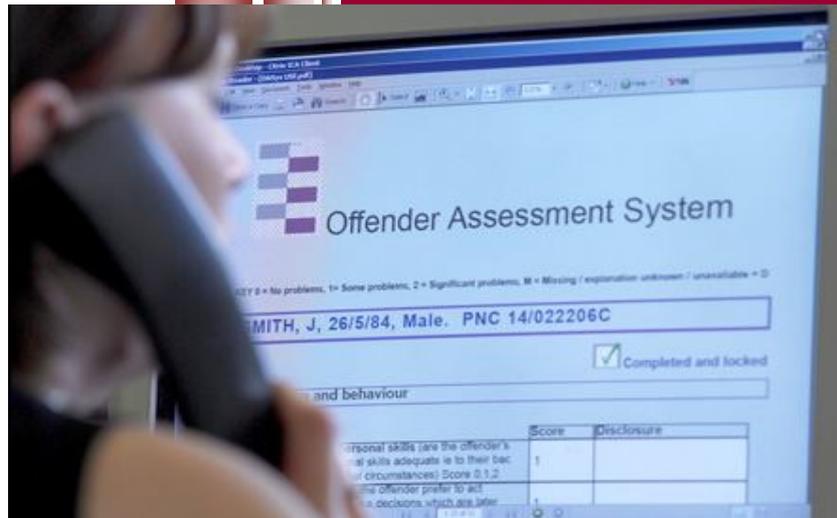


# Oasys in Prisons



## A Report

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Monitoring Fairness and Respect  
for People in Custody

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REPORT OF THE OASYS  
INVESTIGATION GROUP  
MAY 2015

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## 1 The Problem

- a) Annual Reports have identified a lack of up to date OASYS reports for offenders and significant numbers of offenders arriving at prisons without any OASYS report at all. There have been references to backlogs in Offender Management Units (OMU). Whilst there have been various plans put in place by prisons, the problem is still being reported.

## 2 The Approach

- a) The National Council appointed a panel of IMB members to conduct ad hoc investigations into issues frequently brought up in Annual Reports. From the panel, a team of four members was chosen to conduct a review of the OASYS issue and to assess the causes and the effects on offenders.
- b) The investigation consisted of a review of the Annual Reports raising the issue, together with questionnaires seeking further details. A questionnaire document is at Appendix A.
- c) The responses covered a range of prisons from Training to Local to Open, drawn from across England and Wales.
- d) The quality of responses varied considerably. One Board was unable to provide any figures, some were unable to differentiate between the number of offenders with no OASYS and those whose OASYS was out of date and others were able to give a full breakdown.
- e) The team would like to thank those Boards that provided information.

## 3 Analysis

- a) The review covered 38 prisons and over 24,500 offenders. Some of the offenders in that number would not have required an OASYS due to the short length of their sentence. Of relevant offenders, **1,738** were reported as having no OASYS. This figure was understated as, for 9 Boards that could not differentiate between non-existent and out of date OASYS, a combined figure was included in the out of date category. In all, **3,275** were reported as having an out of date OASYS.
- b) Some Boards identified but did not always quantify OASYS that were the responsibility of the Probation Service within the figures.
- c) 18 Boards were able to show the level of arrivals without OASYS, which totalled **295**. Similarly, 17 Boards were able to identify the number arriving with out of date OASYS, which amounted to **188**.
- d) Prisons' own OMU monitoring methods varied considerably. 13 prisons used a database or spreadsheet, whilst 4 maintained a file count. 3 simply prioritized to meet

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the most urgent cases whilst 2 prisons appeared to have no monitoring system at all. In 3 cases, the prison concentrated on the most urgent cases as they were required.

- e) Frequency of monitoring by prisons ranged from daily to weekly to monthly.
- f) 17 Boards identified the use of OMU staff to cover staffing needs elsewhere in the prison whilst 15 mentioned a shortage of staff of the right grade or with sufficient training. 4 boards identified sickness levels as a contributory factor.
- g) 2 Boards referred to the inability of OMU staff to meet with prisoners. This was attributed to the use of staff on light duties in OMU.
- h) 4 Boards raised the issue of delays in production of OASYS by the Probation Service and the need to spend time chasing. For 1 prison, of the 136 prisoners with an out of date OASYS or without one at all, 118 were the responsibility of Probation.

#### **4 Effects on Offenders**

- a) The principal effect on offenders, identified by 19 Boards, was the lack of sentence plans and the consequent delays in addressing offending behaviour. They also highlighted the lack of annual reviews. In 3 instances, this was thought to lead to a perceived lack of interest in the offenders.
- b) 15 Boards highlighted the delay in progression to the right category of prison as a result of delays in holding the annual reviews.
- c) 6 Boards were concerned that there were delays in offenders being able to be released on HDC or ROTL.

#### **5 Overall Judgement**

- a) Based on the information gathered, 5,000 offenders out of 24,500, with either no OASYS or one that is out of date is unacceptable.
- b) It is clear that the major cause of OASYS backlogs is staffing. The regular use of OMU staff to cover other absences means that the problem is never resolved.
- c) Offenders are rightly expected to address their offending behaviour and to reduce their risk to the public but are entitled to feel frustrated when sentence plans are either not in place or are out of date.
- d) Offenders are held back by the lack of reviews and it cannot be satisfactory, as some are, for prisons to simply address the most urgent and ignore the rest until they become urgent.
- e) A comprehensive plan needs to be put in place by NOMS to address the matter in both the Prison Service and the Probation Service.

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**OMU QUESTIONNAIRE****Appendix A**

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Board

What is the current population of the prison?

How many prisoners do not require an OASys?

How many Prisoners have an out of date OASys?

How many prisoners have no OASys?

How many prisoners arrived in the last month without a) no OASys b) an out of date OASys?

How is the OASys backlog monitored in OMU?

What are the issues affecting the backlog in the prison?

How many prisoners are unable to work out due to lack of an up to date OASys?

How Many prisoners are unable to be out on ROTL due to lack of an up to date OASys?

What other effects on prisoners are there due to the lack of an up to date OASys?

Members of working Party

Peter Judges -National Council Lead and IMB HMP Swaleside, Lucy Mills - IMB HMP Brixton, Ollie Mann - IMB Highdown, Paul Large – IMB HMP Kennet

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