task easier.
- 20.6 As outgoing chair I wish to thank my colleagues for their support and assistance. We lost our much appreciated clerk, Mrs Cindy Betts, but I have to commend the work done by our newly appointed clerks Mrs Gill Baxter and Mrs Liz Jones. Board members have much appreciated their efforts. Fair and Sustainable will bring about changes affecting these and other administrative staff so it is to be hoped that it will be possible for the Board to continue to receive the quality support that has assisted us so much in the past.

John McPheat
IMB Chair 2011/2012
HMP Featherstone