



Independent Monitoring Board

HMP Onley

Annual Report

March 2011 – February 2012

The Prison Act 1952 requires 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 records.

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Section 3: The Prison and its Function

- 3.1 HMP Onley is situated between Rugby and Daventry. Onley opened as a Borstal Recall Centre in 1968 changing in 1973 to a Training Borstal (300 prisoners). In 1976 it became a Young Offender Prison (420 prisoners) and in 1983 a closed Youth Custody Centre. Onley reverted to being a Young Offender Institution in 1988. Capacity was increased to 520 detainees in 1991 and to 640 prisoners in 1998. For a period the establishment held a mixture of Young Offenders and Juveniles. In 2004 the prison was re-rolled to Category C Adult/YOI and in 2010 an additional wing (L) was opened increasing the maximum roll to 710 prisoners. The Young Offender population was moved out of the prison in 2010 and on 2nd April 2010 the prison became an Adult only Category C Training establishment. The population was further increased over this last year with several cells being converted to house two prisoners.
- 3.2 In March 2011 the prison had a CNA of 742 adult prisoners, housed over 12 wings labelled A-L.
- 3.3 All residential wings apart from I, J, K and L wings have 60 single cells, each with internal sanitation and in-cell electricity. There are showering facilities, association and dining areas and a laundry room with industrial style washing machines and dryers. H Wing is the Induction wing whilst F Wing houses the Care and Support Unit. I Wing holds 100 Adult prisoners in 50 double cells all with internal sanitation and comparable facilities to the other wings (except for having no dining area). L Wing holds 74 Adult prisoners in cells with internal sanitation and showering facilities. All wings have adequate social areas, generally stocked with table tennis and pool tables.
- 3.4 The regime at Onley is designed to give the prisoners training through a structured sentence plan. Opportunities exist for education work placements and offending behaviour programmes with emphasis being given to resettlement.
- 3.5 Training is offered across a wide range of industries and activities. These include workshops for Painting and Decorating, Motor Mechanics, Concrete (including forklifts), Information Technology, a light assembly line, Bricklaying, Multi Skills, Industrial Cleaning, Waste Management, Goods Again (domestic white goods recycling) and assembly work in the development unit. The prison also offers Market Gardening, using the sizeable garden areas within the perimeter. This area was reclaimed in 2009, having been closed due to security concerns and is now flourishing. The kitchen provides opportunities for NVQs in catering and food hygiene certificates. Recognised qualifications are available, and those who successfully achieve an external accredited qualification are rewarded with an achievement bonus.

- 3.6 Physical well being is catered for through the Physical Education Department which offers prisoners competitive, recreational and remedial activities as well as the opportunity to gain qualifications in sports coaching and leadership.
- 3.7 Support for prisoners is available from the probation team, psychology department, drugs team, chaplaincy, foreign nationals' representative, legal services officer and healthcare department as well as resettlement support from NACRO and Citizen's Advice, although the latter organisation is about to leave the establishment due to losing out in the tender process (see later comments).
- 3.8 Onley has gained Investors in People Accreditation Award as well as an improving OFSTED report in previous years and our impression is that these standards have been maintained over this reporting period.
- 3.9 Healthcare is currently provided through Northants PCT, which includes Dentistry; the Mental Health and In Reach Team is provided by Northants Trust.
- 3.10 Primary education providers are Milton Keynes College and Lincoln College however they are further assisted by North Warwickshire and Hinckley College. Between them they provide a wide range of education courses ranging from basic literacy, courses with qualifications and up to Open University qualifications.

Section 4: Executive Summary

4.1 General Commentary on HMP Onley

- 4.1.1 Overall the Board is very satisfied with the way and manner in which the prison is run. The prison has dealt with difficult circumstances over the last year as it was identified as an establishment that would be included in the next round of tendering. As a consequence the establishment, to prepare for and implement a bid to retain the services within the public sector, has had to put in a huge amount of effort. This has proved to be a considerable distraction however despite the obvious interferences the prison continues to thrive and the bid activity well managed.
- 4.1.2 We feel that this is due to the strong and effective leadership demonstrated by the Governors and their Senior Management Teams.
- 4.1.3 Our members do report of a genuine culture of decency and care within the prison.
- 4.1.4 In our view the prison compares favourably when judged against HMCIP's Healthy Prison Criteria (safety, respect purposeful activity and resettlement)
- 4.1.5 This year's annual report reflects areas of commendation and areas of concern. The Board's view of the establishment is generally positive and it gives prisoners the opportunity for a successful release into the community.
- 4.1.6 We have found a workforce creating, allocating and delivering a wide range of activities – education, training, employment, health promotion, PE, faith activities and offending behaviour programmes.
- 4.1.7 The prison is particularly commended for its active approach to equality, its commitment to healthcare and health promotion, its focus on worthwhile education and employment opportunities and the high priority it gives to safer custody issues.
- 4.1.8 The prison, during the reporting period, was able to recycle 100% of its waste, ensuring that nothing was sent to landfill. The Board highly commends the prison in this achievement.

4.2 Issues for the Minister

- 4.2.1 The Board are concerned about the amount of extra work and interference which the bid preparation has generated. Although the Board acknowledges the rationale behind the bid process, establishments who need to prepare bids find they have to cope with considerable extra pressures in order to maintain the regime. Failure to

allocate extra resources to support these establishments places the maintenance of the regime at considerable risk.

4.3 Issues for the Prison Service

- 4.3.1 The Board remains concerned over the number of prisoners arriving at the prison from the London area, which is causing ongoing difficulties for families to visit.
- 4.3.2 There appears to be a shortage of Cat D places and as such many prisoners who have worked hard on their sentence plans to achieve re-categorisation find themselves experiencing unacceptable delays before a place can be found at a suitable establishment.

4.4 Issues for the Regional Custodial Services Manager

- 4.4.1 As with previous years there remains a constant problem of prisoners arriving at the establishment with either too much property and not compatible with the list of allowed items in the PSO, or with missing and incomplete property. This is particularly identified as a problem if a prisoner arrives from an establishment in the private estate. The Board feels that, although acknowledging the efforts made by the Regional Team to date to resolve this issue, a more robust approach is needed to solve an unacceptable recurring problem.
- 4.4.2 The delay in awaiting spares for kitchen equipment is thought unacceptable.

Section 5: Key Areas

5.1 Diversity

There have been several changes to the management of all the strands of diversity over the reporting period. In March the Diversity and Equality Action Team (DEAT) became the Diversity Equality Management Action Team (DEMAT) and met bi-monthly. At the end of the reporting period this meeting had become subsumed into the Senior Management Team (SMT) meeting held monthly, with a report on the Equality, Disability and an analysis of the SMART data presented at the meeting.

- 5.1.1 Racial Incident Reporting Forms (RIFs) have been replaced by Discrimination Incident Reporting forms (DIRFs) with most complaints being about race. These DIRFs are analysed by an independent lecturer on Criminology.
- 5.1.2 Throughout the year reasonable adjustments have been made with regard to disabled prisoners. These adjustments range from physical measures such as providing a wheelchair, special mattress, shower seat, etc to accommodating someone in a suitable work environment. Work placements for older prisoners are carefully considered and allowances made when appropriate.
- 5.1.3 There were 15 Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP) at the end of the reporting period but when these were reviewed the number was reduced to 9. It appears that when prisoners move wings the PEEP is not always removed from the system but a new one recorded for the new location. At the end of the reporting period there were 115 prisoners with a declared disability out of a population of 731 representing 15.7%. There were 9 applications received by the IMB during the reporting year out of a total of 428 that had a discriminatory element and applicants were advised to fill in a DIRF where appropriate.
- 5.1.4 In February 2012 the Decency Focus Group (DFG) met for the first time. This is a meeting primarily for the Peer Supporter/Equality reps. The representatives have the opportunity to raise any issues they may have but it is also intended to inform the Peer Supporters about all aspects of discrimination and at this first meeting the Disability and Over 60s focus group joined the Peer Supporters. Future meetings will involve other focus groups such as Gypsy/Travellers, Muslims, etc. This is an initiative to be applauded.

5.2 Learning and Skills

The Learning and Skills department within the prison have continued to build on the excellent work begun over previous years and stands out as an area of excellence. The policy, driven by the Governor and ably supported by the Head of Learning and Skills, of ensuring as many prisoners as possible are engaged in worthwhile work and education,

leading to recognised qualifications and skill sets, preparing them for work outside, is pursued with vigour.

- 5.2.1 Classroom attendance has continued to increase over the year to 86.5% against a target of 80%. The prison has delivered approximately 90% of its Education contract. Again the Board feels the Head of Learning and Skills should be commended for the enthusiasm and energy he has brought to this area.
- 5.2.2 Recruitment of qualified staff appears to be a constant challenge. The Board observed a good working relationship between the staff of both the colleges and the prison.
- 5.2.3 Rota reports have identified only 14 complaints or issues that are education/employment related less than half of previous years. We feel this is testimony for the efforts put in by the whole team over this and previous years.

5.3 Healthcare and Mental Health

When a prisoner crosses the threshold of healthcare they become a patient and for the purposes of this report they will be referred to as such in this section.

- 5.3.1 Last year the main issue was staffing vacancies and this has remained the case over the last 12 months. Delays caused by Security Clearances from both the prison and the PCT can result in the loss of the applicant to other positions outside the service. Unfilled vacancies have a significant effect on the operational effectiveness of the team, and in Mental Health in particular, the pressures are considered unacceptable.
- 5.3.2 The Board has a continued concern over the size of the Dental waiting list, which we believe is not acceptable. The refurbishment of the dental surgery has added to the challenges, along with such anomalies as a double Bank Holiday at the beginning of the year, and 6 sessions being lost through illness. This being said, at the end of the year there are encouraging signs that the list is reducing month on month.
- 5.3.3 The current Doctor is a locum, following the resignation of the Doctor in post. There were several applications to the Board about the previous Doctor and specifically the patient's inability to understand his accent. This is something that needs to be considered when recruiting as miscommunication can cause considerable problems.
- 5.3.4 The Health Champion scheme introduced last year has continued to flourish with the individuals on the wings being asked to take on greater levels of responsibility.

- 5.3.5 The change in the core day which came into effect in May had an initial detrimental effect of the distribution of medication, due mainly to the system not being managed by some uniformed staff on the wings. Patients would arrive without appointment slips and it became increasingly more difficult to complete all the necessary tasks. The situation was quickly resolved however and recent changes have produced additional capacity to dispense.
- 5.3.6 There has been a sharp increase in the number of patients with asthma. The resignation of the lead nurse for asthma is regrettable.
- 5.3.7 A Health Fayre was held in March, which was well attended throughout the day.
- 5.3.8 Missed appointments are being dealt with through the IEP scheme, supported by the co-operation of the Health Champions.
- 5.3.9 A delay in recruiting a physiotherapist caused unacceptable delays in patients getting appointments. At one point these delays had risen to 32 weeks.
- 5.3.10 The Healthcare team plays a major role in the reception of new prisoners and their first night at Onley. Healthcare staff saw 100% of prisoners within the first 24 hours, but usually within a few hours of arrival
- 5.3.11 With an ever-changing population within Onley, and the range of mental health issues, the Board would like to pay tribute to some outstanding work with those patients with severe mental health issues by the Mental Health Team. Often the most mentally vulnerable prisoners reside in the CSU for their own safety or the safety of others. It is in this environment that the Board has seen some exemplary work undertaken with patience and an approach that has helped the CSU staff manage very difficult residents as well as treat the patient effectively.
- 5.3.12 The IDTS continues to be mainly a reduction programme but those prisoners due for release within 6 months of sentencing are on a maintenance programme due to insufficient time to ensure the prisoner can be detoxed and remain so when released. Excellent work is undertaken by the IDTS team to refer prisoners, on their release, to suitable supporting agencies.
- 5.3.13 Alcohol misuse has long been an untreated addiction in the Prison Service but the Board is delighted to report that Phoenix Futures, an Alcohol Intervention Service, has gained a contract to run a pilot in Onley and they will be paid on results. Volunteers from Alcoholics Anonymous come in regularly and both interventions are to be applauded.
- 5.3.14 PASRO has been discontinued and replaced with the Building Skills for Recovery (BSR) programme. This programme is proving invaluable in preparing prisoners with life skills to resettle successfully.

- 5.3.15 There was one incident observed during the year when a review within the CSU was conducted without the presence of Healthcare. This was brought to management's attention and has not been observed since.
- 5.3.16 The IMB received 27 healthcare related complaints last year representing a considerable reduction over the period, reflecting the hard work put in by all staff.

5.4 Safer Custody

- 5.4.1 Rota reports did not highlight any Safer Custody issues.
- 5.4.2 The low number of ACCT documents open at any one time indicates a safe environment. The Board have observed the positive interaction between staff and prisoners enabling vulnerable prisoners to be readily identified.
- 5.4.3 In January 2012 there was one incident at height within the prison. This was dealt with calmly and efficiently by the staff involved. The IMB attended the incident and reported no concerns.
- 5.4.4 The Constant Watch cell is located on the first floor of K Wing. The Board questions whether the cells location on the first floor is appropriate.

5.5 Care and Separation Unit (CSU)

The CSU continues to be a well run, calm and humane unit within the prison and the staff are commended for their efforts throughout the year.

- 5.5.1 The Board commends all members of the CSU team, who have carried out their duties in an exemplary manner over the past year. The unit is a calm area where high levels of respect and understanding are shown to some very difficult individuals. There have been no incidents of concern.
- 5.5.2 There is a policy to segregate prisoners who are thought to be concealing items. This tactic appears to have been very successful with a number of mobile phones having been recovered.
- 5.5.3 Reviews are attended by Healthcare and IMB on a rota basis thus complying with PSO 1700. When a prisoner enters the CSU on Rule 45 OP, the Board is notified.

Section 6: Other Areas

6.1 Accommodation and Wing Life

- 6.1.1 The Board generally feels that the accommodation and wing life are satisfactory. There has been an issue on J & K Wings in relation to the provision of heating, with the wing reportedly being too hot in summer and too cold during winter. The Board understands that this is an ongoing problem with a solution remaining under investigation.
- 6.1.2 The Board received 15 applications relating to accommodation which is comparable to previous years. Cell sharing now occurs on two wings and the Board are satisfied that the Cell Sharing Risk Assessments are carried out appropriately.

6.2 Adjudication and I and EP Scheme

- 6.2.1 Adjudications have been observed regularly by Board members who are satisfied with the fairness of the process.
- 6.2.2 The Board received 22 applications with regards to Adjudication matters that represented an increase of 7 on the previous year. These figures have been slightly distorted by the prevalence of two prisoners in their complaints, which when investigated were not upheld.
- 6.2.3 The I&EP scheme has been used much more effectively over the past year to manage prisoner behaviour.
- 6.2.4 The Board believes there are no exceptions to report.

6.3 Catering and Kitchen

- 6.3.1 The kitchen has operated well over the year however there has been a significant increase in the number of food related complaints. Some of this will be due to the decision, in order to meet budget demands, for the prisoners to be offered a snack lunch 4 days per week. Although meeting the minimum needs, the prison population has perceived this as a marked deterioration in standards.
- 6.3.2 The Board are disappointed that there appears to be a long time delay before faulty equipment is fixed, often due to the need for spare parts to be sourced abroad. At the time of writing the following items are deemed unserviceable and appear to have been so for some time:

5 Fryers not working (only 1 working properly)
1 x 40 grid oven not working

1 x 20 grid not working
1 x 20 grid still waiting to be commissioned
3 water taps not working – hoses used or buckets

6.3.3 There have been further concerns over the poor quality of the meat provided by the suppliers. This issue has been raised at Area level.

6.3.4 The Board is also concerned about the effect of food inflation on the budgets made available which have been eroded over the period. The kitchen works hard to meet the prisoner needs, however this is becoming an ever-increasing challenge. It is hoped the availability of produce grown in the extensive gardens can help to offset these pressures in the future.

6.3.5 No NVQs were completed over the last year.

6.4 Complaints

6.4.1 The Board is content that the complaint and application process is generally being adhered to and that timescales are being met. There is a plentiful supply of forms available to prisoners and the staff generally are well briefed and assist the prisoners with their problems.

6.4.2 The Board has raised a concern in the traceability of the Wing/Governor Application process and this was raised at our meetings with the Governor. A new triple form has been introduced and this appears to be working successfully.

6.4.3 Only 5 complaints were received under Confidential Access. All were resolved.

6.5 Drugs

6.5.1 Drugs, and mobile phones, which allow some prisoners to carry on their drug business in prison, remain a source of great concern to the Board. Whilst there are strenuous efforts made by the security staff to locate both drugs and mobile phones there are too many ways drugs can enter the prison for this battle to be won. More resources such as mobile blockers, X-ray machines and scanners would support the intelligence led security measures.

6.5.2 The devastation drug use causes to prisoners, families and lives makes the resources all the more important. Over the year we have observed an increase in prisoners appearing in the CSU on 'own protection' having got themselves into debt funding their habit, causing extra work to be created.

6.6 Reception & Induction

- 6.6.1 The reception process is considered to be a smooth process with no exceptions to report.
- 6.6.2 Prisoners continue to arrive at the prison with property in excess of their allocated allowances as laid down in the PSO. This is notably the case regarding prisoners arriving from the Contracted Out estate. Furthermore property remained a major area of complaint that the Board has had to deal with, despite major efforts by the Governor to involve the Wing Staff in sorting these matters. The Boards time remains wasted, as indeed is the case of the staff, in dealing with problems which are the responsibility of the dispatching prison and we feel that this matter requires a far more robust response from the team at Regional level.

6.7 Recycling

- 6.7.1 Over the reporting period the prison has gone to great lengths to ensure that all its waste is recycled. Setting a target for 100%, they were able to achieve this, even producing Bio Diesel for use in the gardens area. The Board considers this to be an excellent effort by all and highly commends the prison on its innovative approach and achievement.

6.8 Security

- 6.8.1 Security is an obvious priority and the Board is satisfied that all the necessary measures are being taken. The Board has a good working relationship with the Deputy Governor who has supported us during any investigations involving the need to access information that may have a security implication.
- 6.8.2 There appears to be an increased challenge in preventing drugs and mobile phones entering the prison. The Board is very satisfied with the increased emphasis on security issues surrounding these areas and welcomes the considerable finds recently made and the proactive approach to intelligence within the prison.

6.9 Sentence Planning

- 6.9.1 Prisoners serving under a year and some identified as low risk do not have an Offender Supervisor. Contact with outside Probation appears in many cases to be problematic and release plans not being started until six weeks prior to release can cause high levels of uncertainty.
- 6.9.2 The Board is concerned with the number of Cat D prisoners currently being held in the prison due to lack of availability of places. The time delay in removals and the regularity of complaints relating to this area is considered unacceptable.

- 6.9.3 The Board received 82 applications, representing the largest area of complaint, related to 'sentence' issues and parole hearings. The figures are distorted by the relatively high number of complaints about re-categorisation from C to D and the delays in finding suitable Cat D vacancies within the estate.
- 6.9.4 Overall the Sentence Planning process has improved considerably over the past year and the Board would like to commend those staff involved in the turn around of this high profile area.

6.10 Visits

- 6.10.1 Visitors are received in a bright clean Visitors Centre near the Gate. There they are processed with efficiency and courtesy. The searching before entering the prison visits room can take up to 20 minutes.
- 6.10.2 Inside the prison the visits room is a spacious, well lit room with a comfortable feel with refreshments available. The prisoners are well supervised.

Section 7: The IMB of HMP Onley

- 7.1 The Onley Independent Monitoring Board has a recommended complement of 19 and we currently have 17 active members six of whom were recruited this year and are completing their probationary period.
- 7.2 Throughout the year the position of Chair was held by Mr Keith Stanton who was invited to attend the Senior Management Team meetings. He also was able to attend the Area Chairs Meetings. We have held 12 Board meetings with an average number of 10 members attending.
- 7.3 Over the year there were 440 applications received, a further reduction since the previous year, establishing a downward course over the last three years.
- 7.4 The Board carried out training at each of the Board meetings and held a Team Performance Review (TPR) off site at Newbold Revel, which proved useful. We were also able to send a small group to attend a C&R Awareness day at Kiddlington. The Chair was able to attend the Annual Conference.
- 7.5 The improved system of reporting and recording has continued to work well and the Boards' record keeping has improved.
- 7.6 The Governor or his designated representative attended our monthly Board meetings, presenting a report on the previous months activities. Understandably much of the Governors time has been taken up with discussing the status of the bid and its implications on prison life within HMP Onley. The Board has welcomed the candid approach the Governor has had in answering the Boards concerns.
- 7.7 Monitoring is divided into sub teams across the Board with teams reporting by rota at the Board Meeting.
- 7.8 There has been continued co-operation between the Boards of HMP Rye Hill and Onley around the matter of recruitment. Over the year six new members were recruited and all have begun their probation years with promise.
- 7.9 The Board was able to keep within the allocated budget, though primarily due to the goodwill of the Board members. Budget planning has been made very difficult with the lack of accurate information made available to the Chair in a timely manner.
- 7.10 There has been concern within the Board at the red tape which surrounds the operation of the Board, the recruitment process and administrative requirements. These place an undue strain on the very limited resources.

7.11 Breakdown of applications received:

Comments:

The highest number of applications were sentence related. Categories D, E and G saw considerable falls from the previous year. A and K wings produced the most applications with D wing considerably less than any other except the CSU. The Board have no underlying concerns with the spread of applications from the wings, noting that the disproportionate amount from A Wing were as a result of a small number of individuals putting in multiple applications. The months produced no real anomalies.

Code	Subject	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
A	Accommodation	25	17	24	14	15
B	Adjudications	13	14	17	15	22
C	Diversity related	8	11	8	7	4
D	Education/employment/training	36	26	20	31	14
E	Family/visits	48	62	49	47	18
F	Food/kitchen related	1	6	5	6	22
G	Health related	20	38	51	52	27
H	Property	71	114	84	89	74
I	Sentence related	111	80	117	72	81
J	Staff/prisoner/detainee related	28	51	47	36	35
K	Transfers	24	24	52	67	68
L	Miscellaneous	10	59	55	39	60
	Total number of applications	396	502	529	475	440

WING	2011/12
A	75

B	44
C	29
D	15
E	28
F/CSU	11
G	44
H	22
I	35
J	32
K	58
L	35
Total	428

Month	2011/12
March	46
April	37
May	34
June	38
July	34
August	31
September	27
October	41
November	21
December	43
January	41
February	35
Total	428