



**HMP WORMWOOD SCRUBS**  
**2012 ANNUAL REPORT**  
**COVERING THE PERIOD FROM**  
**1<sup>st</sup> JUNE 2011**  
**TO**  
**31<sup>st</sup> MAY 2012**



*Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody*

**Section 1**

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STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

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:

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

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

## **Section 2**

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## **Section 3**

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## A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

HMP Wormwood Scrubs is a Category B local male prison, built between 1875 and 1891 and accepts prisoners over the age of 21 within its catchment area. The prison has an operational capacity of 1,279. Numbers change on a daily basis.

During the reporting year, the prison population fluctuated between 1,159 and 1,250. The lower number was largely the result of construction work within the prison that resulted in the closure of some areas.

The average stay for prisoners is ten weeks.

Between 26 – 38% of the prison population is made up of foreign nationals and about 45% of the prisoners are on remand.

The approximate religious breakdown of prisoners was:

Roman Catholic 24%,

Church of England 23%,

Muslim 21%,

other 14%,

no religion 17%.

Accommodation: The establishment has five main wings plus a number of smaller dedicated units.

A and B wings house remand and sentenced prisoners. B wing also runs the follow-on induction from the First Night Centre. C wing manages prisoners on the Intensive Drug

Treatment System. D wing houses residents in single-cell accommodation and high-risk

prisoners. E wing is single-cell accommodation and for full time workers as well as high risk prisoners for whom D wing is not suitable. The First Night Centre holds 34 new prisoners, usually for one night.

The Conibeere Unit is a stabilisation/detoxification unit for 55 prisoners.

The Healthcare centre holds both physically and mentally unwell prisoners.

The Jan Wilcox unit is a super-enhanced unit for 17 prisoners who are considered more trustworthy.

At the end of the reporting year there were 256 prisoners on enhanced status, 960 on standard and 13 on basic.

Health services are under the authority of Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust (CLCH). Most of the education and training for prisoners is delivered by Kensington and Chelsea College.

At the end of the reporting year there were nine officer vacancies as compared to 13.5 last year.

## **Section 4**

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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

#### **Overall judgment**

1. Significant physical improvements have been made within the prison during the reporting year. These have almost entirely been funded by external organisations. In contrast, the prison budget has been severely pared back, curtailing progress and improvements. The Board acknowledges that the Governor and staff do their best under increasingly tough conditions, but is increasingly concerned that further cutbacks affect the welfare of the prisoners.

2. In addition, the prison is going through a sustained and challenging period of upheaval. Prison staff are anxious about the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) Fair and Sustainable changes for 2013, potential staff cuts and changes to their pension. These tensions can rub off on prisoners, especially those who are vulnerable and a small number ask to stay in the Segregation Unit for their own protection. Their perception of how safe they are in the wings needs to be addressed, the Governor is

investigating the matter. The Board will continue to monitor. See p.7

3. Despite the Government's emphasis on the rehabilitation of prisoners, there is a marked difference between the theory of this worthy aim and the reality of making it happen, especially while insisting on stringent financial cuts. Wormwood Scrubs is a local prison with inmates staying an average of ten weeks. In addition, several workshops have been closed on both a temporary and possibly permanent basis. These two facts alone make rehabilitation unlikely to be achieved. See p.13

4. Serco, a provider of custodial services to the government, was given the contract to ferry prisoners to and from court and between prisons.

The contract began in utter chaos with significant effects on prisoners and staff. It is now less chaotic, but the service remains unreliable, especially as regards to the arrival time at the prison. The needs of prisoners do not always appear to be a priority. See p.17

5. Major construction work was undertaken to install smoke detection and extraction to the north ends of A and B wings and accommodation areas. It was noisy and inevitably disruptive. Several smaller wings had to be closed. The Board believes it was well handled and completed with the minimum effect on prisoners.

### **The positive**

6. The Health Wing H3 has improved significantly during the year. There is a new multi-purpose therapy room jointly financed by the King's Fund charity, the prison and the healthcare provider plus two new fully-equipped medical rooms and a refurbished treatment room. In addition, flat-screen televisions, new sofas, and dining tables and chairs that enable prisoners to sit communally have been provided. The changed environment has been immensely positive for staff and prisoners alike.

Treatment rooms in all the wings have also been upgraded and new equipment provided. This has been paid for by the NHS. See p.7

7. The new Visitors' Centre provided by the Tudor Trust and run by Spurgeons, a registered charity, opened at the start of the reporting year. It is light and airy, and provides a much more pleasant environment for prisoners, families and friends.

Concerns remain about incomplete work and shortage of staff.

8. The re- installation of netting has reduced the amount of illegal drugs thrown over the walls.

9. Over 150 mobile phones were found in prisoners' possession during the year. This was largely due to security intelligence and focused searches.

10. There are now twenty Listeners – prisoners who are trained by the Samaritans to help fellow prisoners in distress. This is a welcome improvement on last year. They could, however, be used more widely. See p.15

11. The litter problem has improved due to a team of Red Bands significantly made up of foreign national prisoners.

12. The introduction of feral cats has reduced the number of mice and rats in the prison.

13. The Segregation Unit continues to maintain high standards in its care of difficult prisoners.

14. More prisoners are turning up for education, work and medical appointments due to a new incentive/disincentive system. For example, prisoners who repeatedly fail to turn up for appointments for an invalid reason are put on a basic regime, which curtails their privileges. Due to lack of space education is now taking place in some wings as well as in the education centre. See p.11

15. The way prisoners are allocated work by Local Employment Office (LEO) was criticised in last year's report. The Board conducted a review and found LEO's procedures have improved.

16. Complaints of a racial nature are less than half the number made in the previous year.

17. An Astroturf football area has been installed. It gives prisoners an

opportunity for exercise and to work in teams, and has been popular.

**The Board has the following concerns:**

18. Although the relationship between staff and prisoners is good overall, some prisoners have contacted the Board to say they don't feel safe on their wings and made allegations about individual prison officers' negative behaviour.

In many instances, perhaps understandably, the complainant's identity is demanded. Their name is then passed on to the member of staff in question who then replies to the allegation.

However, when prisoners are informed of the procedure, many withdraw rather than risk revealing their identity, alleging they will be victimised and/or bullied by the named member of staff. This can result in the allegation not being fully addressed. It is regrettable and the Board would like a more understanding approach.

19. Despite the improvement in H3 in the Health wing, mentally and physically unwell prisoners are still mixed together in the same unit.

This does not happen elsewhere in the NHS and the Board states yet again that it believes it does not help the recovery of prisoners in either group.

20. The Board highlights year on year that mentally ill prisoners remain in the prison for too long before they are moved to a more suitable environment. The national guidelines indicate a target of within 14 days for transfer of severely unwell prisoners to a community setting. This is regularly not met. The Board understands there is a lack of space, but prisoners' welfare suffers.

21. The Board is particularly concerned at the increasing number of mentally ill and obviously vulnerable patients in the Segregation Unit and on D Wing, not least because officers state they are not fully trained to deal with them.

22. The problem of prisoners having jobs within the prison remains; there are only jobs for about half the prison population. This was made worse by some prisoners'

casual attitude to work. The Board is pleased to report that there has been a significant improvement in the number of prisoners actually turning up for work due to the incentive/disincentive approach referred to above.

23. Plans are in progress to divide the jobs into two so that more prisoners will be able to work. The Board is concerned that this will also mean that prisoners will spend more time in their cells.

24. Lunch is often served too early. The Board finds that at times it slips back to be served at 11am rather than 11.30am.

25. The problems concerning lost property, as reported year on year, remains an on-going issue both within the prison and between different prisons. It is the cause of one of the highest number of applications the Board receives.

26. The Board is concerned that the head of the psychology department of Wormwood Scrubs is now based at Brixton prison and has additional responsibility for other prisons.

As the remainder of the team at Wormwood Scrubs regularly need to consult her before taking action, it is not an ideal situation and causes delay.

An additional concern is that that psychologists are no longer automatically involved with various aspects of prisoner behaviour and the decisions that affect them. See p.15

27. There are on-going problems with booking visits and dealing with phone enquiries at the Visitors' Centre due to the lack of Spurgeon's staff. Pressure needs to be put on them to address this issue.

28. The court and inter-prison service run by Serco leaves much to be desired. Prisoners are often kept in court cells for hours due to a lack of vehicles and delivered to the prison well into the evening often unfed. Inter-prison transfers often do not take place as arranged. Nor is the prison regularly notified of no-shows.

The cost of the Serco contract is £420 million - the most expensive contract within the Ministry of Justice. It is supervised by Prison Escort Contract Services (PECS) and

pressure needs to be put on them to improve the service. See p.17

29. Canteen as supplied by DHL continues to be a more expensive way of supplying prisoners with extra items. The additional £145,000 taken from the prison budget remains a substantial drain on the prison's increasingly meagre resources with no obvious benefits to the prisoners. The Board is aware that this is a national operation, but the 'one size fits all' attitude adds yet another financial restriction to any budget spends.

### **Issues requiring a response from the Government**

1. The Board would like to know what additional steps the Government and the Prison Service is taking to improve the work of PECS in the supervision of the Serco contract.

2. The Board would like action to change the practice of putting physically and mentally unwell prisoners together.

### **Issues required a response from the Prison Service**

1. The Board expresses its serious concerns year in, year out, over the way issues about prisoners' property are dealt with. The current time-consuming, labour-

intensive and antiquated system of writing everything out by hand does not work

sufficiently well. Nor is there any initial inter-prison information. It is important that

this is addressed by the Prison Service and a more up-to-date system introduced.

2. What steps can the Prison Service do to ensure more staff are employed in the

Visitors' Centre to deal with requests for visits?

**Issues requiring a response from the Governor.**

1. The Board would like the Governor to take a more practical consideration of a prisoner's anxiety when the prisoner makes allegations about staff behaviour.
2. The Board is concerned that the plan to cut jobs into two will result in more prisoners spending too much time in their cells. How will this be addressed in the light of staff cuts? The Board would also like to see more workshops open. The Board is particularly concerned at the closure of the metal-cutting workshop. See p.13
3. The Board would like more training for wing staff who have to deal with vulnerable or mentally-ill prisoners not kept in H3.
4. What steps are being taken to ensure that there is a viable alternative to the valuable role that psychologists have played in many aspects of prisoners' lives?
5. What steps are being taken to improve the antiquated method of dealing with property issues both within and between prisons and also to alter staff perception of these issues?

**Section 5**

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***Equality and Inclusion***

5.1 There are no plans for a new Diversity Manager. The role has been subsumed into the Diversity department which for much of the year has suffered from staff shortages. The Board would like this addressed.

5.2 The temporary measures to cover the Foreign National coordinator post has resulted in different aspects of the work being handled by a number of individuals at various levels

of seniority. The Board does not believe this can be as satisfactory as having a full-time coordinator particularly as foreign national prisoners count for up to 38% of the prison population. The Board would like the Governor to address this.

5.3 Since the departure of the Foreign National Officer last year the Board is concerned that statistics relating to foreign nationals are no longer effectively monitored. This is a cause for concern.

5.4 The Board remains concerned that without work or education foreign national prisoners spend a considerable amount of time isolated in their cells.

5.5 There is a severe shortage of UKBA staff and a constantly changing supply. This is a national problem but causes difficulties for foreign national prisoners.

### ***Education, Learning and Skills***

5.6 Attendance at education has improved due to the incentive/disincentive approach and the unit is now often full. As a maximum of only 120 prisoners can be accommodated in the education area, this year for the first time education provision has expanded onto the wings. There is a classroom for ten on A wing and D wing and a popular barbering class on D wing. There is also education support in the workshops and in the segregation unit. The Board would like to encourage further developments in this area.

5.7 The emphasis within Learning and Skills is on reducing reoffending by improving prisoners' employability. The aim is to link workshops with employers in the community. However, as there is little or no budget for this and the average stay for prisoners in Wormwood Scrubs is only ten weeks, realistically little can be achieved.

### ***Healthcare and Mental Health***

5.8 The two new fully-equipped medical rooms will enable ill prisoners to be treated for

longer within the prison and return to the prison more quickly from hospital. This will cut down on the number and cost of bed watches needed outside the prison.

5.9 The number of mentally-ill prisoners continues to be a major problem. When Healthcare unit H3 is full, these prisoners are placed in the Segregation Unit or on D wing. Despite their best efforts, many staff on D Wing and in the Segregation Unit believe they are not sufficiently trained to deal with these prisoners. It is not satisfactory for staff or patients.

5.10 A new scheme of dealing with prisoners who are anxious and depressed has begun. Staff in H3 will now consult a designated professional to help with these prisoners. In practice, however, most prisoners are discharged before anything significant can be done to help them.

5.11 Waiting lists for prisoners needing healthcare are partly caused by prisoners not turning up for their appointments.

Sample waiting lists are:

Podiatry	4 weeks
Urology	4 weeks
Optician	5 weeks
Sexual health	6 weeks
Dentist	8 – 10 weeks

Since the average stay of a prisoner is ten weeks, many are not treated before they move on. The wait for dental care is particularly long and some prisoners complain that even when they are in acute pain it is difficult to be seen.

Escorts and bed-watches.

5.12 The number of escorts needed during the year varied between a high of 75 – in November 2011 – to a low of 45 in August 2011.

5.13 The number of bed-watches varied between a high of 11 in December 2011 to a low of one in October 2011.

5.14 During the reporting year 1,375 new prisoners received treatment for opiate addiction. This is 375 more than last year. Out of this total, seventy four prisoners were treated with Subutex as they were already on the drug before arriving at Wormwood Scrubs. The remainder were prescribed Methadone.

### ***Alcohol addiction***

5.15 This is a growing problem within the prison. There is now one alcoholic for every two drug addicts on Methadone.

### ***Purposeful activity***

5.16 The LEO department that is involved in job allocation has become more efficient and at the end of the reporting year was filling 95% of the existing vacancies. In addition, LEO increased by 25% the number of vacancies available for cleaners and hotplate workers. Four workshops, which occupy prisoners and can provide skills and knowledge, have been closed on a temporary basis and the Board fears one or more closures may become permanent. This has reduced the number of vacancies by sixty. It is particularly regrettable that the closures included one of the two metal-cutting workshop, which has invented a non-hinged door saving £200 per door on materials. This invention could be sold to other prisons. The Board would like this addressed by the Governor.

5.17 The laundry workshop has been closed for upgrading. Once completed it will provide work for forty more prisoners and enable it to supply a service to external consumers. This is a very positive improvement. Another workshop has been converted into an Assessment Centre for the induction of prisoners.

5.18 There has been an almost 30% increase in the number of prisoners turning up for employment due to the combined incentive/disincentive approach.

5.19 The Job Club is useful and pragmatic but this excellent resource seldom seems fully utilised when Board members visit. Allocation to this club must be improved

### *Safer Custody*

5.20 In addition to the obviously mentally unwell prisoners, there are an increasing number of challenging and disturbed men awaiting placement in more appropriate mental health facilities.

5.21 Several of these prisoners ask to stay in the Segregation Unit because they are afraid of returning to the wings. E wing, which is a more general wing and has its share of difficult prisoners, may no longer be seen as a slightly 'safer' environment for such prisoners.

5.22 The prison is obviously still struggling to implement the Safer Custody and Violence Reduction policy, due to staff shortages and lack of funds. Dealing with the paperwork seems a particular problem.

5.23 The Tackling Anti-Social Attitudes (TASA) policy, which replaces anti-bullying, has been drafted but reaching agreement has been slow.

5.24 The Case Management Protocol (CMP), previously regarded as being very effective, has been negatively affected by the removal of any input by the Psychology Department.

5.25 Psychology will also no longer attend Segregation Reviews or Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) Reviews, do risk assessments or respond to applications from prisoners who want to see a psychologist. The Board regrets they will not be involved in these processes and believes the insight and experience of such a person can be invaluable. The Board will monitor this.

5.26 Last year the number of open ACCTs was around 30 per month. This has dropped to about 20. Board members are encouraged to attend ACCT reviews when possible.

5.27 A new Violence Reduction Coordinator has recently been appointed. Meetings are held monthly, and are no longer cancelled or changed at short notice.

5.28 Twenty Listeners have been trained, with 14 still in position. They are however underused. Both officers and prisoners have a rather narrow view of what Listeners can offer. The Board believes prison officers could try to use them more proactively for prisoners who are distressed or anxious rather than only those who are suicidal. The nature of the prison means there is a rapid turnover.

5.29 Regrettably there has been one death in custody in the reporting year.

### ***Segregation, Care & Separation, Close Supervision***

5.30 The Board continues to be impressed by the professional way the staff operate and the quality of care given to sometimes very challenging prisoners, those on dirty protests and those on ACCTs.

The Segregation Unit is part of every member's prison rota, which means it is usually visited four times per week. The IMB is informed when a prisoner is taken to the Segregation Unit, put into a Special Accommodation cell and when they have reviews, which a member of the Board usually attends.

The Board attends Good Order Or Discipline (GOOD) reviews.

### **Residential Services**

#### ***Accommodation***

5.31 This is the fourth successive year that the Board has raised the issue of prisoners being unable to have a shower when returning to their wings after work. It is also difficult for them to have association or make phone calls. The Board cannot see why working prisoners should be penalised in this way.

5.32 The Board remains concerned that prisoners are spending too long in their cells, particularly those who do not attend education or work.

## **Section 6**

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### ***Property***

6.1 The Board was pleased that a CCTV camera was installed in the property area of the prison after some valuable property went missing. However cash and valuables, including jewellery, are still too easily lost.

Property left at other prisons can take months to recover as prisons are reluctant to use funds from their diminishing budgets to pay for items to be transported for one prisoner.

It can also take months to establish that a prisoner's property has been lost and compensation can in some cases take over a year to be paid. The compensation can also be derisory and on one occasion was less than 10% of the claimed value. Sorting out property issues does not seem to be a priority.

6.2 The Board regrets that there is no progress in introducing an electronic tracking system, which would help solve many property problems.

### ***Serco contract***

6.3 There are regular last-minute cancellations by Serco of inter-prison transfers from the prison. Prisoners are regularly held in Reception from 9.00am only to be returned to their cells in the afternoon. This causes difficulties for prisoners and staff alike.

6.4 Serco delivers large numbers, often 60-plus, to the prison, often as late as 8pm as prisoners are kept waiting for hours in courts as there are not enough vehicles to undertake inter-prison transfers and drive prisoners to prison after court appearances at a reasonable hour.

Prisoners can then be driven round for hours as various groups are dropped off at different prisons. As a result, prisoners are often left for too long without food as the vans only supply drinking water. Only a few vans have toilets.

Prisoners are allowed a 'comfort break' every two and a half hours, when vans will stop

at a prison, court or police station. As an alternative prisoners can use a potty that has a type of cat litter. The Board does not believe this is acceptable.

Thanks to the hard work of prison staff in Reception the health and safety checks on new prisoners are still made whatever time the prisoners arrive in the evening, but there is an increased risk that vulnerable or dangerous prisoners could go undetected.

Serco does not use large enough vehicles to take account of both a prisoner and his property.

On many occasions the vans have a full complement of prisoners and no room for property. This is unsatisfactory. Prisoners are also limited to 15kg of property.

### ***Complaints***

6.5 The prison deals with about 225 complaints a month, a reduction from about 300 from last year.

6.6 The Board noticed last year that some responses to prisoners were dismissive and /or didn't address the problem. The Board also found that some staff signatures were illegible. Towards the end of the reporting year new procedures were put in place to tackle these issues. The Board will monitor this in the next reporting year.

## **Section 7**

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### **THE WORK OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD**

7.1 The Board has a recommended complement of 24 members. It began the reporting year with 21 members. Three new members joined, seven members left. At the end of the year there were 17. There was a recruitment process during the year and three candidates were recommended.

7.2 The Board has been represented on the Suicide Prevention Committee, the Violence Reduction committee, the Race Equality Act in Team meetings and in the Adjudication

Standards Review meetings.

7.3 Board members made 460 visits to the prison compared to 380 visits last year. Four members are on rota each week and each individual covers a quarter of the prison.

7.4 The Board Development Officer arranged a full programme of training for the Board. Serco was invited to talk at one training session about the new arrangements for prisoners going to and from courts. IMB members from Pentonville, Brixton and Wandsworth were invited to attend.

The Board visited the C and R training unit in Kidlington, Oxfordshire and hosted a visit from a Russian delegation.

7.5 The Board has the use of its own room - but no specific computer – within the administrative block of the prison and the services of a clerk for fifteen hours a week.

The Board is grateful to the clerk for his on-going support.

7.6 The Board is also grateful to Governor Taylor for arranging for a variety of computers, within the administrative block to be used by the Board and for his unfailing courtesy and accessibility.

## APPENDIX

Subject number of visits by IMB members for 1st Jan 2011 - 31st Dec 2011 = 477 (according to those who signed the diary)

### Subject Number of Applications 1<sup>st</sup> June 2011 – 31<sup>st</sup> May 2012

Subject	2011-12	2010-11
Property	63 (13%)	73
Visits/VO's	29 (5%)	20
Medical	82 (17%)	76
Wing Issues/Regime	57 (12%)	39
Finance (Money)	9 (2%)	12
Sentencing & Custody	28 (5%)	94
Immigration	18 (4%)	37
Transfers	27 (5%)	19
Employment / Education	20 (4%)	14
Telephones (Pin Phones)	14 (3%)	14
Home Detention Curfew HDC & ROTL	10 (2%)	15
Categorisation	5	8
Post	25 (5%)	13
Multiple / Various Issues		114
Food	-	10
Adjudications	2	4
Canteen	22 (5%)	9
IEP	6	13
Staff Behaviour	21 (5%)	25
Racial & Diversity	3	1
Chaplaincy	8	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>488</b>	<b>610</b>

### BY MONTH:

	2012 – 11	2010 - 2011
June 2011	39	44
July	42	63
August	33	54
September	28	37
October	45	41
November	34	53
December	38	24
January 2012	32	53

February	41	56
March	52	79
April	38	40
May	38 (Tot 460)	66

BY WING:

Wing/Location	Number of Applications
A Wing	73 (16%)
B Wing	17 (4%)
C Wing	76 (16%)
D Wing	119 (26%)
E Wing	30 (6.5%)
Seg Unit	9 (2%)
H3 (Healthcare)	13 (3%)
Conibeere Unit (Detox Unit)	5 (1%)
Location Not Recorded	123 (26.5%)
	(Tot 465)

Statistics provided by the Board Development Officer