



INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

HMP STAFFORD

ANNUAL REPORT
1 May 2011 to 30 April 2012

CONTENTS

| <u>Section 1</u> | <u>Page</u> |
|---|-------------|
| 1. Statutory Role of the IMB and Diversity Statement | 2 |
| <u>Section 2</u> | |
| 2. Description and Function of the Prison..... | 3 |
| <u>Section 3</u> | |
| 3. Executive Summary | 4 |
| <u>Section 4</u> | |
| 4. Areas reported on | |
| 4.1 Diversity/Equality and Inclusion | 5 |
| 4.2 Learning and Skills | 6 |
| 4.3 Healthcare and Mental Health | 8 |
| 4.4 Safer Custody..... | 9 |
| 4.5 Segregation | 10 |
| <u>Section 5</u> | |
| 5. Other Areas of the Prison where the IMB had Commendations/Concerns | |
| 5.1 Regime | 11 |
| 5.2 Security | 12 |
| 5.3 Resettlement | 13 |
| 5.4 Prisoner Council | 14 |
| 5.5 Kitchen/Catering | 14 |
| 5.6 Chaplaincy..... | 15 |
| 5.7 PE..... | 16 |
| <u>Section 6</u> | |
| 6. The Work of the IMB at HMP Stafford | 17 |
| <u>Annex</u> | |
| 7. Statistics..... | 18 |

SECTION 1

STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB AND DIVERSITY STATEMENT

1. The Prisons Act 1952 requires every prison to be monitored by an Independent Board appointed by the Justice Secretary from members of the community in which the prison is situated.
2. The Board is specifically charged to:
 - (a) 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;
 - (b) inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority, as it judges appropriate, any concern it has;
 - (c) 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 custody.
3. 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, with limited exceptions, to the prison's records.

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

4. HMP Stafford is committed to an inclusive approach to diversity which encompasses and promotes greater interaction and understanding between people of different backgrounds including race, religion, gender, nationality, sexuality, marital status, disability and age. It also recognises that a fully inclusive approach to diversity must also respond to differences that cut across social and cultural categories, such as mental health and literacy.
5. The Board values this approach to diversity within its recruitment and board development practices. It wishes to increase its repertoire of skills and promote awareness amongst its members of the diverse needs and perspectives of the prison population.
6. All members of HMP Stafford IMB will undertake their duties in a manner that is accessible to everyone within the establishment regardless of their background or social situation. The Board will monitor to establish that the experiences and interaction between staff, prisoners, detainees and visitors are fair and without prejudice. Where this is not the case, the Board will alert appropriate authorities and individuals including senior management, the Deputy Director for Custody and the Prisons Minister.

SECTION 2

DESCRIPTION AND FUNCTION OF THE PRISON

7. HMP Stafford is a category C adult male training establishment with a certified normal accommodation of 741. On 30 April 2012, 330 vulnerable and 406 mainstream prisoners were held. It is near the town centre and is one of the oldest prisons in the country with many areas 'listed' for planning purposes.

8. Each of the six main blocks has four landings and each has accommodation for over 100 prisoners mostly in double cells. Each wing has in-cell sanitation and a shower room. The Main Hall comprises A, B and C wings and accommodates mainstream prisoners. D wing has mainstream prisoners too but is also used for detox and drug therapy and is used as a healthy living unit. It is also used for induction and accommodates the Healthcare Centre and the Segregation Unit which is located below. The Crescent houses E and F wings for vulnerable prisoners, with F wing also being used for induction. G wing, which is a single cell, two storey prefabricated building for 40 prisoners, was constructed in 2004 and is now used as part of the successful 'Stepping Stones' project which is available to all prisoners on a compact prior to transfer to category D prisons. The good quality of accommodation and facilities on G wing is in stark contrast to the rest of the prison.

9. There is a visitors' centre in a building opposite the prison, also a visits room and tea bar within the prison itself. There are 10 workshops providing a variety of activities.

10. As at 30 April 2012 the number of full time staff was 352, 8.5 posts fewer than the previous year. Efficiency savings of £347,000 were required in 2011/12.

11. Healthcare facilities, including dentistry and chiropody, are provided by Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Trust (PCT), education services by Manchester College, library services by Staffordshire County Council.

12. There are many voluntary organisations supporting the prisoners. Among them are Samaritans (support for Listeners), Halow Trust (Visitors' Centre), Shannon Trust ('Toe by Toe' reading project), prison visitors, chaplaincy volunteers, Bereavement and Loss Counselling service and refreshment provision in the visits centre.

13. HMP Stafford was inspected by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons in July 2011 who reported that outcomes had been maintained and that in one area, activities, outcomes were good.

14. In April 2011 Governor Peter Small was seconded and later appointed director to HMP Birmingham. His deputy, Governor Padley, led the prison until January 2012 when the current Governor, Bridie Oakes-Richards, was appointed.

SECTION 3

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

15. The Board is asked to report on five main areas of the prison (Section 4) and to comment on any other areas where it has concerns or where it wishes to cite examples of excellence (Section 5). The majority of areas monitored at HMP Stafford continue to work effectively. It is grateful to the management and staff for the cooperation during the course of its work.

16. The Board would commend the management and staff for the following:

- (a) It has been aware of several occasions when staff at the prison have used great initiative and gone to exceptional lengths to meet the individual needs of some prisoners;
- (b) It agrees with OFSTED in finding Education excellent;
- (c) It continues to appreciate the personalised approach of the Segregation Unit;
- (d) It values the environmentally friendly and profit making work of the Waste Management Unit;
- (e) It welcomes the continued improvements to the outdoor areas with regard to planters and gardens.

17. The Board has raised the following concerns during the reporting period and asks that the Governor resolve these problems:

- (a) From the previous report we consider the following issues need, still, to be successfully resolved:
 - (i) supervision and appearance of the children's crèche in the Visits Room (5.3);
 - (ii) completion of the treatment room on C wing (4.3);
 - (iii) provision of increased dental sessions by a permanent dentist (4.3);
 - (iv) failure to hold, or pre-warn of the cancellation of, meetings which the IMB monitor (4.4).
- (b) Section 5.1 for the many concerns which the Board has in respect of the regime.

18. Questions for the Minister and National Offender Management Service (NOMS):

- (a) The Board is very concerned about the existence and treatment of so many prisoners who are imprisoned for an indeterminate sentence for public protection (IPP) (5.3). When will IPP prisoners be able to access, as part of their sentence plans, appropriate courses to ensure discharge and resettlement?
- (b) The Board is worried that, although efficiency savings needed to be made (Section 2), the impact on staff morale and efficiency will increase, particularly with the advent of the Fair and Sustainable restructuring initiative. Can the Minister assure the Board that prisoners will not suffer disproportionately as a result?

SECTION 4

AREAS REPORTED ON

4.1 Diversity/Equality and Inclusion

19. Overall it was the Board's opinion that issues of diversity at HMP Stafford were managed by a dedicated but small team who was enthusiastic and proactive. This is in spite of the absence of a full time officer to lead this area.

20. The prison devised a comprehensive, new strategy to meet its statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The post of Equalities Manager was part time (0.5). Administrative support was provided for 15 hours weekly. Equality Action Group (EAG) meetings were held monthly and were usually well attended by prisoner representatives and operational staff. Diversity representatives played an active part in these meetings.

21. During the reporting period 99 Discrimination Incident Reporting Forms (DIRF) were received of which 15 were upheld. A named Governor was responsible for assuring that a good quality of responses to prisoners was given.

Age

22. In April 2012 there were 128 prisoners aged over 50 in HMP Stafford. A Governor and a senior nurse oversaw their needs. Retired prisoners were offered a social room each day and the Senior Support Group had active representation at the EAG meetings. Such was the demand for places that additional accommodation had to be made to meet it.

Disability

23. The Head of Healthcare oversaw this "strand" and liaised with the appropriate agencies when issues arose. Prisoners were asked to declare disability on reception but often did not do so until they had been in prison for some time. The Board is of the opinion that this area needs a higher profile and will monitor this area closely under the auspices of the Equality Act 2010.

Race

24. Approximately 25% of prisoners at HMP Stafford were from a minority ethnic background. Of the number of DIRFs submitted during the reporting period, this group revealed the highest number of complaints which the Board will continue to monitor.

Foreign Nationals (FNPs)

25. The Board welcomed the reduced number of FNP prisoners held in HMP Stafford during the reporting period. The FNP officer was effective in her role and meetings were well organised and productive. FNPs were met with regularly. Translators were used to good effect. The Board was pleased that choice was offered to certain FNP IPPs to be returned to their country of origin on completion of the sentence tariff. It was a concern that FNPs were still not being transferred rapidly on completion of their sentences to a detention/immigration centre. Despite recent improvements, the Board would welcome a reduction in the length of time sentence expired prisoners under an IS91 authority are retained at HMP Stafford.

Gay/Bi-Sexual/Transgender

26. The Board commended the work of this particularly inclusive and additional “strand”. The group increased in number and worked to publicise its existence within the prison. It had active links to outside agencies.

Gypsy/Traveller/Romany

27. The Board commended the work being developed. 10 prisoners were identified during the reporting period. Links with Creative Arts and Learning and Skills helped meet their needs and celebrate the culture of this group of prisoners.

Ex-Services

28. This active group was highly effective in supporting vulnerable veterans in custody. Developments during the reporting period were of a Personal Development Portfolio to aid resettlement and the production of a magazine for veterans and other interested parties.

4.2 Learning and Skills

Education

29. There was an excellent OFSTED inspection in July 2011 under the effective leadership of the manager. All areas were judged to be good with some outstanding features. It was overall one of the best performing departments within the Category C Estate.

30. A large range of educational opportunities was offered, ranging from the very basic ‘Getting Started’ class to 30 men taking diploma or degree courses through distance learning. A specialist teacher was appointed to work with those with learning difficulties and disabilities.

31. There was a waiting list for most courses. Throughout the year 90% of the students were retained.

32. The IMB seldom had complaints about education. Student surveys showed a high level of satisfaction with the courses on offer and the staff was described as 'professional, helpful, friendly and supportive'.

33. Expressive and Creative Arts continued to make a lively contribution to prison life. In the reporting period, over 100 entries were submitted for the Koestler Trust Awards, the largest number so far at HMP Stafford.

34. Hospitality and Catering went from strength to strength. The Board welcomed such innovations as 'Banged up and Mash', a café which opened to the wider prison staff at lunch times twice weekly. The Board used this facility to entertain visitors from other IMBs.

35. The 'soft skills' needed in preparation for employment, self employment and general resettlement after release were embedded into all courses.

36. The Board welcomed the introduction of a National Certificate of Further Education (NCFE) qualification in peer mentoring which would result in a formal qualification for the men working as classroom assistants.

37. There was a concern that the buildings were not used well out of hours. There were staff and volunteers willing to work in the evenings and on Saturdays but apparently this could not be accommodated within prison staff's working hours.

38. The Board would like to see greater publicity for the Education Department eg lockable display boards. It would also be useful to have information at the gate to raise the department's profile.

39. The Board would welcome greater support and interest from the Senior Management Team in this successful department.

Library

40. The Board commended the continuing invaluable service to the prison by the library, for instance Storybook Dads, Toe by Toe and Saturday Word Club. Book issues were still increasing. The service was promoted well.

41. The support offered by the line manager governor was much appreciated for his attempts to fully integrate the library into the wider establishment.

42. The Board urges the prison management to consider further access for the prisoners to the library over weekends and evenings.

Vocational Training Centre

43. This provision did much to enhance the prison's role as a progressive training establishment, especially with regard to resettlement.

44. Workshops continued to work to nearly full capacity.

45. Hourly rates of pay had again not increased. This continued to be a cause of discontent amongst prisoners.

4.3 Healthcare and Mental Health

46. The department continued to function very effectively and Clinical Governance meetings proved to be an excellent forum for the resolution/reporting of issues between the prison and service providers. The Board received few complaints from prisoners.

47. The Healthcare Department was fully staffed during the reporting period. Financial constraint meant that, in the event of staff absences, no additional resources were available to provide cover.

48. Waiting times for dentistry had been of concern for some time. The dentist retired in March 2012 without immediate replacement. Meanwhile, waiting lists, having previously reduced within acceptable levels, increased yet again. The Board would again welcome the provision of three weekly (currently two) dentistry sessions on a permanent basis.

49. As previously reported, most medication was dispensed at treatment rooms on wings. However, the treatment room on C wing was still not completed.

50. Provision of ancillary services eg chiropody, optical, healthcare promotion, diabetes care etc, was well embedded and operated effectively.

51. Both primary and secondary mental healthcare teams continued to deliver good support to prisoners. Mental health awareness training for prisoners, peer support, Listeners and prison staff were provided on request. The Board continued to applaud the work of the anxiety and combat stress groups which helped to support prisoners and their preparation for release.

52. The Board would welcome the extension of the successful Health Champions Project on to all the main wings. This project has begun well with the vulnerable prisoners.

Drugs

53. This department continued to function as effectively as possible given the increased use of drugs by prisoners.

54. All prisoners were assessed by Healthcare staff on reception or as part of random, suspicion based or risk assessment testing. Referrals could be made to CARAT (Counsellor Assessment, Referral, Advice Throughcare) and demand was demonstrated for the Building Skills for Recovery (BSR) Programmes.

55. The opening of a designated Integrated Drug Treatment Systems (IDTS) suite was welcomed as a more suitable and safer environment for prisoners needing care and support. Of concern to the Board was the lack of IDTS meetings held during the reporting period.

4.4 Safer Custody

56. Overall the Board's perception was that HMP Stafford prisoners were safe.

57. There had been two deaths in custody, for which inquests were awaited, in the reporting period. The Board extended its sympathies to the families. A reconvened inquest on a prisoner who died on 15 December 2006 will take place in November 2012.

58. The Board commended the caring and thorough way in which staff and management supported colleagues, prisoners and also the families of the bereaved. The line manager governor most centrally involved in the two deaths invested considerable time and sensitivity.

59. The use of Assessment Care in Custody Treatment documents (ACCTs) was now more common. The procedures involved were effective and the documentation accurate.

60. Listeners continued to be trained well by the local branch of Samaritans. Their presence was introduced into reception where there was a small room for sharing problems on arrival. The bar chart, devised by a prisoner, indicating the patterns of ACCTs, self harm and Listener time, was always produced at the Safer Custody meetings. It showed that, although more listening hours were listed as being spent with vulnerable prisoners in E and F wings, there had been no overall decrease in the number of complaints from prisoners on these wings.

61. Prisoners' medical records routinely accompanied them on arrival. They were always reviewed by staff and seen within 24 hours by Healthcare.

62. The Board was concerned that the Safer Custody meetings were sometimes cancelled by the prison without notifying the IMB, nor were the channels of communication (via the IMB Clerk) correct. Agendas and minutes were often not given in advance. While attendance at these meetings was

good, it was felt that the presence of the wing staff was key to the success of these meetings, yet their attendance was sporadic.

4.5 Segregation

63. For most of the reporting period prisoner numbers continued to remain low in the Segregation Unit (Seg). The staff managed the prisoners very well; they used a creative, imaginative, flexible and personalised approach which was to be commended. They worked very well as a team.

64. It was rare for prisoners to be held on an open ACCT. All documents were well recorded, reviewed and accessible.

65. Reviews of prisoners were well handled and well attended by the appropriate staff. The IMB always monitored the reviews, along with some adjudications. Prisoners spoke freely in a non-threatening atmosphere. Their targets were followed up by staff, not just in the Seg but later on the wing, in order to ensure continued progress there. This good practice was very effective.

66. The IMB was pleased to record that there was always a member of Healthcare in attendance. It was accepted that staff with psychology training were not available for the Rule 45 but the Psychology Department was available for members to visit. Healthcare could and did answer most concerns regarding mental health at the Rule 45 review.

67. IMB members always visited all prisoners in the Seg, whether they were involved in the Rule 45 or on cellular confinement. The staff had made available a new seating area where the IMB could speak more privately with the prisoners, although it was understood that the staff's advice on the wisdom of conversing one-to-one had to be taken for security reasons.

68. The Board was pleased to note that, in spite of two changes in the prison's leadership in this period, it was still largely understood by prisoners that poor behaviour would not be rewarded with a transfer from HMP Stafford.

69. On most occasions the IMB was informed of arrivals to the Seg but this practice was less consistent and less correct in terms of using the IMB clerk as first point of contact in the second half of the reporting period.

70. The quarterly SMARG (Separation, Monitoring and Review Group) meetings were usually held but minutes were not always available until the meeting itself. Meetings were not attended by a consistent group of personnel, nor led by the same Governor, resulting in unsatisfactory continuity and sometimes outcomes.

SECTION 5

OTHER AREAS OF THE PRISON WHERE THE IMB HAD COMMENDATIONS/CONCERNS

5.1 Regime

Commendations

71. Kit - the trial of prisoners' own clothing on C wing was welcomed by the Board.
72. Post – the innovative use of e-mail for prisoners receiving post was an improvement, quicker and cheaper for all concerned.
73. Showers – there had been some improvement in daily access but the Board felt it necessary to continue to monitor this closely.
74. Phones – access had improved.
75. Alarms – prisoners' feelings of safety were enhanced by the installation of a new electronic bell in each cell.
76. Hygiene – IMB members were pleased that the wings were usually clean, tidy and well maintained.

Concerns

77. Kit – the IMB had received frequent complaints about the quantity and quality of kit. Inadequate gym kit had led to non-attendance at the gym.
78. Laundry – some prisoners were reluctant to entrust prison kit and their own clothing to the prison laundry as no effective system was in place to ensure its safe return.
79. IMB application forms – these were often missing from the boxes on the wings resulting in prisoners not being able to use the IMB application system effectively. On B wing there was no box at all in spite of many requests to the Governor.
80. Prisoners' visits – there were difficulties during some of the reporting period but the line manager governor had dealt with these effectively. The Board will continue to monitor the effectiveness of the new electronic booking system shared with other prisons in the region.
81. Personal officer scheme – this was still not well embedded and was a concern to the Board, as it was to the HMCIP during the reporting period.

82. Incentives and Earned Privileges (IEP) – the Board accepted that it had to monitor IEP reviews at weekends, even though there was no certain way of knowing when and where these would happen. It was concerned that the full range of this rewards and sanctions system was not used effectively or in a measured way by staff, especially ‘enhanced’ and ‘basic’. Many of the complaints to the Board alluded to this. Not all wing staff recorded formally the negatives and positives of prisoners’ behaviour. As a result the IEP status was not necessarily an accurate reflection of the prisoner.

83. Litter – although attempts were made to clear litter on a regular basis, it was noted that it was still a problem, especially near the mosque. The Board wished to see prisoners taking greater responsibility in this area.

84. Wing visit audit trail – when visiting the wings neither a visitor’s sheet or an observations book were routinely available to Board members. It was not always easy to access a prison officer, not just because they were very busy but also because they congregated sometimes in non-productive groups.

85. Induction – the Board was still concerned that IMB leaflets were not often distributed and the timings of induction still varied without prior notification to the Board.

86. B wing – complaints were still received about the lack of heat during cold weather periods.

87. Prisoner complaints – these were monitored monthly by the IMB and wing issues were usually the most common cause of concern.

88. Lock down time – the Board was concerned about the length of time prisoners spent locked in cells after work/education. Greater efforts needed to be made to extend periods of association.

89. Legal mail – unnecessary delays of the delivery of legal mail to prisoners were found. Representations were made to senior management and limited improvement was noted.

5.2 Security

90. The Board was pleased to note continuity of Governor presence during the reporting period. The meetings were effectively managed with well-structured agendas and comprehensive minutes to follow.

91. IMB observer presence was welcomed. Although it was understood why paperwork had to be handed back and no notes could be taken, members found this unhelpful when sharing information with the rest of the Board at a later date. As the meetings were sometimes rescheduled at short notice some prison officers were absent and consequently unable to speak for the entire wing of prisoners they represented.

92. The IMB still had concerns about security in the Visits Hall. The line manager governor had responded to these concerns earlier in the year, resulting in more effective supervision by the circulation of Operational Support Grades (OSGs) and officers. However, the dog and its handler, as a result of budget cuts, were not always present and when they were it was more common to see them on less busy afternoons. The Board recommends that the same team of officers is dedicated to this area to ensure continuity of security through enhanced specialism.

5.3 Resettlement

93. The Head of Resettlement Governor had organised the department effectively in the reporting period. Meetings were held regularly, minutes were available. Most of the Heads of Pathways (governors overseeing accommodation, education/training and employment, mental and physical health, drugs and alcohol, finance/benefits/debts, children/families of offenders, attitudes/thinking and behaviour) submitted reports and most attended the meetings.

94. A Resettlement Officer was appointed who was both thorough and innovative. He oversaw the opening of a Resettlement Room as a surgery which housed a variety of organisations, for example finance/banks/housing for prisoners approaching their discharge. He also organised a 'Resettlement Signposter' scheme so that prisoners could be trained to help others with preparing for their future; this has yet to be fully launched.

95. The Finance, Benefit and Debt pathway was helpful to prisoners who were anxious about their personal finances. A Debt Telephone Line was piloted and one-to-one interviews were offered to prisoners. Benefit claims were processed with help from Job Centre Plus.

96. The Board was pleased that the two probation officers and the offender supervisors had begun to be regularly accessible to prisoners, both IPP and otherwise, on the route to work.

97. IMB deplored the increase of very short stay prisoners who could not benefit from the resettlement programme.

98. The Board was very concerned about IPP prisoners who could not access appropriate courses. In the reporting period 10% of the prison population were in this category, of whom 78% were past tariff and 38% were awaiting courses.

99. All Key Performance Targets (KPTs) were above target during the reporting period.

100. The Attitudes, Thinking and Behaviour pathway was a concern due to lack of staff.

101. The Children and Families of Offenders pathway continued to offer a variety of excellent courses to improve parenting skills. These, however, did need to be reorganised so that one person could be responsible for all. The IMB applauded the provision of six Family Days per year but regretted the fact that only about a quarter of those prisoners who applied were accepted. The criteria for selecting prisoners for this needed to be clearer. The Board recommended that the prison reprofile this area.

102. The children's crèche area in the Visits Hall was still not functioning during the reporting period, impacting negatively on what should have been a positive experience for all concerned. Supervision was still unavailable and the crèche itself was uninviting to children. These problems had long been of concern to the Board.

103. The Board would welcome a greater variety of training courses to prepare prisoners for the outside world. It was a concern that the roofing course ended in the reporting period and that the forklift truck course had not begun.

5.4 Prisoner Council

104. Efforts were made to improve the regularity and running of the meetings during the reporting year.

105. Prisoner Council meetings were always scheduled each month. Prisoners met to plan the agenda items a week earlier.

106. It was disappointing that the meetings had been chaired by a number of different governors, sometimes at very short notice. This had resulted in some actions from previous minutes not being followed up.

107. Minutes had occasionally been taken by a member of the administrative staff and had subsequently been circulated to the wings. However, when no clerk had been provided and a prisoner had had to take the minutes, they had not always reached all members of the Council. Overall the administration connected with Prisoner Council meetings proved to be poor; the Board believes it needs radical improvement.

5.5 Kitchen/Catering

108. The work of HMP Stafford's kitchen was ably led by a catering manager who during the year had been involved in the training of staff in other prisons. His budget had not increased in the reporting year or the previous one.

109. The kitchen had received a 5 Star Award for its cleanliness and procedures. It had also received the Gold Award of the Vegan Society which now publishes some of HMP Stafford's recipes.

110. The kitchen increased its workforce to around 30 prisoners to allow for a five day working week rota. The Board considered this a useful part of the resettlement strategy.

111. Prisoners were invited to fill in questionnaires on two occasions during the year. The results informed the planning of future menus.

112. Where possible the catering manager had endeavoured to address complaints in the food comments books which were held, and were usually available, on each wing.

113. Issues of breakfast and lunch portion sizes had been investigated by the Board. Problems with items that the suppliers had failed to deliver had been difficult to rectify.

114. The Board was disappointed that the kitchen could no longer offer an NVQ course since the college funding had been withdrawn. It was hoped that alternative funding would be forthcoming.

5.6 Chaplaincy

115. The Board continued to appreciate the valuable contribution that the chaplaincy team had made to the life of the prison.

116. During separate extended absences of two chaplains, the remainder of the team ensured that the work of the chaplaincy continued undiminished. They were well supported by their line manager governor.

117. Muslim Friday Prayers started at an earlier time from November until the end of January with the cooperation of the prison staff who rearranged their lunch time to facilitate this.

118. Early in the year VP prisoners refused to attend the Sikh Services. Mainstream prisoners had no problem with VP presence but the VPs said they felt intimidated. Subsequently, separate services were held on alternate weeks whilst a review took place. After this, it was reluctantly decided this system should continue.

119. The Board was appreciative that, in these difficult financial times, the Governor agreed to provide funding for a second Sikhs service, thus allowing both groups to have a weekly service.

5.7 PE

120. During this year it was helpful to prisoners that the staffing levels had remained the same. This enabled the department to maintain its provision of PE courses and of recreational PE in the evenings, at weekends and during holiday periods.

121. A good range of courses was provided during the year:

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| - | Healthy Lifestyle | Level 2; |
| - | First Aid | Level 2; |
| - | Get Fit for Life | Level 2; |
| - | Community Sports Leaders' Award | Level 2; |
| - | Understanding Substance Abuse | Level 2; |
| - | Gym Instructor | Levels 1 and 2. |

122. This year there were fewer complaints about the fairness in selecting prisoners for recreational PE. However, the Board felt that if the PE staff were to take control of the selection list from the wing staff, they would be able to ensure a fairer way of selecting those prisoners who were to attend. PE staff might perhaps give weighting to those who had not been in the gym during the working day, as well as to prisoners with a record of good behaviour and those whose turn it was not to have social time at the end of the day.

123. The Board was pleased to note that there had been a greater take-up of the senior leisure/fitness sessions. On average between 25 and 35 prisoners had attended during the year.

SECTION 6

THE WORK OF THE IMB AT HMP STAFFORD

124. Each week Board members attended the prison to monitor adjudications, Rule 45 reviews and to observe meetings. They responded to prisoner applications on a weekly basis; rota visits were undertaken fortnightly.

125. The Board held a monthly meeting which the Governor or Deputy Governor attended in order to brief the Board on prison matters and to discuss issues arising from monitoring. The IMB clerk was always present and his support was invaluable throughout the year.

126. Two Board members attended the IMB Annual Conference in February 2012. Members also attended national training courses and 'in house' training sessions. They also hosted training visits of IMBs from other prisons.

127. In order to raise the profile of the Board with prisoners members' photos were taken at the start of the reporting period; the photos have yet to be displayed. Leaflets were written about the IMB's work but were frequently not given to prisoners at induction.

128. The authorised strength of the Board is 16. Eight new members were recruited during the reporting period. Sadly, one did not take up her appointment due to work pressures and a second had to resign on health grounds. The remaining new members should successfully complete their probationary year in 2012/13 but they already play a highly effective role in the work of the Board in continuously striving to raise its profile among prisoners and staff alike. Against a background of a depleted experienced membership during the reporting period, together with an increased workload to assist with training and mentoring, tribute must be paid to those more experienced colleagues. Through their hard work and commitment they always tried to ensure that prisoners at HMP Stafford were dealt with in a decent and humane way. This is, after all, the core purpose of the IMB.

Lorna Jones
Chair

1 October 2012

*This report was approved by the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Stafford on 1 October 2012
This report to be sent to the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice on 8 October 2012.*

ANNEX A - STATISTICS

| Board | |
|---|-----|
| Recommended complement of Board members | 16 |
| Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period | 10 |
| Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period | 14 |
| Number of new members joining within the reporting period | 7 |
| Number of members leaving within reporting period | 3 |
| Number of Board meetings during reporting period | 12 |
| Average number of attendances at Board meetings during reporting period | 11 |
| Number of attendances at meetings other than Board meetings | 362 |
| Number of visits to the prison (including all meetings) | 491 |
| Number of applications processed | 171 |
| Number of confidential requests/complaints processed | 17 |
| Number of segregation reviews held | 35 |
| Number of segregation reviews attended | 35 |

| Applications | | | | | | |
|--------------|-------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Subject | | 2007/08 | 2008/09 | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 |
| A | Accommodation | 2 | 3 | 0 | 5 | 4 |
| B | Adjudications | 2 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 5 |
| C | Diversity related | 5 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| D | Education/employment/training | 9 | 10 | 5 | 7 | 11 |
| E | Family/visits | 14 | 26 | 5 | 3 | 19 |
| F | Food/kitchen related | 0 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| G | Health related | 6 | 20 | 1 | 6 | 22 |
| H | Property | 23 | 55 | 3 | 10 | 18 |
| I | Sentence related | 28 | 27 | 4 | 20 | 29 |
| J | Staff/prisoner related | 12 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 19 |
| K | Transfers | 15 | 36 | 8 | 9 | 13 |
| L | Miscellaneous | 44 | 42 | 9 | 26 | 27 |
| | Total number of applications | 160 | 237 | 43 | 88 | 171 |