



**The Annual Report of**

**THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD HMP  
FEATHERSTONE**

**1<sup>st</sup> November 2012 – 31<sup>st</sup> October 2013**

HMP FEATHERSTONE NEW ROAD  
FEATHERSTONE  
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 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 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 and 4 was built in 1976, as was House 6, and occupies part of the same land complex as HMYO Brinsford and HMP Oakwood. Houses 5 and 7 were 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 whilst 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, 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 2012 – 31st October 2013.
- 3.2 HMP Featherstone is 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 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 for the most part, although prisoners do not always follow this route before applying to the Board.
- 3.4 The performance of the Healthcare Department deteriorated during the year with vacancies and sickness absence creating problems.
- The Board has supported the Governor and Deputy Governor in their efforts to improve delivery standards and some improvement was apparent towards the end of the reporting period. The Board believes that some of the issues could be addressed by ensuring that the Service Contract is compatible with the needs of the prison service. 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 prisoners a great deal of frustration. This appears to be an ongoing issue that is linked to the PECS contract and the fact that the vehicles are not adequate to carry both prisoners and their property.
- 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 being ongoing issues. HMIP reported that security was broadly proportionate and that the senior management were aware of the situation and were taking appropriate action.

- 3.8 A recruitment campaign at the end of the year 2011/2012 was very successful and means that the Board enjoys its full complement of members.

## **Section 4**

### **DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY**

- 4.1 As in its previous two Annual Reports the Board would like to commend the work done by the Equalities Group. It is considered that since it was set up Featherstone was and continues to be an example of best practice.

- 4.2 There are nine Protected Characteristics namely:-

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender
4. Marriage and Civil Partnership
5. Pregnancy/Maternity & Paternity
6. Race
7. Religion & Belief
8. Sexual Orientation, and
9. Transgender

Each of these Protected Characteristics is assigned to leads, one a Governor Grade and one a Prisoner Representative and they work closely together.

The Prisoner Reps are well motivated and supported and a credit to the prison. They carry out essential work raising the profile of Equalities amongst the prisoner population. They collate information and statistics about their Characteristic and report to the bi-monthly Equalities meetings. They also act as a “voice” for the needs of their groups of Prisoners and promote the ideals of tolerance and understanding amongst their peers.

- 4.3 Complaints made by Prisoners and Staff about unequal treatment or comments that are, or are perceived to be inappropriate, all investigated by the leads.
- 4.4 Featherstone now has a very diverse population. Typically around 30% of the Prisoner population will be from a Minority Ethnic background, plus Foreign Nationals and a growing number of older prisoners. The largest group remains white British aged between 25 and 30 years but there is always a fair number of under 25s.

- 4.5 During the reporting period a lot of work has been done to support gay prisoners, the Traveller population and older prisoners in particular. Recently there have been some initiatives to give more support to prisoners whose partners are due to give birth.
- 4.6 Equalities and Diversity ideals are well embedded within the Staff and Prisoner population.
- 4.7 An Older Prisoner at HMP Featherstone is deemed to be someone over 50 years of age. The group are represented at a monthly forum organised by the Older Prisoners Representative and is attended by 15 members. The IMB also attends the meeting which often welcomes a speaker and other interested guests. The forum has a standard agenda which includes Healthcare, Housing and Activities. Recently there have been concerns regarding the delivery of Healthcare but these have been rectified following increases in staffing levels within Healthcare. Access to PSA and bowel cancer screening, requests for discrete and quiet housing, requests for doing testing by blood rather than urine where difficulty in giving specimens on demand and access to toilet facilities within the visits area have all been raised by the forum members and considered by residential Governors who have given feedback to the group and Prisoner Council.

In terms of age Featherstone is a “young” prison with the number of over 50s stable at about 45. Most older prisoners are in the 50-60 age group with a recent increase in the number of over 60s. Currently 2 men are over 70 years of age. Each new prisoner over 50 is referred immediately to the group’s representative.

The gymnasium staff are highly appreciated by the group for the provision of a specific range of appropriate activities.

The Board believes that Featherstone is a model of good practice in this area.

## **Section 5**

### **LEARNING AND SKILLS**

- 5.1 All prisoners are issued with a comprehensive list of educational and training programmes on arrival at the prison. The lists are updated regularly to accommodate the latest trends in education and training so as to afford prisoners the best chances of gaining employment or continuing with further training upon release. The updated lists are publicised throughout the prison and continue to be a source of valuable information to both Staff and Prisoners.
- 5.2 The curriculum is both wide and varied with subjects ranging from basic courses in numeracy and literacy through to more advanced courses

leading to Open University Degrees.

- 5.3 Courses are regularly well attended with an average of 70-80 prisoners taking classes both in the morning and afternoon. These figures represent approx 70% of the capacity of the department. With the change of management a series of restructuring is being introduced which it is hoped will be of benefit to future learners. The main change involves the move of teachers from hourly paid contracts to full time employment which will ensure that all staff take more responsibility for their subject areas.
- 5.4 The Department has recently undergone an OFSTED Inspection with the provisional results in the three main inspected areas being rated as "Good" There were some areas of concern but the Board are satisfied that these had been identified by Prison Managers and that remedial action had been taken.
- 5.5 The Board considers that the Industrial Workshops offer a realistic working environment with their increasing links with outside customers. Good work skills have been developed and have led to increased accreditation.

## **Section 6**

### **HEALTHCARE**

- 6.1 The contract for the provision of Healthcare Services is currently held by Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Partnership with additional contracts for specialist services. Featherstone is one of 6 prisons in the regional cluster.
- 6.2 On April 1<sup>st</sup> 2013 when Offender Health moved to a local commissioning team the PCT also re-configured their staffing and the Healthcare Manager and his Deputy were moved from Featherstone and a new manager, with responsibility for both Featherstone and Stafford, took over with a new full time Team Leader.
- 6.3 The Deputy Governor is the Healthcare Lead for the prison.
- 6.4 The Board is in regular contact with prison Management and attends healthcare clinical governance and operational meetings. Over the last six months of the reporting year the Board has had serious concerns over various aspects of service delivery which have been referred to a higher level. The referral cast no criticism on either Healthcare Staff or Prison Management. Healthcare Staff have worked hard to maintain primary care services but deficiencies were evidenced in other areas. These were recorded against prison baseline measures and any significant impact forwarded to the PCT, namely:

Staffing shortages which, from analysis of complaints to Healthcare seen recently by the Board, seem to be at the root of most of the difficulties.

1. Absent or intermittent representation at prison management meetings.
2. During this period the Board has kept in touch by way of informal meetings with the Deputy Governor and Healthcare Staff
3. Late/failure to issue medication affecting prisoner movement, decrease in purposeful activity and the potential for increase in good order or discipline and security issues
4. Un-answered public correspondence and prisoner complaints within prescribed time limits
5. Cancellation of clinics, and
6. Other examples of failures in delivery recorded by the Deputy Governor and taken to the new Commissioner

6.5 There appears to the Board to be little correlation between how the PCT appraises its performance and how the prison measures delivery of Healthcare services. The Board questions whether National Contracts provide for the complexities of service delivery within prisons. National Contracts are due for re-tender in 2014 and need to be re-appraised to ensure that they are fit for purpose.

6.6 At the end of the reporting year Healthcare is fully staffed and an Operational Meeting took place in late October. The Board has concerns around prison staffing levels when escorts for hospital visits are required. The Deputy Governor is working with the Healthcare Manager to re-configure expectations within the new arrangements.

## **Section 7**

### **SAFER CUSTODY**

- 7.1 2011/2012 was not the easiest year for the Safer Custody Department Featherstone has a population of 40% under the age of 30 and 37% between the age 30 to 39. Many have mental issues and present challenging behaviour. There were staffing issues and the new organisation has yet to be firmly embedded. As a consequence a number of meetings were postponed or cancelled at the last minute.
- 7.2 The concerns felt by the Board at the close of 2012 regarding re-integration have by and large not materialised. After consultation all but three re-integration prisoners were found employment elsewhere in the prison. Anyone can apply for re-integration but each request will have an individual approach via a care plan to address any issues.
- 7.3 ACCT documents are raised as required and further training in all aspects of ACCT and Mental Health commenced in April in line with the implementation of Fair and Sustainable. The staff continue to rely on Insiders, Violence Reduction, Listeners and the Recovery Champions to support them in their work.

## **Section 8**

### **CARE AND SEPARATION UNIT (CSU)**

- 8.1 Prison Data shows that prisoners were placed in the CSU on a total of 120 times, somewhat fewer than in previous years. Despite this the unit was full on a number of occasions and just prior to the end of the reporting period it was necessary to hold one relocated prisoner in a specially controlled normal location. All prisoners were seen regularly by Board Members who were able to check on their treatment by staff and the likely result of their time in the Unit
- 8.2 Board Members regularly attend CSU Reviews and sign the review paperwork to signify their acceptance or otherwise of the process. Reviews and Adjudications have always been conducted in a fair and professional manner though, for part of the year, there were concerns about the attendance of Healthcare staff as a result of shortage of staff. These have now been resolved as recorded elsewhere in this report. There also were issues with regard to the number of cases dismissed by the Independent Adjudicator for a variety of reasons which have been vigorously addressed by the Deputy Governor. Members have attended both prison and independent adjudications with reasonable frequency.
- 8.3 The regime within the Unit is basic but works well and prisoners generally return to normal location it having been made clear in reviews that transfers from the CSU were not available unless for protection or very occasionally as a result of re-categorisation. Work in Cell has been made available for prisoners requesting it. Consequently it was a surprise when in late summer two prisoners decided to smash up their cells with so much vigour that the cells were rendered completely un-inhabitable. The action taken by those involved was regarded as a joke but reparation work was very costly. The Board supports the change in rules which will allow the prison to recover the cost associated with such work. Some prisoners close to their release date will sit out their time in the unit but this is exceptional
- 8.4 Managing the unit is never easy but the Board records its appreciation of the Governors and Officers in their work with prisoners and for assistance given to Board Members.

## **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.

- 9.3 House 6 has a mix of young prisoners, IPP and Lifers. All seem to get on well and behaviour is to the expected standard. There are no integral facilities on House 6 which means that prisoners are left unlocked at nights to enable access to facilities on their spur.
- 9.4 House 7 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.
- 9.5 The CSU suite has suffered considerable damage during the year resulting in expensive re-instatement work. Improvements are being made with a view to reducing the amount and subsequent cost of repairs. The Board supports the policy to charge prisoners the cost of repairs to those causing the damage.

## **Section 10**

### **ENVIRONMENT IN THE PRISON**

- 10.1 During the last twelve months great strides have been made in the prison to reduce utility costs, increase re-cycling and to reduce waste in general. £30,000 has been saved by re-cycling metal and paper during the year under review. As well as savings in the use of gas and electricity and the increase in re-cycling of cardboard and clothing, further measures are being pursued in the areas of water conservation and bio-diversity where it is hoped to reduce operating costs still further. Both prisoners and staff are to be made aware of ways of reducing energy costs with the aim of making substantial cost savings in this important area where costs are predicted to rise annually.
- 10.2 Commendable work has been done in the garden department which should mean that in the next year the prison will be self sufficient in vegetables, with fruit coming into production soon. The work has been carried out by Governor Edwards and his team who should take credit from the achievements of prisoners in the areas of wildlife conservation and productive gardening. By their enthusiasm and insight prisoners have been given the chance to learn new skills which could lead to employment upon release. 5000 saplings grown at HMP Featherstone will be planted in the Forest of Mercia.

- 10.3 The Board commend the work of this committee which makes a substantial contribution towards reducing the operating costs and therefore adding to the success of HMP Featherstone

## **Section 11**

### **RISK REDUCTION**

- 11.1 Risk reduction forms part of many areas of work within the prison such as work placement and Category D review boards but particularly relevant to the reducing re-offending strategy is Pathway 7 (Attitudes, Thinking and behaviour) and behaviour change programmes.
- 11.2 A revision in criteria for eligible prisoners, which greatly reduced the number of prisoners available to complete the course and a shortage of trained facilitators, has reduced the number of successful outcomes by half (prisoners completing agreed programmes) for TSP Thinking Skills Programme) for the year. However CALM (Controlling anger and learning to manage it) had planned to run three courses during the year and is on target.
- 11.3 A Self Change Programme (SCP) for those at high risk of future violence has also taken place and was delivered by the Regional Psychology Team. The available alternative for the reporting period was one to one working with those who meet the regional protocols. Work around the service level agreement for 2014-15 is underway and SCP may be delivered within the region but it is not anticipated to be delivered within the prison due to offenders not meeting the criteria.
- 11.4 Though not an accredited programme, a new project SORI has been introduced and is referred to in the Chaplaincy Section of the report.

## **Section 12**

### **CHAPLAINCY**

- 12.1 Led by an Imam with a full time Church of England Chaplain and part time Priests and Ministers from other denominations, all prisoners have an opportunity to see and talk to someone in the Chaplaincy whenever they wish during their time in Prison. They have the opportunity to attend the regular services held for all faiths whenever they wish. Groups of musicians and singers continue to flourish and take part in events held in the Chapel, including the annual Carol Service.

Events are held throughout the year and there was a Cultural Awareness Day in October. Daily visits are carried out to most areas of the prison and there are also extra support classes and help groups run throughout the year.

With the recent appointment of a new Church of England Chaplain the

first Supporting Offenders through Restoration Inside course was successfully delivered. Although based In the Chaplaincy it is not a religious course and contains no religious content but is facilitated by the Chaplain together with Featherstone Discipline Staff, trained community volunteers and Victim Support West Midlands.

The chaplaincy team are always supportive for any issues that arise within the prison. The Board applauds the support given to Islamic and other prisoners affected by the “meat scandal” that swept through the UK earlier in the year.

- 12.2 The Board Members, on their regular visits, are always welcomed into the Chapel by members of the Chaplaincy Team and feel that the prison is fortunate to have such a forward thinking and supportive Department.

### **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 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 over contaminated meat supplied within the national contract. A potentially serious outcome was sensitively dealt with by 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. Recent complaints concerning portion sizes are being addressed.

### **Section 14**

#### **APPLICATIONS TO THE BOARD**

- 14.1 Analysis of Applications 1<sup>st</sup> November 2012 to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2013

There were 185 Applications to the Board in the period 1st November 2012 to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2013 compared to 166 in the previous year. Some applications related to more than one topic and for the purpose of analysis 192 topics were dealt with. Although there were more

applications than last year the numbers were swelled by two or three prisoners who made a number of applications on the same issue – either because they were frustrated by the time taken to resolve an issue or because they did not accept the response to their first or subsequent applications. Taking this factor into account the number of applications to the Board during this reporting year was very much in line with last years

- 14.2 There were 15 applications to the Board on health related matters this year compared with 27 last year. This is a significant reduction and the figure could have been lower but for the fact that one or two prisoners made repeat applications on the same issue because they were not satisfied with, or would not accept, the answers they had received from Doctors and healthcare staff in relation to diagnosis, prescribed medicines etc. Although there have been some difficulties within Healthcare during the year this has not generated a significant number of complaints by prisoners to the Board.
- 14.3 There were 27 applications about Transfers compared to 17 last year. This seems to reflect the number of prisoners who, for whatever operational reason, have been located in a prison which is a considerable distance from their homes, family and friends, and who, as a consequence have no or few visitors. Board Members appreciate that transfers are not easy to effect and a number of prisoners have become frustrated. Delays in decisions or the time taken to arrange transport once a transfer has been agreed regularly feature in applications to the Board.
- 14.4 There were 27 applications on Sentence related matters (including HDC, ROTL, Parole, Release Dates and re-categorisation) compared with 13 last year. A significant number of these applications concerned re-categorisation to Category D. The Board were unable to identify any basic problem but prisoners were just not happy that they were not able to progress to Category D even though there were almost invariably obvious reasons why they should remain Category C prisoners at the time.
- 14.5 There were 12 applications concerned with the delay or loss of property during transfer to Featherstone last year. This year the number nearly trebled to 32. Loss of property, particularly involving HMP Hewell, has lead to compensation claims when that property is never traced. The loss of property during transfer has been a problem for many years, has been referred to in previous Annual Reports, and certainly does not seem to get better. Understandable frustration and annoyance for affected prisoners is increased when matters extend over many weeks and even months.
- 14.6 Applications concerning Equality and Diversity dropped from 9 last year to 1 this year, and those concerning visits from 13 to 7. There were increases in applications regarding food from 0 to 6, and Staff/Prisoner concerns rose from 3 to 10. These increases are relatively small and the Board has not identified any underlying problems or causes for concern in these matters.

- 14.7 There were no prisoner applications from House 6, only 7 from House 7 and 8 from CSU. The remaining applications were spread across Houses 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 with rather more from House 2 compared with the others. There does not seem to be any obvious reason for this.

### **Analysis of Applications by Houses 2012 – 2013**

House 1	25
House 2	47
House 3	27
House 4	36
House 5	34
House 6	0
House 7	7
CSU	8
Not Known	1
Total	<u>185</u>

### **Breakdown of Applications by Subject**

Accommodation	4
Adjudications	3
Equality/Diversity	1
Education/employment	
Training & IEP	14
Family visits/mail/phone	7
Finance/pay	12
Food/kitchen	6
Health related	15
Property (Featherstone)	8
Property (other locations)	32
Canteen	1
Sentence related	27
Staff/prisoner related	10
Transfers	28
Miscellaneous	23
Withdrawn	1
Total	<u>192</u>

## **Section 15**

### **GYMNASIUM AND SPORTS FACILITIES**

- 15.1 The Gymnasium continued to be one of the most intensively used areas of the prison over the last year. A considerable number of prisoners used

the opportunity to keep fit and to work off the stress and tension which can be associated with a prison sentence. The enthusiastic gymnasium staff provided classes, including kinetic, lifting and first aid (as part of the prisoner's induction), weight training and activities for those who want to improve their general fitness and well being. In addition however, the gym has also provided courses on Health and Social Care, Equality and Diversity Mental Health Analysis, Prisoner led Health Training and some aspects of Literacy and Numeracy. Prisoners were also able to work towards qualifications in weight lifting, first aid, football, rugby and badminton.

- 15.2 During Bank Holidays there were regular competitions and there was also a half marathon. There were regular matches against local teams in rugby, football, basket ball and volley ball. Although there were problems with the sports pitch during the year, remedial work has been carried out so that football matches against outside league teams were able to continue as in the past although the use of the pitch for rugby matches (which were extremely popular with the prisoners) has had to be somewhat reduced.
- 15.3 Board Members who visit the Gymnasium continue to be impressed by the commitment, enthusiasm and hard work of the PE Staff which generates such positive response from prisoners.

## **Section 16**

### **FACTORIES**

- 16.1 Established as a working prison Featherstone comprises of two main areas of industry. Engineering and Enterprises (bricklaying, furniture, textiles and printing) Approximately 218 prisoners regularly work a 30hour week with a support resource of 28 instructors, 2 managers and 2 administrators. All prisoners return to their residential units for lunch breaks making their working regime similar to that found in an outside industrial environment.

The main challenges having to be met by Industries have been;

1. Meeting outside Industry Standards
2. Being recognised within a supply chain
3. Demonstrating overall training qualifications of operatives
4. Promoting its services and capabilities

- 16.2 The engineering workshops offer a wide range of engineering skills and currently work with four outside Companies targeting work for export markets or alternatively work currently produced abroad and now looking to be resourced back in the UK. The introduction of new activity roles will start to help accommodate the use of spare capacity but more importantly offer the reverse engineering of components and products enabling competitive services and prices to compete with outside organisations.

- 16.3 A new 2 colour print facility has recently been commissioned with work being undertaken for the prison service, however with the Government's Targets of reducing costs it is felt that more work could be encouraged through National and Local Government Sources such as the Ministry of Justice, West Midlands Police Forces and the NHS in allowing the prison to tender for their print work

A recent visit by the CEO West Midland Manufacturing industries gave considerable praise to the prisons facilities and capabilities and it is hoped that future promotion through this Organisation could prove beneficial.

- 16.4 Prisoners have the opportunity to build portfolios and gain Qualifications such as NVQs and to participate in Open University Courses and Health & Safety Courses along with many others to give supportive evidence of skills achieved. A local recruitment service is working with the Industries Manager in helping to find work placement for prisoners so integrating them back into the world of work.

The Board supports the ongoing work within Industries to enable it to compete with the outside work and draw attention to key achievements in

1. Partnership working with outside companies.
2. Identifying the USP of industries facilities.
3. Re-organisation to meet outside industry objectives, and
4. Giving the prisoners the skills and qualifications to re-integrate into the outside world upon release.

## **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 Service Providers.

## **Section 18**

### **THE VISITS CENTRE AND THE VISITS**

- 18.1 Over the past year the Visitor Centre (which is outside the main prison complex and owned by the John Sandy Trust) was again managed and run by Halow (Birmingham). The manager and deputy, with the occasional help of a paid sessional worker operated the Centre with the invaluable help of a small band of volunteers. They provided a courteous, friendly and helpful welcome to the families and friends who visit

prisoners at Featherstone, as they have done since the centre opened in 1997. The average age of volunteers has risen steadily over the years and it has not been at all easy to recruit and maintain the number of volunteers despite regular campaigns. Volunteer numbers were maintained to just about the minimum required in the last year.

- 18.2 During the reporting period approximately 21,400 visitors including 5,150 children passed through the centre. These figures compare with 25,200 and 6,200 for the previous year. Visitor numbers were affected by the severe weather experienced at the beginning of 2012 but it is not possible to say if any other factors may have played a part.
- 18.3 Community Transport continued to provide a bus service to Featherstone, Brinsford and Oakwood prisons on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays with pickups at Birmingham New Street and Wolverhampton railway stations. Although funding continued to be uncertain for this bus service it has been maintained for a number of years now and many visitors have been very grateful for the service. Only 6-7% of visitors travel to the prison by public transport. There does not seem to have been any increase of usage of the service following the opening of HMP Oakwood but efforts are being made to publicise the service and thereby increase its use.
- 18.4 There were a number of family visiting days throughout the year which proved again to be extremely popular. Religious and other festivals were celebrated in the centre and special activities for children were also provided during school holiday periods.
- 18.5 A visits centre forum met every three months to review the operation of the Centre and the services provided and acted as the necessary link between the Prison Management, the John Sandy Trust and Halow.
- 18.6 The visits room in the main prison building retained a generally relaxed and cheerful atmosphere. The Board accepts that careful but civilised searching has been required throughout the year to prevent drugs and other items from being brought into the prison with the additional use of drug detection dogs and CCTV coverage as necessary backup. There was some concern that visiting hours were being eroded by delays in commencing visits for operational reasons and to allow proper identification of visitors to take place. These difficulties were overcome during the course of the year.

## **Section 19**

### **DRUGS AND DRUG TESTING**

- 19.1 The contract changed in November 2012 and is now carried out by Lifeline through DARS (Drug & Alcohol Rehabilitation Service) and

subcontracts with Delphi Medical, who dispense medicines required. Whereas CARATs focused on target areas, DARS is more holistically focused on the individuals their needs and setting individual goals working at all levels with both drugs and alcohol. They currently have a team of 10 (9 full-time and 1 part-time) – another full time member to join shortly. The team works closely with a clinical team of 5, attending all clinical reviews.

19.2 DARS offer a wide range of recovery treatments for both drugs and alcohol, some of which include:-

- Recovery Champions (trained prisoners) who welcome new prisoners and outline the services available
- An induction session is run by DARS for all new prisoners giving information about services and also awareness of drugs and alcohol. If the new prisoner then wants to engage in services they attend an assessment to identify their needs
- 1:1 sessions
- Group sessions either for educational awareness or as a 5-week recovery programme
- SMART groups which allows prisoners to discuss various issues
- AA sessions are also available
- DARS gym sessions to promote health and wellbeing.

As many issues are complex and often also include mental issues, there is also close liaison with psychiatric nurses. The aim is not, for example, to keep the prisoner on a methadone programme but to move them forwards to rehabilitation. On release from prison they are referred to a Community team and a meeting is set up with a member of the community team, plus member of DARS and the prisoner to ensure progress continues.

DARS works closely with the Mandatory Drug Testing team, who are employed by the prison.

They currently have a workload of 253 prisoners and have seen 695 prisoners in the reporting period.

19.3 The number of tests have reduced in line with the reduction of testing time this due to the benchmarking process. All of the random testing is still taking place and in addition suspicion and reception testing is also completed. The reduction is however still quite significant. MDT work closely with DARS and make referrals but it is still a voluntary decision by prisoners to engage in programmes. There is a problem with synthetic cannabis (e.g. Black Mamba) at this time the MDT process does not detect synthetic cannabis. However the security team continue to work hard to detect any illicit items.

19.4 Recent production of play “Mom can you lend me twenty quid?” was staged by DrugFam to raise awareness of problems associated with drug addiction. This was attended and well received by some prisoners.

- 19.5 The ingress of illicit substances continues to be of concern although in the past year several steps have been taken to overcome this, e.g. increased fencing especially in the workshop area, all the roof vents in the workshops have been covered by grills and there has been an increase in CCTV and this is continuing into the new year. This will mean that all house units and reception have CCTV . There is also an under vehicle camera system going into the gate.
- 19.6 The above programmes ensure prisoners are treated holistically and individually to cater for their needs. The Board acknowledges the high case load for these services, clinical treatments and testing and the commitment of all staff involved to encourage long-term rehabilitation.

## **Section 20**

### **THE WORK OF THE BOARD**

- 20.1 The Board has a full complement of Members following the successful recruitment campaign in 2012.
- 20.2 The Board meets on the second Friday of each month. Each week at least one member makes a rota visit or visits while others deal with applications and CSU reviews. All members devote significant amounts of time to their Board duties, which also include attending most of the prison committees and taking additional training when the need arises.
- 20.3 The Board continually reviews its own performance, discusses working patterns and future strategies. This is very useful in keeping the board focused 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 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 its task easier.
- 20.6 As outgoing chair I wish to thank my colleagues for their support and assistance. I have to commend the work done by our newly appointed clerks Mrs Helen Forrester and Mrs Liz Jones. Board members have much appreciated their efforts. Fair and Sustainable changes meant that we lost the services of Mrs Gill Baxter but thank her for her work during her period of service.

**Jacky Whittle**  
**IMB Chair 2012/2013**  
**HMP Featherstone**