



**INDEPENDENT
MONITORING BOARD
HMP & YOI ROCHESTER**

**ANNUAL REPORT
2014-2015**

Section 1

STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

The Prisons Act 1952 requires 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, 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.

Section 2

CONTENTS

SECTION	TITLE	PAGE
Section 1	STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB	2
Section 2	CONTENTS	3
Section 3	DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON	4
Section 4	4.1 - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5 - 6
	4.2 - OVERALL JUDGEMENT	6 - 7
	4.3 - ISSUES REQUIRING A RESPONSE	7 - 8
	4.4 - PREVIOUS YEAR'S CONCERNS	9
Section 5	5.1 - EQUALITY AND INCLUSION	10
	5.2 - EDUCATION, LEARNING & SKILLS	10
	5.3 - HEALTHCARE AND MENTAL HEALTH	10 - 11
	5.4 - SAFER CUSTODY	11
	5.5 - SEGREGATION	11 - 12
	5.6 - PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY and time out of Cell	12
	5.7 - RESIDENTIAL SERVICES	13
	5.7.1 Kitchen and Catering	14
	5.7.2 Accommodation	14
	5.7.3 Sentence Management (OMU)	14 - 15
Section 6	OTHER AREAS OF THE PRISON REGIME ON WHICH THE BOARD HAS ISSUES/ OBSERVATIONS TO REPORT	16 - 18
Section 7	THE WORK OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD	19 - 21
Section 8	GLOSSARY OF PRISON-RELATED ABBREVIATIONS USED	22 - 23

Section 3

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

HMP & YOI Rochester was originally built as a prison in 1874 on a former military site above the Medway River. It was extensively rebuilt in the early 20th century as the Borstal Institution, taking its title from an adjacent village. Its pioneering methods of dealing with young men and boys were used as a model for the creation of other Borstal Institutions which were given statutory authority in 1908 and lasted until their abolition in 1983, when Rochester converted to a youth custody centre.

In 1988 the prison changed its role to operate as remand centre for the Kent courts and sentenced category C and D adult males. Further changes to its role resulted in a mixed site holding immigration detainees, a resettlement unit for adult male prisoners at the end of their sentences and a remand and allocation centre for under 21 year old males. In January 2002 Rochester re-rolled as a dedicated site for sentenced young men up to the age of 21. This role continued until June 2011, when the prison accepted Category 'C' prisoners who were initially housed in one of the newly constructed wings. In the course of the reporting year, Adult and YOI prisoners have been fully integrated across the whole site, under the banner of "One Prison, One Purpose" (see Section 4). The objectives of the prison are to hold prisoners securely and safely, and to provide a well-ordered establishment where prisoners are treated humanely and with decency and ultimately to reduce the risk of prisoners re-offending.

The original accommodation is a mixture of single and double cells contained in five wings on the 'old' site, and a further four wings on the 'new' site. The Segregation Unit is located on the 'old' site. 'First night' accommodation has been shared around the prison and the "Resettlement Unit" is accommodated in the much larger H wing. Currently the prison's CNA is 742. Following planned refurbishment all wings became operational during 2014. However, during the reporting year remedial maintenance has dictated that Wings or parts of wings were out of action throughout the period.

The regime at Rochester is intended to give prisoners training through a structured sentence plan. Opportunities exist for education and work placements, with the emphasis given to resettlement. Education is encouraged on a full or part time basis. Training is offered across a range of industries and activities. These include industrial cleaning, brick-laying, plumbing, computing, garden work, recycling, railway engineering, welding, and stone masonry. The kitchen is also able to run courses. Some of the activities offer recognised qualifications, particularly within the construction industry.

It is intended that physical well-being is catered for through physical education at two well-run gymnasiums, offering competitive and recreational activities. Restrictions due to staff shortages have made this an aspiration rather than a reality. This represents a lost opportunity.

Support for prisoners is available from the newly appointed healthcare team, In-reach and chaplaincy, as well as community support from external organisations. However, the proportional increase in prisoners of the Muslim faith would suggest that the resources provided may be disproportionately assigned to Christian denominations.

Section 4

4.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Report, in common with the work of the IMB, is dominated by the ongoing effect of a ministerial decision to reduce prison staff numbers and to offer an attractive redundancy package to a high proportion of experienced staff. The results of this decision have been felt throughout the organisation and HMP & YOI Rochester, despite its best efforts, has not been immune to these harmful effects.

This Report covers the period April 2014 to March 2015 during which time there has been a continuing assimilation by the prison of the changes imposed upon it. The Board recognises the significant efforts of the Governor and the Senior Management Team to apply themselves to their 'duty of care', with regard to staff management. Over the period covered this has continued to show progressive signs of success, creating greater stability, accountability, understanding and a sense of 'ownership'.

Having been an early adopter of the benchmarking efficiency arrangements, referred to as "New Ways of Working" (NWoW), the recovery from the ensuing staff uncertainty and low morale for staff and prisoners alike, has been a hard road to travel and continues, along with other changes, to impact on prison effectiveness as a place of rehabilitation.

Staff shortages, the direct result of a fundamentally flawed decision by Central Government, have impacted and continue to impact on the prison system. The prison has coped with this by establishing a restricted regime and, whilst they have been largely successful in keeping the prison safe, they have been forced to do so by cutting back on the rehabilitative aspects of the prison. Sessions of education, work training, physical training, external health appointments and other activities beneficial to the rehabilitation of prisoners are regularly cancelled in favour of keeping other more basic restrictive aspects of the prison workable with a minimal staff presence. Overall, prisoners spend more time on the wings and behind locked doors. "New Ways of Working" promised greater efficiencies and more opportunities for prisoners. All the time the prison is understaffed, this is most emphatically not the case and the greatest potential saving, prisoners not returning to the Courts after release, continues to be put aside in favour of short-term financial gains. Despite the best efforts of the prison, purposeful activity is not available for all of the prison population to attend.

The Board would like to be assured that the predictable increase of prisoners returning to prison, as a consequence of the current lack of available rehabilitation, will be taken into account when planning numbers of prison places and will not be a further 'surprise' to the Ministry.

The Drug Recovery unit, established in the previous year, has continued to offer drug services to addicted prisoners. In comparison with the recovery regimes in existence outside of the prison, it seems that a number of fundamental therapeutic considerations have had to be sacrificed for the sake of expediency. This has involved the integrating of prisoners seeking different outcomes for their drug use being mixed together, sometimes alongside prisoners with no intention to change. It would, we believe, produce better outcomes for less future offending, if greater resources were targeted at drug-using prisoners allowing for fewer compromises in the treatment programme. Routine drug awareness training for Prison Officers is still not available.

The Board continues to have serious concerns about the availability of drugs and other contraband entering the prison. It is clear that the 'sale' of drugs to prisoners continues to be 'big business' earning huge profits for the drug traffickers, causing problems of health, debt,

physical violence and self-harming. Whilst it is not the role of the prison to deal with the external drug trade, the sometimes catastrophic effects felt by prisoners and the consequence for the prison regime make this a priority for concerted action by the Minister. The prison has had some significant 'finds' of drugs within the prison. However, it is clear that the profits are so immense that these 'finds' are not themselves sufficient to dent the 'dealers' incentive.

The much-protracted Healthcare Contract arrangements were finally concluded during the reporting year and a new provider appointed in OXLEAS Healthcare. The Board recognises the need for 'settling in' of a newly contracted service. However, when that service is 'Healthcare' it is felt that the patient should not be the majorly affected party. This is regrettably not the case and Healthcare has been the greatest area of complaint both via the Prison Complaints System and IMB Applications. (+39%) There is no doubt that a small minority of prisoners make very difficult and demanding patients. This should not come as a surprise to any incoming health provider and staff should have been aware of the likely difficulties and how to deal with them according to professional guidelines. The Board considers that in a minority of cases the provider has failed to address this.

There have been two deaths in custody during the year with a number of serious incidents of attempted suicide and near-fatal self-harm. As well as the long-term effects on the injured parties there have been cases where staff, who were first on the scene, have been traumatised by their discoveries.

4.2 Overall Judgement

The Board considers that HMP & YOI Rochester generally provides a safe and decent environment for prisoners. For the most part staff deal with the diverse population of offenders in their care, openly, sympathetically and effectively although there are a few prisoners whose needs are extremely difficult to meet within a prison environment. The Board seriously questions whether Courts should be referring some prisoners, with identifiable mental health needs, to a prison establishment and, given the unsurprising inability of the prison to meet those needs, also questions where legal responsibility for the safety and well-being of those prisoners and their actions on others, might reasonably rest.

The prison is now entering the third year of "New Ways of Working", and the IMB is concerned that the on-going limitation on resources will continue to lead to less satisfactory outcomes in the rehabilitation of prisoners, this despite the best efforts of the Senior Management Team and staff to mitigate the effects of under-resourcing and under-staffing. The Board continues to hold the view that the reductions previously imposed are incompatible with the stated aims of the Prison Service and mean that offending behaviour cannot be addressed meaningfully. Currently the overall effect of the staff changes and shortages has left the prison with little or no flexibility to respond to the (normal) day to day trials created by a minority of prisoners. This lack of staff results in many relatively minor incidents, which require staff attendance, having a punishing knock-on effect to the detriment of the majority. The Board has serious concerns that the Government does not intend to provide the inward investment to meet the Prison Service objectives, particularly with regard to rehabilitation. The Board urges the Secretary of State to ensure adequate, appropriate and consistent staffing of the prison. Throughout the Report reference is made to difficulties being experienced by the prison and many of these are directly attributable to staffing inadequacies and/or the consequent lack of purposeful activity.

Although there is more that could be done, the Board is pleased to note a small improvement in the way in which issues of security are responded to by the Police and CPS. There has

been marked increase in the discovery of contraband, particularly in the form of drugs and mobile telephones. It is the Board's view that criminal acts committed in prison by prisoners should be treated in the same way as criminal acts committed in the community. In the case of illicit drugs the person delivering the drugs, whether in person, by drone or randomly over the prison wall, must be held legally responsible for the effect of the drug on the recipient, whether or not the recipient is the intended target. (See Section 6.4).

The prison is to be commended for facilitating prisoners in the making of their own DVD warning of the consequences of drug use, with particular emphasis on non-standard psychoactive drugs. This DVD has been circulated to other prisons and, whilst not setting out to be an 'answer' to this hugely increasing area of drug use, it is certainly a welcome destabilising and de-mythologizing contribution to the debate, essentially delivered by prisoners.

4.3 ISSUES REQUIRING A RESPONSE

4.3.1 Purposeful Activity - "Prisoners are able and expected to engage in activity that is likely to benefit them".

The Board strongly urges the Secretary of State to ensure that a firm commitment is made, in line with Government policy, to provide the Prison with all the resources necessary to allow full time, high quality, purposeful activity to be provided in the shortest timeframe possible for all prisoners at Rochester. Having stripped the full-time staff roll to below the operational minimum, staff vacancies and sickness have a significant detrimental effect on the effectiveness of prison activities, which tend to be the area from which staff are drawn in the event of unscheduled demands, such as security incidents and escort duties. The Board believe this to be a false economy. (See Sections 5.6)

HMP Rochester has benefitted from considerable effort on the part of senior staff, who have been able to inject new areas of activity which, when staffing levels allow, have the potential to be of significant benefit to the future work prospects of prisoners when they leave the prison.

4.3.2 Illicit Drugs and Other Contraband

The Board has grave concerns about the continuing discovery of illicit drugs and other contraband, such as mobile phones, that are available to prisoners, despite the endeavours of staff to stem the flow. The Board strongly urges that measures are taken to strengthen the resources available to reduce the flow of such contraband into the prisoner; the ability to block/disrupt mobile phone contact would greatly serve this purpose. The police and CPS must also be pro-active in taking a robust line in prosecuting attempts to smuggle contraband into the prison and criminal activities detected within the prison, with the 'normal' position being to prosecute where there is sufficient evidence to do so. (See section 6.4).

4.3.3 Healthcare

New Healthcare Contract arrangements were finally concluded during the reporting year and a new provider appointed in OXLEAS Healthcare. The Board recognises the need for 'settling in' of a newly contracted service but with Healthcare the needs of the Patient should and must take priority, which regrettably has not always been the case. Healthcare has been the greatest area of Complaint both via the Prison Complaints System and IMB Applications. The +39% increase of Applications to the IMB is significant. However, this represents an +82% increase on the previous year and a +343% on 2011/12.

There is no doubt that a small minority of prisoners make very difficult and demanding Patients. This should not however come as a surprise to any incoming health provider and

staff should have been aware of the likely difficulties and how to deal with them according to professional guidelines. The Board considers that in a minority of cases the incoming provider has failed to address this.

The Board strongly urges the Secretary of State to instigate a review by the Care Quality Commission and additionally to ensure that adequate staffing is made available for prisoners to attend outside health appointments, without stripping the prison of normal operational staff. (See section 5.3).

4.3.4 Segregation

From an initially low position there has been a marked improvement in the standard of management in Segregation over the period of this report. There is now much greater consistency in the ability of the Prison to deal with the perpetrators of disorder rather than using the Unit as a 'safe haven' for the victims, as had previously been the case. To a great extent this improvement in standards is, in the view of the Board, due to more experienced staff leading the work of the Unit and shows the value that consistent and appropriate staffing can make.

However, the consequence of the greater order in the Segregation Unit has been an increase in the number of prisoners now spread around the prison but still seeking 'sanctuary' by being placed (at their own request) on a Care Plan, which involves them being detained behind their cell doors for extended periods of each and every day. Whilst this is seen as a generally preferred option to segregation, the potential for such a prisoner to become even more isolated than they would in the Segregation Unit, is of concern. The Board has made the visiting of these prisoners a priority in the normal course of the general IMB Rota. The SMT is aware of and share this concern and hope to address the situation by creating an 'enabling community' in which it is hoped prisoners will be encouraged to confront their concerns and (maybe) return to the mainstream environment. This will be a very welcome and creative initiative which will be kept under observation in the coming year. (See Section 5.3/5.5/5.6)

4.3.6 Kitchen and Catering

Some confusion remains concerning food 'budgets' and the Minister's response to the National Conference Motion on this subject and the subsequent conflicting response from the Deputy Director for Kent and Sussex. The details of this are given at Section 5.7.1.

The IMB continue to be concerned that the prison is not adequately funded to fulfil its statutory requirements, with regard to food, (within budget).

4.4 PREVIOUS YEAR'S CONCERNS

This report covers the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.

Throughout this Report reference is made to concerns expressed in previous years. These include:

- The impact of the loss of experienced staff continues to have an impact on all aspects of life within the prison; having offered voluntary redundancy to an unsustainable number of experienced staff, the prison is now experiencing difficulties in recruiting to fill a shortfall in staffing. This continues to look very short-sighted.
- Food Budget - incompatible with Prison Rules 24(2). National Conference Motion 2013 and 2014
- Contraband - further resources required to combat this trade.
- Lack of Investment towards rehabilitation - real and substantial savings could be made if greater resources were put behind reducing the 'rate of return' of prisoners by equipping them for life in society outside of prison.
- Equality and Inclusion - Over the past 12 months, staff changes and reductions have adversely affected the ability of the prison to openly demonstrate fairness in Diversity and Equality, due to the frequent cancellation of meetings..
- The variation in the standard of the physical conditions between the 'new' and 'old' prison buildings is predicted to continue to create tensions within the prison. The prison would benefit if these inequalities in standards were remedied, albeit on a 'rolling' programme.

Section 5

5.1 Equality and Inclusion

Over the past two years, staff changes and reductions have adversely affected the ability of the prison to openly demonstrate fairness in Diversity and Equality. Meetings are frequently cancelled, or dates changed at the last minute. What were previously monthly meetings are now programmed to be held at 3-monthly intervals but frequently cancelled. The lack of these meetings is regretted and they should be reinstated at the earliest opportunity.

Managing diversity has continued to be a demanding, but well managed, challenge for the prison. Across the prison's population, white prisoners are now in a majority over BME prisoners (approximately 61%:39%). Adult white prisoners outnumber their BME counterparts by over 4:1, whereas the proportions of white and BME young offenders are almost equal. Adult prisoners comprise approximately 86% of the prison's population, compared with half in the last reporting year. During the year prisoners of more than 14 different nationalities were represented.

The Equality Action Team (EAT) demonstrates an effective partnership amongst specialists, governors, officers and offenders, with open and constructive discussions, between prisoners and staff taking place (albeit reduced on a formal level). Useful services are provided for prisoners who need them from the UK Border Agency, a Migrant Helpline is available and Applied Language Solutions giving prisoners' access to a telephone service to seek advice.

During the year 22 Racist Incidents were reported as against 37 last year; 3 were prisoner against prisoner complaints; 12 were prisoner against staff; 7 staff against prisoner. All 22 were investigated by the EAT and of these 5 were proved and 4 remain open.

5.2 Education, Learning and Skills

Education and training have had a busy and productive year with the introduction of several new workshops and courses which have proved popular with the prisoners e.g cycle repair and fork lift training. The department was inspected by OFSTED and was graded 'good'. Attendance at some classes was poor but has improved since steps have been taken to deal with unauthorised absences.

As with other rehabilitative activities within the prison, this service is also a victim of the staff shortage and consequent restricted regime, with attendance at Education Sessions being cancelled for security and other priorities. It is consequently difficult to attribute causes of any statistical variation from last year when a previously unacceptable level of performance, was beginning to show improvement. Allocation rates for provided education classes is recorded as approximately 90%, but with attendance rates at only 82% of allocation (or around 66% of potentially available spaces). This represents a considerable under-usage of the education places, at a time when there continues to be a significant shortfall in purposeful activity places overall. The prison has taken concerted action in an attempt to ensure that prisoners attend education classes/facilities to which they are allocated, and that all available spaces are fully taken-up.

5.3 Healthcare and Mental Health

Despite an unsatisfactory and protracted re-commissioning process Healthcare staff had continued to provide an excellent service. The Contract process is now complete but the level of Complaints would suggest that it has not yet settled into being a mature prison service. The retention of existing staff has helped at some levels but in others inexperience in dealing with

a complex and demanding prison population has been exposed. Lack of available Prison Officers to adequately staff healthcare sessions has undoubtedly contributed to the difficulties for the healthcare provider.

A review of clinical decisions relating to prescribed medication has been undertaken and has resulted, in some cases, to prisoners being prescribed less or alternative medication. As might be expected this has frequently not found favour with prisoners and has contributed to the increased complaints.

Since Rochester took its first Cat C prisoners in 2011 the number of Health-related applications has steadily increased and the level this year is 343% above the 2011 total. Older Category C prisoners have more illnesses than young offenders and adequate provision must be made to deal with them; the significant rise in complaints to the board suggest that this has not happened.

The IMB is not qualified, nor is it their responsibility, to carry out a detailed assessment of the Healthcare service but it is clear that there are problems with recruitment and retention of staff and that there is no organised training or continuing professional development to enable them to carry out their difficult task more effectively. Communication with patients, by a minority of staff, has been observed to be unsatisfactory and is a significant cause of complaint by prisoners about their care. There have also been individual examples of poor medical practice and the IMB look forward to the outcome of the inspection by the Care Quality Commission which will form part of the Inspector of Prisons next visit.

The reduction in prison officer numbers and resultant lack of escort staff has led to hospital appointments being cancelled leading to further dissatisfaction with the service.

As noted last year, the increasing availability of contraband 'Spice' (type) drugs continues to create problems for staff, prisoners, Healthcare and the prison in general. This is a major concern resulting as it does in all manner of conflict within the prison. Prisoners indicate that the debts incurred by those using drugs are the main source of prisoner to prisoner threats.

There were two Deaths in Custody during the year, one of which is believed be attributable to the excessive use of steroids and the other alleged to be as the result of a prisoner-on-prisoner assault.

Difficulties were experienced during previous years in providing a consistent level of dental services. It is noted this concern was only brought to the IMB on two occasions in this period and is to be hoped that this indicates an improvement.

5.4 Safer Custody

The Safer Custody team worked hard to ensure high standards of care throughout the prison.

There have been two Deaths in Custody in this reporting period. The Board commend the Team and the Family Liaison Officers for their sensitive handling of these events, including defusing the volatile reaction of the family in one case.

5.5 Segregation

In the view of the Board, there has been a significant improvement in standards in the Segregation Unit over the period of this report. The previously reported staffing issues were addressed with resultant greater consistency.

The major change has been the added emphasis on ensuring that it is 'perpetrators' who occupy the Unit rather than the 'victims', who were housed for their own safety. This has resulted in what would previously been 'own request' Seg. occupants being dispersed into normal Wing accommodation around the prison which, with a few exceptions, is felt to be a much better and more 'normalising' arrangement. It has raised some issues where this group of prisoners then request to be 'kept behind their door' in an effectively self-imposed solitary confinement. Most of these arrangements are formalised into a Care Plan (in addition to ACCT requirements, if applicable) but there is the possibility that this does not happen and those prisoners do not then receive the regular daily visits, which they would if they were in the Seg. Unit. The IMB has consequently included and prioritised prisoners 'behind their doors' on the normal Rota visits.

The SMT is aware of and share this concern and hope to address the situation by creating an 'enabling environment' in which it is hoped prisoners will be encouraged to confront their concerns and (maybe) return to the mainstream environment. It should be made clear that this will not be a VP Unit with the associated negative connotations relating to the sentences shared by the offenders. The proposed introduction of an enabling community is a very welcome and creative initiative, which will be kept under observation in the coming year.

However, the source of many of the 'fears' shared by this group of prisoners should not be overlooked, stemming as they do from problems of bullying and intimidation, often resulting from debts or inherited debts and they in turn often the consequence of the drug trade inside and outside the prison.

Many of the prisoners in the unit have been difficult and/or disturbed. The Board monitor this area closely, and regularly attend Governors' and Independent Adjudications, and Good Order and Discipline reviews. All reviews and adjudications attended were considered to be dealt with carefully, fairly and appropriately, with few exceptions in the current year. Some officers show exceptional personal skills when dealing with segregated prisoners.

The Board is concerned that several prisoners were held in the Segregation Unit for far too long, but recognises that often in such cases no viable alternative is available and this returns to the question of the suitability for a prison sentence of those whom the Courts send to prison.

One area still requiring improvement is that of communication between the Unit and the IMB, which often lags too far behind real-time events.

5.6 Purposeful Activity and Time Out of Cell

A great deal of effort has been directed by the prison at provision of purposeful activity over the last few years but which nonetheless leaves room for improvement. The proportion of time spent out of cells in the current reporting year is much lower than in past years, distorted by the restricted regime and staff shortages.

The Board welcomes the efforts that have been made to secure new contracts and expand existing ones, the bicycle workshop, Railway Engineering and welding being notable successes.

In the meantime however, it must be noted that, having reduced staffing on the Wings, on the premise that prisoners will be off the wing and working, all the time there is insufficient activity being offered to engage prisoners, then wing staff are left feeling stretched to the limit and occasionally feeling vulnerable.

It is the view of the Board that by far the greatest 'savings' are to be made, not by reducing budgets or staffing levels (including reducing the proportion of experienced senior staff) but by equipping prisoners for life outside of prison and reducing the likelihood of their return.

5.7 Residential Services

5.7.1 Kitchen and Catering

The kitchen continues to manage within the unacceptably severe constraints on available funding. The difficulties with food within the prison are further compounded by a reported reduction of the meal time supervision by Officers of the servery on some wings. Reports of bullying and stealing of prisoners meals by other prisoners has resulted, with 'weaker' prisoners not getting the food which they ordered and should receive. There is also a reported 'loss' of foodstuff between distribution from the kitchen and (non) arrival on some wings.

Despite these problems, the kitchen staff have striven, with some considerable success, to deliver nutritional meals. As in previous years the Board has noted a very basic level of provision in quality and choice, which is almost inevitable given the funding and supplier constraints in operation. The contracted supplier has on a number of occasions been unable to supply the amounts and variety of food ordered, giving little or no notice to the prison kitchen. On these occasions it can be at the time of delivery that they discover that a substitute product has been included in the order.

Some confusion remains concerning food 'budgets' and the Minister's response to the National Conference Motion (see below) on this subject.

This conference, whilst recognising the need for efficiency and economy,

- a) notes that Prison Rules (section 24(2) state 'the food provided shall be wholesome, nutritious, well prepared and served, reasonably varied and sufficient in quantity');*
- b) deplores the reduction in catering budgets to such low levels (e.g. less than £2 person per day in many prisons) that the quality and quantity of food provided no longer meet the standards required under Prison Rules 24(2)*
- c) requests/urges the Minister/NOMS to review the budget as well as the methods of sourcing food so that prisoners may be provided sufficient amounts of good quality food.*

The Minister replied:

"The ultimate decision on how much is spent on food in each prison rests with the Governor, who is required to take appropriate measures to ensure no particular group of prisoners are disadvantaged as a result of providing for the dietary requirements of another."

However, a request for clarification resulted in a response from the Deputy Director for Kent & Sussex stating, " *there is sufficient clarity that NOMS Finance set a national food budget that applies to all public sector prisons, the expectation is all prisons will stay within allocated budgets.*" This would appear to be a contradiction.

Similarly, to the question of using local produce, the Minister replied:

"The food contract is still committed to encouraging small (local) business suppliers to provide food commodities to prisons."

However, the 'clarification' stated: "*There is a mandated food supply contract in place that prisons are expected to use*".

The IMB continue to be concerned that the prison is not adequately funded to fulfil its statutory requirements, with regard to food, within budget.

We remain of the view that catering staff cannot continue to provide good nutritional food, in adequate quantity, as required by Prison Rules, with ongoing reductions in budgets and strongly urge that the catering budget is re-examined as a matter of priority. If prisoners are expected to follow a 'working day', their nutrition must be considered a priority. The last research regarding nutrition in prison food was undertaken in 2001 (followed up in 2006) when food budgets were proportionately higher. A further study would now be appropriate given reducing budgets and expectations of "full time" working by prisoners.

5.7.2 Accommodation

H Wing has continued as a 're-settlement' wing and demand is high. Initial issues appear to have been successfully addressed in the main, with the wing now settled into its role. The Board is concerned that, with a population of 120, there is insufficient appropriate activity to properly fulfil the settlement brief. This concern about lack of purposely activity is however not exclusive to H Wing. With fewer staff in general, there are less out of prison activities because staff cannot be released to escort eligible prisoners. As staffing will allow, the Board would hope to see a greater proportion of prisoners on ROTL and attending outside work.

The welcome change in emphasis in Segregation, ensuring that it is 'perpetrators' who occupy the Unit rather than the 'victims', who were housed for their own safety, has also meant that prisoners with 'special needs' have been disproportionately redistributed to H Wing where the newer accommodation is more appropriate. This too is in conflict with the stated emphasis of the wing as facilitating rehabilitation. There has not however been any opportunity to permanently increase staffing to the Wing to cope with these prisoners who are not attending work or education programmes. The wing staff report being stretched to their limit and occasionally feeling vulnerable, especially when even those staff are called away to attend emergency incidents around the prison.

A number of Serious Incidents have occurred with prisoners climbing onto the roofs of Wings. Two of these incidents were on the same Wing. The vulnerabilities of this (and other) places around the prison need concerted attention and remedies. Serious Incidents, as well as the risk to prisoners and staff, represent a disproportionately expensive incursion into the prison budget.

The variation in the standard of the physical conditions between the 'new' and 'old' prison buildings is predicted to continue to create tensions within the prison. The prison would benefit if these inequalities in standards were remedied, albeit on a 'rolling' programme. Ironically however, the Wings requiring urgent major buildings maintenance have been on the 'new' site.

5.7.3 Sentence Management (OMU)

In common with the convention of 'reporting by exception' OMU has been 'neglected' in recent Annual Reports and whilst this is an endorsement of their continued efficiency, it does not give credit for the difficulties that the Unit overcomes on a daily basis. In recent years this has included the failure of other prisons to complete OASYS Reports for incoming prisoners. Whilst prisons receiving prisoners from Court have an allocation of time in which to complete this process, no allowance is made for the receiving prisons such as HMP/YOI Rochester. Whilst it would be within the 'rights' of Rochester (and others) to refuse to take prisoners for whom OASYS had not been completed, the system of inter-prison transfer would soon grind

to a halt if this were implemented. The result of this is that Rochester OMU, with reduced staffing, are expected to carry out this important process and this year has carried out 475 Primary OASYS reports; the time required for this equates to that needed to carry out 1,300 Reviews which the prison should be doing and also have to complete.

Over and above the additional workload that this represents, it also means that for a proportion of prisoners, information which would assist the prison to accommodate and sentence-plan for the prisoner, may not be available at an early stage.

OMU are to be commended for the pragmatic manner in which they approach this issue but, assuming the likelihood of this continuing, should receive an commensurate allocation of resources.

The IMB is indebted to OMU for the efficiency with which they are able to address prisoner queries and show a willingness to re-address queries when new information comes to light.

Section 6

6.1 Change

"New Ways of Working" sought to address the need for financial efficiencies but there are areas where the ongoing effects of this initiative continue to be counter-productive. Even without the ongoing staff shortages and limited recruitment of new officers, staff work 'detail' does not encourage (or even allow for) the beneficial effects of consistent staff/prisoner relationships, so much a feature of 'soft indicators' in past successful rehabilitation. There were many times when the testimony of former prisoners mention that it was the influence of a prison officer which profoundly affected their 'going straight'. This positive influence is all-but lost when the rotas are so stretched that officers are allocated on a needs-must basis.

6.2 Reception, Property and Induction

The Board welcomes the recognition by the prison of the importance of Reception and Induction, as critical times for new arrivals the prison and is reviewing the process and information made available to new prisoners. This is welcomed and will be kept under review by the IMB. Observation of prisoner Inductions leads the Board to wonder whether some aspects of Induction might benefit from happening over a longer period, when new prisoners might be more receptive to gathering information.

Property issues continue to represent a significant proportion of Complaints. The majority relate to the inter-prison transfer of prisoners featuring the non-arrival of possessions with the prisoner. The lack of facility on the prison transport vehicles would seem a major flaw in the vehicles, which we are informed have been designed in accordance with the MoJ Contract Specification but with no provision for possessions.

The limited availability of staff on the wings during and following a disciplinary incident also contributes to a time when cells, of prisoners being removed, are 'available' to other prisoners and during which time possessions go missing.

6.3 Visits/Visits Centre

It has taken a long time for the on-line system of booking visits to settle in. Whilst there are still occasions when individuals have difficulty, the emerging system seems an improvement on the previous system.

The improved availability of drugs-dogs has proved its worth in visits, where a number of 'indications' by the dog has undoubtedly led to less drugs entering the prison and has provided a deterrent to other visitors attempting this means of trafficking.

The provision of tea-bar facilities in Visits continues to be run by a charity provider (Changing Paths), and in the second year of operation continues to delivering a well-received service. Staff are now able to take advantage of this facility in the lunch period prior to visits. This has been welcomed.

6.4 Security

Led by refined intelligence surveillance and despite the lack of available staff time, mobile telephones, drugs and other unauthorised items are being recovered in increasing numbers from cells and around the site.

Checks on visitors have become progressively Intelligence led and are consequently deemed to be more cost effective and 'finds' of contraband among visitors have consequently not increased.

Overall, compared to 2013-14, the number of finds of illegal drugs rose from 90 to 170 and the number of 'finds' of mobile phones rose from 190 to 262 (plus 286 SIM Cards and Chargers). In addition there were 41 'finds' of weapons. Although these represent significant increases this success is undoubtedly in great part due to the measures that the prison has taken during the year, to ensure that parcels from outside of the prison do not reach prisoners. This has been partly achieved by some ingenious improvised security fences and it is to be hoped that the prison will receive the appropriate financial investment to enable it to make these and other measures, permanent in the near future.

The prison takes considerable steps to intercept incoming items but is continually subject to innovation by drug traffickers for whom this is big-business to a captive and vulnerable client base. An ability to block or intercept calls to mobile phones would be a significant weapon in this regard.

Even in a 'normal' year it is difficult to draw meaningful conclusions from MDT figures and will be yet further distorted during this year by the restricted regime and fewer tests being conducted for long periods during the year. The Board is not therefore reporting these figures.

A very positive contribution by the prison, in response to the increase in the use of new psychoactive drugs (so called 'legal highs') has been the facilitation of the prisoners in the making of a DVD discussing the consequences of drug use. This carries a strong accent towards the 'experimental' nature of taking such drugs and that prisoners are being used by drug traffickers as "Guinea Pigs". This DVD has been circulated to other prisons and, whilst not setting out to be an 'answer' to this hugely increasing area of drug use, it is certainly a welcome destabilising and de-mythologizing contribution to the debate; it is particularly powerful because it is delivered by prisoners, to prisoners, without censorship by the prison or MoJ.

6.5 Works

In the latter part of the year, 'Works' has been contracted out to a private contractor. The Board will be interested to see if this provides the anticipated improvement in quality and speed of repairs which have to date been unsatisfactorily slow.

6.6 Complaints

Numbers of recorded complaints are down on previous years showing a total of 1558 (2135 last year) but does not include complaints about Healthcare, which are directly referred to the Healthcare provider. Complaints about Healthcare are known to have increased but the exact figures are not available. Outside of healthcare, the highest proportion of complaints relate to Property and Finance issues.

Response rates within the allotted time scale, are between 75% and 83%. Whilst the reason for this fall-off in timely responses is unclear, it has been suggested to the IMB that a probable contributory factor is likely to be reduced staffing levels, which result in officers not returning to the 'scene' of the complaint for some time, having been 'detailed' to work elsewhere in the prison.

6.7 Gymsnasiums

The gyms are well equipped with suitably qualified staff. However, they are often under-used due to gym staff being taken off on other duties. Gym sessions are too frequently cancelled.

Of the 3 gymnasia, only 2 are in regular operation. The Board believe there is much more potential to be gained from the gymnasiums including the training of prisoners in a variety of recreational activities. Prisoners returning home may have difficulties in gaining employment but there are many areas in which voluntary work for people using recreational training is plentiful and badly needed. This could give an individual a sense of 'place' and 'worth' as well as getting a 'foot in the door' of community work. Football Coaching and certified training in fitness would be examples of skills available but not currently used by the prison.

Section 7

THE WORK OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

The Board, which has a complement capped at 20 members, began and ended the year with 15 members. During the year 3 members retired/resigned and three new members joined the Board.

All statutory visits and visits to Areas of Special Interest (ASI) have been undertaken and reports made to the Board. Observations are also passed to operational staff and when appropriate result in actions to improve/correct the situation. All members attend committees and provide reports on areas of concern. Although the overall Board numbers have been stable throughout the year, more than half of members have less than three years' experience.

The Board Development Officer arranged several in-house training sessions before Board meetings. Members have also attended establishment run training, as required, to support their roles. Two members attended the Annual Conference in March 2015.

The Board's relationship with the staff and Senior Management Team has remained good and we express our gratitude to them for their openness and willing support.

BOARD STATISTICS	
Recommended Complement of Board Members	20
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	15
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	15
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	3
Number of members leaving within the reporting period	3
Total Number of Board meetings during the reporting period	12
Total number of visits to the prison	591
Total number of applications received	436
Total Number of GOOD and OR segregations (Initial)	204
Total number of segregation GOOD & OR reviews held*	344
Total number of segregation GOOD & OR reviews attended by IMB	440

* not all GOOD or OR segregations result in a review, whilst a number had more than one review.

Application Statistics

Code	Subject	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Change from 2013-14	% change
A	Accommodation	41	25	12	-13	-52.0%
B	Adjudications	19	15	15	0	0%
C	Equality & Diversity (inc religion)	4	9	9	0	0%
D	Education/employment/training inc IEP	71	55	30	-25	-45%
E	Family/visits inc mail & phone	38	47	33	-14	-30%
F	Food/kitchen related	6	13	6	-7	-54%
G	Health related	39	51	71	+20	+39%
H	Property	132	102	89	-13	-13%
I	Sentence related (inc HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-cat etc)	110	77	70	-7	-9%
J	Staff/prisoner concerns inc bullying	15	22	17	-5	-23%
K	Transfers	26	32	36	+4	+13%
L	Miscellaneous	96	100	51	-49	-49%
	Total number of application categories (the number of applications received is lower, as an application can cover more than one category)	597	548	436	-112	-20%

The IMB Board has continued with a 'mixed' response to Application, some being seen in the weekly clinics with others dealt with on the Wings and around the prison in general. To date this has worked well and the clinic setting has the potential to offer a better environment for the prisoner to discuss his concerns. Unfortunately for a significant proportion of the year clinics were allocated to a shared environment which is not conducive to exploring personal concerns.

The number of Applications to the Board decreased by some 20% in the year compared to 2013-14. The reduction has been consistent across most categories with the exception of Healthcare (+39%) and Transfers (+13%).

The decline in property related Applications to IMB is welcomed, although overall numbers remain too high. The Board is aware that there has also been an increase in property issues within the prison Complaints system.

There are a number of issues which will have contributed to the overall fall in Applications:

1) The prison has progressively addressed a range of issues which have brought consistency

to a number of previous areas of concern.

2) It may also be that the restricted regime, whilst in itself altogether unwelcome, has meant that there are less opportunities for prisoners to find fault. (?)

3) The lack of staffing is well known to staff and prisoners alike and this may result in a reluctance to make Application, prisoners predicting (in many cases correctly) that the answer will be "lack of staff".

4) For a substantial period of the year, clinics were held in a shared environment possibly leading to a reluctance to attend(?)

On behalf of the Board



Godfrey E Featherstone
Chairman

June 2015

Section 8

GLOSSARY OF PRISON-RELATED ABBREVIATIONS USED

(Note – not all terms have been used in this report)

ABS Anti-Bullying System	LDR Latest Date of Release
ACCT Assessment, Care in Custody & Teamwork – replacement for F2052SH	LED Licence Expiry Date
ACR Automatic Conditional Release	LSC Learning & Skills Council
ARD Automatic Release Date	MAPPA Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
ATOS Company responsible for assessing long-term sick	MDT Mandatory Drugs Testing
BCU Briefing and Casework Unit – PS unit handling adjudication appeals	MSL Minimum Staffing Level
BME Black & Minority Ethnic	MQPL Measuring the Quality of Prison Life
C & R Control & Restraint	NOMS National Offender Manager Service – amalgamation of the Prison & Probation Services
C2W, CTW Custody to Work – pre-release focus on housing, employment and lifestyle issues	NWOW New Ways of Working
CARATS Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice & Throughcare Scheme – drug & alcohol team	OASYS Offender Assessment System – computerised risk & needs assessment
CC Cellular Confinement – a punishment	OBP Offending Behaviour Programme
CCD Criminal Casework Department (Croydon)	OCA Observation, Classification & Allocations – a Reception task
CLAIT Computer Literacy and Information Technology	OLASS Offender Learning and Skills Service (part of LSC)
CCT Criminal Casework Team (part of Home Office Immigration & Nationalities Dept)	OI/OR/OP Own Interests/Request/Protection – Segregation under Rule 45/49
CMU Case Management Unit – work on sentence planning & progress	PCT Primary Care Trust – National Health component responsible for healthcare
CNA Certified Normal Accommodation	PMU Population Management Unit (central)
CRD Conditional Release Date	POA Prison Officers' Association – the main trade union
CSH Contracted Service Hours (pre-agreed paid overtime)	POPO Prolific and Other Priority Offender
CSU Commissioning Support Unit	PPO Prisons and Probation Ombudsman
DASU Drug And Alcohol Support Unit	PPP Public Protection Panel
DH Dog Handler	PS Prison Service
EDR Earliest Date of Release	PSI Prison Service Instruction
EMU Estates Management Unit	PSO Prison Service Order – see hmprisonservice.gov.uk/resourcecentre/psispsos/listpsos
EPDG Estates Planning & Development Group	RFW Removal from Wing – a punishment
EGP Ex Gratia Payment	ROAD Remission of Added Days (up to 50%)
ETA Employment & Training Allocation	ROR Restoration of Remission – now ROAD; Risk of Reconviction
ETE Employment/Training/Education	ROTL Release on Temporary Licence e.g. to work in mess; town visits; home leave

ETS Enhanced Thinking Skills – an OBP	RRA Assistant to the RRLO
F2050 Prisoner’s basic record	RRLO Race Relations Liaison officer
F&S – Fair and Sustainable	SAU Standards Audit Unit
FLED Facility Licence Eligibility Date (when prisoner may be considered for ROTL)	SCG Safer Custody Group
FOCUS Financial Outstations and Central Unified Systems – the PS accounting system	SED Sentence Expiry Date
GOOD Good Order or Discipline – Segregation under Rule 45/49 (historically GOAD)	SIR Security Information Report
HCC Health Care Centre	SLA Service Level Agreement
HDC Home Detention Curfew – the Tag	SMARG Segregation and Monitoring Review Group
HDCED Earliest Date of Release on HDC	SMT Senior Management Team
HMCIP Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Prisons	TCF Temporary Custodial Facility
IEP Incentives and Earned Privileges – Prisoners can be on Basic, Standard or Enhanced	TOIL Time Off in Lieu (of payment)
IG Instruction to Governors	TSU Technical Support Unit – part of PS responsible for repairs/installation (“Works”)
IMB Independent Monitoring Board	VDT Voluntary Drugs Testing
	VO Visiting Order – sent out by prisoners; allows named people to visit
JSA Job-Seekers Allowance	Gold Commander – Headquarters controller for serious incidents
KPI/KPT Key Performance Indicator/Target	Silver Commander – Person in establishment in charge of serious incidents
	Bronze Commander – Local Sub Commander for serious incidents
	Operation Tornado – System to provide extra staff and resources for serious incidents