



Independent Monitoring Board

HMP Onley

Annual Report

March 2015 – February 2016

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

The Board is specifically charged to:

- (1) Satisfy itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in custody within its prison and the range and adequacy of the programmes preparing them for release.
- (2) Inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority as it judges appropriate, any concern it has.
- (3) Report annually to the Secretary of State on how well the prison has met the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have on those in its custody.

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

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Section 3: Description of the Prison

- 3.1 HMP Onley is a male adult Category C London Resettlement Prison, situated between Rugby and Daventry. The population is split 90/10% between London and the Midland Area prisoners.
- 3.2 In March 2015 the Certified Normal Accommodation (CNA) was 742. Prisoners are housed in 12 wings. This agrees with the Operational Capacity (Op Cap) of 742.
- 3.3 Wings A-I, including F Wing, the Care and Support Unit (CSU), radiate from a single corridor in the main block which also includes the Kitchen, Gym, Education, Chaplaincy and Healthcare. Wings J and K are located in a separate block as is the newest accommodation: L Wing.
- 3.4 The site also has a sports hall, workshops, market garden and all weather sports pitch.
- 3.5 Agencies delivering education are Novus and North Warwickshire and Hinckley College. Industry agencies include Halfords Academy, Industrial Material Recycling Ltd.(IMR), DHL Supply chain, JP Concrete and Cisco, together with PICTA.
- 3.6 Healthcare, Mental Health Care and Dentistry are provided by Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. The Coventry Samaritans train the Listeners and Peer Support.

Section 4: Executive Summary

- 4.1. The Board is of the opinion a culture of care is apparent and prisoners are treated with decency and respect. Particular mention should be made of staff in the CSU who have consistently shown extra care and support to very demanding prisoners. Paragraphs 5.7.1 and 5.7.4 refer.
- 4.2 Whilst acknowledging that the prison is operating in a safe manner, The Board is concerned at the pressure all staff, including senior managers, are operating under which it feels is unsustainable with the resultant effect on prisoners. It had been hoped recruitment of more officers would relieve this situation, but a restricted regime operates at weekends and other periods to cover shortfalls. Paragraphs 5.4.1 and 5.6.3 refer.
- 4.3 The Board is particularly concerned over the reduced staffing levels. It acknowledges the establishment is actively recruiting and is operating at a safe level but is concerned over the effect such pressure has on the staff's wellbeing and again with a knock on effect to prisoners. As in 4.2 above, paragraphs 5.6.3 and 5.7.1 refer.
- 4.4 The prison has an ongoing problem with offenders arriving without completed Offender Assessment System(OASYS) reports and Sentence Plans. Onley is not staffed to complete these and it is acknowledged that a significant level of extra work has been completed by the staff to reduce the number outstanding.

Sentence Plans and OASYs reports are essential for prisoners to establish their goals and work towards their recategorisation or discharge.

- 4.5 Whilst the prison is attempting to educate prisoners to regard the CSU as the area where offence perpetrators are detained and that wings are the preferred “safe” option, it is a difficult culture to reverse and too often it is still seen as the “Departure or Transfer lounge”. Work is ongoing to reinforce the prison’s point of view.

4.2 Particular Issues Requiring A Response

- 4.2.1 Over the year the prison has operated on a much reduced staffing complement and has never attained the recommended figure of 112 officers. The shortfall has been filled by Detached Duties and reliance on Payment Plus. The Board believes this situation is unsustainable over the longer term and leaves the prison exposed. The Board is aware that this is a national issue and would ask The Minister what further proposals are planned as the recruitment campaigns to date have not supplied the extra officers required?
- 4.2.2 The Board commends the prison on reducing the backlog of uncompleted OASYs reports and prioritising HDC and Category D Boards. However, The Board asks The Minister what proposals are being implemented to manage the situation of Establishments failing to fulfill their responsibilities to complete OASYs reports?

4.3 Previous Year’s Concerns

- 4.3.1 The Board still has concerns over visiting difficulties for families, especially those from the London area, particularly in view of the fact we have learned the local bus service ceases to operate to the railway station before Visits end. If a visitor does not own a private car the cost of a visit becomes prohibitive taking into account rail and taxi fares. The station at Rugby is approximately eight miles from Onley. Visiting problems are frequently cited as reasons for transfer requests.
- 4.3.2 Whilst acknowledging the hard work and revised systems implemented to achieve the reduced number of outstanding OASYs reports, a considerable number remain outstanding and prisoners still arrive without an OASYs and so although improved the situation remains unresolved. 350 prisoners had no OASYs in August, reducing to 265 in November.
- 4.3.3 Property remains a continuing problem as can be seen in the application figures in paragraph 6.5. This has been a featured issue in the last ten years Annual Reports and it shows no sign of being resolved. The enforcement of volumetric control and the contractor’s responsibilities in relation to this remain unresolved.

Section 5: Key Areas

5.1 Equality & Inclusion

- 5.1.1 Onley won an award under Investors in Diversity in March 2015, this translated into a Leaders in Diversity Award in October. It acknowledges consistent good work

throughout the year. The prison was also awarded a Bronze Award in Investors in People in June 2015.

- 5.1.2 The prison celebrated the Gypsy, Romany and Travellers (GRT) group culture with an event to mark Appleby Fair in July where traditional refreshments were served. Fourteen travellers attended and were pleased their traditions and the anniversary of The Fair had been acknowledged. The GRT group meet regularly and attendance is encouraged. In September a representative from the Irish Chaplaincy for Prisoners Overseas (ICPO) came from London to attend the GRT meeting. All good initiatives for a group that can be overlooked.
- 5.1.3 In October Black History Month was celebrated by three events: Drumming; How to Write and Deliver Poetry and Comedy: How to Create a Scene and Deliver it. Special menus were also provided. Again, the prison showed its commitment to appreciate our diverse society.
- 5.1.4 The Chaplaincy led on two Rastafarians visiting to speak to prisoners and acknowledge their religion in November with ongoing attendance for worship. The Board feels that the prison is proactive in organising events and groups to represent minority cultures.
- 5.1.5 For the disabled, old and infirm, disabled shower seats were fitted over several months.
- 5.1.6 70 DIRFS were received in the reporting period, all of which are reviewed by the Equalities team to ensure they are dealt with in a timely and in a consistent manner which is good practice. There were two spikes in September and February but no explanation for these.

5.2 Education Learning and Skills

- 5.2.1 Links with external employers exemplified by the Halfords's Academy are a significant asset and the model seems likely to be adopted next year by Ricoh. Although in their infancy, a number of training /education innovations are likely to impact positively on prisoners' experience and long term employment prospects. The inauguration of a restaurant/coffee facility appears to have been a popular and effective innovation in terms of the attendant training and employment opportunities. One prisoner commented on how he valued the homework he had been given as part of his training and observed that it was more constructive than sitting in his cell watching TV. However, despite these successes there is no doubt that elements of prisoner employment are less challenging insofar as they are extremely repetitive. Recycling appears to be viewed as such by prisoners. There is also the reality that training workshops are vulnerable to staff absence and trainer recruitment challenges. All education and training courses are now more widely advertised within the prison. These advertisements clarify course content, level and application to the job market. A booklet tracking each prisoner's learning journey has been introduced with the aim of maximizing educational coherence and enhancing the concept of ownership.
- 5.2.2 In February 2016 education programmes were operating at a 74% efficiency rate in terms of prisoners accessing education. This is the second highest figure in the region. Completion rates on functional skills and vocational courses achieved 90%

plus success rates. However, barriers to efficiency remain resulting in absenteeism from scheduled sessions. Typically, these barriers include football sessions, hair cuts and changes to the regime, usually as a consequence of staff shortages. Changes to the regime necessitate for example the closure of the gym to enable redeployment of specialist staff to the wings. If such disruptions impact too frequently on a prisoner then the programme he is following loses its coherence and may prevent him from getting the associated award. Anecdotal evidence suggests that in the context of staff shortages and with increasing numbers of inexperienced officers there is the potential for the employment/training imperative to be undermined with a consequent greater incidence of prisoners who are not in employment or training remaining on the wing. In addition to what might be identified as opportunistic absenteeism there continue to be a small number of prisoners who refuse opportunities for education and training despite the encouragement and incentives and ultimate sanctions which impact on them.

- 5.2.3 The absence of meaningful in cell education continues to beset a small minority of prisoners who are for whatever reason confined to their cell on their wing or within the CSU. This lack of worthwhile engagement is not only a lost opportunity but a significant waste of intellectual and employment potential.

5.3 Healthcare and Mental Health

- 5.3.1 Changes in the Healthcare contract appear to have brought about a number of improvements in the service to prisoners.
- 5.3.2 Availability of Dental, Optician and Podiatry sessions have all increased. The new Pharmacy provision has resulted in a more responsive service, so that prescribed medication can now be obtained in much more timely manner.
- 5.3.3 Ultra-sound investigations are now carried out on site, thus avoiding the inconvenience and cost implications of sending prisoners to hospital.
- 5.3.4 A healthcare administrator co-ordinates the appointments process to ensure that all appointments are arranged in a timely manner.
- 5.3.5 New Psycho-active Substances (NPS) continue to pose many challenges for Healthcare and prison staff. All medical and nursing staff now under-go training in the use of Intermediate Life Support techniques enabling them to provide appropriate assistance in the event of breathing difficulties that can occur with the use of NPS. Healthcare staff keep statistics of NPS usage and work closely with Security staff to combat usage.
- 5.3.6 A number of initiatives have improved the delivery of mental health care. These include: more comprehensive mental health screening at the Reception stage; prisoners referred to mental health are now seen within 5 working days: if a prisoner fails to collect prescribed medication this is always followed up and he will be seen and reviewed by a nurse.

5.4 Purposeful Activity

- 5.4.1 Staff are alert to those who don't participate in out of cell activities and spend time actively encouraging engagement. Timetabling of work, training and education

seeks to ensure all activities take place on time, however, gym staff can be deployed to cover shortages which can result in gym sessions being cancelled, with the knock on effect to prisoners' health and wellbeing.

- 5.4.2 The contract for outside work was awarded to Amey from 1st June. This has removed the opportunity for prisoners to work outside under Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) and the grounds are not kept to the high standard that previously prevailed. The internal grounds by contrast are well maintained.
- 5.4.3 A Job Fayre was well attended in November with a number of outside organisations showcasing opportunities. Halfords Academy opened in September as did The Lock Inn, the new staff mess. Staffed by prisoners this offers opportunities in transferable skills on release such as catering and barista work. The skills learned in Halfords Auto Centre ensure an interview for employment with them on release. Two excellent opportunities.
- 5.4.4 A new Pay Policy agreed with the Prisoner Council ensures standardisation across the estate and encourages take up of employment and training.
- 5.4.5 The Board is of the opinion that a high number of prisoners engage in purposeful activity and spend a good proportion of time "out of cell". Generally there are not a large number of prisoners on the wings during the day. The Board is aware the restricted core day is to give consistency across all areas and allow cross deployed staff to move back into OMU to address the issues in that department.

5.5 Resettlement

- 5.5.1 The resettlement wing was moved from I wing to G wing and co-located with resettlement services. Novus is the London based Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC). The remote location apparently doesn't pose any problems and local prisoners are served by a branch in Coventry. 5 to 6 referrals a week are received.
- 5.5.2 A Key Performance Indicator (KPI), accommodation on release is one of the biggest challenges. St Mungo's is the charitable concern dealing with this. The target of 90% is currently being met but this may not be sustainable.
- 5.5.3 Prisoners are contacted 12 weeks before release and then work through the programme "Getting it Right" covering Responsible Thinking, "Strive" the CRC's own programme run by Bedfordshire College, Substance Misuse and Money Management. The programme is voluntary and limited to 12 places but Novus staff feel it is of benefit although no details of reoffending were available to support this.
- 5.5.4 Other KPIs of Employment at 30% is being met, although Education at 30% is only achieving 26%.

5.6 Safer Custody

- 5.6.1 Two Deaths in Custody occurred in the reporting period; one from natural causes. The PPO initial report into the other incident was critical of Healthcare involvement but the Coroner's Inquest and final report are yet to be completed.

- 5.6.2 Violence “hot spots” were identified in movement to work and return to wings and staff were increased from two to three per wing at these peak periods to combat this. A reduction in the violence points up what good information sharing can achieve.
- 5.6.3 Weekend closures have featured throughout the period, together with lunchtime patrol state. This impacts on prisoners’ association time but is necessary to accommodate reduced staffing levels. The Board would hope the regular regime can be reinstated in the future. CCTV on wings A-E, G and H was installed after a short delay in January 2016 but there has been no feedback as to how effective this has been in providing increased security for staff and prisoners.
- 5.6.4 Authorisation to over recruit by ten officers (to 112 instead of 102) was given in June, however, the actual recruitment and retention of personnel remains the overriding problem. There was an issue whereby newer officers were allocated rotas together rather than with experienced officers, leaving them vulnerable to manipulation but this was recognised and the detail amended.
- 5.6.5 Four Serious Incidents occurred during the reporting period; The Board attended three of these, communication difficulties prevented attendance on the other occasion. Those The Board attended were professionally dealt with and well managed. The Care Team offer support to staff affected by Serious Incidents or traumatic events and displays a genuine culture of “Caring for Staff” which is to be applauded.
- 5.6.6 On average 10-12 ACCTs are open at any one time. All are reviewed and completed with full Care Plans on those seen by The Board who attend reviews regularly.
- 5.6.7 A Weapons Amnesty in May removed a number of items from circulation and was well received by prisoners generally. It is a concern that the passive drugs dog made a number of indications during Visits all of which yielded drugs finds. This is one of the main routes for illegal substances and mobile phones to enter Onley.
- 5.6.8 Drones have again been used to drop drugs and mobile phones into the establishment. The rural location lends itself to these operations unfortunately.
- 5.6.9 At one of the Segregation Monitoring and Review Group (SMARG) meetings an analysis of the distribution of prisoners in the CSU showed that Black Minority Ethnic (BME) prisoners were there mainly for bullying or threatening behaviour whilst white prisoners were there mainly for Own Protection (OP). The 6 BME prisoners in February 2016 represented 1.5% of the BME population of 399 whilst the 19 white prisoners represented 5.8% of the population of 333. Asian prisoners are generally not located in the CSU. This requires more in depth monitoring by The Board but may indicate that white prisoners go straight to the CSU as their support network whilst other prisoner groups rely on their religious or gang relationships for support and defence.

5.7 Segregation/ Care & Separation/ Close Supervision

- 5.7.1 For the whole of the reporting period the CSU has been full or very nearly full. Frequently there have been prisoners with very complex needs or difficult prisoners occupying the wing. This has placed a very heavy burden on the staff and it is a credit to them that they have coped so well and provided stability during this time.
- 5.7.2 At the end of the previous reporting period there was a change of Governor for the CSU and another change during the year. At the end of this reporting period, although just outside the timescale for this report, there has been yet another change. Three Governors in a period of just over a year does not provide stability in an area where stability is essential. Whilst acknowledging change happens; promotions occur as do transfers, too much change can be unsettling to staff as well as prisoners. It is to be hoped a settled period will follow.
- 5.7.3 Dirty Protests (DP) were reported and observed by members in CSU in the months of March, May, October, December and February. A significant increase on previous years. "Potting", where excreta is thrown or emptied over officers has also occurred more frequently; again a practice which was rare at Onley in previous years. It is likely that these practices have been imported with the changing prisoner demographic.
- 5.7.4 Staff in CSU were under intense pressure in March when four prisoners were on ACCTs and one was on a three staff unlock; again in August six prisoners were on ACCTs and two others were on Constant Watch. On a unit holding fifteen prisoners this level of activity and monitoring was unsustainable and ultimately a Command & Restraint (C&R) team was required to settle the situation in both months.
- 5.7.5 On two occasions a Tornado team was called to remove multiple numbers of prisoners to disrupt gang culture. August saw the removal of ten prisoners in one operation.

5.8 Residential Services

- 5.8.1 The Board is still receiving complaints about equipment breakdowns and the time taken to effect repairs. The temperature during the winter months is still causing concern on the wings.
- 5.8.2. Wings have been updated. Accommodation and wing life seems to be satisfactory with a reasonable relationship between prisoners and staff. It has been noted that due to staffing shortages the officers do not have time to interact with the prisoners to further improve relationships. Due to the shortage of staff officers are often transferred to another wing where they have no relationship with the prisoners as they may only be there for one day and often cannot answer questions about life on that particular wing. During the reporting year due to staff shortages there have been several lockdown periods.
- 5.8.3. Accommodation related applications are still being received by The Board.
- 5.8.4 Litter remains an issue which The Board frequently raises. Litter picks take place twice daily and officers try to educate prisoners not to throw food and other waste

out of the windows but it is an ongoing problem, compounded by increased time spent in cell due to regime pressures.

- 5.8.5. Some Adjudications are attended by The Board and the process is found to be satisfactory.
- 5.8.6. The zero tolerance and IEP scheme assist in the effective management of the prisoners behaviour. Onley is a pilot scheme for the Custodial Violence Management Model (CVMM) but it is too soon to report on the effectiveness of this.

Section 6: Work of the Independent Monitoring Board

Board Statistics	
Recommended Complement of Board Members	19
Number of Board Members at the start of the reporting period	13
Number of Board Members at the end of the reporting period	10
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	1
Number of members leaving within the reporting period	4
Total number of Board meetings during the reporting period	11
Total number of visits to the Establishment	535
Total number of segregation reviews held	245
Total number of segregation reviews attended	234
Date of Annual Team Performance Review	12/11/2015

- 6.1 One experienced member resigned during the year and two left under tenure. One member had his appointment terminated. Following a recruitment campaign in the summer of 2015 one member was recruited.
- 6.2 The Board held monthly meetings and a Team Performance Review offsite in November 2015 in lieu of the Board Meeting.
- 6.3 The Governor attended Board Meetings and a good working relationship has been established. The Deputy Governor attended in The Governor's absence. Both keep The Board informed of all aspects of the operation of the prison and have an "Open Door" policy for IMB should members want to bring concerns directly to them.
- 6.4 The Board visited HMP Pentonville on 26th May 2015.
- 6.5 Each week a team deals with applications, reviews on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and monitoring of four areas: Healthcare or kitchen/ servery on alternate weeks, one wing, an educational or workplace area and another area. CSU prison-

ers are spoken to weekly. This is being revised under new guidelines. Smarter Monitoring is to be welcomed as with the reduced number of members maintaining the current system is proving difficult.

Analysis of Applications Received

Code	Subject	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
A	Accommodation	13	10	12
B	Adjudications/ Segregation	8	6	11
C	Diversity	2	3	1
D	Employment/Training/ Education/ Regimes	44	22	23
E	Family/Visits/Resettlement/Mail/PIN Phones	34	10	18
F	Food	7	7	8
G	Health	36	25	27
H	Property	91	118	108
I	Sentence related	64	54	143
J	Staff Prisoner Related	23	16	32
K	Transfers	30	28	53
L	Miscellaneous	53	36	87
	Total Number of IMB Applications	405	332	523
	Confidential Access not included above	11	3	8

NOTES:

1. The increase in applications from the previous year was due to the OASYs issue. After The Board issued a letter advising they would not take up further applications as they could not assist with a resolution the applications reduced.
2. The highest number of applications again is property related: total 108, with 69 relating to other Establishments.