



HMP RYE HILL
INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD
ANNUAL REPORT

April 2011 – March 2012

Section 1

STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

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

The Board is specifically charged to:

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

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

Section 2

CONTENTS

STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB	2
CONTENTS.....	3
DESCRIPTION & FUNCTION OF THE ESTABLISHMENT.	4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
For the Secretary of State.....	6
For G4S and Rye Hill.....	6
ESSENTIAL REPORTING AREAS.....	7
5.1 Diversity	7
5.2 Healthcare & Mental Health.....	7
5.3 Learning & Skills.....	8
5.4 Safer Custody.....	8
5.5 Care & Separation.....	9
OTHER AREAS. (Alphabetical order)	10
6.1 Accommodation.....	10
6.2 Adjudications	10
6.3 Catering, Canteen & Kitchens	10
6.4 Complaints	11
6.5 Drugs.....	11
6.6 Foreign National Prisoners	11
6.7 Gym & Sports Hall	12
6.8 Incentives & Earned Privileges.....	12
6.9 Induction.....	12
6.10 Life Sentenced Prisoners.....	12
6.11 OASys & IT.....	12
6.12 Offending Behaviour Programmes / Management	13
6.13 Preparation for Release / Resettlement.....	13
6.14 Property	13
6.15 Purposeful Activity.....	14
6.16 Reception & Admissions	14
6.17 Security	14
6.18 Transfer.....	15
6.19 Visits & Visitor Centre	15
6.20 Vulnerable Prisoners.....	15
THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ACTIVITIES 2011/12.....	16
7.1 Membership & Recruitment.....	16
7.2 Board Meetings.....	16
7.3 Rota Visits	16
7.4 Applications to the Board	16
7.5 Training	17
7.6 Board Statistics.....	17
Acknowledgement	18

Section 3

DESCRIPTION & FUNCTION OF THE ESTABLISHMENT.

- HMP Rye Hill opened in January 2001 and was operated by Global Solutions Limited on a 25 year contract to the Home Office. In August 2008 GSL was bought by G4S who took over the running of the prison.
- The premises are purpose built with eight residential units consisting of two Vulnerable Prisoner units where prisoners who have committed an offence making them eligible for the Sex Offenders Treatment Programme are held separately from mainstream prisoners, five mainstream units, and a reception unit.
- The prison is a Category B male training prison with certified normal accommodation of 600 and operational capacity of 625. It held 623 prisoners at the end of the current reporting period.
- The prison currently holds 116 prisoners under traditional life sentences with a further 150 held under Indeterminate Sentence for Public Protection.
- There are 537 category B, 82 category C prisoners and 4 category D prisoners.
- There are currently 115 foreign national prisoners. This is slightly up from last year.
- The ethnic breakdown has remained reasonably stable for some years at approximately 60% White, 22% Black and 10% Asian.
- Prisoners over the age of 50 represent 13% of the total population with more than half of these being over 65.
- Health care is now provided by sub-contract to a new division of G4S called G4S Integrated Services. This contract started on 1st January 2012.
- The Education provider is City College Manchester.
- Catering is provided by Aramark.
- Links with Samaritans are established together with a Listeners Service.

Section 4

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the reporting year April 2011 to March 2012 there have been frequent Senior Management changes including a new Director. Although the frequent changes have had an impact on staff morale and consistency of management approach, the Board believes that the prison has maintained a stable and safe environment for prisoners (see section 5.4).

A recent prison-wide assessment by the new Director is intended to generate a number of Action Plans to address areas of staff and prisoner concern. It is hoped these will address both staff morale and the concerns around long standing issues such as property (see section 6.15) and violence reduction (see section 5.4).

The implementation of PNOMIS is now underway to bring the Contracted estate onto the same system as Public Sector prisons (see section 6.12).

Rye Hill still has a high number of ISPP prisoners (150) and the issues around course provision to allow them to complete sentence plans within their tariff period remains. This is an increasing concern as more of these prisoners reach tariff and the availability of places at prisons offering specific courses appear to become fewer. Within Rye Hill alone there are 65 prisoners currently on the waiting list for the Thinking Skills Programme; a back log that would take at least a year to clear with current resources and no new applicants (see section 6.13).

The issues with attracting and retaining staff in Health Care have persisted during the year although some recent appointments have been made. Security clearance times can be many months even for staff who are key holders at other prisons. The Board supports the recent decision to restrict in-patients in Health Care to those with short term clinical need and to actively move to manage prisoners with behavioural and mental health difficulties under the normal residential regime. Overall the waiting times for Health Care appointments have improved (see section 5.2).

New policies and procedures in CSU have led to better exit planning and shorter stays. There has been a welcome reduction in prisoners trying to use a stay in CSU as the means to gain a transfer, although provision for prisoners held in CSU for their Own Interest is still very basic (see section 5.5).

Overall the prison has operated with respect and fairness towards prisoners during the year.

KEY ISSUES.

For the Secretary of State

The high numbers of ISPP prisoners, the lack of access to courses to allow progression and the impact of this on the prisoners themselves and on other life sentenced prisoners is an increasing a problem.

This was reported last year.

Security clearance for prison staff should be speeded up especially for specialist staff such as Health Care nurses who already work at other prisons. Ideally use of a single clearance for multiple locations should be made available. **This issue was reported last year.**

The issues associated with transfer of property, and also prisoners' monies, between prisons remain. Now PNOMIS is available across the estate surely some tracking of property transfer could be undertaken? In addition the process of long term storage and retrieval of property over the volumetric allowance does not function in a consistent or fair manner.

As blocking mobile phone signals has a range of issues (**a topic reported over the previous 4 years**) consideration should be given to the training and availability of dogs to detect mobile phones. The dogs are a valuable tool for drug detection and could provide an important improvement in mobile phone detection rates in the absence of signal blocking.

For G4S and Rye Hill

The actions on improvements to staffing and clinic provision in Health Care should be continued. The linkage to CARAT/Drugs Mis-use provision should be established as soon as possible.

Rearrangement or cancellation of meetings, both prisoner and staff based, at short notice should be avoided.

The lack of Sunday and Bank Holiday visiting should be readdressed. **This has been reported over many years and remains unresolved.**

The Action Plan tasks identified to increase purposeful activity/move to full employment should be carried out as soon as possible.

The current approach of waiting until multiple appliances require repair before booking an engineer should be reviewed as it can lead to some residential units lacking full facilities for some weeks.

Section 5

ESSENTIAL REPORTING AREAS

5.1 Diversity

Improvement

- The Equality Action Team (EAT) continues to meet alternative months and the scheduled time and venue are now more strictly adhered to.
- Many promotional and religious festivals days have been organized , though it is disappointing to note some have been poorly attended.

Trends

- The expected versus actual racial spread for adjudications, complaints, I&EP, CSU and use of force continue to be monitored and fall within designated ranges.

Concerns

- Many issues arising from the EAT meetings take an unacceptably long times to resolve causing frustration to the prisoner representatives attending the meeting.

5.2 Healthcare & Mental Health.

Developments

- There have been difficulties during the year with attracting and retaining nursing staff. For a large part of the year the unit has been under-staffed and only basic mandatory activities have been undertaken.
- A new Dentist has been appointed and waiting lists have improved but there is still an appreciable waiting time for appointments.
- A new Doctor has been appointed and this has cleared the waiting list completely.

Improvements

- A new practice management team has been put in place and this seems to be addressing some of the recruitment and retention issues and the department is running more smoothly. The change to pass responsibility to the new division of G4S Integrated Services is too new to assess the impact as yet.
- **A change in approach has resulted in the in-patient cells in healthcare only being used for prisoners needing clinical care and not routinely those suffering mental health issues. This is a major step towards addressing the need to manage those prisoners with behavioural issues as part of the main residential regime.**

Concerns

- The staffing situation continues to be of concern although recent steps do seem to be moving this towards a resolution.

5.3 Learning & Skills

Developments

- A satisfactory OFSTED report was given in June 2011. The department was complimented on the number of OU students and the support they were given.
- There are currently 14 computers in the classroom but more would be beneficial.
- The numbers enrolling in full and part-time education remain stable but attendance at the Library has increased with monthly figures of 595 compared to 336 last year.

5.4 Safer Custody

- **The Board remains satisfied that the prison is a safe environment for prisoners although violence reduction and staff morale have needed attention and an action plans have been put in place by the new Director.**

Developments

- There have been frequent staff changes with a new Director now in place and a number of new Senior Management appointments.
- New regulations re ACCTs will promote the sharing of information across prison departments. It is intended that each ACCT contact will be an interaction rather than simply an observation.
- The MOJ Controller has suggested that lack of activity may contribute to the levels of violence.
- A Full Employment Action Plan is being prepared.

Improvements

- The workload on staff re anti-social behavior policy, reported last year, has settled. A Violence Reduction Plan has been drafted and a Zero Tolerance policy to bullying and violence has started with greater use of I&EP and ASB orders.

Trends

- Use of Force down from 230 last year to 199.
- Serious Assaults up from 14 last year to 21
- Self Harm down from 200 to 176
- Violence reduction actions up from 16 to 20
- ASB orders up at an average of 12/month from 9/month last year

Concerns

- The access to courses for ISPP prisoners remains difficult with resources stretched and transfers to other establishment to access courses difficult.
- Not all wings have safer custody representatives
- There is little practical intervention, other than regular observation and review, in the Victims of Bullying Support plan.

5.5 Care & Separation

Developments

- A new exit planning process for prisoners in CSU has started and is 'owned' by the Unit Manager including on-going care and re-integration tasks.
- The consistency of management has improved. There are new 'out of bed' policies in place to keep prisoners occupied however targets set are often meaningless.
- There are still concerns about lengthy stays by certain individuals. It is hoped to reduce the number of prisoners in CSU to a maximum of 6 at any one time.

Improvements

- There has been a reduction in prisoners trying to use a CSU stay as a means to gain a transfer.

Concerns

- Facilities for prisoners moved to CSU for their own interest following threats or assaults are only offered the same basic facilities as those on report. There is no provision in CSU cells for access to additional privileges such as kettles or TV if appropriate.

Section 6

OTHER AREAS. (Alphabetical order)

6.1 Accommodation

Improvements

- Showers are undergoing redecoration in a rolling programme.

Concerns

- Delays in completing repairs on the machines in the Laundry Rooms.
- The accumulation of debris behind grills could be a possible fire hazard. This has improved in the last 2 months.

6.2 Adjudications

Trends

- The number of adjudications has again risen slightly.
- A random sample of adjudications during the year showed that the majority were dealt with at first hearing or with a single adjournment. The most common reason for adjournments were to allow prisoners to obtain legal advice however 23% were because an officer was not available to give evidence and this remains a concern.
- The increased number of transfers has meant more adjudications not proceeded with, although this number does seem exceptionally high.

Statistics

	2010 –2011	2011 –2012
Proven	504 (inc 50 by ext. adj.)	482 (inc 80 by ext.adj.)
Dismissed	363	240
Transferred out during procedure	104	169
Not proceeded with		107
Not continued, no reason given	6	63
Total	1025	1061

6.3 Catering, Canteen & Kitchens

Improvements

- Ordering from the Uni-link system works well and a greater range of descriptors are now shown on the items making it easier for prisoners to choose a menu appropriate to their diet.

- Following the withdrawal of glass containers from the Canteen list, only 15 items previously supplied now remain unavailable.

Trends

- Portion sizes have been a regular issue.
- Consultation meetings are held with groups requiring specific diets eg Vegan and Muslim prisoners to try to ensure issues are recognised and resolved.

Concerns

- The signing off by Aramark of the Comments Book has improved but the book alone does not address the issues.

6.4 Complaints

Developments

- The number of complaints continues to fall.
- Changes in the complaints system mean that prisoners will be encouraged to use agreed procedures.

Concerns

- Offenders feel they do not always get a constructive response to unit applications /complaints and have resorted to using the Confidential Access route as a 'short cut' to Senior Management (overall 26% of complaints were 'confidential access').

6.5 Drugs

Developments

- Communications between IDTS and CARATS is still an area of concern as CARATS do not get any information about prisoners on IDTS, this means when the prisoner finishes their IDTS prescription they often do not get any follow-up support.
- The number of Mandatory Drugs Tests (MDT) has been increased to 94 a month.

Concerns

- Plans were in place to re-purpose CARATS as part of a drug mis-use team. These are on hold but needed urgently.

6.6 Foreign National Prisoners

Developments

- The number of Foreign National Prisoners held at HMP Rye Hill has remained fairly static throughout the year, averaging 110.

- The Early Release Scheme continues to be run efficiently, but it takes too long.

Trends

- Repatriation has been rigorously pursued.

6.7 Gym & Sports Hall .

Improvements

- The Accredited Courses for prisoners began again in January with 5 Apprenticeships currently underway.

Concerns

- Staff are only trained in basic first aid and unable to accept prisoners with more serious health issues even if the Doctor refers them.

6.8 Incentives & Earned Privileges

Developments

- Use of the system to control behaviour has been more effective

Concerns

- **As reported last year the Board continues to be concerned by the high number of prisoners on enhanced level.**

6.9 Induction

Concerns

- Information on the work of the IMB had again been dropped from the Induction Pack. We have requested this is remedied immediately.

6.10 Life Sentenced Prisoners

Improvements

- The move towards developing small groups of a probation officer, offender supervisor and case administrator looking after the welfare of each prisoner is under way but not yet complete.
- IMB has concerns at frequency of cancellation and re-scheduling of sentence planning and re-categorisation meetings.

6.11 OASys & IT

Improvements

- PNOM IS has now been implemented throughout the prison. There were some initial migration issues with a need for a high number of manual number merges. The system is liked by the staff.

- The original Finance system, and its direct interface to the Uni-link system, is being retained and has been updated with the PNOMIS numbers.

Concerns

- At least 50% of prisoners transferring into the prison require major updates to their OASys records.
- As the PNOMIS finance module is not being used the issues around transfer of Prisoners monies from other Prisons remain.

6.12 Offending Behaviour Programmes / Management

Concerns

- The TSP course has a significant waiting list. In late 2011 there were 65 prisoners(including 25 ISPP and 8 Lifers) waiting. Delays are very frustrating for prisoners, especially those on ISPP near tariff who cannot prove they have reduced their risk until their courses are complete.

6.13 Preparation for Release / Resettlement.

Trends

- Rye Hill is not intended to hold prisoners with less than 6 months remaining to serve however there have been a number of prisoners released direct from Rye Hill and these have gone smoothly.

Improvements

- Issues with delays in parole board hearings have improved.

6.14 Property

Developments

- The new provider of prisoner transport shows poor understanding of volumetric control. Some prisoners arrive with excess property and some with none.
- Volumetric control rules have been implemented with each prisoner's in-possession property checked for compliance.

Improvements

- There are new rules about incoming clothing; stored property must be disposed of first and parcels from family are now permitted twice yearly.

Concerns

- Management of stored property is inconsistent with a space problem and requests for retrieval taking many weeks to process.

- Admissions continue to struggle when understaffed so that parcels may take 10 days to distribute rather than the required 3 days.
- Record keeping is poor, with property cards often illegible due to time pressure on the staff making neat recording impossible.

6.15 Purposeful Activity

Developments

- The need to increase purpose activity has been recognized and a Full Employment Action is being developed.

Trends

- The weekly hours of purposeful activity ranged from 27.47 to 30.35 against a target of 29. There are still a high percentage of these hours that are education and wing jobs.

Concerns

- The wing jobs are classified as full time (6.5 hours) but typically take a quarter of this time.
- There are frequently unfilled places in the Industries areas while prisoners are security cleared. There could also be more Industries places with better use of buildings and supervisory staff.
- The untimely death of the gardens supervisor has restricted the opportunities for prisoners to work in the gardens. This has taken time to resolve as responsibilities crossed contract areas.

6.16 Reception & Admissions

Trends

- The work load in admissions continues to increase with as many as 20 prison transfers on some days.

Concerns

- Rota reports have noted the Admissions area to be “frenetic, with stuff everywhere.” Staff admit it can be chaotic.

6.17 Security

Developments

- The dog section is now a national G4S resource, so far no detrimental effect has been seen with 2 active and 2 passive drug search dogs available. No dogs trained to search for mobile phones are currently available.
- An intensive recent campaign has been held on door locking and prisoner escort practices. These seem to have substantially reduced security reports in these areas.

Concerns

- The number of incidents of assault have increased, 21 up from 14 last year (see 5.4 Safer Custody).

6.18 Transfer

Trends

- It continues to be difficult to find places for Category C prisoners and the number in Rye Hill remains higher than ideal. No other issues with transfers have been seen.

6.19 Visits & Visitor Centre

Developments

- The Visit Centre has undergone a refurbishment and a children's play area has been re-introduced with play workers visiting on Saturdays.

Concerns

- **The Board remains concerned that Sunday and Bank Holiday visits are not available. These are the only times many families are able to visit. It adversely affects rehabilitation**

6.20 Vulnerable Prisoners

NOTE: VPs at Rye Hill have all been convicted of a sex offence

Developments

- For the second year the KPT for SOTP has been exceeded.
- The dedicated residential units continue to run smoothly.

Section 7

THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ACTIVITIES 2011/12

7.1 Membership & Recruitment

- The Board remains significantly below establishment strength of 17 members. Again prioritisation of monitoring areas has been in operation for most of the reporting period.
- At the end of the period there were 12 members.
- 4 members left during the year and 3 new members were recruited.
- A new Chairman, Vice Chair and Board Development Officer were elected to office for 2012.

7.2 Board Meetings

- Monthly Board Meetings have been well attended with 118 out of 150 possible attendances. The majority of absences were by those who have since left or were employment or National Council related. The Director or a representative has attended each meeting. The Ministry of Justice Controller or a deputy attended most meetings.

7.3 Rota Visits

- These continue to be completed on a weekly basis with non mandatory areas visited rotationally. Each visit results in a formal report that is circulated to all members and Senior Prison staff. It is discussed with the Director at the monthly Board Meeting or earlier if urgent issues arise.

7.4 Applications to the Board

See section 7.6 for statistics

- Applications continue to follow an auditable paper trail
- 354 applications were received during the period, a small increase, compared with 342 and 303 for the previous two year. 44 applications were received under Confidential Access but most did not meet the criteria for CA and were treated as normal applications.
- Applicants were normally seen within five days and most issues resolved quickly in spite of the low number of Board members.

7.5 Training

- Training received has included:-
 - New member induction
 - Experienced members courses
 - Annual conference
 - Regional and Contracted/SLA Chairs meetings
 - Monthly pre agenda meeting sessions
 - Annual Team Performance Review

7.6 Board Statistics

BOARD STATISTICS	
Recommended Complement of Board Members	17
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	13
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	12
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	3
Number of members leaving within reporting period	4
Total number of Board meetings during reporting period	12
Average number of attendances at Board Meetings during reporting period	10
Number of attendances other than at Board Meetings	505
Total number of visits to the prison	623
Number of applications received	354
Number of CSU reviews scheduled to be held	Ca. 145
Number of CSU reviews attended	Ca. 135
Date of Annual Team Performance Review	May 2011

Application Statistics

Code	Subject	2010/11	2011/12
A	Accommodation	36	23
B	Adjudications	5	10
C	Equality & Diversity (inc religion)	14	10
D	Education/employment/training inc IEP	25	42
E 1	Family/visits inc mail & phone	12	16
E 2	Finance/pay		22
F	Food/kitchen related	7	14
G	Health related	38	40
H 1	Property (within current establishment)	65	64
H 2	Property (during transfer/in another establishment)		10
H 3	Canteen, facilities, Catalogue shopping, Argos		4
I	Sentence related (inc. HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-cat etc)	18	13
J	Staff/prisoner/detainee concerns inc bullying	19	36
K	Transfers	19	24
L	Miscellaneous	84	26
	Total number of applications	342	354
	Of total: number of Confidential Access was:	24	44

Miscellaneous included personal issues, clothing, legal matters and intelligence.

Note. The values for the previous year are not directly comparable because of changes to the classification of some applications.

Acknowledgement

This report has been compiled from information gathered by all members of the Board.