

HMP THE MOUNT

BOVINGDON, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD

**INDEPENDENT MONITORING
BOARD**

ANNUAL REPORT

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to

28th FEBRUARY 2013

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2. STATUTORY ROLE OF THE BOARD

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

The Board is specifically charged:

- to satisfy itself as to the state of the prison premises, the administration of the prison and the treatment of the prisoners; and
- to inquire into and report upon any matter into which the Secretary of State asks it to inquire.

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.

Diversity statement

The Board at The Mount monitors that diversity encompasses and promotes greater interaction and understanding between people of different backgrounds, including race, religion, gender, sexuality, marital status, disability, and age, and actively promotes equality of opportunity.

The Board recognises that diversity and equality is also about respecting and responding to needs and differences that cut across social and cultural categories, such as mental health, literacy and drug addiction.

Engaging diversity and equality should enable all individuals to express their values, perspectives and beliefs without disrespecting or discriminating against others.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE MOUNT

The Mount opened in 1987 as a Young Offenders Institution. Initially there were five residential wings: Annexe, Brister, Ellis, Fowler, and Lakes, with in-cell sanitation and communal showers. Most of these wings have their cells configured in a four spur design on two landings which creates difficulty in observing prisoner behaviour. Some of the wings are linked by enclosed bridges and walkways. These wings are enclosed within one large compound.

The Mount was re-rolled as a Category C Adult Male Training Prison in 1989. It is a closed conditions prison.

During the 1990's two more wings, Howard and Dixon, were built, with in-cell sanitation and communal showers. These are of a two landing galleried design that allows improved observation of prisoners.

In 2007 the latest wing, Narey, became operational. This contains 44 cells on two landings, each with screened toilet and shower facilities. This wing mainly houses indeterminate sentenced prisoners. These latest three wings have separate compounds.

The number of double cells currently stands at 22, which is down from 39 last year. This results in the overall Operating Capacity reducing from 786 last year to 770 this year.

Wing	Regime	Prisoners at 28 th Feb 2013	CNA at 28 th Feb 2013	Op Cap at 28 th Feb 2013	Prisoners at 29 th Feb 2012
Dixon Wing	Standard/Induction	114	120	120	128
Howard Wing	Standard	105	104	110	108
Lakes Wing	Standard	111	112	117	117
Ellis Wing	Standard	109	110	117	117
Fowler Wing	Enhanced	111	112	112	116
Brister Wing	Enhanced	110	110	110	112
Pre-Release Wing	Enhanced	36	36	36	35
Narey Wing	Standard/Enhanced	48	44	48	48
CSU		9	N/A	N/A	1
TOTAL		753	748	770	782

The Mount receives only convicted prisoners who arrive from other establishments, mainly but not exclusively from London prisons. The following table indicates the population breakdown by sentence length.

Length of Sentence	Approximate Distribution	
	February 2013	February 2012
Less than 12 months	1	None
12 months to 2 years	9	17
2 - 3 years	34	72
3 - 4 years	91	89
4 - 10 years	383	391
More than 10 years	71	69
Indeterminately Sentenced	154	136
Sentence Expired Detainees	10	8
TOTAL	753	782

4. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

4.1 OVERALL PERFORMANCE

The Mount has had a successful year and has retained its Level 4 status (High Performance) under the Prison Rating System.

The SMT has continued to implement effectively the required changes in routines and work profiles without materially reducing services or prejudicing the safety and welfare of prisoners. To achieve this, it has relied on the loyalty and capability of its staff. Many staff now have multiple roles to perform and more than one manager to whom to report.

However, according to the Staff Survey 2012/3, the changes in pay and benefit structure have resulted in a drop in staff feeling that their pay adequately reflects their performance and a reduction in the staff happy with the overall benefits package.

The time from now until completion of the New Build and completion of the recruitment of staff necessitated by the increased roll will inevitably be an unsettled period for management and staff. A number of staff have left whether for retirement or resignation and The Mount is currently embargoed from replacing staff on permanent contracts. In the case of officer vacancies, it is offering Payment Plus to existing staff to cover the detail. In the case of other staff, the posts are filled by Agency staff.

In consequence of the New Build, The Mount is now categorised as a complex prison which carries benefits in staffing. But the Board remains concerned that The Mount will not have sufficient management and staff to drive the regime properly.

There continues to be a significant lack of investment in The Mount's infrastructure. The heating and hot water systems continue to cause the greatest concern. There have also been major problems with the fire alarms and water mains. Some of the ovens and other equipment in the Kitchens are constantly in need of repair.

4.2 PARTICULAR ISSUES REQUIRING A RESPONSE

Policy matters for the Minister

(i) Education needs (Section 5.3)

The Board understands that the education provider, A4E, is incentivised to provide courses enhancing employability rather than basic education. Does the Minister agree that nothing is more important than teaching prisoners to read and write? How will prisoners get jobs without being able to read and write?

(ii) Restorative Justice (Section 5.5)

Currently no arrangements exist for funding for The Mount to undertake initiatives in the field of Restorative Justice, albeit that this is likely to be a key factor in the rehabilitation of certain prisoners. The Board understands that this decision has been made at a Regional level, presumably for cost reasons, but believes that Restorative Justice, when appropriate, should commence at the earliest opportunity.

Operational matters for the Prison Service

(i) Infrastructure

With the New Build project commencing, confirmation is requested that this will not obscure the need to refurbish and modernise the existing infrastructure and, in particular, the heating and hot water systems, the fire alarms the water mains.

(ii) Enlarged facilities

The Board understands that the New Build will incorporate additional Gymnasium, Healthcare and Kitchen facilities, but have adequate plans been made to ensure that the Reception, Administration, Stores, Works, Education, Workshops, Visits, OMU, CSU and IT facilities will be adequate?

(iii) Funding of Sentence Plans (Section 5.5)

Currently local prisons are funded to produce Sentence Plans, but frequently prisoners arrive at The Mount without a Sentence Plan. The Mount then has to produce the Sentence Plan, which is estimated to take on average 8 hours, without being resourced for this activity. This impacts detrimentally on the other activities of the OMU staff. Should not OASys funding follow the prisoner?

(iv) Transport contractors (Section 6.4)

Complaints continue to be received by the Board that prison transport often arrives without prior notice being given as to the arrival time or the prisoner details.

Furthermore prison transport is often unable to transport the prisoner's property with the prisoner so that additional transportation is required with increased chance of property going astray.

Conversely, prisoners arriving from private sector prisons sometimes arrive with property in excess of the volumetric limit permitted at The Mount which results in excessive demands on storage facilities.

Is it accepted that relevant details of each prisoner's expected time of arrival and disabilities (if any) should be sent to The Mount beforehand?

Is it accepted that as a matter of economy and to reduce the chances of property getting lost, a prisoner's property should be transferred with the prisoner.

Is it accepted that private sector prisons should apply the same volumetric controls as public sector prisons?

(v) Property issues (Section 7.2)

The biggest category of Applications made to the Board relates to property issues. Of these, a considerable number relate to property allegedly lost at the prisoner's previous establishment which have not been resolved in a timely manner through the normal Complaints procedure. Much time is spent by prison staff and Board members and a great amount of paper used, often without a satisfactory outcome.

Should a Protocol be produced requiring property issues to be dealt with by the establishments involved in a more effective manner?

Should each prison appoint a Lost Property Officer to deal with such cases?

Should a prisoner not normally be transferred when he has any outstanding lost property issues?

4.3 PREVIOUS YEAR'S CONCERNS

In its previous report (1st March 2011 to 29th February 2012), the Board requested the Minister's response to its concerns regarding

- (i) the negative consequences of cost savings in certain identified areas; and
- (ii) the need for substantial investment in the infrastructure to avoid possible detriment to prisoner health.

The Board expresses its appreciation for the detailed and lengthy response by Crispin Blunt MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Justice by letter dated 13th July 2012 to the Chair of the Board.

These issues are however ongoing. The Board remains concerned

- (i) at the progressive impact of cost savings, especially in the field of staffing and in particular in relation to the need to recruit staff with appropriate experience for the increased roll following completion of the New Build project; and
- (ii) that there has not been significant investment during the year in The Mount's infrastructure. This topic is now linked to the New Build project.

4.4 OTHER MATTERS OF SERIOUS CONCERN OR EXCELLENCE

Other matters of concern

- (i) The Board is concerned that the new remuneration levels applicable at The Mount and, in particular, the loss of the local pay allowance of £4,000 and the severe reduction of salary pay scale will make it difficult to recruit staff with requisite training and skills. This allowance was introduced specifically to deal with this problem.
- (ii) The Board is concerned that the proposed number of officers will be inadequate at times of stress, as for example when The Mount has a number of prisoners guilty of repeated misconduct or non-compliance with the prison regime. This has already been evident in the CSU where the profile is laid down for 12 prisoners, but up to 18 prisoners may be held there.
- (iii) The Board is further concerned that the pay scales make it difficult to recruit competent Industrial Officers for the Workshops. A number of vacancies have already arisen. Difficulty has been experienced in recruiting an instructor for the Print Workshop, an Industries Manager and a Contracts Manager at the permitted pay levels. A4E has failed to recruit an NVQ assessor for the Workshops. (Section 5.2)
- (iv) There is a persistent lack of productivity in some of the Workshops. A range of factors are cited to Board members, including the failure to obtain orders, the failure of contractors to collect completed products, the lack of a qualified instructor, and lack of motivation of prisoners. (Section 5.2)

Other matters of excellence

- (i) The Board is delighted at the following achievements:
 - The Mount retaining its Level 4 status.
 - The Mount gaining IIP accreditation.
 - Healthcare Department's performance in achieving 31 top ratings out of 32 Prison Healthcare Quality Indicators.
 - The Safer Custody audit score of 95%.
- (ii) The Board is delighted that the Co-Ordinating Chaplain and Team Leader of the Care Team, Rev Philip Abrey has been appointed an Honorary Canon of St. Albans Abbey.
- (iii) Many other Departments and Wing staff worked assiduously in performing their duties. The Board notes especially the perseverance and care of the RAPt team.
- (iv) The new Governor was appointed in January 2012 and the Board would like publicly to record how well he and the SMT have performed in very demanding circumstances and the Board appreciates the comprehensive briefings he provides to the Board at its monthly meetings.

5. MANDATORY AREAS ON WHICH THE BOARD MUST REPORT

5.1 EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

The Governor is responsible for The Mount's Diversity Policy and is supported by the Head of Residence, Diversity Manager and Officers and the Prisoner Diversity Representatives. They monitor all diversity areas (aka "protected characteristics"), other than religion which is the domain of the Chaplaincy. A bimonthly review meeting is held attended by a representative of the Board.

Race

Despite the large BAME population (ranging between 55% - 65%), serious racial incidents are rare. This may be attributable to some extent to the fact that most of the prisoners come from London where racial integration is well developed. Nevertheless the majority of DIRFs are race related.

Links have been established with some self-development groups which help BAME prisoners to achieve self-respect.

Disability

Prisoners are assessed by Healthcare at Induction attended by the Diversity Liaison Officer. At the year end, a total of 258 disabilities had been declared, including mental illness, reduced mobility or physical incapacity, speech, aural or visual impediment or learning difficulties. The Mount shows commitment to supporting these prisoners, including identifying prisoners in need of Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans.

It is recognised that The Mount was not constructed to accommodate physically disabled prisoners. An application has been made for funding to convert 2 cells to be

fit for wheelchair users and to construct a lift in the Healthcare area in order to provide access to the dental surgery for disabled prisoners, but funding has not been awarded.

It is now proposed that the New Build project should include 2 cells fit for wheelchair users and should incorporate some medical facilities (e.g. dentistry) in existing ground floor facilities in the Administration block.

Sexual Orientation

Whilst The Mount is keen to recognise and support prisoners of homosexual orientation, not all prisoners wish to disclose their sexual orientation. There are currently no regular meetings for these prisoners. Plans are in progress for a new training programme for staff to tackle homophobia.

DIRFs

63 DIRFs were issued during the year. The Diversity and Equalities Manager checks all prisoner Complaints and in cases where the prisoner has ticked one of the boxes identifying the Complaint as relating to a diversity issue will himself issue a DIRF. He investigates all DIRFs and reports on them to the Governor.

A sample of DIRFs are reviewed by an independent assessor from Cambridge University. Her report dated 8th June 2012 concludes: "As usual the standard of the DIRF investigation is extremely high and I continue to be impressed with the Diversity Officer's ability to investigate the complaints as well as he does and on time, especially given that I have noted he is often asked to cover work in other parts of the prison."

Special Interest Groups

Quarterly forums are held for Travellers, Older prisoners and Disabled prisoners. Support groups have been established for a number of nationalities. Special meals and/or cooking facilities are provided and cultural events are recognised for minority groups.

Board recruitment

The Board is keen to advance equality in its own recruitment, but is restricted to those who volunteer drawn mainly from the local population. The Board contains BAME members and members with physical disabilities.

5.2 EDUCATION, LEARNING AND SKILLS

Education

This was a year of change with the commencement of OLASS 4 and with A4E replacing Milton Keynes College as principal education provider. Whilst The Mount has continued to provide a wide range of courses, the emphasis on employability has become a priority. This includes acquisition of soft employability skills, such as work ethic, communication skills, time management and team player qualities. In the short term this has caused a reduction in the number of prisoners enrolled on education courses. The change of emphasis has been detrimental to the substantial number of prisoners unable to read and write.

All prisoners are screened during induction and access the Hidden Disabilities Questionnaire. A4E has additional learning support tutors on site who work with prisoners having special learning support needs. The department continues to screen newly arrived prisoners for Maths and English if they are unable to provide evidence of their ability. For prisoners wanting to access education a full diagnostic test is carried out to ensure the prisoner is enrolled on the correct level of course. The Mount continues to work in partnership with the Shannon Trust delivering the Toe By Toe Reading Scheme.

233 prisoners were enrolled on education courses at the year end on a full-time or part-time basis, compared with 300 at the year end in each of the previous 2 years. A4E provides 40 tutors and is currently contracted to deliver a curriculum that draws down £1,062,346 per annum. Attendance is good and prisoners generally demonstrate the desire to learn. GCSE courses are provided in Maths and English. A level and GCSE courses are 12 months' long. Most other courses are 2 months or shorter.

For the academic year ending on 31st July 2013, the success rate for education courses after 7 months was 81%, with a completion rate of 92.6%.

The Mount has installed a new Virtual Campus hybrid system, which means VC can be accessed by learners in Education, but use continues to be low. It is being used in the Employability and Business Enterprise course for a year.

Library

This is an impressive facility and is part of the Herts County Library service enabling the Library to obtain books in any language. It has an extensive range of reading materials to support education and vocational training and for foreign language readers and emergent readers.

The Story Book Dad project which enables prisoners to record stories to send home on disc to their children remains popular. A grant supports a dedicated worker for one day per week and covers the cost of materials. The Library also supports visiting author events and the National 6 Book Challenge.

Workshops

The Workshops have continued to offer a wide range of practical training, such as building and construction skills, engineering and welding, carpentry, double-glazing, recycling, waste management, canteen packing, bicycle repair and IT skills.

The emphasis has been on training and achievement of qualifications leading to employment opportunities. This is now changing to productivity.

The change is particularly dramatic in the case of the Carpentry Workshop which hitherto has been a small workshop training prisoners to achieve advanced carpentry and marquetry skills, but now to become a mass production unit.

The role of the Workshop staff will accordingly change from instructors to production managers.

Many of the Workshops should be able to accomplish this change. But this will necessitate greater emphasis on the selection of prisoners to work in each Workshop

as each Workshop will require a regular and competent set of prisoners to fulfil orders. Greater attention will also be needed to achieve product flow. At present, Board members often report that prisoners in the Workshops are idle and are informed by the Instructional Officers either that there is a shortage of orders or that the transport contractor has not collect products ready for delivery leaving no room for storing any more products.

Particular reference must be made to the Print Workshop. The print machine was purchased and delivered at an alleged aggregate purchase and transportation cost of £1,000,000 and has stood idle for several months because of inability to recruit an instructor at the permitted salary level. Similarly, The Mount has been unable to recruit an Industries Manager or Contracts Manager. A4E has been unable to recruit an NVQ assessor for the Workshops and is now hoping to engage a shared assessor with HMP Littlehey.

Grounds and Gardening department

The year has been challenging with inclement weather and prolonged rainfall. Often the ground was too soft to dig and planting was difficult. Vegetables are grown solely for consumption at The Mount.

The department managed to retain its high standards in the grounds and garden areas. It is commendable that throughout the year litter and waste have been kept to a minimum.

5.3 HEALTHCARE AND MENTAL HEALTH

Healthcare

Healthcare is available to all new prisoners within 24 hours of reception (to the same degree as it is available to all other prisoners).

Out-patient care, including dentistry, is staffed and organised to ensure that patients are seen and necessarily treated where appropriate and where facilities are available within a reasonable time, and prescriptions are obtained without undue delay.

In-patient care is available according to clinical need. Budgetary reductions imposed on The Mount have resulted in a decision by the Governor to limit funds available for the provision of escort and bedwatch staff. This has meant that where insufficient staff are available to satisfy the demand for hospital visits Healthcare management is required to prioritise hospital visits according to the patient's condition.

Medical services are provided in suitable accommodation with courtesy and appropriate privacy.

Prisoners are encouraged to eat a healthy diet and physical fitness is encouraged through the use of the gymnasium.

Relationships with health providers are very good.

Prisoners have the information necessary to understand their right to treatment under the NHS and complaints procedures. Prisoner surveys indicate satisfaction with healthcare provision and monthly surveys on every dentistry patient are reported.

The quality of healthcare staff, both medical and administrative, is one of dedication and they are ever striving for improvement.

By way of exceptional praise, out of the 32 recognised Prison Healthcare Performance Quality Indicators published in February 2013, 1 is amber (because of the imperfect escort situation which is not the fault of Healthcare) and 31 are green, a statistically exceptional performance.

Mental Health (In Reach)

There are no waiting lists for prisoners who need the services provided by In Reach.

Prisoners with mental health problems have regular and sufficient professional care and support and those who cannot be suitably treated are transferred out within a reasonable time limit.

Services have, this year, been expanded into the area of learning disability. Counselling and psychological services are available to prisoners who need them. Officers receive comprehensive and regular training by In Reach staff. Patient survey results are not made available to In Reach.

5.4 PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY

A wide range of work, training and education is available as detailed in the Section 5.2. Additionally, opportunities exist to work as orderlies, prisoner representatives, listeners, wing cleaners or servery staff.

In addition, The Mount has gymnasium and library facilities which every prisoner is able to use on a weekly basis.

The Activities Allocation Panel sits weekly to deal with prisoner work applications and to allocate spaces. A Board member routinely attends these meetings. Regard is taken to provide employment or occupation required by the prisoner's Sentence Plan. This necessarily is subject to the number of places available on each course or activity.

The average weekly number of hours of Purposeful Activity of each prisoner is no longer recorded.

It is disappointing to note that during the year the number of prisoners designated "whole time unemployed" ranged between 50 and 75 and at the year end was 61 prisoners. This is attributed to a lack of work spaces caused by a number of factors such as:

- the ineligibility of prisoners designated high or medium risk to work in some of the Workshops.
- a reduction in the number of education places as A4E terminated some courses believed to be unprofitable.

- the lack of orders received by the Engineering Workshop.
- the failure of the Print Workshop to function.

5.5 RESETTLEMENT AND COMMUNITY LINKS

On Induction, a Resettlement Questionnaire is completed and this sets out the key resettlement needs of the prisoner: his family circumstances, his problems, any urgent issues, and his needs regarding courses, debt advice, and employment and housing on discharge.

Within 16 weeks of sentence, each prisoner must have a Sentence Plan under OASys. This also states the prisoner's area of risk and level of risk. No funding is provided to the Mount for this exercise, funding having been provided to the local prison from whence the prisoner transferred to The Mount. Some prisoners come with a Sentence Plan, but many do not. In the latter cases, it is usual for the Sentence Plan to be completed by The Mount within the time limit. It is estimated that preparation of a Sentence Plan for a prisoner takes 8 hours' work and necessarily impacts on other duties.

The offender management team conscientiously aims to ensure that Sentence Plans are followed. Frequently, prisoners are frustrated that they are not on the course or doing the work which they think they should be doing. But limited places means prisoners have to be prioritised.

Resettlement needs are met under 7 pathways and there is reasonable cooperation with the Probation Services. Likewise, in the case of prisoners subject to MAPPA, appropriate contact is maintained with the other agencies.

The Mount is dedicated to establishing links with organisations which can provide pre-release training, work experience on ROTL or upon discharge, and post-release mentoring and support. The Mount also arranges family visit days.

Pre-release training and support includes:

- Motivational training (Cement-a-future).
- The Black Self-Development 6 week programme with "Through the Gate" resettlement support.
- Money management and debt advice short courses (Christians against Poverty).
- One-to-one debt advice sessions (the Money Advice Service).
- PAYE tax advice and tax advice for prisoners seeking self-employment in construction (HMRC).
- Forklift training bi-monthly for a maximum of 3 prisoners funded by National Grid.
- NACRO provides a range of support with employment, training and housing.

Work placements for prisoners on ROTL have been established with a range of organisations. A major problem is that ROTL employers require prisoners to complete the term of any work placement, but as soon as a prisoner is allowed ROTL, it boosts his prospects of re-categorisation and transfer to an Open Prison.

Mentoring and support services are provided by New Bridge Foundation (Greater London area), The Restoration and Revival Church (Bedfordshire), Mosaic (Muslim prisoners in Greater London area), Vamos Juntos - Praxis (Spanish first language) and Herts CC (Family support worker).

Resettlement events are held regularly to strengthen links with national and local employers and to raise awareness of the services for prisoners offered by external agencies.

During the 11 months ended 28th February 2013, 219 prisoners were discharged. The Mount's KPTs for discharged prisoners and the percentages achieved were as follows:

Education or training on discharge:	KPT: 25%	Achieved: 33.33%
Employment on discharge:	KPT: 30%	Achieved: 36.07%
Accommodation on discharge:	KPT: 85%	Achieved: 94.06%

The Board regrets that no funding is currently provided to The Mount for Restorative Justice Initiatives. It is understood that this decision has been taken on a Regional basis and that consideration is now being given to introducing a model whereby The Mount staff would act as "facilitators". It would surely be beneficial both to prisoners and victims if Restorative Justice occurred whilst the prisoner was in custody, rather than delaying until after his release which might be several years later.

5.6 SAFER CUSTODY

Safer Custody

The Safer Custody audit achieved an impressive 95% in January 2013, which followed the score of 4 from HMCIP last year. The matters which the audit team suggested should be improved are being tackled.

Safer Custody meetings take place monthly, unfortunately not always with uniformed Safer Custody officers present, due to staffing pressures. The meetings are attended by the volunteer Samaritans' co-ordinator who makes a valuable contribution liaising with the Listeners, some of whom also attend. Prisoner representatives also attend part of the meeting. A welcome innovation was the representative from Serco attending the last meeting of the year so that transport issues could be raised. A representative of the Board attends whenever possible. The statistics and data provided for the meetings are interrogated thoroughly. A positive picture of the safer custody situation at The Mount is normally reported. A sample of ACCT documents are examined and checked for consistency and appropriate comments. The Board makes further checks on such documentation during rota visits.

An inquest on the death of a prisoner in May 2010 remains outstanding which in the Board's view is too long.

Violence Reduction

The Violence Reduction Forum occurs on a fortnightly basis. It is primarily attended by representatives of the Safer Custody / Violence Reduction team, Wing staff, plus Security, Healthcare, Psychology and In Reach. A representative from the Board attends whenever possible. Its aim is to examine unexplained accidents, acts of violent conduct and assaults on staff and prisoners. This is a proactive Forum which sets out to examine the records of any prisoner who is suspected of being involved in such incidents and to discuss and follow up any reports made by the Violence Reduction team. Any tasks set for staff are followed up at the following meeting.

5.7 SEGREGATION

Over 250 prisoners were located in the CSU during the year. This was slightly higher than last year. The average length of stay was over 15 days. The last 4 months of the year saw a disproportionate level (44%) of the total locations, rather higher than in the corresponding period last year, which may be attributable to the presence of a number of challenging prisoners.

42 prisoners had stays in excess of 30 days. Only 9 were resident for more than 60 days, with the longest stay being 89 days.

The mix of locations to CSU continues to reflect a low ethnic minority ratio compared with the prison population. There have been more locations on Rule 53 (pending adjudication) and on Cellular Confinement punishments than in the past. There has been a significant decline, until recently, in locations for Own Protection. The Board closely monitors prisoners located for their Own Protection. It is noted the Violence Reduction Team is no longer ring fenced for these duties.

There were 9 dirty protests during the year of which one prisoner accounted for 5 incidents. All of these protests occurred in the last 4 months of the year. Special Accommodation was used on 13 occasions. The Board was informed of each of these events. On a few occasions it has been necessary to institute 3 man unlock precautions due to the unpredictable nature of some prisoners.

There have been several prisoners held in CSU on disciplinary grounds who have exhibited serious mental health issues. Although these prisoners have been well managed, the Board has raised concerns about their length of stay in CSU and exit strategies.

During the year the Board attended 76 segregation review sessions comprising a total of 192 prisoner reviews. It is the aim of the Board to attend every review.

There were 105 interventions requiring Use of Force during the year. This is in line with last year. A sample of the Use of Force reports was read by Board members. There were no matters requiring comment.

In April 2012 the staffing profile for CSU was reduced by two officers. Although there are CSU trained staff deployed elsewhere in The Mount it has not always been possible to redeploy them to CSU when needed. The Board perceives that excessive pressure is placed on CSU staff when CSU is near capacity and has challenging prisoners. They are to be complimented on maintaining high standards during very demanding times.

The Board confirms that during their regular visits Board members have been satisfied with the conditions, facilities, regime, staffing, security and records of CSU (subject to the qualification relating to staffing in the preceding paragraph).

The Board also confirms:

- that it is informed promptly of moves to segregation;
- that Board members are able to and do speak freely with each prisoner weekly;
- that reviews are conducted properly;
- that as a general rule Board members are given notice of review boards.

The Board confirms that cellular confinement, special accommodation and mechanical constraints are used and dirty protests handled correctly and that the problems of long stayers and prisoners with mental health issues are recognised (but, as mentioned above, the Board has raised concerns on occasions about the length of stay and exit strategies for such prisoners).

5.8 RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

There are currently 8 residential units. Although all comply with the overall prison regime, there are some different characteristics and privileges between units, and this enables prisoners to have a sense of progression, for example from a standard wing to an enhanced wing, during the course of their sentence.

Prisoners are encouraged to take responsibility for, and develop a sense of ownership of, shared facilities on their residential Units. There are very modest kitchenettes on all of the residential units, so that prisoners who so wish can prepare and cook some of their own meals. There has been a programme of refurbishments of these kitchenettes during the year, and prisoners have completed much of the tiling and painting under appropriate professional supervision. The use of these facilities is highly valued, and is self-managed by the prisoners, thereby promoting the development of good life skills, both interpersonal and culinary. Prisoners pay for the ingredients for these meals from their canteen, and in some cases they are eaten instead of the meals provided by The Mount.

An unusual aspect of the regime at The Mount is the practice of “free flow” whereby prisoners move from residential units to their places of employment or education with minimal escorting or supervision. Their movements are recorded, for example on leaving the Unit and on arrival at their workshop, and lateness or unauthorised absence is challenged through the IEP system.

Each wing has at least one prisoner representative who, among other duties, attends meetings with the Governors. There are two types of such meetings, and each is attended by the same prisoner reps. Quarterly meetings are chaired by the Governor and are primarily concerned with strategy. Bi-monthly meetings are chaired by the Heads of Residence and are concerned more with day-to-day operational matters. The prisoner reps are encouraged to bring issues raised by their wing colleagues, and lively and open debate is welcomed.

Prisoners are encouraged to suggest solutions to the problems they identify. One example of good practice is a prisoner-led initiative, which started on the Induction wing, whereby designated prisoners help other prisoners with their wing Applications. This means that the more experienced prisoners can help other prisoners with their requests and queries, and often these can be dealt with without the need for a written Application. If a written Application is felt to be the most appropriate route, the experienced prisoners can help with completing the paperwork so that it is clear what is being asked. This initiative was very positively received by staff and prisoners and has led to a much more efficient use of staff time. Prisoners are not obliged to use this service and would not do so if, for example, there are issues of confidentiality.

Some of the prison cells at The Mount have been refurbished with the new modular furniture units which are being rolled out across the whole prison estate. The new units are generally felt to look good and appear to be robust. However, the storage which they provide is completely open. There are no doors or other types of screening on the units. Prisoners are very reluctant to have all of their possessions on display to other prisoners and therefore local solutions are being investigated to provide low cost screening for the new units.

A lot of paperwork is generated by prisoners on the residential units, and much of it is subsequently processed by prison officers and/ or other prison staff. Many of these transactions, for example Visiting Orders and Canteen, could be processed by the prisoners themselves if the appropriate technology was available to them. When prisoners are released they are increasingly required to operate in an on-line environment, for example in making job applications or claiming benefits. It would be helpful if they could better prepare for this by having direct access to selected internal IT systems, either in cell or in pods on their residential units and workshops.

Induction

All new prisoners are allocated to the Induction wing on their first night at The Mount. The Mount is sensitive to the needs of new prisoners and every effort is made

to identify and appropriately support any prisoner who may be feeling distressed or finds it difficult to cope. Insiders are available and make a valuable input into Reception and first night procedures.

There is a structured one week induction programme which all prisoners are required to attend. Responsibility for managing this programme transferred from Workshops to Education mid-way through the year. A number of the sessions are led by prisoners, with a tutor present. It is felt that new prisoners often feel more at ease asking questions and contributing in the classes under this type of arrangement.

The classroom sessions include a number of DVD's, and prisoners are given comprehensive hand-outs to back up the sessions. These hand-outs include a detailed document about employment policy and the prisoner's rights and responsibilities regarding purposeful activity. Another hand-out covers a range of matters to do with life in prison, and includes clear information about The Mount's commitment to violence reduction, giving details of how to avoid violence /intimidation and how potential victims will be supported.

Prisoners are also asked to complete a dyslexia checklist and a disability questionnaire during the Induction week so that appropriate support can be put in place as soon as possible.

Prisoners normally remain on the Induction wing for the duration of the Induction course, and thereafter they are allocated to another residential wing.

Kitchen

As has been noted in previous Annual Reports, the kitchen facilities are old and built to cater for 500 prisoners. They currently cater for over 750 prisoners on a daily basis, and towards the end of the year the daily allowance per prisoner was reduced from £2.10 to £2.02. In 2008-09 the daily allowance was £2.25, so the current reduction represents continuing downward pressure on this budget.

Board members inspect the kitchen on a weekly basis and, unsurprisingly, frequently report equipment failures and maintenance issues.

Notwithstanding these constraints, the kitchen staff continue to provide a service which attracts relatively few complaints, largely due to the commitment and hard work of the manager and her team.

The Mount is increasingly moving towards all day working by prisoners in the various workshops. The kitchen therefore provides sandwich lunches for consumption in the workshops, and in the current year the menu choices were increased for these workers. The Board has recommended that hot soup should also be made available to the workshops, as happens on the residential units, but to date this has not been possible because of the lack of suitable facilities in the workshops.

6. OTHER AREAS ON WHICH THE BOARD DESIRES TO REPORT

6.1 CHAPLAINCY

The Chaplaincy has a team of experienced and dedicated people led by the co-ordinating chaplain who support prisoners in a great variety of ways. Provision is made for all prisoners to practise their faiths. There are 24 faiths registered at The Mount.

The core team is responsible for providing pastoral care for the whole prison population. This includes involvement with ACCT assessments and reviews, membership of the Care Team, help for bereaved prisoners and non-copers, family liaison and assistance with resettlement issues. They support not only prisoners, but also their families and prison staff. They run courses for both staff and prisoners, including Victim and Justice Awareness and Diversity.

The Chaplaincy comprises the Chapel, the Multi-faith room, group rooms and small rooms. It is very well used for services and to celebrate festivals for all faiths. Many other gatherings occur there.

The Board is delighted that the Co-Ordinating Chaplain and Team Leader of the Care Team, Rev Philip Abrey has been appointed an Honorary Canon of St. Albans Abbey.

6.2 DRUG STRATEGY

The drug treatment service at The Mount has been put out to tender and moved from the Ministry of Justice to the Department of Health. RAPt, an existing service provider at The Mount, won the new three year contract. CARATS, the other service provider, was integrated into the RAPt team and a number of new programmes came on stream in October 2012.

Formerly RAPt was abstinence based, but there are now alternative programmes which do not demand initial abstinence and which give prisoners more options to address their drug and alcohol use.

Stepping Stones is a low intensity four week programme. Prisoners are required to attend daily and groups are peer led with professional facilitators. They cover topics such as triggers, life skills and cycle of change. Unfortunately, this has proved popular for prisoners wishing to fulfil their sentence plan obligations without actually addressing the deep seated reasons for their addiction. As a result, there are plans for the RAPt and Sentence Management teams to work closely together in order to encourage ongoing treatment.

A new alcohol programme is provided for prisoners who are psychologically and physically dependent upon alcohol. This is a six week programme and is abstinence based. Participants are expected to reside on Dixon wing, the high dependency unit which mirrors a residential rehabilitation clinic. Since October 2012, a total of 31 prisoners have participated in the programme and 26 have completed.

A family liaison worker is now working with prisoners on the RAPt programmes and is in contact with some families. He is currently working with The Mount to introduce Family Conferences.

The merger of two separate teams has not been without its problems and has resulted in some changes in staff. However the team now appears to be working well.

Despite high levels of security and regular dog patrols, a number of packages containing drugs continue to find their way into The Mount.

Over the past 12 months the MDT positive figures averaged 9.66%, slightly above the target KPT of 7.5%. November and December 2012 witnessed peaks of 17.9% and 20.5% respectively. In part, this can be attributed to the retraction of the overhead netting due to inclement weather conditions, thus making it easier for packages to be thrown over the perimeter fencing.

The Mount is meeting its MDT volume target of 5% of the prison roll. However it is of concern that staffing reductions have led to reductions in testing on suspicion or risk assessment.

6.3 FOREIGN NATIONALS

During the first half of the reporting year, The Mount's status as a Hub for Foreign Nationals was under review and its foreign national population reduced to less than 90 prisoners. But following confirmation in November 2012 that it would retain its Hub status, the number of foreign nationals has risen, reaching 126 at the end of the year and expected to rise to over 200 prisoners.

The NOMS and UKBA agreement facilitates the deportation process, reducing uncertainty and delays and at the year end only 10 prisoners were held beyond their sentence expiry date, and none for over 12 months.

The FN team organises cultural group meetings each month which gives prisoners an opportunity to meet with others who have similar cultural or language ties and to raise any issues. The FN Formal Representatives Committee meets on a quarterly basis and provides a forum for prisoners and staff to discuss issues that directly impact on the Foreign National population.

6.4 RECEPTION

Generally few complaints are received about the Reception process and a high standard is maintained. On occasions prisoners have arrived at lunchtime and been held inside a locked vans for up to 2 hours as staff are not detailed over lunchtime. The Board raised this issue with the Governor and, whenever possible, staff volunteer to work through their lunch break or late in the evenings if knowledge is received in advance of arrival at these times. Unfortunately the transport contractors do not always notify in sufficient time to enable this to happen. On one occasion a prisoner who was on an ACCT self-harmed whilst detained in the transport. The Board considers that the Prison Service should ensure that the contract for transport is enforced so that adequate notice of the arrival time is always given.

As a matter of routine, The Mount completes a new CSRA for each prisoner on arrival at Reception. The Board supports this policy which makes The Mount responsible for the cell allocation of new arrivals.

Occasionally a prisoner is sent to The Mount by the PMU who either is not suited to The Mount's Cat C conditions or for historical reasons cannot stay. This necessitates the prisoner being placed straight into segregation conditions. The Board understands that it may not always be possible to notify the identity of each prisoner in advance, but where it is found that a prisoner is not suited to The Mount, the PMU's delay, which is sometimes lengthy, in arranging a transfer to an appropriate prison is not acceptable.

The Board occasionally examines transport vehicles and is usually satisfied that they have the appropriate standard of cleanliness and adequate facilities. But sometimes there is no space for property. This results in Reception having to transfer property separately and uneconomically incurring considerable expense or use of manpower. Conversely, prisoners arriving from private sector prisons sometimes arrive with property in excess of the volumetric limit permitted at The Mount which results in excessive demands on storage facilities.

Staffing levels do not seem to be adequate to deal with all the Reception tasks other than the reception and discharge of prisoners, e.g. dealing with catalogue orders, requests for access to stored property and mail required to be signed for by the prisoner. On occasions mail sent by special delivery has been held for up to 3 weeks. These issues have been raised by the Board and there is evidence of improvement latterly.

6.5 WORKS DEPARTMENT

In view of the need to achieve cost savings, resources have had to be prioritised with important works being delayed.

Many of the major work activities continue to relate to the heating and hot water systems. There have also been many incidents of fire alarms going off due to faults. On one occasion the cell call alarms in Fowler Wing failed, which necessitated all the prisoners moving out of the Wing until the problem was fixed.

In November 2012, a water main burst which resulted in a flood in the Education Department. In February 2013, the fire main ruptured which left limited capacity for dealing with a fire, should it have occurred. Contingency plans were brought into action with extra extinguishers being distributed throughout The Mount.

The kitchenettes in all Wings were renovated.

7. WORK OF THE BOARD

7.1 ACTIVITIES OF THE BOARD

During the year 3 new board members were appointed and they started their induction and training at the beginning of 2013. It is expected they will have finished their training and be fully integrated into the Board by the end of Summer 2013. At the start of 2013 one member resigned as changes to his personal circumstances made it difficult for him to undertake allocated duties. The Board currently has 17 members.

The Board continues to have a 45 minute training session prior to each monthly Board meeting. It has valued the diverse range of topics provided by different prison departments as well as an in-house session on Applications. Discussions following these sessions are lively and informative. An ATPR exercise was held during January 2013.

In January 2013, 8 members of the Board visited HMP Wormwood Scrubs

7.2 APPLICATIONS

Applications made to the Board

Code	Subject	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11
A	Accommodation	7	17	8
B	Adjudications	1	3	5
C	Equality and Diversity (inc religion)	5	6	2
D	Education/employment/training inc IEP	32	49	41
E1	Family/visits inc mail & phone	16	24	23
E2	Finance and Pay	16		
F	Food/kitchen related	8	3	3
G	Health related	41	17	25
H	Property	54	42	45
I	Sentence related (inc.HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-cat etc)	35	37	68
J	Staff/prisoner/detainee concerns inc bullying	14	14	10
K	Transfers	4	14	7
L	Miscellaneous	55	30	67
Total number of IMB applications		288	256	304
The number of Confidential Access Applications included above was:		3	6	14

7.3 BOARD STATISTICS

Recommended complement of Board Members	18
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	15
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	17
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	3
Number of members leaving within the reporting period	1
Total number of Board meetings during the reporting period	12
Total number of visits to the prison	598
Total number of segregation reviews held	203
Total number of segregation reviews attended	192
Date of Annual Team Performance Review	9 th Jan 2013

For and on behalf of the members of the Board at HMP The Mount

Chair Jean Hardwidge

Dated 23rd May 2013

8. Appendix A: Glossary

AAP Activities Allocation Panel	NACRO National Association for Care & Resettlement of Prisoners
ACCT Assessment, Care in Custody & Teamwork	NC The National Council for IMBs
ADA Additional Days Awarded	NOMS National Offender Management Service
ALI Adult Learning Inspectorate	NVQ National Vocational Qualification
AQA Assessment and Qualifications Alliance	OASys Offender Assessment System
ATPR Annual Team Performance Review	OBP Offending Behaviour Programme
BAME Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic	OCA Observation, Classification & Allocations
BICS Building and Industrial Cleaning Services	OLASS Offender Learning and Skills Service
BOSS Body Orifice Security Scanner	OMU Offender Management Unit
BOV Board of Visitors	OSG Operational Support Grade
CAB Citizens Advice Bureau	OI/OP Own Interest/Own Protection
CALM Crisis & Aggression Limitation & Management	Op Cap Operational Capacity
C&R Control & Restraint	PALS Patient Advisory Liaison Service
CARATS Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice & Throughcare Scheme	PCT Primary Care Trust
CC Cellular Confinement	PICTA Prisons Information & Communications Technology Academy
CLAIT Computer Literacy and Information Technology	PIN Personal Identification Number
CNA Certified Normal Accommodation	PO Principal Officer
CPN Community Psychiatric Nurse	POA Prison Officers Association
CRD Conditional Release Date	POELT Prison Officer Entry Level Training
CSH Contracted Service Hours	PMU Population Management Unit
CSRA Cell sharing risk assessment	P-NOMIS Prison-National Offender Management Information System
CSU Care and Separation Unit	PPO Persistent & Prolific Offender
DEO Diversity and Equality Officer	PRRRC Prisoner Race Relations Representative Committee
DIRF Diversity Incident Reporting Form	PRT Prison Reform Trust
DPSM Developing Prison Service Manager	PSI/PSO Prison Service Instruction/Order
EDR Earliest Date of Release	RAPt Rehabilitation for Addicted Prisoners Trust
ERS Early Release Scheme	R 45 Prison rule 45 concerning segregation of prisoners
ESOL English for Speakers of Other Languages	REAG Race and Equality Action Group
ETS Enhanced Thinking Skills	RESET Resettlement Team (Prisoner Group)
FN Foreign National	RIRF Racial Incident Reporting Form
FRS Facilitated Removal Scheme	ROTL Release On Temporary Licence
GOOD Good Order or Discipline	RRLO Race Relations Liaison Officer
HACRO Hertfordshire Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders	RRMT Race Relations Management Team
HCC Health Care Centre	SED Sentence Expiry Date
HDC Home Detention Curfew	SIN Staff Information Notice
HMCIP Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons	SIPS Safety in Prison Supporters
HMPS Her Majesty's Prison Service	SIR Security Information Report
HPNT Hertfordshire Partnership NHS Trust	SLA Service Level Agreement
IA Independent Adjudicator	SMARG Segregation & Monitoring Review Group
ICAS Independent Complaints Advocacy Service	SMART Systematic Monitoring & Analysis of Race Equality Template
ICT Information and Communication Technology	SMT Senior Management Team
IDTS Integrated Drug Treatment Service	SO Supervising Officer
IEP Incentives and Earned Privileges	SPDR Staff Performance & Development Review
IIP Investors in People	TOC Time Out of Cell
IMB Independent Monitoring Board	TOIL Time Off In Lieu
ISPP Indeterminate Sentence of Imprisonment for Public Protection	UKBA UK Border Agency
IT Information Technology	VC Virtual Campus
KPI/KPT Key Performance Indicator/Target	VDT Voluntary Drug Test
LIDS Local Inmate Database System	VR Violence Reduction
LINKs Local Involvement Networks	VO Visiting Order
LSC Learning & Skills Council	West Herts NHS West Hertfordshire Primary Healthcare Trust
MAPPA Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements	
MDT Mandatory Drugs Testing	
MSL Minimum Staffing Level	
MQPL Measuring the Quality of Prison Life	