



Annual Report

Independent Monitoring Board

HMP Leyhill

February 2015 - January 2016

Section 1 The Statutory Role of the Independent Monitoring Board

The Prisons Act 1952 and the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 require every prison and Immigration Removal/Reception Centre (IRC) to be monitored by an independent Board appointed by the Minister of Justice from members of the community in which the prison or Centre is situated.

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 Minister of Justice, or any official to whom authority has been delegated, any concerns it may have.

report annually to the Minister of Justice 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.

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Section 3 Description of HMP Leyhill

HMP Leyhill is a Category D Open Prison in a rural setting, located off the M5 motorway between Bristol and Gloucester.

For about half of the reporting year, the Deputy Governor was Acting Governor. During the year as a whole, the Deputy Governor post was held by 3 different individuals. Many other Governor-level posts changed hands as did many middle-manager posts, several with acting appointments.

The prison holds a highly complex group of prisoners, with a total capacity during the reporting period of 515. It is one of only two establishments in the Open Estate to accept sex offender and child offender life sentenced prisoners. The ratio of Indeterminate Sentenced Prisoners and Lifer Prisoners to Determinant Sentenced Prisoners increased during the year such that, by the end of the reporting period, there were some 370 Lifer/ISP (Indeterminate Sentence for Public Protection) prisoners held in the establishment.

Prisoners needing to show they have made progress in their offending behaviour prior to parole are required to be tested in the community. To this end, opportunities are available to obtain work experience in the community local to the establishment.

During the reporting period a wide range of support to prisoners was provided by the following:

- Career information, advice and guidance - National Careers Service
- Personal development, Social and Life Skills and Work-related Learning - Weston College
- Benefits and appointments on release - Job Centre
- Qualification support – N-Ergy
- Resettlement Services – CRC Catch 22
- Specialist support – CFO3
- Debt Advice – Bristol Advice Centre
- Bank Accounts – Bristol Credit Union
- Gymnasium courses - Astara
- Healthcare services – jointly between Bristol Community Health and General Practice Provider, Hanham Health
- Optician Services – Homecare Opticians
- Dentistry – Somerset Partnership
- Mental Health services were provided by Avon and Wiltshire Partnership Mental Health Trust
- Day Centre for older offenders – RECOOP

Escort Services to and from the prison were provided by GEOAmev.

Section 4 Executive Summary

As last year, the offender profile changed substantially creating further pressures, especially on the already stressed OMU [5.5.1]. The coincidence of a large number of staff changes, prison-wide, at both senior and middle management levels (many of them involving interim acting appointments) was unhelpful e.g. [Section 3, paragraph 2] [5.3.11] [5.5.2] [5.5.7].

The prison continued to provide a safe and largely decent environment in which to prepare prisoners for release [5.7.1]. However, the building and systems maintenance was at times inadequate, principally (though not only) in residential Units and the kitchen [5.6.11-15] [5.6.16-22]. The Caterers showed outstanding flexibility and standards in coping [5.6.23].

Pastoral care was usually good, marked by inter-departmental cooperation [5.6.7-8] [5.6.26] and outstanding work by the Chaplaincy [5.1.19-20] [5.4.9] [5.6.8]. Relationships between staff and prisoners were routinely respectful, built on the willingness of staff on occasion to go out of their way to be helpful e.g. [5.6.5-7] and on schemes involving prisoners taking significant roles within the running of the prison e.g. [5.1.8-11] [5.1.25-27] [5.2.5] [5.3.6] [5.3.9] [5.4.4] [5.5.5] [5.7.1-2] [5.7.5]. The exceptionally pro-active work promoting Equality and Inclusion policies [Section 5, passim] helped in encouraging a tolerant and cohesive community that was not afraid to tackle vigorously taxing issues [e.g.5.1.6-7]. The provision for the many elderly prisoners was excellent [5.1.15-17] [5.4.9]. Healthcare provision, despite dentistry concerns, had many good features (not least the closeness of its work with the PE department) and was largely comparable with provision outside [5.3. passim].

Although there was little evidence of the use of hard drugs, substance misuse required - and received - constant vigilance [5.3.6] [5.7.6-7]. Good teamwork, both within the prison and with the police, enabled the most egregious offenders to be returned to closed conditions. There were some valuable anti-drugs initiatives and the new restrictions on smoking were by and large successful [5.2.3] [5.3.5].

The provision of Education, Learning and Skills in many aspects showed clear improvement and high standards [5.2.7-9], though the provision of Creative Arts within the prison still does not enable their potential to be maximised in preparing prisoners for release [5.2.14-15].

Worryingly, the shortage of “approved premises” reported last year continued to cause problems in delays to ROTL and to prisoners awaiting release [5.5.6]. Though the administration of the more restrictive ROTL policy gradually improved, the Board is concerned by its adverse impact on the range of purposeful activities available outside the prison [5.2.10] [5.4.2]. It also deplores that too often some prison workplaces were unable to keep those assigned productively active [5.4.3-7].

Given all the restrictions of the ROTL policy, the Board warmly welcomes the imaginative involvement of carefully selected prisoners in the Great Expectations project [6.4.passim]. The trust and responsibility they carried was considerable. Similar bold judgment in reviewing the policy to enable further highly-selective prisoner use of the internet would be fully justified [5.2.11-13].

In sum, HMP Leyhill continues to be, in essence, a well-organised prison operating in an attractive setting with generally good staff-prisoner relationships. There is much to celebrate and some significant issues yet to be resolved.

4.1 Questions for the Minister

- 4.1.1 What action is to be taken, following changes to ROTL regulations, to remedy the consequent reduction in suitable prisoners working in the community as a key part of their resettlement programme? [5.4.2] [5.2.10]

And as there are issues concerning matters raised last year:

- 4.1.2 What further action is to be taken to ensure the provision of long-term funding for older prisoners through the Lobster Pot day centre facility? [5.1.15-17] [5.4.9]
- 4.1.3 As it was accepted in last year's response that the Creative Arts can directly contribute to rehabilitation, what changes are proposed to ensure their availability to all appropriate prisoners as part of their sentence plans? [5.2.14-15]
- 4.1.4 In view of the widening problems related directly or indirectly to the suitability of the new boiler system, in particular to their effect on the decency of the prisoners' environment, what arrangements are in place to ensure that sufficient funds are immediately available to rectify the underlying causes? [5.6.19-22]

4.2 Questions for the Prison Service

- 4.2.1 What further action is to be taken to regularise the amount of property held by prisoners across the estate and to minimise the loss of property during transfer? [5.6.25]
- 4.2.2 As some prisoners are, after risk assessment, deemed eligible for ROTL without any restrictions on their use of computers on-line, what will now be done to redress the anomaly of their not having, in suitable venues, unsupervised access within the prison when it would be of benefit to the prison community ? [5.2.11]
- 4.2.3 What action is to be taken to ensure a more effective system of preventing prisoners arriving at Leyhill with inadequate documentation? [5.6.6]
- 4.2.4 What action is being taken to ensure that all prisoners employed in industries within the prison are invariably provided with meaningful work throughout their working day? [5.4.6] [5.4.7]
- 4.2.5 Are there any plans to increase the availability of suitable "approved premises"? [5.5.6]
- 4.2.6 What arrangements are proposed to ensure future adequate maintenance and, where required, prompt refurbishment of, in particular, the key areas of the Cooking, Washing and Toilet facilities? [5.6.13/14/16]

And as there are issues concerning matters raised last year:

- 4.2.7 What further action will be taken to ensure that when prisoners are transferred, they are accompanied by all their property and, in cases where property is mislaid on transfer; the matter is dealt with expeditiously? [5.6.25]
- 4.2.8 What further action is to be taken to address the widespread use of the currently legally available NPS? [5.3.6] [5.7.6] [5.7.7]

4.3 Previous Year's Concerns not mentioned earlier

- 4.3.1 Shortage of Learning and Skills tutors is no longer an issue following action by the contracted supplier.
- 4.3.2 Although the long waiting times for dentistry appointments were a problem for much of the year, this issue was effectively addressed by the end of the reporting period.

Section 5

5.1 Equality & Inclusion

- 5.1.1 During the reporting year, the prison continued to respond positively to its duties under the 2010 Equalities Act and the associated PSI. The appropriate structures and procedures outlined in the Board's report last year very largely remained in place with continuing reassuring results. The one structural change was that the Equalities Monitoring Team (EMT) took over the monitoring previously undertaken by SMART and it is now linked to the NOMIS system. The arrangement helps identify offenders' protected characteristics and to spot whether any group is disproportionately involved in Adjudications, Complaints, Use of Force incidents and problems related to ROTL and IEP. The relevant data is monitored at each bi-monthly Action Team meeting (DREAT).
- 5.1.2 As last year, the basic structures and procedures set up to deliver policies, whilst well-designed, meant that some staff were not able to attend bi-monthly meetings due to pressure of other work. Consequently updates and actions required sometimes take longer to implement than intended.
- 5.1.3 One organisational change, the establishment of an Equality Office at ground-floor level, has been a welcome initiative. It is not designed to be staffed by the Prison Service, but rather as a shared, offender-led resource to encourage involvement in Equality issues and with a variety of peer-support groups. Slightly unexpectedly its siting, though obviously sensible because of physical ease of access, has been criticised by some offenders who say they do not wish to be seen visiting the office because of its prominent position.
- 5.1.4. The recording and investigation of Discrimination Incident Report Forms (DIRF) submitted by offenders is regarded by the Board as a key monitoring tool. In 2015 there were 30 of them. The Governor with overall responsibility for the area reviewed all the DIRFs before submitting them to the Prison Governor. The issues raised were all brought to DREAT meetings and where appropriate became part of the Action Plan (DREAP) resulting in changing practice.
- 5.1.5 In addition to the Prison Service checks, many of the DIRFs were read and checked by the IMB. The Board is confident that DIRFs as a whole were thoroughly investigated and action taken where necessary. Such checks also revealed that there seemed occasionally to be an element of group action on a particular issue and this led to several DIRFs being submitted on the same issue at essentially the same time. The implications of this for the validity of the complaint are neither automatically positive nor negative and so the thoroughness with which all DIRFs are investigated is reassuring.
- 5.1.6 Because of DIRFs last year identifying problems with cultural understanding of

religious commitments and festivals, calendars of these events are now on display in workplaces and residential Units and all offenders are invited to participate in some of the religious celebrations whether or not they are members of the religious or cultural group. In addition, in addressing the issue of cultural understanding more broadly, both the Diversity Representatives and the Equality Staff Officer Diversity Officer worked hard to ensure monthly changes of high quality displays, covering different Equal Opportunity Strands of policy areas, in the residential Units. Their work was very well received.

- 5.1.7 This reporting year there was a small cluster of DIRFs about the serving of Halal food in the central kitchen. The resolution of the issue resulted in the Halal food being served by a Muslim kitchen worker and the Imam and the Offender Equalities Representative being given free access to observe the processes. There are now posters and signage in the Dining Hall clarifying food content. As a result of all this close cooperation, there have been no further adverse comments and indeed the menu offered at Eid & Diwali drew offenders' praise.
- 5.1.8 The value of the Prisoners Diversity Consultative Group (PDCG) to the prison is increasingly obvious as each year goes by. During the past twelve months, membership of the Group changed as all previous Representatives of the seven Strands of work have left prison. However, continuity has been maintained by their replacements shadowing them for a while. The Representatives are helped to ensure that they are fully aware of issues by the holding quarterly focus groups for all Strands.
- 5.1.9 There is also useful liaison by the Chair of the Group with the staff Diversity and Equality Coordinator on such sensitive topics as offenders' perceptions of the prison's "shipping out" practices and the response of some staff to various cultural differences, for example, in relation to the noise of black offenders' responses in domino games.
- 5.1.10 Representatives from PDCG play an essential part in the Reception and Induction for new arrivals. During the year, Board members heard from offenders on many occasions of the benefits being derived from the various support systems – initially from Chaperoning of new arrivals in their first few days and later from the Buddying and Peer Mentor systems. Having on occasion overheard some of the Chaperoning of new arrivals, IMB members are in no doubt of its usefulness.
- 5.1.11 One highlight of the year, in which PDCG played a key part and for which the prison provided the funding, was an excellent and well-attended African Drum and Dance event. In many ways this event was typical of the positive working relationship that is in large part characteristic of staff/prisoner relationships in the prison.

Age and disability

- 5.1.12 The percentage of offenders at Leyhill aged over 50 has continued to rise and is currently roughly a third. The provision of the excellent palliative care facility is recognition of some of the issues that inexorably follow from that trend. Inevitably, as the number of elderly prisoners rises so does the number of them with disabilities. According to NOMIS, nearly 70% of all offenders in the prison have a recognised disability. However, in considering the implications of this figure it should be remembered that what is classed as a disability covers a huge range in terms of the extent of its impact on the offender and therefore on prison services. The percentage of offenders whose condition makes great demands is far smaller. Nevertheless, whatever the degree of disability, it is important that from the start it is

recognised and an appropriate response made. This is one of the reasons that the decision was made that all Reception staff and Orderlies should receive training on Equalities and Diversity.

- 5.1.13 The growing number of offenders with reduced mobility (currently about 12%) and/or other significant physical disabilities meant that at times the ground-floor accommodation on B Unit where they are usually housed was unable to accommodate them all. There are other pressures felt as a result of this increase. Meeting the recent national requirement that all disabled offenders have to undertake supervised work before progressing to RDR or ROTL is a considerable challenge. The challenge is both to find suitable work and also to ensure the workplaces have appropriate disabled access.
- 5.1.14 A site survey to identify problems for disabled offenders was completed by some disabled offenders and Equality and Discrimination staff. This led to various works being undertaken to address them and the remaining desirable actions to remain under review.
- 5.1.15 Provision of activities for the over 50s in their dedicated Day Centre (known as the Lobster Pot) is remarkable for its scope and the associated commitment. All sessions are linked to Prison Pathways. A recent list of Activity Sessions contained 26 different areas of activity in addition to 9 topics on which there were talks or presentations. A sample includes: peer support and training for 50+ carers; personal plans for individuals with needs which are sustainable and embedded into all services; Living Wills; Fine Cell work; cookery classes using vegetables grown in offenders' own allotments; sing-alongs organised by offenders themselves; and, when the weather is favourable, pitch & putt, walking football, and organised walks around the grounds.
- 5.1.16 Inevitably, there are some elderly offenders who need persuasion to become actively involved and the project leaders have not been content to rest upon their laurels. There has been wider publicity and more visiting of the residential Units to try to engage the elderly who do not yet attend.
- 5.1.17 The Lobster Pot project is thriving. It has been praised by the Ombudsman as a model of good practice and is increasingly being recognised as such by other prisons, as witnessed by an increasing number of requests for visits. The present premises are reaching the stage where they are simply not big enough for the programme and level of offender support that it attracts. It is a pity that such success is not recognised by long-term committed prison funding.

Religion

- 5.1.18 There are 23 identified faiths. The largest sub-groups, when this report was drafted, were 70 Roman Catholics, 36 Buddhists and 30 Muslims. Smaller groups included 11 Pagans, 6 Mormons, 5 Jews and 1 Baha'i. Specialist materials were purchased for Rastafari worship. 110 prisoners identified with no religion.
- 5.1.19 The Chaplaincy continued to play an encouraging and active role in ensuring all offenders have the opportunity to explore their faiths and played a central role in all areas of prison life. This was underlined by the provision of Faith Awareness Training Days for prison staff in April and October. Despite some illness amongst the team, the Chaplaincy continued to maintain high standards of practice.
- 5.1.20 Across the prison, no evidence was observed of interfaith rivalry and the collegiality

observed among the Chaplaincy team provided a good example to others.

- 5.1.21 Problems arising for some of the faith groups (for example, concerning halal meat and kosher food) were successfully addressed by the prison authorities. Damage to the Buddha on the other hand, though investigated, did not lead to whoever was responsible being identified.

Travellers

- 5.1.22 Travellers are a group who because of their traditional lifestyles sometimes find aspects of prison life particularly challenging. However, the presence now of a Traveller Representative on the PDCG has the potential to help address some of these issues and the holding of a Travellers Awareness Day in June is a further indication of a wish to address whatever issues may arise.
- 5.1.23 One concern reported was that some travellers are unwilling to identify as such because they think that their characteristic nomadic life-style might mean that they were denied ROTL because they lack a permanent address. Another issue was a concern about their ability to reach the government's expectations of level 2 in English and Maths, an expectation now of all prisoners. The concern relates both to the perceived relevance of the expectation to some lifestyles and to difficulties in adapting, given life-histories, to a formal classroom setting. A meeting was held with the Learning and Skills Department in November to discuss these issues. There are no easy answers and this work continues.

Race

- 5.1.24 On-going equalities work reflects a genuine desire to improve staff / prisoner relations and provide an environment that reflects cultural awareness and sensitivity. There are excellent monthly equality and diversity displays; continuing focus groups, staff / prisoner football matches and a multicultural week. The variety of food available and the care taken in its handling is responsive to the variety of cultural/religious expectations. The Diwali celebrations included special meals for Hindu and Sikh offenders. In October there was an excellent Black History Month. This included a Drum and Dance Band performance which was attended by 100+ offenders who were so impressed that they requested that the Band be re-invited. A visiting gospel choir was well-received. There were films and the Lobster Pot put on a presentation. These are all positive manifestations of a determination for the prison to meet its proper obligations under legislation. At least equally important, however, are attempts to address perceived injustices so that the facts may be established and any lack of fairness and decency in the treatment of offenders remedied.
- 5.1.25 Concerns which surfaced during the reporting year illustrate the approach. There was a concern that the ethnic minorities might not be fairly treated in the selection of work-parties, both supervised and unsupervised. The ethnic breakdown of all work parties is now being monitored for representation and includes attendance of offenders working off-site at evening surgeries.
- 5.1.26 A related concern was a perceived bias against recruiting black gym orderlies... When this was investigated, the evidence indicated that black ethnic prisoners were over-represented rather than the contrary.
- 5.1.27 Other concerns are not so easily addressed. Some black offenders perceived that some prison staff showed a lack of cultural awareness. It was reported that some staff appeared "cold, sarcastic and dismissive". Some other ethnic minority offenders

reported that if they were challenging in any way then they would be “shipped out”. However, other ethnic minority offenders did not support these views and commented, “The colour of my skin is not an issue in this prison”. The DREAT group is committed to keeping abreast of these issues and exploring ways of overcoming negative perceptions.

- 5.1.28 Towards the end of the reporting year there were 12 Foreign Nationals: 8 Irish, 1 Jamaican, 1 Salvadorian, 1 Italian and 1 Syrian.
- 5.1.29 One of the above was identified by his previous prison as a Foreign National but was subsequently reclassified as British. As a result of this, the status of all Foreign Nationals is being checked on arrival in Reception.
- 5.1.30 Close links have been established with the Immigration Enforcement Team at Verne Prison and these have proved valuable.

Sexual orientation

- 5.1.31 Some offenders prefer to hide their sexual orientation. Others with this characteristic meet as a small group but many have concerns about being seen to be so identified. Currently there is no representative of this cohort; however there is an identified staff officer.
- 5.1.32 The Equalities Officer is aware of the challenge that many members of this group feel and as a partial response the Equalities Team completed a display on Gay Pride. The one DIRF that was raised relating to sexual orientation concerned an offender making homophobic comments. It was thoroughly investigated.
- 5.1.33 In the DREAT Bi-Monthly Diversity and Equality Report this area was reported on only once, as no issues had been raised
- 5.1.34 Veterans Support In Custody (V.S.I.C.) Towards the end of the reporting year there were 42 offenders who had served in the British army. On induction at Leyhill, all such offenders now receive a letter of introduction identifying the support available. Monthly meetings are held in the Chapel which, among other features, provide the opportunity to hear talks and have discussions.
- 5.1.35 £500 was raised for the Poppy Appeal.
- 5.1.36 During the year, though Benchmarking adversely affected staffing allocations in the Equality and Diversity area, there was much excellent work occurring throughout the prison. Equality and Diversity was well monitored and, although the administrative processes seem quite complex, as a result of this effective monitoring, many initiatives were set in train within the relevant Strands. Some of these initiatives have been fully implemented and others have yet to be brought to fruition. These include exploring the possibility of some elderly offenders having personal alarms; and seeking to improve communication from the OMU to offenders. Nevertheless, overall, the work in this area is something in which the prison can take pride.

5.2 Education Learning and Skills

- 5.2.1 The prison’s policy (and practice) is that all offenders are thoroughly assessed during Induction. If, after checking, there is no record of claimed qualifications they sit assessments in literacy and numeracy. Other educational needs are noted so that they can be addressed. Practice is that any requirements are incorporated in

individual sentence plans and members have seen no evidence that provision has been inadequate in scope and quantity in response to those plans, though inevitably the speed of progress varies from learner to learner.

- 5.2.2 During the reporting year Weston College was responsible for courses in Functional Skills of Maths and English; Independent Living Skills (restricted to offenders having served 7 years or more); Barbering; Site Carpentry; Domestic Cookery; Professional Cookery; Information Technology; Painting and Decorating; and Practical Horticulture. These courses were subject to external validation, mostly by City and Guilds and mainly aimed at Level 2 Diplomas. N-Ergy was responsible for NVQ Level 2 courses in Warehousing & Storage; Sustainable Recycling; Performing Manufacturing Operations; Cleaning & Support Services; and a course in Customer Service at BTEC Level 1. One course in Customer Service failed to materialise.
- 5.2.3 There were also valued inputs from inside the prison, including a course in Car Valeting at BIC Level 2. The P.E. Department, showing its usual enthusiasm, adopted a wide-ranging approach, including not only courses developing personal physical fitness but also one in First Aid, one leading to a national weightlifting award, and 3 others relating to the health and fitness industry (one of these being at the prestigious YMCA CYQ Level 3 for Personal Trainers). Much to their credit, the PE staff used some unease among offenders about restrictions in using heavy weights as a way of creating interest in courses on the use (and misuse) of steroids. They also ran well-supported classes in smoking cessation. Following a successful start-up during the Christmas period, an evening IT course using Virtual Campus was continued into 2016 with 11 enthusiastic students.
- 5.2.4 Courses in Business Enterprise, Art and Music were not provided because of lack of funding. Some courses on Cleaning could not be delivered as planned because of the illness of the tutor, but 6 courses of two weeks each were subsequently planned to take place between February and July 2016. To the Board's disappointment the well-established and successful course in dry stone walling did not take place because no funding was available from the SFA. However funding was later found and Weston College/Lantra are scheduled to provide it during early summer 2016.
- 5.2.5 Peer mentors continued to play an important part in subjects particularly benefiting from one to one tuition, such as literacy (supported by the Shannon Trust) and mathematics (supported by Fair Shares). The use of peer mentors benefits not only those being helped but also the mentors themselves, as part of their preparation for successful reintegration into outside society.
- 5.2.6 It is encouraging that managers at all levels within Education Learning and Skills have become very focused on improving outcomes for learners, the quality of provision, leadership and management. The Virtual Campus is an excellent resource, albeit as yet under-utilised. The appointment of an Advanced Skills Practitioner brought immediate benefit in regard to the teaching of functional skills and also in allowing better support of new staff in their core roles. Although there is still room to expand staff training, all staff have obtained (or are working towards) their Level 5 qualification. It is to the credit of all concerned that sessions of Continuing Professional Development were shared with other prisons as examples of best practice.
- 5.2.7 Provision provided within Learning and Skills led to high success rates, averaging 91% over all courses. Over vocational qualification courses – barbering, horticulture, painting and decorating – the success rate was 99%. The Maths Level

1 pass rate of 55% stood out as very untypical. Problems were exacerbated by insecure literacy skills when some questions had unaccustomed levels of text.

- 5.2.8 During the current academic year 7715 sessions have been taught; during these there were only 7 unauthorised absences. These figures tell their own story and it is entirely consistent with the picture presented in the anonymous well-balanced questionnaires completed in Focus groups conducted by Learning and Skills mentors. Over a year, a remarkable 72% rated the tuition as excellent and 90% rated the courses themselves as excellent. The tutors tried to respond positively and effectively to the feedback if possible. Where they were handicapped was in the call by roughly a fifth of students for more and better resources; the funding was lacking.
- 5.2.9 As well as structured feedback and Board Members' own observations, there was anecdotal feedback about the value of some of the courses. For example, one former prisoner wrote very positively on Facebook about his barbering course; another was (to use his own words) "looking to start up...own bakery after being on the Catering Course"; yet another found work immediately on release having previously completed a course on Dry Stone Walling.
- 5.2.10 Against all the successes must be placed the opportunities missed, several of them as a result of centrally-driven policies which might well (at least in some details) be profitably reviewed. An obvious example is the negative effect restrictions created by the ROTL policy can have on practical opportunities for experiencing a realistic working environment. For instance, arrangements were made for offenders to design and serve a menu in the restaurant of Weston College campus, but the Board heard that ROTL policy got in the way and the opportunity was lost.
- 5.2.11 Another policy that at times can have at times undesirable consequences is that relating to computer and internet access; a point that was raised in last year's Report. A good example relates to the Library. Though the Library has continued to be a well-used and valued resource, it had a difficult year because of staffing issues within the Library Service. Library Orderlies responded positively to the problems and kept the Library open at times when otherwise it would have been shut. However, the nationally-imposed restricted access of offenders to I.T. equipment meant that when a professional Librarian did come in, she had to spend the best part of a working day each week in-putting a backlog of data into the computer. This low-level, routine task is scarcely the best use of very limited (and relatively expensive) professional time.
- 5.2.12 The level of restricted access to I.T. also caused problems when the available Librarian was without the necessary expertise to allow the highly valued 'Story Book Dads' project to proceed in time for Christmas. This project for many years has provided an important link (particularly at Christmas) between offenders and their children. Fortunately, after Christmas, with the help of another prison, the service was restored.
- 5.2.13 Whilst the Board accepts the importance of security considerations in the use of computers (it is currently limited to Virtual Campus, Meganexus, City & Guilds, and Evolve), it is also mindful that in an Open Prison selected prisoners often have ready access to computing facilities when they routinely go outside to work and on ROTL. It is not clear why offenders of that standing cannot in special circumstances have similar access to help provide services to the prison community. It would be strange if there was more risk of their abusing such access when in the prison than when gaining access outside.

- 5.2.14 As recorded last year, the minimal presence of the Creative Arts in Leyhill is a missed opportunity. The Ministerial response to the Board's raising the issue last year mentioned courses being provided in Fine Art Cell work and Changing Tunes and poetry and creative writing workshops taking place in the Library. It also mentioned work taking place to provide additional weekly art sessions through the Prodigal Arts charity and the receipt of increased voluntary support. The provision during the reporting year showed a marginal improvement. Fine Cell work and Changing Tunes functioned as before. The Lobster Pot ran jewellery making and cookery sessions. On Tuesday evenings Prodigal Arts sessions were run by a previous Art tutor at the prison and – a welcome feature – art work produced can be sold at a Bristol art gallery, with 60% of any fee going to the artist's fund for release and 40% to social enterprise and victim support. However, few if any of these activities are currently integrated into sentence planning.
- 5.2.15 The Board is pleased that such activities take place. However, it would be a mistake to regard them for some (perhaps for many) solely as 'recreational' activities. The evidence is that they can contribute to a growing sense of purpose, of self-worth, of the realisation that the future has potential. These are all elements that are essential factors in establishing a situation where resettlement stands a realistic chance of being successfully achieved. It would therefore benefit society if their worth were more obviously reflected by their being integrated, where appropriate, into sentence planning. Hence, through the associated public funding, the potential they have would be released more fully to aid successful resettlement and thus help create a less dysfunctional society.

5.3 Healthcare

- 5.3.1 Healthcare provision in 2015 continued at the high level achieved in 2014, providing offenders with access to healthcare provision at or above the level which may be properly expected in the outside world. The number of older offenders - an age-group that can reasonably be expected to contain an above-average number of people with disabilities - continued to be high. This trend is expected to continue with inevitable impact upon the healthcare system.
- 5.3.2 The appointment system allowing access to the Healthcare department continued as in 2014 with an initial drop-in triage session held morning and evening, followed by appointments where necessary. A new feature in 2015 was the limited provision of a staff member at weekends to enable the distribution of Tramadol (now that it is a controlled drug) and to allow access for offenders who work off-site and cannot readily attend Healthcare during normal hours. A further change being explored is the provision of a wider evening service without a change in the overall staff hours.
- 5.3.3 An appointments system continued to provide access to GPs every weekday; physiotherapy weekly; optometry and podiatry monthly; and dentistry 3-4 times a week. Mainly the system worked well and provided regular and acceptable service, though the failure of the optician to attend in December meant that by mid-January there was a waiting list of 16. More problematically, difficulties with the provision of dentistry that had been evident in 2014 continued into 2015 and the service continued to struggle with long waiting times for appointments. The effect of staffing problems was increased by the repeated breakdown of specialist equipment for cleansing instruments. This meant that an automated process had to be carried out manually. By mid-January there were 41 on the main dentist waiting list, 92 on that for the dental hygienist, 43 currently under treatment and requiring further work, and 2 awaiting laboratory work. It is to be hoped that the change in dental provider from April 2016 will lead to improvements.

- 5.3.4 The longstanding successful cooperation between the Physical Education department and Healthcare continued. For example, some offenders received 'Fit For Life' referrals that allowed them to attend the gym and receive help in improving their general fitness – and, indeed, some made self-referrals. The Board welcomes the flexibility that allows self-referrals because it encourages habits of self-reliance that are not easily maintained by those who have spent long periods in highly-regimented closed conditions.
- 5.3.5 The recent changes to regulations about smoking in prisons seem on the whole to have been implemented as well as could be expected, though the level of observance or otherwise will always be a matter of conjecture. Smoking cessation clinics were made available on a one to one basis and were accessed either by referral by a GP or by self-referral. Several offenders started using e-cigarettes purchased through the Canteen. The P.E. Department reported that the number attending smoking cessation classes was well up on previous years.
- 5.3.6 During the year there was a big increase in the presence of Spice and other new psychoactive substances in the prison, with several hospital admissions as a direct result. Though in the latter part of the reporting year this use seemed to decrease, undoubtedly vigilance was still highly necessary. Offenders with concerns about drugs were able to access help from the specialist Substance Misuse Psychosocial Team and also from volunteer fellow offenders who had trained as Peer Mentors. In addition, offenders from Leyhill could attend the '12 –Step' programme run at Serenity House in Bristol to help overcome their drug/alcohol addiction. The programme, funded by South Gloucestershire and involving a daily attendance for 12 weeks, was reportedly very successful.
- 5.3.7 Mental Health services were provided by Avon and Wiltshire Partnership and could be accessed either through staff or by self-referral. The involvement of a Mental Health nurse in the induction process was of noted value and there are ongoing sessions provided to inform offenders of the services available. There was particular involvement with the Over 50s at the Lobster Pot day centre. Topics covered included sleep, anxiety and memory issues.
- 5.3.8 The introduction by Bristol Community Health of a Care Plan booklet proved a useful innovation. It is given to offenders with chronic illnesses to help them understand their condition better and more readily take some responsibility for its treatment. It contains details of the patient's condition, medications, test results etc. It is retained by the patient and provides the opportunity for him to record, for example, comments on health-related topics of his own choice, perhaps (for example) private targets for action or improvement. This booklet remains in the patient's possession when he leaves and the hope is that it will provide some continuity in care.
- 5.3.9 The Care Act 2015 which came into effect in April placed the responsibility for social care upon the Local Authority rather than the prison. It requires that adults detained are treated as if they were resident in the area in which the prison is located. The change has led to the appointment of 3 Personal Care Assistants who cover HMP Eastwood Park, and HMP Ashfield as well as Leyhill. The 3 offenders assessed as needing personal care received daily visits helping with tasks such as washing and dressing. Less able offenders also received help from volunteer fellow-offenders in such matters as pushing wheelchairs, providing mental stimulus and helping to put on outer clothing etc.
- 5.3.10 The Palliative Care Suite, though empty for much of the year, continues to be greatly appreciated by those who use it and by their families. The prison authorities have

used commendable sensitivity over the arrangements for visits not only by family members but also by the patient's friends within the prison. The Ombudsman's report on the death in custody at the prison was very positive about the care delivered.

- 5.3.11 It was not helpful that the change in Healthcare manager during the year, because of issues that could not have been foreseen, was not as seamless as could have been hoped. It is therefore all the more to the credit of other Healthcare staff that the care provided had so many positive features.

5.4 Purposeful Activity

- 5.4.1 There is an expectation that every prisoner of working age, unless medically unfit or in education, will be meaningfully employed in the prison or in the community.
- 5.4.2 Once again, there was a significant decrease in the number of prisoners undertaking work in the community as a result of the government's more restrictive ROTL policy. Before that change, on average some 120 to 130 were employed outside the prison. The Board reported last year that those numbers had dropped to between 40 and 50. During the year covered by this report the numbers dropped further to some 20 to 30. Undoubtedly the change in ROTL policy is still the major factor in the reduction from the historic figure, but this year other factors have included the length of time taken to vet offenders and to arrange all the paperwork. On occasion, because of such delays the potential job disappeared as the employer could not afford to hold the vacancy open any longer.
- 5.4.3 On site work opportunities during the year when simply listed look impressive. However, when looked at in detail the picture is more mixed.
- 5.4.4 Many offenders found gainful employment as orderlies within various Departments, with widely varying levels of responsibility. Some responded better than others, but many gave good, and in some cases outstanding, service. Without their inputs the prison would be far poorer, both financially and as a community.
- 5.4.5 Various trade courses have been impressive. The Level 2 Carpentry course was well received and gave a wide range of site-carpentry skills. The Level 2 Cookery course was clearly enjoyed by course members; they made some interesting dishes and Board members can testify to their quality. The Painting and Decorating course was well-delivered and achieved excellent results from offenders without any previous decorating experience.
- 5.4.6 The DHL warehouse always looked busy when Board members visited and, after some difficulties experienced the previous year, morale seemed much better. It was good to see the Market Garden expansion get underway, though there is obviously a seasonal pattern to its work and the number of offenders employed has yet to reach the large numbers once talked of. The Print Shop occasionally lived from hand to mouth but when busy had a hum about it. The Carpentry Shop continued to produce quality work but needed a steady flow of orders in order to avoid workers essentially just marking time. Recycling was busy at times but often gave the impression of being able to cope with more work and the same seemed true of the Ministry of Justice warehouse.
- 5.4.7 It could be argued that ebbs and flows are typical of many outside work situations and therefore there is some realism in the work experience being provided, yet in what is in many respects a training situation it is important that the ebbs are not too

severe or frequent. The most glaring examples of underused facilities were the Laundry and the Bob Martin unit (though just before the end of the reporting year the latter contract ended). In both of them it was not unusual to find men sitting round playing games or reading. From time to time offenders made clear they would far prefer to be working. No doubt much effort has gone into trying to attract a wider and more reliable range of work, often to the disappointment of those concerned when the work failed to materialise. Though the Board understands the difficulties faced and appreciates the efforts made to address them, the worrying fact is that a significant problem remains.

- 5.4.8 Some significant elements of purposeful activity do not necessarily relate directly to employment, though the courses providing qualifications for those wishing to work in the physical fitness industry obviously do. Others benefited from the smoking cessation sessions, while the gym programme continued to be well-subscribed and offenders enjoyed the challenges it provided.
- 5.4.9 The Lobster Pot for the over 50s provided an even more varied programme than in the past [5.1.15-17]. The Library always seemed busy, with 85-90% of offenders using the facility [5.2.11]; there were some leisure activities in the Creative Arts [5.2.14] and the Chaplaincy provided a range of activities that included but went well beyond those with a clear theological emphasis.
- 5.4.10 Leyhill is indeed a prison providing a varied programme of purposeful activities. However, because of the designated purpose of Leyhill as a Resettlement prison, it is particularly disappointing that for one reason or another the present provision, though it has undoubted strengths, fails to meet the needs of prisoners more fully.

5.5 Resettlement

- 5.5.1 The offender profile changed substantially over the past twelve to eighteen months and towards the end of the reporting year there were approximately 400 restricted and 100 non-restricted offenders at the prison. In addition, there was a substantial increase in the number of offenders requiring dossiers and reports for parole hearings.
- 5.5.2 These and the gradual changes in the ROTL process all added to the pressure within the Offender Management Unit [OMU]. Changes of the most senior managers in the Unit were also a feature of the year. It therefore was no great surprise when the IMB found that from time to time most of the issues raised, formally or informally, by offenders related to aspects of the OMU's work, not least to perceived failures to keep them fully informed about progress on their issues. As close to the end of the reporting year as December, the Board heard from the Prisoner Advice Centre that offenders were finding access to Risk Boards for day release (RDR) very concerning. It was alleged that on occasion what should be taking the OMU 4 weeks was taking 12 weeks with no feedback to individuals.
- 5.5.3 There are always special cases that distort the generality. However, on the other hand, it may be that the official statistics about offender dissatisfaction on this and associated matters tend to underestimate its level, as some offenders are reluctant formally to register their concern lest it has an adverse effect on their progress through the system. Almost certainly that concern is misjudged but its presence is an indication of how sensitive and important are issues about ROTL and parole towards the possible end of an offender's imprisonment.
- 5.5.4 Thankfully, towards the end of the reporting year, staffing levels within the Offender

Management Unit were reassessed, some recruitment took place and most recently expressions of concern tended to be more muted, as in general offenders appreciated that the OMU was trying hard to deal with the issues.

- 5.5.5 A particularly successful change during the year was the decision routinely to invite offenders to attend their ROTL Board. Prisoners now feel more involved and staff too have noticed the benefits. The IMB's own observations of Boards gave much insight into the work of the OMU and in particular into the complexities of communication with outside agencies, not only for ROTL but also when preparing for parole hearings. Delays that have taken place are far from purely a matter of internal administration.
- 5.5.6 The shortage of "approved premises" reported last year continued to cause problems both in delays to ROTL and also to prisoners awaiting release. The lack of spaces often resulted in short notice being given when spaces did become available. This not only impacted on staff under pressure to provide appropriate documentation within a very tight timescale but also created uncertainty for the offender concerned and for his family. Such uncertainty and the consequent inability of the family to make firm arrangements proved to be a potential cause of family friction, especially if the offender was thought in any way to be responsible for such problems.
- 5.5.7 Recruitment and other staff changes take time and revised procedures inevitably go through a bedding down period, a process that has not yet ended. Nevertheless, progress -though hard-won - has undoubtedly been made and staff dedication during a prolonged and stressful period has been highly commendable.

5.6 Residential Services

- 5.6.1 During the year the prison's Certified Normal Accommodation (CNA) was reduced from 527 to 515. This change, made on the grounds of decency, allowed the prison to dispense with its dormitories. They were converted into double rooms. This arrangement provides some flexibility should the prison population ever require a few extra places and provides for those comparatively rare occasions when, in a prisoner's own interests, he is best placed with a roommate.
- 5.6.2 During the past year the prison's population tended to hover around the 500 mark or slightly above. The trend of the past few years of an increasing number of elderly prisoners and those with care needs continued. Occasionally for short periods the ground-floor accommodation in B Unit reserved for those with the greatest mobility and other care needs was full and there was a short waiting list for movement into one of those rooms. However, through flexible management, such waits were never for long.
- 5.6.3 Two prisoners died whilst in custody, one in March whilst in the Palliative Care Suite, the other outside in hospital. The Ombudsman's report on the former has been received and is complimentary of the care delivered while at Leyhill. One inquest is outstanding but it is understood that the Coroner's office is having problems contacting the family about scheduling.
- 5.6.4 There is no segregation of prisoners (save in 3 short-term holding cells within the Reception Unit) and there is no Vulnerable Prisoner Unit.

Prison transfers

- 5.6.5 There was concern on a few occasions when prisoners were held in the holding cells for over 2 hours. However, the difficulties arose on all occasions through factors outside the prison's control, at such times, staff did their best to ease the situation, by organising coffees, comfort breaks, sandwiches etc and generally maintaining as relaxed an atmosphere as was possible in the circumstances. There is an arrangement with GeoAmey by which the prison is alerted to estimated times of arrival and any significant changes on the way. For the most part this worked effectively.
- 5.6.6 There were a few occasions when prisoners had to be kept waiting in GeoAmey vans for long periods on arrival, on one occasion for some 4 hours. The delays were invariably caused by problems with the accompanying documentation. This is a problem that seems to have increased since the company providing transport no longer has any responsibility to check that documentation prior to arrival, the responsibility reportedly being solely that of the despatching prison. On at least one occasion the prisoner eventually had to be turned away. Far more usually, receiving staff were able to make special arrangements and, as soon as prisoners could be formally received, meals etc were provided and human needs placed before the immediate completion of some reception procedures.

Pastoral care

- 5.6.7 The concern for treating prisoners with fairness and decency that such actions in the Reception Unit imply is manifested more widely across the prison. During the year, the Personal Officer scheme was reviewed. The outcome was that its structure was in essence maintained but supplemented by greater emphasis on the approach that 'Every Contact Matters'. Every month, Personal Officers' entries in the records of those for whom they have special responsibility are sampled by their seniors, Unit landing by Unit landing, to try to ensure quality of contact and recording. Examination of the Unit Observation Books provided evidence of some good practice in the sharing of observations and information.
- 5.6.8 The Board's assessment of the workings of the ACCT and VR systems [5.7.3-4] is that they provided valuable support mechanisms for those offenders needing more intensive pastoral support. The Chaplaincy also made major contributions, especially in cases of special need, particularly when relating to bereavement and other external family concerns [see also 5.1.19 – 20].
- 5.6.9 The new Social Care arrangements provided a very useful on-site source of support. Any assessments needed were completed promptly and, on the very few occasions that transfers involved liaison with Social Care elsewhere no problems were reported. [See also 5.3.9].
- 5.6.10 Overall, pastoral care seems one of the strengths of the prison and that, in the view of the Board, is a major factor in the sense that pervades of a community with an imbedded culture of good order and discipline. However, it is important it should not be taken for granted. The Benchmarking process affected the staffing profile of the prison and the Board would repeat the concern it has expressed previously. The staffing levels at night seem to provide little leeway should there be a major problem. The prudent guidance given to night staff on how to respond should they come across less serious offending behaviour indicates recognition that there is little leeway even in less dramatic situations. The Board is pleased that, at present, close note is being taken of overnight staffing levels and what happens if there is any

shortfall. The maintenance of appropriate staffing levels is not a matter that could properly be allowed to drift because of financial or other pressures.

Residential accommodation

- 5.6.11 Basically, the facilities within the 3 accommodation Units are good, albeit in structure and layout the A and B Units are far superior to C Unit with its narrow corridors and labyrinthine layout. However it was good to see this year the installation in C Unit of an intercom system which goes some way towards addressing Board concerns mentioned in its last Annual Report. The provision of hoods for those telephones that previously lacked them was also welcome for the additional privacy they give.
- 5.6.12 Other internal improvements in other residential Units included trying to keep the interactive Information Kiosk functioning and ensuring it was updated as required (though some problems dependent on I.T. support from an external contractor sadly took a long time to resolve). Some internal redecoration, often with a degree of self-help, brightened up the areas concerned, though it could not entirely disguise a rather 'tired' feel about some parts of the premises, particularly the recesses containing the toilets and washrooms.
- 5.6.13 The desirability of improved kitchenette facilities in all Units, flagged up last year and previously noted by HMCIP, was acknowledged by the prison authorities. However, because the present electricity circuits would not cope with the anticipated improvements the view was taken that, in times of squeezed budgets, the project could not be given priority. It is not for the IMB to judge financial priorities; it is, though, for the IMB to reiterate its view that, in a resettlement prison, though Learning and Skills provides for some prisoners tuition in home catering, preparation of all prisoners for release would be improved if they had facilities to prepare a greater range of food, relatively unsupervised, in something closer to a domestic setting.
- 5.6.14 The Board is aware that as a result of a recent inspection of the premises by the Crown Properties Inspection Group [CPIG] note was made of the lack of in-room smoke detectors. The introduction of no smoking policies means that attempts at covert smoking are almost inevitable (though for obvious reasons not necessarily in the offender's own room). This factor when combined with other fire risks makes remedying of the lack of in-room smoke alarms all the more important.
- 5.6.15 For the most part, offenders treated their surroundings well. For example, as last year, casual observation of the inside of offenders' rooms did not suggest any significant problem concerning displays of inappropriate material or gross untidiness. Similarly, there were many times during the year when members' rota reports praised in warm terms the general cleanliness of communal areas and offenders were sometimes found voluntarily cleaning up messes that other people had left. However, there were occasions when members chanced upon those areas before someone had remedied the problem. It is a general experience in buildings in public use that if maintenance standards are allowed to slip, users gradually become less careful in their use of them. In the unusual circumstances of a prison, staff vigilance is likely to minimise such problems, but with fewer staff it becomes all the more important that maintenance standards are maintained and tardy responses to problems do not set a bad example of what is regarded as acceptable.

Maintenance issues

- 5.6.16 The main issue relating to the residential (and some other) premises last year was

the difficulty of obtaining swift and effective responses to maintenance problems. Those of which Board members were particularly aware, partly through their own observations, partly through representations by offenders, related to the recesses, e.g. toilets that did not work effectively, foul smells, water that leaked through ceilings onto floors, water that for significant periods ran only cold or at best was not warm enough for showers (even problems that at one stage had 40 men on C Unit having to share 2 showers). For the most part, these problems were reported promptly but it quickly became clear that the contractual arrangements with Carillion for one reason or another seemed a huge barrier to effective maintenance.

- 5.6.17 Inadequacies in maintenance relating to residential facilities were equally evident in the main kitchen. Over a period of several months, the Board drew attention to the poor state of the floor tiling by the pot wash (and more widely), yet by late January it still had not been attended to though funding has reportedly been allocated. Various pieces of kitchen equipment became inoperative. By mid-January the tilt kettle had been out of order for about 4 months; the utility washer was out of order for 2 months; the tray washer was out of action from early December and despite an attempt at repair was still operating only at 50% efficiency in mid-January. These are only a few illustrative examples. The impact of these problems was worsened by one problem being quickly followed by another and their co-existing for some weeks. For week upon week the kitchen had to do without various pieces of equipment, causing impact on menus and for what, in total, must have been a matter of months, offenders had to use disposable plates.
- 5.6.18 It would be unfair to suggest or imply that all the difficulties encountered related to the new maintenance arrangements – reports of equipment failures have been common features of IMB rota reports for several years and, according to Carillion's site manager, a backlog of under-funding of scheduled essentials running comfortably into 7 figures had accumulated. However, the slowness of effective response became much more prevalent following the contractual changes.
- 5.6.19 Significant problems arising out of contractual arrangements are sadly nothing new. Last year the Board drew the Minister's attention to the problems with the delivery of the major contract for renewing the prison's new boiler system and the impact the problems concerning its delivery had on the decency of the conditions under which prisoners were held. This year again problems relating to that same contract had a marked impact on the decency with which prisoners were treated.
- 5.6.20 In early January for several days there were intermittent problems with heating and loss of hot water in residential units. On one occasion the bio-mass boiler was out of fuel. The Board was told that fuel can be replenished only when the outside wind speed is less than 8 mph. (a speed which given the hillside position of the prison seems a strange design feature). The position was worsened by the fact that only one of the 3 gas-fired back-up boilers was found to be working. Three days later there was a heating problem in the kitchen. Two days further on, the biomass boilers were again not working and although heating and water systems were partially working later in the day, there had not been a full repair.
- 5.6.21 It is not only the residential units and related services that have been affected by problems with the heating system, reputedly because the bio-mass boiler arrangements do not take account of the age and nature of the pipework on the prison site. In the latter part of January, the prison laundry was very cold indeed and very draughty in some work areas. Offenders were seen working (and those for whom there was insufficient work, sitting) with blankets over them to keep warm.

5.6.22 It is neither fair nor decent for offenders to have, over significant periods, the kind of physical conditions created by inadequate maintenance arrangements. It is indicative of the general quality of relationships within the prison that the majority of prisoners experiencing the impact of these problems reacted with understanding, even if usually tinged with restrained frustration. For their part, on-site maintenance staff, kitchen managers and Unit and other staff showed commendable commitment (and at times inventiveness) in making the best of difficult situations out of their ultimate control. In response to such forbearance, it is to be hoped that lessons will be learnt and, where necessary, changes in contracting procedures and standards quickly effected.

Catering

5.6.23 Despite all the problems with equipment issues described above, and also some staffing issues, the meals provided by the Main Kitchen on a far from generous daily food allowance maintained a generally high standard, though when problems with kitchen and dining hall maintenance were at their most acute inevitably there were some complaints. Overall, though, members were impressed by the range of menus and the quality of meals produced. The Comments Books recorded plenty of compliments. Sadly, too often any complaints were expressed in terms that did not suggest a measured judgement; however, when there was validity in them the kitchen management showed an openness to change where appropriate and possible. Offenders with wide experience of other prisons were often the most enthusiastic in their assessments: to quote one of them, "What I have here is the only fish I've had in many years in prison that actually tastes like fish".

Canteen

5.6.24 The Canteen arrangements (which allow offenders to make private purchases) generally worked smoothly within the national limits. Offenders were formally given opportunities to suggest changes within the list of supplied items. Over several months offenders experienced problems buying items from catalogues. However, the prison acknowledged the legitimacy of the concerns and work is underway to find a wider range of suppliers and address other associated issues.

Property issues

5.6.25 Arrangements concerning property transfer continued to throw up problems from time to time, as reflected both in the prison's Complaints system and in matters dealt with by the IMB. The prison tried to tackle the problem through a number of strategies and the Complaints relating to property declined. However, the Board found, on the small number of occasions it received an Application, that when property issue involved another prison the cooperative process did not work as quickly and effectively as was appropriate. On one occasion, a property issue was still live after many months.

Conclusion

5.6.26 For all the ups and downs of everyday life as reflected in the prison's residential services, the general impression gained by the Board was of good, if occasionally patchy, provision and largely positive relationships. This conclusion is bolstered by the continuing low number of applications to the Board (58 as against 78 in the previous reporting year), by the comparative rarity of both ACCTs and VRs, and by the picture presented by the statistics of the prison's Complaints system. It is a good base on which to build.

5.7 Safer Custody

- 5.7.1 It is clear from many informal conversations with offenders that Leyhill has continued to be generally regarded as providing a relatively relaxed yet safe environment. In part, that is undoubtedly because of the increased elements of personal choice that its regimes provide to offenders moving from closed conditions. However, in part, it is because of the proactive work of the Security Department and the involvement of representative groups of prisoners in discussions of issues across the vast majority of areas of prison life.
- 5.7.2 The major forum relating to Safer Custody is the Team meeting held every quarter. Attendees included the Head of Residential Services (Chair), Governor, and representatives of Listeners, Samaritans, the Chaplaincy, Security, Healthcare and OMU; with a member of the IMB frequently present as an observer. At the meetings reports on Violence Reduction, ACCTs, Samaritans/Listeners, and Continuous Improvement Plans etc. were presented and discussed in an open and generally relaxed environment.
- 5.7.3 During the reporting year 20 ACCTs were opened. The causes of concern usually related to mental health issues, family bereavement, medication and offenders coming to terms with the move from a closed to open environment. In most cases ACCT documents were closed within 7 days. Those read by Board members were generally reassuring in the picture they presented of sensitive and diligent caring.
- 5.7.4 The reasons Violence Reduction books were opened included issues at work, verbal abuse, threats, debt and intimidation. The issues raised were thoroughly investigated and monitored with appropriate steps being taken to ensure satisfactory outcomes. In a number of cases the perpetrators were transferred to closed conditions.
- 5.7.5 The Samaritans continued to be very active in training and supporting Listeners. One of the great successes was the availability of GOBOFFS where offenders could go to a Listener and have a rant. In this way, offenders could allow their frustrations to have full expression, thus avoiding potentially progress-damaging outbursts to staff, either orally or in writing. Concerns raised included frustration with ROTL; the rate of progression through the system (often not as swift as offenders had allegedly been told to expect by their previous prison); fellow offenders high on spice and being intimidating; perceived poor support from Offender Supervisors; and - to the surprise of the IMB - an alleged decline in food standards.
- 5.7.6 Synthetic drugs such as "spice" continued to be readily available. A number of offenders expressed their concern at seeing fellow offenders under the influence of such items, including during one incident in which a prisoner accidentally and spectacularly (albeit not seriously) injured himself.
- 5.7.7 The Board recorded in its last report its concern about the availability of drugs and found some encouragement in NOMS' response that it "is continuing to work with its partners to introduce new psychoactive substance (NPS) testing as soon as technology allows, and is continuing to explore new technology options to tackle the threat of drugs in prisons". Whilst this may well be the case, as yet no benefit has reached the prison. It is impossible to be certain about the amount of spice and other banned substances circulating and the Board's impression is that towards the end of the reporting year it decreased, following the transfer of a larger than usual group of offenders to closed conditions as a result of intelligence obtained and possibly the ostentatious parking of a police car in the prison car park and at other times a

proactive patrolling of the road outside during the night. However, the presence of banned substances continues to be of concern, both in relation to good order and discipline and – the other side of the same coin – the unease their presence creates among prisoners.

Section 6

6.1 The Great Expectations Project

- 6.1.1 A small number of prisoners has been part of the ground-breaking 'Great Expectations' project, a local multi-agency initiative involving the police, the Youth Support Team, Social Care, Probation, InfoBuzz (a local charity providing information and support for young people on drugs and emotional health issues), Gloucestershire Magistrates in the Community team, Gloucester City Homes and HM Prison Service. The project has attracted national attention and was the subject of an article in the national magazine of the Magistrates' Association.
- 6.1.2 Set up some three years ago (under a different name), this project was initially aimed at disrupting gang activity but the focus is now on prevention. The project has 3 strands, dealing with young men at different levels of risk and involving at the lowest level a one-day programme, at the second level a two-day programme, and at its most intensive a group running once a week for three hours and over a seven-week period. What makes these interventions unique is that they are co-facilitated by prisoners from Leyhill, men with serious criminal records.
- 6.1.3 At all levels, the prisoners have been involved. At the lowest level they try to give an insight of what a life of offending and custody entails. At the intermediate level, they interact with the young people as they are involved in, for example, being processed as real prisoners and spending time in actual cells, and they draw on their own experiences as to what the impact is in reality, not just for a short time. At the most intensive level, the prisoners tell their life stories and discuss their experiences from childhood onwards. They talk of the choices made, the situations faced and the eventual consequences.
- 6.1.4 The project team reports an 80% success rate in avoiding reoffending among those undergoing the programmes. It is also encouraging to learn of the positive changes in attitudes that the prisoners involved have expressed. Both outcomes are justifications for the far-sighted decision by the prison to allow its prisoners to take part.

Section 7

7.1 <u>BOARD STATISTICS</u>	
Recommended Complement of Board Members	13
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	11
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	11
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	1
Number of members leaving within reporting period	1
Total number of Board meetings during reporting period	12
Total number of visits to the Establishment	351
Total number of segregation reviews held	n/a
Total number of segregation reviews attended	n/a
Date of Annual Team Performance Review	25/2/15

7.2 APPLICATIONS RECEIVED

Code	Subject	Year 2015-16	Year 2014-15	Year 2013-14	Year 2012-13
A	Accommodation	1	1	0	0
B	Adjudications	2	3	3	5
C	Equality & Diversity (inc religion)	0	30	0	0
D	Education/employment/training inc IEP	1	2	6	6
E 1	Family/visits inc mail & phone	3	5	0	0
E 2	Finance/pay	0	5	0	0
F	Food/kitchen related	2	3	0	1
G	Health related	3	4	7	3
H 1	Property (within current establishment)	4	3	0	1
H 2	Property (during transfer/in another establishment)	5	3	8	1
H 3	Canteen, Facilities, Catalogue shopping, Argos	2	0	0	0
I	Sentence related (inc. HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-cat etc)	27	36	18	17
J	Staff/prisoner/detainee concerns inc bullying	3	3	0	4
K	Transfers	2	2	14	1
L	Miscellaneous	3	5	9	2
	Total number of IMB	58	78	65	51

	applications				
	Of total, number of Confidential Access	0	0	2	1