



Her Majesty's Prison

KENNET

The Sixth Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board

2012

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V1.0

1. Statutory Role of the IMB

The Prisons Act 1952 and the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 require every prison to be monitored by an independent Board appointed by the Home Secretary from members of the community in which the prison 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. Description of the prison

HMP Kennet was converted from part of the Ashworth Hospital complex and opened in June 2007. The original buildings were built soon after the Second World War. It is situated close to Junction 1 of the M58 and is a sprawling site, open and airy, but most inhospitable on a windy winters day in the rain. The land is leased from Mersey Care Trust, although we understand the Home Office owns the land.

It is a Category C establishment designed for 342 offenders. Accommodation for offenders consists of seven single storey buildings, holding between 30 and 69 offenders and is generally two per cell. Each cell has a washbasin and toilet and the latter is generally screened by ceiling high curtains. There is standard two bunk sleeping provision with storage for each offender including a small security safe for personal items. Television sets are available for offenders on Standard and Enhanced Status. Cell locking incorporates protection of property with each resident having his own cell key, which the staff can override with their keys. There are showers in each unit, which are available during each association period.

There are two administration buildings. Wordsworth House contains offices for the Governor, Deputy Governor, Security, the Performance Monitoring Unit (PMU) and the Staff Training Unit with the remaining Administration work is in the building opposite Wordsworth House. Reception, Healthcare, Prison Chaplaincy, Library and the Workshops are all located in a complex in the centre of the Prison Site. The Gymnasium incorporating an all weather football pitch is situated nearby. Visits take place in a separate single story building. The facilities are limited but comfortable. Refreshments are available and there is a supervised child's play area, but the supervision is sometimes limited by shortages of staff.

Healthcare is provided by Liverpool Community Healthcare Trust.
Education and training is provided by The Manchester College.

3.1 Reconfiguration of HMP Kennet – 2012

HMP Kennet is at present being reconfigured as a Resettlement Prison. The change of status is scheduled for the beginning of April 2013. A dedicated unit to project manage this change is manned by the Deputy Governor and a very capable Principal Officer.

Board members are always welcome to visit the project team. The Governor gives an explicit update at each of our Board Meetings and the plans as they unfold appear to be well thought out and well constructed.

The Governor has had meetings with the Unions involved to make sure that manning in all departments is appropriate. There is though, some tension in the work force due to an expected reduction in staff numbers.

Regular forums and surgeries are being held to keep staff and offenders informed and to answer as many questions as are asked. Not all questions can be answered at the immediate time of application as the changes are still being adapted to suit the particular needs of HMP Kennet.

The project team have looked at HMP Kirklevington as a model. Whilst it has been valuable to do this, some differences are still to be addressed. The kitchen at HMP Kirklevington is within the prison boundary whereas at Kennet the kitchen is outside the boundary. This will present problems with setting up a communal dining facility which the Governor hopes to introduce.

There was an interruption of intake of new offenders to enable wings to be closed for modification of cell locks. This will enable freedom of movement around the wings and the areas of the prison allocated to Cat D accommodation.

Gate access for movement of offenders going to and from work is being looked at. The outer perimeter locking will still be maintained at night and the Prison Gate will remain to maintain security.

The dedication and cooperation of staff at HMP Kennet is a credit to them and we can look forward to an effective and successful conversion to a Resettlement Prison.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

4.1 Issues for the Minister

4.1.1 Transfer of Category D offenders

The lack of places in the open estate meant that throughout the year there were a significant number of offenders who had been recategorised to Category D who were awaiting transfer. Locally, offenders waited in a queue with those waiting longest being transferred when a place became available. One of the wings is a Category D transition unit which allows the offenders some additional privileges while they await transfer.

The problems with Category D movement will be addressed when HMP Kennet is reconfigured to a Resettlement Prison in April 2013.

4.1.2 Loss of property when transferring between establishments

This year the Board still sees problems with offender's property that gets lost when they transfer to Kennet. This is time consuming to resolve and can cause the offenders affected, significant distress. The Board is concerned at the level of cases and do not see anything in place which is likely to reduce the problem.

4.1.3 Budget pressures

HMP Kennet has historically had higher costs than other similar establishments, some due to the nature of the establishment eg a kitchen outside the establishment and several small wings. However, compliance with SBC and Fair and Sustainable, along with the implementation of the Business Development Group (BDG) submissions, will see significant reductions in CPPP for the establishment, post April 2013. We are monitoring the impact of the reduced funding closely and have not seen any significant reduction in front line offender provision during 2012. We continue to be concerned about the impact of outside factors. On occasion, the quality of the foodstuffs provided via the standard contract is not acceptable and the only recourse available to the kitchen was complaint to the provider.

4.1.4 Support from Ministry of Justice

During 2012, the IMB at Kennet had five members in their initial probationary year. The remaining members had to take the lead in the Board's monitoring work as well as recruiting, supporting and training the new members. Spending significant time dealing with problems in the Ministry of Justice, notably with the move to a new Website (and the associated failure to update it) and the move to new expenses system meant that the Board had to reduce its monitoring to the absolute minimum. The Triennial Review and year end saw four Board Members leave.

The numbers will be further reduced at the end of 2013 when three members will leave under the limitation of tenure of public office.

4.2 Issues for the Prison Service

4.2.1 Double cells

As stated in our last four reports, almost all the cells are double cells. Generally the toilet is screened by a curtain which provides little privacy. Many offenders eat meals in their cells. The Board is pleased to note that dining out is now available on all wings and there are sufficient tables in the wing recreational areas to allow for anyone who wishes to 'dine out' to do so. However, these arrangements continue to fall significantly short of good practice.

4.2.2 Cost of phones

While the Board realises that the cost to offenders of using the phones is set to cover the whole cost of the phone service, the Board remains concerned about the cost. It is unfortunate that the unit cost of calls remains high.

4.3 Overall judgement

In 2012, the good relationships between offenders and staff at HMP Kennet continue. There is a positive culture with staff generally treating offenders with respect. The Board is pleased to note the improvement in the Key Performance Targets in 2012 with almost all being at an appropriate level. The improved quality and volume of education provision and the established wings for Category D transition and Resettlement are positive developments. At a local level, there is a culture of continual improvement and staff generally value and use feedback, eg from the offender Focus Group and from the Monitoring Board

The Board wishes to record its thanks for the help it has had from the Governor and all of the staff at HMP Kennet during 2012.

MANDATORY AREAS

5.1 Diversity

Due to the lay out and construction of the establishment, generally all that is necessary to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) is 'reasonable adjustment' for the specific needs of an individual. There are some wings with a cell designed for an offender who has limited mobility.

An offender with a disability should have information on his needs recorded in the records which transfer with him from his previous establishment which would then be used at HMP Kennet. Any unrecorded needs should be identified during the reception process with the information passed to the Disability Liaison Officer for follow up. Similarly a gay, bisexual or transgendered offender should be identified during the reception process if it is not already recorded.

The Race Equality Action Team (REAT) meets regularly and Offender representatives attend. The mandatory Race Equality Impact Assessments were completed. These fed into the Race Equality Action Plan which is updated regularly and is overseen by the Governor.

Information leaflets and instructions for offenders in many languages are on the Prison Information pages of the computer so they can be accessed or printed as needed. The establishment puts on activities for the celebration of all religious festivals.

5.2 Learning and Skills

There are vocational courses in painting and decorating, bricklaying, joinery, plastering, catering, tiling and horticulture. The Physical Education facilities include an all weather football pitch and a wide range of traditional gym equipment. Various courses leading to Sports training qualifications are available and trained offenders can work as a gym orderly. There is also a range of classroom based activities such as numeracy, literacy, ICT, business administration and creative writing.

A continuing success is the provision of new courses which are more advanced and lead to industry recognised qualifications eg Diplomas in Bricklaying and Catering. of Category D offenders in the Kitchen and their training in a genuine environment is a further example of better provision.

There is also a well stocked library and the Board were pleased to see that access was better in 2012. The opportunities to use the library though are not always taken by offenders.

There is a temporary lull in education due to the reduction of Cat C offenders. This is in preparation for the reconfiguration of HMP Kennet as a Cat C Prison to a Resettlement Prison.

5.3 Healthcare and mental health

There is a well equipped healthcare centre. There are regular nurse led, GP and dental clinics as well as many specialist clinics such as chiropody, mental health, phlebotomy, psychiatric. There are targeted sessions such as 'cessation of smoking' and 'well man'. The PCT managed to recruit a permanent dentist. There were occasions, where the transfer of offenders to HMP Kennet was hindered by a lack of accompanying records, which left offenders with no prescriptions to support their treatment.

A system has been set up with staff in Healthcare at HMP Liverpool and HMP Kennet to provide overnight cover in the case of incidents.

5.4 Safer custody

There are three safer custody cells on wings. The ACCT's and TABs system in HMP Kennet is one of its strengths with excellent training for all staff and the officer responsible for the system being a strong advocate of its benefits.

As a whole, we feel the regime fulfils the criteria of humane and just treatment of those held in custody. In addition to our regular discussions with offenders, we have seen letters to the Governor with positive comments.

5.5 Segregation Unit

The segregation Unit at HMP Kennet is a purpose built unit consisting of 10 cells, plus two with observation facilities and Closed Circuit Television coverage is available should angry or disruptive offenders be brought to the unit, and with two of the normal custody cells, with a facility to have television observation of any Offender brought to the unit who is causing concern for his potential to injure himself.

Care is taken to observe the strict criteria for using the cameras to monitor the offender when he is in any of these cells and to ensure that the requirements of the Prison rule 50A and PSI 22/2012 and PSI 64/2011 are adhered to.

The outlook from the Segregation Unit is very open, with plenty of grass and trees to be seen. All the cells are in excellent decorative order and all are kept very clean.

Facilities are also available for outside exercise for three offenders at any one time, Indoor exercise, should it be preferred, is available in the form of an exercise bicycle. There is showering and telephone availability and the all the care staff are seen to attend whenever any offenders are resident. Education is also available on the unit.

Occupation in the Segregation Unit at HMP Kennet is not a regular occurrence and this is very much due to the care and attention shown to the offenders by Wing staff whenever possible.

The most frequent reason for Offenders coming onto the Unit seems to be 'in their own interest', ranging from debts to threats from other offenders. It is not unusual for the Unit to be empty for part of any week.

Reviews under PSO1700 are meticulously adhered to, and the review itself is a relaxed and consultative event with staff attending from Health Care, the Chaplaincy and the Independent Monitoring Board (IMB)

AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE AND AREAS OF CONCERN

6.1 Adjudications

Adjudications are held in a room adjacent to the segregation unit and those accused of offences against prison discipline are held in two specially set out rooms opposite the adjudication room.

During 2012, adjudications were held as needed generally in the morning. Those the Board has observed were fair and unrushed. The awards have caused little concern to the Board.

6.2 Catering and kitchens

The Kitchen is outside the perimeter of the Prison, staffed by industrial grade staff and a catering manager, and during 2012 Category D offenders based at HMP Kennet continued to work in the kitchen.

The menus are checked for quality and dietary balance by a dietician. There is a good selection and different menus for special occasions such as religious festivals. The catering manager has continued with the regular survey of offenders by regular meetings.

Food is loaded in insulated trolleys and then transported by van into the prison then the trolleys are used to transport the food to each wing. Trolleys and used containers are returned to the kitchen for cleaning. Temperature records are well kept by the offenders who serve the food in each wing servery and checked weekly by catering management.

6.3 Chaplaincy

The Chaplaincy of HMP Kennet continues to do a magnificent job. The enthusiasm of the whole team is obvious on every occasion they are called upon to either attend a Review or when they are on the rounds of the Prison Wings. The Offenders really appreciate the pastoral care they receive at HMP Kennet and this is obvious from the relationship that they have with the clergy.

Cover is provided for all religious denominations and includes Church of England, Roman Catholic, and Muslim on a regular basis and a wide range of chaplains who attend when members of the minority religions are held in the prison. It continues to be a particular feature that any offender who wishes to see a chaplain will see one on the day of his request, and who will, should it be requested will arrange for a chaplain of the offenders own faith to attend as soon as possible.

With the new role of a Resettlement Prison being setup in 2013 for HMP Kennet, the manning level of each department is being examined carefully,

including the Chaplaincy. One recent change has been the sharing of the C of E Chaplain with HMP Liverpool

It is expected that there will be some changes in the staffing level. One problem that has been encountered is that the way of calculating staff does not take into account the other work in which the chaplaincy staff are heavily involved, namely Family Days, Parenting Sessions, Yoga etc. These come under the heading of Safer Custody and it is hoped that some of this manning level can be allocated to the Chaplaincy staff.

These special features that are provided in the Chapel are well and enthusiastically attended by offenders and their families. A wide range of activities is set up for everybody to participate in and enjoy.

The range of activities hosted by the Chapel is worthy of note, ranging, in addition to its cover of its primary function, to include the use of the Chapel for assorted meetings, awards presentations and the training of staff..

6.4 Reception and Induction

Reception at HMP Kennet is a smooth and well managed process. A power point presentation is used for Induction and is presented by an offender who has learned the computer skills whilst at Kennet to enable him to do this. He takes new inmates through each step and he has the ability to hold their attention.

It was a pleasure to learn that he feels he has turned his life around because of the education he has received whilst serving his sentence.

6.5 Offender Consultative Group

Every month the Offender Consultative Group (OCG) meets in the Chapel to discuss items raised at the Wing meetings.

The representatives show their appreciation of the meetings by the calm way they behave at them.

The OCG has one representative from each wing, but some recent discharged has resulted in some Wings not being represented at each meeting. It was suggested by the wing representatives as a way to overcome this problem, that each wing will in future have two representatives, but that only one will attend the meeting. This proposal has been accepted by the Chairman.

Part of the function of this group is to have other meetings, on a separate occasion, with the Catering managers to discuss and update menus, and to express any concerns that occur in the prison catering services.

They obviously have lively discussions on the Wings with fellow offenders as is evidenced by the range of topics brought to attention of the Chairman and the respect that is shown to members of staff who attend.

Representatives of local voluntary service organisations have also attended looking to improve various aspects of Health Care etc.

Over the last few months of this year concerns have been expressed about the way the role change to that of a Resettlement Prison will effect the offenders and the staff must be complimented on the sensible and caring way information is being communicated to the Representatives of each wing as it becomes available.

THE WORK OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

7.1 Membership and workload

In January 2012, there were 12 members on the Board at HMP Kennet, just right for the complement of twelve. Three were members recruited in the second half of 2011, four recruited in 2010 and five had been on the Board for some time. One of the four recruited in 2010 was on a sabbatical for a year due to a temporary work promotion and resigned in the Autumn of 2012. A further two from the 2010 recruitment also resigned around the same time. In December 2012 we also lost one of our more experienced members who had been Chair to the Board for 3 years. Two of the five experienced members are also members on another Board and helped to set up the original Board at HMP Kennet. The Board has a good mix of people with varied backgrounds. Many are in employment and/or have family responsibilities. People have commented of the number of younger people on the Board - a quarter is under 59 with the youngest in his twenties and a good spread of ages in between.

With the introduction of the Criminal Justice Secure Network (CJSM), The Board now use electronic rather than paper based communication, and this seems to be working fine for our Board enabling communication of rotas and general updates on what is going on in the prison, to be secure between members.

Facilities provided by the Governor to the Board are very good. We have a small but comfortable room, with desks, storage capacity, telephone and a computer.

We held 11 Board meetings in the Boardroom in 2012, one in each month except December. .

The 2012 figures for attendance averaged approximately 73 %.
The Governor or the Deputy Governor attended every meeting.

During 2012, the Board made 400 visits which is a large increase compared to 2011 we put this down to training of our latest recruits allowing them to gain

more experience. The Board also dealt with 72 applications from offenders. There have been very few incidents in the prison, all minor. In addition to this, the Board has focused on recruiting and supporting new members. There were some attendances at Committees, particularly the Offender Consultative Group. Board members have attended National training, including four of our most recent members attending their foundation course and being signed off to end their probation. The National Conference was also attended as were several North West meetings of Chairs of Independent Monitoring Boards and other regional meetings.

7.2 Key IMB statistics 2011

Recommended Complement of Board Members	12
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	12
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	8
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	0
Number of members leaving within reporting period	4
Total number of visits to the prison (including all meetings)	400
Total number of applications received	72
Total number of segregation reviews held	27
Total number of segregation reviews attended by IMB	10

7.3 Applications to IMB

Code	Subject	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
A	Accommodation	2	2	2	3	0
B	Adjudications	1	2	4	3	2
C	Diversity related	7	1	0	2	4
D	Education/employment/training	2	17	3	5	6
E	Family/visits	8	19	6	10	7
F	Food/kitchen related	0	1	1	0	1
G	Health related	9	6	21	7	4
H	Property	7	17	13	17	22
I	Sentence related	25	16	22	18	11
J	Staff/prisoner/detainee related	3	6	8	2	2
K	Transfers	7	14	10	2	3
L	Miscellaneous	11	20	18	7	10
	Total number of applications	82	122	108	73	72

This number is low compared to some prisons that Board members have served in. In part, this is due to the low number of offenders in the establishment. However, the quality of the Personal Officer system means that officers deal effectively with many issues which would otherwise become applications to the Board.