



Independent Monitoring Board

HMP Highpoint Annual Report 2011

For the reporting period: 1st January to 31st December 2011

1. Statutory Role of the IMB

The Prisons Act 1952 and the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 require every prison and IRC 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.

(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.

2. Table of Contents

1. STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB	2
2. TABLE OF CONTENTS	3
3. HMP HIGHPOINT	4
3.1 ROLE OF THE PRISON	4
3.2 ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES	4
3.3 HEALTHCARE	5
3.4 AGENCIES	6
4. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	7
4.1 ITEMS REQUIRING A RESPONSE	7
4.2 ITEMS NOT REQUIRING A RESPONSE	9
5. REQUIRED REPORTING	11
5.1. DIVERSITY	11
5.2. REDUCING RE-OFFENDING	12
5.3 HEALTHCARE AND MENTAL HEALTH	16
5.4. SAFER CUSTODY	19
5.5. SEGREGATION AND ASSESSMENT UNIT	19
6. OTHER AREAS	21
6.1 CATERING AND KITCHENS	21
6.2 CHAPLAINCY	21
6.3 COMPLAINTS AND APPLICATIONS PROCEDURE	22
6.4 DRUGS AND ALCOHOL	22
6.5 INCENTIVES AND EARNED PRIVILEGES	23
6.6 INDUCTION AND FIRST NIGHT	23
6.7 LIFERS	24
6.8 PRISONER MANAGEMENT UNIT AND OASYS	24
6.9 PERSONAL OFFICER SCHEME	25
6.10 PREPARATION FOR RELEASE AND RESETTLEMENT	25
6.11 PRISONER FORUMS	26
6.12 PROPERTY AND POST	26
6.13 RECEPTION	27
6.14 SECURITY	27
6.15 TRANSFERS	28
6.16 VISITORS AND VISITOR CENTRE	29
6.17. GARDENS	30
6.18. WORKS DEPARTMENT	30
6.19. STAFF	30
7. THE WORK OF THE IMB	32
7.1 THE YEAR IN FOCUS	32
7.2 BOARD STATISTICS	33
7.3 APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BY THE BOARD (NORTH & SOUTH SITES)	33
7.4 ACTIVITIES AND DEVELOPMENT	34
8. GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS USED IN THIS REPORT	35

3. HMP Highpoint

3.1 Role of the prison

HMP Highpoint is a Category C training prison situated some 10 miles south east of Newmarket in Suffolk. The Certified Normal Accommodation is 1299 with an Operational Capacity of 1323. The prison is situated on a former Royal Air Force base and lies on either side of the A143.

It was opened as a prison in 1977 and has undergone a number of changes over the years. In November 1997 part of it (Highpoint North) was converted to hold women and in 2001 the North and South sites were formally separated. Highpoint North was renamed HMP Edmunds Hill and then in 2005 was once more returned to the male estate. The two establishments ran separately until 2010 when the process of re-uniting them began. In April 2011 the formal merger was completed.

The merged establishment is now named HMP Highpoint (North and South). The south side is classified at level 3 in terms of performance. This classification indicates that it is meeting the majority of targets, experiencing no significant problems in doing so, and is delivering a reasonable and decent regime. The north side is classified at level 2 which indicates that it is basically stable and secure but may experience major operational problems. This level was automatically applied following an escape from Edmunds Hill in 2010.

3.2 Accommodation and facilities

Accommodation at the prison varies considerably from the older, brick, residential units to the newly opened units which are bright and spacious with en suite toilet and shower facilities in each cell.

Most residential Units have in-cell sanitation except for Vickers, and Halifax on the south and Lysander, Hawker and Dominie on the north which have 24-hour access to lavatory and shower recesses. In-cell television is available to all prisoners with the exception of those on basic regime. On the Induction wing on the south side, there are 24 double-occupancy cells. On the north side Lysander, Hawker and Dominie are mainly double cells with 12 being triple occupancy.

On the south side there are 10 residential Units.

The Tempest Units (A – D) are the oldest and can appear dark with narrow corridors and small association rooms. Ongoing painting and improved standards of cleaning have helped to brighten the Units. Drainage and ventilation problems in the shower recesses are an ongoing problem and there is some refurbishment outstanding. In November work started on replacing the windows throughout the units. They were in a very poor state of repair. This is a rolling programme of major work costing £1.7 million and while ongoing will require prisoners to be moved onto other units on a temporary basis.

In late spring 2012 Units A and C of Tempest will become the IDTS Unit for the prison and some restructuring work will need to be done in advance of this.

Javelin, Wellington and Handley Units are all two-storey buildings. They appear more bright and airy with a narrow gallery running around the wing at the level of the

first storey cells. Wellington Unit houses the Induction Unit on one of its spurs. On this unit there are 24 doubled-up single cells. The lavatory is screened but with limited space there is little privacy, which the Board considers unacceptable. In Handley Unit, the staff office is located behind windows and locked gates. It is the only unit where prisoners are unable to knock directly on the wing office door to speak to staff and the Board believes that this remains a barrier to good prisoner/staff relationships. This issue has been raised in previous reports and the Board has been advised that alterations will be made. So far the work has not been forthcoming and the Board seeks assurance that there is still a serious intention to take this forward. To drop it would be a retrograde step and not in the best interest of the unit.

Vickers and Halifax Units accommodate "super enhanced" prisoners and are modular in construction, originally designed for oil-field workers. Rooms are larger and the regime is more relaxed. Prisoners have keys to their own cells and 24-hour access to the shower and lavatory recesses.

Blenheim Unit houses prisoners participating in interventions treatments. Each cell has en suite facilities. Association rooms are bright and large. Telephones are situated in soundproof facilities.

Vulcan Unit, completed in 2008, is bright and spacious with all cells having en suite facilities. Lancaster Unit is identical in construction and facilities to Vulcan Unit. It houses the Lifer Unit and various prison services, such as Psychology and Probation.

On the north side there are five residential units. Lysander, Hawker and Dominie are old brick buildings and their infrastructure is showing signs of wear and tear. There is no in-cell sanitation on these units but there is 24-hour access to toilet and shower recesses. As in similar units on the south side the showers have a high volume of use and are often in need of maintenance and repair. Cells are mainly doubles although twelve are used for triple occupancy. The Board considers this unacceptable and has asked that at least the cells be restricted to double use. Proposals were drawn up to accommodate this change but were then shelved because of internal and external population pressures. The Board will continue to press for these proposals to be taken forward.

Gloster and Meteor unit are newer units with single en suite cells. Meteor Unit is the Interventions Unit for the north side. During the year the Board highlighted a concern with fire door closures and the Governor arranged for this to be rectified. There is a serious problem with the flooring on the units. This will be a major work project and is being taken forward to 2012 for costing and consideration. The Board will continue to monitor and look for progress on these proposals.

Laundry facilities on all residential Units continue to cause the Board concern. The domestic washing machines and tumble driers struggle to cope with the daily heavy usage and often breakdown. There is then a delay while awaiting repair or replacement. The Board has questioned whether industrial units would be more effective but understands that the electrical supply to the units may not be adequate.

3.3 Healthcare

In September Care UK took over the provision of healthcare services within the prison.

3.4 Agencies

Resettlement providers include NACRO.

Drugs services and programmes are provided by Phoenix Futures.

Ormiston Trust provides services for prisoners' families and children.

4. Executive Summary

January 2011 saw the appointment of a new Independent Monitoring Board for Highpoint and this is the first annual report on the merged establishment.

A single management team had been running HMP Edmunds Hill and HMP Highpoint since 2010 but the final stages of the merger were not completed until April 2011. Changes have continued to the management structure and reviews have been ongoing to ensure a unified approach and standard across both sites.

The re-named HMP Highpoint (North and South) with a population of over 1300 men is at present one of the largest Category C training prisons in the country.

In December the Governor announced she would be leaving to take up a post at headquarters. Her successor has still to be announced. This will be the third change of Governor for Highpoint in just over four years.

4.1 Items requiring a response

4.1.1 From the Minister

Reference

4.1.1.1 Mental Health

5.3.2
5.5

The Board has grave concerns about the men they continue to see with severe mental health issues, particularly those segregated and facing long delays while specialist treatment is sought. The Board considers this situation intolerable and urges that the need for treatment is identified far earlier on entry into the criminal justice system.

4.1.1.2 Foreign Nationals

5.1.3

Foreign national prisoners are being held beyond the end of their sentence, awaiting a decision on deportation from the UKBA. The Board asks for more timely decisions as delays cause undue anxiety. The very restricted access to Category D conditions only adds to this.

4.1.1.3 Financial Investment

6.19

It is appreciated that savings will be sought throughout the justice system. However the Board seeks assurances that there remains a commitment to sufficient investment in the prison system to maintain safe staffing levels, a decent regime and all the resources necessary for preparing prisoners for release.

4.1.2 From the Deputy Director of Custody

4.1.2.1 Foreign National Prisoners

5.1.3

The Board considers that the present monthly visits from the UKBA are inadequate. Highpoint has a high proportion of foreign national prisoners (nearing 22%) and the Board feels strongly that more input from UKBA is essential.

4.1.2.2 Transfers 6.15

The Board would question whether the Prison Service remains committed to its own transfer policy and to the importance of prisoners maintaining family ties. Currently transfers are so difficult to obtain, even on compassionate grounds, that many prisoners are left far from home with family unable to visit.

4.1.2.3 Property 6.12

The Board considers that a review into the safekeeping and management of prisoners' property within the prison system is now long overdue. Will such a review take place?

The Board repeats the request from previous reports for the establishment of a standardised list of possessions for all Category C prisons.

4.1.2.4 Drug Intervention Programmes 6.4

The Board seeks assurances that the Prison Service retains a commitment to CBT- based programmes.

4.1.2.5 Counselling Service 5.3.2.3

Considering the high percentage of prisoners with psychological disorders, the Board is surprised that counselling is not perceived as a treatment priority either by the Prison Service or the Health Service, given that it is recommended as a first line intervention in the community.

The Board seeks NOMS views on the provision of a counselling service.

4.1.3 From the Governor

4.1.3.1 Prisoner Healthcare 5.3

The Board appreciates that the Governor has no direct responsibility for Healthcare. However it asks that pressure is maintained on Care UK to ensure that prisoners receive the same level of care as that available within the community. It also asks that the Governor highlights the needs of those prisoners with mental health problems who face intolerable delays in transfers to specialist units.

4.1.3.2 Review of IEP process 6.5

The Board requests a review of the process in the light of concerns raised by prisoners that suggest inconsistencies between units and individual officers.

4.1.3.3 Personal Officer scheme 6.9

The Board has concerns about the consistency of the scheme across the establishment. Too often prisoners claim they do not know their Personal Officer or have little contact.

4.1.3.4 Triple cells on the North side 3.2

The Board considers the 12 triple-occupancy cells are unacceptable and

requests that the proposals drawn up to reduce such use are now actioned.

4.1.3.5 Handley Unit 3.2

The Board continues to be told that there are proposals in hand to improve the siting of the unit office and seeks assurances that this work will be done. In the Board's opinion the current construction is a barrier to establishing good prisoner/staff relationships.

4.1.3.6 Property 6.12

The Board considers that the current system of recording and managing prisoners' property is ineffective. It requests that more robust controls are introduced.

4.1.3.7 Purchase of Additional CCTV Cameras 6.14

The Board requests that consideration is given to the purchase of additional CCTV cameras for those residential units not currently equipped.

4.1.3.8 Dogs Team in Visits 6.14

The Board suggests that the drugs dogs act a valuable deterrent and that they should be present at all visits on the north and south sides.

4.1.3.9 Narcotics Anonymous 6.4

The Board hopes that efforts to establish a local contact with Narcotics Anonymous will be successful and that a group can be established within Highpoint.

4.1.3.10 Education in the segregation Unit 5.5

The Board considers that segregated prisoners should not be excluded from education opportunities and asks this facility is sought from the provider.

4.1.3.11 Free flow on South 6.14

The Board hopes that the new Governor will consider introducing 'free flow' on the south side in line with that on the north.

4.1.3.12 Partnership Working 5.2.3.2

The Board commends this initiative and hopes that it will continue to receive support from the new Governor.

4.2 Items not requiring a response

4.2.1 New IDTS unit 5.3.3

The Unit should open in spring 2012 and the Board will monitor its

development.

4.2.2 Working Prisons Project

5.2.3.1

This project should be up and running in the New Year and the Board will monitor closely to see if any problems are revealed.

4.3. Overall Judgement

The Board commends the commitment of staff to the running of a safe and decent establishment.

April saw the formal completion of the merger process that started in 2009. Inevitably there have been teething problems as common services were established, but there has been the will to address these issues. The Board will, though, continue to highlight any inconsistencies it finds between the two sites and bring them to the Governor's attention.

In the current financial climate, savings will be sought but the Board is very concerned as to how they will be made. There is currently very good work being undertaken in Education and Training, Offender Behaviour courses and Resettlement and the Board would hope that this will be built upon and not eroded.

The Board is aware that staffing levels need to be very finely balanced when it comes to judging the number of staff essential for maintaining a safe and decent establishment, and for responding to any incident. However, the Board's particular anxiety is that reduced staffing could lead to prisoners being locked up for longer and association time being cut. The Board hopes its concerns will prove to be unfounded but will be alert for any negative impact upon the daily regime.

5. Required Reporting

5.1. Diversity

Since the merger of HMP Highpoint and HMP Edmunds Hill the Diversity and Race Equality Action Team (DREAT) has made every effort to keep the Diversity Agenda open and active.

There is a strong well-led Diversity team, well supported by Senior Management. The Diversity programme too has been particularly successful this year and the team has coped well with the difficulties of spreading the work over two sites.

The DREAT meetings chaired by the Deputy Governor are held bi-monthly on alternate sites. The meetings are attended by Operational Heads, Prisoner Representatives and representatives from all relevant departments. The meetings are considered extremely important and great emphasis is put on all concerned to attend regularly.

The Diversity programme is also given a high profile by picture displays reflecting the varied cultural and religious population of the establishment. These attractive displays are placed at various points in the prison and are changed regularly so that interest is maintained.

5.1.1 Engagement with outside organisations

A staff member from Ipswich and Suffolk Council for Racial Equality (ISCRE) has now been appointed permanently at Highpoint and makes a valuable and much appreciated contribution to the Diversity agenda. Service level agreements have also been agreed with the Anne Frank Trust and with the sports organisation called 'Kick It Out'.

October 2011 was nominated 'Black History Month' and a number of outside organisations were invited to Highpoint to organise workshops and exhibitions on a number of Diversity topics.

The organisation 'Music in Prisons' has also visited and was extremely popular.

5.1.2 Ethnic Monitoring

The ethnic balance in the Prison remains more or less the same, with about 43.3% white British and the rest of the population being mixture of ethnic or foreign nationals

The number of Black Minority Ethnic prisoners on enhanced status has improved this year and is now within range.

A prisoner rep from the Gypsy/ Romany/ Traveller (GTR) community has now been appointed and keeps regular contact with the GTR prisoners. This contact helps to keep them feeling less isolated.

Elderly and disabled prisoners come within the Diversity team's remit. A prisoner rep for older prisoners has been appointed and a booklet prepared for distribution to appropriate prisoners at induction. Regular Older Prisoner Forms are held.

A “well man” session is held in the Gymnasium once a week for older prisoners, and a nurse from the Healthcare team visits during this session to give guidance and reassurance on any general healthcare issues members of the group may have.

The team is working hard to develop a strategy for helping prisoners with disabilities. This is not always easy as some prisoners do not wish to be “labelled” by their disability and are sometimes reluctant to ask for help.

5.1.3 Foreign Nationals

Uncertainty remains the chief anxiety for the Foreign National population at Highpoint. The UK Border Agency is often slow to reach a decision as to a prisoner’s immigration status, including whether to deport him or not. This can lead to a prisoner being held over sentence and causes more anxiety and resentment. A further problem for foreign national prisoners at Highpoint is that they do not often qualify for Category D status.

The UK Border Agency has a representative visiting Highpoint on a monthly basis and while some prisoner’s problems are solved others are not.

Given that the Foreign National population at Highpoint is nearing 22%, which is double the national average, the Board feels strongly that more input from the UKBA is essential as the unnecessary anxiety prisoners feel by being held in this state of limbo has a negative impact on their lives at a difficult time. At the end of the year 34 men were being held over sentence. The Board finds this unacceptable.

5.2. Reducing Re-offending

The Manager for Reducing Re-offending at HMP Highpoint continues to work in partnership with the Head of Education, A4e, the education provider and the Prisoner Learning and Skills Service. The merger with HMP Edmunds Hill has been prioritised and work across both sites has been re-evaluated to meet the needs of prisoners within a restricted budget. It has been a year of consolidation. The challenges of the merger, the unification of programmes and systems of working, and pressures of budget cuts have been tackled by the SMT with consideration for improving the amount of purposeful activity hours for prisoners.

5.2.1 Learning and Skills

Since the two sites were merged this year, all prisoners are assessed for courses as part of induction, which takes place in Highpoint South and is carried out by Tribal, an independent recruitment agency. Prisoners are assessed for numeracy and literacy skills before being advised on courses that are available, which will enable them to work towards fulfilling their sentence plans.

Progress has been made to provide an Activities & IAG peer-support worker to give advice and communicate with LSAs and orderlies. The feedback from prisoners is positive, and courses are well received. There has been a high retention rate – 92.95% and 98.07% achievement out of 3113 students who started courses.

The results from an unannounced inspection this year were very favourable.

The year has seen a change in staff in Highpoint North, with a new Manager and Deputy Manager and an increase in cover staff. A lot of preparation work and

training took place to accommodate new resources, and the curriculum has been slightly changed to include increased Embedded Literacy Skills and ESOL. Because there are now long-term prisoners on the site more higher-level courses are being offered, with an increase in the number of Open University students. More short courses have been introduced, e.g. Food, Hygiene and the Construction Skills Certification Scheme.

Wider Key Skills have increased in delivery to Level 2 and, together with embedded literacy and numeracy skills, are deliverable to prisoners who are working in other roles around the prison and do not wish, or are unable to attend the Education Department. These skills can even be transported to the units to be given on a one-to-one basis.

Virtual Campus online computer resources have been vetted, secured and approved by the Governor for installation. Funding is in place, tendering has gone out and quotes are awaited. Some new IT courses have been introduced, e.g. Sage Accounting, and plans are afoot to increase the number of computers in the department. The Imperial War Museum at Duxford has planned a new course about the effects of war on society. The increased cost is being picked up by A4e as it has been incorporated into a module of their Personal & Social Development course as an enrichment activity. The Bromley Trust is funding Duxford to expand their existing enrichment activities into Highpoint South.

Life Skills have increased the number of courses they deliver: these skills relate to sentence plans and are designed to help prisoners in personal and social development.

Peer support assistance is in place on the wings and in the classrooms, and more assistants have been used especially in the IT classes. Three peer-support worker jobs have been created and linked to a Number 1 domestic on each wing (who effectively represents wing-based prisoners) to establish a communications link with the unemployed and prisoners who are difficult to reach.

There has been an increase of 40% in the number of distance learning applications since last year.

The Board has two concerns:

That students who are assessed on the induction unit and enrolled in a class in Highpoint South are subsequently moved to Highpoint North after only a week or two, meaning that the tutors have then to start again processing their paperwork, and this is a waste of resources.

The windows of the Education building are in need of upgrading as they are now more than 30 years old, and not double glazed.

5.2.2. Gymnasium

Physical education is a popular activity for many in the prison. This year has seen Highpoint North and South P.E. departments merge successfully. Although achieving the same aims, the two gymnasiums worked slightly differently and as such both sides had to learn and adjust to each other's needs. Throughout this process the staff have remained enthusiastic and motivated and have continued to assist discipline staff to cover detail shortfalls while still maintaining a comprehensive gym programme, with minimal disruption.

The indoor facilities on both sites are satisfactory though Highpoint North does not have a non-turf play area which is available in Highpoint South, and extensively used. Remedial work on the fitness area is now complete and problems with the floor in the Sports Hall are in hand.

The PE Department offers programmes which lead to awards in:

- Basic Health and Fitness
- Active Healthy Living
- Certificate in Fitness Instructing
- Circuit Instructor
- Personal Trainer
- First Aid at work

The specialist P.E. staff work on a rota across both sites, ensuring continuity. All new prisoners go through an induction to the PE department and this includes an assessment of all individuals to measure their ability to take part in a suitable programme. Good progress has been made in the provision for older prisoners since the merger, and the staff hope to attract greater interest from other reluctant groups. PE staff now attend the Segregation Unit to run mini circuits.

Staff facilities in Highpoint North have been improved and this has created a good classroom teaching area. In Highpoint South there is an office but changing and catering facilities are very poor and in need of urgent attention in a very busy department.

5.2.3 Industries

The Head of Reducing Re-offending continues to develop purposeful activities and his 3-year plan appears to be on target to generate income as well as offer work placements which are of value to prisoners. The Board commends his efforts as being of real value to prisoners, and appropriate to the function of a training prison. A summary of initiatives developed during the year follows:

5.2.3.1 Working Prisons Project

Following on from the Justice Secretary's Green Paper there has been a strong focus in getting the Work in Prisons Project up and running. Highpoint's aim is to have prisoners out of their cells and working longer to simulate work in the outside world and to give them a work ethic in preparation for release. Highpoint has formed a working group and there are plans to have one workshop up and running at the beginning of 2012. The Board will monitor this development as it unfolds.

5.2.3.2 Partnership Working

The Board welcomed the launch in June of *'Breaking the Cycle through effective Partnership Working'*. Three forums have been held and attracted a number of influential businesses including UK Power Networks, May Gurney and Ridgeon. It has also been good to see the involvement of local businesses, national and local organisations and the support of the local MP. After the first forum those present

were invited to take a tour of the prison workshops and training courses. This gave them an insight into what was currently being offered and also gave them an opportunity to talk face to face with prisoners about their expectations. The focus of the forums is employability, and of course looking forward to employment opportunities on release. There is also the aim of helping to ensure equality of opportunity for ex-prisoners in the jobs market.

The Board welcomes the good relationships that are developing between the prison and the private and voluntary sector and acknowledges that these have already shown practical benefits for the establishment. UK Power Networks have donated a mini digger to enhance the qualification provided by the Streetworks Course, and paint, paint-sprayers and scaffolding have been provided for the Painting and Decorating course.

Involvement with organisations within the local community is helping to raise awareness of employment issues and encouraging further support. Sue Ryder, for example, is committed to taking a prisoner on ROTL to train in their Haverhill store. This placement should start early in 2012.

The Highpoint team have shown great energy and drive in taking this initiative forward and the Board hopes that the new Governor will maintain the level of support for the project.

5.2.4 Interventions

At the start of the year the Head of Psychology was the functional lead for the Intervention Programmes but later on, following the national reconfiguration of Psychological Services, responsibility reverted to the Head of Reducing Re-offending as it had been in previous years. The Board considers this very appropriate given that interventions are an integral part of addressing offending behaviour.

The year saw the opening of an Interventions Unit on the North site mirroring that on the south

The Board welcomes a new initiative to be introduced as part of the interventions programme. Successful contacts have been established with the providers of a gambling counselling service (NORCAS) and it is planned that this service will be available from early 2012.

For details and comments on the intervention programmes and treatments, please see Sections 5.2.6 (Psychology) 5.3.3 (IDTS) and 6.4 (Drugs and Alcohol).5.3. Healthcare and Mental Health

5.2.5 Psychology

The department has continued to run the following programmes:

- TSP -Thinking Skills Programme
- CALM - Controlling Anger and Learning to Manage it
- HRP - Healthy Relationships Programme
- CSB - Cognitive Skills Booster

The department also provides training for violence reduction prisoner representatives.

The Board has long held concerns for those with mental health problems within Highpoint. So it is encouraging to hear that when issues have been identified with participants in the above programmes the mental health team has been brought in provide support.

5.3 Healthcare and Mental health

The Board has continued to have very serious concerns for the management of Healthcare.

Care UK took over this major contract in September. It was, though, difficult to confirm exactly when it was formally signed off, with even the Governor unaware of this late in the year. CareUK undertook a major service redesign and staff consultation but there have not been any noticeable improvements in the outcome for prisoners who have not had the service that they would enjoy in the community. The Board will monitor closely and hopes that 2012 will at last see a much needed improvement.

A new Healthcare application system designed to speed up access to the most appropriate clinician or service has recently been introduced. It is hoped that this will reduce non-attendance rates.

A programme of regular Clinical Governance Meetings and Service Improvement Meetings will commence during the first quarter of 2012 to which the IMB will be invited. The Board welcomes this development.

5.3.1 Staffing

Monitoring Healthcare has been difficult as staff have been under pressure, and morale low. There have been a lot of agency staff and four redundancies. Care UK has appeared to acknowledge the problem and has confirmed that it plans to focus on improving staff morale and to increase staff integration across the two sites.

Communication between Healthcare and the Board has been of concern and it has proved very difficult to obtain updates on the overall state of services. Staff have, though, been helpful in providing information when the Board followed up concerns on behalf of individual prisoners.

It has been noted that Healthcare staff have rarely attended prison service meetings because of work pressures. It is to be hoped that attendance will improve in the coming year.

The merger of the two prisons was completed in April but Healthcare has continued to be separate, though under one overall manager, who has returned part-time after maternity leave.

5.3.2 Mental Health

5.3.2.1 Segregation and Mental health

Concerns for prisoners with mental health issues being held in segregation awaiting assessment are ongoing. The Board has highlighted this for several years. The In-reach team and segregation staff do a good job in difficult circumstances. Last year

10 prisoners were sectioned out and 4 were kept in segregation for an average of 46 days after identification of the need for transfer.

The length of time to section under the Mental Health Act and transfer the prisoner to appropriate care is too long.

There is seems to be no viable alternative to segregation at Highpoint as there is no equality of access to 24 hour Healthcare beds. The host prisons resource these, hence there is some reluctance to allow other prisons to access them. It is a national issue that needs addressing to make for a more equitable system.

5.3.2.2. Access to secondary care

There is a new Mental Health model integrating the primary and secondary mental health teams which may result in a smoother referral and assessment process and speedier access to secondary care interventions. The Board will continue to monitor this carefully.

5.3.2.3 Absence of Counselling Services

The Board is concerned that there is no provision for a routine counselling service for prisoners with psychological disorders who would be responsive to such a service. Given the high percentage of prisoners with such disorders, the Board is surprised that counselling is not perceived as a treatment priority either by the Prison Service or the Health Service.

Specifically, the Board is concerned that prisoners are not being offered the IAPT service recommended by NICE for people with depression and anxiety disorders. As IAPT is considered appropriate as a first line intervention and is offered to all in the community, it would seem that there is an inequality of service provision in this area between prisoners at Highpoint and citizens in the outside community.

5.3.3 IDTS

The Board continued to have concerns about the south Healthcare waiting area for IDTS clients. Undue waiting time for prescriptions has resulted in a build-up of tension and friction. On the north site IDTS clients reported name-calling from other prisoners.

Any client on the IDTS programme, whether on a methadone or Subutex prescription, is likely to be targeted by drug dealers within the establishment. Those targeted are often unwilling to report that they are being subjected to pressure. It is suspected that at times medicines are still being diverted. Nursing staff are alert to this possibility and continue to take appropriate measures to prevent this. There was a reduction in the amount of Subutex found in the year during searches, 1.5g compared to 4.5g in 2010. This does not indicate any need for less vigilance.

At the end of 2011 there were 81 clients on the IDTS programme, 70 on methadone and 11 on Subutex. Healthcare continued to have staffing problems with just one IDTS nurse and one IDTS Healthcare support worker.

It is hoped that a support group for IDTS clients will be set up in the coming year. CARATs staff are responsible for following this up, and visiting other establishments to see first-hand how this is facilitated.

During 2011 it was announced that funding had been secured for a dedicated IDTS Unit. This will be sited on Tempest Unit and it is planned to open it in late spring of next year. With dispensing facilities available within the unit, this should result in more time-efficient prescriptions being dispensed. The Interventions Unit has already shown the value of good working relationships amongst multi-disciplinary staff. On the new IDTS Unit Officers, Healthcare and CARATS staff will be working closely to support IDTS clients. It is hoped that this dedicated IDTS unit will resolve many of the issues centred on this treatment programme. The Board will monitor the unit closely to see what progress is made once it is up and running.

5.3.4 Pharmacy

Medicines management has been a major issue again this year. Delivery was not timely or robust. The Board has been told that a new pharmacy supplier is now in place and the next phase of improvements will be to develop an on-site pharmacy with a full-time pharmacist.

Prisoners get frustrated when there are different prescribing practices in different prisons and their medication is changed when they transfer.

5.3.5 Dentistry

The dentistry provision has been very poor with problems closing the dental suites on both sites in the three months from September to November. There was provision for emergency treatment in the community but this had effects on staffing. Waiting lists have obviously grown. They are 10 and 9 weeks for first appointments and 12 and 13 weeks for treatment on the north and south sites respectively. The Board considers this wholly unacceptable.

During the year the Board highlighted a concern with waiting lists when prisoners moved between the two sites. In effect they lost their place on the list and had to start again. It was agreed that the men must not be disadvantaged in this way.

5.3.6 Podiatry

The Board is pleased to report that there is now access to podiatry. This means that prisoners are no longer having to be taken to Newmarket or Haverhill for treatment.

5.3.7 ICAS and PALS

PALS forms are available on all units. The Board still receives Healthcare complaints, but many are referred on to PALS. Last year there were 435 complaints received by PALS but many prisoners fear complaining in this manner: they think their treatment will be affected as PALS complaints pass through Healthcare. In any case the Board is far from satisfied with the quality and adequacy of responses from PALS.

It is regrettable that ICAS surgeries are no longer held within Highpoint. They ceased after staff changes within the organisation. These surgeries offered prisoners face-to-face independent advice, information and assistance in taking forward healthcare concerns and complaints. The Board hopes that 2012 will see ICAS actively involved with Highpoint once more.

5.4. Safer Custody

The IMB continue to monitor the safer custody of prisoners through attendance at the monthly meetings, liaison with the Safer Custody Officer and weekly contact with all prisoners on ACCT documents. The Board is kept updated regularly of important issues raised at the Safer Custody meetings.

Despite the additional pressures placed upon the Safer Custody team caused by the merger of the two sites, the Board is pleased to report that the prison management remains committed to the safe custody of prisoners within the combined site.

The Safer Custody Officer has been proactive in managing Perpetrator Intervention Plans, Victim Support Plans and ACCTs. The Board continues to monitor the quality of these documents and the processes surrounding their use. Over the year, the Board has seen marked improvement in these areas, though some non-conformity to process has been noted and brought to the attention of the Safer Custody Governor.

In last year's report, the Board reported absences of key members of the team from monthly review meetings. This year, the chairing governor has made a concerted effort to encourage key stakeholders to attend and this has had the desired effect.

Sadly during the year a prisoner died at the West Suffolk Hospital. The Board extends its condolences to his family and friends.

5.5. Segregation and Assessment Unit (SAU)

In their 2010 report the Board noted that it was proposed that the SAU units for HMP Highpoint and HMP Edmunds Hill be merged on the Highpoint South site. During the year the north site unit was closed for operational reasons. It remains 'mothballed' but can be opened up if required. The final decision on its future has still to be announced, but the Board anticipates that it unlikely to be re-opened. The closure has meant that, with a population of over 1,300 prisoners, the SAU is often full to capacity.

Staff have continued to show commendable patience in looking after the frequently challenging prisoners who pass through the unit. While many are relocated to the SAU because of incidents or disruptive behaviour, others may be quite troubled individuals, there for their own protection.

The Board repeats their grave concerns about prisoners with severe mental health problems being segregated for lengthy periods of time while specialised treatment is sought. Often responsibility for this treatment falls to another Healthcare Authority. This means there are delays until assessments; finance and the allocation of a secure hospital bed are all resolved. While acknowledging the care given to these men by staff the Board considers this an intolerable situation.

There have been problems with certain other transfers during the year. Staff had difficulties relocating men who had been re-categorised as Cat B prisoners. It took the involvement of the Eastern Area Deputy Director of Custody to resolve this issue and a protocol has now been established. Transfers to other establishments can also be delayed if an individual is on a 'police hold' i.e. waiting for a statement to be taken after suspicion of involvement in internal incidents subject to police investigation. The Board has questioned whether it would be possible for such men

to be transferred to a prison within the region where they would still be easily accessible to Suffolk police.

The Board has continued to ask whether it would be possible to provide in-cell education within the SAU. It is understood that the education provider, A4E, does not have the resources to provide this service within their contract. However the Board would suggest that this is a facility that should still be sought.

During the year a non-smoking policy was introduced for the SAU. Other prisoners within the establishment are still allowed to smoke within the confines of their cell. The Board raised concerns about this policy particularly with regard to vulnerable prisoners, i.e. those relocated for their own protection. It is, though, only fair to report that this has not been the problem that the Board anticipated, with very few prisoners raising it as a concern.

6. Other Areas

6.1 Catering and Kitchens

The kitchens are constantly under pressure to provide good quality meals within a much-restricted budget. The menu is changed regularly on a four-weekly cycle. There are halal, vegan, vegetarian and healthy options. Nevertheless, because of the budget restraints portions are sometimes small and, at times, monotonous, in spite of the best efforts of the staff. The calorie requirement of 2500 is met. The kitchen caters for prisoners with food allergies, in consultation with Healthcare. Prisoners can work towards basic Hygiene and Catering NVQ level 1 and HAB and their work is vital in the production of over 3000 meals a day.

Food servery logs are monitored regularly, comments are often negative but of a minor nature and there are few, if any, applications regarding the quality of the food. Serveries in residential blocks are generally clean and suitable for purpose.

A constant feature of Board members' rota reports concerns breakdowns in catering equipment. The kitchen staff have to be very creative in their management whilst awaiting repair and delivery of spare parts.

The IMB is anxious to learn of what plans exist to replace and maintain equipment in both kitchens.

6.2 Chaplaincy

Following the merger, Chaplaincy staff on both sites began working as one team under the co-ordinating chaplain, the Imam, which they now do very effectively. Prisoners of all faiths and none continue to be well catered for. For much of the year the team has been without a Roman Catholic priest, based on the north site, but existing Roman Catholic staff have ensured that the needs of Catholic prisoners have been met. The vacancy is to be re-advertised, though it will be a very difficult one to fill.

The excellent booklet given out as part of the induction process summarises the many activities of the Chaplaincy, and has proved to be reassuring for prisoners as they begin to serve their sentence at Highpoint. As noted elsewhere in this report, making space and time available in the Chaplaincy building for Insiders, foreign national orderlies and others, as part of the induction process has been extremely beneficial.

Of particular note among the courses run by the Chaplaincy is the i2i Islamic Programme, the first module of which has now been rolled out nationally. There will eventually be four modules (the second is currently being developed), and the Imam at Highpoint is a member of the group creating this programme. The first module was delivered three times during the year, and very favourably received by participants.

The well-established Restorative Justice course continues, and was delivered seven times during the year, alternately on each site, participants being referred to the course by OMU, and usually being those who have a requirement to do this course on their sentence plan.

6.3 Complaints and Applications Procedure

While Wing Officers are encouraged to deal with queries as they arise, and Prisoner Forum and OMU Surgeries are being held regularly, there still remain those issues that need to be raised formally through the Complaints and Applications Procedure.

Prisoner confidence in this procedure does seem to vary. Some prisoners report that the scheme is working well while others will claim that their application or reply has been lost in the system, or that a response has not been received within the stipulated time limits. There is also the perception by some prisoners that responses are not consistent, leading them to consider they have been treated unfairly.

The Board acknowledges that a particular response may not be welcome and that individual circumstances may vary. It does, though, consider that for the procedure to be judged as working effectively, responses should be consistent, clear and informative and delivered within the appropriate time scale. This is not always the case.

6.4 Drugs and Alcohol

The year saw the creation of one P-ASRO and one CARATS teams for both sites and this resulted in some internal re-structuring.

This restructuring meant that at times the P-ASRO team encountered some logistical difficulties, for example running a course on one side and needing to do reviews on the other. They worked to find ways of resolving the difficulties without disadvantaging their clients. Last year the Board expressed concern that those with literacy difficulties found it difficult to access P-ASRO courses. Staff have addressed this concern and the Board has not been contacted about further problems

There have been some problems with staff attendance at the multi-disciplinary team meetings on Blenheim Interventions Unit. This was because of conflicting work pressures. Timings were altered but this was still an ongoing concern at the end of the year. Staff acknowledge the meeting is a useful forum to discuss concerns so it is hoped that a satisfactory solution can be found.

Discussions have taken place regarding setting up a Drug-free Unit. It is not yet known whether funding will be available to make this possible.

An announcement was made during the year that the Substance Misuse Contract was being re-tendered. This meant an uncertain time for staff involved but their professionalism and commitment meant that the standard and quality of the service they delivered remained high. In December it was confirmed that RAPt would be the new providers. Further details are awaited. The Board acknowledges RAPt's proven experience with delivery in other establishments, but remains concerned about the future of the Substance Misuse course and programmes within Highpoint. It waits to hear whether existing successful courses will be retained, and if not, what will be the replacements, and the proposed staffing levels.

The Board has raised concerns in past reports about the high profile of the IDTS programme, and the Board's perception that this might be at the cost of other drug treatment programme and courses. CARATS are an integral part of the IDTS programme and also carry out valuable one-to-one and group work and referrals. However there are limits to what they can offer, particularly with their future staffing

levels uncertain. With Highpoint's population of some 1300 men and more drugs being discovered within the prison, the Board again presses for in-depth CBT courses and programmes which examine and address this particular addictive behaviour.

Last year the Board welcomed the introduction of an Alcohol & Related Violence Course. This was the first course of this type run at Highpoint and 2011 showed how well it had bedded in. However with the change of service provider the Board has concerns for its future.

There has been a good uptake on the Alcohol Awareness programmes run by Probation Service. The Board hopes that funding and staffing will enable this programme to continue.

The Board is pleased to report that AA groups have now started on both north and south sites. The groups were welcomed by prisoners who had attended at other establishments. There have been some teething problems particularly around anonymity but these have been addressed. There have also been some problems in getting notice of the speaker's name in advance of the meetings - essential for arranging security clearance for entry into the prison. It is hoped that these difficulties will not cause the groups to flounder as they have done in the past.

Despite attempts by staff it has not yet been possible to establish contact with NA. If this can be achieved it is hoped that NA groups will be introduced in the coming year. The Board urges that this momentum is maintained as the group would be a valuable resource.

6.5 Incentives and Earned Privileges

The Board supports the IEP process, provided it is seen to be fair, transparent and consistent across the whole establishment. The Board would question whether this is so, given the concerns raised by prisoners which suggest that a review of the process is appropriate.

The Board acknowledges that few will be happy at a loss of privileges which could result in moving units and losing particular work. However it continues to receive applications from prisoners who are seeking help to challenge an IEP warning or what they consider as unfair downgrading. In some instances a prisoner will claim they are suffering from 'double jeopardy' - the IEP system plus adjudication. Perceived inconsistencies between units and even individual officers on the same unit have also led to claims of unfair treatment and rulings. The Board considers that many of these problems could be avoided if more time was spent in giving a clear explanation of the reasoning behind the decision and ensuring this had been understood.

6.6 Induction and First Night

The policy for procedures to be followed in this important area, as set out in the document of the same name, is extremely thorough, and is evidence of the importance the prison attaches to these matters. Likewise the Information Booklet for Prisoners is well-produced and contains a lot of very useful information. It is as well that reception and induction procedures have been carefully thought through, as Highpoint constantly receives new prisoners, sometimes up to 12 daily. Documentation referring to induction was circulated to local prisons in the area during

the year, resulting in positive feedback and requests to visit Highpoint to see the process in action.

In its last report the Board noted that there were to be some changes in induction procedures in 2011. In fact changes have been minimal, but a very significant improvement has resulted from the Chaplaincy becoming more involved and allowing time and space for input in areas such as Foreign Nationals and Older Prisoners. This has served to release more "slots" for input from, for example, Tribal and A4e.

The Board particularly commends the sessions run by Insiders. They are evidently very helpful to prisoners new to Highpoint, some of whom have actually commented that the induction process here is much more thorough and useful than at other prisons. The Insiders themselves obviously believe in the value of their input. Likewise the staff on the Induction Unit are to be commended, and it is a testament to their consideration for, and care of, newly-arrived prisoners that there are so very few problems associated with the first few days at Highpoint.

If there are any concerns, they have to do with a) the sheer volume of information which has to be disseminated in a relatively short period, b) foreign nationals whose command of English is not sufficient to benefit properly from the induction process, c) that Insiders are expected to include in their talks areas which are not strictly their responsibility, e.g. Probation, and d) that for all the information given out during induction, it can be a while before newly-arrived prisoners are sorted out with jobs or courses, as was noted by HMCIP on their last visit.

6.7 Lifers

The Lifers Unit remains very stable with the long term residents having an interest in maintaining their settled living environment. Although the men have the chance to apply to Vickers and Halifax units, most prefer to stay on Lancaster where the majority of lifers reside. The men keep the unit looking bright and very clean and tidy and they have the opportunity to do some basic catering for themselves.

Lifers from elsewhere continue to request transfers to HMP Highpoint to take advantage of the popular HRP programme run by Psychology.

Four successful lifer days were held during in the year in the visits hall. Lifers have the opportunity to spend extended time with their families and they are able to discuss concerns with lifer-trained officers and probation staff.

The Board is pleased to note that a Lifer Forum was held during the year.

6.8 Prisoner Management Unit and OASys

The focus of the OMU continues to be OASys completions and the reduction of the backlog. There has been a gradual decrease in this backlog.

OMU surgeries continue to run and slight alterations to the application process should ensure that a greater number of prisoners are seen at the surgeries in the future. Redeployment of discipline staff who are prisoner supervisors continues but this is monitored closely and avoided wherever possible.

Development of OMU

Plans for NSPT to recruit a number of Probation Service Officers to the OMU continue, although this is unlikely to take place until the start of the new financial year.

6.9 Personal Officer Scheme

The Board does see and hear examples of officers working well with prisoners and providing excellent support, care and encouragement. It does, though, continue to have reservations about the consistency of the scheme across the establishment. Prisoners must have faith in the scheme and, as a matter of course, turn to their Personal Officer for help and information when needed.

This year has seen a rise in applications to see the Board from 708 to 948. Often the subject has been a matter that the Board considers would have been more appropriately dealt with by the Personal Officer in the first instance. When Board members follow up applications, prisoners often say they are not aware of the name of their Personal Officer or claim that they have been unable to see them when needed as they have not been working on the unit.

The Board will press for an improvement in the scheme so that it inspires confidence.

6.10 Preparation for Release and Resettlement

6.10.1 Resettlement

The department's ability to deliver during the year was adversely affected by redeployment, but this did not prevent the team delivering really well across the 4 KPTs that sit within the Resettlement and ISP function. The GPP (General Parole Process) started off poorly but this was addressed by the new team and for the last 5 months of the year 100% returns were achieved. Links were enhanced through a visit to the Parole Board and PPCS to broaden the knowledge of the GPP process. The 3 Resettlement KPTs performed well.

On the ISP side of the function two forums were held, one for lifers and one for IPPs. This helped to build relationships between the prisoner groups and the prison team. Efforts were made to develop outworking opportunities: some success is anticipated here, which the Board is pleased to note.

Resettlement analysed prisoner needs with reference to finance/benefit and debt, which helped structure support for prisoners. Debt-support has been requested via the Citizens Advice Bureau and other agencies.

6.10.2 Probation

6.10.2.1 Staffing

There were a number of changes in personnel in the year with a third successive Senior Probation Officer in Post. Additionally, two new Probation Officers joined, bringing the team to full complement.

6.10.2.2 Prisoner Management

Despite the changes in staffing, the Board is pleased to note that work with prisoners in the establishment continued as normal. The Board notes that more prisoners from the IPP population completed relevant interventions, enabling them to make progressive moves where appropriate.

6.11 Prisoner Forums

The Board attended individual residential forums throughout the year on both north and south sites. All forums were conducted in a businesslike manner which encouraged a constructive response from prisoner representatives. Residential DPSMs were present, ensuring an immediate response to some of the points raised.

6.11.1 Positive developments during the year

- regular food forum meetings have been established
- 'super-enhanced' units now have PIN phone access from 7.30am – 10.30pm
- the Storybook Dads scheme is now up and running via the library
- tables and chairs have been provided for eating meals communally rather than in-cell on Handley unit
- the new one-for-one kit exchange cost-containing exercise is traceable back to a Vulcan prisoner forum
- prisoner input to the IEP policy review has been requested via the forums.

6.11.2 Causes for concern

- Cat D transfers are taking too long
- dental waiting times are too long
- lack of variety in meals noted
- prisoners do not know who their Personal Officer is.

Following on from last year's report, Fine Cell Work has not been possible. The charity is overstretched and cannot provide training to Highpoint at the moment.

6.12 Property and Post

Property continues to be a concern for the Board. It is an issue frequently raised in Applications and takes a considerable amount of time to investigate, either within Highpoint or following up with other establishments.

The Board considers it unacceptable that so much property appears to go missing within a closed prison system and that it is so difficult to trace once mislaid. It is frequently difficult to reconcile actual property with that recorded in sometimes illegible paper records. It is in the interest of the Prison Service to resolve this issue as prisoners are entitled to claim compensation for items lost within the system.

Different property allowances across prisons is also an issue and could be avoided by some standardisation. In the Board's experience, prisoners are generally unaware of these variations and it would be helpful if more information was provided in advance of transfers.

At the end of January the Reception Units for the whole establishment were merged and all property is now stored on the south side. Initially this did not go smoothly and

the Board was concerned at property building up within the limited storage space available.

6.13 Reception

Reception staff provide that very important first impression of Highpoint. Board members have therefore been pleased to note that when visiting the unit they find staff always friendly and courteous in their dealings with prisoners. Prisoner orderlies also play a valuable role and provide information and support. .

All prisoners being discharged from Highpoint pass through the unit. When the reception units for the two sites were merged in January the Board was concerned that prisoners from the north who were being discharged faced delays. This was brought to the attention of the Governor and was resolved.

6.14 Security

There has been an overall increase in drug, mobile and 'hooch' finds:-

	2010	2011
Mobile phones	45	48
Cannabis resin	197.1g	627.2g
Herbal cannabis	140.7g	141.1g
Heroin	19.4g	7.3g
Subutex	4.5g	1.5g
<i>Other finds include:</i>		
Sim cards		29
Burnt foil		4
Amphetamines		0.3g
Crack pipes		2
"Hooch"	90 litres	211.5 litres

These finds indicate a constant need for vigilance to prevent these items getting into the prison and the Board acknowledges the success of search and detection methods. Fewer drugs available for use within the population reduces the risk of increasing already addictive behaviour. However, there is a knock-on effect: fewer drugs can lead to an increase in bullying. Those on prescribed medication have at times been targeted. Unpaid debts can also lead to an increase in assaults. Where the victim refuses to name those responsible and the bullying or assault has not been witnessed it is difficult for staff to take action against those responsible. It is noted that there appear to have been more assaults on the residential units where CCTV is not fitted, indicating that it probably acts as a deterrent. The Board would suggest

that purchasing and fitting additional cameras in those areas would be a sensible measure and would help to safeguard prisoners and staff, but it acknowledges that maintaining strong security and a safe environment while not operating an overtly restrictive regime can be a delicate balance.

Alcohol can lead to very disruptive and dangerous behaviour, so in addition to the hooch finds, measures have been taken to prevent brewing.

The security department aims to use intelligence received to target searches effectively. Routine searches are carried out and staff, uniformed and civilian, are included. However there have been concerns that drug dogs have not always been available when visits to prisoners are taking place, because of the last minute redeployment of their handlers. The Board considers the dogs and their handlers an important part of the Visits team and presses for their regular attendance. The deterrent effect of their presence should not be underestimated.

It has been proposed that an X-ray machine be purchased for the post room. Post can be a favourite route for the smuggling in of illegal items. At present it is checked manually by staff with help from the drug dogs. To their credit, the team do detect many items but the machine would be a valuable additional resource. The Board hopes that the bid will be taken forward.

During the year a decision was taken to relocate the main security hub to the north site. Some staff expressed reservations that the unit would no longer be sitting within the main population on the south site. The move, though, did not appear to compromise the gathering of intelligence from across the whole prison.

The monthly security meetings were also switched to the north site and attendance did appear to be affected with lower attendance from the residential units on the south site. Mid-year a new Command Suite for the establishment was opened up. Used as an operational hub for managing any major incidents it is located more conveniently for both sites. This has now become the venue for the monthly security meetings and it is hoped attendance will now improve as these meetings are a valuable forum for sharing intelligence.

The merger and subsequent transfer of prisoners between the north and south sites has highlighted a long-standing difference. On the north side prisoners have free flow access to many of the main areas, an option rejected for the south side for security reasons. The Board requests that the incoming Governor review this decision and bring parity to the south side.

6.15 Transfers

Prisoners continued to raise issues with the Board related to transfers either formally on applications or during conversations in the course of rota visits.

6.15.1 Prisoners wishing to be nearer home

Highpoint has a high population of prisoners from London and the Home Counties. Because of the establishment's rural location and the difficulty in reaching it by public transport, families of some prisoners find it hard, if not impossible, to make visits. Not surprisingly prisoners miss this face-to-face contact and so will request a transfer nearer their home. These requests are seldom successful, largely because, with the

re-rolling of prisons in the South East of England to prisons for Foreign Nationals, there are very few places available, a situation which the Board finds regrettable.

During the year the Board received 81 applications from prisoners requesting help with their transfer requests. In effect there was little the Board could do other than to ensure that the request had been received by the transfer clerk and was receiving attention. Highpoint staff could do little either, as national restrictions are outside their control. While this situation remains, the Prison Service's commitment to the importance of maintaining family ties seems like empty words to many prisoners, and places the Board in an invidious position.

6.15.2 Compassionate Transfers

The same population pressures have affected requests for transfers on compassionate grounds however pressing the need. The Board considers this situation particularly intolerable.

6.15.3 Category D prisoners

The closure of HMP Hewell in September has meant that there are now fewer spaces available within the open estate. This can be frustrating for those who have qualified for Category D conditions and now have to wait longer for a transfer. Without being given a full explanation of the situation, prisoners reasonably have an expectation that a move to a category D establishment is imminent following successful recategorisation.

6.16 Visitors and Visitor Centre

6.16.1 Operations

The Board continues to be broadly satisfied with the way the visits are conducted and the officers continue to show sensitivity to the cultures and religions of ethnic visitors. Their handling of young children is good. The previous difficulties over the opening times of the Visitor Centres seem to have been resolved, and it is now possible for visits to be booked by email.

On the north site plans are being made for a shelter for prisoners waiting for visits.

In place of the yellow bibs it is hoped that blue and white shirts will be made available for prisoners to wear during visits, in line with the South site.

A possible site has been identified for a crèche facility. Meetings are taking place with the Ormiston Trust to investigate suitability and to develop a business plan. This will also bring it in line with the South site.

The cleaning of the hall is done by civilian domestic cleaners and therefore not done at the weekends. Despite efforts of willing volunteers, it would seem in the eyes of the prisoners that the cleaning does not always reach acceptable standards.

6.16.2 Refreshments

The vending machines have been replaced and are now receiving regular attention to maintain their serviceability. It is still not possible for the machines to be restocked

over the weekend. However, the possibility of increasing the capacity of the machines is being investigated.

On the south site, in addition to the machines, hot and cold drinks, and biscuits are available for visitors. This facility is not yet available on the North site.

6.17. Gardens

For those prisoners satisfying the necessary security requirements, the inner and outer gardens and grass areas provide popular work opportunities.

The Board has noted a striking contrast between the north and south sites with the smaller, more compact, north having bright and colourful flower beds adjacent to residential units. These have a very positive impact on the living and working environment and the Board hopes that similar flower beds will be extended to the residential units on the south.

The Board acknowledges the valuable work of the gardens team in clearing snow and ice during the winter months, and helping to keep the site accessible. This often involves staff coming in very early when required, to get the work underway.

6.18. Works Department

Staff are responsible for maintenance and repairs across an estate of some 26 hectares. The residential units, the SAU and the office and ancillary buildings are spread widely across the two sites. With a population of over 1300 prisoners there is constant pressure on an ageing infrastructure with, for example, blockages in shower recesses being a frequent occurrence.

Recruitment of tradesman has been a problem during the year and it is thought that a combination of rates of pay and Highpoint's location contributed to this difficulty.

With a reduced workforce the department has constantly to prioritise repairs. At one point in the year there were five vacancies and five members of staff off sick making this task even more difficult. The Board hopes that 2012 will see more staff recruited easing pressure on the department.

6.19. Staff

The Board acknowledges the dedication and commitment of staff, operational and civilian, who contribute to the day to day running of Highpoint.

The Governor and SMT have now raised the profile of the Staff Performance Recognition Awards and individuals and teams are now acknowledged on a regular basis.

The Board notes that the staff sickness rate has remained high throughout the year and is the highest within the Eastern Area. It should however be reported that there have been a number of staff suffering from major illnesses. Sadly one member of staff died during the year. The Board extends condolences to his family, friends and colleagues.

Any absence of uniformed staff either for sickness or, for example, escort duties, can lead to operational difficulties. The year has often seen Senior Offices acting down, and staff redeployed to unfamiliar areas of work. The Board considers this has a negative effect on the smooth running of units.

The completion of the merger did not bring to an end the period of change for Highpoint. Some SMT members left under early departure terms resulting in significant changes to the team and structure. January 2012 will see a change of Governor.

Staff have expressed their concerns to the Board about their own future and that of the Prison Service. The coming year will see a £2.6 million saving in investment and reductions in governor and officer posts prior to the introduction of 'Fair & Sustainable'. This will bring profound changes to all staffing structures. In advance of this DPSMs have already started to revert to the grade of Principal Officer and this should be completed by the first quarter of 2012. There are also concerns about the possible future management of Highpoint. Reviews are ongoing of selected prisons and these open up the possibility of an establishment being transferred to the private sector. So far Highpoint has not been selected for review but inclusion is an anxiety for staff.

Against a background of much uncertainty, staff have remained focused on their priority of running a safe and decent establishment. The Board acknowledges, though, the depth of feeling and is itself concerned as to how any future cuts in posts and investment will impact upon the current regime at Highpoint.

In November, 33 members of staff took part in a one-day strike organised by public service unions. Three workshops were closed but otherwise daily activities for prisoners continued as usual.

The year saw the closure of the staff mess. Although a very good facility offering reasonably priced meals, the relatively low level of use meant that the Governor was unable to justify continuing with the heavy level of subsidy. Microwaves and vending machines are available for staff use within the prison and there is a nearby shop and café.

7. The Work of the IMB

7.1 The Year in focus

In January 2011 a new Board was appointed. This comprised members of the previous Boards for Edmunds Hill and Highpoint. Officials were elected after agreeing it would be sensible for this first year to elect two Vice Chairs, one for the north and one for the south.

One of the first priorities of the new Board was to set up a working group to look at future working practices. The Chair wishes to thank all those involved as the work was undertaken in addition to normal duties. Recommendations were made by the group and then all members discussed the best way to proceed. The Board was mindful that while discussions were ongoing, its priority remained its monitoring role. Initially the status quo was retained for visits. Shared familiarisation visits were then undertaken and by mid-year the majority of members were operating across the whole site.

Initially the Board was over complement but inevitably members left during the year because of changes in work and personal circumstances. It was decided that establishing a stable Board and working practices was essential and so recruitment plans were put on hold until this was achieved. Towards the end of the year recruitment began and in December interviews were held. The appointments recommended will bring the Board up to complement.

There have predictably been differences in approach between the 'old' Boards but these have been worked through and common ground established. The Chair wishes to record her thanks to all members for their support, their hard work and for remaining focused on their monitoring role while internal Board discussions were ongoing. It has been a complex year but now a strong and committed Board is in place.

The Chair also wishes to thank the Board's Clerk for his help throughout the year. During the establishment of the new Board his support and assistance was particularly appreciated. His knowledge of staff and operations across the whole site has been invaluable to members.

7.2 Board Statistics

Recommended complement of Board Members	20
Number of Board Members at start of the reporting period	22
Number of Board Members at end of reporting period	17
Number of new Members joining within the reporting period	0
Number of Members leaving within the reporting period	4
Number of Members transferring out within the reporting period	1
Total number of Board meetings during the reporting period	12
Average number of attendances at Board meetings during the reporting period	13
Number of attendances at meetings other than Board Meetings	140
Total number of rota visits conducted	220
Total number of visits to the prison	740
Total number of Applications received	947
Total number of segregation reviews held	517
Total number of segregation reviews attended	450

7.3 Applications received by the Board (North & South sites)

Code	Subject	2008	2009	2010	2011
A	Accommodation	5	8	2	9
B	Adjudications	8	12	12	19
C	Diversity related	3	3	7	0
D	Education/employment/training	53	65	91	98
E	Family/visits	69	68	58	70
F	Food kitchen related	17	12	13	9
G	Health related	47	79	74	88
H	Property	195	191	146	194
I	Sentence related	116	129	113	207
J	Staff/prisoner related	22	17	21	53
K	Transfers	129	132	73	81
L	Miscellaneous	139	168	139	188
Total number of subjects in Applications		803	884	749	1016
Total number of Applications		695	773	708	947

7.4 Activities and Development

Members have been involved in both internal and external training throughout the Year.

In January our five new members attended the Foundation training course which they found very useful.

In February the Board met to discuss Serious Incidents and the session was led by our Vice Chair who is also a National Trainer.

In April 12 members travelled to Kidlington National Training Centre to observe a refresher course in C&R techniques.

In May members of the IMB at HMP Hollesley Bay visited HMP Highpoint South and spent the day touring the establishment and discussing matters arising from the tour.

In July the Board met for a training session which involved Applications followed by a talk from a representative from ISCRE.

In October the Board held its Annual Review. A plan for future training needs was discussed.

In November members observed internal C&R Training and a Cell Snatch Rescue. A Personal Safety Awareness Course was organised for those who had not yet attended one.

The IMB is regularly invited to attend end of course presentations by the prisoners and their presence and interest is very much appreciated by the instructors as well as the prisoners.

Generally members of the Board actively take on any opportunity to improve their skills and knowledge and give generously of their time to ensure continued awareness of issues which enable them to do their job professionally and sensitively.

8. Glossary of Abbreviations and Acronyms used in this report

ACCT	Assessment Care in Custody and Teamwork
C&R	Control and Restraint
CALM	Controlling Anger and Learning to Manage it
CARATS	Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice and Through care
CBT	Cognitive Behaviour Therapy
DREAT	Diversity and Race Equality Action Team
ESOL	English for speakers of Other Languages
GTR	Gypsy, Traveller and Romany
HAB	Hospitality Awarding Body
HMCIP	Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons
HRP	Healthy Relationships Programme
IAPT	Improving Access to Psychological Therapies
IDTS	Integrated Drug Treatment Service
IEP	Incentive and Earned Privileges
ISCRE	Ipswich and Suffolk Commission for Race Equality
ISP	Indeterminate Sentenced Prisoner
KPT	Key Performance Target
NA	Narcotics Anonymous
NACRO	National Association for Care and Resettlement of Prisoners
NICE	National Institute for Clinical Excellence
NVQ	National Vocational Training
OASys	Offender Assessment System
OMU	Offender Management Unit
PALS	Patient Advice & Liaison Service
P-ASRO	Prison Addressing Substance Related Offending
PO	Principal Officer
PPCS	Public Protection casework section
RAPt	The Rehabilitation for Addicted Prisoners Trust
ROTL	Release on Temporary Licence
SAU	Segregation and Assessment Unit
SMT	Senior Management Team
UKBA	UK Border Agency