



Independent Monitoring Board

**Annual Report
2013-14
for
HMP Wymott**

**Reporting Period
June 2013-May 2014**

Statutory Role of the IMB

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

The Board is specifically charged to:

1. Satisfy itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in custody within its prison and the range and adequacy of the programmes preparing them for release.
2. Inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority as it judges appropriate, any concerns 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
4. 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 the prison's records.

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This report has been constructed using the contributions of all members

Section 1

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

1.1 HMP Wymott is a male Category 'C' closed training prison with an operating capacity of 1176 prisoners. It opened in 1979 and houses both sex-offenders and other prisoners. It comprises 8 separate buildings holding 11 discrete groups of prisoners plus a segregation unit. The Prison is effectively split into two sides allowing sex-offenders to be separated from other prisoners.

1.2 The Prison comprises a number of specialist wings including 2 sex-offender wings, an elderly and disabled wing (including an activities centre), a drug therapeutic community wing, a substance-free wing (to support a drug-free return to the community) and an integrated drug treatment wing (managing prisoners on a controlled Methadone programme) and 4 other wings.

1.3 The Prison workshops offer a range of employments which can lead to nationally-accredited qualifications including Engineering, Welding, Paint Spraying, Bricklaying, Joinery, Painting and Decorating, Industrial Cleaning, Aluminium Windows manufacture, Recycling, Horticulture, Catering, Tailoring, Laundry, Waste Management, IT, Printing, Retail and Gym Instructor qualifications. Some of these employments are operated on a commercial basis providing quality services to external clients and effectively constitute a 'Working Prison'.

1.4 The Manchester College provides basic literacy and numeracy and a wide range of more advanced courses. A full Education programme is on offer on a part time basis. Subjects include Literacy and Numeracy from Pre-Entry to Level 2, Information Technology from basic to advanced, Art and Design, Cookery, Accountancy, History, ESOL, Financial Literacy, Assertiveness, Parenting, Drug and Alcohol Awareness, Access to Higher Education progressing to Open University. Food Hygiene, Health and Safety Courses and training for the CSCS card compliment the vocational training courses. Regular Parenting Days are linked to the Family Learning Course.

1.5 A 'Custody to Work' team provides all offenders with help and support in the 16 weeks prior to release about accommodation, employment and training, benefits, bank accounts and financial planning.

1.6 A Chaplaincy team employs staff in a range of faiths as well as sessional ministers and volunteers.

1.7 The Lancashire Care Foundation Trust provides healthcare services including dentistry and a range of health-promoting activities.

1.8 The PE department consists of a large sports hall, weights room, CV room, training classroom, remedial suite and full size outdoor sports field.

N.B. The information given in Section 1 above refers to the reporting year and may not be currently accurate

Section 2 Summary

(a) Overall Summary

The Prison is working hard to provide a facility which holds prisoners with decency, respect and safety despite the draconian reductions in officer strength demanded by Government. For the officers who remain, working life for many is a hectic daily shift from one duty to the next. Consequentially there is a reduction in the efficiency of OMU and its centrality to prisoner' progress. It is also causing difficulties in the establishment of good working relationships between officers and prisoners since officers have less time to devote to this important task. Much of the adverse commentary in this report is a reflection of the effects of reductions in officer staff. However officers and management do continue to make the prison work for prisoners and they must be commended for the development of the 'working prison' and the benefits it brings in preparing prisoners for employment on release.

(b) Issues requiring a response

(note: numbers refer to paragraphs in the report)

For the attention of the Justice Secretary

J.1 The Board is concerned about the effect of reduced officer numbers may have on the future safe and effective operation of the prison. (3.2.2, 3.2.7, 3.2.11, 3.4.2.3, 3.5.1, 3.5.3)

For the attention of the Director of NOMS

N.1 A considerable and serious number of issues over this reporting period raised by the Board are as a result of insufficient numbers of officers available to carry out the required range of different duties (3.2.2, 3.2.7, 3.2.11, 3.4.2.3, 3.5.1, 3.5.3)

N.2 The Board continues bring to the attention of NOMS the very poor condition of A and B Houses which it considers are below the requirements of decent accommodation. (3.6.2)

N.3 There are insufficient places on offending behaviour programmes and the long waiting lists prevent prisoners from achieving their sentence plan targets; a key de-motivator to changing their offending behaviour (3.2.7)

For the attention of Lancashire Care Foundation Trust

L.1 There are many occasions when there is no conversation between the GP and prisoners in CSU during the GP's visits to prisoners. A 'thumbs-up' sign from a prisoner is taken as proof by the GP that the prisoner remains suitable to cope with solitary confinement. Some nurses have also adopted this pattern of behaviour. The Board considers this to be a matter for urgent attention. (3.3.2, 3.5.15)

For the attention of the Governor

G.1 Some prisoners have reported that they are not able to complete their induction programme due to being moved off the wing too early. The Board is concerned that this will disadvantage some prisoners (3.2.1)

G.2 Prisoners do not get to see their Offender Supervisor for long periods due to Offender Supervisors being regularly taken off their offender supervisor duties for other assignments. Prisoners need these important contacts to maintain focus on their targets

and maintain their motivation to address offending behaviour and have little opportunity to discuss their progress with sentence plans. (3.2.2, 3.4.2.4)

G.3 Often there is insufficient work for prisoners in the main location workshops. During these periods prisoners without work remain idle in the workshop or on their wings. This can demotivate prisoners and may foster boredom and possible consequential disruption (3.2.9).

G.4 The Board is concerned that Diversity and Equality Meetings are not taking place regularly (3.1.1).

G.5 A fall in rating in the recent Safer Custody Audit reflects the fact that responsibility for the supervision of ACCT documents and attendance at ACCT reviews now rests with Offender Supervisors who, due to shortage of officers, are regularly moved from those roles to cover wing and escort duties (3.5.3).

G.6 Prison literature for visitors identifies the start of visits as 1315 but visits actually commence much later than this causing upset for visitors. (3.4.1.3)

G.7 In the past there was a post box situated in the visitors centre to allow relatives to post mail directly to the prison. The removal of this has taken a welcome facility away from relatives. (3.4.1.7)

Section 3 Reporting Areas

3.1 Equality and Inclusivity

3.1.1 The Board is concerned that Diversity and Equality Meetings are not taking place regularly. To date no meetings have been held during 2014, an indicator of the lack of seriousness with which the Prison regards such matters. However the Board anticipates that since prisoner wing representatives for Diversity and Equality have recently been appointed it expects regular meetings to be held.

3.1.2 The specific needs of older prisoners, including those on the elderly prisoner wing, continue to be identified with positive, appropriate, action taken to solve issues. However the Board has identified instances where the expected standards of care are not always met. The Board is pleased that three disability officers have been assigned to the older prisoner wing and that a bid for a six bed social care facility on the annexe to this wing has been submitted.

3.1.3 The Cameo Centre on the elderly wing (run by the Salvation Army) provides excellent opportunities for elderly prisoners, including those too old to work, to participate in a range of activities. The Board again praises the excellent work of the Salvation Army in the running this Centre, with over 70% of eligible prisoners over 65 attending for at least one session a week. The range of educational and craft activities has been widened and the Centre is now working with PE to provide tailored activities, including indoor bowls.

3.1.4 The Library Service continues to provide an important support service to a wide range of ethnicities and religions through large print books, audio books, a book circle, wing libraries and individual prisoners' libraries.

3.1.5 The Chaplaincy continues to make a positive contribution to the prison population, offering support to prisoners of all faiths and no faith. They support the observation of different religious festivals. Prisoners regard the team as approachable, sympathetic and

helpful.

3.1.6 The Safer Custody Team is responsible for the monitoring of discrimination within the prison. DIRF (diversity and racial incident) forms are thoroughly investigated. The majority of complainants receive a reply within 2 weeks. The Board has determined that since the beginning of July 2013, 27 DIRF forms have been submitted alleging a range of diversity or racial incidents. The monthly Safer Custody Report provides management and other key staff information on DIRFs received. Trends are identified and action taken if necessary.

3.1.7 In November a Transgender Compact was introduced by the Prison. This comprehensive document provides staff with relevant information and guidance for dealing sensitively with the problems arising with transgender prisoners.

3.2 Education, Skills and Purposeful Activity

3.2.1 In response to concerns raised by the IMB, the prison has re-organised the induction programme and the Resettlement and Interventions Board now sits on a Thursday to allow time for prisoners to receive information about education and work. The Prisoners can watch a DVD of all available activities opportunities before making their choices. However, the Board remains concerned that the MQPL data indicated that 46% of the prisoners sampled did not find induction helpful, although 32% of these had not completed induction or had been moved off the wing before completion, which is also of concern

3.2.2 The Board continues to be concerned that prisoners are encouraged to choose work over education even though their basic skills may be below Level 1. This is of particular concern in Engineering, where the skills level is low and the need to understand safe working practices is high. The number of Category C prisoners generally engaged in OLASS education is low. The link between a prisoner and his Offender Supervisor is important to encourage him to engage with education, particularly if his literacy and numeracy skills are below Level 1, and the Board is greatly concerned that, due to staffing cutbacks, many prisoners do not get to see their Offender Supervisor for up to 3 months. Feedback from prisoners via the MQPL survey (pre-benchmarking and 'Fair and Sustainable') indicated that lack of contact with their Offender Supervisor and long waiting lists for offending behaviour programmes were key de-motivators for them to address their offending behaviour. Prisoners working 'longer working' hours and prisoners on K wing are unable to attend education due to the constraints of those situations and the Board considers that this may be a disadvantage.

3.2.3 The Board notes feedback from prisoners made via the Student Survey and the MQPL data. Prisoners on both sides of the prison stated that they would like a wider range of courses. They stated that waiting lists for some courses were too long, and that they would like more information about courses during induction. However, prisoners on both sides of the prison valued their education experience and their relationship with the education staff. The Board continues to be concerned that prisoners on K wing do not leave the wing for education. Funding restrictions make it difficult to justify providing courses on the wing as the numbers are small, so opportunities for the prisoners on K wing to engage in education are limited. However, the Board notes that the prison is investigating using a gardening intervention to develop a Greener on the Outside for Prisoners (GOOP) course in conjunction with the University of Central Lancashire. The range of courses provided is funded by the Skills Funding Agency.

3.2.4 The Board considers that classroom accommodation is suitable and notes that the painting programme has improved the look and feel of the classrooms. Prisoner feedback on relationships with staff and the quality of teaching was very positive. Over the reporting

period the Board received 18 Applications relating to education, employment and training, 7.4% of the total number. This is comparable with the 7.2% for 2012-13.

3.2.5 The Board is concerned that the Virtual Campus is still not available to all prisoners despite the Minister's response to the 2012-13 report stating that it is. However at the time of reporting a 'Learning Support Facilitator' has been appointed and at the time of writing is undergoing security clearance. It is anticipated that the Virtual Campus will be running by September 2014. This will be a welcome addition to the teaching and learning resources in the Prison.

3.2.6 The Board commends the enthusiastic work of the Student Council. A number of initiatives took place during the reporting period, including a healthy heart campaign and a survey of prisoners' views on education in the prison – feedback from which has contributed to this report.

3.2.7 The Board is concerned that places on Offending Behaviour programmes continue to be limited, and at times present a barrier to prisoners achieving the targets on their sentence plans. However, the Board is aware that under reconfiguration of the prison estate the number of places on SOTP and HRP programmes is planned to increase as Wymott takes over staff and programmes from HMP Risley. The Board is also concerned that changes to OMU have meant that prisoners have little opportunity to meet with their Offender Supervisor to discuss their progress with their sentence plan targets. This can lead to delays in prisoners accessing programmes that they need to complete before they are eligible for parole.

3.2.8 The Board is concerned that funding cuts have meant that the prison can no longer offer some of the Personal and Social Development courses, such as Alcohol Awareness and Drugs Awareness. These were highly valued by the prisoners, and form part of the sentence plan targets for some prisoners.

3.2.9 Some workshops depend upon outside contracts to provide work for prisoners, and are thus subject to market forces. The Board commends the Prison in working hard on the development and maintenance of contracts, and the changes needed to meet their demands. However, the amount of work available for the prisoners in some areas has fluctuated over the reporting period, and the Board is concerned about the periods of limited activity in some of the workshops, particularly on the Category C side (Aluminium Windows and Engineering Contracts). This has resulted in fewer opportunities for vocational training courses and greater potential for disruption as the prisoners are not sent back to the wings due to the need to meet the prison's industries targets. The number of places in the Engineering workshop is much reduced due to a combination of OLASS funding and the reduced Operating Capacity on the Cat C side. This has made it difficult for the manager to commit to too many contracts. Better workers have been attracted by the higher wages offered by working in the DHL distribution unit. To accommodate the lower level skills available, Engineering have reduced the numbers of places in welding and increased those on contracts. However, the Board is concerned that the opportunities for Category C prisoners to develop valuable employment skills are reducing.

3.2.10 On the VP side of the prison, the longer working-hours workshops continue to do well. The Laundry in particular has managed to maintain the numbers of prisoners consistently employed, and levels of satisfaction with the work are higher than among main location prisoners. However, under the Pay Review, the Print and Tailors' workshops will lose out, and the Board is concerned by recent feedback from the Print workshop reporting difficulties in recruiting due to loss of incentives, including the lack of vocational courses and the reduction in wages.

3.2.11 Levels of attendance in the workshops have been a cause of concern to the prison, and this was not being effectively monitored. For security reasons, the workshops have a staff ratio requirement, and this means that when staff are off the workshop needs to 'not require' prisoners. This has potential for misuse, with staff sometime selectively 'not requiring' those seen as trouble makers, and prisoners telling officers that they are 'not required'. The Board is pleased that this has been recognised and is being addressed, with NOMIS data being collated to count prisoners not attending the workshops, and only workshop managers having authority to 'not require' prisoners. The prison has also improved its data collection in relation to reasons for non-attendance in workshops, and the data confirms that reasons for prisoners being 'not required' are largely related to staff shortages. The data available to date also suggests that the majority of absences are due to 'acceptable' reasons such as prisoners being in education, on offending behaviour programmes, or attending healthcare appointments. The Board commends the prison on the work done in this area.

3.2.12 The prison has some good outside contracts, but it is proving difficult to find work placements with local employers. Since the ROTL rules changed, the prison is no longer able to work with AP Broome, the landscaping contractor, and there are also implications for those who work on the farm. The main source of employment on release appears to be with family or friends, or self-employment. This makes it more important to provide opportunities for prisoners to develop the necessary skills / work ethic.

3.2.13 Following the changes to the core day, the Gym is now only able to offer accredited courses and remedial activities during the core day. This has meant that there has been a major decrease in prisoner participation levels for the PE Department. The Board commends the staff for their work in finding new ways to use the gym, by offering remedial sessions for the 'unfit for work', elderly prisoners and 'job seekers' (those awaiting places in workshops). There have been some tensions between PE courses and programmes, with prisoners not turning up for PE because they are on a programme. Prisoners may be transferred out before they complete their course.

3.2.14 The Board remains concerned that prisoners on K wing who have been deselected from the TC programme are often not engaged in purposeful activity.

3.3 Healthcare and Mental Health

3.3.1 The Board has continued to observe what it regards as less than satisfactory screening of prisoners held in the Care and Separation Unit. On occasions, the interaction between doctor and prisoner appears to be cursory, particularly where the doctor may be less familiar with the CSU context. This is a matter of great concern to the Board at a time when prisoners are being held in CSU for longer periods as regular professional screening of their emotional and mental wellbeing must be an essential element of their care. This role in monitoring the wellbeing of prisoners in CSU appears to be unclear to GPs. General nursing staff currently visit CSU each day but it is not clear to the Board that their role includes monitoring and reporting on the mental wellbeing of prisoners.

3.3.2 The circumstances in which these visits by the doctor to CSU are conducted are also not conducive to the confidentiality to which patients are entitled. The checks on wellbeing take place at an open door in earshot of any prison staff or visitors to CSU, leading to the danger that prisoners will not want to voice their concerns. On one occasion the doctor was observed, by the Board, conducting a check on prisoners accompanied by a nurse and a prison officer. The presence of an officer in such interviews must be seen as wholly inappropriate. The Board is concerned at the erosion of the confidentiality of healthcare provision in these circumstances.

3.3.4 Dispensation of medication remains a concern to the Board. That concern is primarily to do with the arrangements rather than the professional conduct of nursing staff. The introduction of electronic prescriptions during the reporting period caused significant issues to prisoners requiring ongoing treatment which must not be interrupted, but where medication could not be provided due to the new system. The risk to individual prisoners must not be underestimated, and whilst the healthcare team escalated the issues, the issues continued for a significant duration. The issues were caused by the change in prescription contract, with the contracted party underestimating the resources required to effectively dispense medicine across the prison and other establishments under the same contract. At this point it must be concluded that cost cutting requirements have been placed ahead of the service being provided, where the responsibility for the shortfall in service must be placed with the parties negotiating the electronic prescription service for not ensuring the service was sufficiently understood prior to the contract being undertaken.

3.3.5 The Board has been aware of ongoing conflicts in prescribing which have caused concern to prisoners. These conflicts arise where the prison GP appears to overrule a hospital specialist's prescription or a prescription already held by a prisoner transferring in from another prison. The Board does not seek to question the clinical decision of the doctor but is concerned at the issues raised by what prisoners may perceive to be a lack of consistency.

3.3.6 Arrangements for daily dispensing of medication on the wings are generally handled by nursing staff as sensitively as is possible. However, they present a potential for prisoners to be bullied for their medication, as has been reported to the Board directly and in CSU Rule 45 reviews. Early lock-up on weekend evenings also means that prisoners may be required to take medication at an inappropriate time. This is a matter of concern where the side effects include drowsiness. Prisoners are understandably reluctant to take such medication too early in the evening.

3.3.7 The question of waiting times for GP appointments remains a vexed issue. At times it has been difficult to establish clearly what the waiting times are, with different figures apparently being available at the same time. The triage system operated by the nurse-practitioner ensures that urgent cases are seen promptly but there appears to have been an increase in the waiting time for non-urgent GP appointments. During the reporting period the waiting time fluctuated between 8 weeks and 3 months.

3.3.8 Doctors' appointments have been difficult to request, with applications often going unanswered. This is unacceptable given the length of time waiting for appointments, and it must be emphasised that the only mechanism for prisoners to request appointments is via the applications system. However it is also noted as an example that 332 appointments were missed during November 2013, through either prisoners no longer being ill, prisoners not presenting for the doctors or no escorts being available.

3.3.9 Additional services being offered at the prison have been affected due to staffing issues during the reporting period. One example is the absence of a Podiatrist who was on long term sick-leave with no replacement. There had been a four month gap without a chiropodist. This break in healthcare service has a direct impact on prisoners who cannot seek alternative treatment elsewhere.

3.3.10 The Board continues to be aware that conditions in the Healthcare waiting room and the limited availability of escort staff cause distress to some prisoners. The waiting room can be crowded at times with prisoners having to wait some time to return to their wings or workplace after their appointments and can become stuffy and overheated as a result. It was also reported to the Board that prisoner toilets are kept locked which means that prisoners cannot gain access when escort staff are elsewhere.

3.3.11 It has been noted during the reporting period that the VP Healthcare room is often full of prisoners whereas the Cat C Healthcare waiting room is empty, showing the availability of escorts on the Cat C prison, but not the VP prison. This disparity causes distress to the VP prisoners who remain in the waiting room for the entire period, only moving at the end of the session. It must also be noted that the waiting rooms are limited in capacity, yet are often full to capacity leaving some prisoners standing, occasionally for the entire session due to no escorts being available. This leads to hot and uncomfortable conditions for the prisoners, some of whom only require very quick check-ups at 9am, but have to remain until 11:30am.

3.3.12 The Healthcare Manager has raised a number of concerns with regard to the way in which waiting times for dental treatment are recorded and monitored. Her concerns arise from the application of Prison Health Performance and Quality Indicators, which do not reflect adequately the particular circumstances of HMP Wymott. The Board is not qualified to comment on the detail of those concerns but for some time it has held the view that the provision of dental services does not reflect the significant differences in oral health and oral neglect in the prison population as against the general population. The dentist waiting time during the reporting period extended up to six months.

3.3.13 The impact of extended doctors waiting times is lessened by the ability to attend the nurses at the hatch each morning. However, during the reporting period, with the introduction of electronic prescriptions and change in regime the amount of time available for healthcare is restricted and the nurses' hatch is not a suitable location for a prisoner to have a personal discussion about a medical situation. There have also been occasions during the reporting period where the nursing staff have not communicated effectively with prisoners who have had medications restricted or being unavailable, that have led to an escalation of tempers unnecessarily.

3.3.14 The medical and care requirements of prisoners on I wing has been the subject of changes during the reporting period with the introduction of two full time Carers and the modification of several cells to accommodate prisoners with specific care related needs. Whilst it is noted that the healthcare function is not responsible for the social care of prisoners, there has been a pragmatic resolution in the manner in which this service has been provided to specific prisoners. The introduction of prisoners with special requirements has impacted healthcare in the type of health related issues but are generally dealt with by the provided Carers. Of greater concern is the impact on healthcare resources firstly with the aging I wing population and secondly with the increase in Category C issues that arise requiring medical intervention. The latter half of the reporting period highlighted an increase in medical issues from self-harming and violent incidents where prisoners require hospital attention. This level of ongoing healthcare intervention impacts the ability of the nurses to keep to regime, and to provide the normal service. The Board seeks to understand what additional resources are available should the current trend of increasing numbers of incidents continue. It is of the Boards' opinion that should the current increase in medical issues continue then the nurses will be unable to fulfill the required roles due to the interruptions for Code Blue and other emergency situations.

3.4 Resettlement and Reducing Offending

3.4.1 Family Links, Communications and Access

3.4.1.1 As stated in its previous report the Prison continues to provide a welcoming and supportive Visitor's Centre. This Centre is staffed by POPS (Partners Of Prisoners) who are fully trained and experienced in providing the facility. The Centre is recently built and contains toilets, baby changing areas and refreshments; a welcome facility after a long

journey. Families have an opportunity meet each other, not only gaining confidence on an initial visit but also receiving advice and guidance from POPS volunteers. A Family Forum is held in the centre ever 5 weeks and is chaired by a governor grade and attended by the visits booking clerk. These meetings provide a lively informative opportunity for families to have their concerns answered.

3.4.1.2 Visits can be booked by email or telephone, this being staffed, the Board considers, by helpful and experienced staff. From time to time the Board monitors telephone response times and finds these satisfactory. Security searching of both offenders and visitors is carried out with the utmost respect and this is regularly monitored by Board members

3.4.1.3 Each visiting order states that visits start at 13.15 giving the expectation this is the time when visitor and prisoner actually meet. However, in practice, visits quite often commence sometime later than the published time. This is usually due to difficulty in the Prison providing prisoner escorts for those who have visitors. When visitors complain the Board understands that they are informed that 13.15 is the time when the visits 'process' starts and not the actual visit commencement time. This causes irritation with families who, very often, have had to travel long distances with one or more children and are subjected to a long wait until they see their relative. However prison officers usually ensure that the full visit allowance time is provided and in some instances visits have been allowed to last longer. The Board urges the Prison to review the information it provides on Visiting Orders concerning this issue. All prisoners get their statutory visit entitlement.

3.4.1.4 Category C and vulnerable prisoners of necessity have separate visits' halls. However category C prisoners on closed visits have to have these on the VP side and there have been occasions when this has caused some friction. The Board urges that the Prison gives this issue some consideration.

3.4.1.5 The visits hall has comfortable seating with hot and cold food available for visitors to purchase but the halls are poorly ventilated. During the reporting period wall fans have been installed, which help. The prisoners' toilet areas and holding rooms have been decorated and improved but suffer from the inevitable vandalism. Prisoners frequently flout the rule regarding not smoking in holding areas and officers need to be more vigilant.

3.4.1.6 Twice a year the Prison provided 'lifer days' and 'parenting days' but since December 2013 these important events have not occurred. The Board urges these to be re-instated.

3.4.1.7 To facilitate mail from family to prisoners a 'post box' had been provided in the visitors centre. This facility was greatly appreciated by families enabling them to send a letter or card more rapidly and at no cost. However this facility has been withdrawn and the Board urges consideration be given to its re-instatement.

3.4.2 Offender Management

3.4.2.1 There are currently around 600 sex-offenders at Wymott with approximately half of those requiring access at some stage to one of the sex-offender programmes. However with the prison being commissioned to provide only 80 to 90 places per year there are obviously long waits for some prisoners in gaining access. Since allocation to places is made on the basis of risk or nearness to release, there are inevitably many sex-offenders who cannot gain access to courses until well into their sentences, often causing stress, and the Board has received a number of applications regarding this issue.

3.4.2.2 With the Prison being designated as one of the treatment hubs for sex-offenders there will be the need for increased special accommodation and the Board is pleased that the prison has established the 10 place sex-offender community based upon the PIPE (Psychologically-Informed Planned Environment) principle. The Board will monitor the operation of this community.

3.4.2.3 During the reporting year there have been problems with offender management. Far reaching staffing changes during the year, due to benchmarking and re-profiling, have led to experienced Offender Supervisors being taken from offender management duties and replaced by inexperienced officers. Inevitably this demanded retraining and resulted in a backlog of OASys updates and reduced contact with prisoners (this was noted in the Board's previous report). During the year this was reflected in the number of prisoners contacting the Board regarding report issues such as Category D Board preparation, with many unsure of whom their Offender Supervisor was. Others were concerned that their sentences were not progressing. A small-scale informal survey of prisoners by the Board has shown that many prisoners did not know who their Offender Supervisor was. However the Board is aware that the Offender Management Unit is planning to formally inform each prisoner of the identity of their Offender Supervisor. At the time of writing there was a backlog of Category D Boards due to the difficulties in getting the Custodial Manager, Probation Officer, Offender Supervisor and offender together to progress prisoners' issues.

3.4.2.4 In addition to the above problems, which, to some extent, have been overcome, there remains the problem that Offender Supervisors are regularly taken off their Offender Supervisor duties for other assignments. The average workload for an Offender Supervisor is 58 prisoners. However Supervisors are very frequently assigned to other, temporary duties within the Prison such as escorts and attending ACCT reviews, Discharge Boards or Reception Boards. The Board is concerned that for some prisoners the management of sentence plans or key reports are being delayed, a particular concern for lifer and IPP prisoners. Offender Supervisors find it increasingly difficult to arrange and attend meetings with external agencies and as a consequence key reports, including Parole reports, are often delayed. Additionally during the reporting year three Offender Supervisors were promoted causing some temporary reduced activity. In accordance with the Benchmark figure, 20 Offender Supervisors are allocated to the Offender Management Unit but during the reporting year this quota has not been active due assignment to other duties. At the time of writing the Board understands that there are only 15 active Offender Supervisors and because of this shortage around 300 prisoners have not been assigned to a *permanent* Offender Supervisor. Offender Supervisors are split into 4 'Pods' and one high risk offender Pod, all assisted by 13 Case Administrators.

3.4.2.5 The Board has ascertained that the number of assigned caseloads to each Offender Supervisor is manageable but only on the condition that they are not regularly assigned to other duties. This appears to be a particular problem at weekends when they are regularly required to monitor visits or have wing duties. Additionally problems with the Probation Service have resulted in delays in producing necessary, error-free reports, and this has forced an increase in the workload on Offender Supervisors.

3.4.2.6 Of overall concern to the Board is that the regular contact Offender Supervisors used to have with prisoners has reduced as a consequence of Benchmarking and this is delaying offender sentence progression. It will also affect the important closeness of the relationships that an Offender Supervisor must necessarily have with prisoners. Often Offender Supervisors are required to attend parole hearings for prisoners of whom they have little or no knowledge. There appears to be a concentration on achieving KPTs rather than the maintenance of good Offender Manager – prisoner relationships. The Board considers that there has been little improvement on the similar situation it reported in its last annual report.

3.4.3 Drugs and Alcohol

3.4.3.1 Several major factors have affected the Drug and Alcohol strategy during the current reporting year. The three strategy strands namely Therapeutic Community (TC), the Integrated Drug Treatment Service (IDTS) and the Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice and Through-care programme (CARATS) have been taken over by an external organisation (*Discover*). This has led to a more integrated approach to the various strategies, especially with TC and CARATS, now under common management. However the Board has noted with concern that the TC wing is the only wing of the Prison not visited daily by Healthcare.

3.4.3.2 Within the area dealt with by the CARATS team, the 'Building Futures' programme is the main structure. This comprises a catalogue of programmes designed to fit the specific needs of the individual. There is less one-to-one contact but more group work, with prisoners choosing the groups they wish to attend.

3.4.3.3 Fewer and fewer prisoners on the Strategy appear to be dependent on Methadone; at one point in the reporting year only 40 prisoners on D wing were users. However the Board noted a significant amount of disruption on both C and D wings. Some of this may have been triggered by unsettlement caused by maintenance work. Changes such as the longer working-hours initiative and new IEP rules may have also contributed to this disruption.

3.4.3.4 In its last report the Board expressed a number of concerns regarding the Therapeutic community. Although prisoner referrals continue to remain of concern there have been a number of initiatives designed to improve the regime and the Board applauds this progress. A far more rigorous selection process has been put in place to screen those wishing to access the service. Prisoners on opiate-based medication can no longer access the TC. Over the course of the year there were 59 de-selections from the Unit. There is more purposeful activity taking place on the wing with Music and Drama groups being popular and a bid to buy musical instruments has been successful. There is also a compact enabling TC residents to access the main Gym facility. The Board has noted that prisoners on the Unit have expressed a more positive view of the scheme than that prior to the changes. There is now a 'Meet and Greet' system in operation to ensure that the prisoners are clear about what is expected of them whilst on the Unit and what they should expect to achieve.

3.4.3.5. There were 43 completions from 103 starts during the reporting year. The Board notes however that there were still a number of prisoners on the wing who had been moved off the programme, some of whom remained on the wing for a considerable period of time. The Board is concerned that this may destabilise the ethos of the Unit. The Unit was severely affected by an unexpected Death in Custody.

3.4.3.6 Although the presence of the drug 'Spice' within the Prison has become a serious and growing problem, the misuse of prescribed medication has been identified as a more serious issue and in consequence has been placed on the risk register. Misuse of medication leads to multiple problems across the Prison and in an attempt to reduce it, Healthcare has increased the quality of medication checks and investigates any which are unsatisfactory. The Security department also monitors this issue on a regular basis. The MDT and CBDT testing continues in line with guidelines. Test statistics are commensurate with what could normally be expected.

3.5 Safer Custody

3.5.1 The Board considers that the Prison has worked extremely hard to maintain standards of safer custody throughout the year although this has become increasingly difficult due to the considerable changes and disruptions caused by the New Ways of Working and Bench marking.

3.5.2 Safer Custody remains high on the list of establishment priorities and this is reflected in the way in which representation is sought across the estate through both inter-departmental staff and prisoner representation. Staff and prisoner representatives are invited to monthly meetings with all having equal opportunity to contribute. Attendance, however, has become increasingly difficult due to staff shortages and the constant need for staff deployment to other areas. These meetings are chaired by the lead governor for Safer Custody.

3.5.3 There was a dip in rating in the recent Safer Custody Audit (now Amber/Red as of May 2014). This reflects the fact that responsibility for the supervision of ACCT documents and attendance at ACCT reviews now rests with Offender Supervisors who are regularly moved from those roles to cover wing and escort duties. In recent months there have also been considerably more prisoners on ACCTs than is usual which may also reflect the lack of Personal Officer interaction with prisoners. Furthermore the removal of Senior Officers from the wings has had considerable impact on ACCT and TAB documents with regard to the completion of reviews for current and post-closure ACCT reviews.

3.5.4 It is now the responsibility of Custodial Managers to monitor the completion of ACCT documents which, in turn, are checked regularly by the Safer Custody Team. The progress of individuals with more complex needs is discussed at the monthly meetings of this team. Overall the Board considers this to be good practice. However, the Board notes that without Senior Officers on the wings, the Custodial Managers, whilst sharing 'Oscar' duties and continuing to follow shift patterns including nights, can result in occasions when there is no manager with responsibility for a specific wing being available for ACCT reviews or monitoring.

3.5.5 In its previous report the Board noted that there was a move towards the inclusion of family links in relation to maintaining ACCT documents. This is now in place. Upon opening these documents there is now the opportunity to contact a family when this is deemed beneficial to do so. Family input is welcomed and members of the Mental Health Team use telephone communication with families where deemed useful.

3.5.6 The Board considers continued and effective use of the Listener Scheme to be good and is pleased with the increase in numbers of Listeners across the whole Prison given that it was previously reported that there was a lack of response from the prisoner population. However there is a shortage of Listeners on the mainstream side of the Prison. The Samaritans are always represented at the monthly Safer Custody meetings.

3.5.7 The Head of Safer Custody is currently considering information placed on the HUB regarding trends in violence reduction/incidents of bullying and the need to raise awareness regarding satisfactory completion of TAB documentation. These documents are also the responsibility of wing staff and are regularly monitored within Safer Custody.

3.5.8 The MQPL statistics for February 2012 state that although only 25% of prisoners felt that staff showed care (38% saying this 'sometimes' happened) 52% stated they felt relaxed at Wymott; 54% felt that bullying issues were being well managed and 49% felt that they were fairly treated.

3.5.9 In conclusion, the Board considers that Safer Custody, which has had two changes of leadership over the past year, is operating satisfactorily and is efficiently run. The Board however considers that this could be further improved with increased consistency in the completion of all paperwork and attendance at meetings.

3.5.10 The Board considers that the C.S.U. is well-managed and operated. Personal Officer skills are exemplary on this Unit and prisoners receive a considerable amount of counselling and care. Unfortunately officers often report they are less able to deploy their personal skills with wing prisoners for whom they have personal officer responsibility due to reduced contact.

3.5.11 For the benefit of all staff and ultimately for the prisoners, information has been placed on the computer system to assist in the retrieval of information relating to those held on the Unit and to the outcome of adjudications. This has not only saved time for those not working in this area but has vastly reduced officer time in answering calls.

3.5.12 Prisoner population on the Unit during the reporting period has tended to remain high with an average of 15 prisoners held each week. For previous reporting periods the number of prisoners held in CSU averaged around 6 to 8. The Board continues to attend as many Rule 45 and 72-hour reviews of prisoners as possible and are usually informed when these take place outside of the weekly schedule. The duty Board member interviews each prisoner on CSU each week and very rarely receives negative comment as to care and treatment whilst on the unit.

3.5.13 The update of the IEP system was welcomed by the Board last year although it is considered that there is a need to reinforce this with appropriate placement on Basic regime where necessary, as there is currently a tendency for prisoners to feel overly confident that they have little to lose as reduction in status is not always effectively considered. There is a tendency for prisoners to be sent to Segregation before effective use of this scheme is deployed.

3.5.14 Use of force is usually in single figures per month and the Board considers this praiseworthy.

3.5.15 Regular visits to the CSU by Health Care and the GP continue but the Board has concerns about the casual way in which some of these are conducted by the GP. There are many occasions when there is no conversation between the GP and the prisoners and a thumbs-up sign from a prisoner is taken as proof that the prisoner remains suitable to cope with solitary confinement. Some nurses have also adopted this pattern of behaviour. The Board is concerned at this unsatisfactory way of identifying whether a prisoner is coping adequately with cellular confinement and urges this practice to cease. (see 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 above)

3.5.16 The use of detention on this Unit of prisoners considered to present a security risk or risk for their own personal safety has continued with increased success with inter-prison movement, although there have been occasions where prisoners are detained for a longer period of time than the Board considers suitable.

3.5.17 Overall the Board considers the Unit is well managed and operated. The Board is concerned however that the reduction in officer allocation to this Unit is insufficient to maintain this efficiency given the increase in the number of prisoners that are held at any one time.

3.6 Residential Services

3.6.1 Overall the Board considers that the kitchen is well-managed and provides a varied and nourishing diet meeting the dietary, ethnic minority and religious needs of prisoners. Catering arrangements on the wings are satisfactory but sometimes prisoners have complained of food not being hot at serveries. The menu is rotated every 5 weeks with prisoners selecting from a menu sheet carefully designed to allow prisoners with a range of reading or language difficulties to place orders without problems. Generally prisoners appear satisfied with the menus including those associated with religious festivals or dietary requirements. There are no adverse reports of food sampled by Board members. High standards of hygiene are expected from kitchen workers and 'whites' are regularly changed. However during the reporting year the Board has reported that the state of the changing/shower area is not up to expected standards, having poor ventilation, broken plaster and ceiling mould.

3.6.2 Yet again the Board finds itself having to bring the sub-standard state of A and B wings to attention. The poor state of these buildings has been described in several of its previous reports but very little has been done about it. Prisoners regularly complain of the very low temperatures on the wings in winter, mainly due to the metal-framed windows and poor heat insulation. Officers have also complained to the Board that their working conditions in winter are uncomfortable. During the reporting year the Board has reported on the condition of toilet/shower facilities in both wings as completely unacceptable, with missing cover panels, leaking urinals, cracked mirrors, missing tiles, mould in showers and peeling paint. Wing cleaners do a good job to maintain some minimal degree of cleanliness against the odds but overall, hygiene is poor.

3.6.3 In hot weather the temperature in the Healthcare waiting rooms can reach very uncomfortable levels. Given that some prisoners can be in these rooms for up to 2 hours awaiting escorts, the Board considers that the Prison needs to resolve this issue.

3.6.4 The gardens around residential buildings are maintained, by prisoners, in attractive condition and help give a softer appearance to the austereness of those buildings. However these areas are blighted every morning with rubbish thrown from cells.

3.6.5 During the year the Board carried out a survey of toilet facilities in workshops. They were found to be in poor decorative condition with missing tiles, poor plumbing and in a general state of disrepair. Effort was made to rectify some of these issues but it is assumed that the cost of the work needed to bring fully these areas to good condition was beyond the scope of a tight budget.

Section 4: The Work of the Independent Monitoring Board

4.1 Three members had to leave during the reporting year due to the new rules for tenure and since that time the Board has been hard-pressed to continue its normal range of duties. However it had managed to fulfil all of those duties and obligations due to the diligent work of its members, in fact total attendances had increased from the previous year.

4.2 During the reporting year 3 new members were appointed to the Board to replace those leaving. However almost immediately after appointment, 2 of those members could not take up their training due to illness. At the time of writing these members remain inactive and have not commenced their Probationary year training. The remaining member is now fully operational and a valued member of the Board.

4.3 In view of the reduced active membership the Board devoted its Annual Team Performance Review to the efficiency and effectiveness of its monitoring activities.

4.4 Of particular concern to the Board during part of the reporting year was the difficulty members experienced in gaining access to the Prison due to the lack of available designated keys held in the key cabinets. The Board understands that this has been attributed to the unusual number of visitors and workmen but nevertheless on occasions has impeded, or delayed, Board access to the Prison.

4.5 The principal method used by the Board to meet its primary function of monitoring fairness and respect for those in custody is the weekly rota visit. The Board has been able to meet its commitment to weekly monitoring visits and, through the use of effective documentation, has been able to efficiently report on issues of concern and good practice identified at each of those visits. Prior to each Board meeting the Chair presents these issues to the Governor. The Governor continues to be active in promptly addressing the issues raised and reporting back to the Board. The Board is appreciative of this and the information provided by the Governor at each meeting. Important issues raised during the Board meeting are noted and followed up by members during their rota visits. The Board recognises the need to ensure that issues are not simply logged and forgotten and over the reporting year the worth of its 'Key issues log' in pursuing important issues has again been proven

4.6 Board meetings are generally well attended, reflecting the level of commitment of members. The Governor or, on occasions, her deputy always attends the meetings to update members on current issues and developments and provides feedback on issues raised by the Board as a result of carrying out Rota visits. Board minutes are circulated to members via CJSM. The Board also receives daily, via CJSM, a copy of the minutes of the Prison's morning operations meeting.

4.7 For reporting purposes each member of the Board is allocated to at least one specialist monitoring area thus improving the Board's overall knowledge and depth of monitoring. In addition, Board development is supported by regular pre-Board meetings at which either particular aspects of the Board's work are discussed or talks provided by members of Prison staff on particular areas of work. These meetings are also used to discuss other Board issues of concern.

4.8 During the reporting year the Board reviewed and confirmed its Constitution.

4.9 The Board makes every effort to attend all Rule 45 reviews. There is an agreement with the Prison that, where possible, Rule 45 reviews, other than the initial 72 hour review, occur on Wednesday afternoons allowing the Board to attend reviews as part of a normal rota visit. The Board maintains its own record of individual reviews and is thus able to maintain a continuous overview of each prisoner held under Rule 45. The Board also attends a sample of internal and independent adjudications and has attended several incidents. The Board also attends Adjudications.

4.10 A team of six Board members take part in the induction programme for new prisoners and usually the induction of new staff in order to explain the work of the Board and how prisoners may make Applications. During the year the Board has also attended, as observers, a range of Prison meetings in order to extend its depth of monitoring.

4.11 Table 1 below gives a detailed analysis of the work of the Board during the reporting year:

Table 1: The work of the Board over the reporting year

BOARD STATISTICS	
Recommended Complement of Board Members	16
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	11
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	9
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	3
Number of members leaving within reporting period	5
Total number of Board meetings during reporting period	12
Total number of visits to the prison (including all meetings)	505
Total number of segregation review sessions held (Rule 45) * No data available	*
Total number of segregation review sessions attended (Rule 45)	87
Date of Annual Team Performance Review	Nov 2013

Section 5 Applications to the Board

5.1 The following, table 2, shows an analysis of the issues raised by prisoners in their applications to the Board over the reporting period.

Table 2: Analysis of applications under national key headings

Subject	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Accommodation	4	4	3	2
Adjudications	5	6	0	4
Correspondence	7	7	6	10
Equality related	0	2	0	1
Education/employment/training	22	25	17	18
Family/visits	21	7	7	15
Food/kitchen related	2	3	2	3
Health related	24	21	10	17
Property	27	43	43	40
Release/resettlement	13	18	11	18
Request/complaint procedure	7	2	6	1
Sentence related	25	18	25	22
Staff/prisoner related	10	10	9	1
Transfers	32	24	35	18
Miscellaneous*	75	62	61	69
Total number of applications	274	252	235	244
Total no. confidential access	Not avail.	Not avail.	12	14

* 'Miscellaneous' includes Applications regarding issues that had already been resolved, duplicated, withdrawn, prisoner did not wish to continue with application, duplicated applications or where a prisoner had not appropriately used the formal Request and Complaints procedure

5.2 Overall the number of applications to the Board over the last 3 reporting years has remained fairly constant. The number of prisoners requesting transfers has reduced by 50% whilst applications concerning property have remained constant over the same number of years. Sentence-related applications have remained substantially constant. Family/visit complaints have doubled compared to the previous two years. A contributing factor may be that visits frequently do not start on time due to delayed escorts. Healthcare complaints have increased over the reporting year, possibly suggesting that prisoners are now not satisfied with the responses from using Healthcare's own complaints system. Encouragingly there has been a significant reduction in complaints regarding staff/prisoner relationships which, if not a blip is very heartening. Figure 1, below shows detailed categories of applications by volume.

Section 6 Abbreviations used in the report

ACCT	Assessment Care in Custody Teamwork
CARATS	Counselling, assessment, referral, Advice and Throughcare
CAT C	Security categorisation of prisoners (Cat A highest, Cat D lowest)
CALM	Crisis, aggression, limitation and management
CNA	Certified Normal Accommodation (number of prisoners who can be accommodated without overcrowding)
CSRA	Cell Sharing Risk Assessment
CSU	Care and Separation Unit (Often known as Segregation)
DEAT	Disability Equality Action Team
DIRF	Diversity Incident Reporting Form
DLO	Disability Liaison Officer
FN	Foreign National prisoner
HMCIP	Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons
HRP	Human Relationships Programme
IDTS	Integrated Drug Treatment Service (Methadone maintenance)
IEP	Incentives and Earned Privileges scheme
IMB	Independent Monitoring Board
IPP	Imprisonment for Public Protection (indeterminate sentence)
KPT	Key Performance Targets
MDT	Mandatory Drug Tests
MPQL	Measuring The Quality of Prison Life (survey of prisoners)
NACRO	National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders
NOMS	National Offender Management Service
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
OASys	Offender Assessment System
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
OLASS	Offender Learning and Skills Service
OMU	Offender Management Unit
PASRO	Prisoners Addressing Substance Related Offences
PCT	Primary Care Trust (Central Lancashire)
REAT	Race Equality Action Team
REO	Race Equality Officer
ROTL	Release on temporary licence
Rule 45	Removal from association either for own interest/own protection or in interests of good order or discipline
RIRF	Racist Incident Reporting Form
SIR	Security Information Report
SMART	Systematic Monitoring and Analysing of Race Equality Template
SMARG	Segregation Monitoring and Review Group
SOTP	Sex offenders' treatment programme
TAB	'Tackling Anti-Bullying' (Prison name given to anti-bullying policy and its documentation)
TC	Therapeutic Community (drug rehabilitation)
TSP	Thinking Skills Programme
VP	Vulnerable prisoners