



HMP/YOI Elmley

Annual Report 2015

1 November 2014

to

31 October 2015

Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody

SECTION 1

STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

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.

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

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SECTION 3

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

HMP Elmley is a local prison on the Isle of Sheppey in Kent. For a long period it was part of the 'Sheppey cluster' of the three prisons on the island; it is now a stand alone establishment. The baseline Certified Normal Accommodation (CNA) is 995 and the Operational Capacity (OPCAP) is 1252. Actual occupancy in 2014 was at the maximum level constantly. As like other prisons in the south east of England it struggled to deal with the pressures created by the difficulty in recruiting staff and thus of between a number of staff vacancies, it was granted a temporary lowering of OPCAP. This eased the pressures to a degree and allowed management to sustain a revised regime that created a safer and healthier establishment

It is the local prison for the whole of Kent, housing remand and sentenced adult prisoners (Category B & C) and now remands and sentenced young offenders. The prison continues to house a large number of Vulnerable prisoners, Foreign Nationals, those with Drug Dependency issues, Mental Health issues and Life sentenced prisoners.

SECTION 4

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1 The Board commends the management team for the manner it coped with the critical situation in mid 2014 when the prison was operating short of 36 staff in post. It is a credit to the staff generally that they sustained all the basics, and as much of a very limited regime as was possible. It is further noted that the Head of NOMS visited to give support and assisted by allowing a reduction in the operating capacity, which gave some immediate relief and created a 'safer' prison; as did the commencement in due course detached duty staff being allocated.
- 2 An experienced governor grade who was leaving for 'pastures new' wrote 'Elmley has been like no other prison I have worked at and it is difficult to explain in words why I make that statement. The people who work there are dedicated to what they do and incredibly resilient in the face of adversity. You get the job done no matter what the problems are.'
- 3 Good to note that Elmley has re-achieved the standard **for Investors in People Accreditation** during 2015
- 4 The Board congratulate Michael Stephens, the Gardens and Horticultural Instructor on his award of an individual commendation as part of the current year's **Windlesham Trophy Awards** (National Prison's Garden Competition) for his work on the Memorial Garden.
- 5 It is noted that Elmley has been selected to run the new body camera scheme which rolled out from the 1st June 2015. The trial runs until the end of December and it was anticipated that it would prove to be a strong tool in ensuring staff and prisoner safety. Although there remains a suspicion amongst a few staff that the evidence might be used against them, generally it has been welcomed by staff as an asset.
- 6 For the 6 months up to May 2015 the violence figures, which cover all acts of violence against both staff and prisoners, Elmley had come out as the best performing prison out of its comparator group (Nottingham, Highdown, Bullingdon and Forest Bank) with the lowest level of violence. This is a credit to the establishment and demonstrates the progress achieved in ensuring safety and stability compared to last summer. It is anticipated that the body camera will assist in continuing this positive trend.
- 7 The Head of Public Sector Prisons, Phil Copple, visited Elmley in May and spent the day with senior management, visited all round the prison and conversed with prisoners. He met with the chair of the Board and expressed how much progress had been at Elmley and that all the signs were that progress would continue. He acknowledged that small reduction in operational capacity had contributed to Elmley being a safer prison and that would continue for the time being, as would additional hours for staff and detached duty. He was less able to relate what might be happening to ensure that Elmley could recruit permanent staff, which is the only real solution.

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- 8 At the time of the Inspection in 2014, Elmley had 45 staff off work sick. The Board had expressed its concern as it was then one of the highest sickness rates in the prison estate and clearly impacted negatively on the delivery of the regime. Management's response was to initiate a new proactive staff sick reduction scheme. By November 2015 staff sick had reduced to 23, of whom 18 were in the officer grades. It is clear that Elmley is doing its utmost to help itself revive.
- 9 Elmley continues to house prisoners with mental problems who would be better served in dedicated secure mental health facilities. Because of the shortage of places, very few of these prisoners get moved there despite the need.
- 10 It is to the credit of staff, and heartening, that there have been no self inflicted deaths in 2015 and only one from natural causes despite an increasing number of more elderly prisoners, (165 over 50 years of age).
- 11 The problems with the prison Information Technology system have continued despite some modifications being introduced. This results in a degree of frustration both to Board members direct and to those we go to seek information.
- 12 The Prisoner Consultative Committee has been completely revamped during 2015 and now meets regularly with a clear agenda and a more formal structure. Issues raised are dealt with more expeditiously and there is a genuine two way exchange of information. It has played a vital role in keeping prisoners informed and in meeting their concerns that the prison is doing its best to meet their needs and well being. The latest development has been to initiate a separate forum of lifer prisoner representatives, due to the high numbers held at Elmley, to try and deal with some of their more specialist needs in terms of their progress and meeting their sentence plan requirement.

FUNERAL

- 13 The funeral of PC Dave Phillips in Liverpool with its solemn blue line of police officers was an impressive, moving and fitting tribute. On a smaller scale in the past, a final tribute to a serving prison officer when colleagues in No1 best uniform lined the route to the funeral service was as moving and impressive. Sadly that appears to no longer be the case. No1 uniform is no longer issued to staff, the Board where advised a buffer stock is retained just for such occasions. When Elmley had need to draw upon its stock it proved totally inadequate. It could provide less than 20% of the necessary uniforms, resulting in the numbers lining the route where in a 'variety of clothing'. The turnout was impressive and moving, but lacked the impact that such an occasion merited. The Prison Service is a uniformed Service, neither the armed forces nor the police would allow such an occasion to be other than formal, dignified and appropriately attired! If the best the Prison Service can do is to keep a buffer stock, it needs to be MORE than ADEQUATE TO MEET ALL OCCASIONS. By coincidence this is being typed on Remembrance Sunday, which makes it only more relevant and poignant.

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- 14 Would the Head of NOMS indicate that adequate provision has been made to provide No1 uniform for all staff when required for formal occasions.
- 15 There are two small but vitally important departments that contribute substantially to a happy, healthy and safe environment in any establishment; they are the kitchen and the works department. Both have faced considerable change, the kitchen has a monopoly supplier for all food, with deliveries only once a week any error in the order results in a hurried change to the advertised menu, which at times raises queries from prisoners. There is, in the Boards view, an overdependence on frozen vegetables as opposed to fresh. With many establishments being in rural areas, many caterers would be able to secure produce at a competitive price. Secondly the kitchen relies heavily on the works department for the maintenance of its equipment. Since the decision to change the arrangements and again use a monopoly to provide all works services, the system is failing; ovens wait extended periods to be repaired as does general maintenance. Since Carillion took over, there has been a water leak at Elmley, the Board are advised that such occurrences in the past would have been dealt with in a matter of days. Despite holes being dug, the leak has continued unceasing for at least 5 weeks already. The Board are advised that all requests for maintenance work has to go to a central Carillion Office to be prioritised and argued over as to whether it is in the contract, and this apparently appears this can take weeks. What control does the Governor have in requesting work to be carried out and its priority, surely as a contractor to the Governor, should have the final say? It does not appear so at the moment.
- 16 Prison meetings generally have been better attended, organised and productive in terms of outcomes. Due to various pressures these are sometimes cancelled or postponed, which the Board understands, but as volunteers it can be a little frustrating when we are not advised, and therefore unable to attend the revised date.

IMB CLERK

- 17 The Board has now had 3 clerks in a 12 month period, and has found this a little disruptive. We remain mindful of the pressures on the establishment and the heavy demands placed on the administration staff, so are able to keep this in perspective. We rely heavily on the services of our clerk and are appreciative of the support, help and advice they provide.

APPLICATIONS

- 18 The number of Applications from prisoners to the Board is still too high despite a reduction (604 down from 857) last year. The largest number were on the subject of property, despite sterling efforts by Elmley reception staff to resolve problems, this would appear to still be a national issue that does need addressing. The next main issues were health and transfers, we always receive courtesy and help from our healthcare staff, and it is clear that some prisoners are seeking to be on a specific drug. The one area of some concern is the long waiting list for dental treatment, which never seems to get any shorter. It raises a question as to whether the establishment has sufficient provision.

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- 19 The processing of an application by the prison has improved, but a number that the Board receive are about not receiving an answer from the Request and Complaint process. The Board accept some prisoners are frivolous and will persist hoping they will eventually get the answer they want, so no system will be perfect, but the more the internal system is effective, the more prisoners will have confidence in it and it will not only ease their frustration, but it will allow the Board more time to be effective and engage with more prisoners.
- 20 As a Board we are aware of the progress made at Elmley in moving the establishment forward, there remains much to do, and plans are afoot. It is felt pertinent to record some of the statistical information demonstrating the extent to which measurable progress can be shown:
- 25% reduction in adjudications compared to 2014
 - Violent incidence on staff and prisoners fallen by 32%
 - Self harm down by 61% compared to 2014
 - Number of live ACCT'S down by over 50%
 - 2014 - 10 deaths – 6 self- inflicted - 4 natural causes
 - 2015 - 1 death – natural causes
 - 29 search operations - Recovered - 130 mobile phones - 78 drugs find - 40 SIM CARDS etc
 - 63% Reduction in number of prisoners on Methadone and Suboxone
 - First Prison in the country to have a local policy on the management of spice.
- 21 The Prison was subject to a follow up Inspection in mid November, and it was encouraging that the verbal feedback confirmed the Board's assessment that the prison had made considerable progress. The Chief Inspector announced that the management team had got their priorities right and concentrating on Safety and Decency was the right approach. He stated, Elmley is now a calmer, less tense environment, and the reduction in violence levels is commendable, as is the steps undertaken to educate and warn of the dangers of NPS. There remain a number of 'good housekeeping issues' to be addressed but I am confident that the staff can build and consolidate on what has been achieved.
- 22 It was expressed by the Inspectorate that that the population mix with an ever growing number of medium/long term residents was a distraction in that the prison was not in a position to meet their training requirements, and thus it undermined its core function of being a large local prison with resettlement obligations.

PARTICULAR ISSUES REQUIRING A RESPONSE

22 Particular Issues Requiring a Response from Minister:

1. When will the triple occupancy of cells be eliminated from HMP Elmley?
2. When will the OMU unit be staffed fully and staff retained to complete OASYS and HDC work to a high standard and expeditiously?
3. When will more adequate provision be made for Lifers in training prisons, as local prisons are not provided with a regime that meets their training needs?
4. When will more places be provided for sex offenders who require to undergo specialist sex offender treatment programmes?
5. Will the Minister explain why the prison was not allowed to rebid for the hospital laundry contract when both parties wished it to continue?
6. Will the Minister advise the prison, which commercial laundry contracts they will be able to submit a bid?
7. What action is being taken to ensure sufficient psychiatric places are available for prisoners suffering from acute mental health problems in order that they can be transferred once diagnosed?

23 Particular Issues Requiring a Response from NOMS:

1. There appears to be a national shortage of some kit items supplied centrally. What is being done to resolve this expeditiously?
2. Property and its movement remains an issue. What measures are being taken centrally to establish a solution to the management of prisoner property?
3. The headquarters review group on prison laundries has only managed to remove work from the very efficient Elmley laundry. It has now been deliberating for over 12 months, when will it give more positive and tangible support to Elmley, and supply it with the tonnage of work it can handle.
4. The waiting list for opticians and dentists are of concern, has sufficient funding been allocated to these areas?
5. Would NOMS confirm that an adequate 'buffer stock' of No 1 uniforms is maintained and available for all officers requiring it for formal occasions.
6. It was announced at the IMB National Conference 2015, that the OASYS document was under review and would be simplified. Also that the staffing and support for the OMU department was also under review. When might the outcomes of these reviews be known, and what action is being taken to ensure OMU's are fully staffed?
7. When will the current absurd position with reference to the contract let to Carillion for works services be resolved, and can clear advice be given as to the Governor's authority in ordering work and getting it done.

24 Particular Issues Requiring a Response from Management:

- 1 Shortfall in attendance at the bi-monthly Equality and Inclusion Meetings needs addressing.
- 2 Are measures in hand to fully complement the OMU in order that backlogs of essential work can be eliminated?
- 3 What steps are being taken to address the low attendance rates on many classes and some workshops?
- 4 What action is being taken to ensure that prisoners on medical appointments are being notified and sent by the wing staff to Healthcare?

SECTION 5

MAIN AREAS OF THE PRISON

POPULATION

- 25 Local prisons face an eclectic population of young and old, (holding 84 under 21 year olds and 165 over 50 with the eldest being 88). A mixture of 758 sentenced prisoners, 251 on remand and 87 recalls to prison. On average the remands spend less than 3 months at Elmley as do on average 330 of the sentenced, resulting in a constant high turnover of prisoners. This places a high pressure on Reception and leads to issues over prisoners' property, especially transfers. As the primary daily task is getting prisoners ready for court, transfers and discharges, and then receiving back in to the prison, the time available for property issues is very limited especially under the reduced staffing. The amount of property accumulated by some prisoners is excessive and the Board have to ask if 'volumetric control' still functions. Despite all the pressures it is at least heartening that the number of applications to the Board has reduced from the peak of last year.
- 26 At the other end of the spectrum there are over 500 prisoners serving sentences that potentially require an OASYS Document to be prepared. This is a time consuming task that falls to an already stretched staff, and despite some inroads being made into the backlog, there were approximately 300 outstanding at the end of 2014, this still stands currently at 180. The Inspection Report published in November 2014 recommended that 'The OMU should be sufficiently staffed to ensure the prison can deliver timely OASYS documents, sentence planning and regular offender supervisor contact with prisoners.' The Inspectorate unfortunately never quantify 'sufficiently staffed', and we are no experts! It is doubted though that current staffing of the unit meets the Inspectors expectation. More needs to be done to assist local prisons if this task is to be completed expeditiously and sentence plans established in good time. There remains the other issue that no Cat D establishment will accept a prisoner on transfer until it is all completed.

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- 27 This mixture of Remands, Sentenced, Young Offender, Drug Abusers, Sex Offenders requiring vulnerable conditions, Foreign Nationals, Lifers, IPP, Mentally ill, and the Aged and Infirm, and Self Harmers are all wanting their particular needs met and space in which to feel secure and safe. This is the task that the staff face daily in an overcrowded prison originally designed for another purpose.
- 28 The pressure is first noticed on the Induction Wing, which for all too long has not been able to provide an adequate induction programme. New receptions have invariably had to move off the wing within 24 hours in order to accommodate the next day's arrivals. Management has initiated a revamp to the procedure to ensure the programme is officer controlled and covers 2 days, although this entails some receptions having to return to the wing to complete it. There are further plans in formulation that seek to relieve the pressure on the induction wing.
- 29 The reality of holding 120 lifers and 178 sex offenders with very little movement out to a training prison is a real problem as these are groups with specialised needs and there are no appropriate training programmes available, and prisoners are unable to make progress with their sentence plan, or prepare adequately for parole reviews. A former Director General of the Prison Service when giving evidence to the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee said in evidence, 'Local prisons act much more as transit camps.' As a Board we believe local prisons should and do have a greater role than that, but for the 2 groups mentioned above, Elmley is not even meeting that criteria.
- 30 With so much pressure, the slight reduction in operational capacity made a huge difference in delivering a healthy, decent, secure and safe environment for both staff and prisoners. The Board has long advocated that the 'three person cells' are not 'fit for purpose'. There is now some discussion and proposals in this area to reduce such cells. It centres on losing the equivalent number of single cells. The Board would caution such a singleton approach, which removes an element of the flexibility so necessary in a large local. It advocates that using a combination of a reduction of operational capacity of say 40 places and some loss of single cells, then the progress that has been achieved is both enhanced and sustained. This clearly should have no repercussions on Elmley in terms of staffing or budget. It was clear that the Head of NOMS and the Head of Public Sector Prisons were clear when they arranged and supported such action, that such reductions help to facilitate healthier and safer prisons. The media reporting on current Inspection Reports of large inner city local prisons are stating that many are being deemed as unsafe, dirty and providing an unpredictable and poor regime. Action needs to be taken to ensure all our prisons are healthy and are delivering a safer prisoner orientated and secure regime. The Board can only speak with authority in respect of Elmley.

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EQUALITY & INCLUSION

- 31 The Equality & Inclusion (E & I) policy at HMP Elmley is managed by a team comprising of 6 members of staff, led by Governor Grade. This team is also responsible for Violence Reduction and Suicide Prevention.
- 32 E & I meetings are held bi-monthly for key members of staff, the Chaplaincy, prisoner representatives and other agencies. In general, these meetings are not well attended. Regular forums are organised for the traveller community and elderly prisoners. The UKBA holds weekly meeting for Foreign Nationals and it is encouraging to note that the number of detainees held in Elmley has shown a measured reduction over the past few years.
- 33 Discrimination Complaints - Many minor discrimination issues are addressed by Houseblock management and staff without resort to a formal complaint being raised via the Discrimination Incident Reporting Form (DIRF) system. However there were 22 DIRFs raised and resolved by the E & I team throughout this reporting period.

New initiatives include:

- 34 Organised activities for prisoners over 60 including gardening classes and carpet bowls.
- 35 Attendance by members of staff on a new Civil Service E Learning online training course entitled "Unconscious Bias."
- 36 Provision of consultation and advice for ex members of the Armed Forces, who are currently prisoners in Elmley, by the Soldiers Sailors and Airforce Families Association (SSAFFA).
- 37 In conclusion, it is the view of the Board that the E & I Team complies effectively with the prison's Equality & Inclusion Policy. In critique the shortfall in attendance at the bi-monthly E & I Meetings, should be addressed by the management chain. It is recommended that prior to the SSAFFA initiative being implemented, the number and identity of prisoner ex members of the Armed Forces should be established.

EDUCATION, LEARNING AND SKILLS

- 38 The Inspection report in 2014 reported that the education and vocational training provision provided by The Manchester College was overall inadequate, as was the leadership and management. The prison, however, had just been allowed to appoint its own learning and skills manager and it was noted that improvements had started to take place. The report also noted there was a high requirement (30% of the population) that needed to improve their skills in English and mathematics. But the provision was not sufficient to meet the population needs. Waiting lists were long and participation had declined. Attendance at activities was erratic and was declining, for education it was as low as 43%. Nor was sufficient use made of the Toe by Toe reading scheme (now Turning Pages by the Shannon Trust) despite many having very low skills in of literacy.

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- 39 The education department has been attempting to address some of the issues, basic education classes have been moved onto the foreign national's wing, and there has been a greater emphasis on 'outreach education' with it taking place in all workshops, segregation unit, health care and HB6. Patrol staff will track all non-attendees, and record reasons. The Board welcomes this improvement but remains concerned about the attendance levels.
- 40 The liaison volunteer for the Shannon Trust Reading scheme regularly trains mentors, but the high turnover of certain groups of prisoner means all too often they are transferred out. It is to be hoped that greater use can be made of this voluntary scheme.
- 41 Prisoners, particularly now that more 'long term prisoners' are remaining at Elmley, are asking if higher level courses can be introduced to the syllabus. This is being looked into.

HEALTHCARE AND MENTAL HEALTH

Inpatients and Mental Health

- 42 The care in the Inpatients department is provided by IC24.
- 43 The ban on smoking continues to be enforced in the Inpatients department.
- 44 The Board are concerned about the number of prisoners that are kept in the department because of the delay in securing a place for them in an appropriate psychiatric accommodation. The delay after diagnosed needs can often be many weeks rather than days, thus resulting in bed-blocking and extra pressure on the nursing staff. The staff is to be commended for their care of the prisoners in this department.
- 45 Custodial Managers and Governors are supportive of the staff. The Board are concerned that officers are still not allocated to the department on a regular basis, thus leaving the decision of unlocking prisoners to the nursing staff. This can prove difficult due to the number of cases of prisoners who are mentally ill or prone to violence.
- 46 The lack of provision of mental health care continues to be of concern to the Board. The staff in this department are committed and work hard to assist the patients in very difficult circumstances. They received very high praise from the Chief Inspector at the recent Inspection of the prison.

Outpatients Department

- 47 This department is efficiently run by helpful and cheerful staff. Long-term chronic disease continues to be monitored by well trained staff. Triage/head nurse clinics continue to be held on a weekly basis.

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48 One of the biggest problems is non-attendance for appointments. All house blocks are issued with a list on the day of appointments, but still the amount of wasted time because of prisoners not being sent to the outpatients is not acceptable, this is of concern to the Board.

49 The waiting lists of opticians and dental appointments is still of concern to the board up to a five week waiting list for the Optician and up to four weeks for dental treatment

PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY

50 The laundry has been 'the jewel in the crown' of industries at Elmley in its high production, efficiency and the quality of output. At its peak it was managing 37 tons of washing a week. Its workforce of about 40 prisoners worked a full day, including working through the lunch period by having a 'snack' provided at their place of work. This was due to the commitment and enthusiasm of the instructors in the workshop.

51 This would appear to be the very kind of activity and engagement of prisoners that the new Justice Minister has stated should be the norm, and which we as a Board endorse and support. Unfortunately that is not the current situation. A NOMS committee commenced a review of prison laundries in November 2014, one of its early decisions was to re-allocate the laundry of two of the large London prisons elsewhere. Elmley had a contract to undertake all the laundry for a large London hospital, they were very satisfied with the service Elmley provided, and when the contract was due for renewal in early 2015 the hospital had expected that Elmley would continue with the work. The prison was informed that it could not even bid for the contract as politically it had been decided prisons should be excluded. Additionally work from contracts in Kent has also declined. This has resulted in a sharp decline in the tonnage now processed, as it is only 8 tons. In the past the laundry has been generating £740,000 of real income, this has now declined to £280,000.

52 When staff have worked hard to develop a thriving industry, which made real money and taught prisoners a skill, it is borderline scandalous that so little support has been forthcoming from the powers that be. Staff are now disillusioned as what they had achieved has been eroded away by decisions beyond their comprehension.

53 The NOMS committee is still sitting and reviewing 12 months later, its deliberations however do not seem to have reached any conclusions, and certainly none that have benefitted the laundry at Elmley.

54 The work ethic in a local prison is always difficult. The high turnover of prisoners, the high percentage of remands who are not required to work, the need to meet the court commitments, the number of prisoners on drug dependency programmes, the low skill levels, the proportion of vulnerable prisoners, the mentally ill, and those only wanting a transfer to somewhere else. With all that to contend with, to have developed an industry of the quality of the laundry at Elmley, in which prisoners were more than ready to work, is something that should be cherished and supported and not something that should be allowed to wither on the vine.

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- 55 The Board asked the Head of Prison Industries what is being done to restore work to the very efficient laundry at Elmley. Surely the level of work output and achievements by the laundry staff at Elmley must be known at Headquarters, so why have they starved it of work and let it drift. The Board have to ask if there is a concealed plan to shut it, if so why not be honest and come clean. Elmley laundry has proved its potential, and that needs to be sustained, encouraged and supported.
- 56 The Board ask the Minister of Justice why prisons are now restricted in what contracts they are allowed to bid for, when previously they were encouraged to seek commercial work.
- 57 The dispiriting period in the summer of 2014 when all the workshops were closed for lack of staff, has not led fortunately to the commercial firms who supply the work moving their custom elsewhere. The Prison's relationship is clearly sound and the work has returned, and an additional contractor has been recruited. It remains a concern that Elmley still relies on detached duty staff and additional hours by its own staff to sustain the regime. All too frequently currently, particularly when there too many bed watches and hospital escorts, the staffing available is inadequate resulting in the closure of workshops. Elmley is indebted to the staff on detached duty, without them the regime would at a minimum if not non-existent.
- 58 Two officers from Portland after returning there, wrote to Elmley stating 'It's us two from Portland, just saying a few lines to thank you for all you did to help and support us whilst we were at Elmley on detached duty, you are a great team with a really good spirit and get a difficult job done in adverse conditions whilst working with on-going staffing shortages. We have a lot of fond memories about our time with you; it was an honour and pleasure to work alongside you all.'
- 59 Two others wrote 'Jane and I are wanting to say a huge thank you for looking after us so well while we were on detached duty. We have done detached duty for several years, but we were anxious about starting in a new establishment and being 245 miles away from our families. Our anxieties were soon exchanged to feelings of 'being part of something special. Yes. We mean you guys.'
- 60 Detached duty staff can never be as effective as staff in post. As a) they have travelling time and some come from the far north, and b) they neither know the geography of the establishment nor its routines or policies, so are less able to answer queries from prisoners. A Board member was recently stopped by an officer who explained they were on detached duty and had been allocated to visits but did not know where that was and could he give directions. That put into perspective the scale of the problem of unfamiliar staff in unfamiliar surroundings. It is of note how positively the detached duty staff talk about the welcome they receive from the Elmley staff, and the fact they comment positively on the manner in which the prison is run. Last year the establishment was 36 officer staff short,

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that has been reduced to 21 by November 2015, and it is now known that 9 officer will be on detached duty from Dover. This should ease the pressure on Elmley's staff, but there may still be pressure at peak leave times, depending on which establishment is controlling which staff.

- 61 This is critical, as having secured the commercial contracts, the lower levels of productivity due to closures has in some cases made their continuance less certain. FloPlast has had to be 'wooded' and has changed its location to make it a more of a priority workshop. The original expected income of £50,000 is now more likely to be £24,000, and Textiles anticipated to make £8,500 will come in at about £5,000. Tea-boats is meeting all expectations and is now manned by prisoners from the vulnerable wing to give them greater work opportunities.
- 62 Industries are currently 4 staff below complement as 2 were recruited as officers and 2 others were promoted to a higher grade. Action is in place to recruit replacements, but the process entailed means that it will be 2-3 months before they might be in post.
- 63 Industrial Cleaning Training saves prison £140,000 a year in bio clean ups. It employs 20/30 prisoners and they all get British Institute of Cleaning Certificates, most at the top level 3. This enhances job prospects. Resettlement frequently ask the Industrial Cleaning Workshop staff for details. This has replaced in effectiveness the laundry as 'jewel in the crown.'

RESETTLEMENT

- 64 From January 2015 KSCRC won the contract and took this function away from the prison service. This was not fully functional until May 2015.
- 65 It is staffed by a pool of people, which gives a rolling workforce which causes a lack of continuity, but this should soon be coming to an end as permanent staff are in the process of being appointed in October of this year.
- 66 Despite this position there appears to be no backlog in the department, which is to be commended.
- 67 Resettlement see every new prisoner and they asked to complete a questionnaire which will form the basic of their file and plans for their release.
- 68 Three months before release the team will see every prisoner, to ensure that their housing needs are met.

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SAFER CUSTODY

- 69 In the reporting period there has been a decline in the number of violent incidents in the prison. Serious incidents continue to be reported to the National Operations Unit from which a formal prosecution of the prisoner's involved may ensue.
- 70 The setting up of the Violence Reduction and Safer Custody Team last year has proved the value of the strategy, the hard work of the team is beginning to yield dividends. However the attendance at violence reduction meetings has been disappointing on some occasions, this could have been due to operational commitments. The Board believe that the discussions at the violence reduction meetings have gone a long way into the success that has been clearly shown over the past year, reducing violent incidents by almost 50% showing the importance of this strategy.
- 71 The Board are pleased to report the role of the Listeners has been excellent, they are well trained by the Samaritans and have carried out their tasks efficiently and with dedication and the prisoners have made full use of their services. The Listeners and Samaritan Team have been presented with an award by the High Sheriff of Kent for their work within the prison.

CARE AND SEPARATION UNIT (CSU) (previously Segregation)

- 72 There are 2 SOs, 1CM, 1 Governor and 14 officers on the Care and Separation Unit. The Board is pleased to report that during the year systems have been put in place to provide care plans for relocation and transfer of prisoners. The office has been reorganised enabling the staff to have easy and quick access to paper work. The staff have dealt with some difficult situations on the wing and they are to be praised for their handling of these. Showers are offered on alternate days at the request of the prisoners. Access to exercise and phone calls have been provided when staff are available to supervise. During the year detached staff have been allocated to CSU which has been largely successful and those staff have worked hard to fit in with the regime at Elmley.
- 73 The Board attends as many GOOD reviews as possible . There have been instances in the last year when the GOOD reviews have not been conducted in line with the required procedure. Some have gone ahead without Healthcare present, some have been delayed for a day, and some have been completed as a paper exercise without the prisoner being present. There have been occasions when the Governor has turned up so late that other attendees have left before his arrival.
- 74 Segregation Monitoring and Review group (SMARG) meetings are held quarterly. There has been an improvement in these meetings being held since the Board reporting last year.

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- 75 When it has been necessary to place a prisoner in Special Accommodation, IMB have been informed on most occasions. If a Board member is in the prison they are called to observe staff following the correct procedure.
- 76 Since the last Board report there has been a marked improvement in the cleanliness of CSU, although the exercise yards remain a problem despite requests from Board members to get these swept and cleaned.
- 77 The visiting Judge to the Prison commented on the Care and Resettlement Unit, 'The staff at Elmley are excellent and efficient, for instance they work through lunch to complete the job. Management of prisoners to and from adjudications and general running of the unit is excellent.'

HOUSEBLOCK 1 and INDUCTION

- 78 HB1 is the first night centre as well as being a residential wing, having to hold an overspill of vulnerable prisoners, orderlies and 'outsiders', and misfits who have to be placed away from some other prisoners. By definition it has more hustle and bustle as there are always prisoners moving off the wing and fresh arrivals late into the evening.
- 79 It was reported last year that the two-day induction course had struggled to get off the ground. It is pleasing to report that it is now in place with management oversight and officer involvement. To ensure that it is completed, even by those receptions who are moved after only 24 hours due to pressure on the available space, it has to be undertaken prior to being enrolled in gym or work or education. This gives the prisoner an incentive to ensure he is returned to complete it. There is now a clear syllabus, partly led by an officer and a full education assessment and individual needs plans established. The prisoner 'Insiders' are an enthusiastic group and work a long day, and help all receptions settle, but particularly those facing imprisonment for the first time.

HOUSEBLOCK 2

- 80 Houseblock 2 at the time of reporting is running well with a good unit of officers who appear to integrate well with the prisoners. The atmosphere for the best part is good and all the prisoners seem fairly settled. The wing is clean and well maintained by the prisoners, who appear to take a pride in their wing. As with all wings there are the minority of prisoners who are not completely happy, but the staff do their utmost to keep a congenial atmosphere within the house block. The board are pleased to report that they are always made welcome on Houseblock 2 .

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HOUSEBLOCK 3

- 81 Houseblock Three has continued to develop this year. The complete contract for both the Clinical and Psychosocial elements of substance misuse is now under the control of RAPT (Rehabilitation for Addicted Prisoners Trust). New care pathways have also been developed in conjunction with other providers.
- 82 Additionally, representatives from Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous visit every Wednesday.
- 83 The new partnership with RAPT has produced encouraging results, bringing the number of prisoners on maintenance down from in excess of 130 to the most recent figure of 78 on this Houseblock, though there are also 16 maintenance prisoners elsewhere in the prison.
- 84 Just beginning at the end of our reporting period is the pilot of a new Intensive Detox pathway, which will be the first in the country. There will ultimately be a national report published giving information on service user feedback.
- 85 The imposition of new work profiles earlier in the year caused some consternation amongst officers, because of the very tight schedules around mealtimes, but these have now largely been overcome.
- 86 There is a good feel to the Houseblock, which has been recently augmented by the acquisition of three enthusiastic new POELTS.

HOUSEBLOCK 5

- 87 This remains the Category C Resettlement Unit, but more in name than in practise. As it houses mainly category C and D inmates, it has been on the whole a more stable unit. Due to population pressures the strict criteria has had to be watered down a bit, and some more recalcitrant inmates have had to be housed on the B spur. This has resulted in some incidents on that side. In practise few if any inmate are granted Release on Temporary Licence, and resettlement involvement is hardly greater than elsewhere. The main concern raised by inmates concentrate on OASY'S and Home Detention Curfew processing. There are plans, still at an early stage, to alter the use of this wing.

RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

Kitchen and Catering

- 88 The prison was without a Catering Manager for several months. During this time of instability, the kitchen staff coped well and a new Catering Manager has now been appointed who has quickly got to grips with the running of the kitchen.

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- 89 The equipment in the kitchen is old and repaired as and when it breaks down, but one of the concerns voiced by the Catering Manager is that there has been little or no routine maintenance carried out in the kitchen since he took over his role. He fears that should this lack of maintenance continue, it could have a detrimental effect on the smooth running of the kitchen and the ability to continue to provide the standard of meals that are expected in the prison.
- 90 The quality of the produce supplied continues to be delivered by 3663 and has improved, but the prison still has no option but to buy their supplies through them. Since the last report the staff canteen has closed for a number of months, but it has since reopened much to the delight of the prison officers that use it. On the house blocks the daily menus for lunch and dinner have been reduced from six choices to five, this has had no effect on the quality or quantity of the meals produced for the prisoners. One area that did cause a problem for the kitchen staff was the wearing of the correct clothing by prisoners that work on the house block serving area's serving the meals. This has been closely monitored by the catering manager and house block officers, it is now as it should be.

SECTION 6

OTHER AREAS OF THE PRISON

OFFENDER MANAGEMENT UNIT [OMU]

- 91 OMU covers many disciplines. The OCA, a small section, who now only work for Elmley and not the Sheppey cluster.
- OASY'S.
- 92 The backlog now is down to 180 and again a plan is in place to reduce this as each officer has a given number to complete each month. It must be borne in mind that all inmates must have one in place within 16 weeks of the start of his sentence.
- 93 This is very difficult to achieve due mainly to three reasons.
1. Not all transferred prisoners arrive with have Oasy's completed
 2. Due to the nature of Elmley, a local and resettlement establishment, the turnover of inmates in numbers is 100% every 3-4 months.
 3. Staffing at the time of this report, OMU are 10 full time equivalent down on a complement of approximately 40. Of that total 7.5 are uniformed officers, and as

such are often called away for wing duty, which exacerbates the numbers in and also the work of the OMU .

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HOME DETENTION CURFEW

- 94 The backlog has been reduced by 50% on the July/August figure, due to the targeting of this problem and should be eliminated very shortly.

LIFERS

- 95 All reports are up to date. There are deadlines that must be met to allow Parole Boards to meet.
- 96 The Board feels that there are too many lifers at Elmley, which is a local prison.

LIBRARY

- 97 After many years and various false starts it now seems that this facility is better used.
- 98 Prisoners are escorted to and from but are supervised by red bands and the librarians. This has resulted in far better use and also easy access to the Prison Service Orders. On induction there is a representative who explains the libraries roll and with some success in enrolling new members. This also occurs when books are delivered to the wings.
- 99 However the lost book rate is still extremely high compared with other establishments and is thought that the high turnover of prisoners is a cause.

FURNITURE AND KIT

- 100 There appears to be a national shortage of cell furniture, clothing, bedding (blankets in particular) and towels. It is accepted that prisoners are to some degree abusive of the system, either by hoarding kit, or destroying and disposing of it. It is however an obligation on the establishment to fully kit out each prisoner and replace what is missing. New receptions must be afforded a full, clean and suitable kit allowance. With the very high turnover of prisoners in a large local, control of kit is not as tight as one would like, but as already mentioned the pressure on existing staff is already great. In the meantime it is essential that kit be made available.

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GROUNDS

- 101 On any early visit to the prison one is confronted with the ugly sight of rubbish that has been jettisoned via cell windows and lies littering the areas surrounding the wings. Management is well aware of the problem and various efforts have not resolved it. There is a more elaborate scheme, but that requires funding.
- 102 This is a great shame, as it masks the sterling efforts of the horticultural team who have developed some of the most attractive and colourful landscaping of the grounds of all the local prisons we know. By mid afternoon on a warm day it is a real pleasure to walk through the prison grounds, taking in the colour and scent of the displays.

VISITOR CENTRE AND VISITS

- 103 The visitor centre plays a vital role in answering queries from visitors making refreshments available and booking in visitors and helping them prepare for their visit generally.
- 104 The situation regarding the lockers that are used by the visitors to store their personal items, has now been resolved. This has alleviated the extra work for the two members of staff in the office and saves waiting time for the visitors.
- 105 On the whole, the centralised booking system for the prison seems to be working. There are slight problems that still require attention though. The main issue is that at the weekend the officers do not have somewhere to phone if there is a problem. The main complaints from visitors are to do with bringing belongings into the prison for their loved ones within the initial twenty-eight days and not being allowed to. Just recently a visitor booked for her and two other people to see her partner, when she arrived the booking had only been made for two people, leaving one person unable to visit.

RECEPTION AND INDUCTION

- 106 As a local prison the reception area deals with over 20,000 movements each year including the prisoner's property. Compared to the Board's report last year, staffing has been much improved this year with more stable staff able to carry out their duties well. A continuing problem though is the storage of property which can be problematic with some problems being out of the prisons control for example when property does not arrive with the prisoner.

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- 107 As reported last year a difficulty occurs when prisoners need access to their property and the staff levels cannot accommodate this, the problem though has been much reduced through most of the year mainly due to the staff levels being returned to normal and the reduction in prisoners held at Elmley.
- 108 The need to clear cells is still delayed at times with some cells staying out of use and property being lost after an emergency movement.
- 109 As previously, the Board still receive a very high number of applications about property, many of which are out of Elmley's control but occur during prisoner's movement to and from other establishments.
- 110 Induction can also be problematic but is relieved by the use of insiders (who should be commended for their efforts in assisting their fellow prisoners) but at times they are overseen by staff from other areas who are not familiar with the induction process.

GYM AND PHYSICAL RECREATION

- 111 The gymnasium and courts are popular, the return to normal staff levels which is soon to increase from eight to ten is allowing much better use of the facilities. It does not help though when the overall staff level does not allow movement to the gym.

Repairs to the equipment has been difficult since the outsourcing of the works department mainly due to the long waiting time for spare parts.

- 112 The additional equipment in Houseblock 5 is still not used due to the lack of trained supervision, this satellite gym seems to be being discontinued looking forward.
- 113 Purposeful activities continue as and when possible and include certificated courses for prisoners and staff training in C & R, First Aid, Manual Handling and Team Building.

WORKS AND GROUNDS

- 114 The national contract for maintenance has been running for a number of months now after the staff were transferred to the new contract. There has been some teething problems causing delays and complaints from various departments mainly due to the long lead times for spares to arrive or additional contractors required for specialist work. An example of this is the water pipe leak at the bend of the approach road still not completed after a number of weeks causing damage to the road which will be dangerous when it freezes, in the past local contractors would have repaired it within a day or two.

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- 115 During this year planned maintenance for the wings is generally up to date despite the increase in high priority work mainly caused by damage by prisoners, or ageing equipment for example in the kitchen. The major schemes this year have all been completed. The Tracker key controls system is working well and CCTV additions and shower block refurbishing continues.

SECTION 7

THE WORK OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

BOARD MEETINGS

- 116 The Board had 12 meetings during the year, with an average of 77% attendance. This in actuality was higher as one member only managed 4 meetings due to a bad car crash that caused him to have to resign, and was only appointed in time to attend two. The Board will be reduced to 9 members in January 2016 unless the current campaign produces some results, but this is not looking optimistic at the moment.

ROTA VISITS

- 117 The Board aims to one member in attendance at the prison on every weekday as demands on time in just meeting statutory duties is heavy as it is a very busy local prison with a very diverse population. Although the number of application had reduced slightly, the Board dealt with 604 applications, and a single application can involve 1-2 work on occasions. The Board also attempts to attend as observers a whole range of meetings at the Prison, in order to gain a full picture of what is happening. Added to all of the above, the enforced movement of a prisoner under restraint, if it happens, as it does frequently, whilst a member is at the prison, all other duties are suspended to later, as it is observed from its commencement to its conclusion.
- 118 Clearly a Board of only 9 cannot sustain the same level of attendance that was the level of achievement when the Board was 14 members. It is, therefore having to review how it approaches its work in 2016.

TRAINING

- 119 Members of the Board attended national training courses as appropriate, visits to other establishments, and hosted visits for Board members from other establishments. The Board received presentations from different sections within the prison and from the deputy High Sheriff during regular Board meetings.

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BOARD STATISTICS	
Recommended Complement of Board Members	20
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	11
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	10
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	1
Number of members leaving within reporting period	2
Total number of Board meetings during reporting period	12
Total number of visits to the Establishment	412
Total number of segregation reviews held	Figures not available
Total number of segregation reviews attended	100

IMB Applications:

Code	Subject	Year 2012	Year 2013	Year 2014	Year 2015
A	Accommodation	5	15	11	34
B	Adjudications	4	35	17	25
C	Equality & Diversity (inc religion)	9	8	4	0
D	Education/employment/training inc IEP	28	46	32	13
E 1	Family/visits inc mail & phone	78	64	35	22
E 2	Finance/pay	24	26	11	26
F	Food/kitchen related	3	23	14	7
G	Health related	60	125	108	71
H 1 & H2	Property	73	144	196	121
H 3	Canteen, facilities, Catalogue shopping, Argos	8	6	11	6
I	Sentence related (inc. HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re cat etc)	98	161	187	108
J	Staff/prisoner/detainee concerns inc bullying	47	68	45	42
K	Transfers	74	98	73	55
L	Miscellaneous	74	65	113	80
	Total number of IMB applications	582	882	857	604
	Of total: number of IMB Confidential Access was:	29	10	11	7