



**INDEPENDENT
MONITORING BOARD
HMP & YOI ROCHESTER**

**ANNUAL REPORT
2012-2013**

Section 1

STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

The Prisons Act 1952 requires every prison to be monitored by an Independent Board appointed by the Secretary of State from members of the community in which the prison is situated.

The Board is specifically charged to:

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

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

Section 2

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Section 3

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

HMP & YOI Rochester was originally built as a prison in 1874 on a former military site above the Medway River. It was extensively rebuilt in the early 20th century as the Borstal Institution, taking its title from an adjacent village. Its pioneering methods of dealing with young men and boys were used as a model for the creation of other Borstal Institutions which were given statutory authority in 1908 and lasted until their abolition in 1983, when Rochester converted to a youth custody centre.

In 1988 the prison changed its role to operate as remand centre for the Kent courts and sentenced category C and D adult males. Further changes to its role resulted in a mixed site holding immigration detainees, a resettlement unit for adult male prisoners at the end of their sentences and a remand and allocation centre for under 21 year old males. In January 2002 Rochester re-rolled as a dedicated site for sentenced young men up to the age of 21. This role continued until June 2011, when the prison accepted Category 'C' prisoners who were initially housed in one of the newly constructed wings. In the course of the reporting year, Adult and YOI prisoners have been integrated across the whole site, under the banner of "One Prison, One Purpose" (see Section 4). The objectives of the prison are to hold prisoners securely and safely, and to provide a well-ordered establishment where prisoners are treated humanely and with decency and ultimately to reduce the risk of prisoners re-offending.

The original accommodation is a mixture of single and double cells contained in four wings on the 'old' site, and a further wing which has been closed for several years but is currently being re-built. There are four further wings on the 'new' site. The Segregation Unit is located on the 'old' site. The First Night Unit and Induction Wing, have, for most of the year, been located on the 'old' site, with a Resettlement Unit located in the 'new' site. Latterly 'first night' accommodation has been shared around the prison and the Resettlement Unit has been moved to the much larger H wing, giving double the previous capacity. Currently operational capacity of the prison is 662. One wing is still undergoing planned refurbishment with a temporary loss of 60 spaces. It is anticipated that all wings will be re-opened towards the end of 2013 (including the wing closed for several years) and this would increase the Prison's operational capacity to 804.

The regime at Rochester is intended to give prisoners training through a structured sentence plan. Opportunities exist for education and work placements, with the emphasis given to resettlement. Education is encouraged on a full or part time basis. Training is offered across a wide range of industries and activities. These include industrial cleaning, brick-laying, plumbing, computing, garden work, recycling, contract services and hairdressing. The kitchen and gymnasium also run courses. Many of the activities offer recognised qualifications, particularly within the construction industry.

Physical well-being is catered for through physical education at two well-run gymnasias, offering competitive and recreational activities. A third Gym with limited facilities is also available.

Support for prisoners is available from the healthcare team, and chaplaincy, as well as community support from external organisations.

Section 4

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Although being something of a cliché, it is none the less true to say that during the current reporting year (and years immediately prior to that) "the only 'constant' has been change". Whilst it can be benevolently assumed that the majority of these changes have been introduced for some good purpose, the effect of change, in its own right, should not be underestimated. It has caused and continues to cause, anxieties and uncertainties, for prisoners and staff alike.

"One Prison, One Purpose" was an attempt by the Governor to bring some order to the rushed and ill-prepared change which had introduced adult prisoners to the former YOI regime (see our 2011-12 report for our critical views on this change). The Board supported the "One Prison" initiative but regretted the necessity for it. There are still some outstanding staff training issues, which, had they been carried out before the introduction of adult prisoners, would have allowed officers to respond more confidently to the needs of the 'mixed' population. Overall, in the view of the Board, "One Prison, One Purpose" can be adjudged to have been very largely successful, on the level of integrating the YOIs and adult prisoners. The lack of preparation for the arrival of Cat C prisoners is still reflected in the inadequate storage for property and the lack of knowledge regarding Cat D Reviews which resulted in delays and complaints. There are lessons to be learned if this error is not to be repeated elsewhere.

Having undergone significant management change and the publication of the NOMS business plan "Fair and Sustainable", the Prison was an early participant in adopting efficiency arrangements, later referred to as "New Ways of Working". The efficacy of these changes has yet to be realised and whilst the IMB understands the rationale behind the changes, there has (and is) a price to pay in staff uncertainty and periodic low morale, which translates through to the prisoners, increasing their anxiety and reducing their confidence in the prison. The Board will monitor this closely in the coming year

The Board remains concerned about the impact of the budget reductions imposed on the Governor for 2012-13 and beyond. As the prison prepares for expansion to its full operational capacity, with reorganisation of its staffing structures, the Board is concerned that the on-going limitation on resources will continue to affect staff morale and lead to less satisfactory outcomes in the rehabilitation of prisoners, despite the best efforts of the Senior Management Team and staff to mitigate the effects. The Board continues to hold the view that these reductions are incompatible with the stated aims of the Prison Service and mean that offending behaviour cannot be addressed as meaningfully as it could be. Having commented in previous years as to the already unreasonably low amount allocated to the purchase of food, it is disappointing to be informed that this is to be reduced yet further.

"New Ways of Working" promises to produce greater efficiencies and more opportunities for prisoners but only if properly funded and resourced on an on-going basis. The IMB is concerned that the inward investment needed to make those efficiencies and savings sustainable, may not be forthcoming.

There have been no Deaths in Custody in this reporting period; however the Inquest into the death of a prisoner at Rochester in 2004 remains unresolved. An Inquest is now confirmed for September 2013, nine years after the death. The IMB consider this delay unacceptable.

The Board has serious concerns about drugs and contraband becoming much more freely available since the arrival of adult offenders; concerns which have also been repeatedly voiced to us by staff. Staff shortages have frequently reduced the number of cell searches and related activities, as security staff have had to cover other duties. The dog handlers are regularly used as general cover, with the dogs remaining in the kennels and not searching for contraband. The numbers of failed drug tests has risen to a disproportionately high level.

4.1 ISSUES REQUIRING A RESPONSE – POLICY

4.1.1 Purposeful Activity - "Prisoners are able and expected to engage in activity that is likely to benefit them".

The Board strongly urges the Secretary of State to ensure that a firm commitment is made, in line with Government policy, to provide the Prison with all the resources necessary to allow full time, high quality, purposeful activity to be provided in the shortest timeframe possible for all prisoners at Rochester. (See Sections 5.2 and 5.6)

4.1.2 Healthcare

The Board urges the Secretary of State to take action, with his colleagues in the Department of Health, to resolve the uncertainty surrounding the on-going provision of healthcare and the pharmacy service (See section 5.3).

4.1.3 IMB Board

The Board is concerned at the impending imminent loss of expertise due to a change in membership tenure regulations, which have been imposed by OCPA without consultation with Boards themselves. The Board urges the Secretary of State to urgently reconsider this action.

4.2 ISSUES REQUIRING A RESPONSE - OPERATIONAL

4.2.1 Population turnover

Statistics were not available from which to calculate the average length of stay of YO's. Previously this had increased marginally from 17 to 20 weeks – a welcome improvement, but more still needs to be done. It is difficult to be sure given the limited information available, but Category C prisoners, as expected, appear to be a more stable population.

The Board remains concerned about the prison's ability to address constructively, offending behaviour in young offenders and better prepare them for release, all the time the length of stay is so short. More must be done to reduce the rate of turnover. (See Section 5.7).

4.2.3 Security

The Board urges the Secretary of State to take action, to ensure that issues of security are adequately resourced and implemented. (See Section 6.6).

4.2.4 Property

Issues with gaining access to property for prisoners arriving at Rochester has been a continuous problem during the year and continues to be so. Officers are routinely taken from Reception to cover for staff shortages around the prison and the property issues continue. This is a problem which must be addressed.

4.2.5 New Wings

The Board wishes to be assured that sufficient resources will be made available during 2013/2014 to bring the whole prison into use and up to an equal standard across the whole site, which is not presently the case. The variation in the standard of the physical conditions between the 'new' and 'old' prison buildings continues to create tensions within the prison and is an unacceptable inequality. (See Section 6.2)

4.3 ISSUES OF CONCERN OR EXCELLENCE NOT REQUIRING A RESPONSE

4.3.1 Issues of Note

This has been a difficult year for the kitchen, with constraints on available funding, exacerbating an already problematic situation, compounded by staff shortages and the problem with the Halal and other meat "contamination".

The Board noted some deterioration in the quality of food in its report for 2011-12, when it challenged senior civil servants to feed themselves for a week on under £15. We note that that challenge has not been taken up. We remain of the view that catering staff cannot continue to provide good nutritional food, in adequate quantity, as required by Prison Rules, with ongoing reductions in budgets and strongly urge that reductions to the catering budget are reversed as a matter of priority.

The IMB National Conference in March 2013, passed an Emergency Motion as follows:

"This Conference urges NOMS to take urgent steps to improve the quality and quantity of food provided within the prisons, particularly in the light of recent events within the food industry and the earlier advice of the Prisons Minister to the link between food in prisons and the potential for riots. As independent monitors we consider the present level of funding for food to be inadequate, a potential cause of unrest and incompatible with the aim of treating prisoners with respect and dignity"

4.4 OVERALL JUDGEMENT

This report covers the period 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013.

The Board considers that HMP & YOI Rochester generally provides a safe and decent environment for prisoners, despite the challenges of reducing budgets and a protracted loss of new-build accommodation. Staff generally deal with the diverse population of offenders in their care, openly, sympathetically and effectively although there are a few prisoners whose needs are extremely difficult to meet.

The Board remains concerned about the impact of the short-term thinking behind the budget reductions imposed on the Governor for 2012-13 and beyond. As the prison prepares for "New Ways of Working", the Board is concerned that the on-going limitation on resources will continue to affect staff morale and lead to less satisfactory outcomes in the rehabilitation of prisoners, despite the best efforts of the Senior Management Team and staff to mitigate those effects. The Board continues to hold the view that these reductions are incompatible with the stated aims of the Prison Service and mean that offending behaviour cannot be addressed meaningfully. In 'benchmarking' the prison service at Rochester, the Governor must receive the financial support required to make the 'new ways of working' sustainable. The Board have serious concerns that the Government will require the prison to shed staff, whilst not providing the inward investment to meet the Prison Service objectives.

Section 5

AREAS THAT MUST BE REPORTED ON

5.1 Diversity

Managing diversity has continued to be a demanding, but well managed, challenge for the Institution. Across the whole prison population white prisoners are in a majority over BME prisoners (59%:41%). Category C white prisoners outnumber their BME counterparts by almost 4:1, whereas the proportions of white and BME young offenders continue to be almost equal. Adult prisoners comprise approximately half of the whole prison population, compared with one quarter in the last reporting year. During the year prisoners of more than 30 different nationalities were represented at any one time.

The Equality Action Team (EAT) demonstrates an effective partnership amongst specialists, Governors, officers and offenders, with open and constructive discussions between prisoners and staff taking place. Useful services are provided for prisoners who need them from the UK Border Agency, a Migrant Helpline is available and Applied Language Solutions giving prisoners' access to a telephone service to seek advice.

During the year 38 Racist Incidents were reported; 10 were prisoner against prisoner complaints; 8 were prisoner against staff; 1 staff against staff; 18 staff against prisoner and 1 'other'. All 38 were investigated by the EAT and of these 11 were proved and one remains open.

The Board notes that during the year BME prisoners have been marginally, but consistently, over-represented on Basic Regime, in the Segregation Unit on cellular confinement and on Good Order and Discipline; similarly for adjudications before the District Judge and closed visits. They have been slightly under-represented on the Resettlement Wing. Although these levels of BME representation are of some concern to the Board, they are generally recognised by staff and managed well.

5.2. Learning and Skills

From a previously unacceptable level of performance, the service provided by Manchester College is reported to have shown welcome improvement. Priority is given to numeracy and literacy at level 2, with level 1 numeracy and literacy the gateway to vocational training. Prisoners approaching release are offered an accredited employability package called 'Ready Steady Work'. All new prisoners are assessed with prior learning taken into account, so that an educational package can be prepared and a 4-week Functional Skills course has been introduced; more robust teaching observations are in place.

A diverse range of activities was offered throughout the year. These include practical skills such as construction, industrial cleaning, catering, and plumbing, most of which are recognised and accredited by City & Guilds, and integrated with Career Planning advice. A Stone Masonry Course has also been introduced – the first in the country and is already receiving plaudits for the quality of the work and for the successful 'graduation' of prisoners to appropriate training/employment on release.

Many of these services are newly contracted and the Board acknowledges the work that has been done to make improvements over the past year. We look forward to the availability of statistics to demonstrate the extent of improvements.

5.3 Healthcare

Despite an unsatisfactory and protracted re-commissioning process Healthcare staff continue to provide an excellent service and have coped well with the arrival of Category C adults,

many of whom have complex and difficult medical problems and the increasing pressures on them around administering drugs.

Alterations to the 'old' health care centre were not properly carried out so that further repair work was required within a few months. The Board is not satisfied that proper responsibility was taken to ensure that repairs were carried out to a satisfactory standard.

The Board has some concerns about the provision of externally sourced services, in particular dentistry, relating to waiting lists. The amount of dentistry provision has significantly reduced since the end of 2011 and this has had a direct impact on waiting lists. The dentist attends on average 2-3 sessions (half-days) per week. However some weeks have no sessions, resulting in cancellation of appointments. There is also a high "no-show rate" by prisoners. However, staff consider the waiting list to be manageable, at 4-5 weeks, and within the 'reasonable' waiting list expectations for non-emergency dentistry services within the local community, which is reportedly to be about 6 weeks.

Whilst prisoners are waiting for appointments, they are administered pain relief where appropriate. This however increases the amount of drugs circulating in the prison. Whilst the Board acknowledges that measures have been taken to address the problem of waiting lists, more needs to be done.

There have been difficulties in providing Escorts for Hospital Appointments resulting in around 60 cancellations in the first quarter of 2013. The Board is concerned that this problem may become worse as staff numbers are reduced. Alternative arrangements must be made to provide this service, without the need to disrupt other areas of the prison.

5.4 Safer Custody

The Safer Custody team worked hard to ensure high standards of care throughout the prison and over the year has continued with an improved Violence Reduction scheme, with a Special Support service for victims and an intensive counselling and training scheme for repeat offenders. This has led to a reduction in the number of prisoners requiring segregation and the use of the ACCT scheme.

There have been no Deaths in Custody in this reporting period. Last year, the Board was pleased to be advised that the inquest into the death of a prisoner at Rochester in 2004 had been opened by the Mid-Kent & Medway Coroner, although it was immediately adjourned at the request of the family. An Inquest is now confirmed for September 2013, nine years after the death. The Board considers this delay unacceptable.

5.5 Segregation

The Segregation Unit has been managed very efficiently and effectively by two capable Senior Officers and a team of officers, all of whom dealt properly and sympathetically with the prisoners housed there. Many of the prisoners in the unit were difficult or disturbed. The Board monitors this area closely, and regularly attended Governors' and Independent Adjudications, and Good Order and Discipline reviews. All reviews and adjudications attended were considered to be dealt with carefully, fairly and appropriately.

The Board has welcomed the reduction in the number of prisoners in the unit, mainly because disciplinary actions, particularly the Violence Reduction Scheme, have been taken in Wings rather than using segregation as a first-resort action. The Board notes however that a common approach to problem prisoners is to transfer them out, rather than dealing with the issues directly. We are pleased to note that steps are being taken to address this.

The Board is concerned that several prisoners were held in the Segregation Unit for too long, but recognises that often in such cases no viable alternative is available. The Board does what it can to support and encourage staff in finding solutions.

5.6 Purposeful Activity

This is an area of the prison work where there has been an observable upward trend over the last year, but which nonetheless has considerably room for improvement. During the previous reporting year, each prisoner was reported to engage in excess of 25 hours of purposeful activity per week. However, the Board notes that no statistic was available to support what is believed to be an increase in the time spent out of cells in the current reporting year and 'purposeful' was used to define any out of cell activities. It is the Board's view that data should be collected and reported in order to be meaningful and it does not accept that simply not being "locked-up" in a cell constitutes a "purposeful activity". It follows that purposeful activity remains inadequate. The facilities available are also not always suitable for Category C prisoners, and much of the work available is of a very low level and quality, offering little in terms of gaining skills.

The current less than ideal position can only deteriorate as the population increases, unless more, and better quality work, is provided. The Board acknowledges, and welcomes, the efforts that have been made to secure new contracts and expand existing ones – the introduction of the electrical re-cycling workshop, a planned light engineering contract to occupy around 30 prisoners, and maybe more; the stone-masonry apprentice workshop to expand to take up to 15, and expansions of brick-laying and plumbing are anticipated, with further opportunities being explored. However, without significant investment in buildings, subject to the availability of space, there is a limit on how much new activity can be accommodated.

'Changing Paths' has been brought into partnership with the prison. This is a joint-funded Social Enterprise/Charity project between the Prison, Wates Giving, and Kent Probation, with support from the Gallagher Group of companies, by way of quarried materials. Changing Paths provides Mentoring; Life Skills training to people awaiting release; work experience placements; technical training (in conjunction with employer needs); paid sustainable employment opportunities; and apprenticeships and up-skilling to improve individual job prospects. This proposes to be a life-changing opportunity for prisoners and the prison management are to be commended for establishing and accommodating this prospect. The Board will continue to monitor this innovative scheme with interest.

5.7 Population Turnover

The separate parts of the Institution's prisoner population, young offenders and Category C adults, turned over at different rates. Unfortunately statistics are not available to quantify this change. The Board would like to see an increase in the length of stay, especially for young offenders, such that they have time to benefit from the education and work-related opportunities as they increase.

The Board's previous concerns about the prison's ability to constructively address offending behaviour in young offenders, and better prepare them for release, are repeated. More effort must be made to reduce the rate of turnover, and we repeat our previous view that prisoners should not be sent to Rochester with only a short length of their sentence left to serve.

The situation for Category C prisoners appears to be very much more stable, and this is welcomed.

5.8 Property

Issues with gaining access to property for prisoners arriving at Rochester has been a continuous problem during the year and continues to be so. The realisation that adult prisoners have their own clothes and therefore need access to these immediately following arrival (where YOs previously wore uniform) seems not to have received the priority attention that it was due. As an integrated Adult/YO prison, the backlog now includes a high proportion of YOs. Officers are routinely taken from Reception, to cover for staff shortages around the prison and the property issues continue. Prisoners have complained that it can take months for them to access their property and this is reflected in a very high increase in applications to the Board. This is a problem which must be addressed.

Section 6

OTHER AREAS OF THE PRISON REGIME ON WHICH THE BOARD HAS ISSUES/OBSERVATIONS TO REPORT

6.1 Change

In this first full year, adult prisoners found that facilities enjoyed in their previous establishments, and the additional facilities promised, such as preparation for category D and re-settlement preparation for release, were not fully available to them. Despite progress being made to address them, some deficiencies remain, especially in relation to purposeful activity and preparation for Category D. This is further compounded by the lack of available Cat D places regionally.

The Board considers that the distinction made by the Prison Service between adults (21+) and young offenders (18-21) simply on the basis of age, is entirely artificial; many 18 year olds are adults already (and some 40+year olds have not matured). Removal of this distinction would allow the possibility for the establishment to become, in effect, single role again, remove any remaining differentiation between the categories of prisoners, and provide the Governor greater flexibility in the utilisation of increasingly scarce resources.

Staff have often been moved from their familiar areas of work to cover immediate needs, sometimes to the detriment of the positive and beneficial relationship that can, and should develop between officers and the prisoners in their care. Staff often report their weekly 'detail' to lack any apparent logic and to seriously inhibit their ability to create positive influences. This is especially true of Reception.

The Board is aware that the MoJ budget will continue to decrease over the next three years and repeats its concern that the on-going limitations on resources must inevitably affect staff morale and lead to less satisfactory outcomes for the rehabilitation of prisoners. "New Ways of Working", seeks to address the need for financial efficiencies but there are areas where further reductions cannot reasonably be sustained.

6.2 New Wings

The Board reported a far from satisfactory position last year, since when the situation has improved slightly. Since the middle of 2010 a rolling 60 of the 300 new spaces have been unavailable. The most optimistic forecast is that all repairs will now be completed by mid-2013, by which time the shortage of 60 spaces will have lasted for 3+ years - a shocking waste of public funds.

H Wing has undergone significant change during the period of this report, having moved from being a dedicated adult wing to become a much larger 're-settlement' wing. This transition was not problem free, with an initial and arguably inappropriate, relaxation of the eligibility criteria for 're-settlement'. However this was almost inevitable given the increase in resettlement beds now to be filled, plus population pressures, along with the integration of adults and young offenders. These issues appear to have been successfully addressed in the main, with the wing now settled into its new role. The Board is concerned that, with a population of 120, there is insufficient appropriate activity to properly fulfil the 're-settlement' brief.

During the reporting year four Wings have been fitted with in-cell telephones, the introduction of which appears to have been beneficial and relatively problem free. In-cell phones will be installed in all Wings during the next year. However, the remaining considerable variation in the standard of the physical conditions between the 'new' and 'old' prison buildings continues

to create tensions within the prison and is an unacceptable inequality, a situation the Board anticipated in previous reports was likely to arise.

6.3 Kitchen/Catering

This has been another difficult year for the kitchen, with constraints on available funding, exacerbating an already problematic situation, compounded by staff shortages and the problem with Halal and other meat "contamination". Kitchen staff are concerned about the impact on them of Fair and Sustainable.

Despite these problems, the kitchen staff have striven, with some considerable success, to deliver nutritional meals. The Board has noted a deterioration in quality and choice, which is almost inevitable given the funding and supplier constraints operated within.

The Board noted some deterioration in the quality of food in its report for 2011-12, when it challenged senior civil servants to feed themselves for a week on under £15 a challenge which we note was not taken up. We remain of the view that catering staff cannot continue to provide good nutritional food, in adequate quantity, as required by Prison Rules, with ongoing reductions in budgets and strongly urge that reductions to the catering budget are reversed as a matter of priority.

There were only 6 applications received from prisoners on food, following zero last year. Despite the increase, this is not statistically significant, when considered against the approximately 680,000 meals prepared.

6.4 Reception and Induction

Reception and Induction is a critical time for new arrivals and the processes they undergo are not always as supportive as they might be. Many of the issues are seemingly minor and result from the difficulties emerging from fewer staff trying to maintain standards, further exacerbated by Reception staff frequently being taken away from their role, to fill other requirements around the prison. Staff morale has been especially low here. The Board will monitor closely whether this improves as New Ways of Working comes into effect.

Property issues have been significant, with rules being introduced that were unreasonably tortuous and protracted, as well as confusing to staff and prisoners alike. There have been changes and some improvement discerned in the latter part of the year.

The Board has concerns about the quality and value of the current Induction process. It appears to involve 'headings' on a screen, which are then read out to new prisoners. It seems unlikely that prisoners remember much of this information, if any. We are aware of serious and misleading information presented about the IMB, which we have asked to be corrected. We cannot be certain that similar errors are not replicated concerning other prison information.

6.5 Visits/Visits Centre:

The booking of visits has continued to be made somewhat easier by the use of e-mails requests. Take-up of available places at visits has generally been high. There have been some instances of incorrect addresses being included in visiting orders (VO), but they seem to be attributable to teething problems with a new computer system, specifically where addresses have changed since the issue of a previous VO.

The provision of tea-bar facilities for visits throughout the year has been beset with problems. The facility was closed following detection of pilfering of stock. It re-opened using catering

staff, but staff shortages resulted in it being closed again for extended periods. During periods of closure reliance was placed on unreliable vending machines, with no facility for prison staff to open them to deal with failures to deliver items paid for or deliver correct change and so on. The service has now been taken over by a charity provider (Changing Paths), and in the short period of operation appears to be delivering a well-received service.

6.6 Security

The Board has serious concerns about drugs and contraband becoming much more freely available since the arrival of adult offenders, concerns that have also been repeatedly voiced to us by staff. Staff shortages have frequently reduced the number of cell searches and related activities, as security staff have had to cover other duties. The dog handlers are regularly used as general cover, with the dogs remaining in the kennels and not searching for contraband.

Mobile telephones, drugs and other unauthorised items are still recovered but on the basis of intelligence-led information, rather than routine search. Checks on visitors have become progressively intelligence led and consequently deemed to be more cost effective. However finds of contraband amongst visitors have not increased significantly, suggesting that either searches of visitors are less effective or that the items are coming in by other means. During the year the number of finds of illegal drugs rose to 25 from 13, and the number of 'finds' of mobile phones rose from 3 to 69. At 169, the numbers of failed drug tests has risen very significantly. This represents an increase from a less than 1% failure rate as a dedicated YOI, to currently in excess of 20%.

As drugs and mobile telephones become more accessible, the risk of serious issues arising becomes much greater. The Board is of the view that much more needs to be done to reduce the supply of contraband into the prison and to prevent its use and distribution in the prison by increased searching by dogs and the criminal prosecution of those found to be supplying and possessing contraband.

The South London gang culture among YOs has reduced to the point of seeming non-existence. Assuming that the sentencing policy has not changed, this can be assumed to be a positive product of having adult prisoners on site and the subsequent 'dispersal' of YOs around the prison.

6.7 Works

The Works department experienced high demands placed on it by both Rochester and HMYOI Cookham Wood, compounded by continuing shortages of skilled staff. The fabric of the prison as a whole continues to be maintained at lower levels than previously delivered, with the inevitable focus on addressing essential work. The Board is concerned that over time the overall state of the fabric of buildings will deteriorate such that it will either result in significant future repair costs, or require prisoners to live, and staff to work, in sub-standard accommodation, or both.

B Wing was shut for a number of months for major refurbishment of the plumbing. The opportunity to increase the number of showers from 3 per landing (6 for 120 men) was missed as was the installation washing machines and much needed WC privacy screens.

6.8 Freeflow

Offenders are no longer searched on leaving the wings and the number of staff supervising free-flow has been reduced. This is in line with the greater freedom of movement and has to date not resulted in an increase in incidents. Whilst the Board supports this change, there is a risk that it could be an element in facilitating the passing of contraband between prisoners.

Section 7

THE WORK OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

The Board, which has a complement capped at 20 members, began and ended the year with 17 members. During the year 3 Members retired and three new Members joined the Board. Further losses to Board Membership are anticipated in 2013/14. A recruitment campaign is scheduled to take place in May 2013 but the Board is concerned at the impending loss of expertise due to a change in conditions of IMB tenure.

All statutory visits and visits to Areas of Special Interest (ASI) have been undertaken and reports made to the Board. Observations are also passed to operational staff and frequently result in actions to improve/correct the situation. All members attend committees and provide reports on their areas of concern. Although the overall Board membership has been stable throughout the year more than half of members have less than three years' experience.

The Board Development Officer arranged several in-house training sessions before Board meetings. Members have also attended Institution run training, as required, to support their roles and two members attended the Annual Conference in March 2013

The Board's relationship with the staff and Senior Management Team has remained good and we express our gratitude to them for their open and willing support. However, increasingly, as other regime changes have taken priority, the Board has receive progressively less information and involvement in 'serious incidents', often finding out about such incidents, long after the event. Fortuitously, these 'serious incidents', have not, so far, been of a severity which required the Boards immediate attendance on site. This is in the process of correction. The Board must however insist on being informed of all Serious Incidents at the earliest opportunity.

BOARD STATISTICS	
Number of Board meetings held	12
Recommended Complement of Board Members	20
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	17
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	17
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	3
Number of members leaving within the reporting period	3
Number of attendances at meetings other than Board meetings	118
Total number of (half day equivalent) visits to the prison (including meetings)	607
Total number of applications received	562
Total Number of GOOD and OR segregations (IMB figures)	157
Total number of segregation GOOD & OR reviews held* (IMB figures)	173
Total number of segregation GOOD & OR reviews attended by IMB (IMB figures)	105

* not all GOOD or OR segregations result in a review, whilst a number had more than one review.

Application Statistics

Code	Subject	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	change	% change
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A	Accommodation	14	16	41	+25	+156%^
B	Adjudications	10	28	19	-9	-32%
C	Diversity related	3	6	4	-2	-33%
D	Education/employment/training	30	56	71	+15	+27%^
E	Family/visits	29	38	38	0	0
F	Food/kitchen related	5	0	6	+6	+600%*
G	Health related	24	16	39	+23	+144%^
H	Property	65	66	132	+66	+100%^
I	Sentence related	67	41	110	+69	+168%^
J	Staff/prisoner related	10	9	15	+6	+67%^
K	Transfers	15	23	26	+3	+13%
L	Miscellaneous	39	35	96	+61	+174%^
	Total number of application categories (the number of applications received is lower as an application can cover more than one category)	311	334	597[^]	+263[^]	+79%[^]

[^] Very significant Increase

* Not statistically significant

The number of Applications to the Board increased very considerably. The increase in sentence related Applications reflects the first full year following the arrival of Category C Adult prisoners. Many of the Cat C prisoners, upon gaining Cat D status and anticipating transfer to Cat D facilities, found that places were not available. With all the changes which have occurred, the increase may also (speculatively) be a symptom of less continuity in the Personal Officer relationship with prisoners, especially in Miscellaneous Applications, many of which could/should have been very easily addressed by staff.

There was a significant increase in the number of Applications about Health related issues, possibly reflecting the health concerns of an older prisoner population. The continuing practice of GPs prescribing addictive medication to their Patients creates problems in the prison environment, where such medications become 'Prison Currency' and are the catalyst for prisoners being pressurised for their drugs.

Issues with gaining access to property for prisoners arriving at Rochester has been a continuous problem during the year and continues to be so. This is a problem which needs addressing.

Education/employment/training, which last year appeared to mirror the initial dissatisfaction of adult prisoners, seems to have improved (or settled into an accepted pattern).

The fall in Applications concerning adjudications (following the previous year's increase) is a welcome sign, supported by the Board's observations that adjudications are carried out fairly

and without bias.

On behalf of the Board

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Godfrey E Featherstone". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "G".

Godfrey E Featherstone
Chairman

June 2013

Section 8

GLOSSARY OF PRISON-RELATED ABBREVIATIONS USED

(Note – not all terms have been used in this report)

ABS Anti-Bullying System	NOMS National Offender Manager Service – amalgamation of the Prison & Probation Services
ACCT Assessment, Care in Custody & Teamwork – replacement for F2052SH	OASYS Offender Assessment System – computerised risk & needs assessment
ACR Automatic Conditional Release	OBP Offending Behaviour Programme
ARD Automatic Release Date	OCA Observation, Classification & Allocations – a Reception task
ATOS Company responsible for assessing long-term sick	OLASS Offender Learning and Skills Service (part of LSC)
BCU Briefing and Casework Unit – PS unit handling adjudication appeals	OSG Operational Support Grade
BME Black & Minority Ethnic	OI/OR/OP Own Interests/Request/Protection – Segregation under Rule 45/49
C & R Control & Restraint	PASRO Prisons Addressing Substance-Related Offending – an OBP
C2W, CTW Custody to Work – pre-release focus on housing, employment and lifestyle issues	PCT Primary Care Trust – National Health component responsible for healthcare
CARATS Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice & Throughcare Scheme – drug & alcohol team	PEI/O Physical Education Instructor/Officer
CC Cellular Confinement – a punishment	PESO/PEPO Physical Education Senior/Principal Officer
CCD Criminal Casework Department (Croydon)	PIN Prisoner Information Notice
CLAIT Computer Literacy and Information Technology	PMU Population Management Unit (central)
CCT Criminal Casework Team (part of Home Office Immigration & Nationalities Dept)	PO Principal Officer
CMU Case Management Unit – work on sentence planning & progress	POA Prison Officers' Association – the main trade union
CNA Certified Normal Accommodation	POELT Prison Officer Entry Level Trainee
CRD Conditional Release Date	POPO Prolific and Other Priority Offender
CSH Contracted Service Hours (pre-agreed paid overtime)	PPO Prisons and Probation Ombudsman
CSU Commissioning Support Unit	PPP Public Protection Panel
DASU Drug And Alcohol Support Unit	PS Prison Service
DH Dog Handler	PSI Prison Service Instruction
EDR Earliest Date of Release	PSO Prison Service Order – see hmprisonservice.gov.uk/resourcecentre/psispsos/listpsos
EMU Estates Management Unit	RFW Removal from Wing – a punishment
EPDG Estates Planning & Development Group	ROAD Remission of Added Days (up to 50%)
EGP Ex Gratia Payment	ROM Regional Offender Manager
ETA Employment & Training Allocation	ROR Restoration of Remission – now ROAD; Risk of Reconviction
ETE Employment/Training/Education	ROTL Release on Temporary Licence e.g. to work in mess; town visits; home leave
ETS Enhanced Thinking Skills – an OBP	RRA Assistant to the RRLO

F2050 Prisoner's basic record	RRLO Race Relations Liaison officer
F2052A Prisoner's wing record	SAU Standards Audit Unit
FLED Facility Licence Eligibility Date (when prisoner may be considered for ROTL)	SCG Safer Custody Group
FOCUS Financial Outstations and Central Unified Systems – the PS accounting system	SED Sentence Expiry Date
GOOD Good Order or Discipline – Segregation under Rule 45/49 (historically GOAD)	SIN Staff Information Notice
HCC Health Care Centre	SIR Security Information Report
HDC Home Detention Curfew – the Tag	SLA Service Level Agreement
HDCED Earliest Date of Release on HDC	SMARG Segregation and Monitoring Review Group
HMCIP Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons	SMT Senior Management Team
IDU Inmate Development Unit	SO Senior Officer
IEP Incentives and Earned Privileges – Prisoners can be on Basic, Standard or Enhanced	TCF Temporary Custodial Facility
IG Instruction to Governors	TOIL Time Off in Lieu (of payment)
IMB Independent Monitoring Board	TSU Technical Support Unit – part of PS responsible for repairs/installation (“Works”)
IND Immigration & Nationality Directorate (part of the Home Office)	VDT Voluntary Drugs Testing
JSA Job-Seekers Allowance	VO Visiting Order – sent out by prisoners; allows named people to visit
KPI/KPT Key Performance Indicator/Target	VTC Vocational Training Centre
LDR Latest Date of Release	
LED Licence Expiry Date	
LIDS Local Inmate Database System – IMB can use this to check location, dates, etc.	
LSC Learning & Skills Council	
MAPPA Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements	Gold Commander – Headquarters controller for serious incidents
MDT Mandatory Drugs Testing	Silver Commander – Person in establishment in charge of serious incidents
MSL Minimum Staffing Level	Bronze Commander – Local Sub Commander for serious incidents
MQPL Measuring the Quality of Prison Life	Operation Tornado – System to provide extra staff and resources for serious incidents