



HMP THE MOUNT

BOVINGDON, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD

INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

ANNUAL REPORT

**1st MARCH 2014
to
28th FEBRUARY 2015**

CONTENTS

Section	Page
1. Contents	2
2. Statutory role of the Board	3
3. Description of The Mount	3
4. Executive Summary	
4.1 Overall performance	5
4.2 Particular issues requiring a response	5
4.3 Previous year's concerns	5
4.4 Other matters of serious concern or excellence	7
5. Mandatory areas on which the Board must report	
5.1 Equality and Inclusion	8
5.2 Education, Learning and Skills	9
5.3 Healthcare and Mental health	11
5.4 Purposeful activity	12
5.5 Resettlement	12
5.6 Safer Custody	14
5.7 Segregation	15
5.8 Residential services	16
6. Other areas on which the Board desires to report	
7. Work of the Board	
7.1 Activities of the Board	17
7.2 Applications	18
7.3 Board statistics	19
8. Appendix A: Glossary	20

2. STATUTORY ROLE OF THE BOARD

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

The Board is specifically charged:

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

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

Diversity statement

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

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

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

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE MOUNT

The Mount opened in 1987 as a Young Offenders Institution. Initially there were five residential wings: Annexe, Brister, Ellis, Fowler, and Lakes, with in-cell sanitation and communal showers. Most of these wings have their cells configured in a four spur design on two landings which creates difficulty in observing prisoner behaviour.

The Mount was re-rolled as a Category C Adult Male Training Prison in 1989.

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

In 2007 a further wing, Narey, became operational. This wing houses many older prisoners.

The construction of Nash Wing has just been completed with 94 double cells and 62 single cells increasing the CNA to 1020. New kitchen, gymnasium and healthcare units have also been constructed.

In addition to its expansion, The Mount has been re-rolled as a hybrid prison with the

aim of providing training and rehabilitation for 75% of its population and a resettlement service for the remaining 25% during the final 3-4 months of their sentence. The resettlement service is intended for prisoners from Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire.

The following table shows the location of the prisoners on the Wings.

Wing	Regime	Prisoners at 28th Feb 2015	CNA at 28th Feb 2015	Op Cap at 28th Feb 2015	Prisoners at 28th Feb 2014
Dixon Wing	Standard/RAPt	118	120	120	116
Howard Wing	Induction/Standard	102	104	110	101
Lakes Wing	Standard	114	112	117	116
Ellis Wing	Standard	114	110	117	114
Fowler Wing	Enhanced	110	112	112	110
Brister Wing	Enhanced	103	110	110	110
Annexe	Enhanced	35	36	36	36
Narey Wing	Standard/Enhanced	53	48	48	48
Nash Wing	Induction/Resettlement	17	248	250	N/A
CSU		16	N/A	N/A	12
TOTAL		782	1000	1020	762

The following table shows the population breakdown by sentence length.

Length of Sentence	Number of prisoners	
	February 2015	February 2014
Less than 12 months	1	0
12 months to 2 years	57	4
2 - 3 years	68	49
3 - 4 years	75	116
4 - 10 years	326	436
More than 10 years	90	80
Indeterminately Sentenced	163	66
Sentence Expired Detainees	2	11
TOTAL	782	762

4. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

4.1 OVERALL PERFORMANCE

The Mount has again had a successful year. The SMT has continued to manage The Mount efficiently and calmly despite the pressures of staff shortages, the heavy intrusion of construction activity and the expansion of the roll and conversion to a hybrid prison.

The SMT relies heavily on the commitment of The Mount's senior officers, who perform multiple roles and whose experience, competence and guidance to junior colleagues is critical.

It is great to report that in March 2015 The Mount gained the Investors in People Silver Award having achieved a Green rating in 124 of the 130 areas of assessment. It also remains a Level 4 Prison ("Exceptional performance") under the NOMS Prison Rating System.

4.2 PARTICULAR ISSUES REQUIRING A RESPONSE

Policy matters for the Minister

None.

Operational matters for the Prison Service

Please refer to the matters raised in Section 4.3 and Section 4.4 (Other matters of concern).

4.3 PREVIOUS YEAR'S CONCERNS

The Board expresses its appreciation for the response to last year's Annual Report by Jeremy Wright MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Justice, by letter dated 14th July 2014.

The Board wishes to comment further on the following matters:

Staffing Levels

At the reporting year end, The Mount had 48 vacancies, including 1 SO, 12 Officers and 19 OSGs. This excluded vacancies in personnel of external contractors. Vacancies at Band 2 level are particularly difficult to fill.

Existing Infrastructure

Disappointingly, the Capital Bid submitted by the Regional Estates Manager to upgrade The Mount's heating and hot water systems was not successful and no funding was forthcoming.

Lack of Sentence Plans

Mr Wright explained in 2013 that this was “a long-standing operational issue that remains to be resolved”. He advised in 2014 that “NOMS Business Development Group is leading a national project to address the backlog”. The problem remains unresolved. (Section 5.5 refers.)

Typically one-half of prisoners arrive at The Mount with no Sentence Plan. The Mount completes about 20 OASys assessments each month and there is a constant backlog of 90 to 100 OASys assessments.

The Board suggested last year that the funding of OASys assessments should go with the prisoner.

Property Issues

Mr Wright explained in 2013 that there are “mandatory instructions” and that “Governors are required to follow the mandatory instructions”. He observed in 2014 that “managing prisoners’ property is a complex process and we recognize that it is not always managed locally as well as it could be”.

The Board continues to receive many Applications from prisoners and from IMBs at other prisons relating to property missing following a transfer.

It is evident that many of the problems are attributable to the failure of some prisons:

- (i) to apply mandatory volumetric controls; and
- (ii) to maintain property records accurately; and
- (iii) to require prisoners to check the accuracy of property records when arriving at or leaving prison.

Care and Separation Unit

The CSU at The Mount is extremely busy, generally including some prisoners on open ACCT cases. Life is particularly stressful for CSU personnel when the daily Adjudications by a Governor or visiting Judge are taking place.

Healthcare and Mental Health Issues

Whilst prisoners’ access to primary care services is satisfactory, access to secondary care services has been problematic. It also remains a matter of concern that prisoners with serious mental health problems are attended by prison staff without requisite expertise. (Section 5.3 refers.)

Unemployed Prisoners

During the year, the work ethos in the Workshops has improved and the activity level has risen. There remains low enrolment in some Education courses and problems with the allocation of prisoners for courses specified in Sentence Plans. (Section 5.2 refers.) The Mount now faces the challenge of finding purposeful activity for its increased roll.

Network Access

This continues to cause exasperation.

4.4 OTHER MATTERS OF SERIOUS CONCERN OR EXCELLENCE

Other matters of serious concern

(i) Hybrid status

It is a matter of concern

- (a) that with Nash Wing filling up and with The Mount's population divided between those being trained and those to be resettled, there are officer vacancies, and
- (b) that the CRC contracted to provide the resettlement service, Sodexo, with its partners St. Giles Trust and St. Mungo, has been slow to appear on the scene.

(ii) Death in Custody

It is sad to report that for the second year running a Death in Custody occurred at The Mount. The deceased was a young foreign national only recently located at The Mount. It is believed that this incident was not foreseeable.

(iii) The Board

The Board has been below its recommended complement of 18 members for a considerable time. During the previous year and this year a total of 9 members have left. A further 5 members will be leaving during next year (2015-6) for a variety of personal reasons.

Whilst the Board has recruited and will aim to continue to recruit capable new members, it will lack one of its most vital attributes, experience.

The range of Special Interest Areas assigned to Board members on which they might report in the Annual Report has necessarily been reduced.

Other matters of excellence

(i) Nash Wing and the new Kitchens and Gymnasium, although completed several months later than scheduled, are superb facilities.

(ii) The Mount achieved the Silver Award from Investors in People.

(iii) Two members of staff at The Mount were honoured in the New Year's Honours for work with prison volunteers and prisoner education respectively.

(iv) The prisoners continue to publish a high quality magazine "The Mouth of The Mount" printed in the excellent Print Workshop.

(v) Despite the large BAME population, serious racial incidents are rare.

(vi) Board members are treated with respect by Governors, staff and prisoners. Additionally, the Board appreciates The Mount honouring the 3 Board members who retired during the year on account of tenure with an ornamental tablet crafted in the carpentry workshop and placed in a new flower bed recording their names and years of service with the text: "In recognition of IMB service to The Mount".

5. MANDATORY AREAS ON WHICH THE BOARD MUST REPORT

5.1 EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

The Governor is responsible for The Mount's Diversity Policy, supported by designated officers and staff and the Prisoner Diversity Representatives. They monitor all diversity areas ("protected characteristics") other than religion which is the domain of the Chaplaincy.

Race and Nationality

Despite the large BAME population (ranging between 55% - 65%), serious racial incidents are rare. Links have been established with some self-development groups which help BAME prisoners to achieve self-respect.

Disability

Prisoners are assessed by Healthcare at Induction. Disabilities, including mental illness, reduced mobility or physical incapacity, speech, aural or visual impediment and learning difficulties are recorded. The Mount is committed to supporting these prisoners, including identifying prisoners in need of Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans.

The Mount was not constructed to accommodate physically disabled prisoners. Nash Wing includes 2 cells designed for wheelchair users.

Sexual Orientation

Whilst The Mount is keen to recognise and support prisoners of homosexual orientation, not all prisoners wish to disclose their sexual orientation. There are currently no regular meetings for these prisoners. Staff training programmes to tackle homophobia are conducted.

Complaints

DIRFs remain the dedicated form for complaints involving diversity issues. They are investigated by the Equalities Officer who reports to the Governor. During the year 55 DIRFs were submitted, of which 80% were race-related, frequently alleging discrimination.

Special Interest Groups

Quarterly forums are held for Travellers, Older prisoners and Disabled prisoners. Support groups have been established for a number of Foreign Nationality groups. 40-50 nationalities are represented at The Mount, including approximately 150 Foreign Nationals. Special meals are provided and cultural events are recognised for minority groups. The Mount is positive to establish other special interest groups with identified Group Representatives, when the opportunity arises.

Narey Wing is now designated as the Wing for Older prisoners, but this is not mandatory. Currently, some cells on Narey Wing are double cells, which it is hoped in due course will be changed.

Staff recruitment

In staff recruitment, The Mount aims so far as practicable to mirror the local working population.

Board recruitment

The Board is keen to advance equality in its own recruitment, but is restricted to those who volunteer.

5.2 EDUCATION, LEARNING AND SKILLS

Education and Workshop Learning

Education and training is provided in the Education classrooms and the Workshops. The curriculum is targeted to meet population needs and there is local evidence that this is having a positive impact on reducing the re-offending rates of those released from The Mount. The Education Department has also been pro-active in working with the prison and resettlement agencies to increase involvement in employability courses which again will support efforts to reduce re-offending.

The provision of qualifications is being extended in the Workshops with up to six learners each currently being targeted in three workshops, shortly to be extended to four workshops, and an additional learning support tutor being appointed to support these learners. The limit on the number of prisoners being offered qualifications enables the production Workshops to function effectively without suffering from rapid turnover to meet qualification and funding needs.

The ESOL provision has been patchy with the specialist ESOL tutor off long-term sick and with an unqualified tutor covering (who nevertheless was given a 'good' grade for delivery in the internal inspection). However the specialist tutor has now returned and the delivery of ESOL classes has been extended. She is developing and piloting new ESOL resources which should be available nationally, so hopefully the ESOL provision is back on track.

There are however a number of areas for concern:

- There is low enrolment in Education courses and consideration needs to be given to additional promotion of the courses. This is important in view of the numbers of unemployed prisoners at The Mount.
- There are still problems with the allocation of prisoners for courses specified in Sentence Plans which have waiting lists.
- The basic skills provision at Entry level has good group and curriculum teaching. However there is low enrolment in classes. There is considerable evidence that there are many non-readers and non-English speakers at The Mount. Initial assessment should identify these and addressing these needs should be part of the prisoner's sentence planning.
- The functional skills programme has high achievement rates, but the teaching and learning is limited with the provision geared towards examination preparation.

- There is difficulty in recruiting teaching staff and there are still problems with class cancellations and lack of appropriate cover. It will be challenging for the provision to be increased to meet the needs of the new Resettlement Wing.

Currently a Band 6 Learning & Skills Manager is being appointed who will be responsible for The Mount only. It will be interesting to see how this appointment affects the provision as it should lead to more time focussed on local needs and less Cluster co-operation and standardisation.

Library

The Library provision is effective with a well-stocked, attractive and welcoming environment and is to be re-named Library and Study Centre. The opening times have been adapted to meet the needs of the new work timetable and this seems to be working well. However there are sometimes instances when officers have not been available or willing to escort prisoners for evening library sessions.

A new bank of computers has been installed specifically for use by Open University and Distance learners. This provision has been completely transferred to the Library from the Education Department with a library assistant appointed to oversee it.

Story Book Dads continues to have high engagement rates and enables fathers to maintain positive ties with their children. This project is run by a highly motivated volunteer in a dedicated room adjoining the Library.

Sadly, the Toe-by-Toe (Shannon Trust) project is not currently in operation. It was agreed that there should be three paid mentors, who unfortunately turned out to be inappropriate, and other problems have arisen including those of access to potential learners. However there is to be a new version of the project available shortly which is better adapted to the prison environment and hopefully will be more successful.

Workshops

The Workshops provide training and qualifications and generate some income.

They comprise:

WS1 - Double glazing.

WS1A - Bike repair.

WS2 - DHL canteen packing.

WS3 - Engineering.

WS3A - Woodwork. Contract with Rough Stuff.

WS4&7 - Building skills run by John Laing.

WS5 - Painting and decorating funded by A4E.

WS6 - PICTA. Closed all year but due to re-open in April 2015. This Workshop will be partitioned with the other section used for training.

WS8 - Recycling.

WS9 - Plans for a call centre. An instructor has been recruited.

WS10 - Printing. "The Mouth of The Mount", the prison's magazine, is outstanding.

There were several weeks' disruption while reorganisation of the Workshops took place particularly affecting WSs 1,1A, 3 and 3A. At the end of the year all Workshops were near to full operation.

The attendance rate for prisoners working in the Workshops was 84% (target 80%). The number of prisoners allocated to work in the Workshops is planned to increase from 189 to 285.

1-3-1 has increased the amount of work for the Printing, Engineering and Double Glazing Workshops as The Mount's reputation for completing work of a good standard on schedule has risen.

In the Bike Workshop, the supply of bicycles from Sue Ryder has been steady but South Bucks Hospice decided to end its relationship with The Mount. Other customers are being sought.

Farms and Gardens

Farms and Gardens are currently putting up new greenhouses. During the summer, the production of vegetables for the Kitchen was good. The grounds and flower beds have been maintained to a high standard.

The Mount provided a substantial amount of flowers for the Flower Festival at St Albans Cathedral. The Festival was a great success and The Mount was thanked for its contribution.

5.3 HEALTHCARE AND MENTAL HEALTH

Healthcare

The provision of healthcare services is a key priority. The range of primary care services matches those available in the community and takes into account the concentration of need for health issues that are more common in a prison environment. Applications made by prisoners to the Board relating to Healthcare have not raised any systemic concerns about the delivery of primary care to prisoners. The members of the Healthcare team deliver an effective and relevant service to the prisoners. Feedback gained by the Board during regular visits indicates that overall prisoners are satisfied with the healthcare services they receive and are aware how to raise concerns regarding their healthcare needs.

Major challenges arise however in relation to prisoners' access to secondary care. This is currently only possible through escorted hospital visits, which necessarily have limited availability. This requires considerable resources to prioritise by Healthcare and deliver by The Mount and has resulted in the cancellation of hospital attendances, including admissions for operations.

Current access to secondary care does not match that available to the population at large, and this is likely to have an adverse impact on their health, particularly as The Mount's prisoner population ages.

The new Healthcare contract provides opportunities to deliver access to secondary care in more innovative ways and it is hoped that these will be rapidly developed. The Board will monitor this.

Prison healthcare provision is moving from individual contracts for separate parts of the service to a lead provider responsible for co-ordinating all primary care services.

This will be in place from April 2015. This should lead to a more seamless process for prisoners receiving the services and Healthcare professionals delivering them.

The upgrading of the Healthcare Department at The Mount has been challenging because of the prolonged noise and general disruption. The work is not yet complete, but the parts which have been completed are of a high standard.

Funding constraints have denied the Department the ability to provide full disabled access. Accessible rooms are available, but moving an acutely ill patient by stretcher from most areas of Healthcare will continue to be problematic. Also, some equipment cannot be fully utilised until the purchase of complementary equipment is authorised.

Mental Health

The Mental Health Team provides a multi-disciplinary approach to meeting the needs of prisoners who require mental health services. Regular reviews are held to ensure that their status, progress and future plan are discussed and appropriate action taken. Feedback from prisoners confirms that this is generally working well and meets service needs during normal working hours. It is important that prisoners at risk or in crisis also have access to support out of hours and the Board understands that this is normally achieved.

The Mount does not have the facility to ensure that prisoners with severe mental health problems will be attended by staff on the Wing or in the CSU trained to deal with such prisoners.

5.4 PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY

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

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

The AAP deals with prisoner work applications and allocates spaces.

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

5.5 RESETTLEMENT

The Mount has been re-rolled as a hybrid prison and resettlement services will be provided by Sodexo, with its partners, St Giles Trust and St Mungo.

Resettlement prisoners will be approaching the final 3-4 months of their sentence and will normally be residents of Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire or Northamptonshire. The resettlement contract will be fully implemented in the next year.

It is national policy to focus resettlement in a small number of designated prisons selected on a regional basis. Resettlement prisoners from other Category C prisons such as HMP Peterborough have been transferred to The Mount in advance of the roll out of the new resettlement provision. A number of such prisoners have approached the Board to express their concern that moving to a prison away from their home area is disruptive to their family ties.

The strategy to reduce re-offending is based on seven pathways: Accommodation; Employment, Training and Education; Mental and Physical Health; Drugs and Alcohol; Finance, Benefit and Debt; Children and Families; and Attitudes, Thinking and Behaviour. An excellent booklet was produced in June 2014 for distribution to all prisoners giving further information about these pathways and explaining how prisoners can access the services and support available through each one.

Reports on ongoing developments in the seven pathways form part of the agenda of the bi-monthly Reducing Re-offending meetings, to which the Board is invited. These meetings provide a good opportunity for co-ordination of resettlement activities.

In addition, Sequencing has been introduced during the year with the aim of better structuring each prisoner's progression at The Mount. All prisoners are interviewed by Education and by NCS during their first week at The Mount to enable early identification of their needs, which may relate to education, their offence, and/or training. This information is passed to the Offender Supervisor so that appropriate targets and priorities can be set and activities undertaken in the appropriate order.

During the 11 months ended 28th February 2015, 219 prisoners were discharged. The Mount's KPTs for Accommodation (85%), Education and Training (25%) and Employment (30%) on discharge were all achieved.

It is to be noted that the more stringent national requirements for granting ROTL to prisoners in Category C establishments have led to a significant reduction in the local employment opportunities available. Whereas The Mount was previously able to arrange for an average of 8 prisoners to work in the community each day, such opportunities have now reduced.

It continues to be a matter of serious concern that a significant number of prisoners arrive at The Mount without a Sentence Plan, or with a Sentence Plan which is out of date. The Mount does not have the resources to undertake work which is the responsibility of the local prisons, and although OMU staff succeed in completing an average of 20 Sentence Plans each month, there remains a constant backlog of 90 - 100 Sentence Plans.

Community Links

The Mount has a well-established and highly regarded Community Links Department. This Department promotes links with employers with the aim of developing employment opportunities for prisoners on their release. The Department also works, with colleagues, to gain and develop contracts with businesses for work to be undertaken in the Workshops.

The Governor hosted a Chamber of Commerce Business Breakfast meeting in November 2014, which was attended by 45 guests. Feedback was positive with a number of pledges from those attending.

The Community Links Department also works with a number of local and national agencies which deliver a range of programmes and services to help prisoners reduce their risk of reoffending. There is, for example, a successful Black Self Development Programme, which includes a 5 week training programme and helps prisoners to plan for employment after their release. A mentoring scheme provides pre-release and through the gate support.

The Mount values the contribution of volunteers in many areas. The Community Links Department plays a key co-ordinating and liaison role and also arranges an annual training programme for volunteers, which covers not only the statutory training for work inside prison, but also a range of optional sessions that volunteers find valuable.

In 2014, The Friends of The Mount was launched at an annual volunteer social event. This is a community project aimed at building closer links with the community.

5.6 SAFER CUSTODY

The Board is saddened to report that a death in custody occurred in December 2014.

The Safer Custody and Violence Reduction team is well organised, but benchmarking changes have meant that there is not enough time for the VR officers to concentrate on VR issues. Despite this, they recently received a Commendation for their proactive work on dealing with gang membership.

153 ACCT documents were opened during the year, some being duplicated as documents were closed and re-opened. Self harm by cutting is the most common cause.

Monthly meetings are held, chaired by a Governor and attended by officers and representatives from the Chaplaincy, the Listeners, the Samaritans and the Board. Checks on the quality of ACCT documents take place at these meetings with any comments being actioned. Board members also often attend ACCT reviews.

The legal high called “Spice” gained a strong hold within the prison community during the first six months of the year. A considerable number of prisoners admitted to using it and seemed to be unfazed by potential health issues. Problems arose when prisoners became addicted and incurred debts which led to some violent incidents. The atmosphere within The Mount changed during this period. Younger offenders were being transferred to The Mount together with established members of London based gangs. Intel showed that these gang members were involved in prisoner assaults. Prisoners reported that they felt increasingly threatened within the grounds.

The SMT responded quickly and more officers were deployed within the major movement areas. Additional CCTV was also installed.

In the latter part of the year, the use of Spice appears to have decreased as prisoners have reverted to their former drugs of choice, such as cannabis and heroin. These continue to find their way into The Mount, primarily being thrown over the perimeter fence. This change in drug habit, together with the transfer of gang members to other establishments, has resulted in a considerably calmer atmosphere within The Mount and fewer incidents of violence within the grounds.

A major concern is the potential use of drones to bring substances into The Mount. It is understood that directed by mobile phones they could be flown under the security netting to deliver packages directly to a selected cell window.

5.7 SEGREGATION

Benchmarking stipulates that the CSU is adequately staffed with 3 officers and a roving SO during the core day. The Board considers this is insufficient considering the categories of prisoner located in the CSU, its constant near capacity and the incessant and varied demands on the staff. It is reassuring that, despite benchmarking, additional staff have been detailed at times of extreme pressure.

The staff carry out their tasks with great professionalism. Board members regularly acknowledge their calm and empathetic handling of extremely testing individuals and situations.

During the year, two attempts were made by prisoners to hang themselves. It is a tribute to the staff that they were discovered before death in custody occurred.

The CSU has been at near capacity (18 cells) in most weeks and in September for a short time capacity was exceeded and Special Accommodation cells had to be used. Cellular Confinement has on occasions been rescinded to create spaces. Over 350 prisoners were located in the CSU. On more than 30 occasions, 3 or more prisoners were located in a day. This is a noticeable increase on past periods and has worsened in recent months. The number of prisoners seeking location for their own protection, often attributable to alleged debt liability, has increased during the year. The average period of location has also lengthened to 18 days, with 48 prisoners held for more than 30 days and 2 prisoners for more than 90 days.

During the year the staff had to manage a prisoner for 38 days whilst the process for sectioning and finding a secure hospital for him was undertaken. Another prisoner diagnosed with a terminal condition was held in the CSU pending his transfer. It is regrettable that this took 67 days and the Board wrote to the Minister for Prisons to express its concern. Frequently some of those located are on open ACCT documents, sometimes requiring constant watch.

The ban on smoking in the CSU was rescinded raising some health and safety concerns. During cold spells, staff have confirmed the validity of complaints from prisoners about the temperature in some cells, even after providing additional blankets and heaters in the corridors.

With the increase of the population of The Mount, the occupancy pressures are likely to continue.

5.8 RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

Accommodation

The accommodation on the Wings is clean. Standards have been raised. Staffing levels are such that staff are continuously under pressure, but their interaction with prisoners remains professional.

The shower units, particularly on Howard, were poorly refurbished under a contract running to 6 figures administered centrally. The Board criticises this arm's length supervision of contract work. Attempts to get the work remedied have been arduous. Other showers throughout The Mount are being refurbished gradually. Showers are a key area in a prison and cleanliness of them important for prisoners' morale.

The withdrawal of the contract to put pin phones in cells in Nash Wing two weeks before the work was due to start was short-sighted on the part of NOMS and MOJ. Like the showers, the phone facilities are important and, where queues exist, intimidation and bullying may occur.

Kitchen

The opening of the new kitchen facilities in November alleviated the complaints about equipment breakdown and malfunction which put strains on the smooth running of the Kitchen. The new facility is most welcome and suitable for the provision of meals for over 1000 men. There has been a noticeable improvement in the quality of food produced which has been commented on by prisoners. The increased ability to prepare vegetables in house will also enable cost savings to be made in turn improving provision. The Kitchen management should be praised for its dedication and hard work throughout the year and the smooth transition to the new premises.

Canteen

Issues over running out of items, including some fresh items like potatoes and onions, have occurred. Attempts are being made to rectify this.

Reception

Arrivals continue to occur over lunch time periods. On some occasions prisoners have had to wait in transport vans outside the gates as staff have not been notified in advance. The very tight occupancy levels during the year have necessitated arriving prisoners being returned to their sending establishment when, for instance, court discharges are not made thereby not releasing a cell. Prisoners appear to be treated well on transfer in and out at The Mount. When observed in Reception, they are generally in good humour. Staff interaction with prisoners has been observed and is professional and appropriate. The assistance of Insiders and Orderlies is helpful.

Latterly, moves in and out of The Mount related to the expansion and re-rolling have placed enormous pressure on Reception staff. Prisoners not complying have caused delays and frustration to all involved, including transport contractors, sometimes resulting in moves not taking place. Staff have managed difficult prisoners well and have occasionally had to call in extra resources for assistance. A permanent increase of staff resources in this area should be considered.

Physically, transport has appeared to be clean and of a good standard with the appropriate requisites on board.

Property issues, particularly on transfer, abound. There are issues over not enough time being made each day for appointments to deal with property applications. With only 6 appointments scheduled for each day, a delay of 2-3 weeks is normal. NOMS appears to have no plan to resolve the amount of staff time spent on property issues.

Older Prisoners

Currently 12.2% of the population of The Mount is over the age of 50 (close to 100 prisoners). Narey Wing, which including emergency twin cell accommodation houses 60 prisoners, has become a dedicated older prisoner unit. The older prisoners do not occupy the top bunks. There is a clinic held on the Wing for older prisoners to address their specific medical needs. There is a regular forum enabling discussion of issues particular to them, e.g. gym, healthcare and noise problems. Gym provision is highly criticised by this group especially in the case of prisoners at work during the day. It is hoped this problem will be resolved when the new gym facilities become operational. Pay for retired prisoners at The Mount is currently the same as for unemployed prisoners which does not happen in some other prisons. This should be reviewed. The Board is satisfied that The Mount is working hard to provide satisfactorily for this group of prisoners.

Visits

This area has been refurbished to good effect. A coffee bar is available for visitors.

6. OTHER AREAS ON WHICH THE BOARD DESIRES TO REPORT

None.

7. WORK OF THE BOARD

7.1 ACTIVITIES OF THE BOARD

During the year four members left the Board and four new members joined the Board. At the end of the year, the Board comprised 15 members, 3 members below its current recommended complement.

The Mount honoured the retiring members who have made an outstanding contribution to the Board with an engraved tablet set in a new flower bed with their names and dates of service and the text "In recognition of IMB service to The Mount".

Further recruitment is taking place, which is critical in view of the increased size of the estate and population of The Mount.

The Board has a training session prior to each monthly Board meeting. At each Board meeting, the Governor provides the Board with a comprehensive report and answers questions raised by members of the Board on any issue.

An ATPR exercise was held in November 2014.

7.2 APPLICATIONS

Applications made to the Board

Code	Subject	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13
A	Accommodation	25	13	7
B	Adjudications	6	13	1
C	Equality and Diversity (inc religion)	2	14	5
D	Education/employment/training inc IEP	62	74	32
E1	Family/visits inc mail & phone	24	33	16
E2	Finance and Pay	1	10	16
F	Food/kitchen related	7	14	8
G	Health related	36	43	41
H	Property	85	77	54
I	Sentence related (inc.HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-cat etc)	39	42	35
J	Staff/prisoner/detainee concerns inc bullying	16	16	14
K	Transfers	22	23	4
L	Miscellaneous	73	81	55
Total number of IMB applications		398	453	288
The number of Confidential Access Applications included above was:		19	13	3

7.3 BOARD STATISTICS

Recommended complement of Board Members	18
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	15
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	15
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	4
Number of members leaving within the reporting period	4
Total number of Board meetings during the reporting period	12
Total number of visits to the prison	657
Total number of segregation reviews held	307
Total number of segregation reviews attended	298
Date of Annual Team Performance Review	12 th Nov 2014

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

Chair: Jean Hardwidge
Dated: 27/5/15

8. Appendix A: Glossary

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