



Independent Monitoring Board

HMP Highpoint Annual Report 2014

For the reporting period: 1st January to 31st December 2014

1. Statutory Role of the IMB

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

The Board is specifically charged to:

(1) satisfy itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in custody within its prison and the range and adequacy of the programmes preparing them for release.

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

(3) report annually to the Secretary of State on how well the prison has met the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have on those in its custody.

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

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3. HMP Highpoint

3.1 Role of the prison

HMP Highpoint (North and South) is a Category C training prison situated some 10 miles south east of Newmarket in Suffolk. The Operational Capacity increased to 1343 in 2014. The prison is situated on a former Royal Air Force base and lies on either side of the A143.

It was opened as a prison in 1977 and has undergone a number of changes over the years. In November 1997 part of it (Highpoint North) was converted to hold women and in 2001 the North and South sites were formally separated. Highpoint North was renamed HMP Edmunds Hill and then in 2005 was once more returned to the male estate. The two establishments ran separately until 2010 when the process of re-uniting them began with the formal merger completed in April 2011.

The establishment was classified at level 2 in terms of performance for the first 6 months of the year. It then rose to level 3 for the remainder of the year. This means that it is meeting the majority of targets, experiencing no significant problems in doing so, and is delivering a reasonable and decent regime. However this classification fell to level 2 by the end of the year which meant it was requiring development//overall development is of concern.

3.2 Accommodation and facilities

Accommodation at the prison varies considerably from the older, brick, residential units to the newer units which are bright and spacious with en suite toilet and shower facilities in each cell.

Most residential units have in-cell sanitation except for Vickers, and Halifax on the south and Lysander, Hawker and Dominie on the north which have 24-hour access to lavatory and shower recesses. In-cell television is available to all prisoners with the exception of those on basic regime. On the Induction wing on the south side, there are 24 double-occupancy cells. On the north side Lysander, Hawker and Dominie are mainly double rooms.

On the south side there are 10 residential Units.

The Tempest Units (A – D) are the oldest and can appear dark with narrow corridors and small association rooms. On-going painting and higher standards of cleaning continue to help brighten the units. Drainage and ventilation are on-going problems in the communal shower recesses although the year did see the refurbishment of some of these commencing in June.

Units A and D of Tempest are the designated IDTS Units for the prison.

Javelin, Wellington and Handley Units are all two-storey buildings. They appear more bright and airy with a narrow gallery running around the wing at the level of the first storey cells. Wellington Unit houses the Induction Unit on one of its spurs. On this unit there are 24 doubled-up single cells. The lavatory is screened but with limited space there is little privacy, which the Board considers unacceptable.

In Handley Unit, the staff office is located behind windows and locked gates. It is the only unit where prisoners are unable to knock directly on the wing office door to speak to staff and the Board considers this is a barrier to good prisoner/staff relationships. This issue has been raised in previous reports and the MOJ has reported that the prison will be looking into the provision of a window in front of the office to improve staff and prisoner communication and accessibility.

The Board wishes to report that no such work commenced or was planned during 2014.

Vickers and Halifax Units accommodate “carefully risk assessed enhanced” prisoners and are modular in construction, originally designed for oil-field workers. Rooms are larger and the regime is more relaxed. Prisoners have keys to their own rooms and 24-hour access to the shower and lavatory recesses.

Blenheim Unit houses prisoners participating in interventions treatments. Each cell has en suite facilities. Association rooms are bright and large. Telephones are situated in soundproof facilities.

Vulcan Unit, completed in 2008, is bright and spacious with all cells having en suite facilities.

Lancaster Unit is identical in construction and facilities to Vulcan Unit. It houses the Lifer Unit and various prison services, such as Psychology and Probation.

On the north side there are six residential units, the latest, Valiant, being brought into service in the Summer.

Lysander, Hawker and Dominie are old brick buildings and their infrastructure is showing signs of wear and tear. There is no in-cell sanitation on these units but there is 24-hour access to toilet and shower recesses. In its 2013 report, the Board reported that the toilet and shower facilities in these units were showing signs of wear and tear. This year, the Board finds it necessary to report that the situation has deteriorated further. Notwithstanding ad hoc refurbishments which have taken place on these units during the year, in October the Board reported to the governor that night staff provided a broom to prisoners with which to clear blockages in the lavatories of Hawker Unit. This is completely unacceptable.

Each of these three older residential units house 69 prisoners and the showers and lavatories get heavy usage. The Board considers that the ad hoc “make do and mend” maintenance practised to date is not cost effective. The Board asks if it is now time to invest properly in renewing the toilet facilities of these units.

Gloster and Meteor unit are newer units with single en suite cells. Meteor Unit is the Interventions Unit for the north side.

Laundry facilities on all residential Units still continue to cause the Board concern, a matter raised in its 2013 report. With heavy daily usage, machines often break down and there is then an unacceptable delay while awaiting repair or replacement. In the majority of residential units domestic machines are provided as it is understood the electrical supply to the units would not be adequate for larger, more powerful industrial machines and with budget constraints it would not be possible to do the necessary work to upgrade the present facilities, as it would attract a considerable cost. The Board has constantly raised this issue with the Governor throughout the year, and whilst some change has been observed the Board feels that due to the size

of the establishment consideration should be given to installing an industrial laundry on site. The Board is concerned that this matter causes such a problem resulting in the disgruntlement of the prisoners for whom laundry is an important part of a decent environment.

The Board awaits with interest the outcome of NOMS business case for an industrial service.

The communal showers on all units also have a heavy daily use and many have either on-going or periodic problems with drainage and ventilation, notwithstanding some refurbishment work which was started in December

3.3 Healthcare

Care UK are responsible for the provision of healthcare services within the prison.

3.4 Agencies

Resettlement providers include NACRO.

Drugs rehabilitation services are provided by RAPt

Ormiston provides services for prisoners' families and children.

Healthcare is provided by CareUK Ltd

4. Executive Summary

HMP Highpoint, with a population of over 1300, is one of the largest Category C prisons in the country.

There have been challenges, with the establishment seeing reductions in staffing levels, sickness and changes in regime. The new IEP System was rolled out and every effort was made to inform prisoners of the changes, with Prisoner Forums and leaflets setting out the changes. Some refurbishment of the buildings was carried out, but more needs to be done to bring them up to standard.

Although the prison has still not achieved the highest level of performance, it is meeting most of its targets and delivering a reasonable and decent regime.

4.1 Items requiring a response

4.1.1 From the Minister

6.4.2

4.1.1.2 Drugs

Spice, a legal high in the community, has become an increasing problem for Highpoint as it is in other establishments, Identification has been a problematic. The Board urges the Minister/NOMS to seize the initiative and invest in the resources necessary to produce a reliable test that can respond to the challenges created by this complex drug.

4.1.2 From the Deputy Director of Custody

5.5

4.1.2.1 Lack of in-cell education within the CSU

The Board again continues to have concerns that there is still no in-cell education for prisoners on the Segregation Unit, a matter that the Board raised last year with the Governor. The Board urges that this facility should be sought from the education provider as soon as is practically possible

6.6

4.1.2.2 OASys

Prisoners who arrive at Highpoint with either no OASys, an out of date OASys or an incomplete OASys has now become critical. The Board urges the DDC to make other establishments aware that it is their duty to make sure that all prisoners arrive at Highpoint with an OASys, This is so important for a prisoner so he can then make progress prior to his release.

6.13

4.1.2.3 Staffing

The Board remain concerned at the staffing levels – with the year ending with 24 Band 3 Officer vacancies and 30 OSG vacancies. The Board is aware that there have been new officer training at the Eastern Area Training College, but are disappointed that none of these new officers has been deployed to HMP Highpoint. The Board seeks the DDC's assurance that staffing levels will be increased to maintain a safe and secure environment.

4.1.3 From the Governor

5.5

4.1.3.1 Prisoners on Rule 45 OI

The Board has concerns that prisoners who ask to be segregated for their own interest are often being managed on normal location, the Board asks for assurances that these most vulnerable of prisoners are locate on units which most suit their needs, and that staff are made fully aware of the circumstances and issues around the move, and that they are monitored closely.

5.5

4.1.3.2 SMARG Statistics

As there is only one Officer who can collate the statistics to be presented at the SMARG meeting this has meant again that they are not taking place on a regular basis. The Board asks the governor to consider giving training to

another officer to do this important job.

4.1.3.3 Complaints and Applications Procedures

6.3

Although the Board pressed for a full review of the Complaints and Applications procedure, IMB applications highlight prisoners' frustration at the replies they receive. Sometimes these are handwritten, anonymous and often illegible, showing a lack of clarity and respect. The Board again asks that procedures are looked at and changes put in place to make it responsive, efficient and effective.

4.1.3.4 Foreign Nationals

5.1.5

The Board asks the Governor to encourage the Diversity team to engage more with Foreign Nationals in 2015, specifically to recommence regular forums with this prisoner group.

4.1.3.5 Prisoner representatives

5.1.1

The Board asks the Governor to ensure that prisoner representatives attend Equality Action Group meetings.

4.2 Items not requiring a response

4.2.1 Refurbishment of older units

Whilst the Board acknowledge that considerable work has been done on some of the older units there is still much work to be done to bring them up to a reasonable standard. The Board hopes that funding will be made available for these important refurbishments can be carried out.

4.2.2 Laundry facilities

The Board awaits with interest the outcome of NOMS business case for an industrial facility at Highpoint. It has long been the case that the laundry facilities are inadequate for such a large number of prisoners.

4.3 Overall Judgement

The Board acknowledges that staff continue to work hard in sometimes challenging circumstances. There have been many changes to regimes and staffing levels have been at an all-time low. Their commitment and dedication, in sometimes difficult times, is to be commended.

However the Board remains gravely concerned that this situation could become critical. With more budget cuts, staff leaving and not being replaced, and sickness levels remaining high can only have an adverse effect on the running of a safe and decent establishment. The impact on prisoners who are facing longer times being locked up in their cells can only be detrimental to their wellbeing, good order and discipline of the

prison, and the safety and decency of the prisoners in their care.

5. Required Reporting

5.1. Diversity

The Diversity function is managed by a team of three, which includes a representative from Ipswich and Suffolk Commission for Race Equality (ISCRE).

5.1.1. Equalities Action group

The Equalities Action Group, chaired by the no. 1 Governor, met on four occasions in 2014. Meetings were well attended by prison staff and concerned volunteers, but prisoners' representation was not so good. The IMB would like to see more prison representatives attending both the forums and the Equality Action Group meetings. The Board would urge that they be actively encouraged as their input is invaluable in understanding the reality of situations on the wings.

5.1.2 Ethnic Monitoring

The Ethnic balance remains pretty constant, ie approximately 42-45% White British and the remainder comprising a wide variety of ethnicities.

In 2014, 48% of DIRFs came from black prisoners and 42% from White British. Only 2.5% were Asian with the remaining 7.5% coming into the categories of "mixed" and "other".

5.1.3 Focus Group Meetings

In 2014, there were four Forums held for each of the following groups:

- Gypsy/Roma/Traveller
- Equality and Foreign National
- Disability and Older Prisoners
- Sexual Orientation

5.1.4 Engagement with Outside Organisation

An ISCRE staff member now works with the Diversity team two days a week.

History Month was celebrated in October, and Holocaust Memorial Day was commemorated in January. International Older Persons' Day took place as before in the July.

5.1.5 Foreign National and Immigration

While the Orderly for Foreign Nationals is still on Diversity's staff officially, there was little contact with Foreign Nationals during 2014 and no regular forums were held.

5.2. Reducing Re-offending

5.2.1 Learning & Skills

The Quality Improvement who oversee the learning and skills programme at Highpoint is meeting bi-monthly throughout the year. In the last year the learning was led by A4E but is to be succeeded by the Manchester College.

In September 2014 an Adult Education and Skills Needs Analysis for Highpoint was published. Much of the work was done by offenders themselves. The report would help the Quality and Improvement Group ensure the programme of learning meets the needs of its client group, the offenders.

The underlying premise for all those involved is that the programme will reduce re-offending and ensure all have the skills to acquire employment once their sentences are completed.

The programme is both academic and vocational.

GCSE: English for non-English speakers, Business and Enterprise, I.T., Art, P.S.D.

Vocational: Industrial Cleaning, Streetworks, Hairdressing, I.Media, Painting and Decorating, Carpentry, Fitted Interiors, Plumbing and Bricklaying

Variety will always be limited by available funding but on the whole provision matches the skills required for job application upon release. Labour Analysis suggests there is a large number of vacancies in retail but resources do not allow provision for this at present.

Other aspects of learning are: Toe to Toe (basic reading), ADL (additional learning support) and Peer Mentoring.

Upon arrival at the prison, all prisoners are seen by Careers staff and Education. The Board believes it would be ideal if all prisoners, on induction, receive a basic test in communication and numeracy. Previous attempts have been too detailed and beyond the ability of some. This test would allow the prison to direct offenders to the most appropriate course, ensuring, upon release, a level achieved that could be a factor in preventing re-offending.

The prison regime continues to influence classroom learning and especially so with part-time teachers. Lockdowns due to staff shortages have increased and is a growing concern.

There is a heightened awareness of security issues in the classroom at a time of officer shortage within the prison.

Generally speaking, the Board considers that Highpoint does a very good job. There are good links with the world of work and it provides a curriculum that reflects the needs of offenders on release. It would be useful to measure the progress achieved by those with poor communication and numeracy skills.

5.2.2 Breaking the Cycle through effective Partnership Working

Successful forums have continued to be run throughout the year attracting new partnership members and stimulating a healthy debate on promoting future

employability opportunities for prisoners. The regular attendance of prisoner representatives is a valued part of the meetings.

The Board reported last year that a local Building Society planned to provide simple money management for prisoners and is pleased to confirm that the first session has been run and more are planned. Hopefully this will help to give prisoners a much needed basic understanding of how to manage their money upon release.

One of the Highpoint workshops is now producing a range of bags from re-cycled material, the prison receiving regular consignments to sort. The range received its first 'outing' at a forum meeting with partnership members providing valuable market research. They gave an independent evaluation of the products on quality, style and possible pricing. Partnership members also provided the prison with useful suggestions as to how to take the initiative forward and were able to suggest other local sources of suitable remnant materials.

Some forum members have attended Employability Fairs hosted by the Education Department alongside agencies and departments from within the prison. This has enabled them to talk with a wider circle of prisoners and discuss the skills and experience that future employers are seeking. A further cross-section of prisoners were met during the official opening of the new Barber's Shop.

The Board acknowledges the commitment of the Breaking the Cycle team and their continuing energy and drive to respond to any new initiatives presented. Projects can take a long while to come to fruition but the team ensures that the necessary momentum is maintained and partnership members are kept informed.

5.2.3. Gym

The Gym is an important activity in a Prisoner's sentence and is highly valued by most prisoners. It is a time that he is out of his cell and is able to associate with other prisoners.

The prisoners have lost Gym sessions during the year due to Gym staff carrying out duties that would normally have been carried out by Discipline officers.

During the year the Gym staff have undertaken the following duties: escorts, segregation, reception, workshops, healthcare, visits, MDT and working on all the residential units on both North and South.

The Gym staff have carried out around 48 duties per month outside of their normal duties.

Whilst the Board appreciates that the Governor has to use all his staff appropriately, the significant loss of gym time represents a failure in the decency agenda and leads to frustrations amongst prisoners.

5.2.4 Industries

Head of Reducing Re-offending continues to develop purposeful activities and there are at present sufficient work places for the majority of eligible prisoners.

Clothes recycling continue to expand within the prison occupying further workshop space. A new company Amaryllis occupies workshop 5 with a MOD contract for the

refurbishment of MOD furniture which also involves a large input from the Tailoring workshop.

The workshop activities are as follows:

- Clothes recycling - employing about 150 prisoners.
- Tailors -employing 30 prisoners.
- Welding - employing 12 prisoners.
- Recycling for the MOD - employing 24 prisoners.
- Waste management - employing 30 prisoners.
- Food packs for distribution around the prison estate - employing 22 prisoners.

The industries generate a good income for the prison whilst employing 268 prisoners.

Instructors work closely with the prisoners employed in their workshops and the Board acknowledges the good working relationships they establish with the prisoners.

5.2.5 Psychology

Many of the programmes provided by the department form an essential part of a prisoner's sentence plan. The Board is concerned that it still continues to hear that delays in completion of these plans leaves prisoners very anxious and uncertain as to whether programmes will be completed in time to meet pre-parole assessments.

Last year the Board expressed disappointment that the Healthy Relationships Programme had been withdrawn from Highpoint. It is therefore pleased to report that the six month programme was re-introduced in August. A high intensity, cognitive-behavioural intervention aiming to promote healthy intimate relationships, it is offered to prisoners who have been identified as high risk and high need, and who have a history of abuse within intimate relationships.

5.3. Healthcare and Mental Health

5.3.1 Primary Care

Care UK took over the contract to provide Healthcare in Highpoint in 2011; the contract will be renewed in September 2015 for a total of 7 years.

The waiting time to see the G.P. from putting in an application on the wing remains an average of 6 days; an emergency is seen on the day. Nurse-led clinics are run regularly for Asthma, Blood borne viruses, Blood Pressure, Diabetes, Smoking cessation, Chlamydia and Pre-release clinic. A Well Man clinic is run by the Gym Staff.

5.3.2 Dentistry

The dentist provides clinics twice a week on the South and once a week on the North. The waiting time for a routine appointment is 28days but an emergency is seen in 4 days.

5.3.3 Podiatry

The Foot care specialist holds a clinic every 25 days.

5.3.4 Optician

Specsavers the Opticians have a surgery once a month and see everyone on the waiting list.

5.3.5 Physiotherapy

The Physiotherapist comes in Highpoint fortnightly; however, patients are triaged and are sent exercise to do (if appropriate) whilst waiting to see her.

5.3.6 Healthcare Complaints

All Healthcare complaints go directly to the Head of Healthcare, who deals with them. Each complaint is acknowledged and logged immediately. There was an average of 17 complaints a month and a full report is published and sent to the commissioners.

5.3.5 Pharmacy

The Pharmacy team is the same as last year and is working very well.

5.3.6 Mental Health

Yet again, the Board re-iterates its concern that prison is a completely inappropriate environment for people with serious mental health disorders. The Board commends the efforts of most of the officers but acknowledges that they have minimal training in managing issues such as suicide, self-harm and serious personality disorders. For example, sometimes disruptive behaviour is dismissed as “attention seeking” by staff, but the Board believes that in many cases, serious underlying issues are being missed.

The Board again puts on record its acknowledgement of the commitment and dedication of Segregation Unit staff. Their task is a difficult one which they approach with professionalism, dignity and respect for the prisoners with mental health issues in their care.

Notwithstanding the above, the Board has serious reservations about maintaining prisoners with mental health disorders in such a harsh environment, separated from everyday normality and activity. Holding mentally ill people for close-on 24 hours a day in a cell with minimum human interaction, few diversions such as educative activities, and sometimes not even a TV or radio, is, in the Board’s opinion, unacceptable.

In its 2013 annual Report, the Board expressed its concerns with the lack of a counselling service for prisoners with psychological disorders; a service readily available under the IAPT scheme to people in the community.

From the Board’s experience of walking the wings and talking to prisoners with mental health issues and psychological disorders, it is difficult to see any change in 2014, despite the Under-Secretary of State’s response to the Board’s 2013 Annual Report. Information is sometimes difficult to glean from Care UK regarding the

counselling sessions actually provided. The Board wonders why Care UK is so reluctant to provide this information.

The Board asks for a clear and unambiguous statement of the counselling hours provided to prisoners during the year. Only then is the Board able to judge the extent of counselling provision within the prison.

5.4. Safer Custody

The Board considers that HMP Highpoint is still, by and large, a safe prison.

The Board observes that the recent changes in reallocation of discharge prisons have impacted on the stability of Highpoint, with the arrival of members of a number of London gangs now requiring management attention.

The ready availability of spice within the prison is a concern and is being actively addressed by Safer Custody management.

There was a slight increase in reportable incidents this year – 1259 in total, 4% up on last year. Reports of assaults increased from 200 in 2013 to 213 on 2014 and self-harm incidents have decreased. Barricades and damage has increased slightly.

Again the Board is concerned that there is an unsettled feeling on the units, prisoners are more volatile and difficult to manage. The population seems to be changing and prisoners are resorting to barricading, damaging cells and assaulting other prisoners. The significant increase in spice is worrying as the Prison Service struggle to detect it and, when found, to prosecute the offenders.

A Safer Custody meeting is held each month, at which issues and trends around safety, violence and self-harm are examined and addressed. Violence Reduction prisoner representatives and Listeners attend these meetings and report back their observations from walking the wings. The Board also attends these meetings.

5.5. Segregation and Assessment Unit

The CSU continues to be busy and is often full to capacity. The Board visits the CSU on a regular basis and commend the staff who are often faced with challenging and disruptive behaviour.

There is often a 'waiting list' of prisoners who have asked to be segregated for their own safety under Rule 45, whether through being in debt, being bullied or feeling vulnerable on normal location. Whilst it is acknowledged that it is sometimes better to try to manage these prisoners in normal location, the Board asks for assurances that they are placed on units which are appropriate to their needs, and staff are aware of any issues arising from their particular circumstances, and they are monitored closely.

The Board is disappointed that there is still no provision for in-cell education within the CSU, bearing in mind that prisoners are locked behind their doors for the biggest part of the day. We urge the Prison Service and the education provider, A4E, to consider providing this facility.

Segregation Monitoring and Review Group Meetings (SMARG) have only been held a couple of times in the last year, even though there have been assurances that

these will be reinstated. The Board is concerned that this important meeting does not take place on a regular basis. It is important to regularly review the paperwork giving statistics of prisoners who are segregated, and to discuss the work of the SAU. There appears to be an issue with preparing the paperwork, with only one officer tasked to do this. If he then is on leave, sick or redeployed then this task doesn't get done. The Board asks that consideration is given to train another officer to do this so that there will be someone to do this important job.

6. Other Areas

6.1 Catering and Kitchens

Despite the aging Kitchen Equipment, both Kitchens on North and South sites provide excellent meals.

The allowance has now been increased to £2.04 per prisoner per day to cover the provision of three meals.

The sum has to include all additional costs incurred by special catering for religious holidays.

Both North and South Kitchens hold regular food meetings. These meetings are well attended and constructive comments are put forward by the prisoners.

Both kitchens try to incorporate the suggestion into the menus, but due to cost restrains this is not always possible.

The Board wishes to record the dedication and professionalism of the catering staff who provide meals often in difficult circumstances.

The Board would like to congratulate prison management on the successful introduction of a free-range chicken run, which not only provides fresh eggs for the kitchen but also vocational activity for a number of prisoners.

Another success for the kitchen has been the production of home-made pies, which are popular with the prisoners.

6.2 Chaplaincy

The Chaplaincy teams at Highpoint on both the north and south sites provide invaluable pastoral care to prisoners of all faiths and none. Chaplaincy and the IMB work well together with the former frequently taking on the essential task of contacting prisoners' family and friends whenever that help is needed; and like the IMB, are frequently seen on the Units talking to staff and prisoners. Chaplaincy plays a vital role in the induction process when prisoners arrive at Highpoint, and is also responsible for running its own Victim Awareness and Restorative Justice course which features in so many prisoners' sentence plans. Caring and courtesy are the watchwords of the Chaplaincy team and it shares with the IMB a determination to ensure that prisoners are treated fairly and with respect.

6.3 Complaints and Applications Procedure

The Board reported last year that the Complaints process is completely dysfunctional, particularly with regard to issues around prisoners' property. It reiterates exactly the same comment this year.

NOMS comments in response to last year's annual report have not moved the situation forward, merely stating the existing process, with which the Board has no issues. It is the execution of this process with which the Board is concerned. Yet again, prisoners ask us to help "interpret" perfunctory, handwritten, anonymous and

often illegible responses to complaints. Clarity of response and addressing of the issue in the first instance would not only be respectful but efficient too.

The Board wishes to acknowledge the dedication and commitment of the complaints clerk at HMP Highpoint to the management of the complaints process and the chasing up of respondents, particularly from other establishments who are often slow in giving answers.

Again the Board asks that the Governor undertake a thorough review of the Complaints procedure with a view to making it responsive, efficient and effective.

6.4 Drugs and Alcohol

Regular meetings have been held throughout the year reviewing and monitoring agreed policies and actions and the good support and programmes available within the establishment.

6.4.1 Alcohol

The Board is pleased to report that the establishment's strong policy at Christmas does appear to have had the desired effect in limiting alcohol fuelled incidents. The policy removes or restricts any ingredients that could be used for brewing and is backed up by random or intelligence-led searches. Prisoners were also given a strong warning of the penalties for being found in possession of hooch and of the dangers in brewing and consuming such alcohol, particularly when mixed with prescribed medication or other drugs.

6.4.2 Drugs

The Board has noted a significant and disturbing change with the amount of spice found, increasing from 72.2g in 2013, to in excess of 1.5 kilograms in 2014. The Board commends staff for their vigilance in preventing this from getting into the establishment but is concerned as to the challenges posed by spice.

Spice, a synthetic cannabinoid, is a legal high in the wider community and as there is currently no viable test available it is not possible to get a reliable indicator as to the extent of its use amongst Highpoint's population.

Spice can vary from batch to batch – highlighting the problem of establishing a definitive test, and this also means that it can be difficult to predict the behaviour of users and the short and long term health risks of usage.

The Board would suggest that a reliable test is urgently needed as spice is not just a problem for Highpoint but many other establishments. Strong security measures are essential but need to be aided by reliable testing methods. Surely the Prison Service cannot afford to lag behind any longer and needs to have a reliable indicator of usage within the prison population.

6.5 Incentives and Earned Privileges

The Board continues to receive applications and enquiries from prisoners struggling to understand the requirements of the revised scheme, particularly the more limited opportunities to achieve Enhanced Status. . Although prisoners were advised and

reminded of the changes many did not realise the full impact of these until their IEP status was up for review. Board members have continued to explain the process to prisoners who have lost their Enhanced Status and have been concerned they may have been unfairly treated. Perhaps more worrying is the view some Board members have heard expressed, albeit by a small minority of prisoners, that there is no longer any great incentive to avoid disruptive behaviour.

6.6 Prisoner Management Unit and OASys

The Board recognise that there is still a problem with prisoners arriving without an OASys or an incomplete or out of date one.

In a typical month 31 prisoners arrived without an OASys and 16 arrived with out of date OASys. Although prisoners should arrive at HMP Highpoint with a completed and up to date OASys, the issue seems to be that many come from London or local establishments, who do not make sure they have done the work before they are transferred.

Tier 4 prisoners are assessed by outside OMs within the Probation Service. These are falling behind, meaning that the most dangerous prisoners are without a clear sentence plan, hampering their progress and making work for the OMU who have to chase up outside OMs to arrange visits and conference calls, taking them away from working on the OASys in their workload. Add to this the frequent redeployment of uniformed OMs, and staff shortages, and it only puts more pressure on OMU staff, and the backlog becomes difficult to manage.

Again the Board raises concerns that this situation will become critical if steps are not taken to ensure there are enough staff to deal with this important part of a prisoner's plan, and that other establishments are aware of their duty to complete OASys plans before prisoners arrive at HMP Highpoint

6.7 Personal Officer Scheme

The Board continues to see and hear officers working well with prisoners and providing excellent support, care and encouragement.

The Board continues to have reservations about the consistency of the scheme across the whole establishment. It still finds quite a number of prisoners who claim not to know their Personal Officer. Re-deployment of officers will often mean that the designated officer is not available. Board members find that Officers working on an unfamiliar unit do not have knowledge of the on-going issues and problems of the prisoners on that unit.

Staff reductions have resulted in fewer officers on the wings, which has impacted on the time available for officers to spend with prisoners. Issues that hitherto could have been simply solved by chatting with an officer, now often need to be escalated through the complaints process which impacts further on time constraints of officers.

6.8 Prisoner Forum

The Prisoner Forum on South resumed in October after a six month lapse and has been productive. It is understood the Prisoner Forum on North continues, however IMB are not informed or invited to meetings.

Now, only one representative job can be held by a single prisoner. This was initiated from the October forum and has been adopted on the units.

Discussion revealed the new IEP policy is having an impact. Downgrading to Standard is taking place, which is dispiriting and unsettling; there appears not to be enough jobs and opportunities at Highpoint to progress to the new Enhanced level. Furthermore, there is now a limit to the number of Enhanced places, and this can be demoralising when all places are filled and the prisoner fits the criteria.

Communication seems to be a real problem in the prison and a lot of anxiety could be avoided if it were more efficient.

The forums are collaborative, explaining prison rules, procedure and information, giving a sense of involvement. Prisoners also have ideas that could be of benefit to Highpoint.

6.9 Property

Complaints to the prison relating to property (700) outnumbered complaints on the total of the next three most common categories (employment, re-categorisation and IEP) taken together.

These complaints were mainly transfers into Highpoint or handling of property within Highpoint and to a lesser extent transfers out. There appears to be no single cause for failures following transfers into Highpoint, and in many cases it is not clear if the fault lies with a failure of the sending establishment to secure and transmit property with a prisoner, or a failure of the transport contractor to carry the contracted amount of luggage with the prisoner.

A worrying amount of property is lost without trace.

There were fewer complaints from other prisons regarding the onward transmission of property, partly because Highpoint organises onward transfer where the contractor fails to take property. At the time of the Board's investigation Highpoint kept no formal record of the contractor's failure to adhere to the terms of the contract. Pressure on staff handling property within the prison means that there can be a considerable backlog of requests from prisoners for the release of property held at Highpoint, which for much of time reaches many weeks.

The IMB also has more applications concerning property than on any other issues, almost a quarter of all applications relate to property, the majority being issues related to transfers into Highpoint from other establishments, and to a lesser extent handling of property within the establishment.

Access to their property is rightly very important to prisoners as in prison it is a vital part of their identity, and the meticulous management of it makes a significant contribution to the fair and decent treatment of prisoners and the good management of prisons.

It is regrettable that it is necessary to highlight property issues again in this report, as this is an area where much effort and many resources are wasted on remedying failures that could have been avoided by more careful handling of property and more rigorous monitoring of contractors at very little cost.

Again the Board re-iterates its previous requests for a complete review of the handling and transportation of prisoners' property, and better communication between establishments when property goes missing.

6.10 Security

2014 saw a significant increase in the quantity of synthetic cannabinoids (known as spice) found in the prison. However there was a significant drop in other drugs found (52% decrease in cannabis resin and herbal cannabis combined). The finds of spice are likely to continue to increase and reflects the drug trend in the community. There was also a decrease in mobile phone finds but a considerable increase in SIM cards.

	2014	2013	2012	2011
Mobile phones	230	254	260	60
SIM cards	184	89	78	29
Cannabis resin	3.3g	72g	124g	627.2g
Herbal cannabis	424.9g	1160.5g	1330.6g	141.1g
Heroin	4.4g	9.1g	8g +	7.3g
Subutex	6.3g	9.0g	1.5g	4.5g
Spice	1.578kg	72.2g		
Steroid tablets	300+ Plus 2 bottles	300+		
Crack cocaine	8.0g	10.0g		
MDMA tablets	23.6g			
Burnt foil		1	5	4
Amphetamines			0.5g	0.3g
Other finds in 2014 include: - 7 improvised "bongs", 25.6g white powder (believed to be amphetamines)				
"Hooch"	321 litres	429 litres	251 litres	243 litres

There has been an increase in drugs and phones coming over the fence in large parcels, and also coins being thrown over onto the netting, which allows them to fall through, to be picked up by prisoners. Several of these parcels have been intercepted successfully, the largest one being in August. All the parcels recovered on the South site contained spice, contrasting with the North site where cannabis resin, crack cocaine and tablets believed to be steroids as well as spice were found.

The Board commends the staff in also detecting 119 weapons.

6.11 Transfers

During the year, HMP Highpoint was designated as a local release resettlement prison for London and Essex prisoners. This has, in the Board's opinion, made it more difficult for London based prisoners to be successful in seeking transfer nearer to their homes in metropolitan London. The remote location of HMP Highpoint makes it difficult for prisoners' families to visit and the Board questions the wisdom behind the decision to designate a remote Suffolk jail as a London release prison.

6.12 Visitors and Visitor Centre

The Board has noted an overall improvement in the management of visits and they seem to run smoothly most of the time. However, there is definitely room for improvement in the management of VOs.

The Board would like to see an increased use of the drug dogs in Visits with the objective of reducing the contraband entering the prison.

6.13. Staff

The Board again notes the high level of sickness which invariably impacts on the day to day running of the regime. Any absence puts pressure on the detail, and there is a concern when staffing is stretched as to whether this compromises the ability to respond promptly and effectively to an emergency or deal with an incident before it escalates.

Staffing Levels have been a concern to the Board throughout the year. Highpoint ended the year with 24 Band 3 Officer and 30 Band 2 OSG vacancies. The Board has seen new recruits undergoing training at the nearby Eastern Area Training College and was disappointed to hear that none was earmarked for Highpoint on completion of their training. It is understood, however, that some experienced staff from other establishments may be seconded to Highpoint in due course. The Board questions how long this unsatisfactory situation can continue.

Vacancies, sickness or emergencies can mean that at times the Governor and his Senior Management Team face an unenviable challenge to ensure all essential daily tasks are covered and a safe and decent regime maintained.

6.14 Canteen

Canteen is the "prison shop". Prisoners order their needs form a list, and their order is delivered the following week from a central store based in HMP Wayland.

No canteen meetings have been held on North /South between January 2014 and December 2014.

The Board frequently monitors the issue of canteen to prisoners.

Generally the canteen that the prisoners have ordered is correct. On the odd occasion items have been missing, the item is noted by the officer on duty and a credit is issued within seven working days.

A general improvement has been seen with high value items (e.g. tobacco and after shave). The Board understands that high value items are now being packed by the staff at HMP Wayland.

One particular issue concerns orders for tobacco. If a prisoner takes his canteen to his cell to unpack and the tobacco is missing, the officer cannot give a credit.

The Board advises prisoners to check their tobacco order in front of the officer.

The Board has found that on a number of occasions the fruit and vegetables sent from HMP Wayland is of a very poor quality.

6.15 Gardens

The Board is delighted to report that the management of the gardens on both North and South sites is most impressive and the gardens continue to give pleasure to all.

In particular, the kitchen garden on the South site is extremely impressive, and it is clear that the prisoners who work in the gardens are absorbing a lot of useful knowledge.

7. The Work of the IMB

7.1 The Year in focus

The Board for Highpoint North and South continues to rise to the challenges of dealing with the changes in the Prison Service, and all that entails from these changes. The Board has been under pressure as, despite a recruitment campaign during the year, our numbers remain lower than full complement.

The year has been a busy one, with a large number of applications, and the Board has worked hard to deal with these often complex and time consuming issues. Members have been tireless in pursuing answers, and dealing with prisoners in a fair and decent manner. With two sites to cover it is sometimes difficult to ensure that rota visits are meaningful and the Board is to be commended for their commitment in fulfilling their duties.

In October we appointed three new members bringing our complement to 16. Unfortunately we lost an extremely experienced member at the end of the year, who resigned for personal reasons.

The Chair wishes to thank the Vice Chair and BDO for their support and hard work during the year, this has made the work of the Chair much easier. Also thanks to the Clerk, who has again been a great support and help to the work of the Board.

The Chair acknowledges how hard the whole Board has worked this Year. As always members have given of their time volunteering to mentor new members, attend meetings, and being available for 'On Call' duties. The Chair would like to thank the whole Board for giving freely of their time and their professional approach to the role.

7.2 Board Statistics

Recommended complement of Board Members	20
Number of Board Members at start of the reporting period	16
Number of Board Members at end of reporting period	17
Number of new Members joining within the reporting period	3
Number of Members leaving within the reporting period	3
Number of Members transferring out within the reporting period	0
Total number of Board meetings during the reporting period	11
Average number of attendances at Board meetings during the reporting period	12
Number of attendances at meetings other than Board Meetings	122
Total number of rota visits conducted	159
Total number of visits to the prison (includes 129 B/Meeting attendances)	761
Total number of Applications received	1053
Total number of segregation reviews attended	78

7.3 Applications received by the Board

Code	Subject	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
A	Accommodation	2	9	26	62	107
B	Adjudications	12	19	9	23	12
C	Diversity related	7	0	16	20	30
D	Education/employment/training	91	98	53	48	85
E	Family/visits	58	70	35	31	15
F	Food kitchen related	13	9	11	17	14
G	Health related	74	88	89	84	94
H	Property	146	194	170	164	208
I	Sentence related	113	207	121	250	336
J	Staff/prisoner related	21	53	103	61	85
K	Transfers	73	81	90	108	137
L	Miscellaneous	139	188	185	154	116
Total number of subjects in Applications		749	1016	908	1022	1239
Total number of Applications		708	947	831	863	1053

7.4 Activities and Development...

Three new members were appointed this year and received internal training and mentoring.

The Board visited HMP Pentonville to continue its understanding of other Board's ways of working with a view to maintaining good practice at HMP Highpoint.

The Board also welcomed two other Boards to Highpoint this year: HMP Onley and HMP Woodhill.

The Board attended two training sessions this year:

- Offender Management Unit
- Internal training on dealing with Applications

The Board invited speakers to address them prior to the Board Meeting and these included the following topics:

- Security
- Breaking the Cycle

The Board conducted its Annual Team Performance Review in November where current practices and future development were discussed and an Action Plan put in place for the year ahead, and, in light of experience and feedback from members, operational procedures were decided and agreed for the coming year.

8. Glossary of Abbreviations and Acronyms used in this report

ACCT	Assessment Care in Custody and Teamwork
ADTP	Alcohol Dependence Treatment Programme
ATPR	Annual Team Performance Review
BDO	Board Development Officer
C&R	Control and Restraint
CALM	Controlling Anger and Learning to Manage it
CBT	Cognitive Behaviour Therapy
IAPT	Improving Access to Psychological Therapies
IDTS	Integrated Drug Treatment Service
IEP	Incentive and Earned Privileges
ISCRE	Ipswich and Suffolk Commission for Race Equality
ITQ	A nationally recognised qualification in IT
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
NACRO	National Association for Care and Resettlement of Prisoners
NCS	National Careers Service
NICE	National Institute for Clinical Excellence
NOMS	National Offender Management Service
NVQ	National Vocational Training
OASys	Offender Assessment System
OLASS	Offenders' Learning and Skills Service
OMU	Offender Management Unit
PALS	Patient Advice & Liaison Service
PPCS	Public Protection casework section
RAPt	The Rehabilitation for Addicted Prisoners Trust
ROTL	Release on Temporary Licence
SAU	Segregation and Assessment Unit
SMARG	Segregation Monitoring and Review Group
SMT	Senior Management Team
UKBA	UK Border Agency
VO	Visiting Order