



Independent Monitoring Board

HMP Nottingham

Annual Report

To Her Majesty's Secretary of State at the Ministry of Justice

For the period

1st March 2014 to 28th February 2015

Section 1 Statutory Role of the IMB

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

The Board is specifically charged to:

- (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, of 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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Section 3 Description of the Prison

3.1 Capacity and Category

At the beginning of the reporting period, HMP Nottingham had an operational capacity of 1100 prisoners, increased from 1060 during the latter part of 2013, with a CNA (Certified Normal Accommodation) of 723. However the operational capacity reverted to 1060 in July 2014 following a period of concerted indiscipline on one Wing.

The accommodation at HMP Nottingham is designed for Category B prisoners although other categories of prisoners are housed, notably ~ 38% Category C prisoners at the end of the reporting period.

Accommodation is arranged on seven Wings, all of modern design. Whilst the prison constantly strives to differentiate the Wings for specified categories of prisoner, progress towards this remains problematic, largely due to the high prison population nationally and the largely transient nature of prisoners in HMP Nottingham.

Young offenders, mostly on remand, continue to be accommodated throughout the prison as do adult prisoners. Our concerns as expressed in previous reports about the co-location of remand prisoners with sentenced prisoners remain unaddressed. F Wing has been designated for older prisoners and prisoners serving longer sentences, with G Wing continuing to house vulnerable prisoners (VPs). A move to limit G Wing prisoners to those prisoners who are vulnerable because of their offence, and not to include prisoners with debt or other social problems, remains an objective and there is some evidence of prisoners with debts not being accommodated on the Wing. However, from time to time the number of vulnerable prisoners exceeds the available space. This results in small numbers of VPs being housed elsewhere amongst the general populace. As we have reported many times before, in spite of the efforts made by staff to keep prisoners safe and provide access to essential services, such prisoners tend to have restricted access to exercise and showers.

Outside agencies (including voluntary groups) delivering services to the prison include Nottinghamshire Healthcare, Milton Keynes College for Education, PACT (Prison Advice & Care Trust) which manages the Visitors' Centre and the provision of refreshments in the visits halls, NACRO (National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders) and Emmanuel House for housing.

3.2 Operation

Despite previous ambitious plans to develop it as a "community prison", the prison remains a local facility serving the courts of Nottingham and Derby and the corresponding counties. There is now no vulnerable prisoner facility at HMP Leicester so prisoners sentenced at Leicester courts who are unsuitable for normal location are sent to Nottingham.

In practice, many of those accommodated are not local men; they may be on remand to a local court but from elsewhere, transferred in from other prisons to ease overcrowding of the system as a whole, or moved to Nottingham because of difficulties accommodating them at another prison. It is difficult to see how this situation could be avoided but it does create problems for prisoners and their families if they are located a long way from home. Given the present emphasis on rehabilitation, and the importance a stable home and family can have in this objective, any improvements in the situation would be welcome. HMP Nottingham has only limited access to resettlement facilities around the country, including housing, so prisoners from distant areas are doubly disadvantaged.

A proportion of the prisoners are foreign nationals, including a small number of detainees held beyond their sentence and unsuitable for detention centres because of the nature of their offence.

The changes to staffing and operational procedures introduced in September 2013 as a result of the 'Benchmarking' exercise carried out in late 2012 continued to cause problems throughout the majority of the year, despite the deployment of a number of staff seconded from other prisons. Staff have clearly been challenged by what is expected of them even though prison management have directed a great deal of their time to addressing day by day difficulties. Our previous Report optimistically anticipated the introduction of a new temporary, but restricted, stable Regime. In practice, although there were some improvements, prisoners still experienced unpredictable shut downs, and access to the gym was particularly adversely affected. Throughout the year problems continued for a small group of prisoners who work full time and were unable to access showers regularly. Difficulties in ensuring that all prisoners could access the library and collective worship were also encountered. Unsurprisingly, there is significant evidence that the persistent disruption to the Regime caused unrest amongst prisoners.

As in our 2013/14 report we have to report that the gym has been closed on many days although towards the end of our reporting period, the efforts of governors to ensure that it stays open have been more successful as staff shortages have been addressed.

Towards the end of our reporting period, a further 14 staff were authorised, which the Board is hopeful will be used to restore a normal fully functioning daily Regime and in consequence a more settled environment. In addition, a new Governor was appointed in February 2015 at the end of what has been a turbulent year for HMP Nottingham. This has included the publication of a report of an unannounced inspection by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons in September 2014, which reported that that the prison was failing in most of its core responsibilities. The newly appointed Governor is the fifth in four years, which has done little to maintain stability and consistency within the prison.

Considerable success in reducing staff absence due to sickness, and phased returns, has been achieved during the year, thereby reducing the strain on the day to day running of the prison.

The Board continues to commend the overwhelming majority of staff who are dedicated and hardworking. There have been numerous instances during the year when staff have acted promptly in situations where either prisoners or they themselves were at risk, especially during the most recent disturbances in September 2014 which culminated in over 30 prisoners being transferred to other establishments. We would also like to acknowledge that many prisoners help each other in small ways and on a number of occasions during the year individual prisoners assisted in critical situations.

Section 4 Executive summary

4.1 Summary

The Board's main concerns this year relate to the continued impact of the Benchmarking process, the results of which were fully introduced in September 2014. Last year the Board stated that it felt "the changes made were unsustainable and would lead to more prisoner disruption."

Regrettably this proved to be the case with two serious incidents (July and September) and many more minor incidents of indiscipline during the year, with several attendances having to be made by the national Tornado team to bring the situation back under control.

At times the prisoners' frustrations were palpable when Board members visited Wings, largely due to the prisoners' uncertainty as to their daily routine, and the lengthy periods where they were locked in their cells without access to telephones, association, gym, work or education. The gradual introduction of more staff into the prison has relieved the situation somewhat, and a further modification to the daily Regime, to be introduced in May 2015, is planned to eliminate the major cause of prisoners' complaints. Throughout the reporting period daily statistics of the number of men remaining on the Wing were provided. This did reduce as the year went on, but stayed stubbornly above 700.

4.2 Particular Issues Requiring a Response

4.2.1 Policy Matters for the attention of the Justice Minister/National Offender Management Service (NOMS), Governing Governor

4.2.1.1 Prisoners' Telephones

Towards the end of the year we learnt that the prisoners' telephones are not touch tone. The consequence of this is that if a prisoner needs to call his solicitor and has to make a selection to speak to a particular department, he is unable to do so. This then necessitates the prisoner waiting for an operator to answer, using up valuable and very expensive telephone credit.

The Board would like to know what plans there are to update the prisoners' telephones and when call charges will fall to a level more comparable with those available outside, particularly given the significant fall in the costs of telephony in recent years.

4.2.1.2 Commodity Shortages

The Board would like to understand why commodities such as tooth brushes, kettles, TVs, pillows, radios, etc. are continually in short supply or unavailable. From a hygiene point of view not having toothbrushes to supply to new arrivals is completely unacceptable, whilst a lack of pillows is against prisoners' basic needs, and not having TVs, radios and kettles available simply causes unnecessary frustrations to prisoners when their behaviour warrants such provision, as commented on further in Section 5.8.1. Several times management have worked hard to correct the situation, only to find that it was repeated a few weeks later.

4.2.1.3 Detector Dogs

The reduction in the deployment of detector dogs in prisons some years ago now appears to have been short sighted given the significant rise in all establishments of the supply of 'legal highs'. Whilst it is appreciated that there is no overnight solution to the training required for dogs to be able to detect these substances, the Board would like to have an assurance that

more resources will be provided to counter this serious threat to prison discipline and the potentially fatal consequences of the consumption of unregulated and frequently impure substances. The Board is also mindful of the effect consumption of illegal highs has on the prison routine and the pressures felt by the medical services when prisoners are adversely affected by consumption of such materials, as commented on further in Section 5.7.2.

4.3. Operational matters

As referred to above in Section 4.2.1.3, because of the pressure to keep Wings functioning, staff from the OMU (Offender Management Unit) have frequently been used to backfill for officer shortages on Wings and other prisoner facing locations, as reported last year. This has again resulted in delays in producing OASys (Offender Assessment System) reports, which delays the potential transfer of prisoners to more suitable locations. Although the most pressing reviews have been being carried out (e.g. for those prisoners nearing the end of their sentence) such a 'stop gap' did little to clear backlogs, and sometimes reports were months late. (Section 5.5)

Of particular note is the discrepancy between the percentage of prisoners who feel the offending behaviour programme(s) will help them on release (27%) and the low number reporting it to be very easy/easy to get on to such a programme(s) (5%) and then those reporting being involved in such a programme(s) (1%).

4.4. Previous Year's Concerns

4.4.1 Prisoners with Mental Health Problems

Whilst there has been an improvement in the amount of time prisoners with serious mental health problems spend at the prison before a more suitable location is found, as reported in Section 4.2.1.7, the Board remains concerned with discharges from the local high security hospital (Rampton) to HMP Nottingham. Such prisoners are deemed as having reached the end of their treatment programme at the secure hospital, or as not complying with their treatment programme, but are in no way ready to be discharged into the community.

4.4.2 Cat C Prisoners

There has again been little improvement in the allocation of Cat C prisoners to Cat C establishments during the year. Some 35%, typically, of Nottingham's prisoner population is awaiting such dispersal. Often mooted steps, such as the allocation of one Wing to Cat C prisoners, remain an ambition which have yet to be realised.

4.4.3 Late Arrival from Courts

Reviewing previous Annual Reports, it is disappointing to record that this topic was raised as early as 2005, with seemingly no improvement to the situation, so again we are forced to express our concern at the impact on prisoners due to late arrivals from the courts, resulting in prisoners sometimes not being settled in cell accommodation until late in the evening and very occasionally the early hours of the morning, with staff being unable to leave at the appointed end of their shift. We are seriously worried that the pressure created by this situation risks missing signs of distress in prisoners at this vulnerable time.

4.4.4 Revised IEP Rules (Incentives and Earned Privilege)

In our last Report we commented on the OASys reports not being completed as early as could be the case with prisoners therefore unable to comply with sentence plans and hence unable to progress within the IEP system. At the end of the current reporting period this

situation still exists, although we understand steps have now been taken to address the backlog.

4.4.5 Remand Prisoners

As we have previously reported, there is no segregation of remand and convicted prisoners on the wings, including prisoners who are under 21. This situation is unchanged from our last report.

Section 5 Mandatory Reports

5.1 Equality & Inclusion

5.1.1 General

The ethnic mix of the population at HMP Nottingham varies on a daily basis because of the high churn of prisoners. At any given time the white population is around 83%, Black around 6-7%, Asian around 5% and dual ethnicity about 4%. Occasionally a prisoner complains to the IMB that they believe they are unfairly treated because of their ethnicity and we monitor to ensure that the prison investigates such claims. Midway through the year members undertook some analysis in response to a complaint that Black prisoners were disadvantaged in the allocation of work. At that time, the statistics did not support the complaint.

Our previous reports have detailed ambitious plans to improve equality and diversity management and monitoring but for much of the year this seemed not to be a priority. Statistics are collected and analysed but there was little to suggest that all staff have equality as a real target, largely because everybody was so preoccupied with operational difficulties. We are aware of a handful of discrimination cases and believe these are fully explored; as the statistics at Section 7.3 show applications to IMB concerning equality and diversity represent about 4% of the total.

In spite of previous efforts it was again necessary to have an initiative to centralise the allocation of work to ensure equality; but there have continued to be instances of 'preferred' prisoners being allocated work on the Wings during the year. These often come to our attention when the appointed prisoner has not been paid but it is difficult for us to have a full picture of work allocation. The commitment of the Governor and his team to securing equal treatment is reassuring but this continues to be a 'work in progress'.

The detention of Foreign Nationals beyond their sentence is of particular concern to the Board as statistics show that such prisoners are at greater risk of self-harm when they are not moved to detention centres to await deportation.

5.1.2 Disability

During the year ~22% of prisoners declared themselves to have a disability. ~44% said they had well-being or mental health problems with ~20% at any one time being supported by the prison's mental health team. We are constantly concerned about the placement of prisoners with severe mental health problems at HMP Nottingham (~7%) and the amount of time it can take following assessment to move them to more suitable surroundings. All too often they have to stay in the SARU (Segregation and Resettlement Unit) because they cannot be kept safe on normal location. We know that both prison and Healthcare staff put a great deal of effort into resolving these problems which are typically the result of the shortage of resources beyond the establishment but this is little consolation to the prisoners who are in need of care.

An additional concern is that although unit officers provided good care within their limitations and received adequate support from the mental health team, most unit staff had not received recent mental health awareness training. Given that midway through the reporting period changes to the Regime designated two full days per month as staff training days (which means that prisoners lose four potential purposeful activity sessions) it is difficult to understand why staff training remained in arrears, as commented on in Section 5.3.

5.1.3 Remand Prisoners

Approximately 22% of the Nottingham prison population are remand prisoners, with ~32% of young offender (YOs) being in this category. As noted in section 4.5.5 above, there is no segregation of remand and convicted prisoners on the Wings, including prisoners who are under 21.

It is pleasing to note that Probation offender supervisors made contact with most remand prisoners facing a likely life sentence, to discuss immediate needs, answer questions and establish a working relationship. However, there is no assistance for prisoners who wanted to apply for bail.

5.2 Education, Learning and Skills

Learning and skills services are provided by Milton Keynes College and the Board recognises that there are major challenges in delivering meaningful education to prisoners, many of whom stay in the establishment for only a short period of time and a large number of whom - approximately 50% - did not complete their schooling. In August 2014 a new focus on assessment was introduced as part of the OLASS 4 (Offenders Learning and Skills Service) contract with a view to ensuring that prisoners learning needs were not missed. This has had some positive impact but, like all other activities within the prison, it is adversely impacted by both resource limitations and the inability of prisoners to access the facility (and no doubt some reluctance amongst prisoners to engage). It therefore remains aspirational that all prisoners will have their learning needs assessed.

There is no doubt that a lot of good work is carried out in the classrooms. Board members have paid regular visits and have observed prisoners working hard at a wide variety of subjects.

The most disappointing aspect is that a recent Ofsted inspection resulted in a Grade 3 whereas a Grade 2 was anticipated. The main cause was low attendance, this being an issue that the Board highlighted in last year's report and in on-going discussions with management.

On a more positive note, attendance is increasing. It is up by 10-15% overall, there are fewer almost empty classes and more classes approaching complement. Management is aiming for 80% attendance (against expectation) and there is a plan to achieve that goal. The Board do not doubt management's determination to improve the situation.

The prison library is flourishing. Stock has recently been increased by almost 1000 books, attendance is up with all Wings having regular access and various worthwhile projects have been implemented, for example the Big Book Share enabling prisoners to share books with family members, and the 6 Book Challenge. There are plans afoot for the library to open at weekends. There remains scope to encourage more prisoners to engage with the opportunities the library offers.

The Board wishes to give credit to prisoners, library and teaching staff and management for the good work that is being undertaken and we look forward to the significant increase in attendance that has been promised.

5.3 Healthcare and Mental Health

5.3.1 Healthcare

There have been 4 meetings of the Strategic Healthcare Board over this reporting period and the IMB is always informed of these in advance and has an open invitation to attend for monitoring purposes.

A proposed monthly operational Healthcare meeting comprised of the deputy Governor and Head of Healthcare has not always met due to sickness or holidays on the part of one of the members. The IMB were not always informed of the meeting dates or cancellation of a meeting which they were to attend for monitoring purposes.

As reported in previous years, relationships between the IMB and Healthcare staff varies depending on the individuals involved. It continues to appear that the role of IMB is often not understood and in some situations colours the attitude towards IMB members. The IMB has not been invited to speak at Healthcare staff induction sessions. We are aware of difficulties in recruiting Healthcare staff and this may well have impacted on the overall delivery to prisoners. Over this reporting period the prisoner induction programme has been virtually non-existent and there has therefore been a continuing absence of Healthcare involvement in prisoner induction which was mentioned in our last three annual reports. Consequently, prisoners continue to have little understanding of unavoidable time lapses from request to actually receiving a Healthcare appointment. Many prisoners are unaware of the health service complaints system (PALS – Patient Advice and Liaison Service) and as a consequence continue to use the IMB application forms for making a complaint of a health care nature. As stated in our last report prisoners use IMB application forms to complain about response failures to a PALS complaint. The Health Care Manager still deals personally with each complaint, leading to unacceptable delays in response times when the manager is absent from the prison.

It has been noted over this reporting period that a nurse has very occasionally not been present at SARU (Separation and Reassessment Unit) reviews nor in their absence a medical report of any medical concerns sent, though a nurse has generally attended where a prisoner with mental illness has had a review.

DNAs (Did Not Attend) levels continue to remain unacceptably high despite the implementation of Healthcare checks through P-NOMIS (National Offender Management System) to avoid appointments clashing with prisoners' visits. Prisoners have complained that refusal to attend is often cited as a reason for DNA when they say appointment slips haven't been received, cell doors were not unlocked for them to attend an appointment, or they were out on the Wing and not collected. The implementation of the restricted prison day has also had an impact on prisoner DNA appointments as they often have had to decide between attending Healthcare, having a shower or going to the gym. As a result of the high level of DNAs, appointment waiting times have increased across many of the clinics but are particularly problematic in Dentistry and Optician's clinics.

In Reception all new prisoners receive an initial health screening interview by a nurse at arrival at HMP Nottingham, though difficulties can occur in achieving this when there are very late arrivals at the prison. A secondary health assessment is arranged within the next few days. Mental health assessment of prisoners is completed within 24 hours and those requiring triage are seen within five days.

The issue of prisoner admissions over a weekend without the provision of medication or prescriptions, resulting in the interruption of essential drug therapy for up to four days which is particularly concerning for those with mental illnesses, continues to be of concern.

Prisoners are offered a number of health screening tests and the uptake of these varies depending on the type of screening offered.

The NHS Trust employs two GPs providing 17 hours cover each per week. However, there is no cover for holidays, which has an impact on GP waiting lists. There is an out of hours service for prisoners, however it is only telephone advice and its usefulness seems very limited. There is no 24 hour face to face GP advice/consultation at present which leads to more prisoners being transferred out to hospital.

Nurse triage, long term medical conditions and tissue viability clinics run by nurses are held in the Healthcare department but are now also available for vulnerable prisoners (VPs) in the F & G Wings' treatment room, though this is still a work in progress. The keeping of appointments for VPs and the waiting time for such appointments is causing issues among the VP prison population, especially for appointments held in the main Healthcare clinics. Lateness of transfer to Healthcare is one of the problems that results in less available clinic time.

Medicines are supposed to be administered three times a day from Wing treatment rooms, and night medicines administered separately at around 8pm. There have been quite a number of occasions when problems with the administration times of drugs has led to them only being administered twice daily. As a consequence, on these occasions, prisoners have not received their daily prescribed doses of medication. This is not acceptable under any circumstances.

The A Wing dispensing area is being moved to the centre core area on the 3s landing. This is still a work in progress but should eventually make a more pleasant environment for prisoners to wait to receive their medication. The area will have a waiting room as well as a dispensing facility which will be staffed a pharmacist. Prisoners will be moved in groups of ten to the medicine treatment area making not only this area but the rest of the Wing quieter and calmer during the dispensing of medicines.

A podiatry service is available but the waiting list remains long and priority is given to those prisoners with medical conditions which require foot care as part of ongoing care e.g. diabetics. The podiatrist has now commenced a vulnerable prisoner podiatry clinic in the F & G Wing treatment room.

5.3.2 Mental Health

Increasing numbers of prisoners in HMP Nottingham have varying mental health issues from minor to very severe and an integrated primary and secondary mental health team is responsible for their mental health care. As HMP Nottingham is incorrectly deemed to be the nearest local prison to Rampton secure hospital, prisoners who have finished their treatment or have been non-compliant are transferred here to continue their prison sentence. This is questionably not the right place for these prisoners, particularly those who have to remain in the SARU because it is too dangerous to put them on normal location. This can have a detrimental effect on the prisoner as well as other prisoners and staff because of the behaviour of these prisoners.

The secondary mental health in-reach team, with a capacity of 110 prisoners requiring their input, is working at maximum levels of prisoner case loads. This could cause issues for prisoners and members of the in-reach team if the level of interventions required increase.

Mental health staff have said that during this reporting period they have increasingly felt more safe when visiting and interviewing prisoners on the Wings.

Basic mental health training given by a mental health nurse with a teaching qualification has not been accessed by the prison over the past reporting year. No requests for this training have been received by the qualified mental health nurse. Also the proposed in-depth training for some uniformed staff on the Wings and all of the SARU staff, because of the prevalence of prisoners suffering varying degrees of mental illness, has not as yet been implemented. This gives rise to the question of the importance given by the prison to the understanding of prisoners with mental illness.

5.4 Purposeful Activity (Includes Work)

On many days attendance at workshops and education has been well below 50% and despite constant monitoring and reporting, attendance rates have failed to improve in any significant way. Under the Benchmarking structure prisoners are typically scheduled to only work for half days.

There are also large discrepancies between the proportion of prisoners who felt there was value in training, education and Offending Behaviour Programmes and those who reported being involved in these activities, indicating an unfulfilled need, presumably due to lack of access due to frequent lock downs.

We reported on the introduction of a bicycle refurbishment workshop in our previous report and are pleased that this has been both sustained and developed during the year and is popular with prisoners. It is, however, the exception to what is otherwise very routine and uninspiring work which seems to offer little by way of transferable skills which prisoners might use to secure work upon release. Nevertheless, the efforts of those who have worked hard to secure contracts in what continues to be a challenging market situation are clearly commendable.

However, the overall experience of prisoners in relation to purposeful activity during the second half of the reporting period has been far from positive.

The prison has continued to pay prisoners for non-attendance beyond the control of the individual and this may well have helped to keep the situation calm. Nevertheless, prisoners frequently complain to us about the lack of routine and uncertainty. It is difficult to conclude other than that purposeful activity during the reporting period was not contributing very much to rehabilitation.

5.5 Resettlement

Offender Management, like other areas of the prison, has suffered from staff shortages as uniformed staff located in the unit have been deployed temporarily to fill vacant prisoner-facing, and therefore more urgent, positions. As a result, earlier in the year, some 80% of prisoners complained that no one was working with them to achieve sentence planning targets, with OASys assessment being routinely late. Also, routine re-categorisation was not taking place. As additional staff were recruited towards the end of the reporting period, this situation was being addressed.

During the year the Home Detention Curfew (HDC) system became more effective with weekly boards to consider prisoners' applications. However, the proportion of successful applications remained small at ~ 26%.

The prison's target for prisoners having a place to live when discharged was 86.5%. This was not met for the first 8 months of the reporting period, however additional work on this area resulted in Nottingham achieving the target for the final 4 months. Overall the yearly target was not achieved. What should be a useful monthly accommodation surgery was often cancelled with prisoners having no regular access to specialist housing advice.

Towards the end of the reporting period monthly sessions where a range of agencies were invited into the prison were set up and early signs were that they were both well attended and popular with prisoners. However, at the present time, significant numbers of prisoners are being released annually from HMP Nottingham with nowhere to live, either because they were homeless prior to imprisonment or because they have lost their accommodation whilst in prison.

5.6 Safer Custody

High numbers of prisoners have reported to Board members that they have felt unsafe in the prison. A recent HMI (Her Majesty's Inspectors) visit confirmed our findings with almost 40% of prisoners reporting victimisation by other prisoners. The tensions and frustrations within the prison were felt by a number of Board members during the year. In the main the Board attributed this to the restricted Regime, resulting in frequent long periods spent by prisoners in their cells.

Levels of violence remained high, both prisoner on staff and prisoner on prisoner. There were 37 assaults on staff (6 being serious) and 133 assaults on prisoners (17 being serious) reported during the year.

During the summer of 2014 there were some significant serious incidents involving barricades, a hostage incident, some serious assaults on staff and many incidents of prisoners climbing on to the netting between Wing landings. In September 2014, three Wings were locked down for three days due to continued prisoner indiscipline, resulting in the transfer of more than 30 prisoners to other establishments. This event followed a similar occurrence in July 2014 which resulted in 16 prisoners being moved to other establishments.

The number of Listeners has fluctuated throughout the year, as is to be expected with the constant movement of prisoners, but the Board was pleased to note the efforts made to increase this complement, with several in training. Should trained Listeners return to prison for whatever reason, consideration is given to re-using the expertise they previously gained in this role.

At the time of the recent independent inspection there were only two out of the six telephones in working order that ought to be available for prisoners to contact the Samaritans.

An IMB request for a Samaritans' telephone in the SARU went unactioned despite this part of the prison being where some particularly vulnerable prisoners are held. This is now being addressed by a new governor for the unit.

There were two deaths in custody during the year. IMB members attend inquests as appropriate. Deaths in custody are always sad and we send our condolences to the families of the deceased. Both deaths occurred on the Wing and we were concerned to learn that the cell mate of the deceased in both cases was relocated to the SARU. We have not been able to obtain an explanation as to why they could not have been relocated to an alternative cell on normal location. In both instances the death of their cell mate had already caused significant distress and this was compounded by what seemed to be unnecessarily harsh isolation.

5.7 Segregation, Care & Separation, Security

5.7.1 Segregation, Care & Separation Unit (SARU)

All 12 cells in the SARU are often fully occupied with a constant churn of prisoners. The IMB monitors the holding of prisoners in the SARU by observing the Segregation Review Boards thrice weekly. The presence of Healthcare staff at these reviews has continued to improve during the year, and only occasionally has a nurse not been available.

In 2014 we reported that staff in the SARU are selected and trained according to PSO 1700 (Prison Service Order) to enable them to 'maintain a positive ethos within the unit and ensure that all prisoners are treated decently, fairly and with dignity'. Although raising this matter last year, it has still not always been possible to complement the SARU with selected and trained staff. This remains a concern to the Board as the lack of a dedicated staff cohort makes it virtually impossible for staff to identify and manage risks or positively engage with prisoners and establish constructive relationships with them.

Despite the above comment, the Board continues to hold the impression that the work carried out by the SARU staff is commendable, often under very difficult and threatening circumstances.

Adjudications have continued to be abandoned due to paperwork not being issued in the prescribed time frame. This situation pertains because the current night rota does not always use SARU accredited staff thus minimising the amount of useful work that can be accomplished during the overnight period.

5.7.2 Security

Mobile phones are contraband in prisons and as such when they do find their way into such environments they become tradable items resulting in debts and bullying. The board therefore welcomes the continued effort and success in detecting mobile phones held by prisoners. We understand the prison is awaiting even more sophisticated detection devices that will further assist in this area, but in the meantime improved security measures have been taken to make the exercise yards less susceptible to 'throw-overs'.

The worrying trend reported last year in the supply and detection of 'legal highs' (NPSs – Novel Psychoactive Substances) within the prison has continued unabated. Staff in the visits halls have remained vigilant, supported by extensive CCTV coverage, and have therefore been able to intercept 'passes' on several occasions with visitors having been arrested and charged by Nottinghamshire Police. At the end of our reporting period, the prison committed to providing different clothing for prisoners attending visits which should have the effect of making the concealment of illicit substances more difficult. Greater staff awareness regarding NPSs will take place in the coming months to highlight the dangers and effects of NPSs, which can be life threatening. Numerous instances of prisoners suffering health ill effects as a result of taking NPSs have been notified to us.

The Board will continue to support the prison's zero tolerance to drug finds and use.

Of concern to the Board is the reduction in the deployment of detector dogs throughout the prison estate which started some years ago. As the second busiest prison in the country for the throughput of prisoners, HMP Nottingham should ideally have a dog presence at all visiting sessions and to be available for arrivals from the courts, including on Saturdays. Additionally, a 'fast track' process to train for dogs in the detection of NPSs is urgently needed.

On a more positive note, the results from Mandatory Drug Testing (MDT) within the prison have reduced during the reporting period from ~17% for the first quarter of the performance year to ~6% in the final quarter, however the current testing is not able to detect the presence of NPSs.

5.8 Residential Services (Accommodation, Food, Catering, and Kitchens)

5.8.1 Accommodation

The Board has commented on several occasions about the litter that has accumulated beneath cell windows and the general tidiness of the external areas, to little effect. However plans have now been implemented to remove the grills from cell windows which is the basic cause of rubbish accumulation. Many cells are now in a poor decorative state.

As yet the message does not seem fully to have percolated to prisoners that damage to prison property can result in restitution for the cost of refurbishment. It is unfortunate that there is no mechanism to pursue these costs once the prisoner leaves the establishment, which renders the policy to a degree ineffective.

Many prisoners have complained to us of the lack of clean sheets and a recent HMI survey suggested that only 58% of prisoners received clean sheets on a weekly basis. On occasions, access to clean clothes has been sporadic, not helped by insufficient supervision on the Wings of the distribution of items.

During much of the year access to telephones was severely reduced due to the restricted Regime. The Board was frequently made aware of key workers being unable to use the telephones or have access to showers when they returned from their jobs, and the unpredictability of when telephones could be used affected prisoners' contact with friends and family.

Lack of basic commodities (e.g. tooth brushes) have caused problems during the year, particularly for new arrivals. Other items are too frequently in short supply such as pillows, kettles, radios and TVs. The board fails to understand why this continues to be an issue throughout the prison service if robust ordering and supply mechanisms are in place. Some responsibility, however, lies with staff not adequately checking that prisoners only have their entitlement of items both in cell and when prisoners move location.

5.8.2. Food/Catering

The amount of money allocated to prison food at £1.93 per prisoner per day remains a concern. We were told last year that this was being raised to £2.03, however, this was not adequately communicated resulting in the kitchen incurring a budget deficit which had to be made good. Whilst there is a higher allowance for YO (Young Offender) prisoners, due to their dispersal throughout the prison, and their transient stay once convicted, it is not feasible to provide a separate menu.

Towards the end of the reporting period changes were made to replace cooked food at lunchtime with sandwiches and snacks. Although this has now settled to a resigned acceptance, it was not widely welcomed when introduced with prisoners complaining about small portions.

Whilst written complaints remain low, the numbers do not reflect the comments prisoners make whilst members observe serveries. We remain concerned with the quality of the ingredients used in the preparation of meals. Prisoners remark not only on the quality of the

food, but the quantity, complaining of having to supplement their diet by canteen spend. Prisoners with particular dietary needs are catered for but it seems prisoners are sometimes unaware of how to notify the kitchen staff of their needs.

We are pleased to report that there are now officers once again supervising the serving of food. Following a clear incident of favouritism observed on one Wing earlier in the year, the then Governor decreed that active rather than passive supervision of food distribution should take place.

The Bistro, which offers service to the prison staff, remains popular and is a welcome facility for providing useful work to suitable prisoners. Experience gained in the Bistro, including attaining professional qualifications, can assist prisoners in their eventual resettlement into the community.

Section 6 Other Areas on Which the Board Wishes to Report

6.1 Induction/Reception

6.1.1 Induction

For much of the year structured induction sessions were suspended and replaced by ad-hoc gatherings of prisoners. This was in part due to the shortages of staff during much of the year mentioned elsewhere. The HMI report found in September that only 37% of prisoners had received an induction. The organisational difficulties have now been remedied and the situation is improving rapidly.

6.1.2 Reception

The Board continues to be concerned about delays in prisoners being transferred from courts and the consequent very late times at which they are eventually settled into cells. The process of transferring prisoners to their initial accommodation is taking significantly longer than prior to the Benchmarking exercise as prisoners can only be moved singly. This increases the period after prisoners are initially processed through Reception, and so potentially exacerbates the risk of problems arising in the holding rooms.

6.2 Time out of cell

Throughout the report we have repeatedly made reference to the effects staff shortages have on the prisoners' daily routine. The Regime introduced in April 2014 did little to resolve this situation and further changes throughout the year failed to address fully the problem of prisoners sometimes being in their cells for 21 hours a day. It was typical for more than 700 prisoners to remain on Wings, unoccupied.

Delays in prisoners' visitors being approved have continued to some degree. The problem is two-fold; firstly having the approvals actioned by night staff on the Wings and secondly having court outcomes input to the prison's computer system. More management attention has been promised to better monitor the situation.

Section 7 Work of the Independent Monitoring Board

7.1. Board Statistics

Recommended complement	20
Number at start of reporting period	13
Number at end of reporting period	9
Number of new members during reporting period	4
Number leaving during reporting period	8
Number of Board meetings during the reporting period	12
Total visits to the Establishment	430
Total number of Segregation reviews held	140
Total number of Segregation reviews attended	123
Date of Annual Team Performance Review	July 2014

Individual members of the Board have worked well and each contributed their skills to make an effective and harmonious team. The number having left during the reporting period is regrettable, but largely due to personal circumstances, although one member reached the end of her tenure. All 12 Board meetings during the reporting year have been attended by either the Governor or Deputy Governor. In addition, most meetings commence with a training session about an aspect of the prison service covering such topics as Visits, Healthcare, etc. In addition, an Applications Workshop was run in May 2014

7.2. Duties

The Board has continued to monitor the prison through a weekly rota visit; members also visit to attend Reviews in the SARU, deal with Applications and monitor the work of the prison through attending a wide range of meetings. The organisation of our work continues to evolve; taking a flexible approach has allowed us to cover all responsibilities in spite of declining membership.

No visits to other Establishments were undertaken during the reporting period nor were there any visits from other Boards. Members have completed National Courses as appropriate. Two members attended the National Conference in January 2015.

More than the usual number of serious incidents took place during the year necessitating the opening of the Command Suite. On most occasions a member of the IMB attended the incident, which allowed the Board to update and refine its operational procedures.

7.3. Applications

Code	Subject	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
A	Accommodation			42	22	16
B	Adjudications			6	9	5
C	Equality & Diversity (inc Religion)			21	17	23
D	Education/employment/training inc IEP			31	43	29
E1	Family visits inc mail & phone			29	41	69
E2	Finance/pay			10	31	24
F	Food/kitchen related			81	15	13
G	Health related			32	88	85
H1	Property (within current establishment)			43	48	59
H2	Property (during transfer/in another establishment)			53	36	54
H3	Canteen, facilities, catalogue shopping, Argos			12	4	12
I	Sentence related (inc HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-cat, etc.)			21	46	69
J	Staff/prisoner/detainee concerns inc bullying			43	60	37
K	Transfers			19	45	52
L	Miscellaneous			62	46	69
	Total number of IMB applications	444	482	490	517	585
	Of total: number of IMB Confidential Access was:			1	0	1

A breakdown of the figures into the categories above is not available where no data is shown. As reported previously this is due to the figures being lost during two accommodation moves.

Total complaints categorised for 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15 is higher than the number of Applications due to some Applications raising multiple issues.

The Board often receives Confidential Access Applications which do not fall under the Confidential Access criteria. These are recorded as ordinary Applications, above.