



# **HMP/YOI ISIS**

## **REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD 2012**

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## **2 Statutory Role of the IMB**

- 2.1 The Prisons Act 1952 requires every prison to be monitored by an Independent Board appointed by the Secretary of State from members of the community in which the prison is situated.
- 2.2 The Board is specifically charged to:
- 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.
  - inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority, as it judges appropriate, any concern it has.
  - **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.**
- 2.3 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.

## **3 Description of the Prison**

- 3.1 The prison opened in July 2010. It is a training prison for convicted young men, the first of its kind in London combining young offenders between the ages of 18 and 21 with a smaller number of Cat C adults to the age of 25. It is a public sector prison situated in Thamesmead in South-East London. The certified normal accommodation (CNA) is 478. The operational capacity (OP CAP) i.e. the maximum population it can safely and decently hold is 622.

## **4 Chair's Introduction**

- 4.1 This is the second report of the Independent Monitoring Board for HMP/YOI Isis. The first, issued in April 2012, reported briefly on the work of the prison in its opening year and also on the early steps taken towards establishing the Board as an effective monitoring body. That report highlighted the difficulties faced by the prison in managing a new and mixed population of offenders in a new establishment and in a new environment. The general message was one of 'so far so good' despite a series of setbacks in that first year including recruitment delays, fallout from the 2011 August riots, over-dependence on detached duty staff, and unexpected levels of gang-related violence. The Board commended the commitment and dedication of the senior team who had risen to the challenge of those early difficulties, none of which had been of their making.
- 4.2 At the time of that report, the Board comprised of four experienced members only with four more undergoing training. So the report was necessarily confined to identifying some key concerns. I am pleased to say that significant progress has now been made with recruitment to the Board, also with individual training, so that we now have eleven active members. As a result, during the course of this last year members have taken on areas of special responsibility so this second report contains contributions from them for which I am extremely grateful.
- 4.3 This year's message is one of good work in progress within the prison but with some notes of caution. Staff recruitment has improved considerably and detached duty staff have all but disappeared but the levels of violence and bullying appear to have increased, confirming our view that the population mix of the offenders must change. Of equal concern is the potentially damaging effect of imminent resource reductions and of Fair and Sustainable job restructuring.
- 4.4 I referred last year to the excellent relationship enjoyed by the Board with the Governor and his staff. That has been maintained throughout 2012. As a Board we have become more and more challenging but the senior team continue to welcome our views and changes have occurred as a result of our interventions. At a personal level the Governor makes himself available to see me on a weekly basis; he is extremely open and candid and we all appreciate that.

David Pinchin

IMB Chair

## **5 Executive Summary**

- 5.1 The Board is satisfied that HMP/YOI Isis is making solid progress towards being an effective training institution for convicted young men. However, it is still very early days and there are many difficult challenges that lie ahead, some of which are highlighted later. This report does not attempt to cover all aspects of prison life, it is designed to raise matters that give the Board most concern but also to highlight examples of good work that should be commended and perhaps replicated elsewhere.
- 5.2 Probably the most serious local issue facing the institution is the high level of violence and bullying, mainly gang-related, among offenders and the resulting fears for personal safety. This is addressed in some detail in later paragraphs. However, despite its widespread nature, it should not be assumed that all offenders are involved in such behaviour. There are many young men who are anxious to serve their time and to come out as better individuals; and the prison does provide unique opportunities for that to be achieved. Already there are examples of extraordinary transformations from angry young men with little ambition to hard-working members of society. Thanks to the work of teachers and supervisors, referred to in later paragraphs, some young men are now leaving Isis with skills and qualifications and jobs to go to. It is all too easy to forget these success stories when dealing with the day to day issues of bullying and violence.
- 5.3 At a strategic level, probably the most serious issue facing the prison is managing the organisation in the face of public sector cutbacks, prison closures and the Fair and Sustainable and benchmarking initiatives. The Board is well aware of the current political implications associated with these initiatives and the long-term effects they will have on the balance between private and public sector prisons. However, despite Isis being in a relatively strong position regarding its low annual cost and success with outsourcing various services, the impact of these pressures on the morale of both present and future staff should not be underestimated.
- 5.4 Other issues of concern referred to below include sentence-expired Foreign Nationals being held on IS91s, poor attendance at activities, lack of effectiveness of the earned privileges scheme (IEP), offender/staff relationships, cleanliness and hygiene, and catering supervision.

### **Issues for the Minister**

- 5.5 The Board urges the Minister to instruct and enable the Home Office to commence the administrative casework processes for the deportation of Foreign National offenders much earlier than at present so that

appropriate decisions can be made in time for their release from custody. (6.7 - 6.8)

- 5.6 The Board also urges the Minister to reconsider the present policy of housing sentence-expired Foreign Nationals in inappropriate prison accommodation pending deportation. (6.7 - 6.8)

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

- 5.7 To consider urgently the impact of gangs and youth violence in the management of the offender population in London and to reconsider the present policy of bringing together into HMP/YOI Isis sentenced young men originating from the London area. In practice, this has created an environment of underlying fear and violence with serious implications for both staff and offenders. A more effective and intelligence-led allocations policy is required as a matter of urgency. (11.1 - 11.6)
- 5.8 To consider revisions to the IEP scheme to further incentivise good behaviour. There are currently insufficient differentials between basic, standard and enhanced regimes. Also, offenders recalled for licence breaches should be placed on basic rather than standard as at present. (12.8)
- 5.9 To consider again the Board's previous concerns about a lack of toilet privacy in double cells. This decency concern was highlighted also by HMIP. If solid partitions cannot be provided in Isis at this late stage, at very least any future planning should include them as a norm with dimensions in line with those at HMP/YOI Thameside. (13.2)
- 5.10 To implement the delayed proposal to install in-cell telephones across the establishment. There is good evidence that this will reduce the incidence of self-harm and bullying. Running costs are self-funding and the systems are entirely secure with listening facilities. (13.4)
- 5.11 To give catering managers the authority to make local purchases, in exceptional circumstances, outside the national contract. (13.16)

### **Issues for the Governor**

- 5.12 To improve attendance at education and skills by ensuring residential staff, in conjunction with A4E, encourage and motivate offenders to comply with their agreed compacts. Also to consider using IEP more readily to attempt to ensure compliance and to restrict the use of in-cell TV during working hours (7.3 - 7.4, 9.2, 9.4)

- 5.13 To further improve attendance at health clinics by utilising the biometric system for booking appointments and ensuring escort arrangements are properly managed; and to facilitate better attendance at nurse led treatment sessions on the spurs. (8.2 - 8.3)
- 5.14 To ensure that staffing arrangements on the wings are sufficiently constant to enable the personal officer scheme to operate effectively. (11.5) (13.10)
- 5.15 In advance of any major changes to the population mix of the prison, to consider whether there are any further local initiatives that might be taken now to address the increasing problem of violence within the establishment. (11.7)
- 5.16 To attempt a more effective and consistent use of IEP across the establishment and to improve the standard of paperwork (12.7 - 12.8)
- 5.17 To ensure privacy curtains in double cells are routinely repaired or replaced as appropriate (13.2)
- 5.18 To complete work to improve the cell bell call system and to ensure staff respond appropriately to individual alarms in a timely manner (13.3)
- 5.19 To improve consistency in the general standards of cleanliness around the establishment (13.6)
- 5.20 To improve the standards of food delivery, hygiene and portion control at the serveries through better officer supervision. (13.11)
- 5.21 To ensure contract compliance in the kitchen with regard to cleanliness and hygiene, particularly the food trolleys. (13.15)
- 5.22 To encourage residential staff, particularly personal officers, to resolve offender concerns effectively and speedily to avoid escalation to the formal complaints process and unnecessary Applications to the Board. (14.2)

## **6 Equalities**

- 6.1 During 2012 Isis set up a robust process for the management of equality issues which is now being monitored by a member of the Board. This was fully in place by August 2012 since when bi-monthly meetings have been held between departmental staff representatives and offender representatives. Additionally, focus group meetings are held monthly with offender representatives. Although there has been considerable interest in this role, it is to be regretted that by the end of the reporting year all the offender representatives were located in one spur, having been moved as they progressed through their sentences. Steps are now being taken to redress this issue with a view to all eight spurs being represented in future.
- 6.2 The Isis population is made up of about 75% BME offenders, 88% British and with Muslim being the largest religion - 38%. This high BME population brings different issues from those encountered in other prisons including significant cultural, religious and dietary needs. However, minority groups are also afforded close attention, including in Isis the group of white offenders.
- 6.3 Throughout the reporting year, impact assessments have been carried out on several key risk areas, including Segregation and Adjudications, Use of Force, Prisoner Complaints, Discrimination Incident Reporting Systems, and Incentives and Earned Privileges. No specific issues have been identified other than slightly higher levels of use of force against younger offenders. The reason identified for this is the higher likelihood of these younger offenders being involved in gang-related incidents as highlighted in other parts of this report.
- 6.4 It is considered that offenders' special needs are largely well-managed with Education picking up on key learning difficulties, Healthcare concentrating on health and disability requirements and FN issues being addressed in the induction process. Although these special needs are generally well-identified in a timely manner and action plans drawn up appropriately, communication about these to the offenders and to staff could be better and the Equalities Team are considering how this area can be improved.
- 6.5 There is a GALIPS representative working in the prison dealing with both staff and offender gay and lesbian issues.
- 6.6 The Board is pleased to report that complaints on this subject and DIRFs are well-managed in the prison. When the special tick boxes on 'complaint' forms are checked, these are routinely reviewed by Equalities staff and if considered appropriate, they are then managed in the same manner as

DIRFs. Each DIRF is reviewed individually and checked by the Deputy Governor and an action plan devised. A representative from the Zahid Mubarek Trust comes to the prison each month to scrutinise these action plans. The Board has received very few complaints of a racist or discriminatory nature.

- 6.7 During the last few months there has been a steady increase in the number of FN offenders who have reached the end of their sentence but who are still detained in the prison on IS91 detention warrants issued by the UKBA, pending deportation. For the majority of the year, there were rarely more than 6 held after the end of their sentence and prison staff in conjunction with UKBA were able to arrange removal to an IRC within a few weeks. However, the situation has deteriorated rapidly in recent months with the announcement of the purchase by UKBA of 1000 additional prison places for IS91s and also the prison closure programme. At the time of writing, there are 15 such offenders being held in Isis, 2 of whom completed their sentence more than 6 months ago. These offenders are taking up valuable prison places that should be filled by other young men being trained for release.
- 6.8 Whilst the Board fully supports the need for FN ex-offenders to be held safely pending deportation, it is wholly inappropriate, other than in exceptional circumstances, for this to occur in a prison setting, particularly when there are delays of many months before deportation is arranged. These are individuals who have served their time and for whom there are no further charges pending. If they cannot be deported immediately, they should be held in an IRC setting where the regime is entirely different. The Board considers it unacceptable for prison places to have been purchased in this way in order to cope with deficiencies in the IRC estate and UKBA delays in the deportation of these ex-offenders.

## **7 Education, Learning and Skills**

- 7.1 Classrooms and skills workshops have been built to an exceptionally high standard giving offenders excellent learning and skills opportunities. However, the original OLASS3 contract for Education and Skills awarded to Kensington and Chelsea College suffered from staffing difficulties, poor attendance and few incentives for the contractor to deliver good quality services. Contract performance was judged on delivery of the programmes rather than on the number of offenders attending and, although a target of 62% was reached for qualifications achieved, these were generally of a low standard. Average attendance for the year was approximately 65% against a target of 80%.

- 7.2 The new OLASS4 contract awarded recently to A4E has already begun to improve both attendance and the quality of learning, although there are still staff vacancies, so too a considerable amount of sickness absence. This contract is based on payment by results and with a learning threshold applied, hence a much greater incentive for the contractor to deliver. One initial drawback to the contract was that a funding cap was applied of £4,400 per learner per year; however, this has now been reviewed and the cap is to be lifted from August 2013.
- 7.3 Attendance is still an issue and the contractor is now rightly putting more pressure on prison staff to get tougher with offenders who choose not to attend their allocated courses. Currently staff are not very successful in persuading offenders to leave their cells with the result that too many are allowed to remain on the wings for no satisfactory reason. This is not helped by the fact that the law prohibits offenders from being forced to go to Education whereas that is not the case as far as work is concerned.
- 7.4 The Board is of the view that greater use should be made of IEP if offenders fail to adhere to the terms of their compact and decline to attend work or education. Currently IEP is not regarded as being very effective as the differences between basic and standard, and standard and enhanced are simply not great enough to encourage compliance.
- 7.5 On the plus side, 90% of a random selection of 40 offenders questioned, were satisfied with the choice of courses on offer and the majority of those attended regularly. Of those who were not satisfied, most complained of a lack of offending behaviour programmes. The Board is not in a position to judge technically on the adequacy or otherwise of the actual courses available, although it welcomes the fact that, following a recent curriculum review, there is now a greater emphasis on learning rather than teaching.
- 7.6 Also on the plus side have been several inspirational stories of young men achieving real success. One particular example was an initiative led by Livity, a Brixton-based agency specialising in youth engagement, involving eleven Isis young offenders, who in the space of two weeks in August 2012 gained a recognised qualification in video content creation. They then designed and produced a short five-minute film to professional standards featuring professional artists called 'Getting Clean' which was premiered at BAFTA in London. Resources were provided by the Community Action Against Crime Innovation Fund.

## **8 Healthcare & Mental Health**

- 8.1 Healthcare services have been provided by outside provider HarmoniforHealth (recently taken over by CareUK) commissioned for the NHS by Greenwich PCT. It is basically a primary care service with some outpatient, diagnostic and treatment facilities.
- 8.2 The general health of the offenders is good and Healthcare staff manage the workload without great difficulty. Requests are dealt with through an application system with forms being collected from the houseblocks daily and appointments slips provided back to the offenders. Ideally, that manual system should be replaced with an additional application to the finger-print biometric system which would be much more effective and consistent in the booking of appointments. GPs attend at least twice a week and nurses attend treatment rooms in the houseblocks daily to see offenders and to administer medications.
- 8.3 Escorting has improved in recent months with Healthcare staff now authorised and trained to fetch and return offenders; however attendance at clinics is still patchy. The Board would like to see a greater degree of discipline attached to clinic attendance with the possible use of IEP to ensure compliance. The Board would also like to see less reluctance on the part of uniform staff to allow offenders out of cell to consult with nurses when attending the houseblocks.
- 8.4 Diagnostic facilities including x-ray and ultrasound reduce the need for outside visits to hospitals.
- 8.5 Mental Health services are also provided by CareUK with a consultant psychiatrist and psychologist attending weekly. The mental health caseload has been surprisingly small. There are good links between the clinical team and CARATs, also with the Safer Custody team, emphasis being placed on early identification of mental health issues. Offenders with acute mental health problems can be transferred to the inpatient unit at HMP/YOI Thameside.
- 8.6 Drug misuse remains low although has increased in recent months, particularly 'skunk' cannabis which is a major concern. Healthcare and CARATs work together on drug awareness programmes including PUMA (Prisoners Understanding Marijuana and Alcohol) and offenders are helped on release by links with Drug Intervention Agencies in their respective boroughs.
- 8.7 A research project with 2 years funding is being undertaken into ADHD among all new offenders which is to be welcomed.

- 8.8 A recent Infection Control Audit identified poor compliance in some treatment areas. An action plan is in place.

## **9 Purposeful Activity**

- 9.1 Purposeful activity at Isis includes education and skills programmes in classrooms, workshops and the library, physical education in the gymnasium, religious practise in the multi-faith zone, offender behaviour programmes, rehabilitation activities, special issue groups such as equalities or safer custody, and work in a variety of orderly positions across the prison. Although the prison reports that around 99% of offenders are engaged in some form of purposeful activity, attendance remains a problem. It is true that many of the opportunities available are of a part-time nature so offenders are often only engaged in them for up to 50% of their time. However, the prison's own figures show that their KPT of 21 hours activity per offender per week is consistently not being met, and this is still far short of the 40 hour working week that Ministers would like to see offenders achieve.
- 9.2 With regard to attendance, some offenders are determined to remain in their cells for no good reason throughout the day. While it has to be remembered that these are very young men, some with limited maturity and decision-making skills, nevertheless, as is mentioned in other parts of this report, staff are not currently good enough at motivating them to attend their planned activity or at challenging reasons for non attendance. A tougher stance is required. This is particularly concerning given the role of Isis as a Training Prison designed to develop skills for use when offenders are released.
- 9.3 On a positive note, the prison has been involved in the development of a policy which will link the granting of decisions on HDC to criteria including attendance at work and education, and general engagement with the regime. Such a measure will provide exactly the sort of incentives required to bring about improved activity attendance. The Board wholeheartedly support this proposal.
- 9.4 One further recent suggestion of a very practical nature is that television signals to the cells could be switched off during the morning and afternoon periods of the working day. The Board would support this proposal too.
- 9.5 It is of no surprise that the excellent physical education facilities are used at close to capacity by the offenders. As well as the well-equipped gym, there are both indoor and outdoor pitches for a number of sports.

Offenders generally opt for the gym, which has a capacity for 50. Each offender has 2.5 hours per week of PE activity in addition to the 30 minutes daily fresh air in the spur exercise yards.

- 9.6 Orderly positions provide work experience for offenders in various areas around the prison, mainly in the houseblocks and kitchen but also on recycling and ground and equipment maintenance. At the present time there are 196 positions of which 48 are vacant. An allocations board meets weekly to consider applications from suitable offenders. Successful applicants have the opportunity to develop relevant skills and to achieve vocational qualifications in their area of work, albeit at a fairly low level.
- 9.7 Attendance at the library is generally poor, with only a handful of offenders present at any one time. It is a reasonably well-stocked library where offenders' interests are gauged enabling library staff to obtain books of most interest to them. Access is easy for those attending Education and Skills as they can attend the library for periods of 20 minutes during their classes. However, those offenders who do not attend classes may request to go on a weekly basis but very few take up the opportunity. The Board would like to see more encouragement given to those offenders to attend and to make better use of the facilities, although the first priority must be to encourage them to attend classes.
- 9.8 The library also offers courses for low level readers and support for 'Story Book Dad' which enables offenders to create stories on CD for their children. Very few offenders take up this opportunity which needs to be advertised more widely and encouraged by prison staff.
- 9.9 The Chaplaincy is well run with full-time Anglican and Muslim Chaplains and sessional chaplains covering most other religions. The Chaplaincy team is well regarded throughout the establishment although the vacancy for a Catholic Chaplain has been outstanding for far too long. Offenders are able to practice their religion in the Multifaith Room which is clean and well equipped. It hosts Friday prayers and Sunday worship. Various faith classes are held each week including Islamic Discussion Groups, Tarbiyah Course, Christian Studies, Sycamore Tree and Bible Studies. Graduation ceremonies are held following successful completion of some courses.

## **10 Resettlement**

- 10.1 One of the key roles for Isis as a training establishment is to do all it can to prepare offenders for release. Resettlement is therefore a core function with the aim 'to reduce reoffending and to protect the public'. This involves

work across a variety of agencies to help secure suitable accommodation and educational and work opportunities. It also crucially involves working with the offenders while they are in custody. However, this is no easy task as is demonstrated by continuing reoffending rates and the fact that there is only so much the prison can do with individuals depending on the length of their sentence and their own enthusiasm and motivation.

- 10.2 The approach to resettlement is somewhat fragmented as responsibility lies across a number of different departments; however departments appear to work reasonably well together. The Offender Management Unit manages all aspects of sentence planning, Education are responsible for classroom activities and Interventions manage skills and thinking programmes. Housing issues are dealt with by DePaul, Prospects provide career advice and Working Links provide outreach support into the community. There is also advice and training on Drugs and Alcohol in conjunction with the CARAT team and advice on Finance and debt management with DePaul and Job Centre Plus.
- 10.3 The Offender Management Unit has been under considerable pressure in managing its workload with backlogs occurring throughout the year. This has meant delays in HDC and ROTL applications. Offenders have complained regularly to the Board about not being kept fully informed about these. The department has recently been reorganised with offender supervisors and case administrators now working closer together. Communication has improved although in practice it remains difficult to involve residential staff in a meaningful way. The number of complaints to the Board has dropped.
- 10.4 HMIP commended Isis for its resettlement work which it regarded as a strength and the Board shares that view. There are good offender management processes in place and many young men leave with a job or education place to go to as well as into stable accommodation.
- 10.5 During 2012, 28% of offenders were discharged into education and training courses and 37% had employment on release. The Board has been extremely impressed with these initial outcomes which are a testament to the hard work of staff in the departments mentioned above, but adds a warning that there is little or no feedback available from probation services as to the quality or duration of these opportunities, so progress cannot be tracked.
- 10.6 During the same period, 95% of those released had prearranged living accommodation. Again, little is known about how successful such arrangements have been.

- 10.7 Some offenders have said that they only begin to think about their future when release is imminent. It is therefore important for the prison to engage with them at the earliest possible opportunity. HMIP proposed a 'whole prison approach' to offender management and resettlement with staff from all departments, especially personal officers, taking an active role in assessing and implementing individual aims and objectives. That has begun to occur.
- 10.8 Some offenders have expressed anxieties about their impending release, some a real fear about personal safety and their ability to stay crime-free. Reoffending rates appear to confirm how difficult it is for these young men to live law-abiding lives after serving time in prison.
- 10.9 The Board continues to express concern about the lack of information available as to the long-term effectiveness of work undertaken in the prison preparing offenders for release. Most worryingly, there is no evidence to link this work with current reoffending rates or public safety, despite these being the pivotal reasons for investing in resettlement work in the first place. The real problem is that there are no statutory joined-up services working together across prisons and local communities as is the case in other countries where reoffending rates are in decline.

## **11 Safer Custody**

- 11.1 Keeping offenders safe is one of the four key tests for a healthy prison and staff at Isis do take this matter extremely seriously. However, violence within the establishment is perhaps the most significant challenge facing the management of the prison. With an average role of 511 offenders during the year, there were 183 recorded incidents of violence between offenders and 49 recorded assaults on staff. Five serious assaults required hospitalisation with some involving life threatening or life changing injuries. The attentiveness of prison officers and Healthcare staff saved a number of these situations from having tragic consequences. Their professionalism and determination, sometimes well beyond the call of duty, is to be commended. One officer in particular, who saved an offender's life, is to be awarded a Royal Humane Society Certificate of Commendation.
- 11.2 The prison has a small Safer Custody team (two officers and two administrative staff) which is responsible for monitoring violence and incidents of self-harm within the establishment. The team is well organised and produces helpful information on a monthly basis by means of a Safer Custody report which is routinely shared with the IMB.

- 11.3 With regard to violence and bullying within the prison, the main catalyst appears to be gangland feuds and rivalries. Shockingly, the team has identified members from at least 130 different London-area gangs. Additionally, local gangs get established within the prison. With such a widespread gang culture, it is a continuing challenge for staff to manage the location of individual gang members, particularly those who feel threatened and who fear for their for their own safety, given that there are only two houseblocks and eight spurs. Offenders are relocated to different spurs wherever possible but as a last resort in genuine cases, relocation to the Segregation Unit is the only option. Safer Custody meetings are held monthly and involve both Listeners and Violence Reduction representatives, as well as prison staff, Samaritans and the IMB.
- 11.4 The reasons for the high level of violence and the underlying gang culture in Isis are complex and numerous, but the initial decision by the Ministry of Justice to establish Isis as a training prison for London area young men between the ages of 18 and 25, while possibly being intellectually sound, was fundamentally flawed. Bringing offenders back to London from other establishments around the country has only served to reunite offenders and gang members with each other and to reignite old gangland feuds often involving drugs. The intention to encourage family ties has been of limited success as many of the offenders see their originating gangs as their families. The result has been an ongoing volatile situation, both within the prison and in the community, resulting in bullying and acts of gratuitous violence that seem to occur almost daily. Individual offenders have frequently expressed fears to the Board as to their safety.
- 11.5 Managing violence within the prison has been made more difficult as the regime has changed over the year. The continued use of Detached Duty staff until the summer, new inexperienced officers and overall staff shortages have contributed to the problem. As a result, relationships between officers and offenders have been strained, not helped by the delay in fully developing a personal officer scheme, highlighted in the Board's report last year and reinforced by HMIP. It is understood that the scheme is now fully in place and there are signs that it is working. However, for it to be fully satisfactory it is important for staffing levels to be such that individual officers are not routinely redeployed to other areas.
- 11.6 There is little doubt that the population mix needs to change urgently in order to reduce the level of violence within the prison and the Board is aware of moves both by the Ministry of Justice and the prison management to achieve this. The Governor and his senior team are working with the Security Group in NOMS, also with MOPAC (Mayor's Office of Policy and Crime) to develop a regional strategy for the management of this issue across London. The Board's view is that there needs to be a wider distribution of young offenders around the whole YOI

estate, thus separating gang members and reducing the concentration of London offenders at Isis. However, if a London solution is proposed, the allocation of offenders to Isis will need to be managed in a much more intelligence-led way to avoid the present gang-related confrontations.

- 11.7 Locally, managers have done much to address violence within the prison, including the further use of IEP as far as is currently possible and the referral of serious cases to the police for prosecution where appropriate. A good relationship has been established between the Governor and the police who are cooperating fully, but it has to be said that, despite some successful prosecution outcomes, these initiatives seem to have had little effect in deterring offenders from continuing with serious acts of violence. At the time of writing there are 75 offenders on basic regime compared to an average of 21 each month in 2012. There is, therefore, room for some new approaches including perhaps the sharing of good practice with other establishments across the estate, programmes of mediation, interventions on responsibilities and consequences and other violence reduction techniques which are available. Also, despite resourcing pressures, the prison could increase the number of prison staff involved directly in promoting the reduction of violence.
- 11.8 With regard to self-harm, the prison has established a robust process for ACCT management and while there have been 74 incidents of self harm during the year, they have all been handled appropriately and effectively. 91 ACCTs were opened during the year. Open ACCTs are considered monthly at the Safer Custody meeting, together with overall statistics and trends. There have been no deaths in custody.

## **12 Segregation Unit**

- 12.1 The Segregation Unit provides a clean and safe environment for offenders under punishment or held under Rule 45/49.
- 12.2 There are 16 standard segregation cells, also 2 special cells completely unfurnished and 2 dirty protest cells which have floor level hatches so that officers can deliver food and other necessary items without exposure. The 2 special cells have constant observation facilities. Offenders requiring constant observation, but not warranting a special cell, are accommodated on one of the houseblocks at the direction of the duty Governor.
- 12.3 The facilities overall are adequate and provide a safe and secure environment for both young and adult offenders. Radios and in-cell television are available for suitable offenders.

- 12.4 The Board is satisfied that offenders are segregated for lawful purposes only and that they are well managed whilst in the unit. Each offender is offered a shower, exercise and a phone call on a daily basis. However, staff report that delivery of these services is more difficult when the Unit has a high occupancy. Adequate provision is made for in-cell education and access to library books. Members of the Board have visited offenders on a weekly basis throughout the year; and relevant files, care plans, ACCT documents, authorisations and algorithms have been examined. During the reporting year the Board is satisfied that the statutory requirements for visits by the Governor, Healthcare and Chaplain have been met, as have the statutory requirements for mechanical restraints.
- 12.5 A regular time for GOOD and Rule 45/49 reviews has meant that Board rota members have been able to attend as a matter of routine. The SO makes every effort to facilitate Board attendance by notifying the numbers involved and any subsequent changes. Members have been afforded the opportunity of briefings prior to reviews including access to previous documentation. They have been impressed by the openness with which information has been supplied to them and grateful for the opportunity to express their views to the relevant Governor. In addition, Board members have attended some adjudication hearings conducted by Governors and also Independent Adjudicators. The Board is satisfied that these are conducted fairly and in sufficient depth. The appropriate specialists and witnesses attend and offenders are given the opportunity to make representations in person, in accordance with the rules.
- 12.6 The Board monitors the period for which an offender is segregated. A small number has spent up to 12 weeks in the Unit which gives concern to both the Unit staff and the Board as this impacts on the morale and general health of offenders. However, this is a difficult issue as some offenders persistently refuse to relocate back to a houseblock citing safer custody issues in order to facilitate a move to another establishment. Some offenders get used to and like the structure of the Segregation regime and, of course, they are not subject to bullying in that environment. Isis has issues (as mentioned in the Safer Custody section) with London gang members, and, with only two houseblocks, it can be difficult to relocate an offender from the unit to a safe location.
- 12.7 When a move to another establishment is regarded as appropriate, every effort is made to move them on quickly but this has become increasingly difficult in recent times, particularly since the announcement of the prison closure programme. Getting the balance right between moving offenders on but not responding to deliberate bad behaviour to facilitate a move is extremely difficult. The Board believes that the prison does all it can to manage these situations sensitively and firmly with each offender's safety being of paramount importance, although it is of the view that the IEP

process could be used more often and more effectively in the management of poor behaviour.

- 12.8 With regard to IEP, the Board believes that there should be greater differentials between basic and standard, and between standard and enhanced. Currently some offenders seem to care little about the effect of being downgraded to basic. There is also a lack of consistency in the way IEP is applied by officers and paperwork is sometimes incomplete. The Board is also of the view that offenders who are recalled to prison because of licence breaches should be placed on basic.
- 12.9 It has been noticeable in recent months, particularly since the departure of the majority of detached-duty staff, that relocation to the Segregation Unit has been used more often as a matter of last resort after a serious incident. This is to be commended and may reflect the improving staff/offender relationships since the welcome full introduction of a personal officer scheme. It is to be hoped that the positive effect of this will not be jeopardised by future staffing restrictions.
- 12.10 In the reporting year three young offenders were re-categorised to adult status based on an assessment of increased risk and transferred to an adult-only prison. Board members were consulted appropriately on each occasion. In addition five Cat C offenders were re-categorised to Cat B and transferred to Cat B establishments.

## **13 Residential Services**

### **Residences**

- 13.1 There are two similar residential blocks, Thames and Meridian, each consisting of four spurs at three levels radiating from a central hub providing accommodation for approximately 80 offenders per spur in a mixture of single and double occupancy cells. There are a few fully-equipped cells for offenders with disabilities. There is also a separate, stand alone, Segregation block situated between the two houseblocks. Thames 'G' spur is designated for the induction of recently arrived offenders. Enhanced and D Category offenders are accommodated in 'D' spur in Meridian.
- 13.2 Despite decency concerns expressed by the Board in their first Annual Report and as recommended by HMCIP, solid privacy screens for double occupancy cells have not even been considered. The MOJ insists that present facilities comply with the NOMS standard. The Board maintains

that common decency demands more than a flimsy curtain when there are only a few inches between bed and toilet. Many of these so-called privacy curtains have been damaged and not replaced. A much better cell design has been used in the private prison HMP/YOI Thameside which should be considered for any future public sector builds.

- 13.3 Similarly, concerns as regards the inadequacy of the emergency cell alarm system were not dealt with during the year; cell bells routinely went unanswered and the Board had serious worries that a real emergency might be missed with tragic consequences. Funding has now been identified to rectify the design fault so that spur alarms are isolated from each other and at the time of writing remedial work is in progress.
- 13.4 A trial in-cell telephone facility was planned for 2012 but did not materialise. This was a great pity as evidence suggests self-harm, bullying and violence generally reduces when offenders have access to an in-cell phone without waiting for long periods on the landings and being severely restricted as to when they call. It is not a soft option as some public opinion suggests. It is a totally secure system with listening facilities and entirely self-funding so there are no valid reasons as to why it should not be implemented.
- 13.5 Contrary to some public opinion, there are no Sky channels available on the in-cell TVs. In fact no public sector prison in the country has Sky channels. The advantage of in-cell TVs is that they can be withdrawn through the IEP system if offenders misbehave and they have an information channel to reduce the cost of communicating with offenders. Offenders on basic regime do not have TVs.
- 13.6 Cleanliness of the spur landing areas, showers and meal servery areas has been of concern to the Board throughout the year and although at times there has been some improvement, this has not been sustained. At times conditions have been unacceptably dirty.
- 13.7 At the serveries, food temperature records and books in which offenders can report catering complaints have not always been readily available. Although offenders working the serveries wear aprons and gloves, hats provided are often not worn. The standard of hygiene within some of the serveries is poor with hand washing sinks not being used for that purpose, surfaces not being thoroughly cleaned and carbon build up beneath the heating trays. Large sinks are left with food debris and drainers not cleaned. The Board's major concern is that there is inconsistency over hygiene at the serveries which must mean that at times there is a serious lack of supervision.

- 13.8 Owing to regime changes and a reduced number of officers on evening duty but so as to provide certainty of available numbers being present to supervise, association periods have been reduced to two designated weekday evenings for each spur. Offenders in 'D' spur, for whom less supervision is needed, have association every evening and all day on Saturday. It is good to have a spur with more trusted Cat D and enhanced offenders. With more privileges and a more relaxed regime they provide incentives and motivation for other less trusted offenders.
- 13.9 Once the prison became fully staffed in the Autumn of 2012, reliance on detached duty staff ceased and that has led to a much-needed improvement in officer/offender relationships. However, that effect has to some extent been constrained by the inexperience of newly appointed officers, inexperienced managers and an unacceptably high level of staff sickness. However, long-term sickness is being robustly addressed by the Governor through capability procedures where necessary.
- 13.10 The Personal Officer scheme has now been implemented and is contributing to better offender/staff relationships mentioned above, but this improvement is likely to slip as a victim of reduced numbers of wing officers available under the "Fair and Sustainable" regrading system being introduced shortly. Cross deployment for other duties may well result in the appointed Personal Officer being rarely available at the designated spur.
- 13.11 The introduction of cold lunchtime meal packs with pre-ordered items being delivered in-cell has resulted in lengthening the morning out-of-cell education/activities period and assisted in reducing food bullying at that time. However, bullying continues to be a concern for the Board in the evenings and at weekends during collection and serving times at the serveries when only limited officer supervision is available. While offenders are employed to work behind the serveries, it is almost impossible to ensure good portion control resulting in some offenders being discriminated against. It is to be hoped that supervision generally will improve with the introduction of an operational office, and an SO routinely present, on each spur.
- 13.12 Gang related violence and bullying remain as major concerns within the residencies.

### **Catering and Kitchens**

- 13.13 The catering service has been provided by Aramark under contract but is due to be taken over by Mitie in May 2013. The current manager will continue in post.

- 13.14 Before being eligible to work in the kitchens, offenders are required to sit the level 2 written examination CIEH (Chartered Institute for Environmental Health).
- 13.15 On average, there are twenty two offenders at any one time in the kitchen as well as three staff members and the manager. The offenders work well during the preparation and cooking of food. They are less enthusiastic when it comes to the clearing and cleaning of the kitchen work surfaces, utensils and ovens, resulting in sub standard outcomes which need constant supervision by the kitchen staff. The serving trolleys give rise to considerable concern as these are often not thoroughly cleaned after use, allowing carbon deposits to build up. Responsibility for the cleaning of the trolleys needs to be better defined.
- 13.16 The food, for the most part, is well cooked, appetising and of acceptable texture, flavour and variety and the choices offered are commendable. Vegetarian and healthy options are offered as well as Faith dietary requirements and special diets as authorised. There were twenty nine complaints during the year concerning the quality of the food and ten Applications to the Board. It is a great pity that all food has to be purchased through the national contract with '3663'. The Board feels that there should be some flexibility to allow local managers to make local purchases if deemed appropriate in exceptional circumstances.
- 13.17 The Training Kitchen currently has eight offenders working towards Level 1 NVQ City and Guilds Certificate in Food Preparation and Cooking. Three offenders have gone on to achieve Level 2 NVQ Certificate and on release were gainfully employed in the catering industry. Switchback, an intensive mentoring programme with a catering twist, help offenders after release, assisting with job applications, time keeping and in order to keep their skills up to speed have them working in the Skylight Cafe in Spitalfields in London. They work in the kitchen or front of house and receive professional training. Members of Switchback also visit the offenders in prison to talk about job opportunities after release. To encourage more offenders to move forward to the catering industry after release, greater emphasis could be placed on the presentation of the achievement awards in prison, highlighting to other offenders that it is possible to gain considerable skills within this field and that successful outcomes can be achieved from this experience. The Board commend these efforts to equip offenders with catering qualifications and experience.

## **14 Board Applications, Attendance and Training**

- 14.1 Board membership has increased during the year so that at the time of writing there are 11 active members, two of whom are still on probation, and one on an approved period of absence. The result has been that the Board now operates two weekly rotas, one for the monitoring rota visit and one for Applications. Having sufficient members to operate two rotas means that a much more comprehensive weekly rota report on monitoring standards within the prison can be produced and most Applications are now heard and completed within the week they are received. Areas of special interest have been allocated to individual members who have attended a number of relevant prison meetings.
- 14.2 The following is a table of categories of Applications received by the Board during 2012. The two issues complained about most were HDC and property, the former mainly relating to a lack of communication as referred to in 10.3, and the latter as a result of inconsistent staffing deployment in Reception. Applications about HDC have reduced in recent times but property complaints continue unabated averaging more than 8 per month which is not satisfactory. Other issues of concern relate to the regime and transfer requests.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Total in year</b>
Accommodation	22
Adjudications	3
Alleged assaults	4
Attendance to activities	20
Bullying	23
Canteen	12
Category and sentence plan	43
Complaints about staff	18
IEP and Discipline issues	42
Drugs/DST	0
Foreign Nationals issues	6
Healthcare	18
Home detention curfew	108
Kitchen/food	10
Licence recall	4
Mail	13

Parole	5
Payments for activities	13
Personal finance	20
Pins/telephone access	10
Property	99
Racism/discrimination	11
Regime issues	58
Transfers	58
Visits (including legal visits)	30
Others	29
Resolved before visit	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>684</b>

- 14.3 The Board remains concerned at the number of Applications received on a weekly basis, especially as it appears to be significantly higher than in other similar establishments. It is recognised that the young men in Isis do comprise a volatile population but the Board would expect more of their concerns to be handled locally by uniform staff through the prison application and complaints system without recourse to the IMB. It is to be hoped that with the Personal Officer scheme now fully implemented, relationships between staff and offenders will improve and Applications to the Board will reduce. The Board will continue to monitor this situation closely.
- 14.4 Attendance at Board meetings has been good with no member having missed more than two meetings. The Governor or his deputy have attended every meeting and provided the Board with a comprehensive report on each occasion. Information received from the prison via CJSM on a regular basis by way of NTOs, NTSs and daily morning meeting notes has been of real help in keeping members informed about prison life.
- 14.5 Each meeting has been preceded by a 30 minute training session delivered by members of prison staff on a wide variety of subjects arranged by the BDO in conjunction with the Governor.

## **15 Glossary of Abbreviations**

ACCT	Assessment, Care in Custody Teamwork
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
BDO	Board Development Officer
CARAT	Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice and Throughcare
CJSM	Criminal Justice Secure Mail
CNA	Certified Normal Accommodation
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DIRF	Discrimination Incident Request Form
ETS	Enhanced Thinking Skills
FN	Foreign Nationals
GALIPS	Gay and Lesbians in the Prison Service
GOOD	Good Order or Discipline
HDC	Home Detention Curfew
HMCIP	Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons
IMB	Independent Monitoring Board
IEP	Incentive and Earned Privilege
IRC	Immigration Removal Centre
KPT	Key Performance Target
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
MDT	Mandatory Drug Testing
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
MOPAC	Mayor's Office of Policing and Crime
NOMS	National Offender Management Service
NTO	Notice to Offenders
NTS	Notice to Staff
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
OLASS	Offender Learning and Skills Service
OMU	Offender Management Unit
OP CAP	Operational Capacity
PCT	Primary Care Trust
PMU	Performance Management Unit
ROTL	Release on Temporary Licence
SMT	Senior Management Team
SO	Senior Officer
UKBA	United Kingdom Border Agency
VDT	Voluntary Drug Testing
YOI	Young Offenders Institution