



Annual Report to The Secretary of State

covering the period
1st April 2011 to 31st March 2012

**The Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Pentonville**

LONDON
N7 8TT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HMP Pentonville is an overcrowded prison, 170 years old, where most of the inmates live and eat with another prisoner, sharing a bleak cell – most with an open lavatory – designed by the Victorians for one occupant. Because of the limited resources, in terms of education and industrial training, much of prisoners' time is spent unconstructively; about half the population is unemployed. The prison faces major challenges relating to drugs and mental illness.

The prison serves the north London courts, holding remand/unsentenced prisoners (about 50% of the total population); the remainder of the population are mainly short-term prisoners or recently convicted prisoners sentenced to longer terms, but awaiting allocation and transfer to other establishments.

Though the resident population numbered almost 1,300 at the end of the reporting year, over 12 months about 7,500 different individuals are held in Pentonville for an average stay just 55 days, and the Reception area has to process about 20,000 arrivals. The official maximum capacity (OPCAP) was increased during the period of the riots in August 2011, when on occasion Reception had to stay open overnight to process new arrivals. The staff worked well to ensure standards did not slip during this period of considerable pressure.

The average stay is around eight weeks – though a small minority can remain for years. This high turn-over inevitably gives the place somewhat of the feeling of a “transit camp”. It makes it much more difficult to provide adequate educational and training programmes, as prison processes take time to assess prisoners and establish constructive custody plans.

It is to the credit of the staff that, despite these strains, prisoners are in general treated with respect and the relationship between officers and prisoners remains good.

An illegal drug distribution economy lies behind many of the gang, debt and violence issues in the prison system. The IMB greatly applauds the determined efforts made this year by Pentonville staff to reduce smuggling and corruption, resulting in, it seems, a significant reduction in illegal drug consumption. For example, random tests at the end of the year show around 12% of prisoners have illegal drugs in their system (down from 16% a year earlier). Around 20% of the total population are prescribed methadone maintenance under the Integrated Drug Treatment System (IDTS) arrangements. Two wings are dedicated to the clinical management of identified drug users. A “drug free wing” was opened in May 2012 to give maximum support to prisoners who are motivated to reform themselves and resist the temptations they would face on other wings.

There has been (for reasons not fully understood) a serious and sharply increasing problem of prisoners with mental health and personality disorders, far beyond the resources of the Mental Health Team to cope with as well as they would wish. Reported incidents of self-harm (generally prisoners cutting themselves) increased very significantly over the year. Because of the limited space in the Healthcare Centre many of the less seriously mentally ill prisoners are housed on the wings. (Most in-patients held in the Healthcare Centre are there because of mental rather than physical health issues.) The IMB takes the view that further resources are urgently needed to tackle these issues.

In relation to “safer custody”, we note that over the last five years there have been 11 self-inflicted deaths in custody, (three of them during the year 2011-12). We applaud the fact that the Violence Reduction Programme (intended to identify and manage bullies and support their victims) has been re-energised during the year; and the system for monitoring prisoners

on ACCT (i.e. subject to a close watch to ensure their safety) is a high priority for senior management.

A tailored “personal officer” scheme, which allocates a named officer to each prisoner as a focal point to raise any difficulties, has been developed and introduced to give a welcome degree of continuity in the management and support of prisoners. Personal officers are being offered additional training and IT support to enable them to deal with the increasing range and number of requests and complaints raised by prisoners.

The Vulnerable Prisoners Unit (VPU) – a basement wing that houses those who, because of the nature of their offence, background or threats (e.g. from gangs or drug debt problems), are at enhanced risk of violence from other prisoners – is normally full and often requires overspill accommodation. The VPU regime – in terms of work, education and offending treatment programmes – is limited. Additional pressures have arisen from closures of equivalent facilities in other London prisons, and we have doubts whether there is sufficient strategic thinking (on a regional basis) about the allocation and treatment plans for such prisoners.

Good services are provided by the Education and Workshops departments – but available only to a limited number of prisoners. The Library and its associated services are admirable and the Visits unit works hard to encourage links between prisoners and their families.

By the end of the year, some overloaded aspects of prison’s administration had been (not before time) receiving attention: e.g. trying to ensure that the “requests and complaints” system is fit for its purpose in resolving problems as efficiently as possible and that prisoners’ records and sentence calculations were kept up to date despite staffing and population turnover pressures. On the positive side, a new IT system has greatly improved the record keeping in relation to individual prisoners.

Resettlement and the reduction of reoffending are prime management objectives. Co-operation with external services (e.g. the probation service, NHS, and local authorities) to improve “throughcare” has increased efforts to ensure that those making the potentially difficult and risky transition from custody to the community have accommodation, support and ideally employment; all factors which discourage a return to a criminal career.

Implementation of the prison's new equalities regime – which covers matters of race, religion, disability, and sexual orientation – is advancing and this year has had renewed support from management. There is a notable increase in the number of older and disabled prisoners.

The disadvantages of the out-dated physical environment of much of the Victorian prison are now greatly aggravated by serious overcrowding, and urgently need to be upgraded to reach acceptable standards of decency. However, in the interim and despite very severe financial constraints, the senior management team have enabled some improvements in the prisoners' environment and facilities during the last year or so (e.g. the refurbishment and redecoration of the wings and better classroom and workshop facilities). The formerly inadequate ventilation in the relatively new Healthcare Centre has finally been improved. Work on the new kitchen has now started, but while this is in progress the prison had begun a lengthy period relying on the somewhat limited facilities of a temporary kitchen.

We have seen many examples of dedicated and professional staff amongst all levels of the prison staff and the various civilian specialities. In an environment where further budgetary cuts are inevitable in the short term, we remain keen to observe the delivery of humane treatment and all possible measures to reform and reduce reoffending by prisoners being held in HMP Pentonville.

1 THE 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 charged to:

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

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

This is the report of the Independent Monitoring Board, Her Majesty's Prison Pentonville, for 2012. It covers the period from 1st April 2011 to 31st March 2012.

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3 DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

Her Majesty’s Prison Pentonville, located on Caledonian Road in inner North London, is a Category B local prison primarily serving the courts in north and east London. It was built 170 years ago and has been in use as a local prison ever since; the original four blocks housing the prisoners remain, in size and layout, much as they were when the prison opened in 1842.

Certified Normal Accommodation (CNA) is 915 prisoners. CNA, or uncrowded capacity, is the Prison Service’s own measure of accommodation, and as such represents the good, decent standard of accommodation that the Prison Service aspires to provide all prisoners. During the reporting year, however, the prison’s approved Operational Capacity was as many as 1,310 prisoners. It is important to note that the prison’s Operational Capacity is effectively the maximum number of prisoners it can hold safely without serious risk to good order, security and the proper running of the planned regime.

The number of prisoners actually held in the prison varies from day to day, depending on movements to and from the courts, discharges and the availability of transport and accommodation in other prisons. During the reporting year this number, the daily “unlock”, rose from about 1,110 early in the year to around 1,300 by early September following the civil disturbances, and remained above 1,200 for the rest of the reporting year. Thus, for two-thirds of the year the prison was officially overcrowded by between 35 and 42 per cent, and at times it held almost 390 more prisoners than can be accommodated with a “good, decent standard of accommodation”.

As a local prison it holds mostly Category B & C adult males (i.e. aged 21 and over) remanded in custody by local Magistrates’ and Crown Courts, and those serving short sentences or beginning longer sentences. Around 44% are being held on remand at any one time from one or other of these courts, and most of the others are mainly short-term prisoners or recently convicted prisoners still unsentenced or sentenced to longer terms (including about 180 sentenced to 4 years or more), but awaiting allocation and transfer to other establishments. The joint effect of this is a high turnover in the prison’s population, with major implications for assessment, education and treatment programmes. Almost 70% of the prisoners are held there for three months or less, only about 170 are there for more than 6 months and hardly any for more than 12 months.

After some re-allocation in early 2011, during 2011/12 prisoners’ accommodation was organised mostly as follows:

- A Wing – Induction and First Night Centre (for newly arrived prisoners).
- B Wing – Resettlement wing (for prisoners close to being released into the community).
- C Wing – Remanded and convicted prisoners.
- D Wing – Working and Enhanced (IEP) prisoners.
- E Wing – Drug programme continuation wing.
- F Wing – Substance Misuse Stabilisation Unit (primarily IDTS).
- G Wing – Prisoners attending Education, Workshops & Offending behaviour courses.
- Segregation Unit – on the lower ground floor of E Wing.
- Vulnerable Prisoners’ Unit – on the lower ground floor of G Wing.
- Healthcare Centre – in-patient accommodation for up to 22 prisoners.

<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Prison population</i>	
White	606	48%
Black	366	29%
Asian	133	11%
Mixed	65	5%
Not specified or other	95	7%
Total	1,265	100%

4 THIS REPORT

This report records the working of HMP Pentonville from 1st April 2011 to 31st March 2012. It is intended to monitor progress, or lack of progress, during that period.

Each section details the work of a specific area of the prison of concern or particular interest to us.

The Executive Summary above identifies particular matters that the IMB considers a priority. We list specific questions for the Minister, Deputy Director of Custody, London, and the No 1 Governor.

5 PARTICULAR ISSUES REQUIRING A RESPONSE

5.1 Questions to the Minister

1. The increased over-crowding during the year (for two-thirds of the year the prison was officially overcrowded by between 35 and 42 per cent) means that the majority of cells in Pentonville require two strangers to eat, sleep and use the toilet in a very confined space and with little privacy. This is well below the good, decent standard of accommodation that the Prison Service itself aspires to provide for all prisoners. What plans exist either to reduce this over-crowding or, instead, to bring these cells up to the standards of the 21st century?
2. We regularly observe officers coping with highly disruptive and aggressive prisoners, many of whom require skilled psychiatric or psychological help. A busy local prison is not adequately equipped to deal with such prisoners save on a very short term basis. What plans are there to extend specialist facilities so as to relieve staff in local prisons of this unfair burden and to deal more appropriately with such prisoners?
3. The number of drug users coming into prison does not seem to be reducing. The Integrated Drug Treatment System for prisons (IDTS) programme remains hugely demanding of resources. In your response to our Annual Report last year you told us that you expected a large, multi-site, independent evaluation of IDTS to be completed in 2012, thus enabling the Government to evaluate the impact of IDTS on re-offending rates, suicide in prison custody, drug-related deaths following release, etc, and therefore whether this form of treatment is effective in prisons in this country. When do you expect to receive the results and what then will be the next steps?
4. We note with concern that a number of prisoners, particularly sex offenders, spend long periods in the Pentonville VPU, where no Sex Offender Treatment Programme or similar useful intervention is available to reduce the risk to the public of re-offending after release, and where the regime is very limited and wholly inappropriate for long-stay sentenced prisoners. Is there any national strategy for the effective and proper management of sex offenders and their speedy allocation to establishments with appropriate resources?

5.2 Questions to the Deputy Director of Custody, London

1. There is a clear need for some sort of anger management programme for short-term prisoners. In your response to our Annual Report last year you mentioned that the RESOLVE programme, being piloted last year by NOMS, would be implemented in early 2012. Do you see it being introduced in Pentonville this year, alongside the prison's new violence reduction initiative?
2. The VPU is often full, with overflow VPs housed in cells on the G2 landing, which is unsatisfactory. Given the apparently inadequate VP accommodation in the London area (a situation made worse by the closure of the Onslow Unit at Wandsworth), how is the problem at Pentonville to be permanently remedied?

5.3 Questions to the No 1 Governor

1. What is being done to investigate the reasons for the non-attendance of healthcare appointments and when is that investigation expected to be completed?
2. What are the proposals, if any, to carry out exit surveys of prisoners using healthcare facilities and how is it intended to use the results of these to improve services?
3. While there have been improvements in the last year or so, there are still too few opportunities for purposeful activity in the prison. What are your proposals for further improvements during 2012/13?

4. We have followed with much interest the considerable effort put into introducing an effective personal officer scheme tailor-made to suit the predominantly transient prisoner population of Pentonville, and the progress already made. Is it clear yet what form the final version will take and when it will be fully in place?
5. What do you understand to be the main reasons for the apparently substantial increase in prisoners' requests and complaints in the last few years? How are these being addressed?
6. How are prisoners taught and encouraged to use regularly the new outdoor exercise equipment that has been installed on B Yard and on the Healthcare Centre yard?
7. To what extent have new violence reduction procedures been introduced, and what further actions do you propose with the aim of reducing violence levels in the prisons and when?
8. When will a VPU observations book be introduced, in order that incoming staff are alerted to potential problems

6 EQUALITIES (incorporating Race and Diversity)

- The existing Equalities manager was moved within the prison at the end of 2011, and his duties handed to a Governor. Responsibilities for equalities have been changed for a greater emphasis.
- Meetings continued to be sporadic to this point, due largely to the protracted absence, on medical grounds, of two Equalities SOs, but alternate prisoner and staff Equalities meetings have now been scheduled, one for each month.
- The new Governor in charge of Equalities has organised meetings with concerned groups outside of the prison, among them Age Concern and the Travellers' Project. MIND has offered advice on managing staff with mental health problems.
- Seven of the eight outstanding Equalities Impact Assessments (IAs) were completed and signed off in the reporting period. The IA correlating race with access to healthcare suggested that Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) prisoners felt they were receiving less satisfactory treatment than non-BME prisoners, although IA analysis took this to be a problem of perception rather than of fact. The IA on Incentives and Earned Privileges showed a disproportionately high number of BME inmates on Basic, while the one on Segregation found an over-representation of BME prisoners on Cellular Confinement (CC). However, both assessments showed signs of improvement over previous years.
- Two research reports were produced by the Psychology department during the year, one analysing violent attacks among prisoners, the other the over-representation of black inmates in Adjudications, CC and Use of Force statistics. The first study concluded that victims of attacks were disproportionately likely to be White British or Black African. The second suggested that the apparent bias against black prisoners at Adjudication reflected patterns of offending and drug-use in prison, as well as of the type of offence for which the prisoners had been jailed. Although no systematic racial bias was found, over-representation at Adjudication is being addressed.

6.1 FOREIGN NATIONALS

- The number of Foreign National prisoners in Pentonville has grown steadily over the year. At 30th March 2012, it stood at 367 (30 March 2011: 350). The number of Sole Detainees reflects this growth, rising to an average over the period of 23 (2010-11 average: 17).
- This increase in numbers has brought logistical problems, particularly with processing Foreign National prisoners at First Night Induction.
- A drive by UKBA staff to promote the Early Removal / Facilitated Return Schemes has met with some success in terms of inmate take-up. This has been helped by the appointment of a dedicated, five-day-a-week ERS / FRS UKBA officer. However, the prison has been slow to act on this, with few prisoners being released under these schemes in 2011/12.
- Shortly before the end of the reporting year, the Foreign Nationals SO was transferred to a job in another part of the prison and has not been replaced. His role will now be covered by the existing Foreign Nationals officer (not an SO), reporting to the Equalities Manager via an Equalities SO. We wait to see how this reduced resource affects the speed with which Foreign Nationals are dealt with.

7 LEARNING AND SKILLS

- While there have been improvements in the last 12 months, there are still too few opportunities for purposeful activity in the prison. On most weekdays almost half the prisoners are unemployed (i.e. around 580 men spend the day with nothing to do – no structured activities and few opportunities to acquire new skills let alone develop any sense of purpose or self-respect).
- There are now almost 700 paid activity places (including education classes, wing cleaning and painting) and a number of unpaid activities (e.g. library visits, religious services and recreational PE). Approaching 60 per cent of the paid activity places involve work of some sort. Classrooms and workshops operate for up to 5 hours a day, Monday morning to Friday lunchtime (i.e. up to 22½ hours a week).

- Standard pay is £10.50 a week for working prisoners, with £12.50 a week for prisoners on enhanced IEP status (plus occasional bonuses for prisoners who have worked exceptionally well). Those attending Education receive a flat rate of 80 pence for each half day. While prisoners' pay rates are well below ordinary pay rates and perhaps not high enough to encourage education and training, this may in part reflect the fact that there are usually waiting lists for most places.

7.1 WORKSHOPS

- With their usually dull, menial and unaccredited tasks, prison workshops seemed to go out of fashion during the 2000s, but in the last year or so there has been some interest in developing new types of workshop. In March 2012 only 147 prisoners were employed in the workshops, an increase of 25 compared with a low point two years ago but still 84 fewer than in 2005.
- Last year we reported that far too many workshop sessions were lost because of staff shortages, but this year, following the Governor's instruction, we understand that there were no workshop closures as a result of staff shortages.
- Most work places do not lead to any formal accreditation, but there is BICS accredited training and accredited training is available in manual handling, Heartstart, health & safety and in operating fork lift trucks.
- Work patterns in the main remaining workshop changed during the year. The 20-space multi-skills workshop was moved elsewhere and it now has places for up to 10 prisoners (for accredited training in plumbing, carpentry and painting & decorating). Last Summer Workshop 3's tailoring work was being wound down (though not entirely) in favour of cloth recycling as a commercial operation (i.e. producing rags from cloth arriving in bales), but the cloth recycling machinery was recently moved elsewhere and instead additional sewing machines are to be installed taking the total to 35. When installed, there will be places for up to 50 prisoners working in tailoring, embroidery, pressing & ironing (some new industrial laundry machines are to be installed there as well), including (it is hoped) accredited training.
- Another workshop provides electrical maintenance and fault-finding work on a commercial contract, and remains very popular with prisoners, but it only offers 50 places. The industrial cleaning (BICS) Workshop has only 12 places, with a further 6 in the prison's Bio Team (made up of prisoners who have already been trained to clear up bio-hazards and who can be called out from other work when needed – e.g. to clean 'dirty protest' cells). Following its successes in previous years, the BICS Workshop again entered a team in the National Challenge.
- After long delays, the fork lift truck operator training centre in the old boiler house (since renamed the 'Right Start Training Academy' or RSTA) finally opened in early December, with its first 3 passes in mid-December. While it can offer up to 3 prisoners a 5 or 6 day course identical to those offered outside, by the end of March 2012 only four courses had been fully completed (as the fork lift truck needed repairs) by a total of 12 prisoners. The cloth recycling machinery has been moved into the RSTA, taking up some of the floor space and, alas, in April 2012 most of the remaining floor space was being used for temporary storage.
- Some progress was made during the year in setting up the planned 12-strong horticultural team, based at the recently established garden compound next to B Yard. Three separate growing areas have been dug, and four cold frames and two compost containers constructed (using internally-sourced, recycled material at virtually zero cost). A purpose-built 'potting shed' is now being constructed by prisoners in the horticultural team, followed by the construction of two greenhouses. It is expected that the London Wildlife Trust will provide support and training.
- We note that plans for 2012/13 include making space for two further workshops, opening a new laundry facility (3 industrial washing machines and 3 gas dryers) with 10 workspaces and accredited training in bricklaying, cleaning food premises and working in warehouses.

7.2 EDUCATION

- The progress we reported last year continued through most of the reporting period under the provider Kensington & Chelsea College.

- Attendance remained reasonably consistent at an average of 80% of available places filled. There are 120 seats for learners in the department and there are nine half-day sessions each week. There were 338 prisoners enrolled to attend in March 2012. Many do not attend more than a couple of sessions a week.
- Accreditations also improved; both in numbers and in consistency of reporting data. The department is on course to achieving the accreditation target of 67%, or 1,700 accreditations, at the end of July subject to some enrolling issues, which had been identified at the time of reporting (end March), being resolved.
- VPU learners had access for the first time to classrooms in the old education suite adjacent to the VPU which offers eight learner spaces in the morning and again in the afternoon (with the exception of Tuesday mornings fortnightly).
- After a gap of just over three years, Education prisoners were finally provided with access to the Library for two sessions a week.
- The strong partnership with the Guardian continues. The media centre is the hub for the popular prison newspaper, The Voice of the Ville, which has a much more professional look as it is now printed outside thanks to the involvement of the NUJ. The journalism course has 10 places with about five E3 NUJ accreditations (basic entry level) and six to eight at L1 accreditations (the next level up) a month.
- Learner Voice was introduced with monthly meetings between learners and education staff to discuss concerns and to express views. Minutes were recorded and the education manager followed up on the key issues.
- It is disappointing to report that the prison radio, welcomed in our last report, has not been realised even though a radio producer was appointed.
- A planned course in Barbering was delayed owing to a change in the intended location for the Barber Shop. Again, a tutor was appointed (October 2011) but by end of March still had no classes to teach.
- There is some uncertainty over the future education provider for Pentonville. It was announced in March that A4e was the preferred provider, scheduled to take over from KCC on August 1st, 2012. However, in May KCC had its contract extended until October 2012. This uncertainty has had a detrimental impact on staff morale.

7.3 LIBRARY

- There were approx 12,300 visits in the reporting year, which was an increase of 18% on the previous year, with 13,000 books being issued. There was an increase in visits from January 2012 but delivery of prisoners from the wings remained patchy. G Wing, although the largest wing of any prison in Europe, struggled to deliver 20 prisoners a week and regularly missed their library slots. The librarian, however, is working closely with staff to improve this and the good data management and daily report showing visit numbers listed by wing also helps to spotlight weaknesses.
- The Librarian and her staff continued to deliver a creative and energetic programme of activity including the “Toe by Toe” scheme, creative writing workshops and reading groups including one for prisoners in the VPU. Over 100 took part in the “Family Fables” programme and, to cope with demand, the Library started double sessions in March. There was also an excellent “Adult Learner’s Week” which marked, for the first time, a collaboration between the Library and Education.
- There are six computers in the Library - one of which does not work and one of which is not connected to power. Of the four "functioning" computers only two have a mouse as these tend to get stolen. Archbold, the legal reference, used to be available, but is on the defunct computer. The only function of the computers currently is for prisoners to play games on them. Although we have been told that there is a plan for Education to provide content, there does not seem to be a date for this.
- Whilst recognising that there are security constraints, we think that there should be more constructive use of computers, especially given the potentially important role they could have in CV writing or enabling those prisoners without access to traditional media (newspapers, magazines) in their first language to have regulated access to foreign language news.
- Book returns continue to be an issue with loss of stock running at just under 10% against a target of 4% or less.

7.4 PHYSICAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

- The main Gymnasium remains highly valued by prisoners (with about 50 prisoner inductions each week) and staff alike, with each prisoner being allowed up to three 1¾-hour sessions a week, including changing and shower time. Time-consuming checks have been introduced on the wings to monitor attendance so that particular prisoners do not attend more than their permitted sessions a week.
- Despite the very heavy use, almost all of the PE equipment is in good order, which is a credit to its regular maintenance. The only major problem remains the poor ventilation in main Gymnasium resulting in excessive heat and humidity, especially during the summer months.
- The fully-equipped fitness suite, opened on F2 in early 2011, now regularly accommodates 129 prisoners each week during four 1½-hour sessions a day. With cardiovascular and multi-gym weights equipment, it is designed to help with the prisoners' rehabilitation on E & F Wings.
- Last year PE staff began offering an 'Active IQ healthy living course' to E & F Wing prisoners to encourage health promotion, and this year offered this service more generally during two 'Well Being Days' (reaching about 160 prisoners and 200 staff).
- The outdoor sports area, on the yard between E & G Wings, which opened (with high expectations) after being re-surfaced and lined in May 2010, remained largely unused during the year and the temporary kitchen buildings have now been located there. However, brand new outdoor exercise equipment has just been installed on B Yard (six different units) and on the Healthcare Centre yard (three units). Another three units are planned for E & G Yard when it returns to use. Prisoners' regular (statutory) outdoor exercise is supervised by the relevant wing staff.
- PE staff continue to offer a number of courses, and the opportunity for prisoners to earn a range of recognised qualifications including three levels of Active IQ Courses (Level 1 'Active Healthy Living' on E & F Wings, Level 2 'Fitness Instructing Gym' for prisoners are in the last year of their sentence, and Level 3 'Personal Trainer' (a prisoner who completed this course is now employed as a Personal Trainer in a gym). PE staff also run courses for Community Sports Leaders, on First Aid at Work and Diet & Nutrition. They also actively encourage prisoner involvement with visitors from local community groups and their participation in sponsored charity events (e.g. in October prisoners raised sponsorship money for Noah's Ark Children's Hospice by doing an 8-hour marathon training session in the Gym supervised by two trainers).

8 HEALTHCARE & MENTAL HEALTH

- On 1 April 2011, provision of healthcare passed from Islington Primary Care Trust to Whittington Health. The change has been welcomed by the prison. Extensive data on the delivery of care is already produced by the Healthcare administration team and new governance structures have been implemented that will emphasise both strategic monitoring and delivery of care. We were pleased to note that Healthcare provision at Pentonville was commented on positively by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons in his report of June 2011
- Pentonville has 22 inpatient beds and for most of the year the wards were full to capacity, with, on occasions, inmates awaiting mental healthcare services remaining on the wings. Pentonville continues to receive a large and increasing number of prisoners with mental health needs and the majority of inpatient beds are occupied by mentally ill patients. We commented last year on delays in transferring severely mentally ill patients to secure NHS hospitals under the Mental Health Act and noted fortnightly meetings of healthcare staff to check on the speed of transfers, the progress of each transfer and to identify delays. That appears to have been successful in that although a few prisoners have had to wait for excessively long periods between being accepted as suitable for transfer and being transferred, most such transfers now take place within 4 weeks.
- The number of mental health referrals, averaging at 21 per week, increased significantly throughout the year (up from about 18 to 24 a week). Should this trend continue, this is likely to place a strain on the ability of existing healthcare resources to meet their needs.
- As a result of issues with the contractor, dental waiting times increased markedly at the end of 2011 with a waiting list of 250 and a waiting time of 12 weeks. As at March 2012 the waiting list had dropped dramatically to 47 with a maximum waiting time of four weeks, well below the officially acceptable waiting time for appointments in the community. Exit surveys have been introduced in relation to the dental service provided by Whittington Health but we understand that it has not been possible to collect

- An unacceptably high non-attendance rate (around 30%) for medical appointments is a waste of healthcare resources. The reasons include prisoners not being told of appointments that have been made for them; prisoners' no longer wanting or giving priority to appointments; failures by the prison to provide escorts.
- We note the proposals to investigate the potential to install telemedicine facilities in Healthcare, thus obviating the need for expensive escort resources. Bed watches continue to be a strain on resources and the cost of these is over budget. The requirement for constant watches in the prison has increased significantly in recent months. Should that trend continue, it will also place a strain on the healthcare budget.
- In January 2012 the prison completed an Equalities Impact Assessment on access to healthcare. Among other things this identified the possibility of passive discrimination against BME and foreign national prisoners; the difficulties experienced by prisoners with disabilities in gaining access to healthcare resources; and the lack of provision for social care. A detailed action plan to address the findings is being taken forward, with most of the 27 actions due to be completed in the middle of this year.
- Healthcare complaints relating to NHS provision remain at a considerably lower level than previously. There were 99 such complaints in 2011/12 compared with 168 the previous year and over 600 per year before March 2009. Regular surgeries held on the wings by the Patient Advisory and Liaison Service from the Whittington Hospital mean that issues that previously would have resulted in a prisoner making a formal complaint can be dealt with on the spot. And many 'complaints', previously so classified, involved prisoners merely seeking information. Such requests are no longer counted as complaints.
- Installation of an air circulation system, together with fewer hot days last summer meant that problems with excessively high temperatures and poor ventilation in the HCC did not recur.
- There have been intermittent problems with the standards of cleaning in Healthcare – never acceptable in such a facility.

9 SAFER CUSTODY

- During the year under review there were four deaths in custody, three of which were apparently self-inflicted. There were 390 reported instances of prisoner self-harm. This represents an increase of nearly 90% on last year's number. Such figures have to be treated with a degree of caution since not only are there perceived variations in reporting practice, but serious distortions in the overall picture can be caused by the repeated actions of a small number of prisoners. The increase remains a matter of concern to management and staff as well as us.
- The prevention of prisoner self-harm in an institution such as Pentonville poses particular difficulties. The reception of prisoners from court and the high turnover of prisoners, allied to the changes in their status (from un-convicted to convicted to sentenced), creates an environment in which the assessment of risk is problematic – information may be missing and circumstances can change rapidly. Sheer weight of numbers adds to the problems. The prison utilises a range of measures to minimise the risk of self-harm, but it can happen that the pressures of a busy local remand prison undermine those measures. For example, the ACCT document is a file created when a prisoner at serious risk of self-harm is identified; it is designed to underpin the additional care and support to be given to such a prisoner. Some 600 such documents were opened in the year under review. However, the quality of those documents, and therefore their value, varies greatly.
- Listeners are Samaritan-trained prisoners who respond to requests by prisoners who feel the need for support. Because prisoners rarely stay in Pentonville for a long time there is a constant struggle to maintain sufficient numbers – the complement of Listeners dropped to as low as 7 in November, but was a more healthy 22 in March. Their distribution in the prison has not always been ideal. Listeners can also find their role made more difficult in other ways. What should be a dedicated suite for their use on the first night centre has regularly been reported as in use for other purposes. There are, too, occasional complaints over the time taken for officers to inform Listeners that a prisoner has asked to see one of them.
- The systematic monitoring of the response to emergency cell bells was unsatisfactory, though problems in this regard appear now to have been rectified.

- There is a regular safer custody meeting which is usually well attended by staff from throughout the prison, and the safer custody team is commendably conscientious.
- For some years it has been our view that arrangements to minimise the incidence of violence within the prison have been inadequate. It is pleasing to report that, while much still remains to be done, there has been significant progress towards more effective systems. There has been a far more proactive approach to identifying the perpetrators of violence, challenging unacceptable behaviour, and, where appropriate, imposing sanctions upon them. Similarly, there has been better identification of victims so that they may be offered more support. There has been research into the causes of violence within the prison, and more effort is being put into obtaining information about the existence and activities of gangs within the prison.
- Problems remain. Procedures to ensure that certain prisoners do not associate with each other are imperfect, and concerns have been raised over revised arrangements for assessing whether a prisoner is suitable to share a cell. Although there are some designated prisoner representatives to whom others can go to talk about violence problems, they are few in number and under-used.
- A revised strategy for dealing with violence was to have been promulgated in March, but its publication has been postponed for several months.
- The research on inter-prisoner violence concluded that: drug debts and gang-rivalries were the main reasons for violence at HMP Pentonville; in age terms both victims and perpetrators were likely to be towards the average (early thirties) for this prison population and to have served several previous sentences; victims of violence were disproportionately likely to be White British or Black African and the perpetrators of violence were more likely to have been convicted of violent offences than the victims. Prisoners reported in general that they felt safe at Pentonville, though not as safe as at some other prisons. The results of this survey provided useful input into the design of the Violence Reduction programme which has been developed during the year. (See 'Equalities' section for the equalities aspects of inter-prisoner violence.)

10 THE WINGS (Quality of Prisoner Life and Regime)

- While the wings were generally in good cleanliness and decorative state, there were occasional outbreaks of cockroach infestations in some areas, though these were brought under control once reported.
- We welcome the fact that wings were redecorated during the year, with new flooring and refurbishment of the showers; and some cells were adapted for physically disabled prisoners.
- We noted several instances of a lack of attention to the recording of food comments and food refusals.
- We also continued to receive occasional complaints about shortages of in-cell furniture and prisoners' kit (pillows, mirrors, etc).

10.1 SEGREGATION UNIT / E1

- There were two self-inflicted deaths in the Segregation Unit during the reporting period. The deaths are currently under investigation by the Prison and Probation Ombudsman, as is standard practice, and will be the subject of a Coroner's inquest.
- The Special Cell was used seven times (each time for a different prisoner) normally for period of less than an hour.
- Segregation reviews were well conducted and, for the most part, well attended by the relevant departments (mental health, security, probation, chaplaincy, etc). While there may have been frustration at the length of time it sometimes took to move prisoners on, this was usually for reasons outside the prison's control and every effort was made to address the situation.
- Once again, the Segregation staff dealt with a constant stream of difficult prisoners with patience. When board members make their regular visits to the Segregation Unit to speak to prisoners, the majority of complaints concern the reasons they are being held there, rather than their conditions or treatment.

10.2 VULNERABLE PRISONERS' UNIT / G1

- The problem of overcrowding remains. The matter has been discussed with the Governor at Board meetings and the IMB has been informed that the prison has found it very difficult to get transfers into other VPU units. There was inadequate planning for the accommodation and treatment of long term prisoners, particularly sex offenders, in the London area (a situation made worse by the closure of the Onslow Unit at Wandsworth). It is unusual for there not to be an overflow onto G2.
- There is one incident book for the whole of G-wing. We feel that the VPU is a distinct enough area to warrant separate record keeping, especially in light of regular staff turnover and the different reasons for being there - potentially conflicting attitudes and behaviours making for difficult management.
- There are certainly a number of prisoners that spend time in the VPU that have mental health difficulties and staff have commented that they feel they would benefit from training in this area.
- Some refurbishment and new showers have improved things slightly but the basement location is still depressing. With the temporary kitchen being located in an exercise yard, prisoners in the VPU were not able to have fresh air and exercise - although others appreciated the extra compensation of more association time.
- We have received a number of complaints about the last of these from VPU staff and from prisoners housed there. We note that this is now being addressed by wing management.

11 KITCHEN AND CANTEEN

- Refurbishment preparations were delayed to October, then December and finally to March 2012, when the temporary kitchen was finally in place. The main kitchen refurbishment is expected to take about one year.
- Logistically, the change in working methods using the porta-cabins is coped with relatively well, despite several setbacks: the number of available ovens has been greatly reduced, which is a concern as it has negatively affected the quantity and quality of cooking, e.g. no fresh food can be prepared, and the number of menu choices have reduced. There is also less room for sufficient staff to ensure smooth running of the service. This means delays in serving which puts staff under more pressure.
- Throughout the year, recruiting prisoners to work in the existing kitchen has been reported to be difficult, and this is claimed to be due to low incentives, such as low wages and working hours. However, the atmosphere in both the existing and the porta-cabin kitchens has generally been positive with high team morale, despite the challenging times.

12 CHAPLAINCY

- Last year was a difficult year for the Chaplaincy with relocations resulting from the repair of the chapel roof and the vacancies arising in the full time posts of Anglican and Catholic chaplains. The Anglican post, however, remains vacant after two failed attempts at recruitment. At present the post is frozen pending the introduction of the 'fair and sustainable' staff restructuring. The decision about filling the post of chaplaincy coordinator on a permanent basis, too, is held up for the same reason. The post of full time Catholic priest has also become vacant once again due to an internal decision by the Church. Although both Anglican and Roman Catholic positions are filled by part time staff, the absence of full time chaplains in these two important positions remains a serious concern.
- A positive development has been the introduction of a chaplaincy-based counselling service on Saturdays which is coordinated by the Quaker chaplain. The prison authorities have supported this initiative administratively and financially. At present there are four volunteer counsellors with another four due to start soon (21 April), each providing counselling to three or four inmates for up to 12 weeks.
- Another welcome development is the offer by the Greek Archbishop for Great Britain to the appointment of a Greek Orthodox priest to cater to the needs of about 50 orthodox Christian inmates, mostly from Romania.

13 VISITS

- The complete renovation of the Visits Hall with inmates' paintings displayed on the walls and a well equipped crèche corner decorated with children's drawings make it a more welcoming place. The new ceiling tiles have improved the acoustics considerably, and the hall is not noisy even when full. The hall can accommodate 60 prisoners at any one time with up to three adults and three children allowed per prisoner.
- A crèche is provided three afternoons during the week (five during school holidays) and all day on Saturday and Sunday.
- Telephone bookings have been a problem for the major part of the year with many families finding it difficult to get through. Latterly, the situation has improved with the recruitment of two extra agency staff and there has been a drop in the number of complaints.
- In April 2012 the facility to make bookings on a face to face basis, which was relatively time consuming, was replaced by an email booking facility. This has proved to be a faster and more efficient booking system and has resulted in staff having more time to devote to telephone bookings and processing prisoner applications for visits. Consequently, complaints about telephone bookings have dropped even further.
- The biometrics system for visitors, which was discontinued two years ago because of its then incompatibility with a newly introduced computer system, was re-introduced in March 2012. Once one has gone through the initial process of having a photo and fingerprints taken on the first visit, entry procedures on subsequent visits are much quicker than before. Although there used to be queues at both the visits centre and the main gate, the queues at the main gate have now virtually disappeared. In the visits centre queues remain, however, because of the insufficient number of terminals used for entry processing. An additional benefit of the biometrics system is that it provides added security, making it virtually impossible for those who have been banned from visits to disguise their way into prison.
- Saturdays continue to present a problem. Although the most popular day for visits, the number of security staff checking visitors for contraband remains the same as on other days leading to long delays. It is hoped that once the biometric system is fully implemented and entry procedures quickened this problem will be alleviated.

14 RECEPTION, FIRST NIGHT CENTRE AND INDUCTION

- The Reception process is generally efficient, in particular the fingerprint recognition system. There is still an occasional problem with provision of privacy for interviewing arriving prisoners, and with provision of translation services for prisoners who do not speak English.
- The department coped well with the increased work during the summer riots in London. Reception was open 24 hours during the immediate aftermath.
- There have been some recurring problems with the Serco contract for the transfer of prisoners. This affects the efficiency of the Reception process. At times there has been bunching of Serco vans outside Reception, leaving prisoners to wait in them for longer than is desirable. Sometimes the vans arrive very late, due to there being too few vans to bring prisoners from the courts until the end of the day.
- There were occasional reports about inadequate shower provision and food provision late in the evenings for arriving prisoners.
- There have been problems with the availability of medical staff to assess incoming prisoners, sometimes resulting in delayed allocation to cells.
- The Induction process has undergone recent improvements.

15 OFFENDER MANAGEMENT

(Psychology, Probation & Parole, IPPs & Lifers, Resettlement)

- The OMU functions include: public protection (MAPPAs); offender supervision (lifers, IPPs, persistent and prolific offenders (PPOs)); OCA (classification and transfers between establishments); HDC (conditional release with tagging); custody/sentence calculation.
- Late in 2011, there was a period of many weeks in which problems relating to sentence calculation arose with disturbing frequency, generating complaints within the prison system and applications to the IMB. The practical consequences for an individual prisoner not being given a release date were substantial for example in terms of access to courses, applications for Home Detention Curfew (HDC) conditions, and transfers to other establishments. These problems related to staffing and training issues and appeared resolved by early 2012; the unit has a target – which, by the end of the reporting period, it very largely achieved – of delivering a release date within five working days of reception.
- There were also problems during the year in relation to the licence recall procedure. In a number of these cases, prisoners had to wait several weeks after return to prison to receive their “licence recall pack”. These problems were effectively tackled during the course of the year and much reduced by the end.
- Unavailability during the year of Legal Services Officers (prison officers who can give practical advice on procedural mechanics of parole, bail, and obtaining legal advice from solicitors) has not helped licence recall or other matters; and the Ministry's apparent belief that general advice given shortly after prisoners first arrive in custody is adequate is not persuasive. Many prisoners have limited literacy and so a degree of personal explanation, relevant to their circumstances and given when issues arise, seems to us essential. After the end of the year a Legal Services Officer was being recruited, which we greatly welcome.
- The department consists of a Senior Probation Officer, three Probation Officers, plus a small number of support staff (who deal mainly with Oasys, HDC, and BASS matters). The officers are trained in programmes to counter domestic violence and some intense DAP (diversity and prejudice) courses are delivered.
- For repeat offenders, the Home Office's IOM (integrated offender management framework) is progressively taking over from what was the PPO (prolific and priority offender) system, establishing a co-ordinating control and support network amongst the various agencies dealing with offenders after their release.
- We are unconvinced that the rehabilitative efforts of various departments (probation, psychology, mental health and even chaplaincy – which runs “restorative justice” sessions in conjunction with an outside charity) are as fully co-ordinated as they might be.
- The Forensic Psychology Department has a crucial role in the risk assessment of prisoners, as input into the Oasys/MAPPA and Parole Board procedures, the management of IPP prisoners, and the Segregation Reviews.
- By the end of the year there were 3 chartered psychologists and 5 trainees as assistants. Also during the year, a radical reorganisation of the prison psychology organisation was introduced, to deliver services on a regional (London-wide) rather than individual prison basis.
- The Thinking Skills Programme – which has an anger management component - was re-introduced just at the end of the reporting year (March 2012), but only 10 prisoners were in a position to benefit from it. As with many other constructive interventions, much good may be done to the few who take part – but out of almost 1,300 prisoners the numbers remain disappointingly low.
- As of the beginning of April 2012 there were nine lifers and 15 prisoners serving an Indeterminate Sentence for Public Protection (IPPs) in Pentonville. Three of the lifers had been recalled to prison having previously been released on licence and all but one of lifer population had been in Pentonville for 12 months or less. Three of the IPPs had been in Pentonville for more than 12 months. There appear to be continuing problems in moving prisoners to establishments more suitable for meeting their needs and addressing their risk, although the situation is somewhat improved over last year.

16 DRUGS & SECURITY

- There have been no escapes from custody during the year. There has been a noticeable tightening of many procedures, and this was reflected in a positive outcome to an external security audit. Repairs to roofing entailed extensive use of scaffolding within the prison which represented a serious security challenge, but this was successfully managed and there were no untoward incidents arising from that.
- During the year there were 94 drug finds, and figures for positive tests suggest that the quantity of drugs reaching prisoners has been significantly reduced. Seizures of mobile phones – 196 in the year – also contributed to a diminution in the availability of drugs within the prison.

16.1 DRUGS

- We are pleased to record that the continuing action against illicit drugs being brought into the prison has led to the results of the monthly mandatory drug tests coming in well below the target of less than 16% positive; it was, for example, 12% in February. The sampling rate has been held at 15% and we fully support the effort being made to reduce the availability of illicit drugs. We note the new target for 2012-2013 of less than 13% positive and believe that such a target should help to drive the effort to keep the level of use low. We also note that the random sampling rate each month is to be held at 15% for the same reasons and support this approach.
- Usually about three quarters of the positive tests result from prisoners taking cannabis. This is known to be the most available drug in Pentonville as well as the one that remains in the system for more than 30 days, thus making it more likely to be picked up in random testing
- The plan to make B-Wing a drug-free wing from May 2012 provides a source of hope for improvement in relation to Pentonville's fight against drugs and addressing drug addiction although the disappearance of the resettlement wing is slightly concerning. Other establishments have found success in taking this step and we are hopeful that this success will continue at Pentonville. The make-up of Pentonville's population certainly makes it an ideal candidate for taking part in this pilot project.
- F-wing remains the drug stabilisation wing and has been usually full at about 130 occupants throughout the year. A common concern raised by prisoners on F-Wing is that leaving the wing will result in a step backwards as the availability of illicit drugs on other wings is high. This has posed a significant problem for F-wing staff in that moving people off the wing has become a constant struggle. In fact, the reluctance of prisoners to leave F-wing has been a recurring problem over the last two years. It is hoped that the appearance of a drug-free wing will help reduce this problem. We will watch the impact of the drug-free wing with interest.
- We have also been concerned by being told by officers that some prisoners reappear in F wing not long after their release from prison. These tales are anecdotal but nevertheless they lead us to question the effectiveness of the maintenance approach in keeping some men off illegal drugs and able to lead a crime free life.
- One of the stated aims of wings such as F-wing is to work towards ensuring that programmes run inside prison are also run outside prison. It was encouraging to hear at the beginning of 2012 that continuity between prison and community-based treatments is something which the Substance Misuse Steering Group is already addressing its mind towards.

16.2 USE OF FORCE

- We and the prison share concerns that not all staff have sufficient skill in the use of de-escalation techniques. As a result there are still too many instances of personal protection and unplanned UoF, when compared to other large inner city Category B prisons.
- Near the end of the year the UoF increased specifically in Reception and A Wing (FNC).
- The action plan which resulted from the Equalities Impact Assessment on UoF (completed by the prison management in 2010) has been faced with delays in its implementation. Considering the findings this is worrying and could be given more priority. The report noted the following:
 - Gender imbalance of staff used for planned interventions.

- Incomplete data collection regarding prisoner disabilities and use of force.
 - Poor understanding of cultural behaviour and difference.
 - Further research is required into the higher initiation of use of force from BME staff on offenders
 - Research into disproportionately high levels of black offenders being restrained.
 - An analysis of staff language capabilities should be conducted in relation to their ability to de-escalate incidents where possible.
 - Further analysis of specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely (SMART) monitoring statistics and individual prisoner records needs to be commissioned.
 - Development of gang work with local police should include the mapping of gang members to incidents of violence.
 - Mapping exercise to link positive MDT result to use of force incidents.
- Mechanical restraints have not been used.
 - At times, obtaining statistics and details of prisoners and staff involved in UoF (including the circumstances and the outcomes) has been difficult for the IMB. Whilst this is more due to frequent changes in roles and not due to active withholding of information, any absence of this information makes it difficult for the IMB to monitor UoF in the prison.

17 PRISONERS' REQUESTS AND COMPLAINTS

- It is important that the prison administration has in place effective request and complaint procedures that are easy for prisoners to access and use, and yield timely, polite, relevant and informatively drafted replies.
- In our earlier Annual Reports we have asked about progress in introducing a Personal Officer scheme in Pentonville. The absence of one had also been commented on adversely in successive inspection reports by the HMCIP. With its particularly transient population and frequent movements of prisoners within and between wings, the practical difficulties of operating such a scheme are substantial. But notable progress has been made in the last 12 months, with many cells now having nominated personal officers' names shown next to them, and very helpful on-line guidance (HIPPO) has been developed to help them deal with the wide range of questions and problems that prisoners raise. A Personal Officer "Welcome Pack" has also recently been produced for issue to prisoners. This explains who their Personal Officer is and what they could do for them.
- Ideally, landing officers (particularly those nominated as personal officers) would have the time and knowledge to resolve many issues on the same day without the prisoner having to submit a written request (referred to more formally as an 'application') or complaint. This does happen. But for various reasons, most officers merely advise the prisoner to submit a written application or complaint rather than deal with them 'on the hoof' themselves. The resulting replies vary greatly in quality, and while most are of an acceptable or good standard, others are dismissive or merely tell the prisoner to send his request or complaint to a different member of staff.
- As the data below illustrate, with over 70 complaints a week, Pentonville's long standing application and complaint procedures currently generate huge quantities of paper and take up a great deal of staff time. All too often inadequate responses lead to the request or complaint being escalated by the prisoner to the next level of management in the hope of getting a fuller reply and so adding further time-consuming paper work to their work load.

	<i>2008/09</i>	<i>2009/10</i>	<i>2010/11</i>	<i>2011/12</i>
Number of complaints	2,279	2,974	3,872	3,798
Percentage change	—	+30.5%	+30.2%	-1.9%
Complaints per week	44	57	74	73

- A review of the prison's application procedures undertaken in 2008 identified problems and introduced some changes, but these were not long-lasting. A full review of application and complaint procedures was then undertaken in early 2010. This found that as prisoners had little confidence in the applications system (they were not being dealt with promptly and sometimes not at all) they preferred to use complaint

- The review in 2010 noted that 2,581 complaints (including 388 confidential access complaints) were submitted in 2009, when the six areas with the highest number of complaints in 2009 were: Reception; HCC; Visits; Canteen; Transfers; and Money/Pay.
- The most recent figures show that during the year from April 2011 to March 2012 there were 3,798 complaints (including 591 confidential access complaints), i.e. an increase of 67 per cent compared with just 3 years earlier. The vast majority (96%) of complaints were answered on time (i.e. within 3 working days). The departments receiving the most complaints in 2011/12 were: Operations (e.g. booking visits, missing or delayed post, closed visits); G Wing (e.g. staff issues); Custody (e.g. release dates); Reception (e.g. property issues); Finance (e.g. PIN phone issues); OMU (e.g. transfers, HDC); and A Wing. The most common complaints during 2011/12 were:
 - Wants property from Reception
 - My account is wrong
 - Has not received release date
 - Problems booking a visit
 - Post delays
 - Missing canteen
 - Staff issues
 - Pin phone problems
 - Wants/doesn't want a transfer
 - IEP issues
 - Has been put on closed visits
 - Wants a job/has been fired.
- Most of these complaints could or should have been dealt with by a Personal Officer or by the application system, yet on quite a number of complaints the prisoners stated that they were advised to put in the complaint by their landing officer. We were told that this is, in part, explained by staff shortages. The Personal Officer scheme is at its most effective with a full staff. When gaps are made up with officers deployed from other wings, they do not have the same personal relationship with the prisoners on their temporary landing as the regular Personal Officer would, and prisoners there are instead too often advised to submit written applications or complaints or wait until their Personal Officer is next on duty. Managers hope that the continued training, support and development of officers will help to reduce such cases during 2012/13.
- As the table below shows, in the 12-month period from April 2011 to March 2012, the proportions of complaints originating from prisoners in the various ethnic groups roughly matched the equivalent breakdown of the prison population as a whole (though the exact proportions need to be treated carefully given the number of 'not specified', 'other' and 'mixed' prisoners).

<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Complaints</i>	<i>Prison population</i>
White	1,699 45%	606 48%
Black	1,196 31%	366 29%
Asian	463 12%	133 11%
Mixed	177 5%	65 5%
Not specified or other	263 7%	95 7%
<i>Total</i>	<i>3,798 100%</i>	<i>1,265 100%</i>

- Following the Prison Service's system-wide review and pilot exercise, a revised Prisoners' Complaints System, as set out in PSI 02/2012, is to be implemented from 2nd April 2012, with the aim of ensuring effective responses at the earliest opportunity. By allowing a response time (including an interim reply) of up to 5 working days (instead of 3 days), the aim is enable staff to give more attention to providing good quality responses in the expectation that fuller and more meaningful replies are more likely to satisfy the prisoner, leaving them less likely to pursue the matter further. Replies to complaints about staff, racial incidents or bullying are to be within 10 working days, thus allowing more time to investigate the complaint.

- We shall continue to monitor the development and effectiveness of Pentonville's Personal Officer scheme and its impact on the number of prisoners' requests and complaints. We also try to assess the impact of the revised Prisoners' Complaints System on not only the number of complaints but also the helpfulness and general quality of the resulting replies.

18 MAKE-UP OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

In March 2012 the IMB at HMP Pentonville had 20 members, the same number as a year earlier. Two new members were appointed during the reporting year and two resigned.

18.1 WEEKLY ROTA VISITS

Members on rota duty regularly monitor the prison's facilities and treatment of prisoners, giving a sense of how Pentonville is running. Key areas (the Health Care Centre and the Segregation and Vulnerable Prisoners' Units) are reviewed each week, with other areas visited less frequently. The IMB member on rota will visit the prison several times in the week and write a report at the end of it. This is sent to the No 1 Governor, who responds in writing to specific issues and concerns in time for our monthly Board Meetings.

18.2 APPLICATIONS SURGERIES

On Wednesday afternoons, members speak to prisoners who have put in written applications to see them. In the period of this report, the IMB received 669 such written applications. This was a 70 per cent increase on the previous year, some of which can be attributed to the incremental improvements we have made in communicating the IMB to prisoners. From year to year roughly 20 per cent of applicants are not seen on the first occasion because they were at court, on visits, or otherwise engaged; they are invited to be seen the following Wednesday.

Additionally, members will meet prisoners, as well as staff, during their visits to the prison, and frequently receive and, if urgent, respond to prisoners' oral applications when doing so.

Applications

The main areas covered by written applications were as follows:

Area	Years to 31 March							
	Approximate per cent of written applications dealt with							
	2002	2004	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Property and Cash	11	17	20	25	21	23	14	14
Medical	12	12	8	12	13	11	12	9
Transfers/Category	12	15	10	9	12	9	11	9
Sentence Calculation	8	10	4	5	5	3	6	8
Regime	15	3	5	4	4	2	8	6
Visits	10	6	7	8	8	11	8	5
Telephones	-	5	1	2	5	5	2	4
Mail	2	4	4	1	<1	1	2	4
HDC	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	4
Legal issues	-	-	-	2	2	1	3	3
Requests / Complaints	2	3	5	3	2	2	3	3
Bullying	1	2	1	2	3	2	3	2
General IMB advice	6	2	2	4	2	2	1	2
Housing/Resettlement	-	-	-	2	2	<1	1	2
Assault	-	1	1	1	2	1	2	2
Work	4	1	3	1	3	2	-	2
Education	1	-	<1	2	<1	<1	1	2
Licence recall, etc	1	4	5	2	2	5	4	2
Adjudications	4	1	1	3	<1	2	2	2
Foreign Nationals	-	<1	5	1	2	4	3	2
Probation	1	1	<1	1	<1	2	2	1
Food	<1	2	2	1	<1	2	4	1
Library	-	<1	0	0	0	0	-	<1
E-man status*	2	2	<1	1	0	0	-	0
Racial abuse/incident	-	-	-	1	<1	1	-	0
Miscellaneous	7	10	14	7	11	9	8	9

* Prisoner regarded as at high risk of attempting to escape.
- Not recorded separately.

Property and cash, though still the largest figure, is substantially down when compared to two years ago. Other changes this year compared with the previous year (as far as can be meaningful with small numbers of self-selected cases) are the slight increases in complaints about sentence calculation, telephones, mail and HDC and the decreases in complaints about licence recall, food, medical, transfers and visits.

Annex 1 – Board Statistics

Part 1 - General Statistics

Recommended complement of Board Members	20
Number of Members at the start of the reporting period	20
Number of Members at the end of the reporting period	20
Number of new Members joining during the reporting period	2
Number of Members leaving within the reporting period	2
Total number of written applications received	669
Total number of segregation review meetings held	67
Total number of segregation review meetings attended	66

Part 2 – Membership in March 2012

Member

David Miller	Chair
Alan Bevan	Vice Chair
Ann Waters	Vice Chair
Jacqueline van Oosterwijk	Board Development Officer
William Anderson	
Pamela Beevers	
Gordon Cropper	
Charles Darwent	
Bashir Ebrahim-Khan	
Mary Fulton	
Gabriel George	
Jane Gibson	
Yasmin Knowles-Weil	
Sarah Lowry	
Amy-Jo Lynch	
Mohammad Nafissi	
Jean Silkoff	
Rose Stringer	
Alex Watson	
Mollie Weatheritt	