



**INDEPENDENT
MONITORING BOARD
HMP & YOI ROCHESTER**

**ANNUAL REPORT
2013-2014**

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

CONTENTS

SECTION	TITLE	PAGE
Section 1	STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB	2
Section 2	CONTENTS	3
Section 3	DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON	4
Section 4	4.1 - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5 - 6
	4.2 - OVERALL JUDGEMENT	6
	4.3 - ISSUES REQUIRING A RESPONSE	7 - 8
	4.4 - PREVIOUS YEAR'S CONCERNS	8
Section 5	5.1 - EQUALITY AND INCLUSION	9
	5.2 - EDUCATION, LEARNING & SKILLS	9
	5.3 - HEALTHCARE AND MENTAL HEALTH	9 - 10
	5.4 - SAFER CUSTODY	10
	5.5 - SEGREGATION	10 - 11
	5.6 - PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY and time out of Cell	11 - 12
	5.7 - RESIDENTIAL SERVICES	12
	5.7.1 Kitchen and Catering	
	5.7.2 Accommodation	12 - 13
Section 6	OTHER AREAS OF THE PRISON REGIME ON WHICH THE BOARD HAS ISSUES/ OBSERVATIONS TO REPORT	14 - 16
Section 7	THE WORK OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD	17 - 29
Section 8	GLOSSARY OF PRISON-RELATED ABBREVIATIONS USED	20 - 21

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 fully 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 five wings on the 'old' site, and a further four wings on the 'new' site. The Segregation Unit is located on the 'old' site. '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 the prison's CNA is 742. One wing is still undergoing planned refurbishment with a temporary loss of 60 spaces (excluded from CNA). It is anticipated that all wings will become operational during 2014. During the reporting year one wing on the old site was brought back into use; despite having been closed for many years, it was brought into use quite suddenly at the turn of the year as a Drug Recovery wing, the therapeutic input being provided by RAPT (Recovery of Addicted Prisoners Trust).

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 range of industries and activities. These include industrial cleaning, brick-laying, plumbing, computing, garden work, recycling, and contract services and stone masonry. The kitchen is also able to run courses. Some of the activities offer recognised qualifications, particularly within the construction industry.

Physical well-being is catered for through physical education at two well-run gymnasiums, offering competitive and recreational activities.

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

Section 4

4.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We reported last year that "the only 'constant' had been change" and the ramifications of this has continued into the current reporting year. It has caused, and continues to cause, anxieties and uncertainties, for prisoners and staff alike. It appears to this Board that the effect of change, in its own right, is grossly underestimated by Central Government and that greater emphasis needs to be placed on allowing the prison management and staff adequate time and resources for change.

This Report covers the period April 2013 to March 2014 during which time there has been a rapid assimilation by the prison of the changes imposed upon it. The Board recognises the efforts of the Governor and the Senior Management Team to apply themselves to their 'duty of care', with regard to staff management. Over the period covered this has shown increasing signs of success, creating greater stability, in what were initially very trying circumstances.

The Prison was an early adopter of the benchmarking efficiency arrangements, later referred to as "New Ways of Working" (NWoW). The efficacy of these changes, appeared to the Board, to be mainly financial and gave little thought to the price paid, at all levels, in staff uncertainty and periodic low morale for staff and prisoners alike. To some extent this is to be expected in a period of change but in a prison context, the uncertainty of a new regime translates through to the prisoners, increasing their anxiety and reducing their confidence in the prison. By way of example, an area of previous excellence in Rochester was the Segregation Unit, which has become an area of concern for the IMB within the reporting year and is we believe a 'victim' of the NWoW. Although the staff numbers have not changed there was a loss of senior and experienced staff. The kind of skills required in this specialist area cannot be assimilated in a short space of time, especially as little or no additional training was made available.

The IMB thoroughly supports the inclusion of a Drug Recovery unit into the service provided by the prison but again feels that the seeming rush to establish it, into a building not previously used as an accommodation wing of the new size, with poor security considerations and no staff training for working with a distinct group of prisoners, was an unnecessary additional burden on the prison. At the date of reporting, it is believed that RAPT have now completed their recruitment of specialist drugs workers, over three months after the wing was opened. Routine training for Officers is still not available.

The Board remains concerned about the impact of yet further budget reductions imposed on the Prison (2013 -2014). 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. Having commented in previous years as to the already unreasonably low amount allocated to the purchase of food, it is disappointing to be ignored for a further year.

"New Ways of Working" promised greater efficiencies and more opportunities for prisoners. The IMB continues to be concerned that the inward investment needed to make those efficiencies and savings sustainable may not be forthcoming and the greatest potential saving, prisoners not returning to the Courts after release, continues to be put aside in favour of short-term financial gains. Despite the best efforts of the prison, purposeful activity is still not available for all of the prison population and some of the present provision is menial and in 'make-shift' work areas, which are of poor quality as a working environment.

The Board has serious concerns about drugs and other contraband becoming much more

freely available since the arrival of adult offenders; concerns which have also been repeatedly voiced to us by staff. Lack of action from the Police and Crown Prosecution Service has continued to negate the considerable efforts of the Prison to deter serving prisoners from committing further offences within the prison walls. The numbers of failed drug tests has recently improved from the previous disproportionately high level. (See Section 6.5)

The Board is concerned at the impending imminent loss of experience and expertise, within the IMB, due to a seemingly random change in IMB membership tenure regulations, which have been imposed by OCPA without consultation on the potential impact with individual Boards. At a time when the numbers of IMB Members is falling nationally, the Board urges the Secretary of State to urgently reconsider (or even adequately explain) this action.

4.2 Overall Judgement

The Board considers that HMP & YOI Rochester generally provides a safe and decent environment for prisoners. For the most part staff 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 within a prison environment.

As the prison enters the second year of "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, this despite the best efforts of the Senior Management Team and staff to mitigate those effects. The Board continues to hold the view that the reductions previously imposed 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. Currently the overall effect of the staff changes has left the prison with little or no flexibility to respond to the (normal) day to day trials created by a minority of prisoners, with many relatively minor incidents having a punishing knock-on effect to the detriment of the majority. The Board has serious concerns that the Government does not intend to provide the inward investment to meet the Prison Service objectives, particularly with regard to rehabilitation. The Board urges the Secretary of State to ensure adequate, appropriate and consistent staffing of the prison. Throughout the Report reference is made to difficulties being experienced by the prison and these being directly attributable to staffing inadequacies and/or lack of purposeful activity.

The Board remains 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. (See 5.7.1)

The Board urges the Secretary of State to take action to ensure that issues of security are responded to by the Police and CPS. There has been marked increase in the discovery of contraband, particularly in the form of drugs and mobile telephones. The Board welcomes the re-introduction of the use of dogs which has contributed to this but is disappointed to report that, during the reporting year, the attitude of the police and the CPS in dealing with offenders who commit criminal offences in prison, whether it be smuggling/possession of prohibited items, or assaults on staff or prisoners, has been less than positive, with few cases taken forward for prosecution. It is the Board's view that criminal acts committed in prison by prisoners should be treated in the same way as criminal acts committed in the community. Failure to do so by the police and CPS could possibly be construed as neglect of their duty, and must be addressed. (See Section 6.4).

4.3 ISSUES REQUIRING A RESPONSE

4.3.1 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. It is the view of the Board that by far the greatest 'savings' are to be made, not by reducing budgets or staffing levels (including reducing the proportion of experienced senior staff) but by equipping prisoners for life outside of prison and reducing the likelihood of their return. Having stripped the staff roll to the operational minimum, staff vacancies and sickness are having a significant detrimental effect on the effectiveness of prison activities, which tend to be the area from which staff are drawn in the event of unscheduled demands, such as escort duties. The Board believe this to be a false economy. (See Sections 5.6)

4.3.2 Illicit Drugs and Other Contraband

The Board has grave concerns about the increased discovery of illicit drugs and other contraband, such as mobile phones, that are available to prisoners, despite the endeavours of staff to stem the flow. The Board strongly urges that measures are taken to strengthen the resources available to reduce the flow of such contraband into the prisoner, and that the police and CPS are instructed to take a robust line in prosecuting attempts to smuggle contraband into the prison and criminal activities detected within the prison, with the default position being to prosecute where there is sufficient evidence to do so. (See section 6.4).

4.3.3 Healthcare

The Board strongly urges the Secretary of State to ensure that adequate staffing is made available for prisoners to attend outside health appointments, without stripping the prison of normal operational staff. The lack of available prison staff for escort duties to outside appointments is impacting seriously on the ability of prisoners to attend appointments and, when staff are drawn from other areas of the prison, results negatively upon that area. (See section 5.3).

4.3.4 Segregation

There has been a deterioration of standards in Segregation over the period of this report, from the previous position of excellence. This has been compounded by the significantly increased use of Segregation, especially for O/R (Own Request, or Own Protection) and GOOD (Good Order or Discipline). The Board is very concerned about this significant increase, and in particular the number of prisoners requesting to be segregated for their own protection. To a great extent this fall in standards is, in the view of the Board, due to staffing issues; with many staff detailed to work in Segregation with no prior experience or understanding of the specialist nature of the unit's work. The Board welcomes signs of improvement in the later part of the year and will keep a close watch on how this progresses. The Board strongly urges the Secretary of State to ensure that priority consideration is given to the appropriate staffing of specialist services within the prison, whereby the loss of one key member of staff does not cause any area of the prison to struggle. (See Section 5.3/5.5/5.6)

4.3.5. New Wings/Inequality of Accommodation Standards

The Board wishes to draw attention to the matter raised in previous years, to be assured that sufficient resources will be made available during 2014/2015 to bring the whole prison into use and up to an equal standard of accommodation 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 5.7.2)

4.3.6 Kitchen and Catering

As raised in previous years (and supported by the IMB National Conference) this has been another difficult year for the kitchen, with severe constraints on available funding, exacerbating an already problematic situation. It is regretted that the implementation of a monopolistic contract with the supplier '3663' has further reduced the ability of individual prisons to control costs.

The Board has noted continued deterioration in the quality and quantity of food. In its report for 2011-12, and again in 2012 - 2013 it challenged senior civil servants to feed themselves for a week on under £15. 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.

In March 2014 the IMB National Conference passed a motion from this Board as follows:

This conference, whilst recognising the need for efficiency and economy,

- a) notes that Prison Rules (section 24(2) state 'the food provided shall be wholesome, nutritious, well prepared and served, reasonably varied and sufficient in quantity');*
- b) deplores the reduction in catering budgets to such low levels (e.g. less than £2 person per day in many prisons) that the quality and quantity of food provided no longer meet the standards required under Prison Rules 24(2)*
- c) requests/urges the Minister/NOMS to review the budget as well as the methods of sourcing food so that prisoners may be provided sufficient amounts of good quality food.*

The Board awaits with interest a response to this serious matter (See Section 5.7.1)

4.4 PREVIOUS YEAR'S CONCERNS

This report covers the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014.

Throughout this Report reference is made to concerns expressed in previous years. These include:

- Loss of experienced staff - The prison, having offered voluntary redundancy to a significant number of experienced staff, is now experiencing difficulties in recruiting to fill a shortfall in staffing. This would appear very short-sighted.
- Food Budget - incompatible with Prison Rules 24(2). National Conference Motion 2013 and 2014
- Reduction in Prison Budget - incompatible with stated aims of long-term rehabilitation.
- Increase in discovery of Contraband - failure by Police and Crown Prosecution Service to support the prison in tackling illegal acts by prisoners and others.
- Lack of available training for change - the speed and manner in which changes are required by Central Government, take little or no consideration of the duty of care to staff and the consequent effect on prisoners.
- Lack of Investment towards rehabilitation - real and substantial savings could be made if resources were put behind reducing the 'rate of return' of prisoners by equipping them for life in society outside of prison.

Section 5

5.1 Equality and Inclusion

Over the past 12 months, staff changes and reductions have adversely affected the outward signs of Diversity and Equality. Meetings are frequently cancelled, or dates changed at the last minute. What were previously monthly meetings are now held at 3-monthly intervals (if not cancelled).

Managing diversity has continued to be a demanding, but well managed, challenge for the prison. Across the prison's population, white prisoners are now in a majority over BME prisoners (approximately 59%:41%). Adult white prisoners outnumber their BME counterparts by over 3:1, whereas the proportions of white and BME young offenders are almost equal. Adult prisoners comprise approximately two-thirds of the prison's population, compared with half in the last reporting year. During the year prisoners of more than 25 different nationalities were represented.

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 (albeit reduced on a formal level). 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 37 Racist Incidents were reported as against 38 last year; 4 were prisoner against prisoner complaints; 28 were prisoner against staff; 5 staff against prisoner. All 38 were investigated by the EAT and of these 6 were proved and 9 remain open.

There has been a change in the manner of dealing with complaints of discrimination. Custody Managers now receive the DIRF and conduct the initial complaint rather than referring straight to the discrimination officer.

5.2. Education, Learning and Skills

From a previously unacceptable level of performance, the education service provided is showing welcome improvement. Allocation rates for provided education classes has risen to approximately 90%, but with attendance rates at only 79% of allocation (or around 65% of potentially available spaces). This represents a considerable under-usage of the education places, at a time when there continues to be a significant shortfall in purposeful activity places overall. Clearly more needs to be done to ensure that prisoners attend education classes/facilities to which they are allocated, and all available spaces are fully taken-up.

Reviews of service delivery have indicated improving standards, but not on a consistent basis – improvements in areas have revealed deficiencies in others, with improvements in success rates and in retention. Whilst the direction of travel is in the right direction, more needs to be done, such as improving attendance levels, the quality of learning delivered, the focus of learning plans and the provision of learning in workshops etc, to fully address the OFSTED recommendations made at the start of 2013.

A change to “payment by result” during 2014-15 will be a significant challenge, and the Board hopes that the prison and the education service provider will rise to it and ensure that more prisoners take full advantage of the learning facilities available.

5.3 Healthcare and Mental Health

Despite an unsatisfactory and protracted re-commissioning process Healthcare staff continued to provide an excellent service. Compared to young offenders, a disproportionate number of

adults have complex and difficult medical problems and there are increasing pressures on staff concerning the administration of prescription drugs.

Difficulties were experienced during the year in providing a consistent level of dental services. Waiting times for a "check-up" appointment were variable throughout the year, with waiting times of up to eight weeks experienced. Delays in providing appointments were compounded by equipment difficulties and external treatment referrals. It is hoped that the matter will improve in the coming year under the new healthcare provider.

The increasing availability of contraband 'Spice' (type) drugs has created problems for Healthcare and the prison in general. Because of the unknown content of Spice, it is difficult to know what is being dealt with. Fitting, breathlessness, and psychotic behaviour, has made it difficult to deal with Spice users. They are often referred to hospital but are very difficult to take to A&E due to their often bizarre behaviour and inability to describe what is happening to them. Since these concoctions are sometimes taken with other drugs, prescribed and illegal, the prison has been fortunate that no deaths have occurred.

Difficulties in providing escorts for outside appointments have increased resulting in more than 109 cancellations by the prison between June 2013 and February 2014. This compares with 65 cancellations by prisoners and 52 cancelled by the receiving services during the same period. In some months the number of cancellations by the prison exceeded 50% of the total number of appointments, and in June 2013 no outside appointments were attended of 41 appointments scheduled. This unacceptable situation incurs considerable cost to the NHS and could have very significant impact on the health of prisoners. Measures need to be taken to ensure that appointments are met, with sufficient staff detailed to make this happen but without degrading the regime for other prisoners. The major contributor to this situation would appear to be the level of staff sickness (reduced over the year but still high) and staff vacancies.

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 the improved Violence Reduction scheme. Regrettably this has not led to a reduction in the number of prisoners requiring segregation and the use of the ACCT scheme. We believe this is a product of higher numbers of prisoners with greater and multiple complex needs entering the prison.

There have been no Deaths in Custody in this reporting period.

5.5 Segregation

In the view of the Board, there has been a deterioration of standards in Segregation over the period of this report, but with improvements towards the end of the year. Some staff have been detailed to work in Segregation with no experience or understanding of the specialist nature of the unit's work. The provision of any available member of staff to fill a detail slot in Segregation does not work, nor should Segregation staff be viewed as a potential 'pool' to fill gaps elsewhere. The Board is of the opinion that, in large part, these issues are direct consequences of staffing issues. Whether it is the high sickness rate (improved over the year), reduced staffing levels, or that reduced staffing levels have exposed some limitations in confidence in some staff, the fact remains that standards have fallen. The loss of senior and experienced staff has caused increased burdens to fall on those staff who do know the unit and its requirements, but despite their best efforts, which have been considerable, it has resulted in falling standards procedures and administration of the unit (e.g. adjudications failing because of incorrect or missing paperwork, IMB not being informed of the use of special cells and GOODS, etc). Measures are being taken to improve staffing consistency and

experience but it will take time to address deficiencies and restore Segregation's previous high standards.

The staffing issues have been compounded by the significantly increased use of Segregation, especially for O/R (Own Request, or Own Protection) and GOOD (Good Order or Discipline). The Board is very concerned about this significant increase, and in particular the number of prisoners requesting to be segregated for their own protection. IMB figures show that there were 157 cases of GOOD and O/R in 2012/13, but this has risen by around 22% to 192 in 2013/14. Most of the O/R requests are a result of prisoners' fears for their safety, with very many being attributed to debt or other matters relating to the availability and/or holding of contraband items (mostly drugs and mobile telephones). We have noted the arrival of a pernicious practice of "inherited debt" where a prisoner moving to a cell acquires any "debt" outstanding from its previous occupants. Similarly a 'system' of paying off debts by creating problems vicariously has been observed. In one case a Prison Officer was arbitrarily attacked by an enhanced prisoner 'paying off a debt' to another prisoner.

The Segregation unit has frequently been full and during one period an 'Annex' was required and was formed in one of the Wings. The problem has been exacerbated by the limited ability of the prison to deal effectively with problems of bullying, threats and intimidation between prisoners on the Wings. This has led to a significant increase in the Segregation Unit being filled with the 'bullied' rather than the 'bullies'. The Board believes, based on anecdotal evidence and our own observations, that this trend is a consequence of the reduction of staff on the Wings.

All aspects of contraband related activity have led to increased levels of intimidation and threats from prisoners to prisoners, with high levels of fear amongst a small proportion of the population. The prison has taken some measures to address these matters (See 6.4 Security), and the SMT, and the Board, have reluctantly accepted the increased use of segregation for the purposes of 'own protection' as the least worst option for the individuals involved, whilst a transfer to a "safer" establishment is effected. However, notwithstanding that, the Board is of the opinion that there is far too great a reliance on segregation to keep prisoners safe.

Many of the prisoners in the unit have been difficult and/or disturbed. The Board monitors this area closely, and regularly attend 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, with few exceptions. Some officers show exceptional personal skills when dealing with segregated prisoners.

The Board is concerned that several prisoners were held in the Segregation Unit for far 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 and Time Out of Cell

A great deal of effort has been directed at provision of purposeful activity over the last few years but which nonetheless leaves room for improvement. The Board notes that no statistics were available to support what is believed to be an increase in the time spent out of cells in the current reporting year and the term 'purposeful' is used to define any out of cell activities. All the time there are less than 100% work/education places available it follows that purposeful activity remains inadequate. Attendance rates at the available sessions also needs to be improved. The facilities available are also not always the most suitable for Category C prisoners and in common with many other prisons, some of the work available is of a low level and quality, offering little in terms of gaining skills.

The Board acknowledges the increase in operational capacity (+80) and welcomes the efforts that have been made to secure new contracts and expand existing ones. The electrical recycling workshop, whilst not 'stimulating' did none the less provide activity for prisoners. The sudden closure of this workshop was a blow to the prison's efforts to provide work. Further opportunities are being explored. Particularly interesting proposal involve the setting up of a bakery and Bistro, in partnership with a charitable trust, plus the establishment of a welding shop.

In the meantime however it must be noted that, having reduced staffing on the Wings on the premise that prisoners will be off the wing and working, all the time there is insufficient activity being offered to engage prisoners, then wing staff are left feeling stretched to the limit and occasionally vulnerable.

'Changing Paths' continues in partnership with the prison, providing the stone-masonry apprentice workshop which continues to flourish and provide a high level of skill and training. Job opportunities have been created for trainee stone masons on release. The charity also 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 type of relationship has the potential to be a life-changing opportunity for prisoners and the prison management are to be commended for establishing and accommodating this prospect. Additionally the charity runs the Canteen in the Visits centre with prisoners taking a leading role.

5.7 Residential Services

5.7.1 Kitchen and Catering

This has been another difficult year for the kitchen, with severe constraints on available funding, exacerbating an already problematic situation. This is further compounded by a reported reduction of the meal time supervision by officers of the servery on the some wings. Reports of bullying and stealing of prisoners meals by other prisoners has resulted, with 'weaker' prisoners not getting the food which they ordered and should receive. There is also a reported 'loss' of foodstuff between distribution from the kitchen and (non) arrival on some wings.

Despite these problems, the kitchen staff have striven, with some considerable success, to deliver nutritional meals. The Board has however noted a deterioration in quality and choice, which is almost inevitable given the funding and supplier constraints in operation. The contracted supplier has on a number of occasions been unable to supply the amounts and variety of food ordered, giving little or no notice to the prison kitchen.

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.

If prisoners are expected to follow a 'working day', their nutrition must be considered a priority. The last research regarding nutrition in prison food was undertaken in 2001 (followed up in 2006) when food budgets were proportionately higher. A further study would now be appropriate given reducing budgets and expectations of "full time" working by prisoners.

5.7.2 Accommodation

'A' Wing was brought back into use after several years under repair. This is now dedicated to prisoners wishing to voluntarily involve themselves in 'drug recovery'. Whilst this is a welcome and necessary addition to the prison, the lack of training and preparation for the officers on the

wing is regrettable. Four months into the project no training has been made available to prison officers to assist them in the specialist nature of the regime. Physical aspects of the wing layout make it less than ideal for the safety and security of staff and prisoners, compounded by the non-functioning status of the CCTV for the first months of operation. The prison is to be congratulated in managing to create this facility without serious incident.

In response to the increased work-load created by A Wing, it has been agreed that the opening of F Wing on the new site should be delayed until full permanent staffing levels are re-established.

H Wing has continued as a 're-settlement' wing and demand is high. Initial 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. This concern about lack of purposely activity is however not exclusive to H Wing.

All wings have now been fitted with in-cell telephones, the introduction of which appears to have been beneficial and relatively problem free. However, the variation in the standard of the physical conditions between the 'new' and 'old' prison buildings is predicted to continue to create tensions within the prison. The prison would benefit if these inequalities in standards were remedied.

Section 6

6.1 Change

Staff are routinely moved from their familiar areas of work to cover immediate needs, sometimes to the detriment of the positive and beneficial relationship that could otherwise 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 with continuity of service and care. The removal of Senior Officers from the wings has left some staff feeling vulnerable and unsupported. Whilst it might be argued that this highlights a lack of confidence in those staff, it has none-the-less resulted in a fall in standards to the detriment of the regime. The situation has been further exacerbated by rising officer vacancies, which is inexcusable given the loss of a not inconsiderable number of officers under the early voluntary departure scheme.

The Board is aware that the MoJ budget is likely to 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" has sought to address the need for financial efficiencies but there are areas where further reductions across the whole prison estate cannot reasonably be sustained.

6.2 Reception, Property 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 risen of late but from a previously very low level.

Property issues have been significant, with rules being introduced that appeared tortuous and protracted, as well as confusing to staff and prisoners alike. The new IEP rules, introduced on 1 November 2013, have not aided matters, in the short term at least. There have been changes and some improvement discerned in the latter part of the year. However, complaints regarding the transfer of property from wing to wing have risen despite an overall fall in the number of applications relating to property.

The quality and value of the current Induction process is uncertain. 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. The use of lead prisoners to deliver this information is welcomed but the information provided to them needs updating and made more 'accessible'. Observation of prisoner Inductions lead the Board to wonder whether this might benefit from happening over longer period, when new prisoners might be more receptive to gathering information

6.3 Visits/Visits Centre

Visits, like many other areas of the prison, was adversely affected by the staffing cuts imposed by the 'Fair and Sustainable' policy. Experienced staff who arranged visits were replaced by untrained part-time staff, including prison officers on 'light duties'. This led to a very unsatisfactory service for prisoners and their families. The situation has recently improved with the introduction of on-line booking and whilst unsurprisingly this has had 'teething problems', the emerging system seems an improvement for all concerned.

The provision of tea-bar facilities in Visits has been taken over by a charity provider (Changing Paths), and in the first year of operation appears to be delivering a well-received service. Staff are now able to take advantage of this facility in the lunch period prior to visits. This has been

welcomed.

6.4 Security

The Board has concerns about drugs and contraband becoming more freely available since the arrival of adult offenders, concerns that have also been repeatedly voiced to us by staff. Staff shortages have reduced the number of routine cell searches and related activities, as security staff have had to cover other duties. However, despite the lack of available staff time, mobile telephones, drugs and other unauthorised items are being recovered in increasing numbers. Whilst the removal of the items in greater numbers is welcomed, the Board is concerned that this simply reflects an increase in availability.

Checks on visitors have become progressively Intelligence led and consequently deemed to be more cost effective. Finds of contraband amongst visitors have not increased significantly, suggesting that the items are coming in by other means. Overall, compared to 2012-13, the number of finds of illegal drugs rose from 13 to 90 and the number of 'finds' of mobile phones rose from 69 to 190. In addition there were 20 'finds' of weapons. These are significant increases which exceed what might be expected from the increased prison role and the steady increase in the proportion of Adult prisoners to Young Offenders.

The prison has taken considerable steps to intercept incoming items and has erected netting in strategic places to try to combat 'over the wall' packages. The extended use of dogs is also welcomed.

At 149, the numbers of failed drug tests has fallen as a percentage, to 16% of the 921 tests carried out. Failures were previously in excess of 20%, but little comfort can be taken from the decrease due to the increasing availability and use of "Spice" within the prison, as there is currently no reliable test to detect the presence of it. The reality is that there is an increased supply of illicit drugs available to prisoners.

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

Increasing efforts have been made to locate and seize these items, but despite locating more, and using the adjudication system to send out clear messages, the prison will be fighting a losing battle in containing this menace to both security and the welfare of prisoners, if not supported by the Police and subsequent prosecutions. Much more needs to be done to reduce these scourges.

The Board is disappointed to report that the general attitude of the police and the CPS in dealing with offenders who commit criminal offences in prison, whether it be smuggling/possession of prohibited items, or assaults on staff or prisoners, has been less than fully positive, with very few cases taken forward for prosecution. It is the Board's view that criminal acts committed in prison by prisoners should be treated in the same way as criminal acts committed in the community. Failure to do so by the police and CPS could possibly be construed as neglect of their duty, and must be addressed.

On a more positive note, the prison has recently made significant efforts to work with police in mounting exercises to prevent contraband being smuggled into the prison, with some success achieved. These measures need to be stepped-up and more robust police and CPS action taken against perpetrators of criminal acts, if there is to be any real success in reducing the

levels of contraband availability, prisoner on staff and prisoner on prisoner violence and intimidation.

6.5 Works

In the year following this Report, 'Works' is to be contracted out to a private contractor. The Board will be interested to see if this provides the anticipated improvement in quality and speed of repairs which have to date been unsatisfactorily slow.

6.6 Complaints

Despite the 12% increase in prisoners in the last quarter, numbers of complaints remain broadly consistent with 2012-13, with an increase of only 100 (5%), to a total of 2131. The size of the increase is surprisingly low, and welcomed, given the impact of NWoW and F&S. However response rates to Complaints have fallen, with an increasing number failing to meet targets. This has increased the need for the Complaints Clerk to "chase" responses. Whilst the reason for this fall-off in timely responses is unclear, it has been suggested to the IMB that a probable contributory factor is likely to be reduced staffing levels. Similarly it is suggested that officers may not return to the 'scene' of the complaint for some time, having been 'detailed' to work elsewhere in the prison. The Board will continue to monitor this in the coming year.

6.7 Gymnasiums

The gyms are well equipped with suitably qualified staff. However, they are underused often due to the lack of staff resulting from gym staff being taken off on other duties. Gym sessions are all too frequently cancelled. Of the 3 gymnasia, only 2 are in operation.

The Board believe there is much more potential to be gained from the gymnasiums including the training of prisoners in a variety of recreational activities. Prisoners returning home may have difficulties in gaining employment but there are many areas in which voluntary work for people using recreational training is plentiful and badly needed. This could give an individual a sense of 'place' and 'worth' as well as getting a 'foot in the door' of community work.

6.8 Incentives and Earned Privileges

The Board welcomes the attempt at consistent national standards for IEP. The new scheme is in its early stages, however indications are that the new scheme may be too draconian and care is needed to ensure it does not become counter-productive.

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 15 members. During the year 3 members retired/resigned and three new members joined the Board. Further losses to Board Membership are anticipated in 2014/15. 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 areas of concern. Although the overall Board numbers have 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 establishment run training, as required, to support their roles, although the increasing use of on-line learning is having an adverse impact on member's ability to participate. Two members attended the Annual Conference in March 2014 where a Motion to Conference relating to Food Budgets was proposed and agreed by a huge majority.

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 received progressively less information and involvement in 'serious incidents', often finding out about such incidents long after the event. Fortunately, these 'serious incidents', have not, so far, been of a severity which required the Boards immediate attendance on site. This continues in the process of correction. The Board must however insist on being informed of all Serious Incidents at the earliest opportunity.

BOARD STATISTICS	
Recommended Complement of Board Members	20
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	15
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	15
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	3
Number of members leaving within the reporting period	3
Total Number of Board meetings during the reporting period	12
Total number of visits to the prison	568
Total number of applications received	514
Total Number of GOOD and OR segregations (IMB figures)	192
Total number of segregation GOOD & OR reviews held* (IMB figures)	405
Total number of segregation GOOD & OR reviews attended by IMB (IMB figures)	288
Date of Annual Team Performance Review	4/3/14

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

Application Statistics

Code	Subject	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	Change cf 2012-13	% change
A	Accommodation	16	41	25	-16	-39.0%
B	Adjudications	28	19	15	-4	-21.1%
C	Equality & Diversity (inc religion)	6	4	9	+5	+125.0%
D	Education/employment/training inc IEP	56	71	55	-16	-22.5%
E	Family/visits inc mail & phone	38	38	47	+9	+23.7%
F	Food/kitchen related	0	6	13	+7	+116.7%
G	Health related	16	39	51	+12	+30.8%
H	Property	66	132	102	-30	-22.7%
I	Sentence related (inc HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-cat etc)	41	110	77	-33	-30.0%
J	Staff/prisoner concerns inc bullying	9	15	22	+7	+46.7%
K	Transfers	23	26	32	+6	+23.1%
L	Miscellaneous	35	96	100	+4	+4.2%
	Total number of application categories (the number of applications received is lower as an application can cover more than one category)	334	597	548	-49	-8.2%

During the year the Board instituted, with support from the prison, a system of IMB 'Clinics'. This involved collecting the applications as usual and, assuming they required conversation with the prisoner, an appointment was sent to the prisoner inviting them to meet at a prescribed time and place. This allowed time to pre-investigate the circumstances surrounding the application in many instances, and the chance to then discuss this with the prisoner in controlled surroundings. The Board has adopted a 'flexible' approach to this system, still allowing for ad-hoc applications whilst on the rounds of the prison. To date this has worked well and creates a better environment for the prisoner to discuss his concerns.

Despite the increase in the prison role, the number of Applications to the Board decreased slightly, by some 8% in the year compared to 2012-13. However the reduction has not been consistent across all categories, with falls in 5 and increases in 7. The quite significant fall in sentence related applications (both in absolute and percentage terms) is probably a reflection on how the establishment has progressed with its handling of Category C adults and associated Category D reviews. It is however noticeable that the number of applications relating to Transfers has increased (modestly in absolute terms but more significantly in percentage terms)

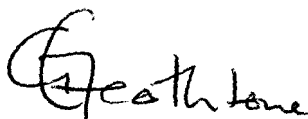
The number of applications about Health related issues continues to increase, reflecting the increase in the number of cancellations of outside medical appointments, with our concerns about this commented on at section 5.3.

Of concern is the continuing rise in respect of food. In 2011-12 we received no applications in this category, with 6 received in 2012-13 and 13 in this reporting year. The Board has also received a very considerable number of verbal complaints about food outside of the formal applications process, re-enforcing the upward trend in this category and testament to a significantly higher levels of dis-satisfaction in respect of both quantity and quality of the food provided to prisoners (see Section 5.7.1).

The increase in the number of applications in the Staff/prisoner related category is mainly due to an increase in applications about other prisoners, which is consistent with increased levels of intimidation of prisoners by prisoners.

The decline in property related application is welcomed, although overall numbers remain too high. However there has been a marked shift in the types of application. Historically the majority related to issues at a previous establishment. This year the majority relate to issues within HMP Rochester (see Section 6.2).

On behalf of the Board



Godfrey E Featherstone
Chairman

June 2014

Section 8

GLOSSARY OF PRISON-RELATED ABBREVIATIONS USED

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

ABS Anti-Bullying System	LDR Latest Date of Release
ACCT Assessment, Care in Custody & Teamwork – replacement for F2052SH	LED Licence Expiry Date
ACR Automatic Conditional Release	LSC Learning & Skills Council
ARD Automatic Release Date	MAPPA Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
ATOS Company responsible for assessing long-term sick	MDT Mandatory Drugs Testing
BCU Briefing and Casework Unit – PS unit handling adjudication appeals	MSL Minimum Staffing Level
BME Black & Minority Ethnic	MQPL Measuring the Quality of Prison Life
C & R Control & Restraint	NOMS National Offender Manager Service – amalgamation of the Prison & Probation Services
C2W, CTW Custody to Work – pre-release focus on housing, employment and lifestyle issues	NWOW New Ways of Working
CARATS Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice & Throughcare Scheme – drug & alcohol team	OASYS Offender Assessment System – computerised risk & needs assessment
CC Cellular Confinement – a punishment	OBP Offending Behaviour Programme
CCD Criminal Casework Department (Croydon)	OCA Observation, Classification & Allocations – a Reception task
CLAIT Computer Literacy and Information Technology	OLASS Offender Learning and Skills Service (part of LSC)
CCT Criminal Casework Team (part of Home Office Immigration & Nationalities Dept)	OI/OR/OP Own Interests/Request/Protection – Segregation under Rule 45/49
CMU Case Management Unit – work on sentence planning & progress	PCT Primary Care Trust – National Health component responsible for healthcare
CNA Certified Normal Accommodation	PMU Population Management Unit (central)
CRD Conditional Release Date	POA Prison Officers' Association – the main trade union
CSH Contracted Service Hours (pre-agreed paid overtime)	POPO Prolific and Other Priority Offender
CSU Commissioning Support Unit	PPO Prisons and Probation Ombudsman
DASU Drug And Alcohol Support Unit	PPP Public Protection Panel
DH Dog Handler	PS Prison Service
EDR Earliest Date of Release	PSI Prison Service Instruction
EMU Estates Management Unit	PSO Prison Service Order – see hmprisonservice.gov.uk/resourcecentre/psispsos/listpsos
EPDG Estates Planning & Development Group	RFW Removal from Wing – a punishment
EGP Ex Gratia Payment	ROAD Remission of Added Days (up to 50%)
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
F&S – Fair and Sustainable	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)	SIR Security Information Report
HCC Health Care Centre	SLA Service Level Agreement
HDC Home Detention Curfew – the Tag	SMARG Segregation and Monitoring Review Group
HDCED Earliest Date of Release on HDC	SMT Senior Management Team
HMCIP Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Prisons	TCF Temporary Custodial Facility
IEP Incentives and Earned Privileges – Prisoners can be on Basic, Standard or Enhanced	TOIL Time Off in Lieu (of payment)
IG Instruction to Governors	TSU Technical Support Unit – part of PS responsible for repairs/installation (“Works”)
IMB Independent Monitoring Board	VDT Voluntary Drugs Testing
IMB Independent Monitoring Board	VO Visiting Order – sent out by prisoners; allows named people to visit
JSA Job-Seekers Allowance	Gold Commander – Headquarters controller for serious incidents
KPI/KPT Key Performance Indicator/Target	Silver Commander – Person in establishment in charge of serious incidents
	Bronze Commander – Local Sub Commander for serious incidents
	Operation Tornado – System to provide extra staff and resources for serious incidents