



ANNUAL REPORT

HMP OAKWOOD

24th April 2012 – 31st March 2013

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Section 1 - STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

The Prison Act 1952 and the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 require every prison and IRC to be monitored by an independent Board appointed by the Secretary of State from members of the community in which the prison or centre is situated.

The Board is specifically charged to:

- 1) satisfy itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in custody within its prison and the range and adequacy of the programmes preparing them for release.
- 2) inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority as it judges appropriate, any concern it has.
- 3) **report annually to the Secretary of State on how well the prison has met the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have on those in its custody.**

To enable the Board to carry out these duties effectively its members have right of access to every prisoner and every part of the prison and also to the prison's records.

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Section 3 - DESCRIPTION OF PRISON

3.1 HMP Oakwood started life as Featherstone 2 in 2011; the government contract to operate the prison was awarded to G4S. The prison was built to a Cat B specification, however when commissioned it was for a Cat C status prison which would house 1605 prisoners in single cell accommodation. The first prisoners arrived on the 24 April 2012 at the then called Oakwood Prison.

The main entrance to the prison houses the Gatehouse, Command Suite, Admin offices, Security, Offender Management Unit (OMU), Finance, Management Offices and Conference / Board rooms.

The prison has three main accommodation house blocks; named Ash, Beech and Cedar; each block is built on a hub and spur arrangement as of a wheel. Within each block there are five spurs, of which four are for housing. Each block has two landings, known within the prison as uppers and lowers, totalling eight units, each accommodating one hundred and twenty prisoners. The fifth spur houses Education rooms and Mandatory Drug Testing (MDT) suites. The central hub houses the wing offices, interview rooms, the food serveries, medication hatch and toilets. There are a number of special cells for wheelchair users, which are twice the size of a normal cell. Listener suites are available on all main house blocks.

A fourth residential block, known as Douglas, houses lifers and longer term prisoners. This unit can accommodate up to eighty nine prisoners.

There is a separate Care and Separation Unit (CSU) building, which can accommodate twenty four prisoners

Adjacent to the Prisoner Reception and Processing unit (Admissions) is a First Night Centre, which accommodates a maximum of seventy prisoners for their first night or nights within Oakwood.

Education within the prison is provided by Milton Keynes College

All Food provision is contracted out to Aramark.

There is a large Healthcare unit. South Staffordshire Primary Care Trust was allocated a budget to provide all healthcare provision. Worcestershire Primary Healthcare Trust provides this service.

There are buildings dedicated for prisoner visits and a Visitor Reception Unit, known as the Family Pathway Centre, is provided outside the main prison.

Kitchens, Gym, Chaplaincy / Multi-Faith Centre/Education workshops/Library and Industrial workshops and a staff refreshment area are also housed in separate buildings.

Section 4 - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

4.1 The handover of the first residential unit was very close to the opening day 24th April, which meant that the first prisoners were the testers of the systems within the house block. Building work on site was still on-going and cells still be fitted out, many ancillaries were not available to prisoners in the opening days, including essentials such as toilet paper.

Further areas of the prison were handed over during the next few months as they were completed.

The prison was designed to a Cat B specification so free flow, normally associated with Cat C prisons, was not able to start until January 2013 when lock backs had been installed throughout the prison, to enable gates to be locked back in the open position to allow free flow movements.

Food was cooked and prepared in Ash block in a small area known as the Bistro until the main kitchen block was completed and handed over at the end of May 2012.

The prison had the latest digital Home Office-approved radio system, which failed due to many black spots in the prison; this in part was due to the metal design of the buildings. To update and give complete coverage has cost £400,000, which will be completed by the end of May 2013.

TV aerials supplied by the contractors also failed to receive the required broadcast signals and again booster systems have had to be installed on all the house blocks.

4.2 INITIAL CONCERNS

Considering the prison was purpose built, there were a number of issues with the layout of the prison following cost cutting initiatives being implemented after the original design specification was agreed e.g. CCTV in stairwells.

The outer fence, which runs adjacent to the road, is only a single fence, which has led to many throw overs of drugs and mobile phones into the prison; additional CCTV has now to be installed to cover the area and additional fencing.

The heating in the main house blocks is centrally controlled and cells cannot be controlled individually, leading to some hot and cold areas.

The hub areas for staff have no natural light, limited air circulation or air conditioning. During hot weather, due to the lack of sufficient air movement and ventilation, the area becomes very warm. The hub areas became very stuffy, despite the poor summer of 2012.

The wing offices are situated in the central hub, so staff can only observe the wing through CCTV footage when in the office. Stairwells, which are not covered by

CCTV, have become areas within the accommodation blocks where incidents are occurring.

Access to staff toilets is directly from the central hub area and not conducive to the existing poor air quality within the hub office.

The toilets for the main Education classrooms are through a locked door and gate. The morning session lasts three and three quarter hours, so prisoners needing to use this facility have to be unlocked by the teaching staff if no officer is available. This is an issue with Education staff, which makes them feel vulnerable and is disruptive to the lessons taking place.

There were no sanitary accessories and no locks on the toilet doors when the building was handed over in both staff and prisoner areas.

Due to the prison being built to Cat B specification, but operating as a Cat C prison, the number of gates within the prison meant that up to January 2013, the movement of prisoners without escort was impossible.

Cells were designed with a wet area adjacent to the viewing door. Fixings for shower curtains or for window curtains were not fitted, giving privacy issues for prisoners taking showers within the cells.

Initially the majority of staff had had no previous experience of prison life or prisoners, most of whom knew the rules and regulations better than the new staff.

4.3 ISSUES FOR RESPONSE BY NOMS

The design of the house blocks has meant that staff working in the hub areas have little natural light, and in summer there is little ventilation or air conditioning.

The fitted furniture in the cells is made of light fibreboard, which is very easy to break up when a prisoner is angry; fragmented furniture has been used as a weapon against staff. The panels in the cell doors are made of a non-toughened glass, which are easy to break. The alternative replacement, made of Perspex, was found to be combustible. *see also Section 5.7*

Balfour Beattie, the builder, and Kier, the contractor, have been continually in the prison dealing with deficiencies and are not expected to complete the remedial work until later in 2013.

Whilst on “ramp-up” the prison could not apply criteria to the prisoners being transferred to Oakwood. Population Management have agreed that the prison received a large number of prisoners with significant issues, and more disruptive behaviour than would normally be expected at a Cat C training prison.

There is no “legal services officer” in the prison to deliver advice to prisoners as laid out in Prison Instructions. The Board believes there are no training courses currently.

4.4 ISSUES FOR RESPONSE BY MINISTER

Healthcare concerns: *see also Section 5.3*

- prescriptions not being renewed
- weekly medication not always given on specified day
- if issues arise during dispensing of medicine the healthcare team cease issuing of medications resulting in some prisoners not receiving medicines.
- delays in appointments – target of 48hrs to see doctor has been removed to the detriment of prisoners.
- severe delays with follow-up appointments
- complaint forms (Comp 1) not being recognised as complaints when received by Healthcare

Limited opportunities for re-categorised prisoners to be transferred to Cat D prisons due to shortage of available places.

4.5 ISSUES FOR RESPONSE BY DIRECTOR

Procurement – orders are being delayed, when they are considered non-essential. For example:

- Locked boxes for confidential requests for prisoners to see a member of the IMB were requested in March 2012 and were finally installed in January 2013
- Chaplaincy furniture ordered prior to opening was not delivered until December 2012/January 2013.

Staffing – High sickness rate after initial opening meant lack of officers to cover essential front-line duties, resulting in Offender Supervisors having to be used for front line duties, which has impacted on the work of OMU. Other areas have also suffered i.e. Resettlement, Library, Education. Although some improvement has been monitored there is still a requirement to underpin these key areas.

Scheduled meetings are often cancelled at the last minute, particularly those held on a monthly basis. Some of these meetings are mandatory and are essential for the smooth running of the establishment. Cancellations affect both prison staff and third party's availability in being able to attend the rearranged meeting.

Lack of work placement for prisoners is causing unrest with prisoners who are locked back in their cell at 09.00 as a result of not having purposeful activity.

Section 5 – REPORTS ON ASPECTS OF THE PRISON

5.1 EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

Evidence of focus by Senior Management on this important area is provided by the holding of only one meeting held on 21st June 2012 and a further meeting is planned for 19th April 2013.

At the first, the intention of holding bi-monthly meetings was recorded in the minutes and after the second, the holding of monthly meetings is to be the target. Though this seems to be unsatisfactory, the report prepared for the second meeting on the Equalities Governance showed considerable attempts to monitor safety and respect for Vulnerable Prisoners, Ethnic Strands and Religious and Gender Issues. The Equality Impact Assessment Schedule has clearly been used to advantage, thus all the protected characteristics are recognised as genuine attempts made to advance equality of opportunity. If the intention of Senior Management to carry through significant attentions to the needs of prisoners throughout these categories is adhered to, then we can hope for better awareness throughout the prison population. The IMB has attempted to present Equality in its own membership and will continue to recruit on this principle.

5.2 EDUCATION, LEARNING AND SKILLS

Due to the prison being new, this has meant that Education have started from scratch. Quality Assurance systems have had to be put in place for the whole site.

On each of the house blocks there are Education classrooms and separately within the prison are Education workshops. A variety of full and part-time courses are available. Instead of having classes in basic Literacy and Numeracy, all courses have functional skills embedded within the course. Courses cover entry level to level 2. The inclusion of Maths and English within the practical course tends to improve the outcomes. For example in plumbing, measuring helps with Maths understanding. At the end of the Social Development Class session, the students played Scrabble and through fun they learn to spell. In another class, Connect 4 was being played which helps both positional numeracy and understanding rules. The Education Department is involved with a national project, ALSIS, regarding functional skills.

A professional cookery course, which includes food service and barista training, is available. The tutors have previously managed kitchens. The prisoners on the course cook meals and wait on staff at the Oaks Cuisine Restaurant. The course is run on the same lines as a commercial restaurant. This gives students a taste of how kitchens operate. Staff have the opportunity to book a meal where all aspects of the meal are cooked from scratch by the prisoners. This has proved to be very popular with staff and there are plans to increase the opening days to cover demand.

The courses that are over subscribed are Art, Business and IT. The most popular course covers the use of Microsoft office, web design, multimedia, Photo Shop and Opus. Students completing all aspects of the course receive two qualifications.

The Art course is limited in the course it can offer e.g. a kiln ordered some months ago, so that clay work can be added to the Art course, is still awaited. There is an issue with Art supplies and work, as currently the students are not allowed the tools to do the work whilst in cell, all work having to be completed in the classroom.

Other courses available are Employability, Customer Services, Money Management, Business Skills, Accounting Life and Living and Functional Skills. What is lacking is the access to Higher Education Courses. A number of prisoners have arrived who are halfway through their course and for some there is no system in place to continue the course at Oakwood.

Staffing has been an issue and for some positions the College have had difficulty recruiting. Staff sickness has been high, which has caused classes to be cancelled. One of the main issues has been with the Education PCO (Prison Custody Officer). The role of the PCO as detailed in Notice to Staff 202.20.11.2012 include;

- Ensuring the correct prisoners are marked in to their classrooms
- Only allow prisoners into Education that are detailed on the unlock list
- To make sure the Education toilets are kept clean
- Contact the Control room with prisoner numbers
- Visit all classrooms at irregular intervals checking for security issues and general wellbeing. They must be visited at least three times each session
- Before the end of each work period check with the Education staff that all equipment is accounted for and secure, including all tools.

When there have been staff shortages in the prison, officers have been put onto other duties. This means that Education staff have no operational support. Staff then have to leave their staffroom to open the gates for prisoners to access the toilet. Other issues that Education staff have had to deal with

- At the end of an Art class a pen was missing but there was no officer to search the group
- A prisoner started to smoke in class

The Education toilets on all the blocks have been visited on rota on numerous occasions and have been found to be occasionally locked, usually dirty with no soap, handtowels or toilet rolls.

The Library is working well and provided by Staffordshire Libraries. The books are electronically tagged and designed that an alarm will sound if passing through the door scanner without being booked out. However, the door scanner is not yet activated.

The numbers of prisoners visiting the library is approximately one hundred per day; there is a wide range of multiple language publications, inclusive of newspapers and talking books. .

The computers for the virtual campus are in the prison, but not set up. It is hoped that this will be available for prisoners in the future. Planned for the future is 'Story

Book Dads' where prisoners can record themselves reading a bedtime story, which can be sent home so that children can hear their dad's voice.

At times the Library does not have an officer on duty but if there are two members of library staff on duty, the library will open. The evening library sessions are still awaited, as there are presently no officers available to move prisoners.

The Library employs enhanced prisoners to assist with the booking in and out of books and the shelving of books.

5.3 HEALTHCARE AND MENTAL HEALTH

The Healthcare building is well fitted with many treatment rooms and includes some of the latest technology.

The whole top floor of the Healthcare Unit remains mothballed due to its change in status from Cat B to Cat C when commissioned.

There is no in-patient facility available. Prison staff escorts are required for planned outside hospital appointments. 23 appointments were cancelled/rearranged in January 2013 and 18 in February 2013 due to escort issues.

Although some of the earlier difficulties have been resolved, Healthcare continues to give cause for concern.

Out of Hours services are provided by Badger. During March 2013 it was reported that only 50% of routine visits were consulted within six hours, the target being 95%.

All new prisoners have an initial brief health assessment in Admissions.

Following the initial assessment, when prisoners move to the residential house block, there have been regular complaints of delays in securing appointments, treatment and the inappropriateness of treatment received.

There have been difficulties and problems by prisoners failing to attend appointments due to not receiving appointment slips and also prisoners attending and being informed their appointments have been cancelled. Since the introduction of freeflow in January this has improved but the non-attendance rate is still around 20%. A new system, which starts in April through the interactive kiosks on each landing, will show the prisoner details of their appointment and they can then print this off, which is also their permission confirmation to move to Healthcare.

Medication is issued on the house blocks at hatches on each unit. There have been complaints that nurses have closed the hatches before the end of the sessions, leaving prisoners without necessary medication. The Healthcare Department accepts this but on these occasions nurses have feared for their safety and felt unsupported by operational staff.

On occasions Healthcare staff have failed to attend Care and Separation Unit Rule 45 reviews, thereby delaying the reviews and on other occasions have arrived without any knowledge of the prisoner's health. This creates considerable problems and wastes the time of the unit staff and the IMB who also attend the reviews.

There have been numerous complaints to the IMB over the past months indicating a general dissatisfaction with the healthcare provision. A system has now been introduced for designated complaint forms and secure boxes for Healthcare complaints only. These go direct to the Healthcare Department and should be responded to within seven days.

There have been complaints regarding acute backlogs in blood testing, delays in emergency dental treatment and accessing reliable follow-up of genuine and sometimes longstanding health problems.

Medications are provided through a contractual arrangement with Lloyds Chemists situated within the establishment. Their delivery comes in at 12.45p.m. each day and there has been a number of occasions where it has been delayed coming through the gate. This delays the outgoing delivery of medications to its feeder prisons. Despite a rule where the van should have priority over contractors, this again has not been the case.

Prisoners are unhappy with regard to possession of pain relief and detoxing from certain substances, which they perceive to be stricter than at other establishments but this practice is in accordance with NICE guidelines.

Healthcare work closely with the PE Department to improve the health and wellbeing of prisoners who need activity-based treatment.

Drug Strategy meetings are held monthly. They are well-attended and fully representative of the establishment. These meetings are very efficiently chaired by the Deputy Director.

The Substance Misuse Team operates a policy of reduction rather than maintenance, which follows NICE guidelines.

All prisoners who are to be transferred to Oakwood are contacted the day before, to ensure they meet the criteria to be clinically safe to transfer. Any prisoner failing to meet the criteria will be refused or returned to the transferring prison.

Initiatives for education and treatment of prisoners to assist them in addressing issues of substance abuse are now established and formal links with relevant community drug agencies and local Drug Action Teams have been made.

The 2012/13 PHPQI (Prison Health Performance Quality Indicator) Self-Assessment for the prison has shown green in all areas except Primary Care Mental Health, Hep B vaccination of prisoners, health promotion and sexual health, which are all amber.

5.4 PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITIES

The buildings allocated to Activities are limited by size and therefore safety and even though numbers in Purposeful Activities have increased, there are still approximately 20% of prisoners not allocated to work and 5% who are unfit or retired.

The prison has on offer through Education workshops the following courses: plumbing, bricklaying, painting and decorating, woodworking – including roof assembly, fitted furniture installation and a barbers shop. The IMB were concerned about the amount of dust in the fitted furniture classroom where MDF was being cut. It was felt that it was not being extracted efficiently. This has now been remedied with a further extraction unit.

The main prison workshops offer a variety of skills including; carpentry, UPVC stripping, dismantling electrical goods, plastic assembly, plumbing assembly, de-branding of clothing, refurbishing white goods, Christmas decorations (seasonal work) and horticulture. Recently a call centre has been established, which is working well, together with a Railtrack course. Other work opportunities are planned.

5.5 RESETTLEMENT

The Resettlement Department, though small, work well to help prisoners leave the prison to an address, achieving 90 – 94% into accommodation against a target of 85%. During the year Oakwood had two hundred and sixty five discharges. Jobcentre Plus staff are on hand to take claims for Job Seekers Allowance prior to leaving prison.

Fry Housing Trust have been at Oakwood since October 2012 and helps not just with housing but with support when prisoners leave, going with them to interviews, meeting at the gate etc. This service covers West Midlands and Warwickshire. Recently they had a father and stepson who wished to be housed together and within 4 weeks this was achieved.

Within the Resettlement area is a virtual campus, which is hoped will be operational soon, which will improve prisoner's access to information on jobs and training.

5.6 SAFER CUSTODY

Within Oakwood Prison the duty of care and safety of offenders is a high priority. The Safer Custody Team have had a challenging year in an area, which has been very challenging and a dynamically changing operation.

When the prison opened in April 2012, it was opened with a very high level of inexperienced staff, with little or no knowledge of the prison environment. With this as a fact, the performance and standard achieved within the first reporting period has been beyond the Board's expectations although in the initial starting weeks, the Board did have grave concerns. Staff training and on-going recruitment has seen a steady increase in confidence and understanding of prison life by all staff.

A Safer Custody Team was set up with meetings under the headings of Safer Custody, Safer Prisons and Use of Force; the meetings are proactive in deciding weaknesses and training needs. The monitoring of trends and safety issues within the prison to increase performance are undertaken by the afore-mentioned groups.

The Board have concerns due to the amount of drugs, alcohol, hooch and mobile phones that are being found and known to be in the prison. Although visitors to the prison are subject to search, it is known that the contraband is been thrown over the fence, which is alongside a public highway, Police are aware but unfortunately budgetary restraints have limited security cameras and extra netting in the area.

Self-harming and threats to make and use ligatures are also a concern. The prison has seen a number of prisoners going over the railings on the landings; again the design of the building makes this easy for them as nets are not fitted.

The prison was opened initially with a controlled flow of prisoners, which was overridden by demand and pressure was put on the prison to increase its population quickly. Prisoners, knowing that the majority of the officers were new recruits, tried to capitalise on the lack of experience of new staff, however the situation was effectively managed by senior staff members, many of whom have many years of service within prison establishments.

The above resulted in high levels of staff sickness.

Despite the large prisoner population, there have been a low number of incidents within the reporting period, with no major issues of disruption concerning large numbers of prisoners or the use of Tornado teams.

Oakwood has the potential of 16 shared cells with none being in use as shared cells within the reporting period.

The policy is upheld that bullying at Oakwood is not tolerated and prisoners are subjected to an Incentive and Earned Privileges Review (IEP). This often results in prisoners being demoted to the basic regime. Those that have been subjected to bullying are in some cases removed to the Care and Separation Unit for their own safety whilst staff investigate the circumstances.

Peaked in September to November with seventy five cases in October. These range from minor injuries to those that cut themselves in a severe way. Those self-harming are monitored closely and are placed on an ACCT (Assessment Care in Custody and Teamwork) Booklet.

There has been an increase in the number of ACCT booklets throughout the reporting period; however this is in line with the ramp up of the prison population. In the first half of the reporting period a monthly average of thirty nine were issued and in the second half of the period it has risen to fifty two in line with the population growth. The figures equate to 2.6% of the population of the prison. The standard of entries in ACCT booklets has caused the Board concern and these concerns have been passed on to the prison.

It is with great regret that Oakwood recorded its first and only death in custody on the 6th February 2013. Board members attended the prison to monitor the procedures. It was later confirmed that the prisoner died of natural causes. The prison staff have to be commended for their compassion to the family of the deceased and the respect that was given to the deceased prisoner. The family attended a very moving service within the Chaplaincy and expressed their grateful thanks to all involved in the incident.

A total of 208 DIRFs (Discrimination and Incident Reporting Form) were raised within the reporting period, they break down into the following categories:

- Racism - with alleged issues of staff to prisoner and vice versa with main complaints from the Asian community, Halal food being one of the major factors in the complaints.
- Religion and Belief - with ramp-up the Chaplaincy has been increased to cover various beliefs, as prisoners complained that staff do not understand their religions.
- Disability - one complaint, a staff-to-prisoner complaint.
- Homophobia - a prisoner-to-prisoner complaint made by one prisoner on the Vulnerable Prisoners wing

The prison, now approaching full capacity, has suffered from an unusually high churn of prisoners, between forty to sixty a week, which caused a greater than expected work load for the prison.

In summary, a first year of many challenges, prisoners testing the systems, testing the staff, challenging authority and taking advantage of weaknesses in the service provided. Within the period the Board have seen staff develop and take control of all situations. Training programmes are now in place for staff to enhance skills. NVQ qualifications are offered to staff. Unfortunately there have been a number of staff who have not been able to settle within the environment of a prison and have left.

The open approach the Senior Management Board take to dealing with staff issues has to be commended. Staff are gaining experience and the Board has seen improvements since the prison became operational.

5.7 CARE AND SEPARATION UNIT

This Care and Separation unit has proven to be a very demanding and frequently busy part of the prison.

The CSU has twenty eight cells, which include two cells that are equipped to deal with prisoners who choose to undertake dirty protest and two Special Accommodation cells, which have observation and viewing portals at ceiling height for staff to monitor prisoners when necessary.

The design of the CSU and initial furnishings have been highly criticised by Board members as making CSU at times an unsafe and volatile area and working conditions for staff very problematical and difficult.

It has a control room fitted with limited CCTV coverage, holding rooms, medical and interview rooms, its own laundry facilities and a well-appointed and furnished servery.

The cells initially contained furniture made from compressed fibre board, which proved completely unsuitable and not fit for purpose. Prisoners soon realised that it could be ripped apart and used to destroy electrical fixtures and fittings within the cells; this included the glass inspection and viewing windows within the cell door. On more than one occasion Board members have witnessed the prisoners throwing destroyed furniture through the viewing holes followed by shredded bedding sheets, which were then attempted to be ignited or used to 'fish' between cells; this was for the purpose of passing messages, tobacco and contraband. The removal of the glass also saw officers being spat at and faecal matter and urine being thrown out through the missing glass panels. 2" x 2" wood battens with nails protruding out of the end have also been used as weapons against staff as they passed by the cell doors. Suitable reinforced Perspex for the inspection ports has now been fitted.

The unit is kept in a clean and tidy state by three enhanced prisoners who operate the laundry and servery, closely supervised by staff. Food is supplied to the unit from the main kitchens.

The Board were aware in the initial few weeks of Oakwood opening that prisoners were testing the staff and pushing the staff to limits. It is without doubt that Oakwood has seen within its initial ramp up, prisoners that are not Cat C status, some of whom have been sent to CSU and have been transferred as Cat B status to other establishments. It is also of great concern to the Board that a large number of prisoners have been held within CSU suffering from mental illness and psychiatric issues, which are very challenging to the staff. Threats of self-harm and the finding of ligatures around the neck have meant that staff have had to spend extra time in supporting and counselling prisoners, which they have done well.

Initially adjudications were failing in some cases due to lack of evidence, preserved seized items, time lapsed and reporting officers not being available. Backlogs of adjudications were common place. Experienced CSU staff considered this to be due to the lack of experience and confidence of some operational staff. Work is being carried out to deal with staff training and promoting the use of IEP on the wings, resulting in the adjudication procedure being used correctly.

The external adjudicator also appears to have a high work load, observations from the IMB are that solicitors called in to support prisoners are frustrated by the amount of hours they are kept waiting for their clients to be reviewed by the external adjudicator.

Rule 45 Reviews have been problematic and have been at times chaotic. The Board have had to remind Reviewing Officers that a review must be overseen by a member of Healthcare to establish that a prisoner is fit and well to continue with a review.

Healthcare have now committed to attending all reviews at the set time, although it is noted that they have a time limit imposed on them in order that they can conduct medication distribution on the wings.

The Board are not informed of all prisoners entering CSU on Rule 45 or the date of the initial review. It is also frustrating to both the Board and Healthcare that reviews start on occasions up to one hour late due to the lack of availability of Reviewing Officers.

The reviews are conducted professionally and in depth, with prisoners given plenty of opportunity to discuss their situation and plan for their future within custody. Sometimes the paperwork has not been prepared appropriately prior to the review taking place.

The Board expressed concerns after viewing a Control and Restraint (C&R) extraction from a cell. One manager opened the cell door with no C&R protection, water from the cell was used to throw over the staff, as the water had not been turned off prior to the extraction. The extraction was not filmed by body or hand-held video-recording equipment, with evidence being reliant on a limited CCTV coverage within CSU. These matters have been addressed with the purchase and issue of body cameras and a hand-held device.

Concerns that drugs are finding their way into CSU are very worrying, a prisoner admitting he has used Black Mamba (a Class B drug) within CSU after being in there for a number of weeks.

In summary, the Board have had major concerns with CSU, however since the furniture has been replaced it has become less volatile and safer. The Board are concerned that the CSU has to hold prisoners who have serious psychiatric issues. Due to staff shortages at times some experienced staff has worked double shifts in order to maintain the basic staffing levels. Over the last few months the CSU staff have worked hard to make CSU a safe and caring area of the prison.

5.8 RESIDENTIAL SERVICES (includes accommodation, food, catering and kitchens)

Board members have generally found staff pleasant and observed good interactions with prisoners, however prisoners have little faith in the complaints and applications system and do not feel that the staff are able to resolve their issues. They do not feel that their grievances are taken seriously – it appears to them that they are told that things will be resolved but then nothing appears to be done. Officers appear too keen to say that they will fix things when they cannot. It was reported that many prisoners wish to transfer out to a regime with more certainty. A number claimed that they had been promised a resolution of their issue by a number of different officers and nothing had been done.

An example of an application to the Board stated that an officer advised a prisoner that he could have a PlayStation sent in. He arranged for this but he was then told that this was not allowed, as PlayStations could only be brought with the prisoner from another prison or purchased whilst in Oakwood.

During the year the Board infrequently observed the Director walking round the main house blocks. Prisoners also have commented on this.

As accommodation was handed over and occupied by prisoners, a number of issues arose and were eventually resolved e.g. initially the hot water system did not work properly. This has been an on-going situation. Firstly the hot water failed followed by spasmodic tripping where certain cells had no hot water. At one time the First Night Centre had no hot water. The Board were told that it was because the water system was only in part use and that when the prison was full the system would work much better. This has generally been the case but still some cells have reported they have no heating.

In August there were still no shower curtains. There was then a time of trial of different shower curtains with different fixings to see which worked best. Cells now have shower curtains.

Each house block has two store rooms on the ground floor. When opening the door on Beech, store room 1 and store room 2 had items stored on the floor in boxes, with no shelving or method of stacking available. Boxes had been thrown in or stacked precariously. The keys to the stores were generic keys so anyone with keys could access them, resulting in items going missing. This issue was eventually resolved with the fitting of digilocks and shelving.

Delays in providing basic toiletries, underwear and socks proved frustrating to prisoners, all of whom had come from established prisons where these issues did not exist. Systems are now in place for issue and replacement of these items.

During the early months food at lunchtime was cold, in the form of filled baguettes/sandwiches with soup. Prisoners complained that the soup was very watery, though when tasted in July was found to be 'Fine, flavoursome and hot'. This followed the opening of the main kitchen at the beginning of June. More recently a full hot cooked lunch menu has been provided.

As the number of prisoners increased, occasionally there has not been enough food provided and extra had to be cooked or prisoners could not have what they ordered and had to have sandwiches and cold food. On one occasion there was no bread, a staple part of the prisoner's diet. This was due to the kitchen running out.

While monitoring Cedar house block, food servers were found not to be wearing appropriate protective clothing. The manager stated that protective clothing was on order. This was noted in September; however in February 2013 staff on Cedar reported that there was no protective clothing available on Cedar or on the other house blocks. In September servers complained that they had been promised safety boots 'for weeks' and were ruining their clothes because they 'have not been given proper trousers and the coats are too small to fasten up'. This issue has now been rectified and recently all serveries visited had the correct clothing.

The cleanliness of serveries varied from block to block. Board Members have noted the following when monitoring the prison: -

- Comment book not available and on occasions missing.
- No dishwasher salt, dishwashers filters needed cleaning.
- No soap to wash hands.
- No scourers or materials to clean pans.
- No paper towels.
- Steel cabinets in the servery dirty inside
- Trolleys dirty – When questioned about the trolleys, the servers stated that they may clean their servery but others did not and as they did not have a dedicated trolley why should they clean it.

All serveries now have designated trolleys.

- Kitchen tools left lying around
- Wash hand basin dirty with what appeared to be brick dust.
- The gobblet choked with food leftovers.

Reports through November and December identified continuing lack of cleanliness in both serveries and trolleys and occasions when staff did not have protective clothing. In October in the trolley bay in the kitchens it was noted that the trolleys were in an unacceptable state of cleanliness; marks and food debris from previous meals down the outside of the trolleys and debris and spilt food from several occasions still within the storage areas of the trolleys. It was noted that the trolley in the Ash bay had a large spillage of baked beans in the one locker.

Prisoners often complain about the food; however when it has been tasted by Board members it has been mostly found to be palatable. The availability of Comments Books is variable but when seen, they have been reviewed by the catering management. Prisoners however, seem to have little faith in the system.

There have been examples of special menus not being provided. Aramark have been working with Healthcare and Chaplaincy to rectify this problem. There has been a considerable amount of complaints from Vulnerable Prisoners (VP) that their food has been interfered with. A number of prisoners told Board members that they had found a variety of foreign objects in the food and also chilli powder in the gravy. The Board has found no evidence of this, other than the incident with chilli powder.

Just prior to the trolleys being removed, the kitchens now swap trays for the VP house block with other trays to avoid contamination of food for that house block.

Section 6 - Reports on other areas of the prison

6.1 TRAVELLERS

Pertemps – People Development group run monthly sessions. They support travellers in most of the West Midlands prisons not just whilst they are in prison but when they leave. Many travellers are imprisoned because of tax evasion and as one traveller told a Board member “The days are gone when you could get away with things – we have to change. We need to know about paying tax and driving licences”. Help is given in passing the Driving Theory Test, reading and writing, running a business and improving vocational skills.

Art appears to be part of many travellers’ lives. Examples are on display and a calendar for 2013 had been produced by the West Midlands group, which features both poetic and picture art.

6.2 FOREIGN NATIONALS (FN)

Oakwood has a population of around one hundred and twenty Foreign National (FN) prisoners who are well managed and supported by the FN manager. Regular visits from the Border Agency to assist the FN prisoners have been good. The prison had five over-stayers at the end of March who were on IS91 and awaiting removal. The prison was expecting for FN’s to go to a designated FN’s prison and thirty have since moved but a new instruction has now stopped this removal. Prisoners who are happy to stay will remain at the prison until their flights are booked.

6.3 GYM AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)

Within the PE department there are:

- Weight training area – loose weights
- Resistance machinery area
- Cardio Vascular room (treadmill, rowers and cycles)
- Large Sports Hall Football/ Rugby pitch.
- External Astro turf pitches.

The PE department has developed a good working relationship with various departments, in particular Resettlement, Education, Substance Misuse Team and Healthcare who are all involved with the PE programme.

Involvement of external contributors has greatly helped the development of the PE programme. These include ‘Second Chance’, Rugby Football Union and several other Resettlement groups.

Classes for Remedial Therapy, Well Man Clinic over 50’s have been introduced as well as several clubs such as basketball and circuit training.

Initially various courses were introduced such as Healthy Lifestyle Level 1, Tackling Substance Misuse through PE and Fitness Instructor Level 2 followed by Sporting

Activity Courses and the Oakwood Academy. This developed to include the following qualifications; Mentoring Level 2, Finance Management Level 1.

The mixtures of Academies now offer maximum opportunities for prisoners.

6.4 PROGRAMMES

The two accredited programmes Thinking Skills Programme (TSP) and Controlling Anger and Learning to Manage it (CALM) have been running during the year but despite reduction in expected completers, the prison missed its target.

Victim Awareness, Chrysalis and the Horse Courses are non-accredited. Chrysalis is proving a very popular course with seventy one completers and four hundred and fifty seven on the waiting list. This course is about how we make decisions and the consequences of our actions. It gets people to think before they act. It has a Restorative Justice element, which is good evidence for the Parole Board. Three prisoners from Douglas house block, who have completed the course, are now acting as mentors, working with the Youth Offending Team outside prison.

The Supporting Offenders Through Restoration Inside programme (SORI) and Sycamore course, both victim awareness courses, are run in the prison. Douglas prisoners are mentoring prisoners through the course and the Lifer group are also a good influence. CALM courses are attracting Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) prisoners who need to show the Parole Board evidence of involvement.

SOLAS are working in the prison with their EUREKA project. The project encourages prisoners to engage and use their creativity and channel it into something worthwhile. Currently the prison has three groups, each containing ten prisoners. The aim is to come up with an exciting new product, design and market, working to a level 3 qualification. The scheme works in communities and schools. The ideas are patented. The prisoners involved normally have two to five years still to serve so that the business has a chance to grow. Any monies made from the business are kept until they are released and they can have part as a percentage sum and then a monthly amount. If they reoffend then the monies in their business account go to Victim Support.

6.5 CHAPLAINCY/MULTI-FAITH

The prison has four full-time Chaplains – three from the Christian churches and one Imam.

There are part-time Chaplains from the Quaker, Sikh, Hindu, Buddhist, Pagan, Jewish, and Jehovah's Witnesses religions. The appointment of a Mormon Chaplain is currently in progress.

The team support prisoners and their families especially in times of family crisis and bereavements.

As the prison has reached almost maximum capacity, there are too many Muslims to accommodate in the prayer hall and unfortunately the wall cannot be knocked out. During prayer-time the prayers are transmitted through to the adjoining hall. It is hoped that a further part-time Imam can be appointed to support the current Imam.

The Festival of Ramadan in 2012 was very successful with Kitchens, prison staff and Imam working in close partnership.

6.6 INDUCTION AND RECEPTION

This has been an extremely busy area since the prison opened. During the last year Oakwood has welcomed close to 1,800 prisoners whilst on ramp-up. There were no criteria for prisoners so Oakwood received mainly prisoners that other prisons wished to move. Officers had to deal not only with the incoming prisoners but also with the prisoner's property. Quite often some or all of the property was missing. All prisoners were given letters showing the items that their family could send into the prison. This was time-bound and if any item was received, which had not been authorised, it was returned to the sender.

It was expected that when the prison was at maximum capacity, the influx of prisoners would decrease but as prisoners were being discharged at the end of their sentence, the numbers coming into the prison remains higher than expected.

Escort duties to pre-booked hospital appointments cause no problems but if Healthcare staff have an emergency then this can cause a staffing problem as between two and four officers need to be found to perform escort duties.

6.7 OFFENDER MANAGEMENT UNIT (OMU)/PROBATION/TRANSFERS

On opening, the prison had Offender Supervisors, Probation Officers and admin staff in post. When the prison population increased and staffing on the wings was hit by high sickness levels, the Offender Supervisors were moved onto front-line duties.

OMU has therefore been operating with just admin staff and Probation Officers for more than six months. The result is that only ten per cent of prisoners have sentence plans. Hundreds of prisoners were transferred in without an initial OASys Assessment by the transferring prison. Sentence calculation checks have been completed and admin staff have kept certain operations going i.e. Re-categorisation – around 200 re-categorisation requests have been considered each month.

Following the closure of a number of prisons, prisoners were received who had very little time to serve of their sentence i.e. some prisoners were transferred from HMP Shrewsbury on Friday and were due to be released on the following Monday, adding to the workload.

Application for Release on Temporary Licence and Home Detention Curfew (HDC) - Fifty HDC's were considered each month, with around sixty per cent gaining favourable answers.

Probation Officers have been very busy writing Indeterminate Sentence for Public Protection (IPP), Lifer Reports and dealing with Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) /Public Protection issues.

There are now new Offender Supervisors in post but none have experience so all require training.

There have been a number of prisoners who have been transferred to Cat D prisons, when spaces allow, but there are still prisoners awaiting spaces for Cat D.

6.8 LIFERS

Oakwood now have about one hundred and thirty Lifers who reside mainly on Douglas house block and now that the prison has reached maximum capacity, there are plans for supporting the Lifers.

6.9 COMPLAINTS

When the prison opened the main complaints regarded food. At the time Aramark had only the servery in Ash to prepare and cook meals so choice was limited.

By the third month Admissions was the area of concern, with property an issue.

At the end of August there had been 1,000 complaints with July/August showing Finance having the majority of complaints.

By end of March the figure for the year was 5,454 with the majority of issues from Sept 2012 to March 2013 being OMU. This showed that the staffing issues in OMU had a big impact on the prison population.

During the year a number of complaints were looked at and this showed that for most checked the reply was satisfactory but two had inappropriate remarks in the reply and it was also found that the reply did not answer the complaint. One of these complaints highlighted the fact that Recorded Delivery letters had no audit trail. This has now been rectified and the system introduced is robust.

6.10 SECURITY

The main concern within the prison is drugs. One side of the prison only has single wire fencing, which is alongside the house blocks and adjacent to a perimeter road. This means that it is easy to have contraband thrown over the fence, which includes not only drugs but also mobile phones. The prisoners have discovered that if they set off a fire alarm the house block windows on the upper floors automatically open and prisoners can go 'fishing'. The parcels have hooks so are easy to retrieve.

The prison are doing all they can to stem the flow of these throw-overs.

Drugs have been brought in through visits and a number of visitors have been arrested on site.

The Security Department have been successful in finding a significant amount of drugs, mobile phone and ropes. One of the more difficult mobile phones to trace has been the BMW fob, which has been found on a prisoner and a watch/mobile.

6.11 VISITOR AND VISITS CENTRE

The prison have received 29,988 visitors through the door for social visits. They have completed 13,213 visits between prisoners and their families in the past twelve months.

2,500 Legal/Official Visitors have attended the prison, which has also facilitated 1,000 video-links between Courts, Solicitors and the Probation Service.

£4,935 has been credited to pin phone accounts via transfer of expired Visiting Orders in the last six months.

Initially inter-prison visits were available but due to staffing levels the prison are now only able to offer video-link. There are twenty applications outstanding that have been offered video-link but only one person has used this facility.

Family days, facilitated by Help & Advice Line for Offender's Wives, Partners and Families (HALOW) are held monthly where food, fun and games are held around a central theme. Families can have closer time together and fathers are encouraged to play with their children. Baby bonding sessions have been facilitated and more are planned. These visits take place in a more relaxed environment and have proved successful.

A Family Support line is open every weekday and messages can be left when unattended. The line receives between ten-twenty calls per day.

Section 7 –The work of the Board

7.1 Oakwood opened with 9 members drafted in from other Boards. The Chair and Vice Chair were appointed by the Secretariat. In practice only 5 members have been active during this reporting period. The remaining members left during the reporting period. The closure of HMP Shrewsbury resulted in 4 members taking up posts at the end of March. Despite the low numbers of members the Board has been able to fulfil its statutory requirements. This has requires great personal commitment of their time and dedication in an establishment of this size.

This has been a welcome addition to our current members who bring with them experience. However we are currently undergoing a recruitment campaign to bring our numbers up to its full complement of 20.

7.2 BOARD STATISTICS	
Recommended Complement of Board Members	20
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	9
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	7
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	3
Number of members leaving within reporting period	5
Total number of Board meetings during reporting period	11
Total number of visits to the Establishment	400
Total number of segregation reviews held	148
Total number of segregation reviews attended	142
Date of Annual Team Performance Review	N/A

7.3 IMB APPLICATIONS

CODE	SUBJECT	YEAR 2013
A	Accommodation	4
B	Adjudications	3
C	Equality & Diversity (inc religion	11
D	Education/employment/training inc IEP	24
E 1	Family/visits inc mail & phone	29
E 2	Finance/pay	20
F	Food/kitchen related	24
G	Health related	91
H 1	Property (within current establishment)	58
H 2	Property (during transfer/in another establishment	24
H 3	Canteen, facilities, Catalogue shopping, Argos	13
I	Sentence related (inc HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-cat etc.)	110
J	Staff/prisoner/detainee concerns inc bullying	57
K	Transfers	16
L	Miscellaneous	60

Allan Chappell – Chair Pam Pritchard - Vice Chair
HMP Oakwood, Oaks Drive, Wolverhampton WV10 7QD

Tel No: 01902 799902