



HMP Springhill

Annual Report

December 2010 - December 2011

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.

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DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

HMP Springhill is an open establishment (Category D) and accommodates up to 330 men. Prisoners are those who can be trusted in open conditions including those coming to the end of their sentences and those serving shorter sentences. All prisoners not serving a short sentence are encouraged to join a resettlement scheme which allows them to perform work for the local community and to seek full time work and work experience for the last months of their sentences.

On a daily basis the prison releases approximately 90 men into the community to perform charity work and other community-based projects. There are approximately 200 movements in and out of the prison daily.

HMP Springhill is jointly managed with HMP Grendon (situated next door). Springhill and Grendon operate as separate units and exist for different categories of prisoner and with vastly different regimes. A single Independent Monitoring Board monitors both prisons.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The injection of a significant number of innovative new measures has been very welcome at Springhill in 2011 and the Board praises the prison's senior management for fostering these innovations.

However, the Board wishes to highlight three areas of concern present in 2010 which continued to cause concern in 2011:

- The management of the healthcare contract with Care UK and the provision of adequate healthcare services to the men
- The provision of education services by Manchester College under their contract with the Skills and Funding Council
- The withdrawal of some drug testing and the management of drug risks within the prison

There are additional concerns which have arisen in 2011. These are:

- Provision of dental services and the lack of coordination of other medical treatments and services which fall outside of the CareUK contract including the pharmacy contract and optician services
- Continued deterioration of the quality of food provided under the contract with 3663 and especially the quality of the meat.

At the end of 2011, Springhill saw the early retirement of both the number one governor, Dr Peter Bennet, and the number two governor, Joe Swierczynski, both of whom had been at the establishment for a very long time. The Board appreciated the positive relationship that had been established with the retiring team and is looking forward to working with the new Governor, Jamie Bennett and Deputy Governor, Laura Sapwell.

AREAS OF CONCERN

The Works Department within the prison continues to be an area of concern to the Board as it has seen evidence of poor service and maintenance. The Board is pleased that a review of the Works Department was begun in 2011. We have, however, not yet seen the results of this review. The Board would like to highlight once again that, as was mentioned in last year's review, the fabric of the buildings at Springhill is very poor and needs serious attention.

Healthcare continues to be a main area of concern which has absorbed the greatest amount of the Board's time and efforts (see under Healthcare).

We cited in our previous review the significant loss of training and provision of purposeful activity due to the actions of Manchester College. The Inspectorates Report cited this situation as well. It is our concern that the contract is once again out to tender (though Manchester College is not tendering again). This may cause further disruption and will undoubtedly lead to a further reduction of educational provision for the men.

It has come to the attention of the Board at various times through the year during our rota visits and in discussion with some prisoners that certain staff have, on occasion, been aggressive, if not bullying in their behaviour. The prisoners, however, have been reluctant to cite specific examples or instances of this behaviour. While the Board is confident that this behaviour is very limited and that the majority of the staff is committed to fairness and to the welfare of the prisoners, it is an area which, because it has recurred regularly, the Board is anxious to monitor going forward.

AREAS OF EXCELLENCE

The Board would like to commend the continuing dedication and excellent work of Springhill staff and management who, under ongoing budgetary pressures, have continued to ensure that the prison is safe and offers significant resettlement opportunities to long term prisoners. There have been a significant number of innovative improvements introduced during 2011. These are:

- Re-opening of the staff mess as the new Springs Restaurant staffed by prisoners
- Introduction of layered management in the Offender Management Unit (OMU) which has improved the efficiency of managing case loads
- Re-organisation of Farms and Gardens which has significantly increased employment for the men and has greatly enhanced the look and tidiness of the camp.
- Planning for a new "eco build" facility which will include training of men in valuable, new, environmentally-friendly construction techniques
- Expansion of employment of men on camp in the Works Department
- The renovation and extension of the Memorial Garden by the prisoners
- Establishment of the Springhill Prison Council
- Opening of Con Hair barbershop run by the prisoners

During 2011, the Farms and Gardens Project completed a successful first year. Planning permission was sought and approved for a Farms and Gardens shop which will open in 2012 to sell produce from the project. Valuable vocational courses in horticulture are being offered with a plan to introduce the RHS qualification in 2012.

OBLIGATORY REPORTS

Healthcare

In our report for 2010, the IMB raised serious concerns for the attention of the Minister about the provision of healthcare at HMP Springhill.

There has been some improvement during 2011, but unfortunately at times during the year the IMB were sufficiently concerned to raise issues about healthcare again with the Governor and directly with the NHS Buckinghamshire Primary Care Trust (PCT). IMB members have devoted much time during the year to investigating applications from prisoners that relate to serious deficiencies in the provision for their healthcare.

Healthcare staff at HMP Springhill are present on site only during the working day and into the early evening. One improvement this year has been the development of an evening surgery on some evenings each week. This has improved access for those prisoners who are released on temporary license to work in the community. Overnight, an out-of-hours on-call service is provided but, if appropriate, the duty prison staff may decide to release the prisoner on license to attend the local hospital. At weekends the healthcare centre is open for only short periods and duty healthcare staff are available in HMP Grendon if a prisoner needs to see them at other times during the day.

Throughout the year, there have been problems with the provision of healthcare including

- low levels of permanent staffing which have required CareUK to engage many locum and agency staff,
- inadequate facilities which delayed the start of the new dental provider,
- delays in dispensing prescribed drugs and
- poor communication between the prison, the PCT, and those commissioned to provide the services, resulting in poor information about healthcare available for the prisoners.

There has been improvement during the year but at the year end, there were still deficiencies that cause the board concern.

The building for Healthcare at Springhill is poorly designed and does not provide an environment that supports a contemporary standard of healthcare. This was exacerbated during the early months of 2011 as there was extensive building work which was required to adapt the facilities for delivering the Integrated Drug Treatment System (IDTS) and storing safely the scheduled drugs that would be required. There was further delay in appointing a nurse with the necessary training for supervising this and by the end of the year few suitable prisoners have been transferred to Springhill. It is questionable how appropriate this regime is in an open prison with an active resettlement regime and many prisoners working daily in the community.

Another deficiency of the facilities is the access for prisoners to the healthcare building. The door has been kept locked for much of the time whether the healthcare centre is notionally closed or open and there is no way for prisoners to attract attention or speak with the staff. The IMB have asked for improved access and questioned if it is appropriate in an open prison to have the outer door locked for such a high proportion of the day. At a minimum, the prisoners

who need to access care or who have queries should be provided with a bell or intercom rather than greeted by a notice telling them not to knock on the windows.

There are no facilities for dental treatment at HMP Springhill and prisoners have to be escorted to neighbouring HMP Grendon for this treatment.

We have reported the various bodies who are involved in the provision of care and while there has been improvement in several aspects of their provision, communication between them and with the prisoners remains a cause for concern.

The prison is responsible for some fixed assets and during the year some alterations were made to these to house the facilities for IDTS.

NHS Buckinghamshire Primary Care Trust (PCT) is responsible for the computer facilities and during the year the implementation and usefulness of these has been extended. The PCT is also responsible for commissioning the services provided and they have been more involved this year, coming to realise more about the circumstances that relate to this prison and the role of the IMB. However they have seemed slow to appreciate that they are responsible for ensuring that the services commissioned are provided to an acceptable standard.

CareUK who have been responsible for primary care in HMP Springhill have had a considerable turnover of staff during 2011, including those responsible for managing the service, of which there have been four within twelve months. This has caused problems in liaison between CareUK, prisoners and prison staff and governors as successive doctors and nurses have taken time to discover the routine and regime of the open, resettlement prison. More problems have resulted from the low proportion of permanent nursing staff employed by Care UK. This has led to many locum and agency staff with variable professional standards and at times serious concerns about the quality of the clinical care provided by both nurses and doctors. After several serious shortcomings had come to the attention of the IMB, we raised this directly with the governor and PCT. The IMB is now satisfied that there is good leadership for primary care for prisoners in HMP Springhill and the proportion of permanent staff has improved at the end of the year although some agency nursing staff are still employed, which has caused concern, especially at weekends.

After a succession of locum doctors who were employed in the first part of the year, one of whom raised such serious concerns that he had to be asked to leave, there are now two doctors who attend more regularly and the number of applications and complaints coming to the attention of the IMB has reduced. Apart from issues about the one to one communication and attitude of a doctor, there was a steep rise in the quantity of opiates and similar drugs prescribed and an increase in drugs allowed in a prisoner's possession which reached a point where there were such concerns about the quantity of such medication dispensed to one prisoner that he had to be transferred for in-patient supervision at HMP Bullingdon.

During the first half of the year there were also issues with the responses to complaints from prisoners and in communicating about these with the prisoners and prison governors. However the present leadership has taken steps to communicate more directly with the prisoners.

CareUK are also responsible for providing the IDTS for drug addicts undergoing methadone withdrawal. At the start it was questioned if the prisoners who were suitable for the resettlement regime in an open prison at Springhill would be suitable for this but in due course a nurse was

appointed to supervise such treatment. To date few prisoners at HMP Springhill have been included in this programme.

Bucks Priority Dental Service were commissioned to provide dental services at the start of the year, but the PCT have made changes in commissioning dental services and there was a period of several months during the year when only emergency services were available, while the facilities were refurbished. Normal service provided by **Haddenham Dental Centre** has now been resumed but there have been problems in communication between the providers and the prisoners resulting in failures to attend for appointments, as the notices of these appointments had not been received in time by the prisoners. Providing dental care at HMP Springhill does present special challenges as the requests from prisoners for a dental appointment are handed in to the Springhill centre and the dental staff only work in HMP Grendon, but this situation has remained constant throughout the time that the PCT has been responsible for commissioning services. This highlights one of the difficulties when the commissioning is fragmented between several providers some of whom have been changed at frequent intervals. Problems are exacerbated as the PCT has not organised any induction for those whom they commission to provide services to familiarize them with the particular issues that they will face in providing dental care at the two adjacent prisons. The IMB have received applications about this and have been actively involved in attempts to improve communication. While we are hopeful that it will improve, at the end of the year there were still outstanding difficulties in ensuring that adequate notice of dental appointments was given and is received by the prisoner concerned.

Communication between the dental providers and the prisoners at HMP Springhill remains an outstanding concern of the IMB

Lloyds Pharmacy remains responsible for the dispensing of drugs. The branch involved has been changed during the year but there are still continuing problems with the prompt provision of drugs, especially those prescribed by the doctor on Friday afternoons. The IMB is aware that some responsibility for these delays also rests with CareUK staff and has been concerned that at times such delays have been assumed to be unavoidable. Complaints made by prisoners about delays in the dispensing of prescribed drugs (also raised by the IMB) are not being communicated to the pharmacy.

The pharmacy provision and dispensing of prescribed drugs remains an outstanding concern of the IMB.

Harmoni provide the out-of-hours on-call service and employ the staff members who are involved with the prison outside of normal working hours and at the weekends.

While there have been times during the year when the IMB has been concerned in ensuring that issues raised by prisoners have been attended to promptly and adequately, this has generally improved. However, the IMB remains concerned that the fragmented commissioning has resulted in service provision that is disjointed and poorly coordinated. The changes in the commissioning of the dental service have resulted in dentists attending the prison who were unfamiliar with the environment. Relatively few prisoners were treated and prisoners who needed to be seen were forced to wait an unacceptably long time for dental treatment.

Communication between the PCT and the many healthcare providers with the prison and prisoners remains a problem and one that requires further attention in the future.

Diversity

Both Grendon and Springhill prisons have benefitted greatly from having a dedicated Diversity Manager who started in this post in November 2010. Prior to this the post had been vacant for approximately a year and so reports for that period are not complete. Diversity training for staff and prisoners, reporting of all incidents and dealing with incidents have all been carried out efficiently in the view of the IMB.

Although the exact figures are not available, the number of racial and diversity incidents reported at Springhill during 2011 have been slightly above the 9 reported between April 2010 and March 2011. The increase, albeit from a low base, is probably attributable to the greater awareness of racial and diversity issues promulgated by the well-trained Prisoner Equality Mentors (PREMs) and staff. The IMB is not concerned at this increase but will monitor it. The PREMs attend monthly meetings with the Diversity Manager to discuss problems reported to them and any incidents that were filed. The Diversity and Equality Team (DEAT) made up of staff members and PREMs met quarterly to discuss, action and disseminate a Diversity and Equality Plan (DEAP).

Cultural events such as Black History Month and religious festivals are celebrated by many inmates. Most mainstream religions are represented by relevant religious figures who are available or take services regularly. The catering staff produce food appropriate for a wide variety of religious, cultural and medicinal needs which, considering the small budget they work from, is noteworthy.

Approximately 40% of the Springhill population is from a Black, Minority or Ethnic (BME) background, which is consistent with the national prison population.

In summary, the way diversity and racial issues have been monitored and dealt with in Springhill during 2011 has been commendable, mainly due to the energy and commitment of the Diversity Manager and the PREMs. However it is noted that the Diversity Manager's position is being changed from January 2012 and will have a more supervisory role from an office in Springhill on a part time basis. The IMB has been informed that this is in order to enable management grade staff to take on this important work as part of their everyday activities. The IMB will monitor this change.

Learning and Skills

Education at Springhill is unsatisfactory, and the proposed conditions for the new contract will need to be monitored closely.

The Springs Restaurant offers the men a valuable opportunity in catering training and qualifications. However, it should be noted that due to poor quality and hygiene control, the Restaurant opening was severely delayed in 2011 as the facility had to be deep cleaned twice. This left men without work opportunities and also deprived staff access to a facility for hot food. The Restaurant is, now, however an excellent and successful facility.

Library

The environment is light and spacious and there is a good atmosphere. Prisoners are all required to be signed off at the library as part of their induction. Prisoner access is good and will be further improved when evening sessions planned for next year are introduced. Early in 2011

the library was extended. The extra space was intended to be used for basic skills courses where prisoner outcomes might be improved by the integration of education provision with the library. Unfortunately this did not happen.

When the extension was created by knocking through into another room a pod was built and equipped with a computer and printer. The provision of this extra facility was due to the resourcefulness of staff in identifying equipment not being used and the expertise of a prisoner in setting it up. The Board applauds this especially when resources across the prison are stretched. However, this kind of initiative can raise an expectation of provision which is dependent on the good will of individuals in various departments. The Board is concerned that insufficient consideration is given to managing popular facilities which have been offered over and above the core provision but which come to be seen as part of it. In this case the printer is often out of order due to difficulties obtaining toner.

In the next year the Board will monitor the prison's plans for the library to develop closer links with a new education provider to be appointed next year.

Safer Custody

The quality and commitment to safer custody was very good with only two ACCT's (Assessment Care in Custody Teamwork reports) opened in the year.

However the Safer custody meetings have not been well attended and changes in Staff roles have affected the quality of information and reporting at these meetings.

There were four Anti-bullying documents opened in 2011; none in 2010.

There were eight Racial incidents one less than in 2010.

There were six Absconds in 2011 against eleven in 2010.

There were fourteen Failure to Returns in 2011; fifteen in 2010.

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Other Essential Reports

ISP Population in 2011

During 2011, the Indeterminate Sentence Prisoners (ISP) population hit a plateau of around 90 to 100 in the last 4 months of the year. Springhill had requested a cap which was put in place by Area in July but this coincided with Area Population Management Unit (PMU) allocating ISPs to prisons, and has resulted in Springhill's intake almost grinding to a halt. However, steps have been taken to remedy the situation with Area. The OMU team managed 130 caseloads during 2011. Of these, 34 prisoners were released by the Parole Board i.e. 25% of the ISP population. There has been an increase in Parole Boards as the year progressed, and most prisoners have been successful and gained release. Only 2 ISP prisoners were refused Parole in 2011. 35 prisoners failed in open conditions i.e. 25% of the ISP population, a 13% increase from 2010. Springhill's analysis of 2010 and 2011 data has shown a sharp increase in the number of ISP failures, and a decrease in the number of determinate prisoners who fail in open conditions. The total number of prisoners who failed at Springhill during 2010 was 111, compared with 103 prisoners during 2011.

Layered Offender Management was put in place in the middle of 2011, and it has been working successfully despite the difficulties of the changing prison population. The team is adaptable and works well.

Springhill Resettlement/Employment Links

The Employment Links unit is a complex area which has three main aims: to provide employment, training placements or educational placements for prisoners upon release. This is in line with Government policy on reducing reoffending. All prisoners who come to Springhill follow a pathway which begins with an induction period and continues through an assessment and work on camp, to Community work and finally to full time work. While Springhill is successful in fulfillment of these roles according to its Key Performance Targets (KPT's), senior management accepts that more needs to be done to ensure successful resettlement. To this end, management of Employment links was re-organised during mid- 2011 with greater emphasis placed on expanding on-camp work (through expanded roles in areas such as Farms and Gardens and Works), developing a greater network of Community work opportunities, and building partnerships for future training and employment placements for prisoners. The Board is impressed with senior management's innovative approach and dedication to trying new avenues for providing resettlement opportunity and employment, including attempting to set up its own employment agency.

There are, on average, just in excess of 100 prisoners eligible for full time work. Just over 20 prisoners have their own full time job. The introduction of the 40% PEA (Prisoners Earnings Act) during the year has impacted on prisoners going out to work given the added expense for Springhill prisoners especially when transportation costs are factored in. However, the prison has continued to develop transport schemes through its own vans and prison drivers. Senior management is also committed where possible to adjust the levy in order to support resettlement.

Housing/St Giles Trust

It has been a challenging year for St Giles at Springhill with the client base dominated by Lifers and ISP's. Although the majority of these cases are expected to be released into pre-approved premises, they have all been tasked with trying to find onward accommodation as part of their sentence plan. The men have approached St Giles in order to try and help them. These cases are dependent on whether the men are successful at parole in the first instance. This, coupled with delayed hearings and then notification of time to be spent in pre-approved, makes the work of the Trust extremely difficult. Much of the time is spent in communication with Client/Outside Probation and Springhill OMU for what can often be a fruitless task.

During 2011, St Giles engaged with 53 clients who required housing. Of this 53, 38 were housed directly by St Giles into supported accommodation. 10 Clients were assisted with HDC (Home Detention Curfew) accommodation through BASS, and 5 left either as NFA or with their own alternative accommodation. During 2011, the Trust made over 240 applications for supported accommodation places and housing register inclusions along with many ROTL's (Release on Town License) for interviews and assistance with Housing Benefit claims and helping clients either sustain or close their tenancy agreements.

There is a rolling caseload of anywhere between 100 and 170 clients at any given time. The office has been staffed on and off with three Peer Supporters (Serving offenders who have gained their NVQ Level 3 in Advice & Guidance), and one member of staff, working part time hours.

Visits

Visits continue to be well run and innovative. Several visits days have had themes which encouraged prisoners and families to engage together, including themes on aspects of diet and health and dental care.

Catering

The Board is concerned about the centralised buying of food, especially meat, which is of very poor quality. There has been significant difficulty with meeting sell by dates on supplies received. Ultimately, the costs have often proved much higher than if the prison were able to source food locally and independently.

There is significant disruption caused by the inefficiencies of maintenance of kitchen/catering equipment. The Board is concerned that equipment suppliers are not fulfilling their service agreements.

The Board would like to commend staff for achieving a good healthy diet despite the significant cost constraints. It should also be noted that food supply and equipment maintenance which cause most difficulties are the responsibility of outside agencies.

Drug Strategy

Drug issues are more limited at Springhill than at similar establishments. The fact that Springhill does have a more controlled drug problem is attributable to the close working relationship between security, healthcare, senior management and the drug services team. A drug strategy team with representatives from security, healthcare and senior management and CARATS meets monthly to share information and practice.

While the new IDTS program was scheduled to start in 2011, Springhill has received no prisoners on scripts during this time. The program was put further into question in 2011 with the announcement that drug services was to be included, going forward, in an out-sourced contract to be negotiated between the local authority (and subsequently the local healthcare authority) and the local drug services teams. This new contract will provide the basis for all drug services offered in the prison, including IDTS and CARATS (Counseling, Assessment, Referral, Advice, Throughcare) work. However at the end of 2011, the timing for the negotiation, award and commissioning of the contract and services remains vague. While the new contract for services may offer a future opportunity for new and innovative programs, in the short term, it does represent a significant risk to Springhill's favorable drugs track record. The factors contributing to this risk are:

- Reduction of drug testing and the absence of drugs dogs or the increased pressure on Springhill's budgets to replace the reduced level of testing or presence of drugs dogs
- Loss of continuity in successful programs on offer to the prisoners

- Potential loss of experienced drug services staff

This is an area which the IMB will monitor closely in the coming year.

It should be noted that the combined good effort of all staff resulted in a very low incidence of drug and or alcohol abuse over the end of year holiday period.

T Hut, which accommodates prisoners at risk from drug dependency has seen some disruption this year but was swiftly restored to good order by the combined hard work of the drug strategy team and security.

Chaplaincy

The Chaplaincy team continues to offer a diverse and responsive service and is well supported.

THE WORK OF THE BOARD

Members of the Board attended meetings and events throughout the year across the following subjects:

- Springhill Operations
- Healthcare and PCT
- Security
- Catering
- Drug Strategy
- Diversity
- Induction New staff
- Social events
- Carol Service
- Visits
- Prison Officers Association (POA)
- Training
- Safer Custody
- Resettlement
- Prison Council

Prisons visited/ IMB visits hosted

Over the last 12 months members of the IMB visited Whitemoor prison. They hosted a visit by members of the IMB from Ford Prison.

External training

The IMB Conference was attended by two members

Internal training

Members of the Board have had two full training mornings where we have had talks from various departments.

At the end of the year a new Vice Chair was appointed

Vice Chair – Margaret Cripps

BOARD STATISTICS - GRENDON	
Recommended Complement of Board Members	15
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	14
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	10
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	0
Number of members leaving within the reporting period	4
Total number of board meetings during reporting period	12
Average number of attendances at Board meetings during reporting period	10
Total number of applications received*	18

APPLICATIONS

There were only 18 IMB Applications from 15 prisoners in 2011.

The figures for 2010 were 29 from 19 prisoners.

Not all applications reflect safer custody implications. The reasons for the low number if IMB applications are the very active and effective Listener service operating in the Prison, the fact that many prisoners are near to completing their sentence and do not wish to draw attention to themselves, and many applications are dealt with verbally which can be solved quickly with the help of the Staff.

APPLICATIONS	
Accommodation	1
Education/employment/training	2
Bullying	1
Adjudication	2
Health related	4
ROTL	4
Visits	3
Confidential	1
Total	18

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of the Springhill Board and our IMB clerk for their hard work and support over the last 12 months.

Louise Hammond
IMB Chair, Springhill