

# Independent Monitoring Board

## HMP Full Sutton

### Annual report 2015

#### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 Due to a severe shortage of members of the IMB at Full Sutton over the last year this Annual Report does not follow the full template set out by the National IMB for Annual Reports.
- 1.2 This report will act as a supplement to the 2014 IMB Annual Report for Full Sutton which, for reasons unknown to the current Board, was never submitted.
- 1.3 This limited 2015 report is submitted along with the more extensive 2014 report. It concentrates on aspects of the regime at HMP Full Sutton that have been noted by the restricted IMB monitoring process.
- 1.4 The IMB at Full Sutton hopes that the Secretary of State, the leadership of NOMS and the Governor at Full Sutton will note the issues raised and, where appropriate, respond to its concerns.

#### **2.0 The Board: Overall Judgement**

- 2.1 The Board, in general, recognises that HMP Full Sutton is a high performing dispersal prison where by and large prisoners are treated humanely despite the increasing constraints placed upon it. The position noted in point 4.4 of the 2014 report remains much the same.
- 2.2 Many instances of fair and just treatment of prisoners have been witnessed by Board members. Inevitably, given the nature of the prison's population, and the role of the IMB which includes looking into prisoner concerns and complaints, the Board becomes aware of issues that need to be drawn to the attention of the authorities. Some of these will be reported in what follows.
- 2.3 The Board congratulates the Governor and all his staff on the maintenance of high standards and a high performance rating.
- 2.4 The Board also acknowledges and applauds the efforts of the Governor and his staff to improve the culture of the prison in the light of the findings of Professor Alison Liebling of Cambridge University. The Board will monitor the results of this with interest over the next few years.

#### **3.0 The Board wishes to draw to the attention of the relevant authorities the following issues:-**

- 3.1 IMB Membership. The IMB at Full Sutton is supposed to have a compliment of 15 members. Given membership turnover and unfortunate sickness, over the last 18 months the Board has included between 8 and 10 members. As at 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016 the Board had 8 members – 3 of whom came into post in mid-2015 and who are just now becoming sufficiently experienced to become full members. Necessarily this shortage has curtailed the level of monitoring of the prison during this report period.
- 3.2 IMB recruitment processes need to be speeded up: the three new members that joined the Board at Full Sutton mid 2015 became involved in the recruitment process at least 1 year before they arrived. As at January 2016 2 potential members await interview. However it is known that one long standing member will retire in June 2016 with a potential for a further retirement in May 2017. The Secretary of State is asked to

address this issue in order to ensure satisfactory maintenance of independent monitoring at HMP Full Sutton.

3.3 Administrative Support to the IMB: The lack of membership in the IMB referred to in the paragraph above has been compounded by the reduction of administrative support to the Board. The Board understands that its amount of administrative time has been reduced in line with general staff reductions in the management of the prison. This has been exacerbated by the retirement through ill health of an experienced "IMB Clerk" and the failure to adequately induct a replacement albeit on reduced hours.

3.3.1 This has seriously compromised the effectiveness of the reduced number of Board members whose time has been diverted to an extent into simple administrative tasks that should not be the part of their role.

3.3.2 The Board appreciates that the governor is taking steps to improve the administrative support to the Board and hopes these will be successful.

3.4 Reductions in overall prisons staffing levels:

3.4.1 The Board remains concerned at the impact and the potential impact of the overall reduction in staffing levels at HMP Full Sutton. The Board appreciated that this has resulted from national policy and the Bench Marking exercise. The Board is relieved that through good management and successful staff relations there has been no detectable reduction in safety and stability in the prison so far. Nevertheless staffing reductions have resulted in significant service curtailment which has impacted on prisoner wellbeing. Given the lack of spare staff capacity to undertake adhoc duties (e.g. escorting prisoners to hospital outside, checking prisoner phone pin numbers) service closures and regime curtailment has been experienced. Both the reception function and the gym have on occasions had to close due to staff shortages and prisoners have repeatedly complained about delays in provision of their own property, in some cases months after they have arrived at the prison from other establishments. G Wing has, over the last year, on occasion, had to be put on night status as staff have had to be diverted to other duties thereby severely curtailing the regime on that wing. The Board notes that the Governor has taken steps to reduce these difficulties and that there has been some improvement. The Board will continue to monitor this aspect as it has significant impact on the morale of the prison's population.

3.5 **G wing**

3.5.1 The Board has been concerned during this reporting period over the use of G Wing to house prisoners requiring extra support without the adequate resources and supervision to do so. In February the unit was re rolled to form part of a group with reception and DTS under the leadership of one governor. This has led to improvements. Staff are now able to offer a better experience to those prisoners who have been sent to HMP Full Sutton. The inclusion of peer mentors who reside on G Wing giving further support to newly arrived prisoners has been very effective. Those prisoners who were experiencing difficulties and located on G Wing rather than being sent to Segregation & Healthcare received the help they needed.

3.5.2 In October following changes to rules for Segregation those prisoners not signed on by the HCC were sent to G Wing. Initially this resulted in them being kept locked up on the wing with none of the safeguards of PSO 1700.

A new regime was introduced ensuring all prisoners had some association time and an individual progress plan. This was reinforced by the production of a weekly exit strategy which reviews the location of all prisoners on the wing. The new regime is fully supported by the staff who work with the prisoners to help them to be reintegrated back into normal location at Full Sutton or another establishment. It will however take time to become fully embedded.

### **3.6 The Segregation Unit**

- 3.6.1 The average length of stay of prisoners in the Segregation Unit in quarter 3 of 2015 was 47 days. The Board would be remiss if it did not express concern at this given that the amendment to PSO 1700 published in September 2015 consequent on the Supreme Court ruling (Bourgass and Hussain of July 2015) actually state that "Evidence suggests that 14 days is the point at which some prisoners may start to suffer adverse effects of segregation." (Paragraph 2.3 of Amendments to policy set out in PSO 1700). The quarterly average referred to above relates the length of stay in Segregation at Full Sutton and takes no account of the fact that some prisoners have transferred in from other segregation units in other prisons. The Board notes that currently (January 2016) there are two prisoners that have been segregated for over one year. Prisoners are often resident in the Segregation Unit because they refuse to locate on main wings and the Board welcomes the fact that Governors do attempt to implement exit strategies. Where these include transfer to other prisons there is a tendency for huge delay in the transfer process and in some cases failure in the plans. This causes huge frustration for the prisoner and cannot really achieve much in the way of progress.
- 3.6.2 The Board realised the issue of prisoners residing for long periods in the Segregation Unit is a whole system issue and that solutions are difficult to achieve. Never the less the Board asks the Secretary of State to focus on this issue in order to create a more humane system.
- 3.6.3 Following the revision of PSO 1700 referred to above, HMP Full Sutton has modified its Rule 45 Process. Reviews are now chaired by a rotation of Governors and the Board feels this has reduced continuity in the process leading to increased frustration on the part of prisoners who can receive confused advice as to plans for their resettlement over the succession of review Boards attended.
- 3.6.4 In the Segregation Unit, although subject to the strict regime in place, prisoners are treated as individuals. The Board have witnessed many examples of prisoners being treated in a sensitive and respectful manner.
- 3.6.5 Following the HMIP inspection of Full Sutton (January 2016) the Board will be interested to see how the regime in the Segregation Unit changes given its perceived limitations especially for the prisoners who have stayed a long time

### **3.7 Health Service Issues:**

- 3.7.1 During 2015 the prison's health services were subjected to a competitive tendering process. This resulted in staff anxiety and consequent high staff turnover. Recruitment of clinical staff generally is difficult across the NHS currently and this, plus the time taken to achieve security clearance,

resulted in significant staff shortages at various points in the year (possibly up to as much as a 40% staff reduction at some stages)

3.7.2 Involved in this general concern about pressure on staff has been particular concern about the number of staff focusing on mental health and learning disability where the number of suitably skilled staff available has been reduced in the tendering process.

3.7.3 At one stage staff turnover caused the closure of the in house renal dialysis service. This has had an adverse effect on the treatment of the prisoners concerned and has added to the staffing pressures (and costs) referred to in paragraph 3.4 above. As at January 2016 the cessation of the local dialysis services continues due to another issue related to the commissioning of specialist health services

The IMB is pleased to hear the Governors report that the solution to this problem is in hand

### **3.8 Offender Management Processes:**

3.8.1 The monthly report that the Board receives from the Governor has not infrequently referred to backlogs in completion of the OASIS system reports. Under the benchmarking process this work is now undertaken by staff who fulfil a hybrid role and it has been suggested that these backlogs may be caused by combination of staff reduction and the fact that the staff concerned do not yet feel motivated towards their new roles. The IMB will continue to monitor this aspect as it feels that such delays and backlogs are not in the general interests of prisoners progress and rehabilitation

### **3.9 Equality and Diversity**

3.9.1 During this reporting period BME and Muslim prisoners continue to report that they do not feel as safe or that they are treated the same as other prisoners.

3.9.2 The SMARG statistics received by the Board do not support this perception. The Equality Action forum, which is a prisoner group has been asked if they can provide some of the reasons behind the perception.

3.9.3 Gay and bisexual prisoners also report that they feel less safe than other prisoners. They also report that they do not think either staff or prison management deal with homophobic abuse as they would other forms of abuse.

3.9.4 Approximately 19% of prisoners have a recognised disability. The prison continues to find it increasingly costly and time consuming to meet their needs. The prison has no identified equipment budget for this and some services and equipment should be funded from the local social care budget or health provider. The prison submits the referrals to the relevant agencies but their staff have to receive clearance before they can enter the prison. Up to the end of 2015 only two individuals had been assessed.

### **3.10 Close Supervision Centre**

3.10.1 The Board recognises the good work in the CSC Unit which has seen 3 prisoners progress out of the system. The Board notes the good consistent management, committed staff and adequate resources in the unit. A multi-disciplinary approach and the respect of others responsibilities has led to the growth of a strong team. This has allowed for different approaches resulting in the prisoners developing skills to help them move forward.

#### 4.0 **Conclusion**

4.1 For the reasons stated at the outset of this report the IMB at Full Sutton presents this truncated report on its observations in 2015. The Board wishes to record its thanks to the Governor and all his staff for the help and support in monitoring the humanity and decency of the prison regime at HMP Full Sutton