



Independent Monitoring Board

HMP Highpoint Annual Report 2013

For the reporting period: 1st January to 31st December 2013

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.

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3. HMP Highpoint

3.1 Role of the prison

HMP Highpoint (North and South) is a Category C training prison situated some 10 miles south east of Newmarket in Suffolk. The Certified Normal Accommodation is 1299. The Operational Capacity increased to 1331 in 2013. 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 with the formal merger completed in April 2011.

The establishment was classified at level 3 in terms of performance. This means that it is meeting the majority of targets, experiencing no significant problems in doing so, and is delivering a reasonable and decent regime. However this classification fell to level 2 by the end of the year which meant it was requiring development//overall development is of concern.

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. 12 triple occupancy cells reverted to double use during the year.

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. On-going painting and higher standards of cleaning continue to help brighten the units. Drainage and ventilation are on-going problems in the communal shower recesses although the year did see the refurbishment of some of these commencing in June.

Units D of Tempest is the designated IDTS Units for the prison.

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 considers this is a barrier to good prisoner/staff relationships. This issue has been raised in previous reports and the MOJ has reported that the prison will be looking into the provision of a window in front of the office to improve staff and prisoner communication and accessibility.

The Board wishes to report that no such work commenced during 2013.

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.

Gloster and Meteor unit are newer units with single en suite cells. Meteor Unit is the Interventions Unit for the north side.

Laundry facilities on all residential Units still continue to cause the Board concern. With heavy daily usage, machines often break down and there is then an unacceptable delay while awaiting repair or replacement. In the majority of residential units domestic machines are provided as it is understood the electrical supply to the units would not be adequate for larger, more powerful industrial machines and with budget constraints it would not be possible to do the necessary work to upgrade the present facilities, as it would attract a considerable cost. The Board has constantly raised this issue with the Governor throughout the year, and whilst some change has been observed the Board feels that due to the size of the establishment consideration should be given to installing an industrial laundry on site. The Board is concerned that this matter causes such a problem resulting in the disgruntlement of the prisoners for whom laundry is an important part of a decent environment.

The communal showers on all units also have a heavy daily use and many have either on-going or periodic problems with drainage and ventilation, notwithstanding some refurbishment work which was started in December

3.3 Healthcare

Care UK are responsible for the provision of healthcare services within the prison.

3.4 Agencies

Resettlement providers include NACRO.

Drugs rehabilitation services are provided by RAPt

Ormiston provides services for prisoners' families and children.

Healthcare is provided by CareUK Ltd

4. Executive Summary

HMP Highpoint with a population of over 1300 is one of the largest Category C prisons in the country.

A new governor was appointed in October and he has had to face many challenges since his appointment including Fair and Sustainable, New way of Working and changes such as the new IEP system to take forward. With the Senior Management Team he has implemented many positive changes including extensive works on the grounds and within the residential units.

Although the prison has some way to go to achieve the level of performance it started the year with, it is still meeting most of its targets and delivering a reasonable and decent regime.

4.1 Items requiring a response

4.1.1 From the Minister

4.1.1.1 Mental Health

The Board repeats its concern expressed in last year's annual report that it continues to have very grave concerns about the number of prisoners it sees with severe mental health problems. Regrettably it is often the Segregation Unit that becomes a place of safety while a transfer is sought to enable the appropriate treatment to be given. The Board is disturbed that there seems to be no real progress in identifying mental health issues early in sentence. .

5.3.7

4.1.1.2 Property

In last year's report the Board expressed concern about the handling of property. Again the Board re-iterates its previous requests for a complete review of the handling and transportation of prisoners' property, and better communication between establishments when property goes missing.

6.10

4.1.1.3 Counselling Service

In last year's annual report, the Board expressed its concern that, given the high proportion of prisoners with psychological disorders, counselling services are not perceived as a treatment priority either by the Prison Service or the Health Service.

5.3.7

NOMS' response to the report indicated that CBT was available to prisoners where there is a clinical need. The Board wishes to bring to the attention of the minister that there is, at Highpoint, no process in place for identifying clinical need for counselling and no facilities in place to provide it.

4.1.2 From the Deputy Director of Custody

4.1.2.1 Staffing

With the continued financial pressure and new ways of working the Board remains concerned about the impact this will have upon maintaining a safe and decent regime. The Board seeks the DDC's assurance that staffing levels will be maintained at a level that ensures the maintenance of a safe regime.

6.14

4.1.2.2 Laundry

Are there suitable facilities in the region to offer adequate laundry services to prisoners here? If not, taking into consideration the large and complex site of Highpoint North and South, could funding be made available to install an Industrial Laundry on site?

3.2

4.1.3 From the Governor

4.1.3.1 Complaints and Applications Procedure

The Board still perceives an on-going lack of confidence in the procedure.

6.3

Perfunctory, handwritten, anonymous and often illegible replies are not helpful.

The Board asks that the Governor undertake a thorough review of the Application and Complaints procedure with a view to making it responsive, efficient and effective.

4.1.3.2 IDTS

6.4

As RAPt programmes are abstinence-based, IDTS clients are excluded. Although useful support and harm-minimisation sessions are offered, the Board regrets that clients lack any in-depth course addressing their behaviour. The Board asks whether this need will be addressed in the future.

4.1.3.3 Lack of in-cell education within the SAU

5.5

The Board continues to have concerns about the lack of in-cell education within the SAU and urges that this facility should be sought from the education provider A4E.

4.1.3.4 Disparity of wages for learners and workers

5.2.1

Prisoners with employment on residential wings and in the kitchen earn a higher wage than full and part-time learners with prisoners restricted to one part-time course only. If lives are to be changed more prisoners need to be encouraged into education and training or not be penalised by a lower wage.

4.1.3.5 Catering Qualifications

6.1

The Board feels that the Prison Service has lost an opportunity by not making NVQ catering qualifications available to kitchen workers. This would have positive benefits to rehabilitation and potential employment on release.

4.2 Items not requiring a response

4.2.1 SMARG

5.5

The Board is concerned that these meetings are not taking place on a regular basis.

4.2.2 OASys

6.7

Sentence plans are important to prisoners who are keen to fulfil their requirements to maximize their chances of progression towards D cat and ROTL. The Board is aware that at the end of the year, approximately 25 sentence plans were outstanding. Although, for a prison population in excess 1300, this number seems reasonable, the Board is concerned that changes to staffing and ways of working within the OMU will further contribute to delays in preparation of prisoners' sentence plans. The Board will continue to actively monitor the status of outstanding sentence plans in 2014.

4.3 Overall Judgement

The Board acknowledges that the staff have worked hard in sometimes difficult circumstances. With changes in the regime, the new way of working and Benchmarking being introduced. Their dedication and commitment is to be commended.

However the Board remains concerned that further cuts in finances are beginning to have an impact on prisoners. The Board remains concerned that this will adversely affect the running of a safe and decent establishment. It questions whether Highpoint can continue to function without prisoners facing longer times in cells, which will only add to their frustration, ultimately having a negative impact on the safety and decency of the establishment, and for prisoners and staff.

5. Required Reporting

5.1. Diversity

The Committee is now known as the Equalities Action Group

Foreign National Issues are now dealt with by the Immigration Dept. who visits the Prison two or three times a week. An Administration Officer is provided by the Prison.

The Equalities Action Team has had to adapt to new Prison working schedules during the year. At one point the Committee had to struggle to keep the impetus going and maintain the previous vibrancy, but by the end of the year they had succeeded in doing this and are now moving forward positively.

Diversity and Equality are interpreted in the widest sense at HMP Highpoint and all departments are encouraged to contribute ideas and be involved in discussions.

5.1.1. Ethnic Monitoring

The Ethnic balance is little changed, with 42% of the population being White British and the remaining 58% being a mixture of a wide range of ethnicities.

Prisoner Representatives from different Ethnic and Religious Groups are encouraged and assisted to attend all relevant meetings and Focus Groups so that points of view can be heard and groups kept up to date with ideas and developments.

5.1.2. Focus Group Meetings

These are held for the following groups.

- Gypsy/Roma/Traveller
- Equality and Foreign National
- Disability and Older Prisoners
- Sexual Orientation

5.1.3. Engagement with Outside Organisations

The contribution of the Staff Member from the Ipswich and Suffolk Council for Racial Equality (ISCRE), who attends Highpoint on two days a week, continues to be highly appreciated. Staff and Prisoners benefit from his input.

Black History Month was celebrated again this year. The Exhibition of Historic and Diversity themes provoked useful discussion.

Music in Prisons visited again and was very successful.

Holocaust Memorial Day was commemorated again.

International Older Persons Day, an exhibition for Prisoners aged 45+, with input from a variety of Organisations giving advice and information on a variety of relevant

topics, was held during the year. The aim was to give information and advice about what was available to older prisoners on release.

5.1.4 Foreign Nationals and immigration

The situation for Foreign National prisoners has continued to improve over the last year, and whilst there is some frustration felt by Prisoners held over sentence, communication with UKBA is now easier and gives Prisoners greater confidence in the system.

Regular Forums are held on both North and South sides of the Prison. These are attended by the Foreign National representatives from each Unit and this encourages a free-flow of information about Immigration and Foreign issues.

The Prison gives a high profile to all Foreign National issues. The subject is discussed at each bi monthly Equalities meeting and a Foreign National representative is present at each meeting. Every effort is made to solve the various problems that may arise.

5.2. Reducing Re-offending

5.2.1 Learning & Skills

The manager for Reducing Re-offending at HMP Highpoint works in partnership with Head of Education, the education provider A4e and the Prisoner Learning and Skills Service.

Across both sites there are the equivalent of 77 tutors, of whom 53 teach, whilst the remainder are management, administration and learning support. Both sites are managed by one Education Manager supported by a Deputy and a team of Curriculum managers.

The prisoners involved in education came from a varied number of ethnic groups of various ages with an average age of 36.

All prisoners arriving at HMP Highpoint are initially assessed as part of the induction process by the National Careers Service but it was felt this was too detailed and beyond the reading ability of many.

Screening for English and Maths is part of the enrolment criteria for all courses. Between June and October 2013 A4e screened 322 learners.

Data collected suggests that those with lower levels of literacy and numeracy are less likely to enrol for education provision. A significant proportion of learners are level 2 or above.

A4e manage and deliver the programme and receive funding based on delivery and results. The programme is both academic and vocational. A variety of courses at various levels are available but the variety is limited by funding.

There have been significant curriculum developments since the last report as a result of 3 key markers: the Prison merge, the change to OLASS-4 funding and the HMPS benchmarking activity. These areas were highlighted in the last Ofsted report.

The new ACCESS course has seen an improvement in numbers of below entry level learners taking up further learning. There has been an increase in the provision for additional learning support with a team of learning support practitioners who provide support to learners with additional needs in the classroom.

The prison reassumed responsibility for Toe-to-Toe in November and as a result Education has no member of staff responsible for this. The prison was able to appoint a member of operational staff for 8 hours to manage the programme but this has not happened. A member of Education has coordinated the programme on a voluntary basis but the situation needs to be addressed.

Peer mentors have to be level 2 in English and Maths and commit to a Peer Mentoring course. A pilot course has been a success and a second course is imminent.

Distance Learning – A regional model is to be introduced but at HMP Highpoint there might be a problem with numbers transferring from London prisons. Courses beyond level 2 for over 25 years will involve a student loan.

The major and most encouraging change since the last report has been the creation of the Vocational Training Centre on the North side. Together with the relocation of existing construction courses and ITQ provision, this centre is an excellent move towards changing lives and raising self-esteem.

The courses available are a result of reviewing prisoners' needs whilst evaluating local and national labour market markers.

There are, however, some factors that are a concern and should be addressed, for example, the new regime which has increased teacher contact time with learners. Efforts are in hand to tackle this problem which is a concern to the teachers who have less time for marking and preparation.

Another example is the disparity between wage levels between workers and learners. Prisoners with employment on residential wings and in the kitchen earn a higher wage than full- and part-time learners with prisoners restricted to one part-time course only. A recent report suggests that 52% of prisoners have no qualifications and almost half of prisoners have literacy skills at or below level 1. Two thirds have similar problems with numeracy. If lives are to be changed more prisoners need to be encouraged into education and training and not be penalised by a lower wage.

The increased number of lockdowns due to staffing has led to a number of education sessions being cancelled therefore learning is disrupted.

There are a significant number of prisoners with mental health issues requiring education courses. It is often difficult to meet their need as a consequence of their health and behaviour.

5.2.2. Breaking the Cycle

The 'Breaking the Cycle through effective Partnership Working' programme addresses the issue of re-offending by giving prisoners practical experience of work in readiness for release.

The successful forums have continued and provide a good opportunity for a lively exchange of ideas and new initiatives. The team is always keen to follow up contacts

to see if they can establish future ROTL opportunities for prisoners or enhancing future work prospects. A Board Member has attended on a regular basis and has been able to see and hear first-hand the genuine interest. There has also been an opportunity for delegates to talk with prisoners, the best way possible to get a feel for their future working needs. Feedback has always been provided on topics/suggestions raised at previous meetings.

In the July delegates attended the formal opening of the new Vocational Training Centre on Highpoint North and were then given a tour of the centre. Again there were good opportunities to talk with the instructors and prisoners who had been involved in the creation of the unit.

Each meeting has provided an update of ongoing projects. It was particularly good to learn of one initiative that has benefitted the local community - a group of prisoners laid a path enabling wheelchair access to woodland managed by a local charity, the Green Light Trust.

Future plans include a local Building Society coming in to work with prisoners on money management - something that many of them never consider.

The Board continues to be impressed by the drive and determination shown by the team working upon this initiative. It is not always easy working within the constraints of the prison system but they refuse to let this dampen their enthusiasm.

Bi-monthly meetings are held under the chair of the Cluster Head of Learning and Skills which includes the IMB. The group is an energetic group and the IMB has seen much to encourage it with their efforts to change the lives of prisoners leaving HMP Highpoint at the end of their sentences. Prisoners speak very highly of their tutors who should be applauded for their efforts.

5.2.3. Gym

Physical Education is a popular activity on both the north and south side of the prison. The facilities are good, and the South benefits from an all-weather football pitch.

Programmes delivered include an induction for new prisoners, sessions for older prisoners and remedial support for anyone referred by Healthcare. Gym orderlies receive training by staff to offer support to fellow prisoners.

Prisoners can work towards various qualifications in:

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

Due to the new Benchmarking it is unfortunate that Instructors are being redeployed to other duties within both North and South sides. Since August 2013 to Dec 2013 116 sessions have had to be cancelled, resulting in induction to gym being delayed and prisoners not getting the required hours as laid out in Rule 29. The Board is concerned that this may lead to unrest among prisoners, and the implications this may have on the good order and discipline of the establishment.

5.2.4 Industries

The Head of Reducing Re-offending continues to develop purposeful activities but at present there are insufficient work places available for the existing population. Added to this when a company pulls out of industries, it results in loss of places until a new unit can be set up. It is acknowledged by senior management that increasing employment is an essential priority. There are plans to make changes in the coming year, switching facilities between the north and south sites, and the Board hopes that this will generate more work opportunities. Instructors work closely with the prisoners employed in their workshops and the Board acknowledges the good working relationships they establish with the prisoners.

5.2.5 Interventions

For details and comments on the intervention programmes and treatments delivered, please see Sections 5.2.6 (Psychology), 5.3.7 (Mental Health) and 6.4 (Drugs and Alcohol).

5.2.6 Psychology

Sentence plans often highlight the requirement to complete one of the many in-depth programmes run by the Psychology Department. Timing is all important if a pre-parole assessment is due and the Board has spoken with prisoners very concerned as to whether they will be able to get onto the necessary programme in time.

In March the Board was advised of some significant changes to the programmes being run by the Department.

The HRP Programme (Healthy Relationship Programme) was run for the last time at Highpoint and transferred to HMP Blundeston. The Board questions whether it would have been sensible to have kept the programme running at Highpoint a while longer, as in December HMP Blundeston was closed. It was a programme undertaken by many of Highpoint Lifer prisoners and the reason some prisoners transferred here.

The Board was told that a Self Change Programme is to be introduced but is concerned that this will not be until April 2014, a wait of nearly a year.

In the autumn the CALM programme stopped and a newer version called RESOLVE has now commenced. RESOLVE aims to reduce the likelihood and seriousness of violent and aggressive behaviour in prisoners and so is a welcome addition.

The Thinking Skills Programme has continued but has been reduced by one programme. The Board understands that acquisitive offenders are no longer being put on the programme as outcome research has indicated it was not of benefit to them.

5.3. Healthcare and Mental Health

5.3.1 Primary Care

Care UK took over the contract for the provision of Healthcare in Highpoint in September of 2011. All the new procedures are well embedded into the daily routine of the prison and are working very well.

Care UK are contracted to provide primary care to the Highpoint. They expect that prisoners take some responsibility for their own health issues and seek advice accordingly. A Healthcare Orderly is now the norm and one of his duties is to deliver to the cells all healthcare appointments slips (in envelopes) which have helped to reduce the unattended appointments. Prisoners not attending appointments has been a problem, but steps were put in place to reduce this.

The waiting time to see the GP was an average of 6 days; an emergency is seen on the day. Nurse-led clinics are run regularly for Asthma, Blood borne viruses, Blood pressure, Diabetes, Smoking cessation, Chlamydia and Pre-release clinic. A well man clinic is run by the Gym staff. A Physiotherapist from NHS comes into the prison when required. Specsavers the Opticians come into the prison on a monthly basis seeing all who require to be seen.

The Board receives many complaints from prisoners who have an expectation that the medication they have been receiving at previous prisons will be available to them at Highpoint and they cannot understand why that should not be so. The Board wonders why there is no standardisation across the estate. Whilst the Board appreciates that GPs prescribe according to clinical need, it questions why this need appears to be different when prisoners arrive at Highpoint.

It is to be hoped that the new contract with NHS England will provide much more uniformity.

5.3.2 Dentistry

The dentist provides clinics twice a week on the South and once a week on the North side. The waiting time on the North did increase during the summer because of long standing issues with the dental chair which at last was resolved. The waiting list for an emergency appointment is a maximum of 4 days and a routine appointment is 23 days.

5.3.3 Podiatry

A podiatry service was not originally included when CareUK bid for the health contract at HMP Highpoint. Care UK have been filling the gap pro tem. The Board urges the commissioner to include a podiatry service as soon as possible.

The Board is concerned that prisoners with diabetes are not routinely checked by a podiatrist.

5.3.4 PALS

PALS is no longer available to prisoners and they are required to write to NHS England, whose address is displayed on all Healthcare noticeboards on all wings.

5.3.5 Healthcare Complaints

The prison Complaints Procedure Complaints is no longer used to report Healthcare problems. All Healthcare complaints now go directly to the Head of Healthcare who deals with them. There are an average of 20 complaints a month and a full report is published and circulated.

5.3.6 Pharmacy

The Pharmacy team is made up of a pharmacist, 2 senior pharmacist technician, 1 pharmacist technician and a part-time trainee. A Medication Management Meeting is held every 3 months to discuss any issues with the rest of the Healthcare staff. The IMB have not received any complaints about the pharmacy itself.

5.3.7 Mental Health

Again, the Board re-iterates its concern that prison is a completely inappropriate environment for people with serious mental health disorders. The management of mental health issues is a major problem within the prison. The Board commends the efforts of most of the officers but acknowledges that they have minimal or non-existent training in managing issues such as suicide, self-harm and serious personality disorders. For example, it is easy to dismiss disruptive behaviour as “attention seeking” but the Board believes that in many cases, serious underlying issues are being missed.

The Board would like to put on record its acknowledgement of the commitment and dedication of Segregation Unit staff in their tireless efforts to maintain a safe and decent environment in the Unit for all prisoners with mental health issues in their care.

The Mental Health team are now totally based in the prison having vacated their external offices. The Board has concerns over the very high number of unattended appointments. The Board is aware that procedures are being put in place to decrease this number which the Board will monitor carefully.

The Board has serious concerns with the lack of a counselling service for prisoners with psychological disorders; a service readily available under the IAPT scheme to people in the community. The Board consistently raises this issue in its reports yet there seems no desire by NOMS to consider its provision.

5.4. Safer Custody

The Board considers that HMP Highpoint is, by and large, a safe prison though tobacco debt is starting to become an issue for concern.

A Safer Custody meeting is held each month, at which issues and trends around safety, violence and self-harm are examined and addressed. Violence Reduction prisoner representatives and Listeners attend these meetings and report back their observations from walking the wings. The Board also attends these meetings.

The Board is concerned that Safer Custody staff are often redeployed onto other duties around the prison and continuity in the management of operational issues is therefore more difficult to maintain.

Delays in the approval of ROTL, HDCs and Category D and delays in the response to complaints cause frustration amongst prisoners and can lead to tension. The Board considers that again the redeployment of staff has impacted on these matters being dealt with in a timely manner, and the Board urges the Governor to address this.

The Board is most concerned that ACCT documents frequently do not accompany vulnerable prisoners when they are off the wings; an issue which the Board has repeatedly brought to the management's attention, but thus far with little effect.

5.5. Segregation and Assessment Unit

The SAU continues to be busy and is often full to capacity. The Board visits the SAU on a regular basis and commends the staff who are often faced with challenging and disruptive behaviour.

The Board still has grave concerns regarding prisoners with quite severe mental health problems being located on the SAU, sometimes for long periods of time whilst they are assessed for transfer to a more appropriate placement. This often involves having to be sectioned under the Mental Health Act, and this involves securing funding and specialist treatment from the appropriate Healthcare Authority. The Board continues to stress that these situations are intolerable, both for the staff who have to deal with these very disturbed individuals and the prisoners themselves.

The Board is disappointed that there is still no provision for in-cell education within the SAU, bearing in mind that prisoners are locked behind their doors for the biggest part of the day. We urge the Prison Service and the education provider, A4E, to consider providing this facility.

Segregation Monitoring and Review Group Meetings (SMARG) have been sporadic and often cancelled. The Board is concerned that this important meeting does not take place on a regular basis. It is important to regularly review the paperwork giving statistics of prisoners who are segregated, and to discuss the work of the SAU. The Board hopes that this will improve next year.

6. Other Areas

6.1 Catering and Kitchens

Highpoint prison has two kitchens catering for approximately 1300 prisoners. Meals produced have to meet cultural, nutritional and diversity needs. The IMB sample the food and observe its preparation and delivery.

Prisoners are provided with three meals a day and choose from a multi choice, pre-selected menu system which covers a four week cycle. The allowance for each prisoner is now £1.89 which the Board feels is insufficient to provide nutritious and ample meals for prisoners. This has had an impact upon the quality of the food, which is supplied from a central contractor. It has been noted that meat and cheese in particular are of very poor quality. The Board this year saw a considerable increase in food complaints. The combination of increasing prices and reduction in cost per head has made it difficult for staff to comply with the requirements of the PSI. In addition, the kitchens are required to meet the catering needs of various religious festivals, which though appreciated by prisoners, also leads to increased costs and the potential for a reduction in the quality and quantity of the food provided.

Over the last 12 months there have been on-going problems with equipment failing and awaiting repair, and at one point the kitchen on the South side had two thirds of its equipment out of order. It is of great concern to the IMB that breakdowns occur so frequently, and that it can take so long for repairs to be authorised and implemented. The Board considers that a review of the processes for maintaining and repairing kitchen equipment, such that delays caused by failures are minimised, is long overdue.

Food Committee Meetings, which should take place on a regular basis, have often been cancelled with the reason given that there are not enough staff to facilitate them. When they do take place they are well attended by wing reps, with points raised being acted upon by the staff. The IMB is invited to attend and if that is not possible minutes have been available for the Board to read.

Training in Basic Hygiene is provided for all prisoners working in the kitchens. However, the Board feels that the Prison Service has lost an opportunity by not making an NVQ available to them. This would have positive benefits to rehabilitation and potential employment on release.

The Board acknowledges the dedication and professionalism of the kitchen staff who provide meals in often difficult and challenging circumstances. Despite this, the meals provided are generally appetising, and are widely appreciated by the prisoners.

6.2 Chaplaincy

The Board acknowledges the valuable contribution the Chaplaincy team plays in the day to day life of the prison and the pastoral care that it provides to prisoners of all (or no) faiths. All new prisoners meet with a member of the team as part of the induction process. Chaplaincy members are a familiar and welcome presence around the prison. They provide very good support to those in need particularly at those times when absence from family and friends is most keenly felt, e.g. family bereavements.

6.3 Complaints and Applications Procedure

The Board considers that the Complaints process is completely dysfunctional, particularly with regard to issues around prisoners' property.

The Board's perception is that many prisoners still lack confidence in the Complaints and Applications Procedure.

Perfunctory, handwritten, anonymous and often illegible replies are not helpful and frequently result in additional work by staff and the Board to clarify the response being given. Clarity of response and addressing of the issue in the first instance would not only be respectful but efficient too.

Many Complaints need to be forwarded to other prisons (for example the sending prison of a new Highpoint arrival). Although there are some good examples, most responses from other prisons are tardy, leaving the prisoner in limbo with his complaint. The Board reflects that, in its experience, the worst culprits are the private prisons.

Whilst the Board acknowledges that transfers are dealt with nationally, with transport being cancelled at the last minute, applications for transfers to other prisons experience intolerable delays as they pass through a chain of command for approval and authorisation, often sitting in the in-box of a Custodial Manager who has been redeployed onto other duties.

The Board asks that the Governor undertake a thorough review of the Application and Complaints procedure with a view to making it responsive, efficient and effective.

6.4 Drugs and Alcohol

The treatment programmes run by RAPt are now bedded in well. These are The Bridge (for prisoners with drug dependency) and the Alcohol Dependence Treatment Programme (ADTP). A Board member has attended the end programme graduations and heard first-hand the very positive feedback from participants. The Board hopes that the graduates will continue to develop their self-awareness and to use the knowledge and skills gained to build a life for themselves free of addictive behaviour.

Last year the Board expressed concern that the regular Drug Strategy meetings had been cancelled. It is therefore pleased to report that the meetings have been re-introduced, chaired by the Deputy Governor, and have been held throughout the year on a bi-monthly basis. An Action Plan has been drawn up, sound proposals introduced and these taken forward and monitored in a timely manner.

The IDTS unit with its contained pharmacy has run well on Tempest Unit. Board members monitoring the unit are particularly aware of the benefits of the dispensing arrangements. The previous system was not ideal in that prisoners had to wait together in an often hot and crowded waiting room in Healthcare and there was often a very volatile atmosphere. The Board still has some reservations about the lack of an in depth course for IDTS clients but nonetheless acknowledges there is good support available through one to one or group sessions run by RAPt.

Blenheim Unit is now the establishment's drug-free unit and is home to the prisoners on the Bridge and ADTP programmes. There were inevitably some teething

problems in the early stages but now a calm and orderly unit has been established conducive to the work being undertaken. A peer support worker who also resides on the unit provides valuable support to his fellow prisoners.

The Board recognizes Highpoint's commitment to its Drug Strategy policy and the support it offers to prisoners but also notes the many challenges it faces in its attempts to keep the prison as alcohol and drug free as possible.

The Mandatory Drug Testing programme highlights this. Highpoint is required to randomly test 5% of its population each month for illicit drugs. While two months returned a positive test rate of just 1.5% in three months, the positive rate reached 12.3%, way above the target of just 5%. This reinforces the continuing need for strong and decisive policies and constant vigilance.

6.5 Incentives and Earned Privileges

A new IEP scheme came into operation in the prison in November.

The revised scheme was publicised to prisoners via notices, prisoner forums and one to one conversations with staff. However the Board's perception is that many prisoners have still not grasped the fundamental changes of the scheme, in particular what is required to gain or maintain enhanced level status.

Prisoners still continue to seek the Board's assistance to challenge an IEP warning or a downgrading they consider unfair. Usually the Board member is able to report that the correct procedure has been followed.

Some prisoners however remain confused when they receive both an adjudication ruling and an IEP downgrading. Their perception is that they are being punished twice for the same offence, an issue also raised in last year's report. While the Board is able to confirm that there is no 'double jeopardy' in these cases, it considers that more time spent explaining the process would help avoid these situations.

6.6 Lifers

The Lifers Unit is situated on Lancaster Unit. Most of the residents appear to have a very balanced view of prison life and the unit is generally very stable providing them with a settled living environment.

There are good links to probation and psychology that are also located on the unit. Lifer-trained officers provide excellent support to the residents.

Generally, the Board's perception is that Lifers present few problems.

6.7 Prisoner Management Unit and OASys

The Board has frequently found it difficult to contact Offender Managers to assist in resolution of prisoners' issues due to their being redeployed on other prison duties. This creates intolerable delays in responding to the concerns expressed by prisoners about their sentence plans and eligibility for ROTL, HDC and cat D.

At the end of the year, 25 sentence plans were outstanding and the Board is concerned that this figure may rise in 2014 due to redeployment of Offender Managers.

6.8 Personal Officer Scheme

The Board continues to see and hear officers working well with prisoners and providing excellent support, care and encouragement. This is then backed up by meaningful entries in prisoner records.

The Board does, though, continue to have reservations about the consistency of the scheme across the whole establishment. It still finds quite a number of prisoners who claim not to know their Personal Officer. Re-deployment of officers will often mean that the designated officer is not available. Board members find that Officers working on an unfamiliar unit do not have in-depth knowledge of the on-going issues and problems of the prisoners on that unit.

The year has seen the New Way of Working and Fair and Sustainable implemented. The new regime has resulted in fewer officers on the wings, which has impacted on the time available for officers to spend with prisoners. This results in prisoners not being able to access their personal officers or sometimes not knowing who they are.

6.9 Prisoner Forums

The prisoner forum format changed yet again this year, when the new operational management structure came into effect.

There is now one forum dedicated for North chaired by an Assistant Governor and one for South chaired by another Assistant Governor. These Governors are very fair, straight forward and adept.

The forums are well attended by prisoner representatives from each unit. Amiable, direct and honest discussion is encouraged within the protocols of the meeting. Important information regarding the change in IEP rules was carefully explained at these forums and questions encouraged to promote full understanding of the new system.

At forums, prisoners raise questions or ideas. Minutes are made available soon after the meetings and circulated. Concerns about the ban on photos being sent in, rules regarding photo ID for children when visiting and the high prices charged on the Canteen list are a sample of issues aired.

Forums were originally planned for two monthly intervals but are less frequent in practice, which is not ideal.

6.10 Property

The Board remains concerned about the amount of applications it gets regarding lost property, particularly when a prisoner is transferred to Highpoint from another establishment. Often they have been unable to bring all their property on the van because of lack of storage. Often a prisoner who has moved round several establishments within a few months are still waiting for their property to catch up with them and no-one seems to know, or to take responsibility for, where it is in the

system. The Board continues to remain concerned at the apparent cavalier attitude by the Prison Service towards prisoners' property. This is unacceptable and leads to prisoners losing personal, sentimental items, and frustration at not being able to trace the items. In addition, the Prison Service becomes liable for compensation claims and the time-consuming bureaucracy that accompanies them.

Again the Board re-iterates its previous requests for a complete review of the handling and transportation of prisoners' property, and better communication between establishments when property goes missing.

6.11 Security

2013 saw a significant decrease in the drug finds.

Mobile phone finds remained more or less constant but there was a slight increase in SIM cards.

The Board commend the staff in detecting the following items:

	2013	2012	2011
Mobile phones	254	260	60
Sim cards	89	78	29
Cannabis resin	72g	124g	627.2g
Herbal cannabis	1160.5g	1330.6g	141.1g
Heroin	9.1g	8g +	7.3g
Subutex	9g	1.5g	4.5g
Spice	72.2g		
Steroid tablets	300+		
Crack cocaine	10g		
Burnt foil	1	5	4
Amphetamines		0.5g	0.3g
Other finds in year include: - steroids, syringes/needles, cans of nitrous oxide, tattoo equipment and home-made 'bongs', one old bullet.			
"Hooch"	429 litres	251 litres	243 litres

Intelligence suggests that drugs are still being passed in the visits hall with prisoners swapping footwear with their visitors to in order to traffic contraband. Children's visits on the North are a weak spot as these take place in the Gym and there is no CCTV and a more relaxed atmosphere. Staff face a constant challenge to stay one step ahead of the game, and when one route is blocked another is then identified, and has to be dealt with.

Again there is a rise in reportable incidents this year - 1206 in total - 4% up on last year. Although reports of assaults remain the same and self-harm incidents have decreased the number of barricades and damage has increased. The Board is concerned that there is an unsettled feeling on the units, prisoners are more volatile and difficult to manage. With the new profile and Fair and Sustainable implemented in November, the Board continues to urge the Prison Service to ensure there are enough Officers to deal with any incidents before they have an adverse effect on the good order and discipline of the establishment.

6.12 Transfers

Because of the rural location of HMP Highpoint and lack of public transport, prisoners' families find the journey difficult and arduous. As most of the prisoners are from the London and surrounding areas this leads to many transfer requests.

Again we raise concerns as many prisoners are unable to maintain family ties, and when requesting a transfer they are often unsuccessful in their request. For whatever reason the prisoner is left frustrated, and the transfer clerk finds there is little they can do to facilitate the move. The Board feels that the prisoners should be kept informed, and not be given false expectations with regard their being able to move closer to home.

Prisoners' sentence plans may include an obligation on the prisoner to undertake mandatory training courses before they may be considered for parole. If those courses are not available at Highpoint then the Board considers that the prison should make every effort to assist in a transfer. The Board regrets that it becomes involved with many prisoners for whom this is not the case and prisoners become frustrated that they are caught in a situation not of their making.

Category D transfers are slow to come through for prisoners coming towards the end of their sentence and an intolerable backlog of cat D processing existed for the latter half of the year. Following assurances by the Governor, the Board will monitor the effectiveness and efficiency of cat D processing in 2014.

Accumulated visits are not taking place at all and prisoners are not always aware of this fact. The Board asks that prisoners are made aware of this to avoid building up false hopes.

6.13 Visitors and Visitor Centre

Visiting orders remain slow to process and many prisoners' families are waiting nearly two weeks to receive them. This then reduces the length of time to get the Visits in before the end of the month. In some cases delays were as much as three weeks and there is a feeling that this is not being taken seriously.

There is now a canteen on the North side, selling hot and cold food bringing it in line with the South, and it is proving very popular, but it is felt that the £10 allowance is not sufficient now that there is so much more on offer.

On the whole, the Board considers that the visits seem to run reasonably efficiently with the catering on both north and south sides now a success.

6.14. Staff

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

Again the Board notes the high level of sickness which inevitably impacts on the day to day running of the regime.

The new profile which came into operation at the end of the year has inevitably had an impact on staff. The Board has noticed that there is less time for officers to engage with prisoners, and often they are redeployed from units for other duties, meaning there are often lockdowns, or just a couple of officers to manage the units, even at busy times such as lunchtime. Any absence puts pressure on the detail, with the possibility of an emergency or incident not being dealt with before it escalates.

During the course of its work on the Residential units, the Board frequently engages with officers who are happy to relate their concerns. This is a useful function as the Board is able to gauge staff feelings and the effectiveness of operational procedures.

It is important that experienced officers are retained, and given the support to carry out their duties in the professional and enthusiastic manner that focuses on running a safe and decent establishment. The Board is mindful of the need to ensure a safe working environment for all staff.

With the continued financial pressure and new ways of working the Board remains concerned about the impact this will have upon maintaining a safe and decent regime. The Board will continue to monitor this situation and bring any concerns to the attention of the Governor.

7. The Work of the IMB

7.1 The Year in focus

The Board for Highpoint North and South continues to work well together and has risen to the challenges that have presented themselves throughout the year.

At the beginning of the year the Board moved office and is now based on one of the newer residential units. It is a much better location, and puts the Board at the heart of the population. The Board has settled in well.

Again the year has been a busy one, with members dealing with numerous applications from prisoners, many of which were complex, and often had multiple issues to be addressed. This means that members are awaiting responses and applications take time to resolve. The number of applications has not decreased, and it is sometimes difficult to keep on top of them.

In November the Board appointed three new members bringing our complement to 16. Again we had a member resign for personal and family commitments. The Board is hoping to run another recruitment campaign next year as it is still well short of its full allocation of 20.

A new BDO was elected this year and the Chair thanks the outgoing BDO for his work in this demanding role, and wishes the new person well in the role.

Again the Chair thanks the Clerk for her support and help to the Board this year – especially her hard work when the Board moved office, making sure the move went smoothly and with little disruption to its work.

The Chair acknowledges the hard work and commitment of all the Board members throughout the year. As always members have given of their time volunteering to mentor new members, attend meetings, and being available for 'On Call' duties. The Chair would like to thank all Board members for their professional approach to their role, and the support the chair has received in her first year in Office.

7.2 Board Statistics

Recommended complement of Board Members	20
Number of Board Members at start of the reporting period	16
Number of Board Members at end of reporting period	16
Number of new Members joining within the reporting period	3
Number of Members leaving within the reporting period	3
Number of Members transferring out within the reporting period	0
Total number of Board meetings during the reporting period	11
Average number of attendances at Board meetings during the reporting period	12
Number of attendances at meetings other than Board Meetings	132
Total number of rota visits conducted	184
Total number of visits to the prison	736
Total number of Applications received	863
Total number of segregation reviews attended	83

7.3 Applications received by the Board

Code	Subject	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
A	Accommodation	8	2	9	26	62
B	Adjudications	12	12	19	9	23
C	Diversity related	3	7	0	16	20
D	Education/employment/training	65	91	98	53	48
E	Family/visits	68	58	70	35	31
F	Food kitchen related	12	13	9	11	17
G	Health related	79	74	88	89	84
H	Property	191	146	194	170	164
I	Sentence related	129	113	207	121	250
J	Staff/prisoner related	17	21	53	103	61
K	Transfers	132	73	81	90	108
L	Miscellaneous	168	139	188	185	154
Total number of subjects in Applications		884	749	1016	908	1022
Total number of Applications		773	708	947	831	863

7.4 Activities and Development...

Three new members received internal training during the year

The Board Visited HMP Chelmsford to continue its understanding of other Boards ways of working with a view to maintaining best practice at Highpoint.

The Board attended training sessions given by the following Departments:

- Care UK
- C & R

The Board invited several speakers to address them prior to their Board Meeting these included following topics

- Breaking the Cycle
- A4e

The Board conducted its ATPR in October, where current practice and future development was discussed and the Board also revised and agreed its Serious Incident Contingency Plans and other operational procedures in the light of experience and feedback from members

8. Glossary of Abbreviations and Acronyms used in this report

ACCT	Assessment Care in Custody and Teamwork
ADTP	Alcohol Dependence Treatment Programme
ATPR	Annual Team Performance Review
BDO	Board Development Officer
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
IAPT	Improving Access to Psychological Therapies
IDTS	Integrated Drug Treatment Service
IEP	Incentive and Earned Privileges
ISCRE	Ipswich and Suffolk Commission for Race Equality
ITQ	A nationally recognised qualification in IT
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
NACRO	National Association for Care and Resettlement of Prisoners
NCS	National Careers Service
NICE	National Institute for Clinical Excellence
NOMS	National Offender Management Service
NVQ	National Vocational Training
OASys	Offender Assessment System
OLASS	Offenders' Learning and Skills Service
OMU	Offender Management Unit
PALS	Patient Advice & Liaison Service
PPCS	Public Protection casework section
RAPt	The Rehabilitation for Addicted Prisoners Trust
ROTL	Release on Temporary Licence
SAU	Segregation and Assessment Unit
SMARG	Segregation Monitoring and Review Group
SMT	Senior Management Team
UKBA	UK Border Agency