



HMP Springhill

Annual Report

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

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Section 3

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

- 3.1 HMP Springhill is an open establishment (Category D) and accommodates up to 339 adult men. Prisoners are those who can be trusted in open conditions, including those coming to the end of their long sentences and those serving shorter sentences.
- 3.2 Springhill was the first open prison in the country, and opened in 1953. The “Big House” was built as a family home in 1872 and used in wartime as a base for MI6 and then Special Operations Executive (SOE).
- 3.3 All prisoners not serving a short sentence are encouraged to join a resettlement scheme which allows them to carry out work for the local community and to seek full time work and work experience for the last months of their sentences.
- 3.4 The prison releases approximately 90 men daily into the community to carry out charity work and assist with other community-based projects. About 30 prisoners are on Home Leave at any one time. There are around 200 movements in and out of the prison each day.
- 3.5 Prisoners are accommodated in 13 huts, each with a communal lounge, kitchenette, showers and separate toilets. There are three huts with 40 single rooms each – these are allocated according to a structured incentive system. Office accommodation and Springs Restaurant (used by visitors and staff from Springhill and Grendon) are in the Big House.
- 3.6 HMP Springhill is jointly managed with HMP Grendon (located next door), and a single Independent Monitoring Board (the Board) monitors both prisons. Although sharing a number of common services (e.g. the dental suite in Grendon), and therefore able to share some staff, Springhill and Grendon operate as separate units and exist for very different purposes.
- 3.7 Healthcare is provided by Care UK under contract with the local PCT. A drug and alcohol intervention service contract was awarded to Inclusion during 2012.
- 3.8 Education was provided by Manchester College until September 2012 when the contract was awarded to Milton Keynes College.

Section 4

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 4.1 In January 2012, Jamie Bennett joined Springhill as the new Governor and Laura Sapwell joined as the new Deputy Governor. No large changes were made to the running of the prison but preparing for the Fair and Sustainable regime, which was introduced to the prison service nationally, took up a significant proportion of the management's time.
- 4.2 The focus at Springhill is resettlement and employment, helping prisoners to take back responsibility for their lives and return to life outside.
- 4.3 The prison population continues to evolve, with the proportion of Indeterminate Sentence Prisoners (ISPs) increasing further. The number of older prisoners is also increasing: some come with complex health issues.
- 4.4 The Board has attracted several new members during the year and at the end of the year (December 2012) was at full complement.

ISSUES OF CONCERN

- 4.5 The Board's main concerns are the quality of prisoner accommodation and the cleanliness of the Healthcare Centre. The additional points are issues to which it would like to draw attention.

Prisoner accommodation – deterioration of building fabric

The Board remains very concerned about the fabric of the buildings at Springhill, in particular the huts providing prisoner accommodation. Although the showers in two huts have been refurbished during 2012, the fabric continues to deteriorate overall. Whilst X Hut showers were being refurbished, 20 rooms were out of use. The prisoners keep the huts as clean as possible in difficult circumstances. The accommodation issue was also highlighted in the March 2012 Re-Inspection of Springhill by HM Inspectorate of Prisons.

Healthcare – cleanliness of the Centre

The cleanliness of the Healthcare Centre is unacceptable despite an infection control action plan, although the coordination between various providers has improved since 2011.

Farms & Gardens project - sustainability

This project commenced in 2011, and was commended by the Board last year and again this as an area of excellence. However, at the end of the year there are signs that the project may not be sustainable in the long term, due to a range of funding-related issues which may impact in future on staffing levels and the range of courses available.

Balance of prisoner population and implications for services being provided

The prisoner population continues to evolve, with an increasing proportion of Indeterminate Sentence Prisoners (ISPs), as well as an older age profile. These factors bring cultural and healthcare challenges of concern to the Board, since ISP Prisoners can create greater demands on Prison and Probation staff.

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'Fair and Sustainable'

The Board felt that although the movement towards implementing the Fair and Sustainable working practices has so far been handled by staff and management in a practical and amicable manner, it has inevitably produced fears and tensions in all who are affected by it. As it will not be fully 'live' until April it remains to be seen how this will translate into a harmonious and efficient regime.

Catering

The national contract with 3663 was renewed in 2012 but the quality of food continues to be a concern. Additionally the deliveries are often wrong or have missing items, causing unnecessary extra work for the catering staff.

AREAS OF EXCELLENCE

4.6 We would highlight the following areas of excellence during 2012:

Dedication and commitment of staff

Staff is professional and interested in introducing new initiatives to support prisoners – including celebrating a range of religious festivals, introducing a Thinking Skills course and establishing a job agency.

Work on resettlement, including established partnership with voluntary & community sector organisations

A Focus Group of more than 20 statutory and voluntary sector organisations is well established, ensuring prisoners are inducted into open prison life, prepared for resettlement and if necessary supported on release. This partnership is an important element of life at Springhill.

Prisoner Council

This new forum for discussion originally established in 2011, continued to develop in 2012. By the end of the year it was meeting regularly and was well attended by staff and prisoners reflecting all areas of Springhill. The Council sponsored the publication of the "Spring Onion" newsletter addressed to prisoners and staff.

Farms & Gardens Project

Using the original walled garden and orchard, the project provides training and work opportunities for prisoners, and supplies local restaurants and the Springhill Farm Shop (open daily from 12.00 to 14.00 and staffed by prisoners) with high quality seasonal produce. (However, its sustainability is an area of concern to the Board – see above.) It is partly Big Lottery funded, and during 2012 over 80 prisoners worked on the gardens, producing fruit and vegetables for local restaurants. There are 4 paid prisoner employees. Courses are offered in land-based studies, conservation and horticulture.

Constructing a new eco-build facility

Providing training and work opportunities, this project is using the latest environmentally friendly construction materials and techniques to create a new facility (conference rooms) for the prison whilst training prisoners in valuable new skills and qualifications.

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Section 5

OBLIGATORY REPORTS

5.1 Equality & Inclusion

As reported in the annual report last year the post of manager in charge of Diversity in Springhill was eliminated at the end of 2011. Instead all staff is being trained in Diversity matters and it is the intention that everyone takes responsibility for this area rather than referring to one manager.

An increasing number of religious festivals and other events are celebrated at Springhill, including the annual rededication of the first Buddha Grove in a UK prison, and a visit by Eva Schloss to the Anne Frank exhibition in August. Over forty prisoners observed Ramadan in 2012, with supportive arrangements in the canteen. Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month was marked with food and cultural events.

The Catering department have regular special meals for different ethnic groups in the prison as well as meeting the day to day dietary needs of different religious groups.

Most mainstream religions are represented by chaplains or visiting chaplains who are frequently available and take services regularly.

5.2 Education, Learning & Skills

The contract for education provision transferred from Manchester College to Milton Keynes College in August 2012, and the Board will be monitoring the new contract closely as education provision - and learning and skills overall - was a cause for concern in 2011. The department is shared between Grendon and Springhill.

Funding for courses is linked to completion rates, and the department is working with Employment Links to ensure prisoners complete a training course before moving on to community work. This is something the Board will monitor in 2013. Courses are becoming more employment focused.

The Picta workshop is a unique partnership between Milton Keynes College and the prison, with the College providing tutors and HMP funding the workshop which runs the courses. In 2012 prisoners could access qualifications in all aspects of IT – call centres, sales, networking etc.

Opportunities for the Library to work more closely with Education have been discussed during 2012 but not implemented (for example, using the new seating area for basic skills courses, and stocking resources for a sustainable building course). The Library is run jointly with Grendon. The library is run by Buckinghamshire County Library, and will be retendered in April 2013: the Board will monitor the new contract arrangements with interest, with the hope that librarian contact time with prisoners will be maximised under the new contract.

5.3 Healthcare

The Board is happy to report that, compared to previous years, (see particularly IMB Springhill reports for 2010 & 2011) improvements have been made during 2012. Communications between the various bodies who are involved in the provision of

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healthcare have greatly improved. There are now regular monthly contract meetings, chaired by NHS Buckinghamshire PCT, to monitor all the services that they commission which has succeeded in improving all the services provided. The IMB attend and monitor these meetings.

Care UK has worked hard to improve its services. Its workforce has stabilised and it has employed two practitioner nurses who hold clinics and prescribe when needed. Complaints have been significantly reduced and Care UK is now responding promptly to any complaints received. For part of the year, CareUK held meetings with Prisoner representatives, although this has now been integrated into the Prison Council meetings.

Cleanliness of the Healthcare centre continues to be a concern. Although the PCT conducted an infection control action plan, the prison was slow to respond. The prison employed an outside firm to carry out a deep clean of the centre, but this was recognised by all concerned as being to an unsatisfactory standard.

In the newly opened gymnasium, a protocol with Healthcare should ensure that concerns about excessive bodybuilding and steroid use are monitored and contained, as well as monitoring training by prisoners taking prescription painkillers.

By the end of the year, plans to refurbish the healthcare centre had been formulated for early 2013 – this is an area the Board will monitor closely.

Dental Practice: the dental services run by Haddenham Dental have greatly improved in the year. The newly refurbished dental suite in Grendon is a great success. Although there are no dental services in Springhill, prisoners are escorted to Grendon for treatment. Waiting lists were reduced from 2011, and all emergencies see the same day if possible.

Pharmacy: Lloyds Pharmacy is providing a reasonable service and the communication with Care UK has been greatly improved although there have been difficulties with deliveries. Lost or illegible prescriptions written on faxes have been eliminated by use of a computer system (systemOne).

Optometry: there is now a good optometry service in Springhill, with a revised booking system and 100% attendance. The clinic has been busy with prisoners not going on Town Visits, and a further clinic will be held in early 2013.

5.3 Purposeful Activity, including work

During their time at Springhill, prisoners progress from induction, to unpaid work on camp, to paid work – which may be on camp or outside.

The Focus Group of statutory and voluntary sector organisations plays an important role in both providing work opportunities and facilitating resettlement. It meets quarterly, and a Board member attends when possible. The Focus Group includes, for example, Employment Links, St Giles Trust (housing advice), Gamblers Anonymous, Prisoner Council. Prisoners are assessed during induction in their first week at Springhill, and may also be supported on release.

Employment Links ensures that a range of employment opportunities is available to prisoners, for example verge and roadside maintenance, volunteering with Citizens Advice Bureaux and in charity shops. It works with charities and small businesses and other organisations. Prisoners are also prepared for employment with an

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intensive programme over the 3 months before release.

Springs Job Agency is becoming more established, working in conjunction with Employment Links and other private agencies. It is based on site and is still in its infancy, researching new local opportunities for prisoners to obtain paid work.

Farms & Gardens Project - This project is partly Big Lottery funded. During 2012, over 80 prisoners worked on the gardens, producing vegetables and fruit for local restaurants and for sale in the shop (which since March 2012 has been open daily between 12.00 and 14.00hrs, staffed by prisoners). There are 4 paid employees on the camp, including one man who continued to work on the project after his release.

Eco build - This started on site during early 2012, and is managed by the Learning & Skills Department. Eight prisoners at any given time are working on the building, using environmentally friendly construction techniques being used locally at new developments in Bicester, so in future prisoners may find employment on these sites. There is also the potential to use similar techniques in future building projects at Springhill.

Springs Restaurant - up to 5 prisoners work in the restaurant, and 5 in the kitchen. Prisoners speak highly of the training and experience, and some go on to obtain paid employment in restaurants and cafes.

5.4 Resettlement

All prisoners who come to Springhill follow a pathway from induction to assessment and work on camp, then community work and, finally, full time paid work. Some 80 to 90 prisoners will be off-camp (ROTL, Home Leave etc) on any one day.

On-camp work has continued to expand – 2012 examples include work on the refurbishment of the shower blocks, the eco-building and Farms & Gardens project. Officers have continued to develop new avenues for employment, using the 11 vehicle transport fleet to take prisoners to work. The Prisoners Earnings Act (PEA) 40% levy is adjusted where possible to support resettlement.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) on employment on resettlement continue to be met, and opportunities for full-time employment on release are being developed in particular with construction companies on sites in the area.

Housing Advice is provided by St Giles Trust: this is an essential element of the resettlement regime. Trained Peer Advisors work with a part time member of staff, and interview every prisoner during his first week at Springhill to identify any housing needs on release. The Trust also makes other interventions, including help with tenancies, Housing Benefits, and liaises with the healthcare Mental Health Team where necessary.

ISPs and Lifers are generally released into pre-approved premises, but have to find onward accommodation as part of their sentence plan. They can spend an unpredictable length of time in pre-approved accommodation

During 2012, St Giles saw 406 clients at induction and made 268 housing applications. The average rolling caseload is 100. Prisoners speak very highly of the

assistance and advice available, including help with transport to interviews, or via a video link. Eight peer advisors worked in the St Giles office, and 52 clients were housed during the year.

Courses are offered in land-based studies, conservation and horticulture, and in 2012 over 50 qualifications were awarded to prisoners. Although funding for prisoner qualifications stopped in September 2012, Abingdon & Witney College funded the final weeks of courses for prisoners. In 2013 it is hoped that Milton Keynes College will secure funding to deliver similar subject-based courses.

5.5 Safer Custody

The quality and commitment to safer custody was very good with only 3 ACCTs (Assessment Care in Custody Teamwork reports) opened in the year.

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. However, this did not detract in any way from the commitment to Safer Custody by management and staff, as demonstrated on a daily basis and as the statistics confirm overall:

- 2 Anti-bullying documents opened in 2012 (4 in 2011);
- 13 Racial incidents in 2012 (8 in 2011);
- 8 Absconds in 2012 (6 in 2011); and
- 10 Failure to Returns in 2012 (14 in 2011).

5.6 Security

Security issues revolve mainly around the presence of mobile phones and illegal and legal drugs/highs. The prison council has repeatedly highlighted the incidence of queue-jumping in both the town visits queue and the queue for the dining hall.

5.6 Drug Strategy

Issues relating to drug misuse including prescription drugs were handled by a combination of security, healthcare and drug support staff. However the lack of a dedicated drug strategy team inevitably led to some lack of integration of all of these areas with respect to communication and implementation of drug policies and support of prisoners. The Board is pleased that this has been recognised by senior management and will be rectified in 2013. This may allow for the resumption of some compliance testing, as well as a better integration of the mandatory drug testing undertaken by Security.

All men arriving at Springhill are made aware of the existence of the additional support available in T Hut, with access to a DART worker. However, anecdotally, the availability of legal and illegal highs is increasing. Legal highs present a particular problem because of the difficulty of testing for new substances. There is random testing for alcohol and other substances for prisoners returning from Town Visits and Home Leave. If substances are detected, the prisoner is transferred to Grendon for recovery and removal (see below).

The new drug support services contract between the PCT and Inclusion, the new services provider, came into effect in 2012. However delivery of new services will not be realised until 2013 under the terms of the contract.

5.7 Segregation Unit

Springhill does not have a segregation unit. However, facilities at Grendon have been used as an effective short term segregation unit for prisoners at Springhill who are “lodged” on Grendon wings pending removal to other prisons. The Board is concerned that Healthcare at Grendon, and the Board, are not always notified when prisoners are sent to Grendon.

5.8 Residential Services: Accommodation, Food, Catering & Kitchens

Accommodation: The Board is very concerned about the worsening condition of the prisoner residential accommodation (The Huts) at Springhill. Shower blocks on two huts were refurbished in 2012; nonetheless, the overall fabric is deteriorating although the Blue Band prisoners ensure communal areas are kept clean and tidy. This issue was highlighted in the March 2012 Re-Inspection of Springhill by HM Inspectorate of Prisons.

Food, Catering & Kitchens: As reported in 2011, the Board is concerned about the centralised buying of food, especially meat, which is sometimes of very poor quality. It remains a widely held belief that the costs are higher than if the prison were able to source food locally and independently.

As with HMP Grendon, the lack of accuracy in fulfilling the food orders by contractors 3663 has also continued to be a source of extra work and irritation to the catering staff. Sometimes the wrong food is supplied and at others the wrong quantities.

Equipment in the kitchens appears to fail on a frequent basis, and repairs take a while, apparently for a variety of reasons (contractors, contracts, fault reporting delays, obtaining parts etc.).

Despite these difficulties, the staff should be praised for maintaining a high standard of catering, often commented on favourably by prisoners.

Section 6

OTHER AREAS

None to report.

Section 7

THE WORK OF THE BOARD

7.1 Meetings Attended

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

- Springhill Senior Management Team
- Healthcare/Buckinghamshire PCT
- Security
- Catering
- Drug Strategy (now discontinued)
- Diversity
- Induction of new staff
- Social events, including Carol Service
- Visits
- Prison Officers Association
- Training
- Safer Custody
- Resettlement
- Prison Council

7.2 Prisons visited/hosted

In 2012 members of the Board visited Gartree prison in March and hosted a visit from the same prison in September.

7.3 External training/conferences

Members of the Board have attended the following external training courses:

- C & R training
- The IMB Conference was attended by 2 members

7.4 Internal training

Members of the Board have had 9 training mornings in 2012 when talks from various departments in the prisons were given. The Board is grateful for the time and effort given by those members of the prison staff that gave these informative talks.

7.5 Appointments

During the year a new Chair (Margaret Cripps) and Vice Chair (Huxley Cowen) were appointed, their tenure to start at the beginning of 2013. Roy Hawley was elected to continue as BDO.

7.6 Board Statistics

BOARD STATISTICS: IMB GRENDON & SPRINGHILL	
Recommended Complement of Board Members	15
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	10
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	13
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	7
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

7.7 Applications

There were a total of 26 IMB Applications from 22 prisoners in 2012. Although this is an increase from 2011 of 18 IMB Applications from 15 prisoners, the number remains low.

Some of the reasons for the low number 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
- the introduction of the Prison Council, which has helped further to create and maintain good relationships between Management, Staff and Prisoners and to contribute overall to the safer custody of the prison.

APPLICATIONS BY SUBJECT	2012	2011
Healthcare	7	
Returned late from Town Visit	6	
Property	2	
Resettlement	2	
Discipline/Racial	3	
Adjudication	1	
Disability Needs	1	
Money Transfer	1	
Mobile Phone	1	
Bullying	1	
Confidential	1	
Total	26	18

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

Louise Hammond
IMB Chair, Grendon & Springhill

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