



# **Annual Report**

## **HMP High Down Surrey**

**December 2010 to November 2011**



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## **Section 2 STATUTORY ROLE OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD (IMB)**

1.1 The Prisons Act 1952 and the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 require every prison and Immigration Reception Centre to be monitored by an independent Board appointed by the Home Secretary 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; and
- (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.

### **HMP HIGH DOWN IMB DIVERSITY STATEMENT**

1.2 The members of High Down IMB have all read and understood the HMP High Down Diversity Statement below. We recognise our work should be consistent with that statement, and behaviour which conflicts with it is not acceptable.

“HMP High Down is fully committed to all Diversity and Equal Opportunities Policies and procedures.

Discrimination, prejudice, harassment, bullying and negative stereotyping on the grounds of colour, ethnic or national origins, religious belief, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, gender or any other factor is unacceptable.

Everyone who lives, works in, or visits HMP High Down should treat each other with respect, decency and kindness.

We do not accept, and aim to change, any behaviour that does not meet these high standards.”

### **Section 3 DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON**

3.1 HMP High Down is a Category B male local prison, serving the Crown Courts of Guildford and Croydon, and the surrounding magistrates' courts. It holds Category B and C prisoners, sentenced and on remand. With two new house blocks opened in 2008/9 it is certified to hold 999 prisoners, though with the doubling up of some single cells it can currently hold 1103. During this past year the prison has again held a large number of foreign nationals and young offenders (YOs).

3.2 High Down is the only adult male prison in the Greater London area holding young adults. The categories of YOs held are sentenced, remand, Rule 45 (own interest), lifers and those with indeterminate sentence for public protection (IPPs).

3.3 A large number of prisoners coming in to High Down have mental health problems, legal and illegal drug use problems and/or physical and learning disabilities. Many have a low level of literacy and numeracy skills.

3.4 Healthcare has been managed by the Surrey Primary Care Trust, though this is very shortly to change. Manchester College has managed education and training within the prison. Voluntary and community sector organisations play a significant part in underpinning the work of the prison.

### **Section 4 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

#### **Overall judgement**

4.1 In response to its key statutory function (section 1) the Board is satisfied that High Down treats prisoners humanely and fairly. It is a well-run prison, with a continuing and committed focus on safety and security. The prison has maintained its active and innovative approach to developing resettlement: an essential component in reducing reoffending. This is a key element of government penal policy, and High Down continues to take a dynamic, independent lead. Partnerships have been developed with a range of organisations to help prisoners both in prison and on release. The prison has a very good reputation, and has attracted positive media interest.

4.2 In August 2011 Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons (HMCIP) made an announced visit to High Down. The Inspectorate team spent a week looking at the prison and during our reporting period produced a draft report on their findings. It was pleasing to find the

Inspector largely agreed with the Board's Annual Report 2010 and further monitoring in 2011, as will be detailed further on. The Inspector makes clear that although there were budgetary constraints, the prison has continued to perform well across many areas with examples of real improvement and good practice.

4.3 The Board reiterates much of what was said in 2010 on the subject of budgetary cuts, though the picture is now much bleaker. As with other prisons, further efficiency savings were required during the year. This inevitably led to yet more reductions in what the prison could achieve. In terms of staffing, High Down had already lost management grades, operational support grades and some specialist posts. There were further losses with staff and officers being expected to cover two and more roles. Officers leaving were not replaced, leading to a shortage. Cross deployment of staff and overtime were necessary. Staff often commented to Board members about consequential pressures, and that they could only 'do the basics'. The consequences are referred to throughout this report. This year, the Board cannot say it has always been satisfied that these developments did not jeopardise safety and decency, despite the best efforts of all concerned. The implications of further budget cuts are a matter of great concern due to their impact on the treatment of prisoners.

4.4 The Board had concerns and these are mentioned throughout this Annual Report. Little progress appears to have been achieved since last year in addressing the significant underuse of the Stephen Pryor Centre (SPC), which is a large, relatively new 'state of the art' education facility (5.26-29); in the waiting lists for dental treatment (5.17-18) and in the consequences of overcrowding, which has resulted in prisoners having to share 'doubled up' cells in unhygienic conditions (6.12). Specific groups of prisoners, such as Young Offenders (YOs) and Vulnerable Prisoners (VPs) are held in High Down where no separate facilities are available to meet their particular needs.

4.5 On a positive note the Board would like to draw attention to a recent article in 'The Monitor' by Stephen Pryor, an ex-Governor of High Down. He contends that a prisoner cannot learn to take on active citizenship if all responsibility is removed from him. While it is certainly true, as the HMCIP report pointed out, that many roles for prisoners offer no motivation, the Board has observed many examples of fine work by staff and outside organisations with men in High Down developing responsibility towards their prison community. Examples of these include: the Listeners who meet first-timers in Reception to reassure and explain, or turn out in the middle of the night to listen to a disturbed man; Induction workers who run the morning introductions to prison life; Toe by Toe workers

organised by the Shannon Trust who use their skills to take men who have never learnt to read on a one-to-one basis through the first stages and help them read and write letters to loved ones; the Healthcare prisoner representatives who act as go-betweens for men who feel their medical needs are not being met; the St Giles representatives who help men with resettlement issues; Foreign National representatives who support their fellows in a particularly complicated area; and there are others. The IMB at High Down are very aware of the role these prisoners play in the life of the prison community and of the value both to themselves and to those they assist. One of the joys and privileges of our monitoring is to observe these interactions.

### **Issues for the Minister**

- The impact on prisoners of further budgetary cuts.
- Continuing placement of mentally ill people in prison (5.19).  
The Minister referred to the Diversion programme in his answer last year but the Board remains unconvinced this is having a significant effect.
- Overcrowding, leading to doubled up cells (paragraph 6.12)

### **Issues for the Prison Service.**

- Equivalency of treatment for vulnerable prisoners (6.30-36)
- Delays in recruitment caused by security clearance (5.29)

### **Issues for the Prison**

- Equivalency of treatment for vulnerable prisoners (6.30-36)
- The underuse of the Stephen Pryor Centre (5.26-29)
- Dentistry waiting lists (5.17-18)
- Problems associated with staffing levels in the laundry and the repair and maintenance of equipment in the laundry and kitchen (5.34, 6.5). The Minister told us in his answer to last year's report that a third instructor would be available to staff the laundry but this has not happened, consequently barely a third of the current VP population has access to work despite their readiness..

## **Section 5. SPECIFIC AREAS.**

### **Equality and Foreign National Prisoners (FNPs)**

5.1 This has been a year of continuous change for the Equalities team. Early in the year a full-time Foreign Nationals clerk left without replacement. In May the Equalities Manager post was downgraded from governor to senior officer and over the year there were several changes in post holder. The newly-appointed Deputy Governor has taken overall responsibility for Equalities and the Board hopes this will herald a more stable period. On the other hand, there is a strong network of prisoner workers: three paid Equality/FN orderlies supported by a number of unpaid house block representatives. Despite continual movements and transfers of prisoners this network of prisoners is very effective in resolving issues before they become formal complaints.

5.2 While acknowledging the hard work put into the promotion of racial equality and diversity within the prison by individuals the Board has had some concerns. The HMCIP draft report from its July visit reported a loss of focus since its previous inspection and the Inspector highlighted a number of weaknesses in the Equality/FN strategy and made recommendations to address these. The Board has noted that work has begun on implementing some of the recommendations.

### **Equality**

5.3 There was only a slight change in the population mix during this reporting period from the previous year. Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) prisoners represented almost half of High Down's population at 48% (an increase of 2% over 2010) and FNPs decreased slightly over the year from 24% in 2010 to an average 22% in 2011. Disabled prisoners represented 8% and older prisoners (over 50 years) 9% of the prison's population. The three major faith groups represented were Anglican, Catholic and Muslim; these and others were catered for by the Chaplaincy (see 6.6 ).

5.4 The monthly High Down Equality Action Team (HEAT) meetings were chaired by the Deputy Governor. Four were cancelled due, the Board understands, to management changes. Until August, meetings were fairly well attended by staff and prisoner representatives, though sometimes prisoners did not attend. This usually related to officer shortage on the house blocks. Nevertheless, those representatives who came raised issues of concern. The representatives spoken to by IMB during the year were fully engaged with their role and confident that their issues were listened to and action taken where appropriate.

After August and the HMCIP inspection visit, the agenda of the HEAT meetings changed to become more strategic and less of a forum. Attendance by prisoners was reduced to the three paid orderlies, although prisoner representatives are still given the opportunity to contribute at a weekly session hosted by the Equalities Manager.

5.5 HMCIP also recommended that the Equalities team become more proactive in identifying and addressing future needs. An equality policy should address **all** diversity strands: race, nationality, religion, disability, gender, sexual orientation and age. There has been no policy for gay and bisexual prisoners, nor a procedure to assist officers in dealing with the recent arrival of a trans-gender prisoner.

5.6 Of the 88 disabled prisoners in High Down at year end the top categories were dyslexia (21), reduced mobility (16) and physical disability (14). The increase of a third on last year may be attributable to improvements in data-gathering. Similarly there were 100 prisoners over 50: 67 aged 50-55; 25 aged 60-70; and 8 aged over 70. A number of the elderly and disabled were located on one of the newer house blocks where accommodation is more suitable. Some chose to stay on the older house blocks as these are nearer to the Visits Hall, healthcare, etc. Limited attempts have been made to bring older house blocks up to standard eg by the provision of grab rails in the showers. Additional clothing and blankets are permitted in the winter months and those in the older house blocks who do not work have their doors unlocked during the working day. An over 50s gym session has been introduced.

5.7 During this reporting year the old Racist Incident Reporting Form was replaced with the DIRF (Discrimination Incident Reporting Form) in line with national policy across the prison estate. The Equality Manager investigated 148 DIRFs, an increase of 32% over the previous year. The reason for this increase is not clear but may represent the widening scope of incidents being reported. The Deputy Governor reviews all investigations.

5.8 High Down continues to work with the local community on cultural and religious awareness. The year saw the staging of the annual Gypsy and Traveller event in June and Black Awareness month in October where the programme including food tasting of dishes worldwide served across the prison and ending with an excellent concert. Other activities can be found in the Chaplaincy section (6.6).

## **Foreign National Prisoners**

5.9 The FNPs population fluctuated around 22% of the prison population. Of the 43 disclosed nationalities at the end of the year, the top five were Jamaican (12%), Nigerian (10%), Polish (10%), Romanian (9%) and Irish (7%). A high of 28 time-served detainees in January had reduced to 11 by the end of the year.

5.10 The Equality/FN orderlies were also supportive in dealing with issues raised by this diverse group of prisoners, whose needs are often quite different from British nationals. Many of them do not receive visits. Instead they are entitled to a free five minute telephone call home each month. This is expensive for the prison. The Board understands that the managers are researching the cheaper option of the Voice over Internet system. Induction material was offered in 20 or so languages and translation software was readily available.

5.11 The FN work continues to be supported by UKBA staff. Immigration officers from the local team visit to deal with individual cases but over the year this has become more ad hoc than the previous regular attendance at the weekly resettlement clinics. The plan for Criminal Casework Directorate (CCD) staff to have a regular presence in High Down started in summer but is subject to the operational needs of UKBA outside the prison and there have been gaps. Decision-making still rests with the UKBA case owners based elsewhere and is often slow. It often falls to the FN clerk to chase up individual cases to establish whether a man reaching the end of his sentence should be released or his detention authorised under immigration powers.

5.12 The Board agrees with HMCIP that there has been slippage this year in the focus on Equality/ FNs at management level, although the team has continued to work hard to deliver. Further changes are expected in the coming year and the Board trusts these will work for the better.

## **Health and Mental Health**

5.13 The IMB agrees wholeheartedly with HMCIP's recently published report praising High Down's Healthcare Department. Over the years since Surrey Primary Care Trust (PCT) took over the administration, the Board considers there has been progressive improvement in all aspects of service delivery within the constraints of the budget. Many offenders enter prison with a swathe of medical problems that have not been addressed owing to their often chaotic lifestyles. High Down prisoners have the opportunity to leave the prison in a healthier state

than on their arrival. Once again in 2011 we can say that, in our estimation, prisoners at High Down were given at least an equivalent level of care to that which they would receive in the community.

5.14 The government's decision to put healthcare nationally out to tender has been a disturbing factor. Resources have been dedicated to preparing for this process and for ensuring that the particular needs of the Surrey prisons were understood. Thanks to the success of these efforts the outcome appears to be good for High Down. Assura is set to take over healthcare at High Down in the New Year and developments will be monitored with interest by the IMB.

5.15 Numbers of nursing staff have been mostly maintained at a good level during the year. Two years ago we called the situation 'challenging'. The improvement is welcome, and largely attributable to the active policy of upgrading skills and techniques and encouraging nurses to take on new responsibilities. This has paid off in terms of staff retention; the continuity being a benefit to the prisoners. It is a matter of some pride to the department that, as mentioned in the local press, two nurses went to Venice to collect the World Health Organisation award for their work developing the healthcare orderly network.

5.16 The Board is happy to report that the local practice of GPs who were contracted by Surrey PCT in April 2010 continues to be satisfactory. Healthcare offers a wide range of treatment through its doctors and nurses. Clinics cover dentistry, eyesight, cardiac problems, diabetes, smoking cessation, chiropody and sexually transmitted diseases such as hepatitis B and Chlamydia. In an attempt to reduce the prescribing of strong painkillers a Pain Relief Clinic was introduced this year, which has been well attended. There have also been initiatives to promote alternative therapies, including the promotion of healthy eating and exercise. For obvious reasons prisoners are treated in-house as far as possible. One significant difficulty has been accessing outside hospital appointments. Despite the escort costs falling within the PCT budget, the prison has to provide officers. The tight staffing profile does not easily allow for escorting staff to be made available. Appointments have frequently been cancelled, often at short notice, and can take a considerable time to reorganise. Managers are investigating the option of inviting consultants to attend clinics in the prison.

5.17 The principal blot on Healthcare's record, as indeed it was in 2010, has been the provision of dental services - a real problem throughout the year. The Board has been very concerned about the long delays before prisoners, often in considerable pain, were able to

see a dentist, and there have been many complaints. This table shows the deterioration in waiting list times:

Jan 2011	Routine 85 (11 week wait)	May 2011	Routine 106 (16 week wait)
	Urgent 14 (2 week wait)		Urgent 22 (9 week wait)

Nine weeks is simply too long to wait for urgent attention for a patient who cannot go elsewhere for help.

5.18 Owing to life-styles, dental healthcare is an area where numbers seeking attention are bound to be high. This has been compounded by staffing issues for well over a year. Attempts have been made to resolve the situation. A new triage system was introduced in April to enable house block nurses to target those in real need. Budgetary considerations played a part but even when money for a locum was made available by the PCT, lists proved intractable. In September the healthcare managers took drastic action, announcing that new dental patients would be taken on to the list only for the emergency treatment of acute pain. All routine dental work would be postponed. As the Board writes its report there appears to be light on the horizon but the telling of that story will have to wait till 2012.

5.19 The HCC has continued to function well and the Board judges that in-patients have been treated with respect and humanity, despite the challenges HCC habitually faces. Early in the year the HCC played a very significant role in the nursing of a terminally-ill man, and was later praised by the Coroner for the care given. A large proportion of in-patients have mental health issues with behaviour that tests both nursing and discipline staff. Attempts to self-harm, dirty protests and food refusals are some of the problems patients have posed. Once again the Board questions whether prison is the appropriate destination for many of these men.

5.20 On numerous occasions through the year the HCC was used to house VPs for whom space could not be found on the VP wing. This is an entirely inappropriate use of the medical facility. It puts pressure on the centre staff who must arrange a separate regime of exercise and association for these men and it adversely affects the men themselves in terms of their normal access to induction information, education and work opportunities. The Board understands moves are afoot to seek a better solution. Another problem, especially in the latter half of the year, was the cross-deployment of officers from the HCC, and the reduction in hours worked in the HCC of the one Senior Officer, in order to cover other areas of the prison. Following a serious assault on staff both healthcare management and the IMB

felt it necessary to raise their concerns about unsafe staffing levels with the Governor since when the situation has improved.

5.21 The new manager for the Mental Health In-reach team across the Surrey prisons took over in May with a smooth transition. The In-Reach team has continued to perform an important role in High Down. A significant number of prisoners have mental health problems. 24 men were diagnosed as needing the specialist care of mental health establishments, the majority of whom were transferred within the national guideline limit of eight weeks. Recognising that there was sometimes a lack of understanding between the role of the In-reach team and discipline staff, efforts were made to work more closely with house block officers and, in particular, with the Separation and Re-integration Unit (SRU). An In-Reach worker attended SRU reviews when required and training in mental health issues and the handling of challenging behaviour was also offered to officers.

5.22 After a slow start at High Down the recently established Prisoner Advice and Liaison Service

(PALS) played a useful role hearing and resolving prisoners' complaints about their healthcare and 'nipping them in the bud' at an early stage. Despite the resignation of the PALS manager in April the initiative survived, supported by nurse managers and the dedication and interest of the orderlies.

5.23 An interesting development was started this year when the PCT agreed to fund a new post for a Learning Disability Nurse to work with prisoners with learning disabilities across all four Surrey prisons. It had become apparent that insufficient attention was being given to the needs of this group of prisoners. At present the initiative is in the early stages but assessments are already in progress to establish who falls into this vulnerable category.

## **Learning and Skills**

### **Education**

5.24 The Stephen Pryor Centre (SPC), with its state of the art educational facilities, offers the prisoners an exceptional opportunity for both learning and training. There are approximately 220 spaces available with a further 48 places in computer studies in Workshop 2. The main aims are to improve literacy and numeracy and to provide training in work-place related skills.

5.25 There is much to commend. Staff work hard to provide a broad spectrum of courses. These range from basic literacy courses, including for those for whom English is a foreign language, to a wide selection of skills and interests including workshops giving instruction in construction techniques: brick-laying, carpentry, plastering, painting, and decorating. The emphasis is to teach skills that will help prisoners to re-integrate into society and earn a living on their release. Creative work is also encouraged. HMCIP praised the music course. The High Down annual Art and Poetry exhibition was held at Sutton Library during March and contributions entered for the Koestler Awards in October. The exceptional standard of entries is a credit to the help and guidance the prisoners received from their tutors in the SPC.

5.26 As the IMB has also noted in its last two annual reports the HMCIP draft report on their August inspection visit highlighted that the resources for educational vocational training and work are good but under-utilised. On average, most work areas only have around 60% occupancy. The Board considers the poor take-up of the educational opportunities in SPC to be one of the most disappointing aspects of the prison. Throughout our monitoring in 2011 empty classrooms were a regular feature. On occasions there was less than 50% occupancy. We monitored numbers in the spring which consistently showed a substantial difference between those expected and those who turned up. There has been no improvement in the large numbers of prisoners who leave classes soon after their arrival. The numbers registered first thing in the morning often bear little relation to those actually observed in the SPC by mid-morning. Undoubtedly, good reasons were given (eg induction, sickness, healthcare appointments, legal visits, library, gym, etc) but it throws some doubt on the validity of the SPC's attendance figures. Furthermore, while about 370 prisoners are engaged in education most are part-time for only one or two sessions a week.

5.27 Management is well aware of these problems and has made attempts throughout the year to improve the situation. One such was the much-criticised turning off of daytime electricity in cells to encourage men to leave their TVs. Tutors and education representatives continue to try to drum up enthusiasm on the house blocks. The Job Shop, which controls the appointment of prisoners' employment, also took over the allocation of education places in an attempt to rationalise this in August 2010. Further attempts have been made to make allocation procedures fairer and more transparent. In keeping with much of prison activity this year the IMB believes part of the problem with the Job Shop is under-resourcing and numbers on courses have not improved much, despite the undoubted hard work of staff in that department.

5.28 The Board believes that the courses could be more tailored to needs. At its inception limits were put on the SPC in respect of the courses it could offer. It is notable that the practical courses in construction appeal to the men; they always appear to be busy, and with a waiting list. However, they are only available to prisoners who are convicted and have at least six months to a year to serve. Remand prisoners are not included. YO's that we have spoken to think the courses uninspiring and want something more relevant to their interests and needs and that would give them certified qualifications. There are also few courses above level 2 for long-term prisoners or those capable of achieving more.

5.29 Other areas of concern identified both by the Inspectorate and by the IMB were:

- Insufficient cover during staff leave or illness leading to cancelled classes (this particularly affected the awarding of City and Guilds certificates for the construction classes in April)
- Insufficient access to education and work opportunities for men on the Vulnerable Prisoner Unit (VPU) (6.29). Again, throughout 2011 they have only been able to access computer and art classes or work in the Laundry or on their spur as orderlies.
- Delays in the recruitment of new teaching staff due to security clearance. This took as much as three months earlier in the year and in May two job offers had to be withdrawn, after a considerable wait and the process had to begin again. While appreciating the needs for proper security checks potentially good staff may not be able or willing to wait to hear whether they have a job. This is clearly an issue for the Minister to address.
- As HMCIP reiterated on several occasions, pay rates are poor both for education and work and do not motivate prisoners to use the opportunities available.

5.30 The Report "Making Prisons Work: Skills for Rehabilitation" was a joint publication by the Ministries of Justice and Business & Skills earlier in the year. The principles emphasised were the teaching of vocational and employability skills, the providing of education in prison equivalent to that available in the community and giving groups of local prisons control of their own education contracts. The IMB is particularly cheered by this last point. The SPC staff and the prisoners have had a very unsettling time when Manchester College became the education provider in August 2009. Understandably staff are once again concerned about the changes to come but it is hoped that the new provider will offer greater local control and prove beneficial to High Down.

5.31 While we know that a local prison has a transitory population and men on remand cannot be obliged to participate, it is essential that major steps are taken to increase the numbers taking advantage of the excellent training opportunities in the SPC.

### **Library**

5.32 The Library is now well-resourced and fully staffed. The HMCIP reported that the Library opening hours are satisfactory and around 40% of the prison population use the Library regularly once a week. Prisoners come from all house blocks in good numbers. This is a significant improvement from earlier in the year when HB1 in particular was not getting prisoners to the library. A wide range of materials is provided, including books in foreign languages and legal texts. However, book loss is high at around 9%. Staff have established a library facility on the VP wing. When the computer crashed in May the library had to be closed for a week. The librarian works with his counterpart at HMP Downview sharing projects.

### **Laundry**

5.33 The Laundry continues to provide an essential service for High Down and in addition currently holds contracts with three other prisons, HMPs Downview, Bronzefield and Coldingley. It is the only place in the prison where prisoners from the VPU are employed. Despite sterling efforts by the civilian managers and the VPs who operate it, the laundry was regularly hampered by failing machinery and pipe-work leaks throughout the year, leading on occasion to backlogs, sometimes in relation to High Down's own washing.

5.34 Throughout the year the Board's rota visits revealed that the laundry was often working to half-capacity. While 34 prisoners could normally be provided with employment there must be a ratio of one member of staff to 17 prisoners. One instructor absent on annual or sick leave meant that 17 men remained locked in their cells on the VPU. In his answer to the Board last year the Prisons' Minister stated that "the recent employment of an additional instructional officer will reduce the number of occasions on which this happens". This does not represent the actual situation as no extra instructor is in place. Once again it is vital that staffing, and problems about the maintenance and replacement of equipment, are quickly addressed. The laundry is one of the prison's few profit centres.

### **Workshops and Recycling**

5.35 The Board is once again extremely impressed with the workshops and recycling unit which provide excellent opportunities for training in a friendly and supportive environment. After last year's problems Workshop 4 (Industrial Cleaning) reopened in February and is now

going well, offering 10 prisoners work and training qualifications. Workshop 5 – Woodwork – has been busy making beehives which have been installed around the prison grounds for a new initiative to produce honey for sale through the prison restaurant. They also made a chair for Dorchester Primary School in Worcester Park and were congratulated by the headmistress and the pupils. They recycle garden tools which are then offered to schools. Workshop 6, where 20 prisoners deal with textiles and recycle sheets, always appears busy.

5.36 The Recycling workshop offered prisoners 14 places. An amazing number of items are now being recycled and a wide variety of different items from cans to clothing are managed there. Cooking oil from the kitchen is turned into diesel fuel to run prison vehicles. It took many months to establish but by mid-year plans to transform all food waste into compost became reality once the Works Department had completed the necessary construction to house the machinery. There were also frustrating delays to the installation of the new cardboard baler but that is now operational and can handle bulk quantities. All sorts of items from the prison are collected and recycled involving liaison with the laundry and other workshops over repairs, thus saving the prison considerable sums of money. In view of the HMCIP comment on the low pay scales at High Down the Board is surprised that recycling workers are at the lowest end of the scale, particularly given the value of the sometimes unpleasant work they do.

### **Safer Custody**

5.37 Safer custody remains a high priority within High Down and staff make great efforts to maintain an environment that is safe for both prisoners and staff. The Safer Custody team has put considerable effort into improving procedures in monitoring, reporting and analysing all aspects of prisoners' custody to aid awareness and bring about improvement. Particular improvements have been made to the collection and presentation of data. New initiatives continue, including the introduction in June of Violence Reduction representatives on each house block. Early indications are that it is a successful scheme.

5.38 Attendance at safer custody monthly meetings is generally good with prisoner representatives from Safer Custody, Violence Reduction and Listeners all present and contributing to the first half of the meeting. Not all house blocks are able to send an officer to every monthly meeting.

5.39 During 2011 393 self-harm documents (ACCTs) were opened during 2011 to monitor men at risk. The quality of ACCT documentation is an on-going problem. The safer custody

team repeatedly emphasises to house block staff the need to raise standards, and there are signs of improvement. However it is recognised that further guidance is needed and new training programmes have been organised for 2012. There were 163 self harm incidents in the first six months of the reporting period and 169 in the second half. This compares with 146 for the second half of last year. The self harm rate throughout High Down has remained static. White prisoners significantly dominate the statistics of prisoners self harming, with cutting being the preferred method. Adults account for the majority of self harm incidents: while instances of YO self harm are low these have risen in the latter second half of the year.

5.40 The Listener programme at High Down continues to be well-run, well-supported and highly utilised by prisoners. It is an excellent example of encouraging prisoners to take civic responsibility for their fellows. In Reception they identify newcomers who might need extra support facing their first night in prison and they respond to calls for help 24-hours a day. Calls range between 70 and 140 per week. A programme of regular training courses is run by the Samaritans to ensure the prison maintains an optimum team of around 24, not an easy task within a local prison. Efforts were made to ensure that listeners were recruited from the VP wing when it became apparent that this section was under-represented. The Listeners and Samaritans liaise well with the Safer Custody team to iron out niggles in the process. It has proved to be an effective form of support for prisoners upset by recent deaths in custody.

5.41 The number of anti-bullying dossiers opened in 2011 was significantly more than in the same period in the previous year. Notable spikes occurred in January and August, with the latter being attributed to the influx of prisoners from rival gangs detained during the riots. These dossiers appear to be an aid towards managing individual cases but are less effective when large numbers are involved. Incidents involving the bullying of VPs, taking the form of verbal abuse, have been recorded in the Separation and Re-integration Unit when men have been located there due to insufficient space on the VPU wing.

5.42 The total number of violent incidents for 2011 is only marginally greater than in 2010, though the months of April, July and August appear higher than the average. Assaults on staff numbered 45 recorded incidents in 2011 with the majority in the second half of the year. 36 serious assaults took place in 2011 with 25 prisoners and 11 members of staff recorded as victims. One particularly serious assault is currently in the hands of the police and depending on their decision it may be followed by an internal inquiry. Reporting of such incidents remains a problem. The incidents themselves are recorded in observation books and handover records on the house blocks but are not always submitted centrally for

analysis. A major push was undertaken mid-year to ensure all areas had incident packs. The use of weapons shows no upward trend in the second half of 2011 compared to the first half, although incidents in August were higher than any other month, again possibly reflecting the fullness of the prison following the riots

5.43 There have been four deaths in custody during the last 12 months. At the two inquests already held the verdict was death by natural causes and the same result is likely for the other two. There were also two 'near misses' where thanks to the quick reaction of staff further harm was prevented. As is always the case in a prison death or 'near miss', the prison instigated procedures to see what lessons could be learned. In some cases there was a failure to notify either the IMB or the Samaritans but procedures which will hopefully rectify this omission.

5.44 High Down has continued to hold some very challenging prisoners. The instigation of weekly Complex Case Management meetings between all concerned departments is proving to be a very effective way of highlighting and managing them. The body belt was used on two occasions in the last quarter of the year, one being to prevent a prisoner from self harming. The IMB were involved from the outset and were impressed with the professional and humanitarian approach of all involved.

#### **Separation and Reintegration Unit (SRU)**

5.45 The SRU has 22 standard cells and two special accommodation cells. All areas are reasonably well maintained. The number of prisoners held in the SRU during the year was 755. This included 218 Rule 45 Own Interest (OI) and 182 YO's aged 18 to 21. Invariably, the SRU was often running at near-full capacity and on several occasions was completely full. This was in part due to a disproportionate number of vulnerable OI prisoners being located in the SRU because there were insufficient places for them either in the VPU, or in the prison estate generally. Some of these vulnerable prisoners were 'first night in prison' prisoners or prisoners on an open ACCT document. An effort was made to move these prisoners to the VPU as soon as this was possible.

5.46 The Segregation Monitoring and Review Group (SMARG) met quarterly during the reporting period. The IMB are part of the group. SMARG's terms of reference are comprehensive and it looks at all aspects of the running of the SRU. The quality of the statistics and information presented has evolved and generally improved during the reporting period. Changes and recommendations for improvement have resulted.

5.47 Prisoners are reviewed under PSO 1700 after 72 hours and then after seven or 14 days. The Board attended nearly all of the SRU Reviews during the year. The reviews are conducted in an appropriate and respectful manner. On occasion, the number of prisoners for review on a given day has been in double figures, largely because of the overflow OI prisoners. During the review it is vital that the reason a prisoner is being held in the SRU is clearly stated and that up-to-date information is available to help the review body decide whether continued segregation is appropriate. The Board has noted that such up-to-date information is not always available at reviews.

5.48 One of the considerations of the review panel is the safety of the prisoner. A prisoner may stay in the SRU for weeks and even months, simply because his safety elsewhere in the prison cannot be guaranteed, and while a 'progressive move' is arranged. Such men include: high profile prisoners who may have an indeterminate sentence with a long tariff; high risk Rule 45 OI prisoners and others who cannot be located on any house block because of safety concerns and prisoners who present with violent and unpredictable behaviour, difficult to manage in a local Category B establishment.

5.49 During the last quarter of the reporting period, there was an increase in the number of prisoners in the SRU who demonstrated unpredictable and violent behaviour. A disproportionate amount of officer time was spent managing this demanding group. There were a number of assaults on staff. Some prisoners required several officers to be present when they were unlocked. Sometimes the Use of Force team had to be called. On occasion, and as a last resort, the prisoner would be placed in the special accommodation cell. This was used as a de-escalation technique and for a short period only. There were a number of 'dirty protests'. The Board closely monitored the SRU at such times and commends all officers for the consistently professional way in which they managed these challenging circumstances.

5.50 One of the most testing cases was a prisoner who spent five weeks in the SRU before eventually being transferred to a prison with a special unit for managing challenging behaviour. He repeatedly went on dirty protest; he assaulted several officers and verbally abused nurses, officers and the IMB. A Senior Officer with a team of five officers in protective equipment was required each time he needed to be unlocked. On one occasion he targeted and threw his excrement into the face of a Senior Officer. The demands of coping with this one man had serious repercussions around the whole prison.

5.51 The Board is extremely concerned about the multi-prisoner attack that took place on two high profile VPs, who had been moved from the SRU to normal location (5.42). One of the two prisoners was injured in the attack. This episode has been referred to the police. The prisoners who had been attacked were returned to the SRU for their own safety pending transfer to a more suitable prison.

5.52 The Board draws attention to the length of time that prisoners and staff have to wait to be interviewed by the police following serious assaults committed within the prison. This, coupled with the Crown Prosecution Service's reluctance to prosecute such cases, can leave the victims of assault feeling ignored, frustrated and ill-served by the judicial system.

5.53 The management of the SRU is never easy. During the year there have been long periods dominated by difficult and challenging behaviour by prisoners. The officers and managers have risen to this challenge. They continue to run a decent and respectful unit and have the continuing support of the Board.

## **Section 6 OTHER AREAS OF THE PRISON**

### **Catering and the Kitchen**

6.1 As in recent years, the kitchen has produced just over 2000 hot, nutritious meals daily, catering for a wide range of special dietary requirements, and offering a varied menu. Given the current budgetary constraints, and the added pressure of operating The Clink, this is an impressive achievement – made all the more so as High Down has proportionately fewer chefs than a number of other prisons. The IMB has great admiration for the hard work and dedication shown by the staff, and it is well known that many prisoners who gain catering qualifications have found related jobs on release. Prisoners speak positively about their work and the opportunities it presents.

6.2 Last year's report mentioned the high number of food complaints, and the large number of default meals. There have been great improvements in both these areas. Communication between the kitchen staff and the house blocks is much better, and menu orderlies check the menu sheets to reduce the numbers containing errors. This enables many more prisoners to have the meal of their choice rather than the default option.

6.3 The quality, and sometimes the quantity, of food is still a major concern. There is a heavy reliance on rice and potatoes alongside small portions of meat and fish and a very limited range of fresh vegetables and fruit. The kitchen manager is aware of this, but budget

and buying restrictions make it impossible for him to do otherwise. The food allowance of £2.10 per prisoner per day speaks for itself.

6.4 This said, the Board noted few verbal complaints from prisoners, and the house block complaints' books are largely unused. Our rota book records many more positive than negative comments about the appearance of the meals. We were told that on occasion, food ran out before all prisoners had been served, and we received complaints from some laundry workers that there was too little food for them by the time they got back from work, but nevertheless we found no hard evidence to support this. Cleanliness in the serveries has been a concern from time to time, but recently we have recorded more positive than negative observations. All serveries have been deep cleaned in recent months.

6.5 One aspect of kitchen life has not changed: on many occasions we have found that major pieces of machinery have been out of order 'awaiting repair'. It was months before the extractor fans above the fryers were repaired, during which time the fryers could not be used. The Board heard frequent complaints about the absence of chips from the menu. For some months, only two of nine ovens were fully operational. Last year the Board reported that many hot food trolleys were unfit for use. New ones were ordered, delivered, and then spent three months awaiting their identification tallies. Some of them developed faults soon after being brought into use. There is also a long list of minor electrical repairs outstanding – a threat to Health and Safety. The IMB must join kitchen staff in arguing for a programme of regular maintenance rather than this belated fire-fighting.

### **Chaplaincy**

6.6 The Board acknowledges the important role this department plays in supporting and comforting those who need spiritual help. The four full-time and other part-time chaplains, under their newly-appointed Lead Chaplain, represent most faiths, providing pastoral care and regular services for worshippers. One of the largest groups represented in High Down is Muslim prisoners who have averaged 170 during the year. The Muslim fast of Ramadan is a challenge in a prison context. Special flasks were provided to keep food hot for the required length of time so that prisoners could have a hot meal at the end of their daily fast. The Imam worked with the kitchen, and specially trained Muslim prisoners, in preparing and serving the meals according to religious requirements. Board members were invited to join the Sikh and Hindu celebration of the Festival of Lights and the National Holocaust Day – moving experiences for those IMB members who attended. The Chaplaincy is also seeking

to develop further links between prison and community, with plans for local churches and mosques to become involved.

### **The Gym**

6.7 The Board was surprised at the somewhat negative comments made about the gym by HMCIP. Our view is that the gym provides an essential service throughout the year. Prisoners had proper access to its facilities and were encouraged to use them. Though the Inspector cites only 40% usage it is a popular venue for those who choose to attend. Exercise and equipment sessions are organised for the house blocks, with extra sessions for enhanced prisoners. Football competitions are run with outside teams providing the opposition. The atmosphere is positive. Rules about participation are clear cut and readily understood, and give a strong incentive towards good behaviour.

### **Legal and Illegal Drug Use**

6.8 Regrettably, the majority of new prisoners entering High Down continue to have drug and/or alcohol problems. In common with most prisons in the UK illicit drugs remain a problem. There are a number of routes via which drugs enter the prison and it happens despite searches, drug tests and the work of the three drug dogs and their excellent handlers. Another significant source for the drug trade within High Down is the recycling of drugs legitimately prescribed to users. A number of widespread searches have been carried out, some in conjunction with Surrey police. A major initiative in November involving police and prison officers led to the arrest of several individuals, including sadly, a member of staff. The case is currently under police investigation. Through their attendance at monthly security meetings the IMB is well aware of the efforts staff have continued to make throughout the year to combat this problem.

6.9 In past reports the Board has expressed its concern at a national policy of keeping prisoners on a maintenance dose of methadone or Subutex rather than moving them towards detoxification. The Board, therefore, applauds an exciting new initiative. 2011 has seen the opening of the Drug Recovery Wing at High Down which is run by RAPt – Rehabilitation of Addicted Prisoners Trust. RAPt worked closely with the in-house Counselling Assessment Referral Advice and Throughcare Scheme (CARATS) on the development of the project and the whole thing was implemented remarkably quickly.

6.10 Prisoners who have already completed a detox regime are eligible and will progress through the RAPt-run accredited Bridge Programme — a six week intensive treatment programme based on the philosophy of the 12 step treatment. The objective of the programme is to strengthen motivation for recovery and for offenders to address their substance dependency and related offending behaviour. They are encouraged to engage with Narcotics Anonymous which also provides support on release: ex-offenders can attend regular meetings. The programme uses group and individual therapy, workshops and assignments. Participants are introduced to the concept of personal responsibility, positive choices and constructive decisions for the future. RAPt has completed three courses this year. Each course involves 12 prisoners and 33 have now completed the programme. Independent research undertaken by the Centre of Crime and Justice Studies and Kings College, London indicates that 53% of RAPt graduates remain drug free and 80% remain crime free for six months after release. This is a notable step in the prison's new plans to prioritise the resettlement of offenders into the community.

6.11 The Board is pleased to report that alcohol abusers can also access this programme. In past annual reports we have noted with concern the exclusion of help for men with alcohol issues.

### **House Blocks**

6.12 The prison contains six house blocks, some with specialised functions, such as the VPU, Drug Recovery and Induction wings. It remained technically overcrowded with a certified number of 999 spaces but a maximum of 1103 prisoners. For many years the Board regularly complained to the Prisons Minister about the crowding of three men in a cell intended for the use of two. To resolve this without reducing the overall accommodation it was necessary to convert some single cells for double occupancy. The Board believes this is still far from ideal. There is insufficient room for two men's property and the plastic privacy curtain round the WC is inadequate protection when two must eat and sleep and perform all their functions in the same space, for long periods of lock-up. The situation eased through much of 2012 as High Down was rarely at capacity, but changed abruptly at the time of the riots.

6.13 Although there are references throughout this report to the effects of the budget cuts, it is on house blocks where the Board has particularly noticed the harsh reality as the cuts bite home. The number of officers seen on a house block is often woefully small. As the year progressed it was notable that officers complained less about the shortage of staff and the

difficulty in doing their jobs properly as a culture of inevitability set in. There were frequent occasions when prisoners were unable to have their full association or exercise periods; one spur was left locked up rotationally, so men had long, long periods locked in their cells. When it became impossible to give prisoners their entitled time out of cell the Prison Service redefined the regulations. The Board received multiple complaints and believes the situation could become explosive. Fortunately, when prisoners had advance warning and understood the reasons less aggression was directed at the officers.

6.14 The Personal Officer scheme has, of necessity, largely gone to the wall because officers hardly have time to perform their basic tasks. This is disappointing as the interaction with High Down's excellent body of officers can give a head start in the battle to rehabilitate a prisoner. Given the circumstances, the situation was being managed as effectively as possible, often by means of 'pay plus' overtime. The need for cross deployment and its effect on other areas of prison life is also mentioned elsewhere in this report. An unexpected call to escort a prisoner to hospital can upset the careful balance of staffing and disrupt arrangements.

### **Offender Management (OMU)**

6.15 The Probation Department has worked in conjunction with the Sentence Management Unit, now both reorganised as the Offender Management Unit (OMU), to reduce the numbers of life sentence prisoners ('lifers') and those with an indeterminate sentence for public protection (IPP) held at High Down. Actual numbers varied but as an illustration, at one point of the year there were 14 lifers and 15 IPPs. In the past it has been a major concern of the Board that sentenced prisoners have not been moved on quickly to more suitable establishments. Delays are very frustrating if men cannot start their sentence plan and feel stuck in the system. A local prison like High Down does not have the resources to run the courses which will allow men to address their offending behaviour and thus be able to satisfy a parole Board. The numbers held in High Down remain manageable though it still takes a very long time to find a suitable establishment that will accept some categories of prisoners. A recent encouraging initiative was to include sentence plans for short term prisoners within the Induction process to speed the process.

6.16 The IMB attends the monthly Public Protection meetings chaired by the head of OMU along with relevant prison staff and representatives of a number of outside agencies. The cases of all prisoners coming to the end of their custody, who are identified as presenting a threat either to the general public or to specific individuals, are reviewed at the meeting, and

the outside bodies utilise the intelligence collected at the meetings to develop control strategies. The IMB can vouch for the thoroughness of this liaison work.

6.17 As mentioned in paragraph 6.15 the Board is concerned about prison transfers taking so long to arrange, but also about transfers to far distant prisons. Much is written about the importance of keeping prisoners close to their families because of the benefit of family links to successful resettlement and the reduction of reoffending. Yet the Board has noted the frequent transfer of prisoners with long sentences to jails far away from their local area. Should a man with significant family relationships locally be sent far away to the north of the country? Will this help his mental health and well-being and his long term ability to reintegrate into society? Such transfers are justified by the Prison Service on the grounds that to satisfy his sentence plan a man may have to go out of area to a prison that can provide the necessary courses he must complete. As with so many things in the Prison Service, we understand the reasoning but question the rationale.

### **Property**

6.18 The number of complaints received by the IMB about missing property has dropped compared to the recent past, due in no small part to the success of the procedure of property being handed in at visits, carefully examined, and passed on to the recipient at the end of the visit. However, there are still instances where incoming prisoners become separated from their property either at court or the police station. A problem can also arise when prisoners, not in any way involved in an incident, are moved at short notice to make space for prisoners whose behaviour has necessitated their immediate transfer from other institutions. Internal moves between house blocks appear to be well controlled however. Property still gets lost, but applications to the IMB on this subject remain lower (see Table 2) and prison procedures are generally adequate, if slow, to locate missing items or make due compensation.

### **Reception**

6.19 On a day to day basis the Board considered that prisoners were treated courteously by reception staff and nurses on arrival at the prison and 'first night in prison' procedures and interviews were well conducted. Listeners played a significant role, identifying and speaking to nervous newcomers and answering questions. The main concern was the length of time prisoners were left waiting in the reception cells, sometimes for a number of hours, before

they were moved into the prison. This was particularly likely for early arrivals who needed to see the doctor about drug issues.

6.20 Late arrivals from court, particularly on Friday evenings, continued to be a problem throughout the year. This was often due to transfers from courts outside the High Down catchment area when nearer prisons were overcrowded. It was difficult for staff, including nurses, to process prisoners satisfactorily. The effect of the London riots in August must also be noted. At very short notice High Down found itself on the front line. For a time reception was called upon to stay open all night to receive large numbers of men, many young and in prison for the first time, who had been remanded into custody from the magistrates' courts working 24-hour sessions.

6.21 However, this seemed a minor problem compared to what happened with the change of escort contractors in August. The service provided by the escort companies, which had been running fairly smoothly, deteriorated sharply. Many complainants attributed this to the lack of experience of the new contractor GeoAmey and their Control room. However, similar complaints were also made against the former contractor Serco, which still holds the contract for the London area courts. IMB members heard the term 'catastrophic' applied to the consequences of the changeover by escort managers themselves. Reasons for the disaster are complex; certainly one factor was the budgetary cuts the contractors were required to make; but the results were severely disrupting for High Down. Men were locked out of nearer prisons because of the lateness of their return from court, had longer journeys, hold ups once they reached High Down, and then a rushed processing before reaching their allocated cell at the end of a long day. The Board hears that regular meetings between GeoAmey and Reception management have been organised, a positive move towards an improvement. It is a credit to hard-working reception officers and nurses that nothing significant went wrong.

### **Resettlement**

6.22 As was highlighted in the HMCIP draft report the Board believes that High Down should be applauded for its on-going work in this area. The prison continues to work with many charitable agencies and this protects Resettlement from the many budgetary cuts within the prison. The one exception where the Board feels improvement needs to be made is greater inclusion for VPs in the resettlement programme. There are currently no courses running at High Down for VPs despite their substantial presence in the prison community.

6.23 There is a large number of different charitable agencies involved in resettlement with High Down: the Forgiveness Project, Times for Families, Sussex Pathways, Surrey Jobmatch, Geese Theatre Group and SMART who have worked with approximately 754 prisoners this year, all with the aim of preparing prisoners for release and improving recidivism. This figure does not include the Resettlement Clinic, which is a weekly session held at High Down to enable prisoners who are coming up for release engage with agencies such as Job Centre Plus, Citizens Advice Bureaux, St Giles and the UKBA.

6.24 The Clink Charity also works within High Down and operates the Clink Restaurant. It aims to reduce reoffending by training offenders and placing them in the hospitality industry on their release. Since its inception in 2009 the Clink has gone from strength to strength in terms of bookings by outside visitors. The food is excellent and the comments in the visitors' book reflect the patrons' enjoyable experiences. This is important feedback for the prisoners who work there – in the last two years 60 have completed their training, and 22 of 26 are still in the jobs found for them on release. Ex-offenders are mentored on release in conjunction with SpringBoard – a hospitality education charity that not only assists in work placements but also housing and finances. The Clink has received several awards this year including the Education and Catering Award at the Caterer and Hotelkeeper annual Catey Awards. 2011 will have seen 19 graduates released into work. It is exciting news that, following the success of the Clink, the project is to be extended to other prisons.

6.25 High Down has been working towards becoming a 'Payment by Results' prison whereby a proportion of its income will depend upon its success with reducing reoffending. The prison has had the benefit of a staff member seconded from the Ministry of Justice whose sole purpose has been to work on a Consortium, made up of a partnership between High Down, Surrey and Sussex Probation, RAPt and St Giles Trust, with an aim of reducing reoffending in the local community by a target of three per cent over five years. Excellent links have been set up with mentoring groups such as New Roots, Sutton Mentoring Scheme and Mosaic, aimed at the Muslim community, as well as Croydon College which offers courses in construction for ex-offenders and the British Red Cross who offer first aid training. No decision had been taken as to whether High Down would be part of the pilot at the end of the IMB reporting period.

## **Visits**

6.26 The Visits' Centre, with its play area, provides a comfortable environment. A team of staff and volunteers who welcome visitors ensure that, in difficult circumstances, families and

friends can be reunited for a few hours. A period of very severe weather at the beginning of the year was well-handled by staff and volunteers in the centre, many of whom had to walk to High Down. Thanks to this dedication visits were suspended for only three days. The Board was aware of issues with the cleaning of the centre, delays in removing nappy waste and delays with the repair to the pathway but can report these have now been resolved.

6.27 The booking line service varied throughout the reporting year. 'In person' and self-booking by prisoners are alternatives but telephone booking is still the preferred option, accounting for 65% of all visits' bookings in the middle of the year. Cross-deployment of staff from the visits' line to other tasks is always a danger. However, overall the service performed reasonably well.

6.28 Morning enhanced visits fell in numbers as the year progressed with sometimes only three or four per day. These were introduced following the cancellation of Friday afternoon visits, but have not proved popular nor replaced the loss of a whole visits' session for the general population. Morning visits have now also been cancelled for Monday and Wednesday as have legal visits. Some complaints have been received from solicitors. These are undoubtedly all economy measures.

6.29 A major change scheduled for the New Year is the contracting out of visits centres and probably some roles in visits halls. Staff are naturally concerned.

### **Vulnerable Prisoners**

6.30 The Board has become particularly concerned over the past year about the situation of VPs. Numbers held at High Down have built up and there is a lack of movement to suitable establishments in the prison estate where they can start their sentence plans. The regime at High Down was not designed to cope with these numbers and VPs find themselves at a disadvantage compared to the rest of the prison. Some of these matters were highlighted in the HMCIP draft report.

6.31 Both the SRU and the HCC are used to house overflow VPs when, as has happened frequently, there is no space in the dedicated unit. This decision is taken for the men's safety but is far from ideal. The SRU is intended mainly as a punishment area. New arrivals will include men facing their first time in prison; some will be on remand and found guilty of no crime and in SRU they will be subject to long periods of isolation. The Board has found that these prisoners frequently miss out on the induction process where explanations about

the complexities of prison life are given. Education is limited whilst in SRU and although there is gym equipment available on the wing, exercise is done in isolation. There is a small library on the house block and books can be ordered from the main library. Efforts are made by SRU officers for these prisoners to exercise together and to have association with other VPs but this is dependent on staff availability to escort them. Operating two different regimes adds to the pressure in an already pressurised environment. During the period of January 2011 to mid December 2011 approximately 213 VPs have been held in SRU. Similar problems exist for VPs kept in HCC in terms of limited regime, albeit more relaxed and without the isolation factor. On many occasions VPs have had to remain in HCC beds when perfectly fit to transfer to ordinary location. The recent need to cross-deploy discipline officers in HCC to staff other areas of the prison can make it particularly difficult to run separate regimes.

6.32 There are currently 75 VP spaces on the unit but any 'high risk' prisoners needing single cells will reduce that number. Officers regularly work alone on the spur and consequently many prisoners who have no access to work or education opportunities will be kept 'behind doors'. The Board has recorded days when 50 prisoners were locked up for this reason. A further aggravation is that daytime electricity is turned off in their cells though there is no option of work. Officers have said that figures for self-harming are increasing. Bullying is also an issue — the 'VP' classification also includes prisoners in debt to other prisoners, who now fear for their safety. The serving of meals can also appear unfair; due to the late return of the laundry workers the VPU is served lunch last, and the IMB hears complaints that there is insufficient food left. All activities off the house block are dependent on staffing levels to provide an escort.

6.33 There are approximately 10 men involved in various capacities on the spur with another two to three engaging in voluntary work. The laundry is the main source of employment as previously discussed (5.34). Further work places are desperately needed to provide purposeful activity to this group of prisoners. A new recycling workshop is under consideration as is extending the laundry working week. Something urgently needs to be done. Officers are convinced that with more opportunities the spur would empty during working hours.

6.34 To summarise other areas of disadvantage: -

- VPs have one library session per week while other prisoners have two;
- employed VPs have two evening sessions of gym but the unemployed can only use the gym on Sundays. Recently, 5-a-side football has started weekly just for VPs;

- basic literacy is very sporadic but should be a fortnight. Six to seven prisoners are able to go to an art class two afternoons a week and a further 10 prisoners are able to do IT classes two afternoons a week. A Toe by Toe peer advisor can assist with literacy. With the exception of these classes no further education is available to VPs;
- there are currently no resettlement courses available to VPs;
- VPs cannot attend the resettlement clinic though peer workers with information about benefits and other subjects can visit if requested;
- there are no specialist courses at High Down to enable men to progress their sentence plans while they await transfers.

6.35 Under Rule 4400 many VPs will require prison approval for the telephone numbers they want to call. The IMB receives many applications, verbal and written, from VPs where there have been long delays in receiving permission. It is particularly noticeable in the case of overflow VPs kept in SRU. In the meantime, a man may be out of contact with his family and friends for weeks. On investigation this has usually proved again to be a staffing issue.

6.36 For all these reasons the situation of VPs at High Down cannot be considered satisfactory. However, the staff on B spur, the dedicated VP unit, should be applauded for their commitment and drive to promote new ideas to improve prisoners' time in custody. The Board is aware the prison is intending to address these issues and will observe developments with interest.

## **SECTION 7 THE WORK OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD.**

7.1 Board meetings take place monthly. The Governor prepares a report for the Board, and either he or the Deputy Governor attends the meeting. Four members of the Board monitor the prison every week on rota. Their duties involve talking to prisoners and staff, looking at all aspects of prison life, and ensuring that prisoners are held in a fair and decent environment. Individual prisoners can apply to see a Board members if they have any concerns. Rota members cover these applications. Members also have special areas of interests linked to the Annual Report. They attend relevant meetings and report to the Board.

7.2 Training usually takes place before Board Meetings. It includes helpful presentations by either prison staff or representatives from other services within the prison. In addition, all members attend appropriate National IMB courses. New members receive in-house training in the form of shadowing experienced members and each is assigned a mentor. A formal review of the Board's work takes place annually, when working practices are reviewed.

Board members also visit other establishments during the year. This year's activities have included a visit to Brook House Immigration Centre as well as some individual visits.

7.3 The recommended full Board membership is 20. For most of the year there have been 17 members which has proved adequate. However, looking to the future, the Board has been engaged in a recruitment drive which should lead to new members for 2012. The Board is committed to continue broadening its membership to reflect the population.

**Table 1**

<b>BOARD STATISTICS</b>	
Recommended Complement of Board Members	20
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	20
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	17
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	0
Number of members leaving within reporting period	3
Number of attendances at meetings other than Board meetings	143
Total number of visits to the prison (including all meetings)	648
Total number of applications received	610
Total number of segregation reviews held	374 (est.)
Total number of segregation reviews attended	366

**Table 2 Applications to see the Board**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>2007/8</b>	<b>2008/9</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/2011</b>
A	Accommodation	12	27	13	9
B	Adjudications	10	7	10	7
C	Diversity related	8	16	8	2
D	Education/employment/training	52	62	33	50
E	Family/visits	115	126	79	108
F	Food/kitchen related	14	18	18	20
G	Health related	83	77	54	60
H	Property	131	204	111	115
I	Sentence related	66	88	61	80
J	Staff/prisoner/detainee related	64	84	80	83
K	Transfers	38	56	32	22
L	Miscellaneous	63	73	57	54
	<b>Total number of applications</b>	656	838	556	610

## **Section 8 GLOSSARY OF PRISON-RELATED ABBREVIATIONS**

**ACCT** Assessment, Care in Custody & Teamwork – replacement for self harm document F2052SH (see below)

**BME** Black & Minority Ethnic

**CARATS** Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice & Throughcare Scheme – drug & alcohol team.

**FN** Foreign National

**GOOD** Good Order or Discipline – Segregation under Rule 45/49

**HEAT** High Down Equality Team

**HCC** Health Care Centre

**HMCIP** Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons

**IMB** Independent Monitoring Board

**IPP** Indeterminate Sentence for Public Protection

**MAPP** Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements

**OMU** Offender management Unit

**OI/OR/OP** Own Interests/Request/Protection – Segregation under Rule 45/45

**PALS** Patient Advice and Liaison Services

**PCT** Primary Care Trust – National Health component responsible for healthcare

**PSI** Prison Service Instruction

**PSO** Prison Service Order

**SPC** Stephen Pryor Centre

**SCT** Safer Custody Team

**SIR** Security Information Report

**SRU** Separation and Reintegration Unit

**VO** Visiting Order – sent out by prisoners

**UKBA** United Kingdom Borders Agency (Immigration)

**VP** Vulnerable Prisoner

**YO** Young Offender