



Annual Report

1st SEPTEMBER 2014 – 31st AUGUST 2015



Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody

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SECTION 1

Statutory Role of the IMB

- 1.1 The Prison Act 1952 and the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 require every prison and IRC to be monitored by an independent Board appointed by the Secretary of State from members of the community in which the prison or centre is situated.
- 1.2 The Board is specifically charged to:
 - a) 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.
 - b) inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority as it judges appropriate, any concern it has.
 - c) 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.
- 1.3 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

Composition of Chelmsford IMB

Nick Adams - Chair and also BDO since April 2015

Lyndall Collins - Vice Chair (since January 2015)

Robert Hunt – Vice Chair (since January 2015, on sabbatical since May 2015)

Graham Herbing - Board Development Officer (until April 2015)

Diana Peacock - Vice Chair (until December 2014)

Emma Hewat

Johnson Abugu (appointed March 2015)

Gill Castle

Barry Catling

Tony Evans

Graham Finch

Mark Graham (appointed February 2015)

Stephen Harriman

Joe Hayden

Linda Jarvis (appointed July 2015)

Vikki Parlour (appointed July 2015)

Russell Pearson

Rod Salmon

Sam Smith (appointed July 2015)

Brian Wellman

SECTION 3

Description of HMP/YOI Chelmsford

- 3.1 There has been a prison on this site in Chelmsford since 1819. The original Prison was built in the traditional 'spokes of a wheel' design of three storeys - once four, when part was below ground. Three further wings have been added this century and a variety of other facilities include Healthcare Centre, Education facilities, a Gymnasium and artificial grass sports pitch, a Multi-Faith Room, Library, Kitchen, Laundry, Recycling Centre, Visitors Centre and a variety of offices housing prison and agency staff.
- 3.2 Chelmsford is currently designated a Category B Local prison and, as such, a large proportion of the prisoners held are on remand. The average stay of a prisoner at Chelmsford is just a few weeks, which leads to a high turnover, with a large number of transfers to and from Court and other establishments each day.
- 3.3. The Prison's Operational Capacity is 745.
- 3.4. Helen Carter has been Governor since March 2014.
- 3.5. HMP Chelmsford continues to hold Young Prisoners (YPs) and Adult Prisoners; both on remand and sentenced, with sentences ranging from a few weeks to life. The number of YPs, averaging around 50 throughout the reporting period, is significantly lower than in recent years.
- 3.6. During the last few years there have been significant changes in the way in which services have been provided to or on behalf of the Prison. Care UK now runs Healthcare and People Plus provides Education. In May 2015 the Probation Service was replaced in prisons by a number of Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) which now provide Resettlement services. Essex Community Rehabilitation Company subcontracts the detailed work to the National Association for the Care and Rehabilitation of Offenders (NACRO), with input from the Money Advice Centre, the National Careers Service, the Department of Works and Pensions Chelmsford and Job Centre Plus.

SECTION 4

Executive Summary

- 4.1 As a result of the Government's budget cuts, throughout much of the period covered by this report, the Prison had to operate with around 25% fewer officers than in previous years. Newly recruited officers naturally lacked practical experience and the departure of many older and more experienced members of staff compounded the problem. In addition, officers on detachment from other establishments, providing temporary cover, and often themselves with limited knowledge of the Prison and its prisoners, are unlikely to have been as effective as the officers that they replaced.
- 4.2 During the reporting period, there was a noticeable increase in levels of violence within the Prison, the numbers of Adjudications increased and the number of Prisoners who are required to be monitored closely because of concerns about the possibility of self-harm, rose by around 20%. In a survey designed to measure prisoners' quality of life, respondent prisoners reported that they felt less safe.
- 4.3 We continue to have concerns about the ability of the Healthcare providers - Care UK, to recruit and retain sufficient numbers of doctors and nursing staff to ensure the safety of prisoners. There have been occasions when they have failed to provide the doctor and nursing cover which they are contractually required to do, which in our view is unacceptable. During the reporting period the Board received a third more healthcare Applications than in the previous year and a large percentage of these related to prisoners' medication.
- 4.4 We were also very concerned that the funding for Atrium, which provides counselling services to prisoners with mental health problems, was severely cut this year, resulting in longer waits for treatment for some very troubled individuals.
- 4.5 The Board believes that the rehabilitation of prisoners, and specifically the provision of adequate support for their resettlement on leaving prison at the end of their sentences, is a vital part of the Prison's work. We are therefore concerned at the total lack of support which is given to prisoners on remand who are eventually not convicted or who do not receive a custodial sentence.
- 4.6 The provision of employment opportunities for prisoners remains very limited, with the newly introduced 'split regime' meaning that although more prisoners have jobs, they work for shorter periods, thus spending more time on the wing or in their cells. The Prison's 'Enterprise Unit', which carries out work for an external manufacturing company is an example of good practice, but the Board is disappointed that the Prison has still not been able to expand its operation.

SECTION 5

Equalities and Inclusion

- 5.1 During the reporting period, the Board received only 11 Applications which were Equality/Inclusion specific and which, although an increase on the previous year, represents only 6% of the total number of Applications received. Through its monitoring and general observations, the Board is not aware of any significant concerns in this area.
- 5.2 The Prison's Equalities team has made efforts to raise awareness of possible discrimination and has made Discrimination Incident Report forms (DIRFs) readily available to prisoners, staff and visitors. Although during the period and possibly as a result of these efforts, there was a modest increase in the number of DIRFs made, we are satisfied that these were reviewed and investigated consistently and fairly.
- 5.3 The Board is also satisfied that the Prison had in place a suitable written Equalities Policy and a robust process to allow it to monitor and deal with reported breaches.
- 5.4 Regular Equalities meetings were attended by representatives of most disciplines within the Prison, including prisoner Equality Representatives. However, we are told that the high turnover of prisoners at Chelmsford made the appointment and retention of suitable candidates a particularly difficult challenge for the Equalities team.
- 5.5 The Board feels that the Prison's understanding and evaluation of data using the 'Equalities Monitoring Tool' has matured during this reporting period. This tool enables comparison of the Prison's own statistics with data held by NOMIS for the entire prison population. It also widens the reporting and analysis of issues other than race and ethnicity, to include those relating to disability, sexual orientation, religion, age, nationality and other areas.
- 5.6 The use of Equality Impact Assessments used to review potential areas of issue, the commendable initiatives to teach sign language to staff and the assistance which was given to a transgender prisoner, demonstrate a more widespread understanding and application of the Equalities Policy within the Prison and, the Board believes, are indicative of the positive progress made in this area during the reporting period.

SECTION 6

Healthcare and Mental Health

- 6.1 The Board received 45 Healthcare Applications during the reporting period, compared with 32 in the previous year and 17 of these were medication issues; most were complaints about prisoners not being prescribed the same medication that they said they had been receiving in the community.
- 6.2 The Board is closely monitoring the efforts that the Healthcare management is taking to ensure that prisoners receive the correct and sufficient medication as soon as possible after coming into the Prison. It is however recognised that it is sometimes difficult to contact GPs to confirm previous prescriptions.
- 6.3 Recruiting and retaining trained clinical staff has continued to be an issue and there have been several Registered Nurse posts vacant throughout the year. However, the workforce has been reasonably settled with the regular use of agency staff. The Board is however very concerned that the agency tasked with supplying clinical staff has occasionally been unable to provide the necessary cover.
- 6.4 The Board is pleased to learn that two apprentices have joined the Healthcare administration team as a Prison Service initiative.
- 6.5 The Optician service was interrupted for two months, but is now well restored with a suitably trained prisoner assisting the new Optician to give general advice and help other prisoners choose spectacles.
- 6.6 The Board is also pleased to note that prisoner non-attendance at clinic appointments is now being monitored and managed, with a subsequent reduction in wasted appointments.
- 6.7 The Board is however disappointed that the funding for Atrium (Counselling Service) was severely cut in March 2015. This has resulted in longer waits for assessment and group work being put on hold with potential negative implications for the safety and welfare of the individuals concerned.
- 6.8 The Board is still concerned about the ability of the Healthcare provider, Care UK, to deliver the level of service required to meet prisoners' healthcare needs, and will continue to monitor closely the performance of this vitally important area of the Prison.

SECTION 7

Reducing Reoffending

Resettlement

- 7.1 The Board considers effective Reducing Reoffending programmes to be a key function of Chelmsford Prison.
- 7.2 During 2013/2014 Resettlement processes concerned helping prisoners nearing release with their housing, employment and training needs. In the main the Prison Service targets for these activities were met or exceeded. However, approximately 50% of the Chelmsford Prison population is on remand and these prisoners are not afforded the same support.
- 7.3 During 2014/2015 these same Resettlement processes continued within the new Reducing Reoffending structure. Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) commenced operations on 1 May 2015. Their role is to provide resettlement opportunities to prisoners who have less than one year of their sentence left to serve. These prisoners are closely monitored by CRC staff both whilst in prison and following release, to ensure compliance with programmes and supervision licences. However, given the short time the contract has been running, no data is yet available that enables the Board to make a judgement on how successful or otherwise the programme is.
- 7.4 Better basic custody screening and induction processes are expected to assist prisoners in adopting the most appropriate programmes to improve job and training opportunities on release. Prisoners with poor literacy/numeracy are required to receive additional learning support.
- 7.5 In the coming year the Board will monitor the progress and the effectiveness of the new Reducing Reoffending programme.

Education

- 7.6 A small range of qualifications is currently provided by People Plus (formerly known as A4e).
- 7.7 After an initial settling down period, the introduction of the split regime (part-time work/education) during the reporting year did not appear to adversely affect attendance rates. Of the 232 spaces that are available on a daily basis, it is reported that approximately 90% are allocated and attendance is currently at 80%.
- 7.8 In cell education is available on request for functional skills at all 5 levels but apparently is rarely taken up.

- 7.9 Poor education provision on location in D Wing (Vulnerable Prisoner Wing) has been a cause for concern for the Board during the reporting period and continues to be monitored.
- 7.10 Higher education via the Open University, is available where appropriate, following referral from the National Careers Service to those who request it.
- 7.11 The biggest barrier to delivering an effective programme of education to prisoners is the 'churn'. There are a high number of prisoners who spend a very short time in HMP/YOI Chelmsford. Often prisoners have moved to another prison before completing their qualifications and do not always re-engage with education in their new location.
- 7.12 The 'Every Contact Matters' initiative was introduced to the Prison very near the end of the reporting period to emphasise the role that all staff have in raising the importance of education for prisoners. This and a recent 'Education Open Day' aimed at those not currently attending education are positive steps towards improving the functional skills of convicted prisoners.
- 7.13 After many months without an electronic cataloguing system, new computers have been installed in the Library. The Library offers access to prisoners on all wings on a rota basis. Unfortunately, it only provides a mobile service to the segregation unit once a week and during staff shortages access to the library is curtailed.

Purposeful activity

- 7.14 The Board is concerned that that the provision of employment remains limited but notes the good practice and consistency of work activity in the areas of the Kitchen, Laundry and Recycling.
- 7.15 The Prison introduced part-time working for most prisoners in August 2014 which has led to more prisoners being employed but for shorter periods. The new system settled down quickly and the Board did not receive any Applications complaining about the change. Job allocation staff endeavour to place the few prisoners requesting full-time work in areas where it is available.
- 7.16 It does however appear that the introduction of part-time work has only increased the time in cell for prisoners who do not work.
- 7.17 Once again, as reported last year, the Board is disappointed that the Prison's 'Enterprise Unit', which undertakes work for an external manufacturing company, has still not been able to expand. The Board regrets that no new work for prisoners has been introduced this year.
- 7.18 Again, as last year, Board members have observed prisoners, in work places, playing cards or chatting, well before the end of a work session.

SECTION 8

Safer Custody

- 8.1 Safer Custody is the mechanism the prison employs to ensure that all prisoners, particularly those at risk of self-harm or bullying, are closely monitored and receive appropriate care and protection.
- 8.2 Sadly, we must record that, there has been one Death in Custody (DIC) during the reporting period. This category covers all causes of death and as the inquest has yet to be held we are unable to make further comment.
- 8.3 The Board has been concerned to see that there has been an increase in violence in the Prison during the reporting period but, from the data available to us, the precise reasons are not clear. For example, during this period the number of prisoners sent for Adjudication was higher than in previous years and the use of Incentive Earned Privileges (IEPs) was relatively low.
- 8.4 This reporting year has seen significant changes in the staff and staffing levels with a number of experienced officers leaving, the use of detached duty officers who were unfamiliar with the Prison and the recruitment of new inexperienced staff. While this process is near completion the violence numbers have not changed significantly. There have also been changes to the regime with prisoners spending more time on the wings.
- 8.5 The level of self-harm among prisoners varies significantly month to month and there is no discernable trend. Much of the variation however is due to a few individuals who self-harm frequently. Most of this self-harm results in minor injuries.
- 8.6 The number of Assessment Care in Custody Teamwork (ACCT) documents opened during the reporting period increased by more than 20% from the previous year but it is reassuring to note that self-harm incidents and threats to self-harm have reduced this year. Much of the self-harm seems to have led to minor injuries which Prison staff report to be 'goal-directed'. (For example, prisoners self-harm to attempt to achieve their own objectives such as getting transferred or avoiding transfer).
- 8.7 Supervising Officers (SOs) now have their own caseloads of ACCTs in order to even out the workload and provide better continuity of care and management for these vulnerable prisoners.
- 8.8 Nevertheless, these data reflect well on the Prison, given the significant changes in staff during this reporting period.
- 8.9 The Board is also impressed by the detailed knowledge demonstrated, by staff at all levels, of the concerns, needs and issues of individual vulnerable prisoners and of the care afforded to them.
- 8.10 Finally, it is interesting to note that, despite some evidence to the contrary, the Monitoring of Prisoner Quality of Life (MPQL) survey conducted earlier this year, highlighted that prisoners said they felt less safe than previously.

SECTION 9

Segregation Unit

- 9.1 As we reported last year, the physical condition of the Segregation Unit, in A Wing, in the oldest part of the Prison remains poor, which tends to mitigate against the otherwise excellent care provided by the Unit's officers to some of the most challenging individuals within the establishment.
- 9.2 The Board is pleased to note that, during the reporting period, the Unit's officers have continued to make timely contact with its members, enabling prisoners to have access to the Board as required.
- 9.3 Board members continued to attend and monitor the reviews of prisoners on Good Order or Discipline (GOoD) and have generally found the process to be appropriately managed and the documentation accurate.
- 9.4 The Board is also able to confirm that, following the decision of the Supreme Court of 29th July 2015, the Prison has put in place suitable processes and systems to ensure compliance.
- 9.5 During the period covered by this report, more than 200 prisoners were held in Cellular Confinement (CC) in the Segregation Unit and the Board has noted the great commitment of its officers and the care which is shown, particularly to some very difficult and/or troubled individuals.
- 9.6 The Board is however concerned at the increase in the number of prisoners being held in the Unit on GOoD and CC during the period and the perceived underlying increases in the number of prisoner Adjudications and incidents involving violence.
- 9.7 During the reporting period, we are pleased to note that there were no Dirty Protests and that the Unit's Special Accommodation was only used on four occasions and then for short periods only.

SECTION 10

Residential Services

- 10.1 As stated in last year's report, despite the refurbishment of the showers in Segregation Unit during this reporting period, the physical condition of A Wing has been very poor and has continued to deteriorate due in to its Victorian design, slow maintenance programme and prisoner action.
- 10.2 As stated in reports during the last two years, the Board believes that unless major refurbishment of the Victorian areas of the Prison is carried out, conditions will continue to deteriorate to the detriment of the well-being of the prisoners and staff.
- 10.3 'Disabled' cells have been installed in some wings but the Board continues to be concerned that Wings A, B and C Wing are still not fully accessible.
- 10.4 The daily prison budget to feed each prisoner has risen to £2.02 and despite some staff shortages the Kitchen continues to produce on site, fresh rolls, scones, buns and pies. The provision of Kosher meals has however generated a number of complaints.
- 10.5 The external areas surrounding the majority of wings have frequently been in a poor state. Cleansing of these areas by 'Yard Parties' has been hampered by the lack of supervision skills shown by relatively inexperienced officers.
- 10.6 There continues to be a problem with rats that are attracted by the large amount of food thrown out of the windows.
- 10.7 A rolling programme of replacing broken or missing grills was introduced during the reporting period and has contributed to a reduction in litter, discarded food, clothing, toiletries, cutlery and plates as well reducing the ability of prisoners to pass illicit items between cells.

SECTION 11

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	19
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	15
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	18
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	6
Number of members leaving within reporting period	1
Number of Board meetings during reporting period	12
Number of member attendances at Board meetings	133
Number of rota visits to the Establishment	207
Number of other visits (Chair/new members/meetings/special interest)	74
Total number of GOoD Reviews attended	92
Total number of meetings attended	20
Date of Annual Team Performance Review	15.05.15

SECTION 12

Applications to the Board

Code	Subject	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
A	Accommodation	12	1	1	10
B	Adjudications	3	3	0	4
C	Equality & Diversity (inc religion)	3	2	8	11
D	Education/employment/training	9	10	4	11
E	Family/visits inc mail & phone	2	8	3	5
F	Food/kitchen related	5	6	3	3
G	Health related	33	36	32	45
H	Property	21	24	25	32
I	Sentence related (inc. HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-cat etc.)	2	4	8	8
J	Staff/prisoner/detainee concerns inc bullying	14	10	13	9
K	Transfers	9	4	7	13
L	Miscellaneous	13	17	18	25
	Total number of IMB applications	126	122	122	176

SECTION 13

GLOSSARY OF ESTABLISHMENT RELATED TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS REPORT

ACCT Assessment Care in Custody Teamwork

Adjudication The formal internal disciplinary procedure for prisoners.

Application A request by a prisoner for a personal interview with the IMB

CC Cellular Confinement

CRCs Community Rehabilitation Companies

DIRFs Discrimination Incident Reporting Forms

DiC Death in Custody

GOoD Good Order or Discipline

HMP Her Majesty's Prison

IEP Incentive-based Regimes and Earned Privileges

IMB Independent Monitoring Board

MOJ Ministry of Justice

NACRO National Association for the Care and Rehabilitation of Offenders

NCS National Careers Service

NOMIS National Offender Management Information System)

SOs Supervising Officers

VP Vulnerable Prisoner

YOI Young Offenders Institution

YP Young Prisoner (aged 18 - 21 years)