



INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

HMP MAIDSTONE

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 28 FEBRUARY 2015

S1 STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

The Prison 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 its 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 with the exception of medical records.

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S3 DESCRIPTION OF MAIDSTONE PRISON

Maidstone Prison is a category C establishment for Foreign Nationals who are of interest to the Immigration and Visa Service, it has capacity for 600 inmates accommodated in 4 wings :-

Weald (capacity 149) is an Induction Wing for prisoners new to Maidstone prison. It is the only wing with double cells (38)

Thanet (capacity 174)

Medway (capacity 101)

Kent (capacity 176)

There are nine English Heritage listed buildings in the estate, including the outer wall and main entrance, the Roundhouse, the Theatre, the old Roman Catholic Chapel and the Church of the Good Shepherd. The English Heritage listing states that all these listings form a group. The Roman Catholic Chapel and the Church of the Good Shepherd are comprised within the same building. The main part of the church has been adapted to create a Multi-Faith Centre.

There are many later additions on the site. Where fixtures and fittings form part of the land and have done so since 1st July 1948, they are treated as part of the listing for listed building control, although they do not necessarily appear on the English Heritage listings.

The education in the prison is supplied by NOVUS.

Healthcare for this year was supplied by the NHS Foundation Trust of Oxleas. It is more like a GP run service as the health-care unit has no in-patient accommodation and is not open 24Hrs.

Home Office Immigration Enforcement staff work alongside Prison Staff to facilitate repatriation of the majority of inmates.

Executive Summary

The Board's report for the year ending February 2015 finds the prison in a more stable position than the previous year. The prison has now been a Foreign National Prison for over 18 months, the staff appear to have adjusted to the change in regime and this is reflected throughout the wings.

The Board is concerned with a cut in the catering budget, due to a budgeting error, and remains vigilant in ensuring that quality and quantity of the food provided does not diminish. The catering budget does not reflect the special requirements the prison is now expected to cater for, especially in relation to religious dietary requirements.

The lack of Dental Services throughout the year has remained critical, there have been several complaints made through the applications regarding the time it is taking to get an appointment and treatment. All members of the board have been approached and complained to verbally, in some instances prisoners have been waiting over a year to obtain treatment. The board expressed its concern to the commissioners but was offered no practical solution.

Fabric of the buildings is deteriorating due to the restrictions on the maintenance budget; some aspects have direct impact on the prison population and add to the tensions within the prison, for example the roof to the gym/hall leaks. For H&S reasons this means that area cannot be used, restricting opportunities for the prison population to exercise. Temporary repairs have been attempted but the hall needs a new roof. The board awaits with interest the commencement of the new maintenance contract with Carillion.

Property remains an issue, the high rate of churn and large amounts of property per prisoner add to the problem, Maidstone is no longer taking transfers in on a Friday which is having some positive effect on ensuring incoming prisoners have their property by the weekend. Planned improvements to the reception layout could not be funded.

The IMB was pleased to hear that the gardening team won first prize in the Windlesham Trophy once again and extend their congratulations to all those involved in winning this prestigious award.

S4ii Particular issues requiring a response

Staff shortages are having an impact on the amount of time the prisoners spend locked up. This results in the loss of gym sessions, education and work opportunities and the ability to make phone calls. There are some extenuating circumstances such as staff sickness levels and new officers not yet completing training. The prison is also required to provide detached duty staff to provide support elsewhere.

Multi Faith Centre lacks sufficient space for Friday prayers; the limit on how many prisoners can be safely accommodated has now been reached. The multi faith centre does not have much more potential to be reconfigured and alternative accommodation needs to be arranged.

S4iii Previous Concerns

The number of prisoners remaining in prison after completion of their sentence awaiting deportation remains an issue.

S5

5.1 Resourcing

There remain problems in managing the wings with appropriate free movement of prisoners. There is insufficient flexibility to cover sick leave or unusual events and segregation was frequently left with too few and/or inexperienced officers as trained officers had to cover elsewhere. The consequence of this was that access to telephone, showers and exercise was frequently compromised. In addition there were frequent problems with identifying the appropriate IMB member to call and a failure to notify IMB at all on occasions. The situation improved during the last quarter of the reporting year as a result of the SMT responding to the board's concerns. The prison has now had the resourcing reviewed in light of its change of role, as requested in the previous annual report. The board hope that some of the pressures relating to rapid churn and a more volatile population will be recognised and addressed.

5.2 Communications

Communications with the Secretariat in the reporting year were patchy, especially in relation to the management of the recruitment process, resulting in long periods of inactivity both in advertising and interviews. In the prison there were many instances of scheduled meetings being cancelled with little or no notification. Attendance at

board meetings has been excellent and we have been given comprehensive updates at those meetings and informally by the SMT.

5.3 Equality and Inclusion

As reported in the previous year, there is an impact on the chaplaincy due to the number of different religious denominations. There is also an impact on the budget of the catering department because of the need to provide various religious considerations to the prisoners diet for example Halal meat and different requirements for religious festivals.

There are also security and H&S issues raised concerning the number of Muslim prisoners wishing to attend Friday Prayers and the amount of space available in the multi; faith centre.

5.4 Health Care

Dissatisfaction with Health Care is reflected in the number of applications up from 27 in the previous reporting year to 44.

The Governor had to meet with the head of Oxleas re ongoing health care problems .New appointments at management level and additional staff have resulted in substantial improvements of attitude and productivity except in the area of dentistry.

The lack of Dental Services throughout the year has remained critical, there have be several complaints made through the applications regarding the time it is taking to get an appointment and treatment. All members of the board have been approached and complained to verbally, in some instances prisoners have been waiting over a year to obtain treatment. Both the board and the Governor expressed its concern to the commissioners Oxleas and NHS England but were offered no practical solution. As of the 28th February there were 180 on the waiting list, the majority deemed urgent, this represents 30% of the prison population in need of dental care.

5.5 Purposeful Activity

The change of regime and consequent increased rate of churn has meant that the work opportunities have had to change as some are no longer viable. Whilst appreciating the skills required for the 4 colour printing machine are no longer available amongst the prison population, the length of time it has taken to remove the printer and install the 2 colour printer is of concern as it has seriously affected the work opportunities in this area. The board is pleased that alternative employment will be coming on line

in the current year with the opening of two new workshops, both giving the prisoners useful work opportunities in recycling. The process for developing new work streams and contracts has been very disappointing, resulting in long periods of downtime in most workshops. It is to be hoped that this will improve as occupying prisoners is essential to keeping tensions down under the new regime.

5.6 Resettlement

The majority of prisoners, being of interest to the Home Office Immigration Enforcement, will be leaving the country on the completion of their sentence or when arrangements have been made with the receiving country. Changes to the immigration appeals system have led to several applications to the IMB with regard to the length of time it takes the border agency to respond to appeals.

5.7 Safer Custody

Open ACCT documents are routinely examined during each statutory visit by the IMB to ensure correct procedures, regular reviews and meaningful observations are recorded. Members attending reviews in Segregation have commented positively on the professionalism of staff in their Statutory Reports. The process of managing ACCTs and Observations logs had been reviewed and improved.

5.8 Segregation, Care & Separation, Close Supervision

The CSU has a small number of cells to hold prisoners for disciplinary or own protection reasons.

There is one special unfurnished cell for particularly difficult prisoners this has been used very rarely and usually only for short periods (hours as opposed to days.)

IMB members have seen all prisoners relocated to CSU within a 72 hour framework during the year. It is the member's responsibility to ensure all understand the reasons for their being there and that the reasons are legitimate. Members have attended regular reviews to consider the continued segregation of prisoners throughout the year; members are able to express dissatisfaction with management decisions.

5.9 Residential Services

All areas of the prison are inspected regularly by members of the board during their Statutory Visit. Although the general condition of the wings is good given the age of the buildings, shower areas remain an issue due to their poor condition which is exacerbated by drainage problems. The

maintenance contract has been given to Carillion and it is hoped improvements will be forthcoming.

Problems reported on last year relating to Gym sessions have now been resolved although the condition of the roof to the sports hall has led to sessions having to be cancelled as the hall becomes unsafe when it rains. Improvements have been made to the problems relating to the kitchen in last years report, the catering manager visits the wings on a regular basis and tries to resolve issues with the staff and prisoners more quickly. The comment books availability does remain problematic.

S6

6.1 Induction and Reception

The board remains concerned about the Induction offered to prisoners, prisoners are still being called after the board member arrives to give their talk and Induction has been cancelled on many occasions. The problem of no officer being present also remains.

Pressure on reception remains, although the prison not taking prisoners on a Friday has helped the situation relating to transferred prisoners getting their property in a timely fashion. Failures in the transfer system however have meant that property issues are still a major concern with prisoner applications to the board.

6.2 Time out of cell

The improving staffing levels have meant the system whereby only one wing at a time had evening time out of the cell has been relaxed. There have however been problems relating to telephone calls due to the number of stand downs during the year, this has also had an impact on hospital appointments and dental services,

6.3 Security

There has been a continued problem through out the year in relation to drugs, especially the increased use of “spice.”

Prisoner’s use of mobile phones continues to be a major issue; members of the board attending reviews have expressed an opinion that prisoners see being caught in possession of a phone as a minor inconvenience.

Technology designed to interrupt the use of mobile phones continues to be discussed with little progress.

The IMB welcome the return of the search dogs to aid officers in combating the problem both of drugs and mobile phones.

Board Members attended several Security Meetings throughout the year unfortunately these meetings were often cancelled or changed at short notice.

S7 The work of the Independent Monitoring Board

7.1 BOARD STATISTICS

Recommended Complement of Board Members

12

Number of Board Members at the start of the reporting period

11

Number of Board Members at the end of the reporting period

9

Number of new Members joining within the reporting period

1

Number of Members leaving within the reporting period

3

Number of attendances at meeting other than Board Meetings

Total number of visits to the prison

Total number of applications received 324

7.2 BOARD ACTIVITIES

There have been a number of resignations and absence due to health problems or work commitments throughout the year. This has created a lot of pressure on a small number of members. The unacceptable delays in advertising and recruitment have made the situation considerably worse although we were able to gain one new appointee

Apart from the main duties of the Board, members have special areas of interest where they attend meetings as observers and report back to the Board. The lack of available members and the changes resulting from SMT getting to grips with the new regime have limited the board's engagement in these areas.

Members have attended National Training Courses organised by the IMB Secretariat. They also attended Kidlington to observe advanced Control and Restraint training at the National Tactical Response Group Centre. Two members attended the IMB National Conference.

During the year Board Development was promoted by a variety of prison staff being invited to speak at Board Meetings about their duties and matters of interest in the prison.

7.3 PRISONER APPLICATIONS 2014/2015

	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13
A Accommodation	12	1	9
B Adjudications	2	4	6
C Diversity	9	2	3
D Education/Training/IEP	32	25	25
E Family Visits	12	16	24
F Food/Kitchen	4	10	11
G Health Related	44	27	27
H Property	74	71	28
I Sentence	23	33	9
J Staff/Prisoner relationships	12	11	21
K Transfers	11	7	9
L Miscellaneous	49	33	27
M Immigration/Deportation	29		
N Resettlement	11		
Total	324	240	199

Breakdown of Applications by Ethnicity

A1	Indian	10
A2	Pakistani	6
A9	Any Other Asian	14
B1	Caribbean	52
B2	African	77
B9	Any Other Black	8
M3	WH/Black Caribbean	1
M9	Any Other Mixed	10
O9	Any Other	1
W1	White British	1
W9	Any Other White	130
NS	Not Stated	14