



HMP LONG LARTIN

ANNUAL REPORT

For the year 1.2.14 to 31.1.15

INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

SECTION ONE The Statutory Role of the IMB

The Prison Act 1952 requires every prison to be monitored by an independent Board appointed by the Secretary of State from members of the community in which the prison is situated.

The Board is specifically charged to:

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

inform promptly the Secretary of State or any official to whom he has delegated authority, as it judges appropriate, any concern it has

report annually to the Secretary of State on how well the prison has met the standards and commitments placed on it and what impact these have on those placed 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.

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SECTION THREE Description of HMP Long Lartin

- 3.1.1 HMP Long Lartin is a dispersal prison within the High Security Estate. It is situated in the Vale of Evesham. The original premises date from the early 1970s, although they have been modified by successive programmes of adaptation and improvement. There have also been two substantial phases of expansion. The first, around fifteen years ago, brought a new houseblock and a large segregation unit. The second, completed in 2009, replaced two of the original wings with a further new houseblock.
- 3.1.2 The prison has a CNA of 625. It holds adult males. About a quarter of them will typically be from Category A; almost all of the remainder are from Category B. From time to time there may be a small number of remand prisoners, all of them provisionally Category A. In addition, there are usually a small number of men who are High Risk Category A. All of the prisoners are accommodated in single cells. The three residential blocks which are termed support wings accommodate vulnerable prisoners. The remaining five wings are for mainstream prisoners.
- 3.1.3 The education contract is with Milton Keynes College; the Worcestershire Health and Care Trust provides healthcare and DHL has the canteen contract.

SECTION FOUR EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

4.1 For the attention of the Minister.

- 4.1.1 To consider the range of activities suitable for men in long term custody, taking account of humanity, stability of the prison and eventual rehabilitation and to ensure that these are appropriately encouraged and funded. [Paragraphs 5.1.3 to 5.1.8 and 5.4.5 to 5.4.8]

4.2 For the attention of the National Offender Management Service.

- 4.2.1 To consider how necessarily private consultations may be conducted in a busy segregation unit. [Paragraph 5.8.9]
- 4.2.2 To ensure that the details of an individual prisoner's Managing Challenging Behaviour programme travel with him on transfer. [Paragraph 6.6.4]
- 4.2.3 To ensure that the planning of any further reroll of wings at HMP Long Lartin takes account of the lessons from June 2014. [Paragraph 6.7.4 to 6.7.10]

4.3 For the attention of the Governor.

- 4.3.1 To extend opportunities for Education to prisoners in Segregation and Healthcare. [Paragraphs 5.8.8 and 3.3.5]
- 4.3.2 To ensure that there is adequate supervision and support for prisoners located in the IDTS unit. [Paragraph 5.3.4]
- 4.3.3 To allow all prisoners in Healthcare and IDTS their entitlement to exercise in the open air. [Paragraph 5.3.5]
- 4.3.4 To continue to seek ways of reducing the misuse of prescribed medication. [Paragraph 5.3.9]
- 4.3.5 To continue to create opportunities for staff to engage with prisoners and to foster a working culture which puts them to good use. [Paragraphs 5.5.5 to 5.5.7 and 6.1.5]
- 4.3.6 To keep the frequency of cleaning below the windows of the old wings under review. [Paragraph 5.6.1]
- 4.3.7 To provide a Food Book at every servery and to encourage its use. [Paragraph 5.6.5]
- 4.3.8 To maintain a rigorous scrutiny of open ACCTs in the Segregation Unit. [Paragraphs 5.7.3 and 5.8.7]

- 4.3.9 To ensure that members of the Rule 45 Review Boards are sufficiently well informed to discharge their duties. [Paragraph 5.8.10]
- 4.3.10 To extend, where possible, certification to activities that currently lack formal recognition. [Paragraph 6.3.3]
- 4.3.11 To redecorate the Visitors' Centre and ensure that notices and posters are kept up to date. [Paragraph 6.9.3]
- 4.3.12 To take advantage of any opportunity to reinstate visits on a Saturday morning. [Paragraph 6.9.4]
- 4.3.13 To include some healthier refreshments among those provided for children who are visiting prisoners. [Paragraph 6.9.6]

SECTION FIVE

REPORTS ON ASPECTS OF THE PRISON

5.1 EDUCATION AND SKILLS

- 5.1.1 A monitoring visit to Education is usually a heartening experience. The classrooms are calm and organised; there is an obvious sense of purpose. The staff are committed and enthusiastic; they carry out their work with care and good humour. This is, self-evidently, a valuable service.
- 5.1.2 The new weekly regime appears to be helping the prisoners who study there. Their work now has more continuity as they can expect to be in the department for successive days.
- 5.1.3 The Board's serious concern is not about this work, some of which it sees day by day. It is about what is not there, what does not or cannot happen under the present arrangements. The present system of funding supports the teaching of basic skills and, more specifically, the acquisition of basic qualifications. Funding can be found for courses up to and including City and Guilds Level 2; it is released when such courses are satisfactorily completed.
- 5.1.4 As a national priority this could hardly be challenged. More does need to be done to recognise and remedy the educational deficiencies of people who are being held in custody. That applies, in some degree, to a proportion of the men arriving at Long Lartin. The Board would be pleased to see more of that work go ahead.
- 5.1.5 But there is a wider need as well. Men who have these basic skills, whether acquired in prison or without, continue to seek what Education can provide. This is particularly true of those who face many years in custody. Education offers them stimulus and challenge, engagement with a wider world and a framework for reflection. If imprisonment is to work it has to hold the possibility of individual development.
- 5.1.6 It is frustrating to long term prisoners – and galling to the Board – when they find that success at City and Guilds Level 2 or its equivalent disqualifies them from further formal study. In a broad sense it is opportunities for rehabilitation which are being lost; underlying this is a denial of something which our society claims to value. More immediately, it is a neglect of opportunities to contribute to the stability of the prison.
- 5.1.7 There is the notional possibility that prisoners may choose to finance their own studies by taking out a loan. This has yet to happen at Long Lartin and the Board would be very surprised if it did.
- 5.1.8 Two particular examples illustrate the range of ways in which courses under threat have the potential to reach out to different areas of the prison population. Art offers possibilities of personal and social development which are highly relevant to long term imprisonment if not to eventual employment. Open University work – which is not merely under threat, but

actually drawing to a close – rewards sustained self- discipline and personal development of a kind which would be admired and encouraged in most other sections of society.

- 5.1.9 More practically, the Board has noted the Education Department’s struggle to manage the implications of the normal turnover within its teaching staff. The protracted business of achieving Counter Terrorism Clearance [see also paragraph 7.1,1] has come to mean that the departure of almost any member of staff is followed by an indefinite period of temporary arrangements as the process of Counter Terrorism Clearance runs its course.
- 5.1.10 Elsewhere in this report [paragraphs 5.8.8 and 3.3.5] the Board has commented on the lack of educational opportunities in Segregation and Healthcare.

5.2 EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

- 5.2.1 Diversity is a prominent fact of life for those who live or work at Long Lartin. Some initial detail will help to convey its complexity.
- 5.2.2 45% of prisoners register an ethnicity other than White British; 43 foreign nationalities are represented among the 123 prisoners who are entitled to foreign passports. On the seven mainstream wings the proportion of foreign nationals rises to 24%.
- 5.2.3 There is also considerable diversity of religious belief. The three big registrations are Muslim [28%] Church of England [20%] and Roman Catholic [15%]. Another 15% choose to record no religious affiliation at all, leaving 22% registered under a further 21 different headings. Muslim prisoners are predominantly on the mainstream wings, where they form 39% of that population.
- 5.2.4 As the topic of religious conversion can attract a good deal of interest, the Board thinks it useful to present a factual summary for 2014, at least as it is expressed by changes in religious registration. There were 30 changes during the calendar year. The net effect of these was to add six Muslims, five Rastafarians, four Jews, three Buddhists and five instances of a single increase. This relative stability contrasts with the volatility that is sometimes assumed.
- 5.2.5 The proportion of older prisoners [those aged over 50] is 19%, but only 5% are aged over 60. Just 10 prisoners have elected for retirement.
- 5.2.6 The response to this high degree of diversity takes place at two different levels. The first is institutional, the attitudes and actions of the prison. The other set of responses arises from the prisoners themselves.
- 5.2.7 The IMB notes that the routines of monitoring at Long Lartin make the prison alert to any trends towards discrimination in its normal operations. This is a well- established culture of seeking to address any genuine anomalies.

5.2.8 Monitoring attitudes manifested among prisoners themselves is very much less straightforward, yet it is here that the realities of discrimination may be most harshly felt. Some prisoners may carry into custody attitudes which are far from enlightened; others prioritise the company of the like-minded or those with similar background. These are inescapable facts of prison life, but when carried to an extreme they can generate inequality and exclusion. The Board observes that the prison strives, day by day, to manage such pressures in so far as it can.

5.3 HEALTHCARE AND MENTAL HEALTH

5.3.1 Healthcare is inescapably an important part of most prisoners' experience. Yet it is probably the area of the prison that the Board finds most difficult adequately to monitor. So much about which the Board would normally inquire has become inaccessible to lay people that the IMB's attempt to present an overall view can only rest on shallow foundations.

5.3.2 There is a small inpatients department within the Healthcare Centre. Ostensibly this is the prison's facility for longer term care, a small ward of eight individual cells. In practice, however, it has evolved a broader function. Along with the sick, from time to time it accommodates men at serious risk of self-harm and a handful of prisoners whose circumstances make them unsuitable for either segregation or normal location. The members of this small group have little in common apart from the unusual risks which they pose or the complex hazards which they face. So fuzzy a definition is not a tidy one, but it is difficult to visualise any other location in the prison which could be as suitable in the medium term. For all its anomalies, inpatients allows a very restricted but moderately decent custodial life to some who would otherwise lack this prospect, at least within Long Lartin.

5.3.3 Along a corridor from the inpatients department is a further small unit. This goes familiarly under the title of Integrated Drug Treatment Strategy or IDTS. Whilst that remains part of its function, in practice it is also used for a variety of other purposes.

5.3.4 Unlike inpatients, however, IDTS has caused the Board acute concern. The layout of the prison makes the unit distant from staff, be they discipline or medical. It becomes all too easy for individual prisoners who are out of sight to slip out of mind.

5.3.5 The Board has had concerns about three aspects of the regime in both of these units. The first two are systemic: there has routinely been no Education offered to prisoners who are located there. [This echoes an observation made about Segregation; see paragraph 5.8.8.] The opportunities for other activities, furthermore, are very limited. Thirdly, the arrangements for exercise in the open air are under great strain when the two units are fully occupied and many of the men wish to take up their entitlement. There is a yard available, but it a flight of stairs has to be negotiated and the location is perceived to be inconvenient. Certainly it is difficult to supervise exercise whilst also providing active supervision and engagement across the two units upstairs.

- 5.3.6 For the great majority of prisoners at Long Lartin, however, it is the work with outpatients which is most significant. The IMB finds itself unable to assess this with any objectivity. It can report that it picks up a good many grumbles from prisoners about this service, but it is usually unable to take these any further. They remain as no more than grumbles; they may be well founded but they may not. They may even be serving another agenda altogether.
- 5.3.7 The Board is rather more confident that there is substance to dissatisfaction with the responses made to some of the complaints which go into the department's system.
- 5.3.8 The Board notes that great efforts have been made by both the prison and Healthcare to devise new arrangements that allow medication to be dispensed efficiently and the rest of the regime to proceed without undue distortion. These appear to have been successful.
- 5.3.9 The misuse of prescribed medication remains a matter of great concern. The Board reported on this at length last year. [2014 Report paragraphs 6.3.1 – 6.3.8] As the drugs which are commonly prescribed and traded are not detected by the regular programme of Mandatory Drug Testing [MDT] there is not an objective measure of the scale of the problem. It may be that vigilance and the greater use of slow-release doses have brought about some progress. But it is clear to any Board member who spends time among prisoners on the wings that the misuse of NHS drugs continues to go on.
- 5.3.10 This is not just a waste of NHS resources, it is an abuse of them. It carries risks to health and does so at the expense of the taxpayer. It also allows the taxing, trading and indebtedness that were familiar when drugs from the street could find their way into Long Lartin more readily.

5.4 PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY

- 5.4.1 There was widespread relief at the decision, implemented partway through the year, to abandon the arrangement whereby prisoners employed in workshops remained there throughout the working day instead of returning to the wings at lunchtime. It had been a scheme fraught with practical difficulties. Some of these were described in the Board's 2014 Report [paragraphs 5.4,5 to 5.4.12].
- 5.4.2 The return to a more realistic regime has allowed the prison to refocus its attention on two enduring problems. One is the amount of activity, the hours of engagement offered to each man per week. The other is the value of this activity, in particular its suitability for prisoners who will remain inside for many years to come.
- 5.4.3 Increasing the amount of purposeful activity within Long Lartin is clearly very difficult. Although it has been a priority of the establishment for the better part of twenty years, the practicalities of location and security have proved to be major barriers. A good organisational framework exists and strenuous efforts have been made to build upon it, but

the job of the Board is to report on outcomes and it remains true that there is underemployment at Long Lartin.

- 5.4.4 All too often does the Board come across men on the wing during what is nominally their working day. Typically this is attributed to the absence of an instructor or a dearth of orders. Schemes to increase the reliability of work as well as its amount are being devised; the IMB hopes for their success.
- 5.4.5 Beyond the goal of consistently finding a form of work for every prisoner lies a more subtle target. That is providing activities which truly are purposeful, ones which are suitable to the population concerned.
- 5.4.6 Across the national estate there is a wholly understandable emphasis on equipping prisoners with the attitudes and skills which will be useful on their return to the world of conventional employment. That is much less appropriate at Long Lartin. For many of its prisoners release is a distant prospect; when it does come they will be into their fifties or sixties or even beyond. The world of work will have moved on in ways which we cannot now foresee. These are not men who are reckoning the days or weeks until their release; they are living their lives – and often the greater part of what is left to them – within custody. It is the here and now which matters to them.
- 5.4.7 This is why Board members return heartened from their visits to areas as diverse as the canteen packaging unit or the woodcraft shop. In the former there is bustle and purpose and productivity; in the latter there is quiet engagement, even absorption, in demanding individual projects. These are examples of work which foster self- respect and a degree of personal development; they make for a prison that is more humane as well as more stable.
- 5.4.8 Much less can be said of the workshops dedicated to the destruction of redundant CDs. It has the merits of occupying hands and creating some routine; otherwise it is the bleakest of occupations. To describe it as a purposeful activity is an institutional irony which is surely lost on those allocated to spend their time in the workshops concerned.

5.5 RESETTLEMENT

- 5.5.1 All but a handful of the prisoners held at Long Lartin are serving long sentences, some very long indeed. Their experiences during these years, whether structured or informal, are a preparation for a phase that is usually quite distant, the phase of resettlement into free society.
- 5.5.2 The structured processes are well established. The cycle of sentence planning reviews seeks to give a direction to each year. Progress is acknowledged and new targets defined. At some points these are likely to include a relevant offending behaviour programme. These are important in themselves and also as a gateway to the next stage of a long sentence.

- 5.5.3 The Board is therefore pleased to note the high level of completions from the three programmes which are provided. This is constructive work, both in the short and the longer term. Regrettably, however, this cannot apply to many of the prisoners held on the three support wings. They number about 230 in all. Some of these men, those termed situational VPs, have become vulnerable because of events in custody, but that is not true of the overwhelming majority. It is their index offence which makes these men vulnerable and that offence typically had a sexual character. Engagement with a relevant programme requires an acceptance of guilt and that is a step which these men are unwilling to take. Consequently they sit and wait, apparently resigned to growing old in custody. The resulting impasse is not a situation which the Board can admire, but there is apparently no alternative.
- 5.5.4 Accurate assessment and review relies upon informed and timely contributions from staff who work with the prisoner concerned. Last year the Board drew attention to some delays in completing OASYS reports and Category A reviews [2014 Report paragraph 5.5.4].It is good to see that a combination of checking and chasing has since addressed these problems within the prison. There are still delays, however, in some of the contributions due from external offender managers.
- 5.5.5 It is more difficult to define the unstructured or informal influences on Long Lartin's prisoners and to gauge their contribution to eventual resettlement. What is clear to the Board, however, is that these can be – and often are – a very important part of the prison's work. A long term prison is a society as well as an institution. Those who spend time within it help to shape its character – and are themselves influenced by it in turn. For all the very clear and necessary boundaries, staff are a part of this society. Their clarity and constancy can be an important influence; their good humour and appropriate involvement do not merely help another day to pass; they can exemplify a better way of dealing with other people.
- 5.5.6 The programme that has recently been launched under the title Every Contact Matters appears to recognise and value this aspect of the prison's work. It certainly needs that support. The Board's concern is that Benchmarking has reduced the time which can be invested in this way and also breaks up the settled teams which allow constructive relationships to develop. It watches this central part of life in Long Lartin with acute interest.
- 5.5.7 The Board is encouraged to learn that the introduction of a Personal Development Record has been under discussion. This has the potential to record, in one single place, the varied forms of activity and engagement which go to make up a prisoner's custodial experience. By integrating them into a single record it would highlight how much- or how little – has been done and emphasise that ultimately the diverse contributions of wing staff and specialised departments are part of one individual's personal development.

5.6 RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

- 5.6.1 Most of the public areas of the prison are freshly painted and are cleaned to a very high standard. The one current exception is some of the recesses in the original wings. They do need attention. Parts of the external areas, in particular those beneath the cell windows of A,B,C and D wings, are much less commendable. To the Board's regret they are characterised by what are euphemistically described as 'parcels'. These are an offensive by-product of the sanitation system known as Nightsan. One implication of Benchmarking is reportedly that these parcels will now be cleared less frequently. The Board will learn during the summer months how much further this moves conditions beyond the remotely acceptable.
- 5.6.2 Nightsan is a remotely controlled queuing system that allows prisoners to be unlocked one at a time during the night. It is necessary because there is no integral sanitation on the four original wings. Although it is sometimes defended on the grounds that prisoners like the opportunity for an unhindered shower or a private use of the recess, no one could claim that it should be part of the planning for any modern houseblock.
- 5.6.3 It is inevitable that, day in and day out, prisoners are alert to any changes in the quality or quantity of their food. The Board's sampling of meals, analysis of its own Applications and scrutiny of the available Food Books leads it to the conclusion that the quality of food is generally good. Where complaints do occur, they have often related to the quality of the bread.
- 5.6.4 It is more difficult to assess the validity of the complaint, quite frequently heard, that the size of portions has been reduced. This is refuted by the Kitchen and it seems probable that the problem arises at the hotplates.
- 5.6.5 In view of the recommendation made by the Board last year [2014 Report paragraph 5.6.6] it is disappointing to find that Food Books are still not routinely held at every servery.
- 5.6.6 The Kitchen has catered for the principal religious festivals with conspicuous success.

5.7 SAFER CUSTODY

- 5.7.1 There were four deaths in custody in the course of the reporting year. The record shows that three of these were in the final four months, during the period when Long Lartin was being affected by Benchmarking. It may be tempting to associate these two facts and infer cause and effect. That, on the information available to the Board, would be wrong. These three sets of individual circumstances do not appear to have been exacerbated by any changes in staffing.

- 5.7.2 Listeners render an important service. Their numbers are bound to fluctuate as transfers to other prisons take their effect. Overall, however, there has been a downward trend from the healthy number in post at the start of the year.
- 5.7.3 There is reference below [paragraph 5.8.7] to the extraordinary number of open ACCTs on segregated prisoners during the summer months of 2014. This was at its extreme in September, when eight of the ten open ACCTs concerned men who were in segregation. Over the year as a whole 44 of the prison's 178 open ACCTs – all but a quarter - involved segregated prisoners. The Board described a comparable situation in its last report [2014 Report paragraph 5.7.5]. It would be facile to suggest that there could be an easy solution to this persistent problem. What the Board looks for is a thorough assessment of each set of circumstances as it is presented and the measured conclusion, case by case, that there is no practical alternative. That, to date, is what appears to have happened.

5.8 SEGREGATION UNIT

- 5.8.1 The Segregation Unit at Long Lartin is inevitably a busy, sensitive and complex area of the prison. It is busy because it reflects the more extreme responses to long term imprisonment. It accommodates men whose behaviour disqualifies them from the normal life of a wing; it also offers a service to other prisons less well equipped to handle challenging individuals.
- 5.8.2 It is sensitive because responses to the threat to good order, which may still be evident, if only in potential, combine with handling the pressures and circumstances which underlie many prisoners' behaviour. The men who live there are individuals and they need individual treatment. Providing a regime and a set of relationships that are appropriately personal calls for a robust sensitivity that is not easily developed or sustained.
- 5.8.3 The complexity comes from these varied individual circumstances. Staff can be required, within the space of half an hour, to move from resisting aggression to patiently unravelling a misunderstanding and then to a cheery but firm exchange on the yard. This is demanding work.
- 5.8.4 A persistent feature of the Segregation Unit is the presence of a handful of men who are engaged in a tactical struggle with the authorities over their location at Long Lartin. They first ensure they are segregated; they then refuse to return to normal location and seek a transfer elsewhere. A battle of wills commences. Such prisoners contribute, sometimes substantially, to the high population of the unit.
- 5.8.5 It is against this background that the Board takes encouragement from the generally open culture of the unit. Staff are confident and mutually supportive. Many of them appear to enjoy the varied challenges of their work. Visitors are frequent and they are made welcome. The formalities of rounds are routinely carried out and it is particularly good to see that the Governing Governor does one of these each week.

5.8.6 Representatives of the Board are among these frequent visitors. The weekly IMB round is far from being the only reason for these visits, but the records of it do document the busy character of the unit. There were 52 of these IMB rounds in this reporting year. The number of prisoners segregated at the time of these weekly visits was as follows.

No. of prisoners segregated	Frequency at time of weekly IMB round
22	2
23	2
24	6
25	6
26	7
27	7
28	4
29	8
30	2
31	6
32	2

5.8.7 It is always a concern when a segregated prisoner is subject to an open ACCT. That situation has not been unusual during the year under review. Each time it has occurred the Board sets out to satisfy itself that there is no better alternative. Broadly speaking, this has been the case. Yet it was still acutely troubling to observe the number of ACCTs open on segregated prisoners during the second week in September 2014. There were six of these on the 11th and no fewer than eight on the 13th. Remarkably, this was in a month when there were only two ACCTs opened for close to 600 men who were on normal location.

5.8.8 The Board has three longer term concerns about the operation of the unit. The first is the failure to extend Education to segregated prisoners. The Board understands that this is contracted, but for most of the year it has not happened. The lack of it bears heavily on men who are segregated for a long time.

5.8.9 Secondly, the Board observes that on some busy mornings it becomes necessary for medical conversations to be conducted around the edge of a closed door. This cannot be good practice, either on grounds of privacy or effectiveness. The IMB would like to see some work on a technical solution to this problem.

5.8.10 Finally, the Board returns to its long standing theme of raising the quality of discussion at the Rule 45 Reviews. In the course of the year Board members have attended no fewer than 727 of these. Although the appropriate departments are generally represented, it evidently can be difficult for them to come well briefed. A notetaker is normally present, but for most of the year the information recorded on Wednesdays and Fridays was not readily available. As this report was being written there seemed at last to be a solution to this problem. If that does bear fruit the task becomes one of establishing the expectation that the material will be put to use.

SECTION SIX

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE PRISON REGIME

6.1 BENCHMARKING: SOME IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1.1 In November the prison implemented the programme of economies that goes under the heading of Benchmarking. It was the outcome of a careful process of planning and preparation. This was only right, for the reductions in staffing which it brought had implications for almost all of Long Lartin's operational work.
- 6.1.2 At the time of writing the IMB has yet to see the new arrangements tested by the many pressures and contingencies which form part of the typical reporting year. At this interim point, however, the Board offers three preliminary conclusions.
- 6.1.3 One is that the new system does function. The intricate arrangements of the daily regime do mesh together and allow custodial life to go on – and to go on more cheaply.
- 6.1.4 Secondly, there is self-evidently less in reserve. It may be an event within the prison that calls upon a reserve that is no longer there or it may be a commitment outside. For example, even before Benchmarking the escorting of provisional Category A prisoners to a lengthy trial resulted in a restricted regime for many scores of prisoners back on their wings. Implications such as this are likely to be felt more commonly in the future.
- 6.1.5 Thirdly, the Board is already seeing signs that Benchmarking will erode the quality of Long Lartin's work with its prisoners. Some of them are discussed in the sections on Library [paragraphs 6.5.1 – 6.5.3], Managing Challenging Behaviour [paragraph 6.6.2], Resettlement [paragraph 5.5.6], Residential Services [paragraph 5.6.1], Safer Custody [paragraph 5.7.1] and Visits [paragraphs 6.9.4 and 6.9.8]. Underlying these details is the essential point that relationships with prisoners and accurate appraisal of risk or progress require time. Without it there is a risk to stability, to progression and to rehabilitation. The new programme Every Contact Matters is welcomed by the Board as it states an important truth, not least in its title. But if the initiative is to be nourished, it will have to be with time.

6.2 CHAPLAINCY

- 6.2.1 The Chaplaincy has a strong team of full-time staff, supplemented by a number of colleagues who are sessional. Reflecting as it does the diversity of religious commitment across the prison's population, the team sets a conspicuous example of inter-faith respect and co-operation.
- 6.2.2 The prison management has been imaginative in making arrangements for religious observance, reconciling the demands of faith with the practicalities of security and the regime.

- 6.2.3 The consistent part played by the Chaplaincy in ACCT reviews and Rule 45 Boards helps to raise the quality of these processes, each so important to the individual prisoners concerned.

6.3 GYMNASIUM

- 6.3.1 In successive years the IMB has reported upon the enthusiastic and enterprising atmosphere which prevails in this department. It may be comparatively easy to extend opportunities for vigorous exercise to young men who would otherwise be inactive. That is part of the Gymnasium's remit, but it is only part. It continues to be done well.
- 6.3.2 Beyond that, however, are the prisoners who are disinclined to be drawn into energetic activity. It is good to see the efforts that are made to engage such men and draw them into the department. The sports hall, in a phrase, is used for bowls as well as five-a-side football and that is much to be commended.
- 6.3.3 There may be opportunities to recognise and certify some of this activity that have yet to be explored.

6.4 INCENTIVES AND EARNED PRIVILEGES

- 6.4.1 In November 2013 the system for Incentives and Earned Privileges [IEP] was changed on the instructions of the Secretary of State. The changes were implemented rigorously and their effects began to be felt in the current reporting year. Standard and Enhanced status became restricted to prisoners who were pursuing the targets set out in their sentence plans. At the time Long Lartin held a substantial number of sex offenders who were in denial of their offences. Some were attempting to mount appeals against their convictions. They argued that participation in rehabilitative courses would acknowledge their guilt in advance of the result of any appeal. Others said plainly that their own innocence removed any point in attending a programme designed to rehabilitate those who had been rightly convicted.
- 6.4.2 As the new system was phased in, prisoners who had chosen not to comply with their sentence plans were reduced to Basic status. Forty six men were downgraded in this way, predominantly sex offenders who had a long time still to serve. Seventeen of them subsequently decided to attend a programme in compliance with their sentence plans. Attempts were made to persuade others to attend a programme in relation to a conviction for which the sentence had already been served. Nevertheless, fourteen prisoners remained on the Basic regime, some for up to four months, in spite of all efforts to persuade them to comply.
- 6.4.3 The IMB was concerned by the level of resentment which this generated. There were understandable fears that the situation was eroding the stability of the wings involved. The

Board commends the persistent – and ultimately successful – work of the staff in persuading their prisoners to present their points with restraint.

6.4.4 The IMB was also concerned by the possible consequences of prisoners becoming members of rehabilitative courses solely in order to regain privileges to which they had become accustomed. It seemed unlikely that this would help any others in the groups whose participation was genuine and even whole hearted. It was, however, not possible for the Board to track most of the prisoners concerned as many of them were transferred in the limited re-rolling carried out last June.

6.4.5 At the end of the reporting year the downgraded prisoners who remained in the establishment were once again on the Standard regime, despite having sustained their refusal to co-operate with the relevant part of their sentence plans.

6.5 LIBRARY

6.5.1 As the reporting year drew to a close the Library was adjusting to substantial changes in the service that it was able to offer. The department still meets the requirement that prisoners should have a weekly opportunity to borrow or return books and CDs. In other respects, however, it exemplifies the qualitative changes which have been brought about by Benchmarking.

6.5.2 Under the new arrangements there is no longer time available to operate the two creative writing groups and three reading groups which have been run under the auspices of the Library. The IMB notes their closure with great regret. The shortage of activities suitable to long term prisoners is one of the themes of this report; the loss of these five groups represents a substantial narrowing of opportunities. They were not merely a diversion. At their best they encouraged a reflectiveness and personal exploration which contributed to stability in the short term and rehabilitation in the longer term.

6.5.3 Responsibility for ordering and distributing newspapers and periodicals has moved from the Library to one of the administrative hubs. As a result men are no longer drawn into the Library to question an order or collect a periodical; they are less likely to go on to browse the displays or engage with the librarians. This does not strike at the heart of their custodial conditions, but it is one more way in which their years of imprisonment have recently been impoverished.

6.6 MANAGING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

- 6.6.1 Long Lartin now has an effective system for assessing men whose behaviour might benefit from an individual programme of closer supervision and short term targets. Monthly reviews also consider those whose behaviour has improved to a point where it no longer warrants special attention.
- 6.6.2 This broad development in Managing Challenging Behaviour [MCB] brings into sharper focus the practical implications of the scheme for the individual prisoner. In the majority of cases they include some particular goals or restrictions and a closer engagement with staff on the wing. It may well be that this is exactly what is required, but the Board is alert to the possibility that Benchmarking may prove to have eroded the time which officers can commit to the day to day exchanges which are central to this work.
- 6.6.3 There are also some men on MCB who patently would benefit from more specialised intervention. If this is available, as sometimes it is, that is through good fortune and good will. There are no additional resources attached to MCB. In this respect there is a gulf between the impressive level of investment made in the man who is narrowly accepted on to the Close Supervision Scheme [CSC] and the experience of another who falls just short of that status. It would be better if that gulf could be replaced by a slope, with at least some specialised resources being made available to the MCB programme.
- 6.6.4 Experience suggests that when prisoners who are subject to an MCB regime are transferred, even within the high security estate, their MCB file does not always travel with them. There is an obvious benefit in having all of that detail available without delay on their reception at a different prison.

6.7 THE REROLL OF D WING

- 6.7.1 Around the middle of the reporting year there was an important change to one of the prison's eight residential units. For several years the population of Long Lartin had been divided almost equally between mainstream and vulnerable prisoners. This had been an uneasy arrangement from the outset. The site and its buildings have not been designed to allow two separate flows of movement to work, to treatments and to other essential facilities. Safe delivery of the daily regime became a matter of intricate choreography.
- 6.7.2 The restriction of mainstream prisoners to just four wings, two of them populated predominantly by men who were older or more compliant, also created a second problem. There were correspondingly few opportunities to disrupt and disturb troublesome activities by relocating prisoners within the mainstream group.
- 6.7.3 The Board noted last year that there had, from time to time, been several schemes to address these difficulties by rerolling one half of the prison and so creating an undivided population. [2014 Report paragraph 6.1.8]

- 6.7.4 Consequently the Board should have unequivocally welcomed the decision to reroll D wing, one of the prison's four original wings, in June 2014. The vulnerable prisoners were to move out and a population of mainstream prisoners was to replace them. The prison would become about 63% mainstream and there would be some easing of the difficulties which have been described.
- 6.7.5 In the event, however, the change was carried through with great haste. The Board is disappointed that a scheme which had, at least in broad terms, been floated as a possibility for so long should be implemented with such apparently deficient planning. The new arrivals came almost entirely from outwith the high security estate. These men saw their move as being distinctly regressive. The individual letters with which the Director of their previous prison had sent them on their way did nothing to challenge this perception.
- 6.7.6 The new prisoners were brought in over a very short period of time. There were not the pauses which could have allowed smaller groups to settle and establish themselves. Added to this were acute shortcomings in the delivery of property.
- 6.7.7 Despite all that had been said before, it appeared to the Board that, when it came to it, this hectic operation was driven by an urgent need to create spaces elsewhere. In the Board's view the Service was fortunate that Long Lartin proved itself able to contain and absorb the consequences of this operation. It could have been much worse and, to repeat the point, it could have been avoided.
- 6.7.8 The staff on the wing concerned rose to the challenge presented by the abrupt arrival of so many aggrieved prisoners. They worked admirably to explain, to reassure and to give practical help, all within an environment more restrictive than many of the prisoners had previously known.
- 6.7.9 The Offender Management Unit was quick to identify men who were close to their earliest date of release. These prisoners were quite rapidly moved on to more suitable establishments. When the Board checked through the new arrivals six weeks later nine of the newcomers had already been transferred, leaving just one with an earliest date of release in the next fifteen months. At that same stage work had been found for all but three of the recent arrivals and of those one was segregated.
- 6.7.10 All of this represents a commendable response by the prison. Several months on, however, it has not been sufficient to create a wing that is settled and well integrated. The work to achieve that still goes on. If, in the fullness of time, the other support wings are to change their function it is earnestly to be hoped that the lessons of the D Wing reroll will be remembered.

6.8 USE OF FORCE

- 6.8.1 The IMB has been represented at the meetings of the Use of Force Committee during the reporting year. It is impressed by the robust way in which the group has monitored this important and sensitive aspect of prison life.
- 6.8.2 The use of force has been commendably low. Its incidence compares very favourably with that at similar establishments and in 2014-15 it was employed less frequently at Long Lartin than it had been in the previous year. Analysis of the occasions when force did have to be used reveals a proportionate distribution across the various groups represented within the prison.
- 6.8.3 This is a substantial achievement. It reflects well on the systems which combine to give security and predictability to a prisoner's day. Equally, it draws attention to the qualities which staff display in their daily interactions with the prisoners in their charge. The Board often notes with admiration the ways that staff employ patience, skill and good humour in responding to frustration or anger. It hopes very much that Benchmarking will not erode the time which such relationships demand.
- 6.8.4 Board members have had opportunity to observe the training in Control and Restraint which is routinely given to discipline officers. They have been impressed by the care with which its limits have been defined and alternatives explored. The techniques themselves have been taught with rigorous discipline.

6.9 VISITS

- 6.9.1 The typical visitor to a prisoner at Long Lartin arrives after making a substantial journey. The dispersal prisons are a national resource; they do not draw from a local or even a regional catchment.
- 6.9.2 The Visitors' Centre is therefore a particularly important facility. Those who use it have often travelled a long way; they may also have a good deal of time in hand before the start of their visit. It is important that they are offered a pleasant environment on arrival and as smooth a passage into the Visits Hall as security will allow.
- 6.9.3 The Visitors' Centre goes some way towards meeting these expectations, but the Board believes that more could be done without great expense. Redecoration would be a good start, as would removal of the tattered posters and outdated notices. They convey an impression that this is an area seen not to matter.
- 6.9.4 The ending of opportunities to visit on a Saturday morning is much regretted. This was one of the consequences of Benchmarking. No longer do families have an option to organise an extended visit on this most suitable of days. Those who come from afar and those with school aged children will feel this particularly.

- 6.9.5 Once admitted to the Hall, the visitors' chief concern is to meet their prisoner without delay. It is acutely frustrating when the visitor, perhaps having travelled for several hours and then gone through the process of registration and admission, has to endure a lengthy delay before the prisoner is produced from his wing. As this report was being written the prison was energetically addressing this problem and the Board will be alert to any change for the better.
- 6.9.6 The Visits Hall itself is brightly decorated, although its rather cavernous character does become emphasised on winter afternoons when there is no natural light. There are two vending machines. One is stocked with fizzy drinks and the other with chocolate in various forms. The Board would like to see an alternative available to those who want something healthier for themselves or their children. Some hot drinks and heated food is available over a counter, but it is apparently uncertain whether this scheme will be continued.
- 6.9.7 The tone in the Hall is strongly influenced by the staff who are detailed for that duty. An experienced and confident team, one with a strong sense of ownership and a pride in its handling of visitors and visited, can inject humanity and good humour as well as efficiency.
- 6.9.8 The reorganisation necessitated by Benchmarking has dispersed the established teams of staff and the Board has observed an inevitable change in manner as their successors begin to gain familiarity with the work. The commitment of the former team was exemplified during the periodic sessions of Family Visits. For those few who are able to take part these offer a rich and memorable experience. The experiment in using the Gym for Family Visits appears to have gone well. Both the Visits and the Gym staff went many an extra mile in creating an event that was warm, lively and as relaxed as a high security prison can expect to be.

SECTION SEVEN

7.1. THE WORK OF THE BOARD

- 7.1.1 Over the course of the year the Board has lost three long established members. They take with them over fifty years of experience in this and other prisons. That will not readily be replaced, but even refreshing the list of active members is no small task. At the time of writing the Board has two applicants who are awaiting Counter Terrorism Clearance. They have now, through no fault of their own, been in that position for over seven months. This is a severe test of their patience and commitment; it is also a handicap to the work of the Board.
- 7.1.2 Five years and more ago the IMB at Long Lartin was responding to over 600 applications in the course of a year. Lately that figure has, in round terms, been halved and in the year under review it was only 289. In itself this is very good news: it suggests that the prison's own processes are working more efficiently and it allows the Board to invest its effort in less reactive ways. With this change, however, comes a new priority for the IMB. It has to find different means of maintaining its profile among prisoners as it goes about its broader duty of monitoring the establishment.
- 7.1.3 The particulars of the Board's work in 2014-15 are summarised in Appendix 1. They represent a great deal of skilled voluntary activity. Its value is made all the greater by the readiness of the prison staff, at all levels of seniority, to support the practice of an independent presence within so highly controlled an environment. It is right to conclude this annual report, the final one of eleven to come from this metaphorical pen, with thanks to the many whose discreet support makes the IMB effective as well appreciation of the Board members whose efforts underlie it.

David Waters

Chair

IMB of HMP Long Lartin

APPENDIX ONE

THE WORK OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD 2014-2015

	2014-2015	2013-2014
Recommended Complement of Board Members	18	18
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	13	11
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	10	13
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	-	5
Number of members leaving within the reporting period	3	3
Total number of Board meetings during the reporting period	12	12
Total number of visits to the Establishment	685	736
Total number of segregation reviews held	727	n/a
Total number of segregation reviews attended	727	n/a
Date of Annual team Performance Review	29.10.14	30.10.13

APPENDIX TWO

ANALYSIS OF APPLICATIONS

Code	Subject	Year ending 31.1.15	Year ending 31.1.2014
A	Accommodation	2	10
B	Adjudications	5	2
C	Equality and Diversity (inc. religion)	4	4
D	Education/employment/training (inc. IEP)	23	41
E1	Family/visits inc. mail and phone	29	39
E2	Finance/pay	11	30
F	Food/kitchen related	5	5
G	Health related	25	29
H1	Property (within current establishment)	49	29
H2	Property (during transfer/in another establishment)	13	13
H3	Canteen facilities, catalogue shopping, Argos	2	5
I	Sentence related (inc. HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, recat etc.)	21	31
J	Staff/prisoner/detainee concerns inc. bullying	13	15
K	Transfers	19	28
L	Miscellaneous	22	42
	Confidential Access	46	40
	Total number of IMB applications	289	363