



Annual Report

HMYOI Huntercombe
January - July 2010

&

HMP Huntercombe
October - December 2010

Section 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.

Section 2

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Section 3

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

HMYOI/HMP Huntercombe is situated in open countryside off the A4130 at Nuffield between Wallingford and Henley-on-Thames in Oxfordshire. Due to its rural location access via public transport is limited.

Huntercombe was used as an internment camp during the war after which it opened in 1946 as a Borstal Centre for young men. The establishment subsequently became a Young Offenders Institution until April 1999, when part of the establishment was allocated to juvenile offenders. Although not purpose built for this, in April 2000 the prison became a wholly Juvenile establishment.

As a Juvenile establishment, Huntercombe held only convicted and sentenced, young males as part of the Prison Service under-18 estate. It was a closed site for young people aged 15-18, serving a Detention and Training Order (DTO) or sentenced under Section 91 or detained under Indeterminate Public Protection (IPP) sentences.

All places were commissioned by and all placements were made by the Youth Justice Board (YJB). Young people came mainly (but not exclusively) from the South East of England. Throughout the reporting period the Certified Nominal Accommodation (CNA) was 360. With knife crime legislation coming into effect, more cautions given and courts placing more faith in awarding Community Service sentences, Huntercombe saw a reduction in the number of young people being sent to the prison. Huntercombe was decommissioned as an establishment for young people and closed for refurbishment in July 2010.

Huntercombe opened as a Cat C training prison for adult men in October 2010. The Occupational Capacity is given as 372. Accommodation is split between five individual wings, each wing having primarily single cell accommodation with in cell sanitation.

The buildings and facilities at Huntercombe had been geared towards classroom based education. There are some facilities suitable for vocational courses but none for industrial-based workshops.

Huntercombe accepts sentenced prisoners only and at the end of the reporting period prisoners transferred to Huntercombe had been interviewed and selected for their suitability. It is expected that as the prison fills up decisions about transfer to Huntercombe will be made centrally.

Details of education classes, work opportunities and intervention courses are inappropriate for this report as prisoner transfer in to Huntercombe was a gradual process. By the end of this reporting period there was only a limited educational and work programme in place. The education contract is provided by The Manchester College.

Healthcare is provided by Oxfordshire PCT.

Section 4

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In early spring 2010 it was announced that Huntercombe was to close as a juvenile establishment and the site was to be returned to NOMS. There had been some speculation that this would happen as the number of young people at Huntercombe reflected the decline nationally in the number of young people receiving custodial sentences.

It was anticipated that Huntercombe would become an adult male establishment but categorisation and exact remit was not announced until May 2010.

Huntercombe closed in July and underwent a period of refurbishment prior to opening in October 2010 as a Cat C Training establishment for adult males.

There was a change of Governor during the year. Kevin Leggett transferred to HMPYOI Aylesbury in April. The then deputy Governor Jonathan French took on the role of Governor until July when the current Governor Nigel Atkinson was appointed.

The Board continued to monitor during this time. Areas of concern, issues and comments on good practice were communicated to staff, managers and Governors. The Board acknowledges that the Governors kept them up to date with the many changes. Regular Board meetings were held which were attended by the Governor.

The Board consider it inappropriate to report in detail about the departments and initiatives that were in place during the final months as a juvenile establishment or the initial months as a Cat C establishment and therefore present general summaries in the following sections.

The Board noted that Huntercombe is developing as a Cat C adult establishment. All departments are in the process of setting up and staff are focused on learning new processes and adjusting to the new regimes. There is great potential for Huntercombe to become an excellent training establishment. Future reports will be able to give a more detailed appraisal of progress.

IMB in transition

Only one Board member had previous experience of monitoring an adult establishment. Whilst the remit of monitoring is the same across all types of establishments, the Board was aware that there would be considerable changes in the regimes and management between the two very different populations.

In preparation for Huntercombe opening Board members visited several other Cat C establishments to gain insight into the monitoring of this population.

The Board are very grateful to Board members and staff at these establishments for their advice and insight.

The Board would like to thank the staff at Huntercombe for helping its members to adjust to the new population.

Overall judgment

The Board at Huntercombe is in the unique position of being able to compare directly the facilities, regimes and management of two very different prison populations. The Board was surprised at the extent of

the 'refurb' and upgrade of the establishment. Facilities considered as suitable for young people were deemed as unsuitable for an adult population. These included the replacement of all furniture and mattresses in cells and replacement and upgrade of shower units and furniture in the Intensive Support Unit (ISU).

When a juvenile establishment, the Board witnessed and monitored the use of control and restraint procedures on the young people. Although the Board recognises this was a necessary function, in general it is felt that other strategies could have been used to de-escalate some situations and possibly its very use escalated others.

Experience of adult prison has highlighted the unsuitability in many ways of using the adult model in a juvenile setting - it shows the total inadequacy of the system for young people. The lack of a categorisation system means that young people assessed as being low risk offenders have the same restrictions in regime as those assessed as being high risk. In the adult estate this would not be seen as appropriate or fair. The Board also noted that young people were often given tariffs on adjudication which again, when compared to adults, would not be seen as appropriate, fair or proportionate.

The gradual re-role of Huntercombe to a Cat C prison is taking place successfully and the staff are in the process of adapting to a population with very different needs and expectations.

Particular issues requiring a response

The Board would like to report it has no particular issues requiring a response in this report. It may have issues in its next report for the year 2011.

Kim Richardson
Chair IMB
HMP Huntercombe

Section 5

HMYOI Huntercombe January – July 2010

All staff at Huntercombe are to be commended on the way in which the decommissioning process was managed. Whilst the news that Huntercombe was to be decommissioned and then re-rolled did not come as a surprise, it was a worrying time for all staff in terms of their future with the prison service. Many had only ever worked with young people. Despite their own personal worries and anxieties they applied themselves to making the transition as smooth and stress free as possible for the young people.

Following the closure announcement, the prison prepared a detailed plan of how the transfer of young people would be managed to minimise disruption, threat of violence and damage. It also took careful consideration of the unsettling effect this upheaval would have on some of the most vulnerable young people in society.

Young people were kept well informed of what was happening and, where possible and practical, were given the option to choose their preferred location. The staged and gradual shut down of each wing was highly successful and the prison had no significant problems with young people. Staff were very considerate of the needs of the young people, some of whom had been at Huntercombe for several years.

Young people approaching the end of their sentences stayed at Huntercombe until their release date and young people reaching 18 were transferred to YOI establishments.

Education

Education classes continued to run during the decommissioning process.

The learning & skills provision was provided by CfBT Education Trust. After the announcement of the closure CfBT's contract continued until end of August 2010.

It was recognised that the provision provided for an adult population would be very different to that currently provided for the young people. One of the main anxieties at the time related to the budget that would be available now that the Youth Justice Board (YJB) would no longer be involved.

The learning and skills contract then went out to tender and the education staff went through a period of great uncertainty about their future and rights within the education department. This lengthy uncertainty caused an understandable distraction to staff in executing their teaching duties.

As the numbers attending classes decreased it became a challenge to keep the young people engaged and focused especially as course work was completed. However, Board members did note classes that were engaged and focused especially in vocational courses.

There were occasions when the Board were concerned about the quality of the teaching and management of education. In March a new classroom behaviour policy was implemented. There was a difficulty in identifying to whom concerns should be addressed, the Governor or the Head of Education.

Healthcare

Healthcare was well-managed by a modern matron who continued to encourage the professional development and cohesiveness of the team and the improvement of co-operation and understanding between departments.

The Matron was very aware of the need to try to 'normalise' the presenting problems of the young people whose complaints and behaviour are often pathologised and medicated in the community and because of the historic approach to this age group.

Twenty-four hour nursing cover was provided: GPs attended for three mornings per week, dentists for two half days. In addition, there were clinics for GUM, podiatry, optometry and other specialist services when necessary.

The mental health in-reach team included a visiting psychiatrist, a clinical psychologist, (both part-time), two graduate mental health workers and psychiatric nurses. The presence of healthcare staff on the wings allowed young people to self-refer for psychological help and all staff and voluntary workers could also make referrals. Substance misuse programmes were also in place, run by CARATS.

During the closed period, staff were moved to other areas within the PCT and some were relocated permanently.

Healthcare concerns

Although 24-hour cover was provided, occasionally in-depth mental health assessments could not be carried out on young people over weekends or at night because the agency staff providing cover were often not psychiatric nurses. Also, when young people refused to co-operate in assessments, there was little that staff could do. Once again, this raises the question of how practical it is to attempt to manage young people with extreme developmental or behavioural disorders, as well as mental health issues, outside a specialist unit.

REFURBISHMENT OF HUNTERCOMBE

Staff

While Huntercombe was closed, Prison Service staff relocated on detached duty to other Cat C and B establishments, many of whom performed very well at their temporary establishment, and there were many letters of appreciation to the Governor on the excellent performance of staff. Staff also seemed to learn a great deal whilst on secondment, and many were prepared for the re-role by their temporary duties at other establishments.

Managers kept in contact with staff members and provided regular updates and information about the transition. Details were available on the intranet and managers visited staff in their new locations.

Managers at Huntercombe reviewed all policies and contacted other establishments for policies and protocols known to demonstrate areas of good practice.

Many members of staff seemed to come back to Huntercombe with renewed enthusiasm for the task ahead. The staff who took the opportunity to move from Huntercombe during the summer of 2010 were in general those who were dedicated to working with young people and had skills and qualifications which indicated that a move was the natural progression in their careers. Some compulsory staff moves were necessary; these were done on a postcode basis. However, the majority of staff and management team remained at Huntercombe.

Facilities

It was recognised that there would need to be some changes to the outdoor space in terms of the exercise yards and the fencing appropriate for a Cat C establishment. This work had to go through the tendering process which delayed its start and therefore work was still ongoing at the end of this reporting period. As a result, access to outside space is being restricted to some of the residential units.

Staff who remained at Huntercombe worked on the refurbishment of the establishment and spent many weeks stripping out all the cells and redecorating all association areas and corridors. They did an excellent, professional job throughout.

A small work detail of Cat D prisoners from Springhill were brought across to Huntercombe to help with the painting and decoration.

Section 7

HMP Huntercombe October – December 2010

Adult Cat C

Huntercombe opened as an adult Cat C Training establishment on 18 October 2010 with an operational capacity of 370. The population was built up gradually over several months and at the end of the reporting period the role had reached 197.

The first men to arrive at Huntercombe had been selected by managers for their suitability. Consideration had been given to educational needs and intervention courses that had been identified on the individuals' sentence plans, for example recategorisation to Cat D, ISSP courses, resettlement. Prisoners requested transfer to Huntercombe on the promise of these opportunities.

The Board recognises that the focus during the period from October to December was to settle in the new population. Small groups were transferred in from different prisons and all had to adapt to the new surroundings. Managers were mindful of the importance of integration of the different groups. It was noted that the regimes of the sending prisons were all very different from each other and the fledgling Huntercombe. This inconsistency produced some dissatisfaction and frustration from prisoners and staff as there was little clarity from management for a long time – October to December. These issues would not arise if there was consistency of interpretation of policies across the whole adult estate.

The Board anticipated that during this settling in period they would receive a range of applications and enquiries from prisoners (see Section 9). It was noted that amongst the genuine issues there were cases where prisoners tried to use the systems to their own advantage.

The Board noted the enthusiasm of the prisoners for wanting to settle on to the units, many were keen to take on work as cleaners and maintain the accommodation areas at the new standard.

Huntercombe has retained the gymnasium facility provided for the young people. This was fitted out with high specification equipment. It is managed by a highly motivated team who anticipate being able to run a full sports and fitness programme accessible to all prisoners. It is also anticipated that the facility will offer courses and play an important role in the education programme at Huntercombe.

During the first month of opening it was noted that the quality and especially the quantity of food offered was of a much higher standard than that previously offered to the young people.

Many of the regimes and procedures for Cat C adults were very different from those relevant to the previous young people population. Staff who had been on detached duty had gained some experience in working in a Cat C environment. Staff at Huntercombe are to be commended for their approach and professionalism in adjusting to their new role. The Board noted that whilst staff were sometimes unable to answer questions from prisoners they always made further enquiries and continually upgraded their knowledge.

By the end of the reporting period some very positive initiatives had been introduced; publication of a Decency strategy, prisoner forums were

taking place, giving opportunity for prisoners to engage positively and directly with managers raising and discussing issues and concerns. Information notices for prisoners and staff were being issued on a regular basis. The Board also noted that the management team including the Governor had a very visible presence around the establishment.

Offender Management

The Board were aware of the demands being made on the offender management department.

It was apparent that staff were having to learn completely new systems at a very fast pace to transition from young people to adult male requirements, for example a change in paperwork processes.

Communication issues remain; there was inadequate transfer of information with incoming prisoners from the sending prisons. Equally there was no system set up here for prisoners to communicate with their offender managers. As the whole population was new, this required a large amount of time being spent on each individual.

Healthcare

The team is still managed by a Modern Matron who will be replaced by a practice manager at the end of the year. There are seven nurses, two GPs and a graduate mental health worker on the team. The contract was due to change in the New Year. There is now no out-of-hours care, it is provided by Urgent Care as in the community.

Healthcare provides a GP surgery daily, nursing service and primary mental health care, with out of hours.

There are small-scale clinics to suit the initial population in physiotherapy, podiatry, optometry, genito-urinary medicine and a weekly dental surgery.

Mental health care is currently supplied by a GP, a graduate mental health worker and a visiting psychiatrist from Bullingdon.

There are addiction interventions, run by CARATS, in place and further programmes will begin when the population is stable.

The number of chronically ill has risen; older prisoners have age-related health needs; pharmacy suppliers have been slow to adapt to the new demands, causing problems for prisoners and staff alike. Every effort is being made to deal with difficulties as they arise and it is hoped that the outcome will be a health centre well adapted to the prisoners' needs.

The professionals were lead to believe that the incoming population would be relatively fit.

Section 8

THE WORK OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

Support

The board has access to a Clerk and a dedicated secure office inside the establishment. There is an SLA with the Governor for the Clerk's time. The Clerk is part of the Performance and compliance unit

Training

Board members attended relevant training courses run by the IMB training team. These included where appropriate foundation, continued development, and courses for nominated posts of Board Development Officer, Vice-Chair and Chair.

Board members also attended training courses run by the prison's training department.

Team development

An annual team performance review gives opportunity for Board members to discuss all aspects of their monitoring practice and develop strategies to further improve its monitoring role.

Duty visits

The Board has established a rolling rota ensuring 2 members are available to undertake rota responsibilities including applications from prisoners and complete segregation duties.

The Board continually monitors and records the details of its attendance at the prison.

A report to the Governor is completed each week. Responses to the reports are received from the Governor or a member of the management team.

Board meetings

The Board held 10 monthly Board meetings at times convenient to the working patterns of the Board, i.e. a mix of afternoon and evening meetings; 9 were attended, in part, by a Governor.

Board statistics 2010	YOI	HMP
Recommended Complement of Board Members	16	15
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	12	
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	14	
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	3	
Number of members leaving within reporting period	1	
Number of attendances at meetings other than Board meetings	27	n/a
Total number of visits to the prison (including	216	70

all meetings)		
Total number of applications received	40	28

Section 9

Applications received

Code	Subject	2008 YOI	2009 YOI	2010 YOI Jan- July	2010 HMP Oct-Dec
A	Accommodation	6	13	2	2
B	Adjudications (punishments)	14	15	7	0
C	Diversity-related	3	3	0	0
D	Education/employment/training	13	8	2	4
E	Family/visits	6	13	4	5
F	Food/kitchen related	5	11	3	0
G	Health related	5	3	0	1
H	Property	6	12	3	7
I	Sentence related	0	5	2	3
J	Staff/prisoner-related	20	18	10	3
K	Transfers	4	6	3	0
L	Miscellaneous	3	6	4	3
	Total number of applications	85	113	40	28

Section 10

GLOSSARY

ACCT Assessment, Care in Custody & Teamwork	OASys Offender Assessment System - computerised risk & needs assessment
BME Black & Minority Ethnic	OBP Offending Behaviour Programme
C & R Control & Restraint	OCA Observation, Classification & Allocations - a Reception task
CARATS Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice & Throughcare Scheme - drug & alcohol team	OI/OR/OP Own Interests/Request/Protection - Segregation under Rule 45/49
CC Cellular Confinement - a punishment	PCT Primary Care Trust - National Health component responsible for healthcare
CNA Certified Normal Accommodation	PEI/O Physical Education Instructor/Officer
CSU Commissioning Support Unit	PPO Prisons and Probation Ombudsman
ETE Employment/Training/Education	PS Prison Service
ETS Enhanced Thinking Skills - an OBP	PSI Prison Service Instruction
GOOD Good Order or Discipline - Segregation under Rule 45/49 (historically GOAD)	PSO Prison Service Order
HCC Health Care Centre	ROTL Release on Temporary Licence - e.g. to work in mess; town visits; home leave
HDC Home Detention Curfew - the Tag	SLA Service Level Agreement
HMCIP Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons	SMT Senior Management Team
IEP Incentives and Earned Privileges - Prisoners can be on Basic, Standard or Enhanced	TUPE Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) - staff transfer
IMB Independent Monitoring Board	VDT Voluntary Drugs Testing
MAPPA Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements	VO Visiting Order - sent out by prisoners, allows named people to visit
MDT Mandatory Drugs Testing	
NOMS National Offender Manager Service - amalgamation of the Prison & Probation Services	