



Annual Report

Independent Monitoring Board

HMP Leyhill

February 2014 - January 2015

Section 1

The Statutory Role of the Independent Monitoring Board

The Prisons Act 1952 and the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 require every prison and Immigration Removal/Reception Centre (IRC) to be monitored by an independent Board appointed by the Minister of Justice from members of the community in which the prison or Centre is situated.

The Board is specifically charged to:

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

inform promptly the Minister of Justice, or any official to whom authority has been delegated, any concerns it may have.

report annually to the Minister of Justice 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.

Section 2

Contents

Subject	Page
<u>Section 1</u> Statutory Role of the Independent Monitoring Board	2
<u>Section 2</u> Contents	3
<u>Section 3</u> Description of HMP Leyhill	4
<u>Section 4</u> Executive Summary Questions for the Minister Questions for the Prison Service Previous year's concerned not earlier mentioned	5 6 6 6
<u>Section 5</u> Equality and Inclusion Education Learning and Skills Healthcare Purposeful Activity Resettlement Residential Services Safer Custody	7 9 10 12 13 13 16
<u>Section 6</u> Offender Management Unit Prisoners Consultative Committee & Advice Centre Reception	17 17 18
<u>Section 7</u> Board Statistics Applications Received	19 20

Section 3

Description of HMP Leyhill

HMP Leyhill is a Category D Open Prison in a rural setting, located off the M5 motorway between Bristol and Gloucester.

The prison holds a highly complex group of prisoners, with a total capacity during the reporting period of 527. It is one of only two establishments in the Open Estate to accept sex offender and child offender life sentenced prisoners. The ratio of Indeterminate Sentenced Prisoners and Lifer Prisoners to Determinant Sentenced Prisoners increased during the year such that by the end of the reporting period, there were some 370 Lifer/ISP (Indeterminate Sentence for Public Protection) prisoners held in the establishment.

Prisoners needing to show they have made progress in their offending behaviour prior to parole are required to be tested in the community. To this end, opportunities are available to obtain work experience in the community local to the establishment.

During the reporting period a wide range of support to prisoners was provided by the following:

Career information, advice and guidance - National Careers Service

Personal development, Social and Life Skills and Work-related Learning - Weston College

Job Club - Tribal

Qualification support - Nergy

Gymnasium courses - Astara

Healthcare services - jointly by Bristol Community Health and General Practice provider, Hanham Health

Optician Services – Homecare Opticians

Dentistry – Somerset Partnership

Mental Health services were provided by Avon and Wiltshire Partnership Mental Health Trust.

RECOOP (Resettlement and Care of Older ex Offenders and Prisoners) ran a Day Centre for older prisoners, The Lobsterpot, on a daily basis.

Escort Services to and from the prison were provided by GEOAmey.

Section 4.

Executive Summary

HMP Leyhill is a well-organised prison operating in a generally well-maintained and attractive setting, though this year the change-over to a new multi-million pound boiler system caused initially such disruption in the residential units that questions arose about the effectiveness of the contractual arrangements (5.6.6).

Over the year the balance of the prisoner population gradually changed so that now there is a markedly higher proportion of lifers and men with indeterminate sentences (5.6.1). Through the implementation of the Benchmarking approach to staffing, there were also changes in the number and roles of both uniformed and administrative staff. In the OMU the changeover for many weeks adversely affected the efficient management of prisoners' sentences (5.5.3-4; 5.6.9; 6.1.1-6.1.5).

Overall, the Board feels that HMP Leyhill provided a safe, decent environment to prepare the men it holds for release back in to the community. Pastoral care was generally good (5.6.13-14; 5.6.16; 5.7.4-6) and the catering provided was of a high standard (5.6.8). Healthcare provision with few exceptions was at least as good as outside (5.3.passim) and palliative care was excellent (5.1.14; 5.3.2-4; 5.6.3). The establishment continued to manage well an increasingly complex group of prisoners and maintained, as a norm, good respectful relationships between staff and prisoners (5.6.6). The active promotion and monitoring of Equality and Inclusion policies (5.1.passim) played a major part in enabling the prison to be a reasonably cohesive community. Where there were issues they were addressed, not left to fester (5.1.2; 5.1.5-7; 5.1.10-12; 5.1.18-19; 5.1.20 & 22)

Despite every effort and a zero tolerance policy, drug use continued to be a problem (5.7.2; 5.7.7) though partly mitigated by the transfer back to closed conditions of established offenders (5.7.2; 5.7.7). The continued absence of a facility for Voluntary Drugs Testing was unhelpful to some of those struggling to keep off drugs (5.7.3).

Changes to the IEP (Incentive and Earned Privileges) policy, although nationally effective from 1st November 2013, were not implemented until during the reporting year. They, together with aspects of the changes to ROTL policy and new national stringency about access of prisoners to the internet raised issues about the extent to which national policy planners had recognised the very different circumstances in which Open Prisons, as distinct from the wider closed estate, operate. (5.4.3; 5.5.4; 5.6.12; 6.1.2) The difficulties raised by these changes were considerably mitigated by sensitive and well-judged handling of their implementation, by the prison's working hard to keep prisoners as fully informed as possible in rather fluid situations (5.5.4; 5.6.12; 6.1.2) and by the active involvement of the Prisoners' Consultative Committee and Advice Centre (6.2.1-2).

The revamping of the Learning and Skills programme to give greater emphasis to the vocational and courses leading to nationally recognised qualifications is still essentially a work in progress as initially the link between Sentence Plans and Learning and Skills was not always clear (5.2.1-2). However, overall, the picture is positive (5.2.7-8).

Much effort was expended in trying to ensure meaningful employment in the establishment or the community of all prisoners of working age, medically fit and not in education.(5.4.1-2; 5.4.4). Unfortunately the new ROTL policies reduced the number of prisoners allowed to work in the community (5.4.3) and, though the nominal employment rate was very high indeed, there were significant periods when in several employments in the establishment the amount of work available left prisoners with little or nothing to do whilst technically at work (5.4.6).

All told, the positives certainly outweighed the negatives. There are many promising initiatives yet to reach fruition.

4.1 Questions for the Minister

- 4.1.1 What action will be taken to ensure that future national policy initiatives will incorporate, before the initiatives are published for implementation, any variations necessary to meet the particular needs and circumstances of Open Prisons (5.4.3; 5.5.4; 5.5.5)?
- 4.1.2 Does the Minister accept the role of the Creative Arts in assisting in the rehabilitation of offenders and if so what action will be taken to ensure their provision (5.2.1)?
- 4.1.3 In view of the problems encountered before and after commissioning the new boiler system, what arrangements are in place to ensure that in the case of such projects, the use of public funds represents value for money (5.6.6)?

And as there are still issues concerning matters raised last year:

- 4.1.4 What further action will be taken to ensure long term funding for older prisoners through the Lobster Pot Day Centre project (5.1.9-12; 5.4.8)?
- 4.1.5 What further action will be taken to ensure that all contractual obligations to transfer a prisoner's property with the prisoner are invariably fulfilled (6.3.5)?

4.2 Questions for the Prison Service

- 4.2.1 What policy modifications are proposed to tackle the present limitations on selected prisoners having internet access at the Prisoner Advice Centre (6.2.2) and computer access in the Library Office (5.4.7)?
- 4.2.2 What actions are proposed to improve the dentistry provision? (5.3.6)

And as there are still issues concerning matters raised last year:

- 4.2.3 What actions are proposed to ensure the reintroduction of Voluntary Drug Testing (5.7.3) and what further actions will be taken to deal with the issues arising from the prevalence of synthetic drugs, especially 'Spice' (5.7.2)?
- 4.2.4 What further actions are proposed to ensure that prisoners do not arrive at HMP Leyhill and have to be turned away because of unsuitability (6.3.4)?
- 4.2.5 What further actions can be taken across the Estate to ensure that when prisoners arrive they are accompanied by all the property to which they are entitled (6.3.5)?
- 4.2.6 What action is being taken to ensure that contractors never again fail to provide sufficient tutors in key subjects for an extensive period (5.2.4) ?

4.3 Previous Year's Concerns not earlier mentioned

- 4.3.1 Medical cover at weekends is no longer an issue following the introduction of appropriate arrangements (5.3.1; 5.3.5).
- 4.3.2 Although provision of Social Care for the elderly remained a concern, revised arrangements have been agreed for introduction in early 2015. (5.6.16)
- 4.3.3 The link between Sentence Plans and Learning and Skills is gradually being strengthened. (5.2.2)

Section 5.

5.1 Equality and Inclusion

5.1.1 The concept of Equality and Inclusion (known locally as Equality and Diversity) expanded significantly under the 2010 Equalities Act: and the Board has seen evidence that, despite the challenges posed by such a wide-ranging remit, the prison continues to respond energetically to the Equality Duty placed on all public bodies in April 2011. Some of the actions taken are small in themselves but indicative of a restless determination to come to grips with as many aspects as possible. For example, new Equality and Diversity [E & D] notice boards have been put in place. Some explain religious festivals and holidays, others identify E and D reps on wings and in workplaces. Others in the dining hall are colour coded and show food content.

5.1.2 More significant, and particularly impressive, is the inclusive nature of the prison's approach. Developing Equality and Inclusion is not the task of an administrative silo: The bi-monthly meeting that monitors both the wide-ranging Action Plan and issues dealt with by the Prisoners' Consultative Group includes representatives of, for example, Health, Residence, Corporate Services, Learning and Skills, Probation, Reducing Reoffending, and the OMU. Concern was expressed by BME offenders that they were not receiving ROTLs as expected. Coincidental with national changes in ROTL policy, a concern raised by some BME prisoners that they were being unfairly dealt with over ROTL was investigated by a focus group who confirmed that there was no discrimination.

5.1.3 One of the consequences of the prison's inclusive approach to Equality and Inclusion matters is that diary clashes and other pressures (including role changes among staff as a result of the Bench-Marking process) occasionally result in developments taking longer than anticipated to implement. However, the approach brings significantly more benefits than problems and the Board would not wish to see it changed.

5.1.4 From IMB regular attendance at key meetings and knowledge gained through weekly rota visits, the Board is satisfied that prisoners' contributions are taken seriously. They have regular access to all relevant minutes and the Chair of the Prisoners' Consultative Group has a valuable liaison link with the staff Equality and Inclusion Coordinator. They have a key role in the Prisoners' Consultative Group, at the various targeted forums (such as those for Disabled, Foreign National, Travellers and Gay prisoners) and in providing an essential part of the Reception of and Induction Programme for new arrivals. Feedback from new arrivals indicates that this last role is especially helpful

5.1.5 The Board finds reviewing Discrimination Incident Report Forms (DIRFs) submitted by prisoners a particularly helpful indicator of how far the various systems outlined above are effective in minimising problems and in responding appropriately to those that are raised. During the reporting year, 35 DIRFs were submitted, 12 fewer than the previous year. The contents and handling of a good proportion of them have been analysed. The exercise proved reassuring and this process might usefully be embedded further.

5.1.6 It is perhaps significant that the submission of DIRFs tended to be bunched and in 5 months of the year there were none at all. Of those that were submitted, 7 arrived on the same day and dealt with the handling of halal food in the kitchen. Another largish group, coinciding with the introduction of a new government-inspired policy, concerned possible discrimination in the granting of ROTL and the operation of waiting lists for OASYS. A small group was concerned that some staff employed by an outside contractor did not fully appreciate the significance of some religious festivals. One prisoner submitted several DIRFs on his access to a particular religious diet and an allegation of homophobic bullying was immediately investigated. There is concern that some gay offenders are unwilling to identify as gay. Whether this is specific to Leyhill, the general prison system or society is difficult to disentangle.

5.1.7 An analysis of actions taken revealed that while on occasion there were administrative issues that needed attention, they did not entail any inappropriate discriminatory aspects. When, on other occasions, such aspects were identified, appropriate action was taken without undue delay. Issues were properly reported to DREAT meetings and where necessary adjustments were made to the Action Plan. The Board is satisfied that the system has worked effectively.

5.1.8 The aim, of course, is for the prison to be so alert to Equality and Inclusion issues that the already modest number of DIRFs reduces still further. There is certainly much proactive activity relating to the various strands of policy and to expressed concerns. One example is a Veterans Support in Custody group (VISCO) that was started in 2014 by a member of staff and now supports over 30 ex UK Forces prisoners. The main issues are outlined below:

Age & Disability

5.1.9 Issues of Age and Disability loom large as the numbers of prisoners falling within one or other (or both) of those groups continue to rise. Any figures cited inevitably provide only a snapshot, but they are indicative. Towards the end of the reporting year there were 163 in the 50 - 70+ group out of a total population of some 510 or so and 62 with reduced mobility.

5.1.10 An on-going challenge is providing access to work for such prisoners. It is not simply a question of physical access to premises, but also of work situations they are capable of handling.

5.1.11 That said, there is much imaginative and committed work going on to support them in a variety of ways. The Lobster Pot, a dedicated day centre for the elderly, plays a central role and despite some difficulties over funding (not yet secure beyond 2016) has gradually become an inspiring pace-setter in responding to their special needs, offering a wide range of education, recreational and life skill related activities.

5.1.12 Amongst the initiatives that have been successful, were bids for funding personal alarms for the very elderly, an ongoing analysis of the site for disabled access especially to employment areas (but also to the Equalities Office), peer support and training for 50+ carers, personal plans for individuals with needs which are sustainable and embedded into all services and provision of a Living Will template.

5.1.13 Sadly, difficulties for the disabled elderly can continue once they leave prison. An elderly, disabled prisoner experienced problems because of the lack of suitable hostel accommodation to cope with his particular needs. With the number of such prisoners increasing significantly there is a need for some central planning to cope with this issue.

5.1.14 Inevitably, some of the elderly and disabled will never leave prison and Leyhill's Palliative Care Suite is proving a valuable resource, regularly commended warmly by patients and their families alike. The levels of support and care from all areas involved in "end of life" are outstanding.

Foreign Nationals

5.1.15 While the number of Foreign National Prisoners at Leyhill is small – during last year some 5 to 6% of the population – aspects of their treatment are of some concern. This concern does not arise from any lack of staff commitment to treat them with fairness and respect but because of external factors. It is good that Foreign National surgeries have continued to be held, but other aspects of their treatment has occasionally been unhelpful.

5.1.16 On occasion, some prisons from which they came did not forward paperwork as required but forwarded it to the Home Office.

5.1.17 As a matter of routine the Home Office does not complete assessments of Foreign Nationals until two weeks prior to release from prison. This can mean that at short notice, a Foreign National in the Open Estate can suddenly be sent to Closed Estate, perhaps prior to deportation.

5.1.18 Cuts in Legal Aid meant that, for a while, a Helpline phone was the only Home Office source of advice for Foreign Nationals. A disembodied voice at the end of a phone line is far from ideal for reasons that are obvious. Ways have now been found around the problem, but it should not have arisen in the first place.

5.1.19 The UK Border Agency contact working with Leyhill, has been relocated. The prison's Equality and Discrimination officer is trying to identify other links

Religion

5.1.20 Despite the very limited catering budget, varied menus continued to be provided for religious and ethnic groups. Black History week was specially marked. When at one point an issue arose concerning the preparation and serving of Halal meals, the Iman and Catering Manager worked hard to produce an acceptable solution. Training was given to a Muslim cook, a new system was put in place and a new, separate servery and hatch was provided for the serving of Halal food alone

5.1.21 Particular support was given to Muslim prisoners during the period of Ramadan, e.g. on reception a Muslim prisoner was met by a fellow Muslim, in order to offer support to him during the fasting period.

5.1.22 Unprompted, prisoners expressed their gratitude to the management of the prison for the flexibility shown during Ramadan when the shortened daylight period led to 3 prayer calls within a shorter time span. They also were appreciative of the ready provision of prayer mats for men in A and C Units who were unable to attend prayers in the B Unit Prayer Room after lock down.

Race

5.1.23 The only time race was mentioned as an issue was when there were concerns about the new ROTL policy (see 5.1.2 and 5.1.6 above).

Gypsies and Travellers

5.1.24 No concerns were expressed in relation to Gypsies and Travellers during the year. It was notable that one elderly traveller learnt to read and became Learner of the Month. However, it is difficult to get prisoners from this community to identify as Gypsy / Travellers. It is thought this is because, as ROTL requires a fixed address, those concerned are unwilling to identify their special category.

5.2 Education Learning and Skills

5.2.1 During the reporting year there was a change of emphasis in that participation in learning and skills programmes was largely based on vocational, as opposed to academic, subjects, with a view to assisting prisoners with resettlement, rehabilitation and employment on release. This resulted in fewer classroom based courses and while the Board would not question the general approach, it seems a pity that creative arts have been side-lined. The significant role these can play in rehabilitation has been well demonstrated over the years by the Koestler Award competitions and when prisoners are making the difficult transition from closed to open conditions (and gradually in most cases to release) they can be a stabilising influence.

5.2.3 Initially, the link between Sentence Plans and Learning and Skills was not always clear and, as a result, prisoners were not always able to find suitable courses or employment related to their existing skills. During the reporting year this was noted and was slowly being resolved.

5.2.4 There were some difficulties with the delivery of the functional skills programme by Weston College, as there was a shortage of Maths and English tutors for several months. Inevitably there was a temporary increase in the waiting list for some courses but these problems were slowly resolved and at the end of the reporting period, 115 were enrolled on courses.

5.2.5 Courses latterly being run (with the numbers involved) are as follows: Men's hairdressing (6); Painting & Decorating L2, ie Level 2, (7); Work Skills Certificate (11); Dry Stone Walling (12); Food Preparation & Cookery NVQ (7); Horticultural Skills L2 (10); Joinery (6); Laundry NVQ (6); Functional Skills English, Entry Level (8) & L1 (8) & L2(8); Functional Skills Maths L1 (15).

5.2.6 Courses not running are: Cleaning & Supplies L1; Principles of Food Production L2; Information Technology L1 & L2; Functional Skills Maths Entry Level & L2.

5.2.7 It has been pleasing to note a range of internal quality assurance measures was introduced, including end of course student perception surveys and a number of focus groups aimed at validating course outcomes.

5.2.8 The difficulties encountered in Learning and Skills over the year have to be set against the gradual improvements and achievements. The use of an initial skills test to identify learning needs is clearly good practice and the assertion that it is now possible to have a specialist teacher for a specific need is encouraging (though the knowledge that such arrangements are dependent on space and time allowing means that the use of this facility over an extended period will have to be monitored carefully). The high attendance levels at all courses (98% or so) is to be commended and whilst some absences are inevitable, every effort was made to ensure that these were authorised. Of the 298 prisoners who enrolled in one or more of the courses on offer, 260 completed the course and 253 obtained a qualification. More than half of those who failed to complete the course or gain a qualification did so through no fault of their own and. The Virtual Campus is in the process of being updated and prison staff are being used to co-ordinate Open University courses.

5.2.9 A NVQ Assessor praised the learning environment, an observation that Board members on occasion were able to validate for themselves. There have been letters from former prisoners indicating employment gained and Board members have heard prisoners speak of their increased self-confidence as a result of courses taken. They have also from time to time seen for themselves the high quality of some work that is being produced, a prime example being the display of Harvest Breads in the Visits Hall.

5.3 Healthcare

5.3.1 Healthcare continued to be provided on an appointments system, with prisoners attending at the Health Centre for treatment. The services were available only during the working week and out of hours doctor services were utilised at weekends and when required.

5.3.2 During the reporting year the care and treatment of terminally ill prisoners was exemplary, with accommodation in the latter stages of illness being in the specially adapted Palliative Care Suite.

5.3.3 Problems with the provision of medical and social care on a 24 hour basis for terminally ill prisoners were addressed and resolved during the reporting year

5.3.4. Prior to being admitted to the Palliative Care facility, prisoners were accommodated in specially adapted rooms on B Unit.

5.3.5 Some problems arose regarding the dispensing of medication, out of hours, to a seriously ill prisoner prior to admission to the Palliative Care Suite. However, with the provision of a safe for storage of his medication and cooperation between Healthcare and Unit staff in arrangements for assisting and supervising his access to the medication, a satisfactory solution was found.

5.3.6 On occasion there were significant backlogs of prisoners awaiting dental treatment or optical examinations. These were addressed to some extent but aspects of the dental service provided still cause concern. From the time when a new formal comments system was introduced to Healthcare at the start of December, while 25 compliments have been received (largely relating to various aspects of nursing care & staff attitudes) and 13 complaints, 9 of the latter related to dentistry.

5.3.7 The ageing population continued to increase the demand for optical and podiatry services, the latter service being increasingly important to diabetic prisoners

5.3.8 The demand for such services is unlikely to decrease in the foreseeable future, although the provision of exercise classes for the over 50s and substance misuse classes organised by the Gym (including with a group of prisoners on anti-depressants) made a valuable contribution to the health and well being of the older prisoner. An encouraging input of European Social Funding is enabling further useful development work with Over 50s, through the good auspices of the Lobster Pot staff.

5.3.9 Mental health provision is led by two specialist practitioners. They are supported by a psychiatrist for two and a half days a week and also as needed by a nurse psychiatric prescriber. The majority of cases come as a result of the initial Healthcare screening when prisoners arrive at Leyhill.

5.3.10 The specialist practitioners, however, by taking part in prisoner induction and having an 'open door' policy try to break down any sensitivities about raising mental health issues. Over a period of time, this attitude seems to influence wider attitudes within the prison towards mental health, as at the most recent open forum for service users roughly a half felt there was no stigma attached to raising mental health issues.

5.3.11 The mental health practitioners confirm IMB members' own impression that making the change from closed to open conditions is a major cause of the need to access primary mental health services. It is also the case that self-referrals almost certainly under-represent the elderly. The total number of mental health referrals from various sources between 2008 and 2014 is roughly 2,000. A deliberately strict policy is enforced about attendance at appointments and two failures to keep appointments lead to discharge, though the opportunity at a later stage to reapply is kept open.

5.3.12 The primary mental health services provided, as well as topic groups (eg on anxiety), include memory clinics and liaison work with Lobster Pot activities. For more complex cases, there is a Care Programme Approach and each patient has a care coordinator. When they are coming up for parole there is liaison with relevant Community Teams and during the last 6 months of imprisonment the case is gradually passed over.

5.3.13 The Board greatly values the specialist mental health services provided and sees their maintenance as a vital element in seeking to enable prisoners to deal with the huge adjustments – particularly after long sentences – that are involved in most cases in gradually reintegrating within society.

5.4 Purposeful Activity

5.4.1 There is an expectation that every prisoner of working age, unless medically unfit or in education, would be meaningfully employed in the establishment or in the community.

5.4.2 On site work opportunities during the year included Laundry, Joinery, Printing, Catering, Warehousing, Horticulture, Waste Recycling and Vehicle Valeting. Good use is made of the allotments by prisoners, including a number of those plots allocated to the Lobster Pot.

5.4.3 There was a significant decrease in the number of prisoners undertaking work in the community as a consequence of the introduction of a more restrictive ROTL policy which dictated that only where there was a clear link with the requirements of sentence plans would ROTL be considered. On average, some 40 – 50 prisoners were working out after the changes to the ROTL criteria compared with some 120 – 130 previously.

5.4.4 Although all those prisoners of working age and fit for work were employed during the year, there is a need to develop work opportunities for the disabled. The fact that overall the number of prisoners is well below maximum capacity has, to some extent, eased what might have been a problem following the reduction in the number of prisoners eligible to work out on the community.

5.4.5 Despite a staff shortage for a large part of the year, the Gymnasium continued to offer a wide range of activities and classes, all of which were well attended. Of particular note were the classes aimed specifically at the elderly and those prisoners referred by Healthcare.

5.4.6 Though ebbs and flows of work can occur in many businesses in the wider world, if drastic they can be of major significance in a prison where the aim is to provide experience of routine and sustained activity to men who too often have not been able to sustain such lifestyles on the outside. It has been disturbing when at times in various work places prisoners have been observed either killing time in work situations and have claimed that they have frequently been active for 3 hours or less a shift or being provided with menial and unrelated tasks. This was particularly a problem in the Laundry where recent prison closures have significantly reduced demand for laundry services and in the Print Shop (and associated areas) where demand is inconsistent.

5.4.7 Some 90% of prisoners regularly accessed the library facilities during the reporting year, making use of not only the traditional library services but also writing and recording family messages for birthdays, anniversaries and Christmas and through the popular 'Story Book Dads' initiative. The work is well-supported by the professional Library staff, but it is unfortunate that national restrictions on internet access for prisoners have meant that valuable professional time each week is spent on low-level clerical tasks requiring computer access instead of being more profitably and appropriately used. This is but one of several situations within the prison where the Board, though aware of security needs, is not convinced that access could not be made available to suitably vetted prisoners.

5.4.8 The Lobster Pot Day Centre continues to provide opportunities for elderly (over 50) prisoners to make good use of their time, to take up new hobbies and pastimes and to keep fit. The lack of clearly identified long term funding for this important facility is of concern, particularly as the age profile of prisoners at HMP Leyhill can be expected to increase. During the reporting period some 70 prisoners made regular use of this facility

5.4.9 The loss of a significant proportion of the available playing field space was of concern as there is likely to be a reduction in the opportunities for prisoners to be involved with some team sports and to interact with teams from outside the prison. The area lost to sport is however, to be used for additional horticulture facilities.

5.4.10 The external employer, DHL, expanded its operation within the prison during the year and, as a result, increased the number of opportunities for employment. There were, however, a number of employer/employee incidents requiring investigation and, although these were resolved, there was from time to time an unsettled atmosphere and, despite the financial attraction, there was no waiting list of prisoners wishing to take this employment.

5.5. Resettlement

5.5.1 During the reporting year problems were experienced with the availability of Hostel places.

5.5.2 A particular problem was experienced by a wheelchair bound, elderly prisoner who had a past history of sex offending. This offender gained his Parole in August 2013, but despite every effort being made on his behalf, he remained in custody for several months until a suitable hostel place became available.

5.5.3 Changes in the ROTL (Release on Temporary Licence) arrangements necessitated the updating of OASys (Offender Assessment System) reports for some 270 existing prisoners, in addition to each new reception. Arrangements were made to prioritise Lifer and IPP prisoners in order to facilitate Parole hearings, which led to some delays for determinate prisoners. Every effort was made by staff to minimise the impact of such delay, although problems in communication between OMU (Offender Management Unit) and prisoners continued throughout the reporting period.

5.5.4 The national policy changes in relation to ROTL were, despite hugely impressive efforts of staff, unduly unsettling at Leyhill because of the very different situations in Open Prisons to those pertaining in the rest of the prison estate. The policy was over a period of several months refined and adjusted to take account of some of those differences, but the impression was gained that, had national planning been more sophisticated, much stress would have been avoided to prisoners, their families and to staff. It is to be hoped that in future national initiatives the different situations present in Open Prisons will be fully taken into account before policies are promulgated.

5.5.5 A lack of internet access for the Prisoner Advice Centre continued to hamper contact with Local Authority housing departments to ensure suitable accommodation for prisoners on release. Prisoners released on temporary licence – and perhaps some working off site – have unsupervised internet access. Bearing that in mind, though mindful of the needs of security, the Board remains unconvinced that arrangements could not be made to allow such access in limited circumstances, of which this is but one example.

5.6 Residential Services

5.6.1 The population of the prison has in recent months been significantly below the Certified Normal Accommodation (CNA). By the end of the reporting year there were roughly 55 spaces. The prison now contains an increased proportion of lifers and prisoners with indeterminate sentences. The demanding change in the make-up of the prison population has staffing implications and the Board trusts that the Bench-marking staffing figures will be reviewed in a timely manner. As a result of the drop in overall numbers, the small number of dormitories (capable variously of providing for 2, 3 or 4 offenders) have not been so used for several months. The Board has been told that, while having dormitories is not ideal, they can provide some flexibility in accommodation should the present population trend at the prison change. For this reason and partly because of costs, no removal of dormitory provision is currently envisaged. However, during the last year they have been provided with privacy screens and blinds on the windows.

5.6.2 There is no segregation of prisoners (save in 3 short-term holding cells within the Reception block) and no Vulnerable Prisoner Unit.

5.6.3 The Palliative Care Suite, though not always in use, is providing a high quality service, greatly appreciated by users and their families. The accommodation is much admired. Ombudsman's reports into the deaths there have not all been received, but so far they have been very positive. The only significant recommendation has been to stress the importance of keeping next of kin details up to date.

5.6.4 The facilities within the 3 accommodation units (but especially A & B Units) are generally good, appreciated by prisoners and sensibly used. Casual observation of the inside of offenders' rooms does not suggest any significant problem concerning displays of inappropriate material. The 5 year rolling programme of redecoration and weekly checks on routine matters generally works effectively.

5.6.5 Members have reported their unease related to the communication arrangements in C Unit, where there is no tannoy system and where anyone moving along its narrow, circuitous corridors might well feel uncomfortable at times, given the sense of isolation they can create. The green emergency buttons provide a basic aid to security. The careful selection of who will live there is also an important element and that feature no doubt helps explain the skeletal staffing. The argument is advanced by prison management that, should a situation erupt where additional staffing was needed, assistance could readily be provided from elsewhere on site. The validity of that viewpoint has yet to be strenuously tested.

5.6.5 Given Leyhill's role as a resettlement prison, as HMCIP pointed out the facilities within the kitchenettes are rather limited and would benefit from enhancement. Learning and Skills provides some tuition on home catering and its facilities allow for practical work, but preparation for release would be improved were offenders also able to prepare a greater range of food, relatively unsupervised, in an environment closer to that of a home. The prison accepts the need, but the Board has been told that budgetary pressures have been a factor in not yet implementing any significant change.

5.6.6 The main concern relating to premises during the past year has been the disruption caused by problems, particularly within the residential Units, before and after commissioning of the new boiler house (and associated systems). To its credit, the Prison moved swiftly and decisively to minimise disruption. Fortunately the emergency portaloos provided did not have to be used: offenders always had drinking water; and they had access to showering facilities, even if not within their usual accommodation. However, at the end of a multi-million pound contract, it is unsatisfactory that such arrangements have to be made, that water bowsers have had to be used to fill up buckets to enable toilets to be flushed and that some 3 months or more into a new year there are still problems with hot water supplies to the higher storeys of the main residential Units. It says much for the generally very good staff/offender relationships that the long-running disruptions to the provision of such basic services have been endured largely with understanding and ready cooperation. Insofar as the Prison Service has had to spend significant sums rectifying the situation after the signing off of the contract, it is inevitable that other highly desirable expenditure has not taken place to the detriment of offenders, be it directly or indirectly.

5.6.7 The canteen arrangements are generally working smoothly within the national limits and offenders are regularly and formally given opportunities to suggest changes within the list of supplied items.

5.6.8 Meals provided by the Main Kitchen on a daily food allowance of £1.98 p.p. produce few complaints and many compliments (though an abuse-proof system of user comment has not yet emerged). Members are routinely impressed by the food they sample.

5.6.9 Staffing changes and the gradual unfolding and adjustments to new national schemes led to the Information Kiosks not being kept as up to date as desirable for much of the year, though the Prison did exceptionally well in trying by other means to ensure that

offenders were kept as up to date as possible. At the end of the reporting year, however, only the definitive features of ROTL arrangements remained to be added in order to bring the Kiosks totally up to date. When the new administrative staffing arrangements are fully in place, the plan is to train someone up to ensure that the information available through the Kiosks is regularly reviewed and can be regarded as reliable.

5.6.10 Offender to offender support is a key and highly effective element of the pastoral arrangements. The recent bringing together, in one easily accessible office, of 3 of the main elements is indicative of a wish to strengthen further its significance. They are the Prisoner Consultative Committee, the Prisoner Diversity Consultative Group and the Listeners.

5.6.11 The recent review of Induction arrangements, introducing a great flexibility, a shorter time period in which they are completed and a key role for Insiders, has reportedly been welcomed. The Board has heard the input of Insiders praised as especially helpful.

5.6.12 The gradual introduction of the new national Incentives and Earned Privileges scheme (I.E.P.) consumed a considerable amount of staff time and Members frequently heard prisoners express concern about aspects of the changes. The impending changes were clearly outlined to prisoners. The PCC was instrumental in helping circulate all necessary information and the national requirements were implemented by staff as sympathetically as the system allows. It is not clear, however, that the national scheme takes full account of the special characteristics of the highly-selective group entering Open Prisons.

5.6.13 The Personal Officer policy has recently been updated. Some thought has been given to grouping offenders with the same PO in adjacent accommodation. The Personal Officer is still regarded as the central, pivotal figure, though s/he is now to be more formally supported through the introduction of elements of the 'Every Contact Counts' approach.. That process should be eased by the culture encouraged by the previous Sentinel programme. The introduction of 'Surgery Hours' when prisoners can contact Unit staff is reported to have brought benefits, though a wider flexibility has had to be introduced in C Unit because of the minimal staffing there. Elsewhere, Board members have noted welcome informal flexibility when the need arises.

5.6.14 Further support was provided by the Chaplaincy team. As well as providing an extensive range of spiritual support and guidance to those in need, they helped community understanding of varying religious practices by ensuring that descriptions of all festivals and their dates were well publicised. Team members also gave general pastoral support and, despite the long-term sickness of two team members, oversaw a varied activities programme.

5.6.15 Although social care became available once a prisoner was admitted to the Palliative Care Suite, no service was available routinely to assist elderly prisoners who were instead forced to rely on assistance from fellow prisoners. It is to be hoped that the decision that, from April 2015, the Local Authority (LA) should become responsible for offenders' social care will lead to some improvements. A co-operative arrangement with other prisons in the L.A. has been made with 2 managers of the arrangement being based in B Unit. The impact of that change and the introduction of local Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) alongside probation officers – will need to be carefully monitored

5.6.16 Though in complex organisations there are inevitably going to be blips and though, particularly in a closed community, what others would regard as minor irritations can readily be assigned a far greater significance, nevertheless the general impression given by monitoring life in the prison is that relationships are usually good. Further support for this view is given by the low numbers of applications to the Board (65 in the last reporting year); very modest use of the prison's Complaints system (a norm of about 25 a week, only 11

about Residence in 12 months and 6 about staffing in the same period), the rarity of prisoners being on an ACCT (and usually for only a short period) and a correspondingly low number of VRs.

5.7 Safer Custody

5.7.1 A proactive approach to its work by the Security Department and the care taken to build cooperative relationships with other sections within the prison helped to sustain an atmosphere that, whilst structured, was not stifling. Consequently, generally prisoners reported feeling safe. It was noticeable that accusations of bullying were quickly dealt with by staff.

5.7.2 However, synthetic drugs such as 'Spice' continued to be available and constantly evolved, making detection difficult. Of the 194 transfers from HMP Leyhill, a significant number of prisoners were returned to closed conditions as a result of Security intelligence indicating involvement in the use and/or supply of drugs.

5.7.3 The cessation of VDT (Voluntary Drug Testing) was a cause for concern and some prisoners themselves would like to see the facility reinstated.

5.7.4 On the modest number of occasions an ACCT (Assessment Care in Custody Teamwork) booklet was opened, the prisoners concerned were given notable support by Unit staff and because of this it was very rare for any to remain within the system for more than a week.

5.7.5 When VR (Violence Reduction) books were opened the concerns were thoroughly investigated, monitored, and appropriate steps taken to ensure satisfactory outcomes, including, on occasion, the returning of perpetrators to closed conditions

5.7.6 A small number of cases of homophobic bullying were identified. They were promptly and sympathetically dealt with.

5.7.7 Non-compliant prisoners being returned to closed condition were located in the Holding Rooms in Reception when GEOAmev transport was not immediately available.

5.7.8 The Board was notified of situations where prisoners being moved back to closed conditions were non-compliant and the use of control and Restraint was required. The situations observed were judged to have been handled in a sensitive, patient and professional manner.

SECTION 6

6.1 Offender Management Unit

6.1.1 The Unit continued to play a key role in the development of individual sentence plans and in the process of risk assessing prisoners prior to Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL). For several months it was clearly a department under pressure, partly due to the heavy workload, but also because of staffing issues largely associated with Benchmarking and the additional workload associated with the changes to arrangements for ROTL. During the reporting period there were 632 new arrivals, 366 discharges and 245 transfers to other prisons.

6.1.2 Issues concerning ROTL formed a significant proportion of the Board's dealings with prisoners during the year. Various factors were involved. One was that some prisoners arrived with mistaken expectations about how ROTL operates in an Open Prison. Another was the necessity, because of the nationally-imposed changes concerning ROTL, for already over-stretched staff to rewrite OASys assessments at short notice. A third was the various adjustments made to the new scheme during the period of implementation. Lastly, there was some poor communication about individual prisoners' progress towards ROTL.

6.1.3 Over the course of the year, much progress was made on all these matters. Explanations of the new scheme and varied adjustments made to it were widely promulgated by general notices, by notification of individual prisoners, by briefing of the Prisoners Consultative Committee (who were charged with passing on information) and by many face to face conversations. The Board was much impressed by the commitment and skill shown by many key staff in dealing with these complex situations.

6.1.4 Most Applications received by the Board concerning ROTL/HDC (Home Detention Curfew), on being followed up led to the conclusion that matters had been processed as quickly as possible, given the resources available, but not necessarily as promptly as was desirable. There is, however, continuing concern among prisoners who, despite recognising external as well as internal factors being at play, feel that given the clear stages of the consideration of eligibility for ROTL it would lessen the frustrations of uncertainty if they were given indications when each stage was completed.

6.2 Prisoner Consultative Committee and Advice Centre

6.2.1 The PCC continued to meet on a regular basis, providing the opportunity for prisoners to discuss concerns with a member of the Senior Management Team. This forum was able to raise issues which had been discussed by prisoners in smaller, topic related groups and to actively seek out solutions. Its significance within the prison is indicated by the fact that it played an important role in easing the implementation of new IEP and ROTL systems (see 5.6.12 and 6.2.3).

6.2.2 The Advice Centre continued to be an excellent prisoner-run resource, providing support and advice on topics such as housing, finance, travel, ROTL and many other areas of concern to prisoners. Its ever increasing significance within the prison can be gauged by the fact that during January 2015 the Centre dealt with 635 enquiries as against about 400 for the same period last year. However, sadly during the year its effectiveness in relation to housing was hugely limited by the denial to it of internet access. Local Authority Housing Departments increasingly demand electronically based applications. The Board remains unconvinced, within an Open Prison, where many of its prisoners on ROTL or work in the community are in situations where they may have access to the internet, that a scheme could not be devised that would allow appropriately vetted prisoners to have such access for the type of very responsible work undertaken in the Advice Centre.

6.3 Reception

6.3.1 The redecoration of the Reception area during the year, including the mounting of attractive photographs of some of the prison's facilities, was a welcome improvement. Receptions of prisoners that were monitored were seen to be efficient but not officious and conducted with humanity and courtesy.

6.3.2 Plastic furniture in the Holding Rooms was replaced with furniture constructed from solid materials after a prisoner destroyed a chair and used the parts to do extensive damage to the room, but such disruptive behaviour was very rare.

6.3.3 GEOAmeY continued to provide Prisoner Transport and where delays were encountered in moving prisoners back to closed conditions, prisoners were generally well managed and, on those occasions when GEOAmeY was unable to provide transport within a reasonable time scale, alternative prison transport was organised

6.3.4 A number of the 632 arrivals were found to have incorrect, or incomplete paperwork, or to be unsuitable for Open Conditions. Typically, during the three months November 2014 to January 2015, five prisoners were returned to closed conditions. GEOAmeY staff reported that increased problems had been encountered as they were not required to check documentation on collection of prisoners. One prisoner was found on arrival to be underage and was transferred after three weeks. Another had not been within the prison system for the required time prior to transfer to Open Conditions; as GEOAmeY refused to return him to the sending prison, Leyhill staff had to do so.

6.3.5 The inability of GEOAmeY to carry the contracted amount of prisoner property resulted on occasion in property being left behind at sending establishments. Analysis of applications to the Board about property issues arising from prison transfers showed an increase from 3 last year to 11. Regardless of where the fault lies in each case, it is clear that increased vigilance is required from all those involved in the transfer process.

SECTION 7

The Work of the Board.

BOARD STATISTICS	
Recommended Complement of Board Members	13
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	13
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	11
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	1
Number of members leaving within reporting period	3
Total number of Board meetings during reporting period	12
Total number of visits to the Establishment	390
Total number of segregation reviews held	n/a
Total number of segregation reviews attended	n/a
Date of Annual Team Performance Review	24.05.14

Code	Subject of Applications received	Year 2014-15	Year 2013-14	Year 2012-13	Year 2011-12
A	Accommodation	0	1	0	0
B	Adjudications	1	3	3	5
C	Equality & Diversity (inc religion)	2	3	0	0
D	Education/employment/training inc IEP	12	2	6	6
E 1	Family/visits inc mail & phone	1	5	0	0
E 2	Finance/pay	2	5	0	0
F	Food/kitchen related	2	3	0	0
G	Health related	4	4	7	3
H 1	Property (within current establishment)	3	3	0	1
H 2	Property (during transfer/in another establishment)	11	3	8	1
H 3	Canteen, facilities, Catalogue shopping, Argos	0	0	0	0
I	Sentence related (inc. HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, etc)	12	36	18	17
J	Staff/prisoner/detainee concerns inc bullying	3	3	0	4
K	Transfers	3	2	14	1
L	Miscellaneous	7	5	9	2
	Total number of IMB applications	65	78	65	51
	Of total, number of Confidential Access	1	0	2	1