



HMP/YOI Isis

**REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD
JANUARY – DECEMBER 2015**

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2 Statutory Role of the IMB

- 2.1 The Prisons Act 1952 requires every prison to be monitored by an Independent Board appointed by the Secretary of State from members of the community in which the prison is situated.
- 2.2 The Board is specifically charged to:
 - 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,
 - inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority, as it judges appropriate, any concern it has, and
 - 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.
- 2.3 To enable the Board to carry out these duties effectively, its members have right of access to every offender and every part of the prison and also to the prison's records.

3 Description of the Prison

- 3.1 HMP/YOI Isis – named after the River Thames - opened in July 2010. It is a public sector training prison for convicted young men, with a mix of young offenders between the ages of 18 and 21, and Category C adults up to the age of 30. It is situated in Thamesmead in South-East London. The certified normal accommodation (CNA) is 478. The operational capacity (OP CAP) i.e. the maximum population it can safely and decently hold, is 628.
- 3.2 Although sited within the original perimeter wall of HMP Belmarsh, HMP/YOI Isis is a completely separate prison.

4 Chair's Introduction

- 4.1 This is the fifth report of the Independent Monitoring Board for HMP/YOI Isis. Earlier reports were optimistic about progress being made in developing this new prison, but staffing shortages and a restricted regime now seems to be the accepted "norm".
- 4.2 This restricted regime, which was implemented temporarily in the summer of 2013, has continued throughout 2014 and 2015. This has a detrimental effect on the lives of the offenders at Isis, both around their attendance at training activities and the excessive time they spend locked in their cells.
- 4.3 We remain concerned that so many of the excellent facilities in the prison have been severely underused and that offenders have had their rehabilitation opportunities limited because of external factors. Hopefully, this report demonstrates the continuing frustration felt by the Board, the prison staff and by the offenders themselves.
- 4.4 This report is made up of individual contributions from members of the Board. I am extremely grateful to them for these contributions and also for their dedication and hard work during the course of the year.
- 4.5 I would like to thank the Governor and his senior team for continuing to welcome the Board's contribution to life in Isis. They rightly regard regular monitoring on a local day-to-day basis by independent eyes and ears as important for both the offenders and staff alike.
- 4.6 Finally, I would like to recognise the work of my predecessor, David Pinchin MBE, in leading the IMB over the past five years and for his outstanding contribution to both the IMB and the prison.

Peter Ward
IMB Chair

5 Executive Summary

- 5.1 As a training prison for sentenced young men between 18 and 30, HMP/YOI Isis has excellent facilities for delivering a wide range of education and training, and work opportunities, as part of the Government's rehabilitation and reducing reoffending initiatives. However, despite the best efforts of the Governor and his team, the prison has again fallen well short of meeting its objectives in 2015 due to continuing staffing shortages. This report is designed to raise matters such as this which have given the Board most concern during the year. However, it also highlights examples of good work that is to be commended and perhaps replicated elsewhere.
- 5.2 The two most significant concerns for the Board in 2015 have been the lack of staff to operate a normal regime, and the limited number of offenders attending training courses and undertaking purposeful activity in the prison. Both of these issues impact on the lives of the offenders and detract from the prison fulfilling its role to retrain and rehabilitate young men, thus reducing reoffending. This runs counter to Government's expectations that all prisoners should be engaged in work activities. These should be addressed as a matter of urgency or the prison will again fail to meet its objectives.
- 5.3 The inability to staff the prison to the agreed "benchmarking" levels of 110 officers on a daily basis continues to be frustrating for both prison management and offenders, with only 80% of that number being available towards the end of 2015. There has been some new recruitment of prison officers during the year but the prison continues to struggle to increase its effective officer numbers due to resignations, sickness, promotion and disciplinary matters. The "temporary" restricted regime imposed in September 2013 continued during the year, although some improvement was made to allow more offenders to attend activities.
- 5.4 Further, the recruitment freeze imposed by NOMS in 2013 for almost a year (referenced in our 2014 Annual Report) has resulted in an extremely young and inexperienced group of prison officers. At the end of 2015, 38% of the prison officers had less than 12 months service and 54% were younger than 30 (the same age as the offender group). This presents significant challenges when managing offenders on the residential Houseblocks.
- 5.5 Frustratingly, officer recruitment is managed entirely centrally, outside the control of the Governor or his senior team. Quite simply, that central process is not fit for purpose as it continues to fail to provide sufficient new staff. Recommendations on this crucial subject are made in the

paragraphs below to the Minister and also to both national and local managers.

- 5.6 In addition to the continuation for a third year of the “temporary” restricted regime, the lack of officers had many knock on effects. These include central core functions (Equalities, Safer Custody, OMU and Gym) not being performed because of “cross deployment”, restrictions on attendance at activities, lack of sentence planning and failure of the Personal Officer scheme. It is extremely worrying that this has now become the “norm” for the prison.
- 5.7 Attendance at education in 2015 has been poor, with only 67% attendance compared to a target of 80%. The new provider of education services for the prison, The Manchester College (TMC Novus) has performed poorly, with many classes cancelled because of teacher unavailability. As this contract is managed centrally, the Governor and his team have very little influence to improve the situation. Typically, only 100 to 120 offenders (out of over 600) attend education and training at any one time, and only two of the six workshops have been in continuous operation throughout the year.
- 5.8 Violence across the prison remains high, with incident levels a third higher than last year. (80 recorded incidents of assaults on offenders and 43 on prison officers). It is influenced by the age of the offenders and the many gang affiliations in the prison. New violence management processes were introduced late in 2015 and the impact of these will be closely monitored.
- 5.9 We also reported last year on the lack of up-to-date OASys risk assessments and sentence plans for over half the population (which should accompany the offender when they arrive at Isis), thus further affecting the lives of the offenders as they prepare for release and a life outside prison. That situation has barely changed; some initiatives to alleviate the burden, such as the introduction of a less onerous report for some offenders, have been introduced, but they have had limited impact on the overall workload. Approximately half the offenders still have no OASys or sentence plan.
- 5.10 While the kitchens at the prison are well run and produce good food on a regular basis, this good work is often compromised by poor food hygiene practices when it is served on the wings. All eight wings have individual serveries where there are high levels of inconsistencies in cleanliness (of food trolleys and servery), serving and checking food at the correct temperature, and in the management of the servery workers.

Issues for the Minister

- 5.11 The Board received assurances from the Minister during 2014 that a full training regime would be reinstated by the Spring of 2015. In July of 2015, we were told by the minister that “The prison expects this level of restriction to continue to the autumn”. Despite some limited progress in increasing the times allowed for education, this did not happen and the temporary “restricted regime” introduced in September 2013 remains in place with no firm plan for it to be lifted. The Board urges the Minister to intervene urgently with officials to overhaul the officer recruitment process so that a level of staffing can be achieved and maintained at HMP/YOI Isis that can support a proper training regime as previously promised. The present position runs counter to all Government policy concerning the rehabilitation of offenders. (13.8 - 13.10).
- 5.12 The Board strongly suggests that the Minister considers providing more freedom to the Governor in terms of financial and contract management to enable him to be responsible, and accountable, for the delivery of services within the jail. In particular, the Governor should be able to determine the content of the education contract and be responsible for its delivery. (7.1 - 7.8)

Issues for the Prison Service

- 5.13 To recruit now to the full “benchmarking” staffing level so that the full training regime at Isis is implemented as previously promised. This requires appropriate forward looking resource and staffing plans that take account of levels of attrition and availability, with measurable actions and agreed timeframes. (13.8 - 13.10).
- 5.14 To reconsider the whole principle of cross-deployment of staff within prisons. It is de-motivating and encourages poor performance. The cross-deployment of staff into operational roles on a daily basis should be minimised, particularly around essential core functions such as Equalities and Safer Custody. (6.2, 10.13, 11.5)
- 5.15 To review the way in which the OLASS4 contract for training and education is managed with The Manchester College and whether their performance is satisfactory given the poor attendance at activities across the prison, the levels of achievement and the lack of opportunity to progress. (7.5, 7.6)
- 5.16 To facilitate the transfer of offenders to open conditions once they have been successful in obtaining their Category D status. (10.8)
- 5.17 To refocus efforts to ensure all offenders have appropriate Sentence Plans and OASys assessments, rather than accepting the status quo that has developed over the past year. (10.9, 10.10)

- 5.18 To implement the delayed proposal to install in-cell telephones across the establishment during 2016 after the current contract ends in May 2016, as noted in the NOMS response to our report last year. There is good evidence that this will reduce the incidence of self-harm and bullying. Running costs are self-funding and the systems are entirely secure with listening facilities. (13.12)
- 5.19 To introduce an effective system for the transfer of offender property across the prison estate which enables offender requests for lost property to be followed up in an expedient manner, and which brings about consistency across all establishments and escort contractors. (14.6)

Issues for the Governor

- 5.20 To work closely with NOMS to produce an appropriate forward looking staffing plan to meet fully the training aspirations of the prison, and to secure the appointment of sufficient staff in conjunction with NOMS and the Deputy Director of Custody so that the present restricted regime is withdrawn as soon as possible. (13.8 -13.10)
- 5.21 To bring about a reduction in the daily cross-deployment of staff into operational roles, particularly in Equalities and Safer Custody. (6.2, 10.13, 11.5)
- 5.22 To improve significantly attendance at education and skills by working in conjunction with The Manchester College to make more classes available, and to encourage and motivate offenders to comply with their agreed compacts for education. Also, to open and continue to operate to capacity the six workshops available for re-training offenders. (7.2 – 7.7)
- 5.23 In conjunction with increasing attendance at education, increase the level of purposeful activity across the prison. (9.2)
- 5.24 To maintain vigilance and implement a proactive programme around the use of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) drugs such as Spice. (8.5)
- 5.25 To improve the attendance at Healthcare clinics and dramatically reduce the “did not attend” numbers which waste valuable resources and prevent other offenders from receiving appointments. (8.7)
- 5.26 To review the manner in which offenders are held for long periods in the holding room for Healthcare appointments. (8.9)
- 5.27 To continue to monitor the resettlement activities and particularly housing in light of the new CRC initiative now in place. (10.2 – 10.5)
- 5.28 To continue in addressing the high levels of violence in the prison, particularly around assaults on prison officers. (11.2)

- 5.29 To consider how in-cell education can be provided to offenders held in the Segregation Unit. (12.4).
- 5.30 To resolve the long-standing issue of the cleaning of toilets in the cells and reception areas as a matter of urgency. (13.11)
- 5.31 To re-implement the Personal Officer scheme once staffing levels increase so that offender/staff relationships are improved. It is important that more offender concerns are resolved locally without recourse to the formal complaints process and unnecessary applications to the Board. (13.13)
- 5.32 To improve supervision of the cleaning of trolleys and trays before they are returned to the kitchens from the Houseblocks, and to ensure the completion of temperature books at the time of testing. These should remain in the serveries at all times. (13.17, 13.18)

6 Equalities

- 6.1 The prison has a young population, aged 18 to 30 with a wide range of ethnic minorities reflecting the prison's catchment area across London. The Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) population accounts for 69% with 31% categorising themselves as white. There are two main faiths amongst the offenders with 47% Christian and 37% Muslim.
- 6.2 During 2015, leadership of equalities has been taken on by a Governor, which is to be welcomed following the decision not to appoint an Equalities Manager. However, the one Equalities Officer at Band 3 level, who covers all areas of the work, has been regularly cross-deployed for up to 50% of his time, leaving insufficient time to keep on top of the work. This year it was not possible to organise any events for Black History Month or conduct any Equality Impact Assessments.
- 6.3 There are welcome plans to organise disability awareness and autism training events for offenders, a Father Awareness day, and activities for Black History Month in 2016. However, if the current level of cross-deployment is continued, there is real doubt that this will be possible.
- 6.4 It is encouraging to see regular attendance at the bi-monthly equalities meeting by offender representatives who also take part in the induction for new offenders. They also take an active part in the recruitment of new representatives and initiate their own surveys of offenders. These meetings are well attended by staff from across the prison. However, it is difficult to follow through with actions from these meetings because of lack of equalities resources.
- 6.5 There have been only four complaints regarding equalities this year received by the Equalities Officer. There does seem, however, to have been a period of months during staff changes when complaints may not have been passed to the correct officer. Work is now in hand to check back and ensure that none has been overlooked.
- 6.6 The prison has a robust system for dealing with complaints of discrimination. They are investigated by the Equalities Officer, reviewed by the deputy governor and independently reviewed by the Zahid Mubarek Trust which provides the prison with a quarterly written report of their findings.

7 Education, Learning and Skills

- 7.1 It is a stated priority of the prison that offenders should be engaged in education or work, and IEPs are issued to those offenders who refuse to go to work or education. The education provider is The Manchester College (TMC) who were appointed in February 2015. The Governor has little say over the curriculum or how they manage their activities.
- 7.2 The IMB has significant concerns, expressed regularly throughout the year, that attendance is extremely poor at the Academy and in the Skills Zone. Out of a total of 600 plus offenders in the prison, typically only 100 to 120 are attending classes at any one time. Many classes are not running and the numbers in many classes are small. In the Skills Zone for a significant part of the year members have reported that only the barbering and carpentry workshops were running out of the six workshops available. It is very disappointing that the opening of the fitted interiors workshop that was initially planned for 2014, then delayed until 2015, was only achieved in mid December. The LED lighting workshop was opened then closed in a short period of time due to a lack of available work from the contractor. Long-term sickness has also meant that painting and decorating classes have been cancelled on a regular basis.
- 7.3 The table below shows by month the planned number of attendances and the actual offender attendances at classes and workshops run by the education provider. Each month there is a significant number of offenders not attending education with March being the month with the highest actual attendance at 78% of planned and July having attendance of only 59% of those planned. The reasons for non-attendance are many but the most significant are TMC non-delivery, offender refusal and offenders subject to violence monitoring procedures.

7.4 Planned and Actual Education Attendances (in “offender sessions”)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Planned	5274	7070	6314	5725	5200	7035	6550	6469	6229	5845	6829	5167
Actual	3807	4873	4908	4024	3419	4638	3870	4138	4092	3602	4505	3257
%	72	69	78	70	66	66	59	64	66	62	66	63

- 7.5 The percentage of non-attendances that relate to TMC non-delivery, because of sickness, vacancies etc appears to have gradually increased through the year, from around 6% in February to 16% in July, and remaining at around 10% for most of the rest of the year. It does not appear that TMC as the provider are obligated to cover vacancies, sickness and other absences.

- 7.6 TMC have had difficulties in recruiting staff, covering vacancies, sickness and other absences. There are questions about the contractual expectations, and the ability or commitment of TMC, to consistently meet those requirements within the contract resources. The prison has worked hard to address issues relating to non-attendance, including the introduction of fortnightly meetings with the provider, monthly performance monitoring meetings and daily attendance checks. This is against a backdrop of the contract being between the provider and NOMS, not the prison Governor. Negotiations relating to curriculum provision and delivery expectations are between these two parties with the role of the prison at times being peripheral.
- 7.7 The level of non-attendance because of offender refusal has also increased during the year. This has increased from 4% in February to a high of 13% in August and has continued at that level to the end of the year. This increase is possibly linked to the introduction of the partially extended regime that requires some offenders from each houseblock to mix with each other; some offenders stating that they don't feel safe. The violence management processes also result in a significant number of offenders not attending education. The prison has recently reviewed how this policy is applied which should reduce the numbers unable to attend education. There also needs to be closer working between residence staff and education to ensure that there is a common understanding of offender attendance at education and the actions to be taken when an offender does not or cannot attend
- 7.8 Towards the end of the 2014/2015 academic year the curriculum was reviewed and changes introduced for 2015/16. The drivers for the changes were levels of achievement, costs and assessment of need. Prior to curriculum changes in the early autumn, offenders within the Customer Services class were spending an hour working within the Library and this then formed part of their portfolio assessment. The class has now unfortunately been disbanded together with ICT, Employability, Accounting, Hospitality, Catering and Art. The new curriculum does not appear to have improved the range of courses available. The majority of courses are at level 1 with some level 2 courses and very few level 3 opportunities. There are not sufficient progression opportunities within subjects.
- 7.9 On the plus side, the new curriculum now includes the addition of The Virtual Campus, initially developed by NOMS and designed for supported self-study. It provides carefully controlled computer access to Open University and on-line courses. Useful advice is available on various issues including resettlement, applying for jobs & lifestyle information. Isis is now the best in the region for Virtual Campus usage.

- 7.10 The IMB has five concerns that it will continue to raise and monitor during 2016:
- The Governor currently has insufficient control over the education contract or the content of the curriculum,
 - There are insufficient courses to accommodate all the offenders needing to attend,
 - The curriculum plan does not provide the range of courses that cater for more able (academically or technically) offenders,
 - There are insufficient courses that allow offenders to progress through to higher qualifications in particular skills, and
 - The level of achievement, particularly in functional skills, is too low.

- 7.11 There has been a number of achievements during the year including:
- A very successful presentation of the musical “Our House” was performed by offenders in conjunction with Pimlico Opera in February. Thirty offenders were involved with the production which included acting, singing and backstage assistance,
 - Two “pop up” restaurants have taken place in the Quays, with outside restaurateurs providing leadership to the offenders,
 - Level 3 Mentoring for all Peer Mentors was introduced – this was the first for London prisons as all other establishments deliver Level 2.
 - The Create course has run successfully three times this year,
 - The Koestler Trust “arts by offenders” Awards attained by Isis this year has exceeded the previous year’s results. The awards have been achieved in a number of categories including Art, Music and Carpentry along with the successful Mixed Media Create programme. Twenty-two Awards were received including two Gold and two Bronze Awards, and
 - At the National Prison Radio Awards in November, an award for Excellence was achieved.

8 Healthcare & Mental Health

- 8.1 The provider for Healthcare Services changed in April 2015 from Care UK to Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust. The Healthcare team is a set of dedicated professionals and the Board commends their work. There have been no deaths in custody during 2015
- 8.2 The change of provider was generally managed well, although during April it was realised that GP provision between the hours of 17.00-21.00 had not been set up. This was quickly rectified and it was formalised that GPs in HMP Belmarsh/HMP Thameside would cover the out-of-hours service, including weekends. GPs hold clinics in Isis for three days a week.
- 8.3 The mental health caseload continues to be small. Only one case during the reporting year has given the Board cause for concern as, in spite of the offender not fitting the algorithm for segregation, the Segregation Unit had to be used, there being no in-patient unit in the prison. The Board recommends that, in future, offenders should be screened on arrival, and, if there is a mental illness identified which would preclude safe accommodation anywhere in the prison, including in the Segregation Unit, these offenders should be transferred immediately to an alternative prison with specialist mental health in-patient facilities. A consultant psychiatrist continues to attend Isis on a weekly basis.
- 8.4 Drug misuse continues to remain low for a prison of this size and regular drug tests are carried out. Many of the positive tests continue to involve offenders who have recently entered the prison. Lifeline and Healthcare continue to work together on drug awareness programmes but access by drug workers to offenders is still limited due to the restricted regime. Offenders are helped on release by links with Drug Intervention Agencies in their respective boroughs.
- 8.5 The Board has concerns that use of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) drugs such as Spice has increased this year. There is no test as yet to detect this drug but dogs are being trained to identify its presence. The effects of use of this drug vary tremendously reflecting the unquantifiable and thus dangerous content of the drug.
- 8.6 The research project for Attendance Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) on selected offenders was completed last year and the Board is pleased to report that a second phase has been initiated which continues today.
- 8.7 The Board has concerns that clinics are poorly attended with as high as 50% non-attendance. This is particularly noticeable in the dental clinics; unfortunately there is a waiting list for this clinic and the Board recommends that a better system should be instigated, possibly allowing

the spaces to be allocated on an ad hoc/last minute basis. There is understandable reluctance by healthcare staff to use the IEP system for non-attendance at clinics. Uniformed staff can and should issue IEPs for non-attendance as every opportunity is given for cancellation through the biometric system. No surgeries are held on the houseblocks

- 8.8 Nurses dispense medication on the houseblocks. The Board has raised concerns that offenders have been observed collecting medication without showing proof of identify. This situation was very quickly rectified and all offenders now show IDs before collection. Some offenders are allowed in-possession medication.
- 8.9 The Board has concerns regarding the overcrowding in the healthcare holding room, particularly in summer when the temperature can be high. It is hoped that when full staffing levels are achieved, offenders can be moved from the waiting room throughout the morning/afternoon sessions rather than at the end. The Board is also concerned that Safer Custody offenders wait outside the holding room but in full sight of the occupants which might compromise safety. These Safer Custody offenders are returned to the houseblock relatively quickly following an appointment.

9 Purposeful Activity

- 9.1 Purposeful activity at Isis includes education and skills programmes in classrooms, workshops and the library, physical education in the gymnasium, religious practice in the multi-faith zone, offender behaviour programmes, rehabilitation activities, special issue groups such as equalities or safer custody, and work in a variety of orderly positions across the prison.
- 9.2 There are significant difficulties in ensuring offenders are engaged in purposeful activity. Reports from each Houseblock show that, on many days, less than 50% of the offenders are involved in purposeful activity with the current “restricted regime” now in its third year. Though the prison was able to extend the regime mid-year it has not been possible because of staffing difficulties to move to a full regime. The current regime restricts the time available for offenders to engage in purposeful activities. This does not support the development of a work ethic and reduces the opportunities to develop skills, achieve qualifications or gain realistic work experiences.
- 9.3 Offenders are spending too long in their cells, partly due to the restricted regime but also due to the level of non-attendance at education. Additionally the violence management procedures applied to offenders who have been involved in violent incidents mean that those on the VM regime spend all their time in their cells except for time spent on exercise, phone calls and showers that are organised on the days their

spur is scheduled for association. The prison introduced a new process for dealing with violent incidents in December and this may mean fewer offenders spending most of their time in their cells.

- 9.4 The prison has continued to make attendance at education or employment, within the constraints of the regime, a priority. Offenders not attending work or education are penalised under the IEP scheme. It is made clear to offenders that they need to participate in activities and courses if they wished to earn privileges. Engagement with the regime and participation in activities are considerations when deciding on HDC applications.
- 9.5 There are currently up to 200 jobs available across the prison for orderlies, kitchen workers, painters, recycling and waste management. There are also positions available as Listeners, Peer Mentors in the classrooms and as Equality and Violence Reduction Representatives. Each spur has a representative on the Prison Council. The prison has recently introduced a new role of OMU Representative for each spur. To secure an orderly position, the prison requires offenders to have a level 1 qualification in Maths and English and commit to the achievement of a level 2 qualification. However, all jobs are subject to the restricted regime mentioned above.
- 9.6 There are not sufficient opportunities for offenders to engage in work and/or education when a full regime is re-instated. There are 423 full time equivalent activity places, which mean there are not all offenders will be able to engage in purposeful activity at one time.

Library

- 9.7 The Library continues to be run effectively by Greenwich Leisure Ltd on behalf of Greenwich Council. It is well managed by two experienced full time Librarians supported by two offender orderlies. The environment is welcoming and the good facilities provided promote the opportunity for reading, reference and other activities
- 9.8 Library attendance has been very good albeit the restricted regime and staff shortages have affected the attendance on some occasions. Facilities are in place allowing for Safer Custody and Kitchen worker offenders to visit the Library; in addition books are delivered weekly to the Houseblocks. The Library participates in Family Visits Days encouraging offenders and their children to read together.
- 9.9 A Reading Group has been established which takes place monthly with the assistance of two volunteers of the Prison Reading Group. From a choice of books provided, the group of offenders decide on the book they will all read in their spare time, which they are then allowed to keep. At the next session they discuss and debate aspects of their reading.

The Board is pleased that facilities are now in place for Story Book Dad to commence early in 2016; hopefully this will be on-going.

Gym

- 9.10 During the year, issues have arisen concerning the appropriate staffing levels in the gym but were subsequently resolved. Like many other areas, the gym has suffered from cross deployment of the trained instructors to meet minimum operational staffing levels on the Houseblocks.
- 9.11 Currently no training courses are delivered in the Gym, but Charlton Athletic run a one week football course twice a year and the prison has plans to introduce level 2 instructor training and healthy lifestyle certificate plus a personal trainer course.

10 Resettlement

- 10.1 The Offender Rehabilitation Act 2014 came into effect on the 1st February 2015. This Act introduced the “Through the Gate (TtG)” model that supports offenders before and after their release. The probation service has been split into the National Probation Service and Community Rehabilitation Companies. MTC Novo have been awarded the London CRC contract and from the 1st May 2015 have had responsibility for providing the TtG service through their partner agencies. For Isis, that partner agency is Catch 22.
- 10.2 12 weeks prior to release, Catch 22 resettlement officers start working with offenders to plan their release; providing advice and referral in relation to:
- Employment, training and education,
 - Accommodation,
 - Finance and debt,
 - Domestic and sexual violence, and
 - Family support and mentoring.
- 10.3 Though it is still early days, there has to be concern that the level of support within the prison to help offenders find accommodation has been significantly reduced. In the future, there will be only one member of De Paul based in the prison down from an average of 2.5 staff members. The offenders at Isis have complex needs; if they are to be able to avoid the “pull” factors of gang membership and avoid the influence in some cases of family and friends, support to find suitable accommodation is essential.
- 10.4 Catch 22 help offenders obtain ID and set up bank accounts. Step Change has been retained to provide help and advice on resolving debt

issues. The prison will need to make special arrangements if offenders are going to be able to use this service as it is based on telephone assessment and helpline support.

- 10.5 The Catch 22 team are committed to supporting the rehabilitation and resettlement of offenders and they work flexibly to ensure the best outcome for offenders. Their work ends with the handover of offenders to the NPS or the resettlement officer from another CRC. Before that time, they will have worked with the offenders developing support plans, on face to face work and engaging with resettlements agencies internal and external to the prison.
- 10.6 During the year, the prison has run a number of innovative activities designed to increase the aspirations of offenders and improve their employment opportunities. Two Jobs Fairs were run in 2015, where 30 organisations were represented and offenders could attend for 90 minute slots to talk to employers and others. There is evidence that this led to a number of offenders being offered jobs or support on their release.
- 10.7 It is too soon to measure the impact of TtG in improving the resettlement and rehabilitation of offenders or the effectiveness of the CRC arrangements. The IMB will monitor how TtG is working for offenders during 2016.

Offender Management Unit

- 10.8 A very real issue during 2015 was the increased difficulty in arranging transfers to other establishments. Transfers are required for a variety of reasons - personal or prison safety, proximity to an offender's home, medical or training needs - and the problem is particularly acute for Category D transfers with 15-22 offenders usually awaiting a place. Although at the end of the year the number had dropped to 10, we will continue to monitor this closely. The Board does not consider Isis the appropriate environment for a Category D prisoner, especially whilst still operating under a restricted regime. Achieving Category D status requires a long period of preparation for the offenders around their behaviour and work ethics in prison, and significant OMU work in preparing and reviewing the case for re-categorisation.
- 10.9 It is with a sense of deep frustration that we report no improvement in the number of offenders arriving at the prison with an OASys report and sentence plan. Priority is given to completing the OASys for offenders due for re-categorisation or release in order to facilitate their move. This has a direct impact on the other offenders who often find the completed OASys a pre-requisite for participation in accredited courses.

- 10.10 Initiatives to alleviate the burden, such as the introduction of a less-onerous report for some offenders, have had limited impact; the slimmed down version is suitable only for around 20% of offenders and still takes 3 hours to complete. By definition, those for whom the lighter version is appropriate are those who require less interventions and so completing the report has least impact. Whilst the vast majority of offenders continue to arrive without an OASys report, it is hard to see how the prison can make serious in-roads into the approximately 300 reports outstanding at any one time with current resourcing constraints.
- 10.11 The backlog in Home Detention Curfew reviews that we reported last year has been tackled and the situation has improved. For the most part delays in holding an HDC review is the result of poor quality home assessment reports or waiting for Social Services inputs. The bedding in of the National Probation Service/CRC reorganisation has certainly not helped and external Probation Services are often overstretched and unable to provide reports in a timely manner.
- 10.12 Around half the offenders attending an HDC Board have their hearing deferred as they have not given proper thought or made plans for such areas as employment. OMU staff are working directly with offenders and through the OMU reps to improve this.
- 10.13 In 2014 we reported on the OMU hours lost to cross deployment as a result of the shortage in prison officers across the prison. Although this did improve during 2015, dropping to a low of 5-15 hours per month over the summer, the number of hours has started to rise again, and the average OMU hours of lost time to cross-deployment a month was 30. Offender Supervisors are already stretched with a caseload of 55 or more offenders and cross deployment has a real impact on their ability to process OASys reports, HDC and re-categorisation reviews.
- 10.14 The Board is pleased to recognise that steps have been taken to alleviate the pressure on the OMU staff. Late in 2014 a number of offenders were made OMU representatives, able to field standard questions about processes and timescales. Six wings now have a rep and there are plans to up-skill these offenders; an NVQ may soon be available and the Board supports this development.
- 10.15 The Biometric system is also being used to allow offenders to have a dialogue with their Offender Supervisor either without seeing them or ensuring they come armed with the relevant information. The OMU has invested time and effort into helping offenders make best use of this access mechanism by honing the questions asked and the reason for requesting a meeting. It is recognised that more needs to be done but this is a welcome development.

11 Safer Custody

- 11.1 Keeping offenders safe is one of the four key tests for a healthy prison and staff at Isis do take this matter extremely seriously.
- 11.2 However, there remains a high level of violence across the prison, with numbers up in 2015 over 2014. With an average roll of around 600 offenders during 2015, there were 80 recorded incidents of an assault on an offender (up from 58 in 2014) and 43 recorded assaults on staff (up from 33 in 2014) and this remains an on-going problem for the prison. The number of assaults on prison officers at almost one per week is particularly concerning. (Numbers based on NOMS Incident Reporting System).
- 11.3 The Violence Management process in the prison was radically overhauled in December 2015 to move away from “blanket” sanctions involving closed visits and being restricted to their cells, to a more personalised plan for each offender involved in violence. This will hopefully allow offenders to attend more activity and focus on specific offending behaviour.
- 11.4 The prison has a small and stable Safer Custody team (a Custodial Manager, two officers and one administrator) which is responsible for monitoring violence and incidents of self-harm within the establishment. Safer Custody meetings are held monthly which involve Listeners, Violence Reduction representatives and the Samaritans, as well as prison management. An IMB member also attends.
- 11.5 Unfortunately, up to 50% of the Safer Custody officers’ duty time in each month continues to be cross deployed to assist in the general running of the prison. This frequently means that the Safer Custody interview of new offenders is delayed, with the possibility that they are sent to areas of the prison where gang or other conflicts may arise.
- 11.6 With regard to self-harm, the prison has established a robust process for ACCT management and while there have been 118 incidents of self-harm during the year (up from 88 in 2014), they have all been handled appropriately and effectively. 148 ACCTs were opened during the year (slightly up from 130 in 2014). Open ACCTs are considered monthly at the Safer Custody meeting, together with overall statistics and trends. There were no deaths in custody.
- 11.7 The majority of Use of Force incidents occur in the first 6 months and last 6 months of an offender’s sentence at Isis. There is a disproportionate number of Young Offenders involved in the use of force. The requirement for Use of Force paperwork to be completed by the officers involved has been tightened, although timeframes have not been adhered to in some cases.

- 11.8 There have been several serious incidents during the year, the most serious involving an offender in the kitchens threatening life with a large knife. The majority were resolved through the skills of trained negotiators at Isis, although National Resources were deployed on a small number of occasions, There were 26 incidents at height during 2015 involving offenders going on to the netting in the Houseblocks.

12 Segregation Unit

- 12.1 The Segregation Unit provides a clean, safe environment for offenders under punishment or held under Rules 45/49. The unit comprises 16 standard segregation cells, 2 special cells unfurnished and 2 dirty protest cells with level floor hatches so that food and other items can be delivered without exposure. In the course of the reporting year the special cells have been used twice, and on both occasions the stay was of short duration.
- 12.2 Last year, the Board reported some wear and tear in the unit and is pleased to note that redecoration has been carried out during the reporting year by offenders. A pre-occupation cell certificate has been instigated during this year; it is consequently easy to verify if an offender has graffitied/damaged the cell and can then be placed on report and the Board commends this protocol.
- 12.3 The Board is satisfied that the segregation of offenders was enforced for lawful purposes only and that offenders received their entitlements whilst held in the Unit. On a daily basis, each offender was offered a shower, exercise and a phone call; offenders were checked daily by healthcare workers, the duty Governor and Chaplaincy as statutorily required. When the Unit is full there have been rare occasions when delivery of showers, exercise and phone calls has been compromised. The Board is satisfied that mechanical restraints were only used as necessary and have met the statutory requirements.
- 12.4 There is still no in-cell education in the Unit. The Board deplores this as offenders can remain in bed for the majority of the day if they are not allowed access to television/radio. However, all offenders had access to a library trolley or can reserve books. Unfortunately the Education provider, TMC, has not been contracted to provide in-cell education and the Board recommends that this be addressed.
- 12.5 In September 2015, following a Supreme Court ruling, procedure for confinement in Segregation Units has been defined clearly; a Segregation Review Board (SRB) must be held within 72 hours of location to the Unit, there should be an SRB review within 14 days (conducted by a different Governor) and then every 14 days. Subsequent detention requires approval from the Deputy Director of Custody in NOMS. In essence this practice has been followed since Isis

opened; however, difficult offenders could still have long stays in Segregation Unit if alternative places in the prison estate could not be found.

- 12.6 The average length of stay in Segregation Unit this year has been shorter than the previous year; longer stays have sometimes been due to police investigation and subsequent referral to the CPS post incident. If an offender is referred to the CPS in the future, it is anticipated that he could be considered to be on remand for a new case and could then be sent to the appropriate local prison to await trial and removed from the Segregation Unit.
- 12.7 The Board has concerns that some offenders may try to use the time constraints for segregation to attempt to orchestrate a prison move, as has sometimes been the case. If offenders refuse to relocate to normal location and are considered to have no safer custody issues, they will be sent before the Independent Adjudicator more quickly than in the past so that added days may be given if the case is proven. It is hoped this will be a deterrent of misuse by offenders and prevent long stays.
- 12.8 Members of the Board statutorily visited offenders on a weekly basis. During these visits relevant files, care plans, ACCT documents, authorisations and algorithms were examined and the standard of documentation was satisfactory.
- 12.9 A regular time for GOOD reviews has facilitated attendance by Board members; any changes have been notified to the Board in advance. Board members have attended adjudication hearings conducted by the Governors and by the Independent Adjudicator and evidence paperwork and witness attendance has improved this year. The Board is satisfied that these hearings are conducted fairly, the requisite specialists attended and offenders were given the opportunity to make representation in person or by legal representation, in accordance with the rules. SMARG meetings have also been held regularly and changes notified to members in advance.
- 12.10 The Board is pleased to report that the high proportion of BME offenders in the Unit, as reported for several consecutive years, is lower this year, and there have only been occasional incidents where the figures are skewed if the same BME offender is accommodated in Segregation Unit more than once.

13 Residential Services and Regime

Induction

- 13.1 The IMB conducted an in-depth review of the reception and induction of offenders into life at Isis. The prison does not take offenders straight from the courts; all new arrivals will all have spent time at other prisons prior to arriving at Isis and will have received induction into prison life. IMB members observed the reception process, the transfer to the induction spur and the induction programme that introduces the offender to different aspects of prison life and the functions available to support and help them towards rehabilitation.
- 13.2 IMB members observed that offenders arriving in reception were treated fairly and with respect, they were processed efficiently before transferring to the induction spur. The prison accepted and acted on most of the recommendations made in relation to reception and arrival in the induction spur, but there are some aspects of the induction process that either remain unresolved or need to be completed.
- 13.3 There are times when the reception process needed to be rushed because the transport carrying prisoners arrived late in the afternoon. This has a knock on effect in the induction spur with offenders arriving late for their evening meal, not being able to make phone calls and not being able to shower.
- 13.4 Because property cards arriving from some other prisons were sometimes inaccurate, incomplete or blank, the prison staff completes a new set of property cards for each new arrival. This should not be necessary, is a waste of valuable staff time and could be avoided either by all prisons completing accurately and completely the property cards or by introducing electronic property cards. There have been significant difficulties reuniting offenders with their property if they arrive at the prison without some or all of their property.
- 13.5 In both the holding rooms in reception and the cells the lavatory bowls are heavily stained and cleaning has proved to be ineffectual, primarily because the material from which the bowls are made attract and hold the stains. The poor state of the lavatory bowls was commented on by HMIP
- 13.6 When the induction programme was initially observed, too much information from a range of departments and agencies was being squeezed into too short a period of time, leading to very poor initial interactions with offenders. The video that was shown did not reflect the regime in operation at the time and gave an inaccurate picture of the availability of some departments such as OMU. The prison has now redesigned the programme giving departments and agencies more

adequate time with offenders. Plans are also in train to make further changes including greater use of offender representatives to help familiarise new arrivals with prison systems.

Residential Blocks

- 13.7 There are two similar residential blocks, Thames and Meridian, each consisting of four spurs at three levels radiating from a central hub providing accommodation for approximately 80 offenders per spur in a mixture of single and double occupancy cells. There are a few fully-equipped cells for offenders with disabilities. Thames 'G' spur is designated for the induction of recently arrived offenders. In Meridian, Safer Custody offenders are accommodated on 'C' spur.
- 13.8 The prison continues to operate a "restricted regime", first introduced as a temporary measure in September 2013, because of lack of staff available in the residential Houseblocks. This temporary regime has improved somewhat during the year with 75% of the offenders now being allowed to attend activities and education, but no evening association is allowed and all offenders, therefore, spend 14 hours locked in their cells overnight. It is not possible with the restricted regime to offer basic facilities to the offenders such as a shower every day.
- 13.9 After NOMS implemented a number of changes around re-grading and approved staffing levels leading to benchmarking and "new ways of working" prior to 2013, the prison has a revised complement of 110 officer grade staff. Despite the recruitment of new officers being restarted after it was frozen in 2014, the use of a "payment plus" overtime incentive scheme, cross deployment of officers from specialist functions and detached duty officers from other prisons, the prison has struggled to have 90 officers on duty at any one time. At the end of 2015, it still appears that full staffing to the agreed NOMS "benchmarking" level is unattainable, with the continuing impact on the prison's ability to meet its role as a training prison for sentenced young men.
- 13.10 In addition, the recruitment freeze imposed by NOMS in 2013 for almost a year (referenced in our 2014 Annual Report) has resulted in an extremely young and inexperienced group of prison officers. At the end of 2015, 38% of the prison officers had less than 12 months service and 54% were younger than 30 (the same age as the offender group). This presents major challenges when managing offenders on the residential Houseblocks and requires significant time being spent by the management in training and development for these new officers.

- 13.11 A further issue that has continued during the year relates to the deteriorating condition of the toilets in the cells and reception areas. Although the prison was only completed just over five years ago, a fault in the toilets has meant that the porous surfaces are impossible to clean properly, with many toilets in a filthy condition. A recent initiative in cleaning toilets using chemical means is to be applauded and should be rolled out quickly in 2016.
- 13.12 The pilot in-cell telephone system which had been promised for implementation in 2013 has still not been delivered and is now set for review during 2016. Such a system is known to have major benefits including a reduction in violence, bullying and self-harm, and in supporting family engagement. It is also mainly self-funding after the initial investment.
- 13.13 A Personal Officer scheme is theoretically in place but lack of staff and the high percentage of new officers have rendered it meaningless for most offenders.
- 13.14 A Prisoner Council was instigated early in 2015 and meets on a monthly basis, and is attended by senior staff as well as 10 or more offenders. This has had a positive impact across a number of areas of the prison.

Catering and Kitchens

- 13.15 It is a positive experience to visit the kitchen in Isis as the offenders are quietly engaged in the preparation of food, enjoying the work and job satisfaction. They are supervised by a team of experienced staff and the atmosphere is relaxed and the team effort impressive to observe. The variety and balance of the menu is good and remains within budget at £2.01 per day for food supply. The Kitchen Manager is always open to suggestions from the Prisoners Council for menu changes or additions and will adopt these where feasible. A recent visit from Environmental Health awarded 5 green stars throughout.
- 13.16 Portion control within the serveries is not always well supervised with some wings calling for extra breakfast and lunch packs but this is improving due largely to the support from the Houseblock management. Faith dietary requirements are well catered for and food provided at the major religious festivals is greatly appreciated.
- 13.17 It is a requirement that food is at a safe temperature at the point of service (the time lapse between food leaving the kitchen and service should not exceed 45 minutes). Temperature books are not always being filled in at the point of service and in some cases there is no entry for several days. This must be done and recorded as the temperature of the food is taken and not retrospectively as pointed out in previous Annual Reports. The temperature books should be retained in the

serveries at all times. These books are also required for auditable purposes. The comments books need to be better used and if there are complaints, these will be easier to address if they have been recorded.

13.18 The cleanliness of the trolleys is still an ongoing issue with carbon build up still presenting a problem and in some cases food is left in the trolleys overnight and unwashed trays left by the sinks. This is unacceptable and will result in attracting vermin. It is the job of the servery workers to clean the trolleys and trays. Some wings do an excellent job of cleaning the trolleys and this needs to be replicated consistently across both Houseblocks.

13.19 The Quays restaurant for staff continues to offer a daily changing menu and offenders work towards achieving NVQ Level 1 Certificate in Food Preparation and Cooking. They can then move on to the main kitchen to take NVQ Level 2 Diploma in Food Production and Cooking. During the year, 36 offenders commenced Level 1, 21 completed and 19 achieved the qualification. Twelve started the Level 2 course and three achieved the qualification.

13.20 Switchback has again offered an intensive mentoring programme through the gate. Twenty four offenders from Isis were taken onto their programme. Seven of those had worked for substantial periods of time in the Isis kitchen and have moved on to suitable employment or further education.

Chaplaincy

13.21 The Chaplaincy Department is extremely well run at Isis with a dedicated team of Chaplains covering a wide range of Religions. At a recent inspection by Chaplaincy HQ, a green rating was awarded for Assurance and Compliance with a score of 94% which reflects the excellence of the team of Chaplains, who work very hard to deliver faith provision and the high level of pastoral care across the prison. It is reassuring that requests from offenders to arrange a visit to attend a funeral or dying relative have never been declined on the grounds of short staffing during the Prison restricted regime.

13.22 The Board are pleased to note the support that Chaplaincy receive in particular from the Governing Governor, Residential staff, OMU and Interventions staff enabling the department to do their work effectively.

13.23 Classes cover Christian & Islamic Studies, Hindu, Buddhist & Sikh Worship. In addition a Tarbiyah Islamic course where many Graduations have been achieved and POGA (Power of Good Advice) courses based on the Book of Proverbs which cover a wide spectrum of issues including relationships, money, violence & controlling anger which are relevant to the Offenders lives. Support is given to Safer Custody

offenders with a weekly 'Time Out' session of activities and for Travellers a monthly support group is available. Sycamore Tree & Finding Rhythms classes run for 6 weeks, two to four times during the year. The Finding Rhythms classes achieved some Gold Koestler awards.

13.24 Due to the large number of offenders attending Friday prayers, this is now held in the Visits Hall which for the purpose is converted into a pleasant environment for worship. RC Mass & Church of England/Free Church services take place every Sunday in the Multi-faith suite. The Isis Band which meet for practice once a week, give Offenders the opportunity to learn and improve their musical talents and then perform at the C of E & Free Church service. The Annual Carol Concert this year was well attended by 84 offenders and outside organisations and was able to be held in the Evening thanks to Officers volunteering to cover a late shift.

13.25 A full-time post for a RC Chaplain has remained unfilled since March and every effort is being made to fill the post which is being covered at present by the Chaplaincy team. There are now two full-time Community Chaplains, appointed and awaiting clearance, funded by Feltham Community Chaplaincy Trust.

14 Board Applications, Attendance and Training

14.1 Board membership was 13 active members at the end of 2015. The Board operates two weekly rotas, one for the monitoring rota visit and one for Applications.

14.2 Having sufficient members to operate two rotas means that a comprehensive weekly rota report on monitoring standards within the prison can be produced and most Applications are now heard and completed within the week they are received. Individual members have developed familiarity with their areas of special interest including attending relevant prison meetings as observers and providing contributions for this Annual Report.

14.3 Following the recruitment round which commenced in early 2014 in conjunction with HMP Belmarsh, two new members were appointed to the Board during 2015. Training and mentoring have been carried out by experienced members. A further recruitment round was conducted in late 2015.

14.4 The following is a table of categories of Applications received by the Board during 2015.

Category	Total in year
Accommodation	7
Adjudications	1
Alleged assaults	5
Attendance to activities	7
Bullying	5
Canteen	21
Category and sentence plan	18
Complaints about staff	22
IEP and Discipline issues	21
Drugs/DST	0
Foreign Nationals issues	4
Healthcare	21
Home detention curfew/OMU	123
Kitchen/food	9
Licence recall	1
Mail	18
Parole	0
Payments for activities	4
Personal finance	13
Pins/telephone access	3
Property	148
Racism/discrimination	4
Regime issues	50
ROTL	0
Safer Custody	20
Transfers	43
Visits (including legal visits)	18
Violence Management	15
Others	5
Resolved before visit	5
Total	611

14.5 The total of 611 was significantly lower than the 1037 received in 2014. There was a major drop in the monthly number of Applications in the spring of 2015 which coincided with the introduction of the Prisoners' Council. The issues complained about most are property and Home

Detention Curfew/OMU. Our concerns over these areas have been highlighted earlier in the report.

- 14.6 On property, delayed and mislaid property arising from transfers from other prisons has been a matter of continuing serious concern. At the end of 2015, there were approximately 30 outstanding Complaints being handled by the prison from offenders awaiting response from their previous prison, the vast majority around property. Rules appear to be different for different establishments and also for different transport contractors about what can and cannot be permitted. No one party appears to take responsibility when property cannot be located. There is an urgent need for clarification and better control nationally over prisoner property policy and procedures.
- 14.7 The applications concerning the OMU and Home Detention Curfew did drop off to a certain degree later in the year after the OMU put in place measures to communicate with offenders via the biometrics system in the prison.
- 14.8 Attendance at Board meetings has been good with no member having missed more than two of the twelve meetings. The Governor or his deputy has attended every meeting and provided the Board with a comprehensive report on each occasion. Information received from the prison via CJSM on a regular basis by way of NTOs, NTSs and daily morning meeting notes has been of real help in keeping members informed about prison life.
- 14.9 Each Board meeting has been preceded by a 30 minute training session delivered by members of prison staff on a wide variety of subjects arranged by the BDO in conjunction with the Governor.

15 Glossary of Abbreviations

ACCT	Assessment, Care in Custody Teamwork
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
BDO	Board Development Officer
CARAT	Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice and Throughcare
CJSM	Criminal Justice Secure Mail
CNA	Certified Normal Accommodation
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
CQC	Care Quality Commission
CRC	Community Rehabilitation Company
DDC	Deputy Director of Custody
DIRF	Discrimination Incident Report Form
FN	Foreign Nationals
GOOD	Good Order or Discipline
HDC	Home Detention Curfew
HMIP	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons
IMB	Independent Monitoring Board
IEP	Incentive and Earned Privileges
IRC	Immigration Removal Centre
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
NOMS	National Offender Management Service
NPS	New Psychoactive Substances
NTO	Notice to Offenders
NTS	Notice to Staff
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
OASys	Offender Assessment System
OLASS	Offender Learning and Skills Service
OMU	Offender Management Unit
OP CAP	Operational Capacity
PCT	Primary Care Trust
POELT	Prison Officer Entry Level Training
ROTL	Release on Temporary Licence
SMT	Senior Management Team
SMARG	Segregation Management and Review Group
TMC	The Manchester College – TMC Novus
UKBA	United Kingdom Border Agency
TtG	Through the Gate
VM	Violence Management
YOI	Young Offenders Institution