



**HMP Erlestoke  
Independent Monitoring Board**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016**

**HMP Erlestoke,  
Westbury Road, Devizes, Wiltshire, SN10 5TU**



## 1) STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

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The Prison Act 1952 and the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 require every prison and Immigration & Removal Centre (IRC) to be monitored by an Independent Board appointed by the Secretary of State from members of the community in which the prison or centre is situated.

The Board is specifically charged to:

- 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.
- report annually to the Secretary of State on how well the prison has met the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have on those in its custody.

To enable the Board to carry out these duties effectively its members have right of access to every prisoner, every part of the prison and also to the prison's records. (With the exception of medical records.)

The HMP Erlestoke Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) is currently composed of 8 volunteer members (this number varies throughout the year as people join and leave the Board) and is independent of the Prison Service and the Justice Ministry.

The IMB obtains information from many sources in the prison and this is reflected in this Annual Report:

- Informal face-to-face conversations with prisoners and staff whenever we are in the prison, not necessarily regarding complaints
- Our formal weekly rota visits generate points for our monthly meeting with the Governor (urgent matters are escalated immediately)
- Verbal and written applications made to us by individual prisoners
- Attendance at routine meetings, together with formal and informal briefings by the Governor and members of his management team
- Observation of peoples' behaviour and the state of the prison
- Attendance at incidents when they occur

**We are the only independent presence in the prison on a day-to-day basis.**

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### 3) DESCRIPTION OF HMP ERLESTOKE

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HMP Erlestoke is an adult male; Category 'C', predominately a Rehabilitation, closed programmes prison; built in the grounds of the former Erlestoke Park House. It is the only prison in Wiltshire and is situated in a rural location, some 21 miles from Salisbury, 44 miles from Bristol and 26 miles from Swindon.

Category C prisoners are those who have neither the intention nor the resources to escape. Categorisation of prisoners is not, of itself, dependent on the prisoner's offence. Hence even though HMP Erlestoke is a Category C prison, over 50% of its prisoners are classified as Indeterminate Sentence Prisoners (ISP), being Life and Indeterminate Public Protection (IPP), the remaining population are serving not less than 4 years.

There are eight residential units; three are standard units, one of which is used for induction, four are enhanced units and one is dedicated to intervention programmes. The total operational capacity of the prison is around 524.

HMP Erlestoke focuses on the intervention programmes to address drug and alcohol issues and prisoner past behaviours. Following successful completion of the programmes prisoners are returned to their original prison.

HMP Erlestoke continues to uphold a good image in the community and the Governor and his staff keep local residents involved and informed of relevant developments. The Board is pleased to note that the Friends of Erlestoke Prison continue work with the management team to provide services outside the scope of prison service budgets.

Performance of the prison overall has been very strong in the reporting period. However Sickness absence which came in at 15 days per person against a national target of 9 days, this is up on the last year's report.

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#### 4) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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It would be easy to use the Executive Summary as a critique of the Prison and the Prison Service however the scenes recently portrayed in the media are not a reflection of daily life in HMP Erlestoke. The Prison does have problems which are continually under review and dealt with within the constraints of budget and staff shortages.

The dedicated Governor and Staff continue to work extremely hard to provide a safe and secure environment for both prisoners and staff, despite the continuing budgetary and resource constraints.

The Prison is set in many acres which Farms and Gardens keep tended and planted with flowers grown on site. There are water gardens and quiet places to sit and reflect this aids a convivial environment...

Page 12

The Chaplaincy Team are always to be seen around the prison supporting and, at times, comforting those who are in need of their support. Their dedication covers all faiths.

Page 13

The courses run by the Barnardo's Family Intervention team have helped to give a positive understanding of parenting. This has brought some families together, who may have not been in contact for a number of years.

Page 13

The workshops, such as the Julian House Bicycle workshop give a purpose to the day, together with a skill that can be continued upon release. The sale of the bicycles goes towards helping the homeless in the Bath area.

Page 12

The Listeners Service overseen by the Samaritans is available 24 hours a day to all prisoners, supporting many through difficult times.

Page 16

The Kitchen offers a catering experience together NVQ training which can and is used upon release. With a varied selection of diet offered on a budget of just £2.01p per head per day.

Pages 9, 19

#### HOWEVER

The Board continues to be very concerned about staff shortages and the high staff sickness levels, this has a negative impact on staff morale and also that of prisoners.

Pages  
4,7,9,10,12,14,23

The inadequate healthcare cover provided by The Great Western Hospital Healthcare Trust (GWHT) and the Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership (AWP) during the reporting year has been such that the Board has not been able to obtain confirmation of any figures or dates needed for this report.

Pages 7,10,18, 22

The complaints received regarding Visits continues to cause frustration among the Prisoners, this is a concern of the Board.

Page 20



“Legal Highs” – Spice, which will shortly be illegal, is a great cause of concern, with a number of prisoners being treated for the bad side effects, with ambulances being called and hospitalisation. The feared is that it will be only a matter of time before there is a death due to this substance.

Page 10, 16

The Board remain extremely concerned by the number of Prisoners who are sentenced to an Indeterminate Sentence for Public Protection (IPP) and those who are over tariff, with no indication as to when a release is possible. This leads to frustration and poor behaviour. On the 12<sup>th</sup> October 2015 the survey completed by the Board showed that of the 530 prisoners held on that day 156 of the 264 IPP or Life Sentence inmates were over tariff by between 2 years to 23 years. This is not cost effective.

Page 14

The Property of prisoners being left behind and or lost in transit continues to cause many hours of staff and IMB time, trying to trace such losses. Costs are incurred when GeoAmey does not take the belongings so private transport companies have to be arranged and/or compensation paid for the loss. This is not cost effective.

Page 22

The Contract with Carillion is causing exceptional long delays due to negotiation with the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) this continues to leave a servery closed; showers out of action; broken windows not replace for months. This is due to the fact that the Prison has to negotiate a price with Carillion, Carillion then have to negotiate with NOMS the money for the job. This is not time effective.

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## **5) MANDATORY REPORTING AREAS**

### **5.1 EQUALITY AND INCLUSION.**

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This encompasses ethnicity, disability, religion, age and sexual orientation.  
(See the statistical analysis of the prison population for a breakdown of numbers)

The board is concerned that during the last year due to budgetary restraints and low staff numbers the response time for investigating perceived discriminatory incidents (DIRFS) has been unacceptably long. There are currently 33 DIRFS awaiting investigation, 13 of which date from 2015.

There are two Prisoner Orderlies dealing with equality issues and they support Equality representatives on each wing who are able to advise other prisoners on courses of action when appropriate. This limits the number of inappropriate complaints at the same time as solving problems before they escalate.

Two allocated prison officers have the duty to investigate these complaints but they have no protected time to do so and are frequently called away to cover details on the wings. Unsurprisingly there has been a significant turnover of officers doing this task and there has been a lack of continuity leading to the back log of un-investigated incidents. The Board is aware that management are already attempting to rectify this situation.

The implementation of the Social Care Act 2014 in April 2015 has been challenging to the prison as the design and building of the estate does not easily accommodate the needs of older or disabled prisoners. It is understood that the increase in number of these prisoners is a problem over the whole prison system and Erlestoke is no exception. The prison is working with the Local Authority Social service department to try and overcome these difficulties. The possibility of able prisoners being trained as carers for the less able is being explored and has already occurred on a small scale. The implementation of Care Plans for those returning from hospital and those with complex needs is not always happening and ways of overcoming this difficulty are being investigated in conjunction with the healthcare department.

Despite these difficulties the social provision for older prisoners is good. There are three walking football sessions a week; Allocated time for older prisoners in both the Gym and Fitness suite; A 'Snug' in the education department is successful as a day care provision but access to it for those with mobility problems limits its use. A representative from RECOOP visits the prison and arranges events.



## 5.2 EDUCATION, LEARNING AND SKILLS

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The more settled regime, following the introduction of Prisoner Learning & Skill Service 4 (OLASS 4) and the change of provider to Weston College, which we commented on last year, has largely been maintained, and a Weston College inspection team in December 2015 commented on 'significant improvement' and graded the department 'borderline good' – an improvement on 'borderline inadequate' which was its previous grade. Overall retention rates on both educational and vocational courses are high (97%) and the success rate is 96%. Of particular note is the 100% pass rate in the Maths and English courses. However, these figures do not reveal that the attendance rate is at 80%, and education managers suggest that more cooperation is needed from the officers on the Units to help improve this figure. Courses in Bricklaying, Carpentry and Cookery and Catering have been interrupted by staff shortages, and IT was without a tutor from September 2015 until March 2016, and the outreach teaching of 'contextualised functional skills' was halted between September 2015 and February 2016 in the absence of a 'generalist' tutor.

Maintaining a satisfactory staffing level is clearly still proving difficult and managers comment on the low number of applicants when a post is advertised. Weston College's ability to provide support in these situations does not seem to be strong. The 'Turning Pages' scheme is operating successfully with 6 mentors and 8 mentees, and its maths equivalent 'Times2' is also in place. The NVQ course in Hospitality and Catering being run through the Kitchen has 5 participants and three of the staff are Assessors. It should be mentioned that impressive artwork done by the prisoners was on display in Salisbury Cathedral in the summer of 2015 as part of the celebrations of the anniversary of Magna Carta.

**The Library** continues to make a very positive contribution to prison life. About 470 prisoners are current borrowers. The participation in last year's 'Six Book Challenge' saw the prison win a Gold Award when 150 prisoners completed the challenge. Its successor, 'Reading Ahead' is going well, with 55 completions already this year. The Library is also involved in the scheme to move 'Storybook Dads' from audio to audio-visual through the use of DVDs.

**The Gym and Fitness** facilities are used by an average of 59% of the prison population per week. There are 20 to 30 different sessions per week, with dedicated sessions for the over '50s, and the PE staff are involved with prisoners on drug treatment programmes and are supporting the campaign leading up to the cessation of smoking at Erlestoke. A major problem is caused by staffing difficulties. PEIs being detailed to discipline duties cause, on average, a drop of about 30% in the actual hours of PE available. Between March and April of this year, 66 staff- hours and 930 prisoner-hours were lost to this problem.

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### 5.3 HEALTHCARE AND MENTAL HEALTH

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During the reporting year the Board has raised, on numerous weekly and monthly occasions, concerns regarding the Healthcare Department within the Prison. This is reflected in the number of Applications from Prisoners to the IMB being greater than any other application area. (Page 22)

The Great Western Hospital Healthcare Trust (GWHT) and Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership (AWP) who provided the medical and mental health care at HMP Erlestoke contract for these services ended on the 31st March 2016. During the application period for the new contract the service provided by these organisations was inadequate, with no handover and no figures given to the new contract holders.

The Healthcare team had consisted of one healthcare manager and seven nurses plus two administration staff. Medical cover was provided by a local GP practice. Monthly visits had been made by a physiotherapist, optician and a chiropodist. Mental health care was supplemented by visits from a psychiatrist and a cognitive behavioural therapist on a monthly basis. However, this fell by the wayside during the reporting year, leaving the Healthcare department at times with two nurses on duty, no manager, no Mental health nurse, no Psychiatrist and locum G.P.s coming from as far as Hertfordshire.

For example: -

- The Psychiatrist left in early 2015 and was not replaced till 17th November 2015
- The Health Care Manager left in June 2015 and was not replaced till November 2015
- A Nursing Sister was temporarily upgraded to cover for the Health Care Manager with the Nursing sister then leaving at the end October 2015 with no replacement.
- The Mental Health Nurse left in April 2015 and was not replaced till August 2015

Mental health provision is a major concern and has been under pressure all year. It would appear that one full time mental health practitioner is inadequate for a population of an average of 520 prisoners. A replacement for the mental health practitioner who left in December 2015 has still not been replaced, this only added to the problems experienced in the department. The temporary cover provided was only two days each week.

The number of missed 'in house' healthcare appointments, as reported in the past two years, remains unacceptably high. 2015/2016 shows 935 missed appointments. Officer shortages needed to escort some prisoners has meant that on occasions prisoners were unable to attend for an appointment, this added at times to the problem. In the reporting year 13875 patients had appointments with 12940 being seen (minus the non attendees).

There are still serious concerns about the illicit use of prescribed medication by prisoners and also the use of NSP (Legal Highs; Spice) which is smuggled into the Prison. Dealing with the side effects of this illicit substance is very time consuming for the nursing staff, has lead to an A & E visit or hospitalisation. Therefore, other prisoners who need to attend an outpatients' appointment miss the appointment and drop down the waiting list, some having waited 10 months. An example of this being a patient waiting for 5 months for an outpatients' appointment to have alterations to a prosthetic limb, so wheelchair bound for the whole period - this was not seen as a clinical priority.



Although the escorts to the local hospitals have been increased to 10 per week this has not lessened the waiting list which is in excess of 140 prisoners. It has to be remembered that HMP Erlestoke is 21 miles away from the nearest hospital in Salisbury and 26 miles from GWHT in Swindon; two Officers are required on escort duty, should they be away for 4 hours with a prisoner that is a total of 8 hours and therefore a loss of a working day – with 10 escorts leaving the prison per week this totals a loss of 10 working days. With the staff shortages this leads to areas in Lockdown.

On the 1st April Inspire Better Health took over the Healthcare contract together with Avon & Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership (AWP) again covering the mental health care. It is the Boards hope that with the new Healthcare providers the 2016/2017 Annual Report will be a positive report.

### **PSYCHOLOGY**

The psychology services based within HMP Erlestoke have no connection with Healthcare; they are employed by NOMS and not by the NHS.

The service they undertake is reflected on page 14 of this report.

The psychology team at HMP Erlestoke receives approximately five requests for psychological reports per month. These reports can take approximately 4 - 6 weeks to complete. Priority is given to the deadline directed by the Parole Board. Delays may be caused when an application is received for a report too close to the Parole Hearing, not giving sufficient time to complete. An extension to the deadline is then requested.

South West Psychological Services operates a Framework Agreement whereby reports (which cannot be completed in house) are put out to tender to six providers. Those providers who can meet the time scale and offer competitive price are more likely to be offered the work. A reference made to an “external report” means that the report is completed by an external provider on behalf of Psychological Services/The Prison, whereas an “independent report” is completed by a psychologist commissioned by the prisoner’s legal representative.

The Psychology Team at Erlestoke supports the Programmes Team by providing expertise, Treatment Managers and Forensic Psychologists in Training (FPiTs) who facilitate the high intensity programmes as part of their training. When a prisoner completes a high intensity programme (HRP or SCP), a member of the Psychology Team will complete the appropriate psychological risk assessment after the prisoner has had a period of consolidation.

These reports are crucial to Parole Board hearings. The Board has found that there are times when the report or the psychologist is not available for a Parole Board hearing. One prisoner, who is 4 years over tariff, had hearings arranged for February 2015, November 2015 and March 2016, due to the fact that the Psychologist did not attend the hearing these had to be deferred. Up dated reports were ordered by the Chairman of the Parole Board for August 2016. The prisoner has now been informed by Psychology that due to an oversight the ordered report will not be ready. This is frustrating for the prisoner and unacceptable.

#### **5.4 PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY (INCLUDES WORK)**

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The Prison offers a range of good quality purposeful activity and work opportunities. All prisoners are strongly encouraged to engage in purposeful activity during unlock. This activity is carefully designed to equip prisoners with work skills on their release and reduce reoffending rates. However, as stated in the 2014/2015 report, their progress is not tracked after their release.

Again the reduction in staff has resulted in increased lockdowns. Prisoners have had less time out of cell during this year. As in the previous year, although the board has asked for this information, senior managers have not yet collected data on the amount of lockdowns and in which wings they have taken place. As a result, senior managers are not able to assess the impact of increased lockdowns on the work of the prison, individual wings and prisoners.

Prisoners are able to apply to work in the workshops and as cleaners on the wings, however not all wish to take advantage of these opportunities and the wages paid.

The Speedy Hire contract provides work for up to 30 men in two workshops, one servicing and repairing power tools such as vacuum cleaners, paint strippers lights etc., and the other heavier industrial equipment. The men are offered a Parts Testing qualification, of which approximately 15 are qualified; a NVQ in Team Leading and Warehouse management; also the Performance Manufacturing Operation (PMO) qualification.

In the Opella workshop, prisoners assemble plastic plumbing fitting, and in the next workshop prisoners pack chamois leathers, gloves etc., this is paid at piece work rates.

The Gripit, contract has 2 workshops employing 25 in the larger workshop and 8 in the smaller workshop, the prisoners are assembling fittings for plaster board, this work is paid at piece work rates, the men producing between 35,000 and 40,000 pieces per week

The Julian House Bicycle Workshop is a new and exciting addition to the work ethic and training, which started in November 2015. The project run by Julian House from Bath already have 3 other successful bicycle workshops. Here 13 men are employed with 5 mentors. The bicycles are refurbished, quality checked and then resold, since November 2015 some 200 bicycles have passed through the workshop. It is proposed that a Cycle Mechanics qualification be offered.

In the Vocational Workshop a Level 2 City and Guilds qualification is offered by Weston College in Bricklaying and Plastering. However due to the lack of Tutors these courses are often delayed.

The Farms and Gardens section offers significant employment opportunities in horticultural work. Meetings are held between the Kitchen and Farms and Gardens Managers to discuss the planting for the forthcoming season. This enables the kitchen to plan the use of the vegetables. The opening of Erlestoke House Farm Shop has also enabled the sale of vegetables and plants to be sold to the local community together with garden furniture.



The building of garden furniture is also an important, creative activity which is done by the prisoners; these products are sold through the Erlestoke House Community Interest Company and Erlestoke house Farm Shop. This is a joint venture with local community volunteers. Waste recycling has been expanded to reduce the quantity going to landfill with a recycling instructor recruited to improve overall how recycling in the prison is organised and managed.

Erlestoke is a National Resource, one of the few prisons providing programmes to address offending behaviour. The prison's role is now primarily rehabilitation. It continues to run valuable key programmes to address drug, alcohol and offending behaviours.

The prison provides many other useful options for prisoners to gain new skills and to be involved in purposeful activity. These include:

- peer mentoring/supporting;
- health trainers;
- orderlies' e.g: learning and skills, clothing exchange, library, reception, visits;
- works, chapel, diversity, induction support, care and separation unit wing cleaners;
- kitchen work, including the recently reintroduced NVQ opportunities.

Barnardo's run the family Intervention Unit (Kennet), which delivers the Family Man and Fathers Inside courses for 16 prisoners on a 3-month programme, these courses are highly successful and in strong demand. During the reporting year 2 Family Man and 2 Fathers Inside courses ran with 48 prisoners attending, 43 graduated with their success being marked with Family Days which enabled their families to see the certificates and qualifications awarded. The Board is pleased that funding had been found to enable these important courses to run for a further year.

## **CHAPLAINCY**

The Chaplaincy Team play an important role within the Prison. They are able to offer pastoral support to all prisoners, staff, families and significant others irrespective of lifestyle, background, belief or non-belief. The Chaplaincy is managed by a Co-ordinating Chaplain and supported by administration staff, other Chaplains and Sessional Chaplains (faith leaders who visit for specific services or sessions). 14 religions have representation within HMP Erlestoke and a Rastafarian Elder will be joining this team shortly.

There is at least one duty Chaplain on duty each day and when the need arises, the wing staff can phone for a Chaplain who will visit the prisoner. The Team offer a variety of groups and classes open for all prisoners to attend. It is not unusual for a wedding and other Services to be performed in the Chapel; the celebratory cake being made by the kitchen staff.

The Board have observed that some Friday services have been disrupted due to staff shortages; officers being relocated to other duties such as prisoner movements and visits.

## 5.5 OFFENDER MANAGEMENT UNIT (OMU)

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The recent year has brought a change in the allocation of Band 4 Prisoner Supervisors. There are now 7 Band 4 Offender Supervisors (OS's) who are based in the OMU and have a caseload of up to 70 prisoners each. There are also 4 Band 4 OS's who are residentially based, but have a caseload of 10 prisoners. These changes are aimed to give a continuity of service to prisoners, and also to support the Officers within the Residential function. There was a transition period in respect of management within the function with both Band 5 Custodial Managers' roles being covered on a temporary basis.

Although OMU moved to this model in regards to the Band 4 OS's split, the OS's continue to be deployed to support the detail on a regular basis, due to staffing shortages. The Board are concerned this is affecting the work within OMU.

Although prisoners will always wish to see their OS's, this will be on a basis of risk management and key points in their sentence i.e. pre-parole, annual reviews, Category reviews.

OMU still have a large number of prisoners who arrive from local and other Cat C establishments with an out of date Prisoner Assessment System (OASys) or none at all. This continues to put great pressure on the management of risk and allocation of prisoners to interventions.

Currently there are 38 prisoners with no OASys (27 are HMPS and 11 are Probation) and 116 prisoners with an out of date OASys (60 are HMPS and 56 are Probation)

### **INDETERMINATE PUBLIC PROTECTION (IPP) & LIFE SENTENCES**

All the data was correct as at the 12th October 2015.

HMP Erlestoke holds 530 prisoners of which 264 are serving IPP or Life Sentences. Prison documents show 156 IPP and Life Sentence Prisoners are over tariff.

4 have now been transferred to other establishments leaving a total of 152 Prisoners.

11 Prisoners shown on the documents are not over tariff therefore leaving 141, who have a collective total of 1014 years over tariff. This equates to 7.19 years per head.

The cost of keeping a person in prison is £40,000 per annum; therefore, it is costing HMP Erlestoke £5,640,000 per annum to hold the 141 prisoners who are over tariff. (£40,560,000 for the 1014 years)



An analysis of the 152 IPP and Life Sentence prisoners is as follows: -

Issues that could be addressed – a total of 141

- 24 are awaiting psychology reports or input – delays caused by psychology reports being late or not at all; multiple issues i.e. deferred or awaiting Parole Board direction etc.
  - 68 awaiting Parole Board Hearings
  - 38 awaiting courses – transferred in for courses before a place is available; found then to be unsuitable
  - 15 awaiting transfer to another establishment – refusal to take back or accept a prisoner
  - 3 awaiting reports – due to staff sickness or staff leaving.
  - 6 awaiting transfer to an Approved Premises - these are usually specialist units Included in the total
  - 11 prisoners with issues that are more unpredictable/difficult to address
  - 58 have extended sentences because of their behaviour
  - 13 have Drug/substance abuse
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## 5.6 SAFER CUSTODY

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The team consists of three prison officers, one administrative officer, one prisoner orderly, a band 5 Custodial Manager, and a Band 7 Operational Manager.

The safe care of isolated and vulnerable prisoners, as well as those with complex problems, remains challenging and requires a robust approach. These needs are being addressed through an extremely well attended multi-disciplinary Complex Prisoners Meeting that is held every Thursday morning... This meeting has proved to be very effective in identifying and addressing the needs of some of the most complex prisoners held at Erlestoke. Monthly meetings are well attended and interdepartmental support is evident. Risk assessment of new arrivals takes place and follow-up is efficient.

Antisocial Behaviour Forms were introduced onto the units this year. These are for use by prisoners to raise concerns for themselves or others. Substance abuse remains a serious issue. A monitoring sheet for use with prisoners suspected to be under the influence of a substance was brought into use. This provides valuable information concerning substance reactions and assists in subsequent treatment.

It has been found that the smuggling into prison of smart phones has meant that information on the internet has led to some cases of bullying. A violence reduction team is active in challenging perpetrators and offering victim support.

The training in the use of Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) is undertaken by the Safer Custody team and the aim is to train as many persons as possible.

Planning strategies for the non-smoking regime to be introduced in May 2016 have been welcomed. Supportive meetings and nicotine replacement therapies have been offered and well received.

Increased incidents of violence were recorded during this past year. The Board have monitored the incidents, which appear to have increased since the prison changed from a Resettlement prison into a Rehabilitation closed programme prison. Unfortunately the Board has not been able to obtain figures at this time.

. The change of prisoner demographics is deemed to have been an important factor. Steps have been taken to improve incident reporting at the establishment and it is hoped that this may alleviate some of the increased levels of recorded violence.

The mandatory drugs testing rate is approximately 11.64% against a target of 11%. This reflects the growing use of NSP (legal highs including spice) for which there is currently a test being piloted.



### **THE LISTENER SERVICE**

Prisoners who volunteer for this role are interviewed, trained and supported by the Samaritans who maintain a presence in the prison. The number of Listeners available to prisoners at any one time has ranged between eight and sixteen over the year. The popularity of the service is reflected in the following figures:

- Formal requested visits                      213
- Casual/other visits                              221
- Total visits                                        434
- Total hours spent:                                387.50

Following an unfortunate death in custody in May 2015 an increased level of disquiet amongst prisoners was evident in the Listener call-out statistics. No new Listeners were trained in the past year, however two separate Ongoing Training (OGT) sessions were held on Sunday mornings. A total of 20 Listeners attended over the two sessions.

During 2016 HMP Erlestoke will be **celebrating 25 years of the Listener Service.**

### **THE SAMARITANS**

In addition to their role of overseeing the Listener Service, the Samaritans maintain a free-phone system on each of the units. This provides prisoners with direct access to the Safer Custody team.

### **THE CITIZENS ADVICE SERVICE**

The Citizens Advice Service regularly attend the Prison offering advice to all new intakes and serving prisoners. The service offers the full range of their expertise including debt which is an on-going problem.

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## 5.7 CARE & SEPARATION, CLOSE SUPERVISION. (CSU)

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The IMB is pleased to report that a support system is in place offering counselling by nursing staff, Chapel staff and a dedicated “Care Team” of trained officers, for any member of prison staff. The Care and Separation Unit (CSU) continues to be professionally well run by patient, tactful and dedicated staff who need to strike a delicate balance between support for vulnerable prisoners and discipline for those who challenge.

Over the past year the challenges have increased considerably due mainly to an influx of prisoners coming into the CSU for their own protection, mainly against bullying and debt. This is a reflection of a change in the prisoner demographics in the past year, which has seen the arrival of much less mature prisoners coming to undertake courses/programmes befitting the crimes they have committed. This in turn can identify them as a specific category, making them vulnerable to threats and bullying.

During the past year, there have been more challenging mental health issues with prisoners in CSU and it is felt that there has been a lack of support from Mental Health Services. There is at the time of writing this report, no Mental Health nurse and no regular doctor. There is no weekend Health Care available, often leaving staff feeling unsupported.

There has been an increase in the levels of “Self-Harm” in the CSU, including overdosing, attempted hangings, as well as setting fire to cells, dirty protests and attacks on staff.

Last year IMB reported that the holding cells in the CSU were to be upgraded “in a few months’ time”. It is disappointing to report that, due to lack of financial resources, there has been no change regarding the poor condition of these holding cells. The IMB considers these cells to be unfit for purpose and contravening expected levels of decency. Officers refer to them as “like the worst public conveniences ever seen” and “an embarrassment”.

The stoicism and professionalism shown by the staff of the CSU under the above mentioned stressful circumstances is to be applauded.

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## 5.8 RESIDENTIAL SERVICES (INCLUDES ACCOMMODATION, FOOD, CATERING AND KITCHENS)

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The outsourcing of property and equipment maintenance services to Carillion from June 2015 has had an unsatisfactory start. Routine maintenance tasks are taking an unnecessarily long time to complete. For example, simple jobs such as replacing broken windows can take several weeks and/or months.

Replacement of equipment has been subject to exceptionally long delays due to negotiation with the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), sometimes resulting in additional costs. For example, the kitchens have incurred extra costs as it has been operating without a potato peeling machine since November 2015. This will be reflected in the kitchen overspend of £18,000.00, from a budget of £378,213.00. (The allowance for feeding a prisoner is £2.01p per head per day.)

Even relatively urgent health & safety related works are not undertaken promptly. For example, the servery in Wessex was in an unacceptable condition but despite repeated requests no remedial action was taken. Eventually the servery had to be closed on health & safety grounds and temporary arrangements made.

A number of outstanding building issues were identified in our 2014/15 report of which the following remain outstanding:

- Shortage of showers on Kennet wing
- Incomplete decoration of Alfred wing
- The lack of ventilation and appropriate drainage in the showers on Wessex wing;
- The continuing poor recreation facilities on Sarum wing

The inability of 'GeoAmey' to transport all the Prisoners belongings has caused a high number of Applications (79) from Prisoners to the Board. The situation is caused by 'GeoAmey' sending small vehicles that are unable to take the prisoners and their property, which does accumulate during a long custodial sentence. Belongs get lost, broken or left at another prison. The transportation of belongings left behind in HMP Erlestoke has cost the prison £2305.05 in the use of delivery organisations such as TNT.

As reported in last year's report - In 2014 HMP Erlestoke accommodated an extra 30 prisoners; as a result, more cells were converted into double cells. The Board still considers that these cells inadequate for two prisoners, although conforming to regulations.

As reported in last year's report – The Board still has concerns that two-week Induction process for new prisoners are often interrupted, cancelled or changed to another time without notice.



## **VISITOR CENTRE AND VISITOR HALL**

The Visitor Hall continues to be a comfortable and welcoming environment offering a wide range of refreshments and snacks. However more complaints have been received this year from the prisoners, on behalf of their visitors, regarding the failure to answer the telephone to book a visit; visiting orders expiring before the visitor can book; visitors having to wait out in the elements all year round to enter the first gate; the search area for visitors continues to be not fit for purpose with the building in the same hazardous state with mould on the walls, a leaking roof with the result that the heating cannot be switched on.

Although the managers put together a bid for a new facility nothing has changed since last year's report.

The Board had hoped that Visitors could be brought through to the Visitor Hall, collect their beverages and sat down before the prisoners were brought over to the Visit Hall. Although this happens in a number of other prisons it has not been available in HMP Erlestoke.

Therefore, prisoners are sat waiting for a considerable time, and losing much awaited visits, before seeing, on some days, their cold, wet and tired visitors.

The Board is aware that management are currently reviewing the 'Visits Experience' and that a number of changes will be implemented to improve it. The Board will continue to monitor.

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## 6) THE WORK OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

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<b>BOARD STATISTICS</b>	
Recommended Complement of Board Members	12
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	10
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	8
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	4
Number of members leaving within reporting period	4
Total number of Board meetings during reporting period	11

**APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BY THE BOARD**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>1st April 2014 – 31st March 2015</b>	<b>1st April 2015 - 31st March 2016</b>
A	Accommodation	6	4
B	Adjudications	5	8
C	Equality & Diversity (inc. religion)	3	7
D	Education/employment/training inc. IEP	10	1
E 1	Family/visits inc. mail & phone	10	9
E 2	Finance/pay	12	6
F	Food/kitchen related	4	7
G	Health related	18	32
H 1	Property (within current establishment)	9	16
H 2	Property (during transfer/in another establishment)	29	31
H 3	Canteen, facilities, Catalogue shopping	1	0
I	Sentence related (inc. HDC, parole, release dates, re-cat etc.)	23	13
J	Staff/prisoner/detainee concerns inc. bullying	13	13
K	Transfers	12	10
L	Miscellaneous	9	20
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>177</b>

