



INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

HMP MAIDSTONE

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 28 FEBRUARY 2013

S1 STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

The Prison 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.

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 its 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 with the exception of medical records.

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S3 DESCRIPTION OF MAIDSTONE PRISON

HMP Maidstone is a category C training establishment and uses its resources on programmes, education and training with the purpose of preparing prisoners for release with a reduced risk of offending.

The prison is a specialist treatment resource centre for Kent and Sussex and delivers the Sex and Offenders Treatment Programme and related courses.

The prison's capacity is 600 prisoners comprised wholly of sex offenders and foreign nationals accommodated in four houses, Weald House (capacity 149) is an induction house for prisoners new to the prison, Thanet (capacity 174), Medway (capacity 101) and Kent (capacity 176). With the exception of 38 cells in Weald House all other cells are for single occupation.

The population of the prison is fully integrated thus sex offenders and those committed for other crimes live, work and learn alongside one another.

There are nine English Heritage listed buildings in the estate, including the outer wall and main entrance, the Roundhouse, the Theatre, the old Roman Catholic Chapel and the Church of the Good Shepherd. The English Heritage listing states that all these listings form a group. The Roman Catholic Chapel and the Church of the Good Shepherd are comprised within the same building. The main part of the church has been adapted to create a Multi-Faith Centre.

There are many later additions on the site. Where fixtures and fittings form part of the land and have done so since 1st July 1948, they are treated as part of the listing for listed building control, although they do not necessarily appear on the English Heritage listings.

The education in the prison is supplied by Manchester College. Healthcare for this year was supplied by a new contractor, Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust.

S4 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Board's report for the current year does, in general, indicate a settled establishment with few major incidents, hard working staff, with the conditions at the prison being satisfactory.

The report obviously only covers the current reporting year but the recent news that the prison is due for a change of use to a wholly Foreign National population during the spring and summer of 2013 does, however, bring some speculation by the Board members as to how the change will affect the prison and to the Board's duties and preoccupations in the future.

One of the Board's main duties has been to observe how the prison staff has coped with the budget cuts during the year and how this has affected the prison's performance. The cut back in staff levels have had an effect upon staff on the wings and the Board has made special observations to see how the reduction of staff in these areas has been used and whether this could create security problems. To a large extent this has not caused problems but will remain a vital role for the members during the coming year.

The Board is also concerned with the recent cut in the catering budget and will remain vigilant in ensuring that quality and quantity of the food provided does not diminish.

The Board was also concerned during the year about the number of SOTP (Sex Offender Treatment Programme) courses completed and whilst this may not be a problem in the coming year with the change of use, the Board is concerned in the general sense about sentence programming and the resources that will be provided.

The Board is also concerned about the number of Foreign National prisoners who have served their sentence but are still retained in the prison due to the fact that their deportation cannot be arranged. With the advent of a prison devoted to Foreign National prisoners this may well be a major issue in the coming year.

ISSUES REQUIRING THE ATTENTION OF THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL OFFENDER MANAGEMENT SERVICE

4.1 WORKING PRISON MODEL

The Board, whilst noting the progress of the scheme, is still concerned with the shift system introduced and the general ill will that is being felt by the staff that are affected by it. The Board requests that constant review is made of the system and the affect that it has been causing staff and the general affect on the prison.

4.2 FOREIGN NATIONALS

The Board is concerned about the growing number of Foreign National prisoners who have served their sentence but are still in the prison because the arrangements for their deportation have not been finalised. Although this is mainly a problem to be dealt with by the UKBA this will be a rising issue with the growing number of foreign prisoners.

4.3 PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY

Whilst, at present, there are a number of employment possibilities open to the prisoners the Board is concerned with the change of use in the future that the lack of trained prisoners in, for example, the Print Shop may have a detrimental affect on the variety of work available and the output of the shop.

4.4 RE-ROLE - DISABLED/SEX OFFENDER PRISONERS

The Board is concerned about the forthcoming transfer of older and disabled sex offender prisoners in the near future. Many of these prisoners, at present, have ground floor cells, showers and other facilities adapted for their use and mobility scooters for use in getting around the prison. The Board is anxious that, as far as possible, they will be sent to prisons that can accommodate them in a similar fashion. The Board is also concerned that the sex offenders at present receiving appropriate treatment are allowed to finish that training/treatment before they are moved to another prison.

S5 ISSUES THAT MUST BE REPORTED

5.1 EQUALITY & INCLUSION

Maidstone has experienced, during the past few years, a steady increase in the number of older, infirm and disabled prisoners. In 2013 there were 184 prisoners aged over 50 and 197 disabled prisoners. The prison management deserve credit for dealing with the numerous problems this brings with mobility of some prisoners, accommodation and dealing with prisoners not able to work or attend education. The Board acknowledges the work done, in particular, by the gym staff to encourage the older prisoners to take part in some sports. The nature of the buildings at Maidstone is not ideal for older and infirm prisoners but the prison does ensure that as far as possible they are not disadvantaged.

5.2 EDUCATION, LEARNING AND SKILLS

The contract for the provision of education went out to tender at the start of the year and Manchester College were again awarded the contract. In general this has worked well with courses being supplied from basic literacy and numeracy to distance learning with also English as a second language (ESOL) being given, where required.

The Board had serious misgivings about the number of courses for sex offenders and the SOTP (Sex Offender Training Programmes). There were problems finding staff willing to lead these programmes and a fear that not all prisoners would complete their courses before release. This has been further emphasised by the change of use for the prison in June 2013. It has been made clear, however, that all prisoners at present doing these programmes will complete them before being transferred to another prison.

5.3 HEALTHCARE & MENTAL HEALTH

The Board has a statutory duty to monitor the provision of healthcare on a regular basis and has carried this out throughout the year with no major shortcomings ascertained in the provision of healthcare to the prisoners in custody at Maidstone. The timeliness of appointments and range of services available in general is at least as favourable as that experienced by the public locally. The new providers, Oxleas, have now settled down and the Board has had the opportunity to invite the new Manager to one of its meetings to explain the services available and to hear his thoughts for the future about healthcare at Maidstone.

The overall impression that the Board has is that of better liaison by the staff to the Board members. There is still a need to use bank and agency staff due to difficulty in recruiting full time staff. It is still noted, as with the previous year, that health staff still did not attend review segregation hearings on many occasions.

There were many clinics held during the year, together with regular visits by doctors, dentist, chiropodist, in reach team and psychologists.

One growing problem during the year has been the rising average age of prisoners at Maidstone with the inevitable rise in the amount of health support and attention they require.

5.4 PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY

There is a wide range of work available within the prison which includes residential house cleaning, food preparation and serving, gardens, kitchen, print shop, laundry, brick shop, painting and decorating shop and recycling of almost all waste produced with the prison.

Many of these areas provide the opportunity to achieve qualifications which can be of benefit when seeking employment on release. The Print Shop has acquired, over the past 4 years, a number of large and modern machines and is now the most modern printing facility in any prison. It continues to expand its capacity and employs prisoners in composing, printing and print finishing. It now works as part of the Working Prison Model and ensures that prisoners working there work a full day with meals being served in the Print Shop.

The Painting and Decorating Shop, which restarted in April 2012, proved a great success with a waiting list for prisoners looking for the opportunity to work and train there.

In addition to the above a few prisoners act as peer workers or Listeners in the prison. This is a very valuable job and does assist newly arrived prisoners as well as those prisoners finding it difficult to adjust to prison life or those faced with family problems .

5.5 RESETTLEMENT

In 2011-2012 there were 233 prisoners released and up to January this year the figure was 194. Prisoners are interviewed prior to release by resettlement staff to give them assistance with accommodation, employment, medical facilities and the agencies and charities all aimed at reducing the risk of re-offending on release.

The section also held two open days when a range of organisations brought displays and literature detailing the help that they could offer prisoners upon release. The section also offers professional help with debt problems, family issues and parenting skills.

5.6 SAFER CUSTODY

A Safer Custody Meeting takes place monthly under the chairmanship of a Governor. Officers and prisoner representatives from the four houses are present and a member of the Board attends these meetings.

During each Statutory Visit open Assessment and Care in Custody Teamwork (ACCT) documents are examined to check that correct procedures are being followed, regular reviews are held and that the entries are helpful. On occasions member of the Board attend ACCT reviews and it must be noted their satisfaction of the constructive and sympathetic attitude of the reviewing panel.

5.7 SEGREGATION, CARE & SEPARATION, CLOSE SUPERVISION

The Care and Separation Unit (CSU) has a small number of cells of various types to hold prisoners for disciplinary or own protection reasons. The unit has a special unfurnished cell for particularly disruptive or refractory prisoners but it has not been necessary to use this cell other than for very short periods during the current year.

IMB members are required to see all prisoners located in the CSU with 72 hours of their first location to ensure they are held there for legitimate reasons. Following this initial visit prisoners held in the unit are visited by a member at least weekly to check on their well being. Members also attend regular reviews to consider the continued segregation of a prisoner in the unit at which they may express their dissatisfaction if they do not agree with the management's decision. Members check on the progress towards return of prisoners to normal location or transfer to another establishment.

Prisoners found guilty of a breach of prison rules may be awarded a period of cellular confinement (CC) which is served in the unit.

It is the responsibility of the prison management to ensure that members of the Board are advised of the movement of prisoners to the CSU (Prison Service Order 1700) and in the majority of cases this has been done.

Two cells which are not part of Segregation have been adapted to enable constant observation or prisoners who are deemed to be at high risk of self harm. The cells have been used in the past year but for relatively short periods while the risks are reduced and the prisoner can be returned to normal location.

Staff must be congratulated on the compassionate manner and understanding they show to prisoners who are moved to the CSU.

The Segregation Monitoring and Review Group (SMARG) should meet quarterly and be attended by an IMB member. The Group reviews reasons for location, ethnicity, use of force and religion of residents and the quality and completeness of a sample of a prisoner's Segregation record.

Meetings have not been held at the scheduled times which has meant that when the meetings are held they consider very old statistics which are somewhat meaningless.

5.8 RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

There are four wings at Maidstone and members of the Board visit them on a regular basis to ensure that conditions are sustainable, the food served is satisfactory as regards quality and quantity, that records are kept relating to self harm prisoners in a regular fashion and that observation books are up to date and checked by senior staff. In addition, the members are able to check the number of Officers available and their location, the common areas used by prisoners are clean and safe and that the prisoners have a general sense of well being. Members of the Board attend wing consultative meetings when available and take an observer role in elections by the prisoners to the committees. In general the residential wings are maintained to an acceptable standard.

5.9 FOREIGN NATIONALS

Foreign National prisoners constituted approximately 30% of the prison population with up to 70 languages being spoken. All prisoners attend induction sessions when they arrive and those who have difficulty with English are paired with another prisoner to act an interpreter. A number of forms, policies and documents are translated into the main languages.

The UK Border Agency has two staff members attached to the prison and they run regular help sessions on a weekly basis. There are also regular forums for the prisoners where there are several speakers on specialist subjects.

There is Chaplaincy staff available for all prisoners and they are able to practice their religious observances with a part of the church used as a Multi-Faith Centre.

S6 OTHER AREAS OF THE PRISON

6.1 ADJUDICATIONS

Adjudications are heard by a Governor in cases where a prisoner is charged by staff with a breach of prison rules. Board members attend adjudications on an ad hoc basis to monitor the processes and when requested to do so by prisoners.

There is a facility to refer adjudications to an independent Judge in circumstances where, if proven the case, it may merit an additional period in prison.

6.2 APPLICATIONS TO THE BOARD

The Board monitors applications received from prisoners on a monthly basis by reference to source, subject and ethnic background. Statistics recording this information are contained in Appendix 1 and 2.

A total of 199 applications were made to the Board and investigated by members, in addition 10 applications were made under confidential access and dealt with by the Chair.

The number of Healthcare complaints increased over the previous year but on closer examination most of the additional complaints were from prisoners transferred from other prisons and had been prescribed different medication from that prescribed at their previous establishment.

It is pleasing to note that the property complaints had shown a decrease from the previous 3 years.

The ethnic analysis does not show any concerns, although the percentage of complaints from prisoners in group B1, B2 and B9 is greater than the population; this is explained by several prisoners in this group making numerous applications to the IMB.

6.3 CATERING AND KITCHEN

Prisoners are able to choose their meals in advance from a varied menu produced by the Catering Manager. With the strict restrictions of the catering budget the Manager is to be congratulated on the variety and quality of the meals provided to the prisoners. This is reflected in the low numbers of complaints received by the Board in respect of prison menu and food.

The Board has been concerned about the availability of the Food Comments Book that should be present at all the servery stations on the wings. The book should be open for entries by prisoners and inspections by senior staff and Board members.

Board members visit the kitchen on a regular basis to satisfy themselves that food is prepared and served in clean and hygienic facilities.

A Catering Consultative Committee, comprising prisoner representatives and the Catering Manager, meet at regular intervals with a Board member being present to discuss any issues that have arisen and requests for changes to menus.

With the advent of more prisoners having their lunch at their place of work, whilst there were teething difficulties in setting up the supply of correct food to the correct location, this has now improved.

6.4 CHURCH/MULTI-FAITH CENTRE

The Church plays an important part in the life of the prison. It is used for all faiths to worship. Family visit days are held there and as the largest meeting place in the prison it is used for full staff meetings.

The Board has had concerns during the year with the retirement of the only Church of England Minister and the problems with his/her replacement. There have been various temporary appointments but the lack of a full time chaplaincy team has resulted in lack of attendance at some meetings and reviews which is undesirable.

6.5 COMMUNICATIONS

The Prison Council has met on a regular basis its aim is to formulate proposals to improve prison life and at the same time provide, where appropriate, cost effective solutions. Each month a proposal is submitted to the Senior Management team (SMT) for consideration.

This process continued well until September when a prisoner representative on the Council became frustrated by the lack of progress or information about proposals previously submitted, most of the frustration surrounded proposals involving security where there seemed to be a lack of will to investigate and respond.

A change of prisoner representatives on the Council led it to losing focus and reverting to a forum to air complaints. The situation has now improved and the purpose of the Council is back on track.

The Council provides the opportunity for the Governor to speak to the prisoner representatives from all wings and outline issues that affect prisoners.

6.6 INDUCTIONS

Every week a member of the Board attends the prison to take part in the Induction Programme for prisoners new to Maidstone. The member explains to them the role of the IMB and how to contact the Board should a prisoner wish to talk to a member of the Board.

Board members are also available to speak to all new members of staff although this seems to be a facility not, at present, being used by the prison management.

6.7 INTEGRATED REGIME

All four wings have a population made up of sex offenders and Foreign National prisoners., and all workshops, education, gymnasium and the kitchen all have complements made up of prisoners regardless of offence.

It is pleasing that, in general, full integration has been a success.

6.8 PROBATION

Since moving offices and placing staff under one roof the department is more settled. The staff have had a busy year with a considerable amount of change. The change of use of the prison has created some uncertainty and a number of staff are concerned as to what extent they will be required in the future.

The move towards grouping as many high risk prisoners as possible under Probation Officer within the Offender Management Unit (OMU) has been completed with good results. This has allowed the Probation Officers to better use their skills as work is more evenly spread.

Workloads continue to be heavy and this is being carefully monitored. Steps will be taken if stress related problems arise and/or if there is an increase in absenteeism.

An Offender Supervisor from Canterbury has joined the department.

6.9 RECYCLING

There is a very efficient recycling centre in the prison which deals with sorting all the waste that is created in the prison.

The food waste is recycled into compost which is used in the prison garden. Wood is used to make bird nesting boxes to be given to schools and wildlife organisations. Paper, metal and plastics are sold to recycling companies. Good use is made of broken and obsolete furniture by converting them to articles that can be used in the prison.

6.10 SECURITY

A Security Meeting is held on a monthly basis and an IMB member attends and reports to the Board.

Whilst articles and packages containing illicit articles are still being thrown over the outer wall of the prison, due to increased surveillance this has been restricted to limited areas which makes detection of the parcels easier. Drugs and mobile phones do, however, continue to be smuggled into the prison despite the excellent work carried out by the staff to prevent their importation.

During the meetings each house reports on their own wing and the known or suspected drug and mobile phone dealers. The situation has improved at the end of the reporting year and with the closing of Canterbury prison there may be more equipment available to assist detection.

There was also a slight increase in the amount of illegal liquor found despite rigorous searches in the prison. Whilst the searching in the prison and the intelligence reports has increased it has to be said that the prisoners are using increasingly ingenious methods of concealment.

6.11 VISITS

There was a problem with refreshments in the Visits hall during the year which does now seem to have been solved. The Dinsmore Centre continues to function giving visitors the opportunity to wait in a more congenial atmosphere.

6.12 WORKING PRISON MODEL

The process was brought into the prison in the autumn and the object was to give those prisoners who are in work a full or near to full days work and to abolish the midday lock up. Those prisoners in employment had their lunch served to them in their place of employment.

The effect of the process did mean that staff in the prison had new shifts to work and often extra duties to perform during the day. There were teething problems in the new shifts and the Board does believe these have not been solved completely and that there is some ill will about the new shift pattern despite the prison management working hard to alleviate those problems. The situation regarding the full time working by the prisoners has proved successful in most cases.

6.13 PSYCHOLOGY

Reorganisation to an area module has been completed. This has provided more emphasis on SOTP, management and supervision, completion of end of programme report and psychological assessments with less delivery of programmes.

The change of use will see SOTP running down and at present the department is in limbo until the National Review is completed at the end of April when it is envisaged staff will have an idea of where they are to be placed.

6.14 GARDENS

One of the striking points about Maidstone prison is the well kept gardens throughout the site and the excellent work carried out on them by the Garden's officer and his team. It has just been learnt that the prison has been awarded the NOMS Wildlife Award for the second year running, a precedent being set as no other prison has ever won the award for two years running.

The gardening team have worked very hard over the last year not only to maintain existing gardens but to convert any spare land not used for building into attractive and well kept areas. They also produce insect and bird boxes to encourage insects to nest and produce their larvae.

S7 THE WORK OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

7.1 BOARD MEETINGS

The Board meets once a month to discuss the previous month's reports from the Governor, individual reports of Statutory Visits, notes of meetings attended, statistics and to plan areas for special attention during future visits.

Prior to the meeting a half hour slot is allocated to a member of staff or visitor to give details of the work of their department or function which enhances the knowledge base of members.

The Board Chairman and Vice Chair meet with the Governor once a month to raise issues that require responses at the following Board Meeting.

7.2 DUTY MEMBER

The Duty member is required to be on 24 hour call for 7 days attending the CSU as necessary and to be present at prisoner reviews in order to ensure that prisoners are being held for valid reasons and are receiving appropriate care and attention.

A report of all prisoners held in the unit and when they are seen and spoken to is circulated to Board members. The Duty member will attend incidents and make a record of their observations.

7.3 STATUTORY VISIT

A member will make an unannounced visit to the prison and inspect: Residential Houses, Healthcare and the Kitchen, together with other areas identified for particular attention. The member makes a written report of the inspection which is circulated to all other members and the Governor highlighting any issue that requires a management response.

7.4 INDUCTIONS/APPLICATIONS

After the weekly Inductions of newly arrived prisoners has taken place the member collects the prisoner's applications from the residential house's and CSU, records details of the application, carries out an investigation and responds to the prisoner, recording the response.

The same member collects prisoner applications to the Board from residential houses, records details of the application, carries out an investigation and responds to the offender, recording the response given.

BOARD STATISTICS

Recommended Complement of Board Members	12
Number of Board Members at the start of the reporting period	11
Number of Board Members at the end of the reporting period	12
Number of new Members joining within the reporting period	3
Number of Members leaving within the reporting period	2
Number of attendances at meeting other than Board Meetings	295
Total number of visits to the prison	418
Total number of applications received	199

BOARD ACTIVITIES

Apart from the main duties of the Board, members have special areas of interest where they attend meetings as observers and report back to the Board.

Members have also attended National Training Courses organised by the IMB Secretariat. They also attended National Tactical Response Group Centre at Kidlington to observe advanced Control and Restraint training. Two members attended the IMB National Conference.

During the year Board Development was promoted by a variety of prison staff being invited to speak at Board Meetings about their duties and matters of interest in the prison.

Ian Fraser
Chair

APPENDIX 1

OFFENDER APPLICATIONS 2012/2013

		2012/13	2011/12	2011/10
A	ACCOMMODATION	9	7	17
B	ADJUDICATIONS	6	3	2
C	DIVERSITY	3	12	7
D	EDUCATION/TRAINING/IEP	25	34	34
E	FAMILY/VISITS	24	19	28
F	FOOD/KITCHEN	11	7	4
G	HEALTH RELATED	27	15	20
H	PROPERTY	28	44	55
I	SENTENCE	9	20	30
J	STAFF/PRISONER RELATIONSHIPS	21	16	13
K	INTER PRISON TRANSFERS	9	3	11
L	MISCELLANEOUS	27	24	25
TOTAL		199	204	246

APPENDIX 2

PRISONER APPLICATIONS 2012/13

ETHNIC ANALYSIS

ETHNIC GROUP	APPLICATIONS	%OF TOTAL	%OF PRISON POPULATION
ASIAN BRITISH	10	5.0	2.9
BLACK BLACK BRITISH (B1, B2, B3)	44	22.1	17.8
MIXED	1	0.5	1.0
CHINESE OR OTHER ETHNIC GROUP (01, 09)	2	1.0	1.7
WHITE	141	70.9	76.5
NOT STATED	1	0.5	0.0

