

HMP BELMARSH



INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

ANNUAL REPORT 1 July 2015 – 30 June 2016

1 STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

- 1.1 The Prisons Act 1952 requires every prison to be monitored by an independent Board appointed by the Home Secretary from members of the community in which the prison is situated.
- 1.2 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.**
- 1.3 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 records.

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3 DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

- 3.1 Belmarsh opened in April 1991 at a cost of over £105m. It occupies some 60 acres on the old Ministry of Defence Woolwich Arsenal site in South East London, 47 acres of which are within the perimeter wall.
- 3.2 It is a core local prison within the high security estate. It primarily serves the Central Criminal Court and Magistrates' Courts in South East London and parts of Essex, as well as holding high security risk prisoners on remand and awaiting trial.
- 3.3 The Certified Normal Accommodation (CNA) is 760 and the Operational Capacity i.e. the maximum population it can safely and decently hold is currently 906.

4 IMB EQUALITY STATEMENT

- 4.1 IMBs will not discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital and civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race including colour nationality, ethnic or national origins, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, in recruitment, in the treatment of members, and in the way they monitor the treatment of people in custody.

5 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 5.1 It is pleasing to report that at the end of the year Belmarsh is ranked as a solid Level 3 performing prison, due entirely to the efforts of the Governor Simon Cartwright and his management team and staff.
- 5.2 Although there are increasing levels of violence across the prison estate and at Belmarsh, the Board considers that this is well managed under the prison's Violence Reduction programme.
- 5.3 The main areas of concern are:

Staff Levels and Morale

- following changes in recent years and the introduction of benchmarking, the Board continues to have concerns about whether the prison is adequately staffed, given the number of occasions when the regime has been affected. Staff are constantly being redeployed, with the consequent impact on regime, property and attendance to activities;
- a significant and growing area of concern is low staff morale, observed by the Board on many occasions. It is felt this is due to many factors, including the gradual erosion of staff remuneration and benefits and the impact of staff shortages in virtually all areas of the prison.

Decency

- decency is still a major concern for the Board and, in particular, housing prisoners in triple-occupancy cells, originally designed for two people. For reasons set out in the report, this is not considered decent or humane;
- the frequent changes to the planned regime (mainly due to staffing shortages) result in prisoners having reduced access to showers, telephone calls, association and planned activities.

Attendance at Activities

- attendance to work and education is unacceptably low and provision of activities is poor. This does not meet the requirements of the Minister to provide meaningful activities for prisoners and adequate preparation for release.

- 5.4 The Board is supported by an efficient clerk and the Board is grateful to the prison for the continued provision of this service.
- 5.5 The Board currently has 17 members and is thus fully able to fulfil its duties effectively. The Chair would like to thank the Board and clerk for their efficiency and support.
- 5.6 The Chair acknowledges and applauds the efforts of all staff and governors who do a great deal of effective day-to-day work that is not mentioned in this report. The Chair is grateful for their cooperation and for the many good working relationships that enable the Board to carry out its duties.

- 5.7 The Board sets out below the principal issues to be addressed by the Minister, the National Offender Management Service and the prison.

Points for the Minister

- 5.8 The Board is concerned about staffing levels in the prison resulting from changes introduced over the last few years following benchmarking. When there are not enough officers, prisoners' access to a full regime and activities is affected across the prison. (Ref 7.16, 7.17, 7.21, 8.3, 8.5, 9.1, 10.5, 11.4, 11.6, 12.3, 12.7, 12.8)

Points for the Prison Service

- 5.9 The Board continues to be concerned about the time taken for security clearance following the recruitment of staff and Board members and the impact this has in the prison. The Board continues to urge for measures to be put in place to speed up this process. (Ref 7.7, 7.8, 11.6, 12.7)
- 5.10 The Board urges the Prison Service to liaise with the Healthcare Centre to reduce the complaints response time of 28 days. (Ref 8.8)
- 5.11 The Board urges the Prison Service to introduce changes to the form used for recording GOOD review details to ensure the Board can check that the governor who approved the initial review is not conducting later reviews for the same prisoner. (Ref 10.7)
- 5.12 The Board urges the Prison Service to expedite the assessment processes for prisoners being held in Segregation for times exceeding three months by ensuring there are enough places available for these prisoners in suitable establishments. (Ref 10.9)
- 5.13 The Board urges the Prison Service to provide funding for the purchase of body-worn cameras so that these can provide sound evidence in use of force and other interventions. (Ref 10.14)
- 5.14 The Board is concerned about basic decency and privacy for prisoners by the continued use of triple-occupancy cells, originally designed for two people, and would urge a reduction in their usage. (Ref 12.1)
- 5.15 The Board urges the Prison Service to investigate improvements to the management of prisoners' property throughout the entire estate. (Ref 10.10, 12.4)
- 5.16 The Board urges the Prison Service to make improvements to the visits booking system used throughout the prison estate to provide a calendar facility enabling visitors to see which dates are free before attempting to make a booking. (Ref 12.13)
- 5.17 The Board urges the Prison Service to look for ways to improve the service provided by the maintenance contract. (Ref 13.1, 13.2)

Points for HMP Belmarsh Management

- 5.18 The Board is concerned that there is little evidence of work being done on diversity issues, nor of work being undertaken on equalities streams. Few diversity meetings have been held during the year. (Ref 6.1, 6.2)
- 5.19 The Board urges the prison to increase the disability, sickness, and retirement age pay rates. (Ref 6.3)
- 5.20 The Board is concerned about attendance to classes in education and activities in workshops. (Ref 7.2, 7.17) These concerns are focused on:
- the quality of classes in education (Ref 7.4);
 - concerns about recognition of prior learning done in previous establishments (ref 7.6);
 - teaching vacancies, teaching standards, sickness and speed of getting CTC clearance (Ref 7.7 - 7.10, 7.16, 7.24);
 - the range of activities available in education and workshops (Ref 7.4);
 - staff shortages impacting attendance (7.17, 7.21);
 - limited workshop options available (Ref 7.18 -7.20);
 - gym sessions not sufficiently diversified (ref 7.21).
- 5.21 The Board urges the prison to provide sufficient staff to enable Category A prisoners to attend the study group sessions run by Chaplaincy. These are considered an important tool in combatting extremism. (Ref 7.22)
- 5.22 The Board again urges the prison to consider employing Category C prisoners in the upkeep of the gardens. (Ref 7.23)
- 5.23 The Board is concerned that the Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) has not yet reached its potential, meaning that prisoners are not being provided with the necessary skills to assist them on release. (Ref 7.24)
- 5.24 Whilst the Board welcomes the start of Patient Council meetings, it is regrettable that these meetings are frequently cancelled at short notice or have poor attendance. (Ref 8.2)
- 5.25 The Board urges the HCC to improve information to prisoners about the availability of the Minor Ailments Clinic and also to make HCC complaints forms readily available to all prisoners. (Ref 8.4, 8.8)
- 5.26 The Board urges the prison to do more to improve attendance at medical appointments. (Ref 8.5)
- 5.27 The Board urges the prison to improve the process for reviewing prisoners' records when prisoners are transferred into the

establishment. Failure to do so can affect safety of both staff and prisoners. (Ref 9.4, 10.4)

- 5.28 The Board urges the prison to focus on the causes of violence in the prison. (ref 9.6, 9.8)
- 5.29 The Board urges the prison to continue to look for ways to improve the management of Duty of Care prisoners. (Ref 9.9)
- 5.30 The Board requests the prison to improve the process for police referrals to ensure cases are not cancelled due to a failure by prison staff to submit statements. (Ref 10.13)
- 5.31 The Board is disappointed about the limited educational provision for prisoners located in HSU and urges the prison to work with Education to improve this provision. (Ref, 11.5, 11.6)
- 5.32 The Board urges the prison to improve the processes for the transfer of prisoners' property when prisoners are moved within the prison and also when transferred to other establishments. (Ref 10.10, 12.4)
- 5.33 The Board urges the prison to improve the processes for the management of adjudications to ensure prisoners are appropriately brought to justice where applicable. (Ref 10.11)
- 5.34 The Board urges the prison to ensure that Prisoner Council meetings are held each month and to ensure good representation of prisoners and staff from all relevant areas. (Ref 12.2)
- 5.35 The Board requests the prison to consider whether there is a better way to provide breakfast to prisoners, other than the issue of packs with the evening meal. (Ref 12.6)

6 DIVERSITY REPORT

- 6.1 It is regrettable that, after several years of being able to report that diversity has been well-managed within Belmarsh, it is now necessary to report that there is little evidence of work being done in this area. There have been few meetings held and often these have been cancelled at short notice and not rearranged. At the few meetings held, prisoner representation was poor.
- 6.2 It is understood that SMT members have responsibility for individual equalities streams and promote activities and initiatives within these streams. There is no evidence, however, to indicate that work is being undertaken on these streams.
- 6.3 The issue of disability, retirement, and sickness pay has been discussed many times throughout the year with the prison and the prison responds that they are “fully compliant”. In cases where prisoners are unable to undertake any other activities due to their condition, the Board considers these pay rates unacceptably low (£3.25 a week) and urges the prison to consider increasing these rates. This is likely to affect a very small number of individuals and therefore have a negligible impact on the prison’s pay budget.

7 REDUCING REOFFENDING/ LEARNING AND SKILLS

- 7.1 Belmarsh is a challenging prison, and it is difficult to innovate and establish dynamic improvements quickly. The prison has undergone significant change over the reporting year, both in terms of senior personnel and ways of working. Staff morale remains low. As a result progress has been slow in the area of reducing reoffending. Even though there is good leadership and management and some dedicated staff, the restrictions of the high security estate can be stultifying.
- 7.2 Prisoner attendance at classes and workshops continues to be a focus for management and this is a concern for the Board, due to a variety of reasons detailed in the sections below.

Education

- 7.3 Manchester College is now the established education provider and there is a new Education Manager who has a clear understanding of the demands of the post.
- 7.4 The curriculum has been reviewed and there is a greater focus on basic skills with a view to improved employability on release. Basic skills courses cover only levels one and two, which are below the standard needed to get a job. It continues to be a concern that prisoners are often dissatisfied with the level of courses on offer with,

it seems, little between basic and higher level learning. This does not help to motivate those prisoners who are less than enthusiastic about attending classes.

- 7.5 Prisoner timetables have been challenging to devise owing to different departments needing their attendance at the same time. Complicated timetables and schedules have been created to try to ensure that prisoners do not miss classes and, equally, Manchester College, who rely on payment by results, are not penalised by lack of attendance.
- 7.6 Prisoners who transfer between prisons are concerned that their prior learning is not acknowledged or is incompatible with the course on offer at Belmarsh.
- 7.7 The Board is concerned that the department has continued to operate with teaching vacancies all year. The speed of CTC clearance for newly appointed staff continues to be a major issue in getting staff into post.
- 7.8 The Board is concerned that recruitment of teachers to tutor classes in trades is slow. One reason for this is that the level of remuneration offered does not attract suitable teachers and another is the difficulty of getting CTC clearance.
- 7.9 The Board is concerned that teaching standards are variable. There has been focused effort to help individual teachers and the department as a whole to improve standards. The Board will continue to monitor this area.
- 7.10 The Board is concerned that staff sickness throughout the year has impacted on the ability to provide the planned classes. Currently it is not possible to recruit agency teachers to cover for sickness which has resulted in either managers covering or the cancellation of classes.
- 7.11 The Board is pleased that support for those prisoners engaged in higher level courses has improved with eight hours of one-to-one support now available to them.
- 7.12 The Board is pleased that the HSU has a flourishing fruit and vegetable garden with tuition in horticulture available to all prisoners located there. This is a popular resource.
- 7.13 The Board is pleased that the training in “Barista” skills has recently started.
- 7.14 The Board is pleased that, after many delays, the library is currently being refurbished.
- 7.15 The Board was pleased to observe a very good session for prisoners due for release. It would be good to see this provision extended to more prisoners along with more work on preparation of CVs.

Workshops and Resettlement

- 7.16 Civilian instructors have now replaced officer instructors in all of the workshops. There should be a complement of ten civilian staff in the workshops, but there are currently four vacancies, and two of the staff are on long-term sick.
- 7.17 Attendance at workshops has been poor over the reporting year, owing to staff shortages, staff redeployment following the introduction of the new regime management plan, and frequent prison lockdowns. Between April and June 2016 daily attendance has averaged approximately 68% of the target figure of 126 prisoners per day.
- 7.18 The dedicated teabag workshop, the CD and DVD recycling workshop which has closed and the Lighting Maintenance workshop which is supposedly awaiting further supplies are now all being used for the preparation of breakfast packs. The Yards Party is still functioning. The Recycling workshop has not been open during this reporting year and remains on hold owing to security considerations.
- 7.19 The Board regrets that the Vulnerable Prisoner (VP) workshop recycling toner cartridges, which won the Elton Trophy in 2015 for the best performing prison workshop, is no longer in partnership with Ink2work and the Green Office Co-op. Ink2work withdrew from Belmarsh in January and since then the workshop has been preparing breakfast packs.
- 7.20 The Board is disappointed that there are no workshops able to offer practical skills training and qualifications except for the British Institute of Cleaning Science (BICS) which offers certificated modules in different cleaning techniques. There is a passport to employment document which monitors attendance and teamwork. Prisoners attending workshops are encouraged to complete the passport but this is not recognised outside the prison.
- 7.21 Currently approximately 32% of prisoners attend gym sessions, as opposed to 35% this time last year. Staffing problems continue to affect attendance. There have been difficulties in providing sufficient gym time for VP prisoners. The Board understands that some prisoners do not want to attend these because they find they are not sufficiently diversified and focus for the most part on heavy weights training.
- 7.22 Chaplaincy currently has two part-time staff vacancies but this does not affect the provision of its planned programme. Chaplaincy run study groups on a variety of important social and religious topics and some of these courses are viewed as important tools in combatting extremism. The Board would like to see all prisoners, including Category A prisoners, given the opportunity to attend these courses, but unfortunately the attendance of Category A prisoners is not always possible due to frequent officer redeployments.

- 7.23 The Board is disappointed that there has been no progress in employing Category C prisoners in the upkeep of the gardens. Instead garden maintenance has been outsourced solely to the support services provider contracted long-term by the Prison Service. This is a lost opportunity for prisoners' rehabilitation.
- 7.24 The Board is disappointed that the CRC (Community Rehabilitation Company), whose brief is to deliver and co-ordinate resettlement services for low to medium-risk prisoners who are approaching their release date, has not yet reached its full potential after a year at Belmarsh. The CRC is not yet fully staffed owing to lengthy CTC clearances. Accordingly it has not been able to provide an analysis of monthly outcomes. In addition the lines of communication between the CRC, the Offender Management Unit, and Activities, which should be working together on resettlement issues, are tenuous. Relations between the CRC and the Probation Service is good at Belmarsh. The Board is concerned that at present prisoners are not being provided with the necessary skills to assist them on release.
- 7.25 Pathways to Recovery, under the umbrella of Change Grow Live, continues successfully to address substance misuse issues. Since January it has provided two members of staff to link with the CRC to provide a transitional service from prison to community.

8 HEALTHCARE CENTRE (HCC)

- 8.1 Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust became the provider for healthcare services on 1 April 2015 operating an out-patient clinic and an in-patient facility. The Board has a good working relationship with the Head of Healthcare.
- 8.2 The Board has noted the following improvements in the service provided and hopes these will reduce the need for in-patient treatment in the long run:
- the introduction of a Minor Ailments Clinic, which the prisoners now need to be encouraged to utilise fully;
 - mental health issues are significant at HMP Belmarsh and the treatment of these is now being addressed with increased access to psychological therapy and an in-reach service. There are more staff to deal with diagnosed patients with severe and enduring mental illnesses. A resource centre is being developed to deal with anxiety, healthy living, and lifestyle improvements;
 - another new initiative is the Capability Assessment which seeks to help those who feel they are unable to work to find an activity they can physically manage;
 - Patient Council meetings take place monthly and the Board recognizes the value of having input from both prisoners and staff at these meetings. It is disappointing to note, however, that for

what appear mostly logistical reasons some of these meetings have either been cancelled at short notice or are poorly attended.

- 8.3 Of concern for the Board remains the high volume of mental health in-patients, although a number have been transferred in recent months to more appropriate secure accommodation. The additional care the remaining patients require affects not only the regime of those in the HCC but also other areas of the prison when staff have to be mobilized to the HCC, often at short notice.
- 8.4 The Minor Ailments Clinic was set up in the hope that the number of out-patient appointments would reduce. This service, however, needs to be better publicised to the prisoners for this to happen.
- 8.5 The failure to attend appointments remains a concern. For example, the numbers for non-attendance of dental appointments was in excess of 40% of all appointments made for the period September 2015 to February 2016. In addition, the number of patients able to access outside appointments is restricted due to availability of staff. There are currently three patients that require dialysis three times a week, each needing their own escorts.
- 8.6 The HCC has its own separate system for dealing with complaints using their own complaints form. Any HCC complaints submitted on a Comp 1 are returned to the sender asking them to complete the Oxleas complaints form. These Oxleas complaints forms are often not readily available on the houseblocks. Currently the Board does not have access to the Oxleas complaints and therefore it has been impossible to monitor them. It has been agreed, however, that in future the form will include a box that can be ticked by the prisoner if it is agreed that the information can be shared with the Board.
- 8.7 Healthcare applications to the Board for the reporting year number 100, a slight decrease on the previous year.
- 8.8 The prison's complaints system has a response time of 14 days whereas the HCC has 28 days to respond. The Board considers this 28-day period is too long and inequitable. The HCC advises that in most cases prisoners are not seen personally regarding their complaint. Instead a written response is sent back to them.

9 SAFER CUSTODY AND VIOLENCE REDUCTION

- 9.1 The upward trend of incidents of self-harm has continued during this reporting year, an increase of 30%. There was a spike in June when eleven recorded incidents related to one prisoner. The cramped living conditions in triple-occupancy cells, many prisoners with mental health problems, and the frequent limitations on unlock time due to staff shortages and absence can only serve to exacerbate this situation.

- 9.2 There was one Death in Custody (DIC), a decrease on last year.
- 9.3 During the year three DIC inquests took place, one held nearly four years after the death, one nearly three years after, and the third just two years after. Following the response to last year's annual report, the Board met with the Senior Coroner for Inner South London, and has now been reassured that the delays are being tackled. Sustained and continued improvement, though, depends on courts suitable for jury inquests being made available to the Senior Coroner, and forensic toxicology tests being completed in a timely fashion.
- 9.4 Across the prison, the Board has noticed that crucial information in prisoners' files is sometimes not picked up or acted upon in a timely fashion. There have been two examples of that this year, one featuring in the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman's report. The prison and its Safer Custody team have worked to remedy this issue in relation to ACCTs. There are regular training sessions for staff on suicide prevention and there has been a significant rise in the number of ACCTs opened this reporting year. A further example of information-sharing issues was highlighted in one of the DIC inquests, where the jury found that failure to transfer information adequately from the treating hospital to the prison HCC was a "contributing factor" in the prisoner's death.
- 9.5 A number of Board members attended the training for Suicide Prevention and observed that, although the trainers were professional and well-prepared, there was not always positive participation from all officers and staff members.
- 9.6 The Board is concerned that the number of fights recorded during the reporting year has increased by over 50% on last year. From November 2015, fights between young adults, adults, and both groups were recorded separately. So far there seems to be a trend of young adults being more often involved.
- 9.7 A policy of control of razor blades was introduced during the year, whereby one blade at a time was loaned in exchange for an ID card. This dealt with a longstanding concern of the Board, and may have contributed to the limiting of slashing incidents.
- 9.8 The increased presence of 'spice' and other psychoactive substances in the prison presents challenges of effective detection, unpredictable reactions in the users and, anecdotally, an increase of debt-related incidents of violence or threats of violence, which are not necessarily reported to staff.
- 9.9 A number of prisoners continue to be held on a regime called 'Duty of Care' (DOC), which is peculiar to Belmarsh. These prisoners are considered (or consider themselves) to be at significant risk from other prisoners because of conflict issues. They are not therefore unlocked for association and domestics at the same time as others on the spur and, depending on the level of risk, not even unlocked at the same

time as each other. All DOC prisoners were eventually moved together on to Houseblock 4 to facilitate their management. The officers on this houseblock, however, are now required to manage several different regimes, including the VP spur and sometimes also 'overflow' VP cells elsewhere. This has resulted at times in an inadequate and limited regime for those on the DOC regime, with exercise and showers often not available on a regular daily basis. The Board is concerned that these DOC prisoners are effectively being segregated without the controls and safeguards available in the Segregation Unit and are thus being treated unfairly. The Initial PPO report for a DIC during the reporting year raises similar issues about the DOC regime and endorses the concerns of the Board. The Board understands that the prison has the DOC regime and its governance arrangements under review.

- 9.10 One Postcode is a new project initiated during this reporting year. It was developed by prisoners working with the support of the Violence Reduction team. Trained mentors sign up prisoners to the scheme who want to become violence-free whilst in prison. Incentives and rewards are given to mentees who remain violence-free for a period of time. The Violence Reduction team considers that the project is beginning to have an impact, although it is dependent upon a few motivated prisoners to drive it. The Board will monitor this project with interest over the coming year.
- 9.11 The Listeners at Belmarsh, trained and supported by local Samaritans groups, continue to provide a much valued resource for prisoners and the prison across houseblocks. A stable number of around 20 has been maintained, refreshed with at least two newly trained groups per year. A six-month transfer 'hold' for trained Listeners ensures continuity.

10 SEGREGATION UNIT

- 10.1 A pilot Progressive Segregation scheme started during the reporting year. This seeks to embed a more rehabilitative culture in the unit with better individual interventions and engagement and a focus on psychological health. The Board has observed some positive developments such as trial association periods for appropriate prisoners, but it is too early to reach any firm conclusions on whether this has been a success.
- 10.2 The now well-established local Managing Challenging Behaviour Strategy (MCBS) continues to be a welcome multidisciplinary approach to working with the most dangerous and disruptive prisoners and the Board has witnessed many positive interactions with officers, management, psychology and mental health. This operates alongside the new Violence Reduction strategy.

- 10.3 The staff in the unit generally act with a high degree of professionalism in managing a challenging group of prisoners at sometimes considerable risk to their own safety. There is room for improvement in terms of positive interactions with prisoners and better recording.
- 10.4 The Board notes that important information concerning a prisoner's history at other establishments sometimes takes a considerable time to review and this can hamper the effective management of these individuals and sometimes potentially put staff in danger.
- 10.5 On frequent occasions, the Board observed that prisoners were not being offered daily showers or exercise and sometimes they were asked to choose between the two because of staff shortages or redeployment. This is not necessarily the fault of the prison management as they seek to afford the maximum time out of cell for the majority of prisoners in the establishment, but it has often meant that the unit suffers from a limited regime. These restrictions are neither fair nor humane and they are likely to hinder the move to establishing a more progressive environment.
- 10.6 Special accommodation was used sparingly on only two occasions during the reporting year and this was deemed reasonable and proportionate after scrutiny. Three prisoners on open ACCTs were located in the unit in appropriate exceptional circumstances.
- 10.7 A new procedure for Good Order and Discipline (GOOD) Segregation Review Boards came into effect during the reporting year. This seems to be working well and it appears that prisoners are taking the opportunity to make written representations when appropriate. The Board has difficulty in establishing whether the governor who approved the initial segregation was the same as the governor who conducted the review, which is prohibited. The Board has requested changes to the form used to facilitate this.
- 10.8 It is mandatory for a Healthcare representative to attend all Segregation Review Boards, but some have taken place in their absence or only after chasing. The Board continues to monitor this situation.
- 10.9 Most prisoners were held in the unit only for short periods restricted to weeks rather than months, but there were a few individuals, including CSC (Close Supervision) prisoners, who remained there for times exceeding three months. Given the well-recognised physical and psychological effects of segregation, there is a strong case for investigating what can be done to ensure there are enough places available in suitable establishments at a national level.
- 10.10 Prisoners continue to encounter unacceptable delays with the transfer of their property from the houseblocks or when they have been moved from other establishments at short notice. This situation is a source of much resentment on the part of certain prisoners who may be missing their legal papers or items of sentimental value and it is a

hindrance to their effective management. Some staff are proactive in seeking to resolve these issues but there is a failure to address this longstanding problem at an institutional level.

- 10.11 The adjudications that the Board has observed have been conducted fairly and professionally. There continue to be, however, unfortunate dismissals when the relevant paperwork is not sent to the unit promptly so that it can be processed within the 48-hour time limit. There is also a problem with unnecessary adjournments or dismissals when reporting officers do not attend adjudication hearings.
- 10.12 The prison has made concerted efforts to address the use of force paperwork backlog but it remains considerable. Despite the new requirement for the paperwork to be submitted within 72 hours, this was not being complied with in all cases and there were discrepancies in the recording of incidents. The Board recognises that this has been addressed at management level and hopes that matters will continue to improve in future.
- 10.13 The system of police referrals following serious assaults and weapons finds is now more robust. The Board noted that no further action was taken in 14 cases because prison officers made the decision not to submit their statements.
- 10.14 The Board understands that no funding was available for the purchase of body-worn cameras for officers. Hand-held cameras used for planned interventions are not as useful, as a single camera can be obscured and does not provide a complete view of an incident. Body-worn cameras would assist in the effective investigation of alleged inappropriate use of force and other interventions. Officers and prisoners alike would have peace of mind that there was an independent record.

11 HIGH SECURITY / SPECIAL SECURE UNIT

- 11.1 The long term role of the HSU remains in doubt and it is the subject of a discrete review by the Deputy Director of Custody. The Board awaits the outcome of the review with interest.
- 11.2 The population of the HSU has declined with, on occasion, only one spur of four being used. Obviously there will always be a degree of variation depending on the need to house high or exceptional risk prisoners, but the question remains whether the unit is being effectively utilised bearing in mind the general pressure on prison places and the high staff to prisoner ratio. The unit was downgraded from a Special Secure Unit to a High Security Unit during the reporting year.
- 11.3 The HSU Segregation Unit has been used more sparingly than in previous years. After a number of incidents in the main prison at the

start of the reporting period, the HSU was used as an overflow Segregation Unit for a few weeks. This was not ideal in terms of the proper management of these prisoners and was brought to an end as quickly as practicable.

- 11.4 The prisoners in the HSU tend to have reasonable access to showers, exercise and telephone calls, albeit that the regime was curtailed from time to time. Longstanding problems with heating and air conditioning have been reported. Staff do their best to resolve most issues and the Board receives relatively few applications from the unit.
- 11.5 The HSU prisoners' access to purposeful activity remains extremely limited beyond the small gym, exercise and chaplaincy classes and there has not been any recent improvement. They are not able to visit the workshops or the education department.
- 11.6 A Learning Support tutor attends the unit for two hours every fortnight, but these visits have been cancelled from time to time due to staff shortages and CTC clearance issues. The curriculum is very basic encompassing functional skills in maths and English and does not address the needs of some prisoners who wish to undertake specific courses. Some individuals wishing to participate in distance learning have reported that they need more assistance in obtaining the relevant materials.
- 11.7 The Board is pleased that a horticulture tutor now visits on a regular basis and some prisoners have access to associated reading materials. HSU prisoners, supported by officers who have been committed to this scheme from the outset, continue to maintain the fruit and vegetable planters. The Board regrets that it has not been deemed practical for low risk prisoners to take part in similar positive purposeful activity elsewhere in the prison.

12 RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

Residence

- 12.1 The Board recognises that there has been a reduction in the use of triple-occupancy cells but continues to have concerns about cell sharing, in particular about these triple-occupancy cells, originally designed for two people (currently 111 in use). As noted in last year's report the Board considers that over-crowded cells are not decent for the following key reasons:
- space for only one prisoner to eat meals at a table;
 - use of sinks for purposes other than of personal hygiene, such as washing dishes;
 - use of sanitary facilities, especially during mealtimes;
 - different standards of hygiene and cleaning amongst prisoners;
 - conflicts between prisoners over choice of television programmes;

- breakdown in effective communication between prisoners due to language differences;
 - lack of adequate storage space for personal and confidential effects;
 - issues of personal conflict regarding religious beliefs and practices.
- 12.2 The Board welcomes the introduction of Prisoner Council meetings but is concerned that these meetings are frequently cancelled.
- 12.3 The Board continues to have concerns about staffing levels. These impact on the provision of a full regime for prisoners and on the ability of staff to manage prisoner attendance at planned activities such as education, library, workshops, gym, and medical appointments.
- 12.4 Applications to the Board regarding property far exceed all others. The Board urges the Prison Service to investigate ways of improving the management of property throughout the entire estate, focusing on transfer between establishments, transfers internally and cell clearance processes.

Kitchen

- 12.5 In this reporting year, the food budget increased to £2.02 a head. The kitchen does an excellent job in producing three meals a day, for more than 800 prisoners, on this limited budget.
- 12.6 A breakfast pack is handed to prisoners when the evening meal is served. This is a disincentive for prisoners to get up for daily activities. The breakfast pack is sometimes eaten during the night.
- 12.7 Staffing levels in the kitchen continue to be a problem with a total of six chefs in post and a further chef awaiting CTC clearance. The total complement should be ten. Kitchen staff are supplemented by prisoners and the allocation is 26. Currently there is an average of 15 to 18 prisoners on duty at any given time
- 12.8 There are currently four prisoners completing a catering course which is similar to an NVQ. The Board would like to see more prisoners able to gain catering qualifications.
- 12.9 The Board commends the kitchen on the provision of all specialist diets.

Foreign Nationals

- 12.10 The Foreign National (FN) population has seen a small increase in 2016 to 216 prisoners. The trend continues from last year which has seen a significant increase in the Eastern European population.
- 12.11 The management of removals continues to be spearheaded by Immigration Enforcement (IE) and the whole process is overseen by Safer Custody. Whilst the Immigration Surgeries of the past have

ceased, IE now deals with prisoners on a one-to-one basis and reacts to prisoner applications which can number up to ten per week. It is of note that the Board receives very few applications from FNs. Much work has been undertaken across the prison and the Board acknowledges the contribution made by all those involved in the removal of FNs.

Prison Visits and Visitor Centre

- 12.12 As a result of its regular work in the prison, the Board became increasingly concerned about the quality of the service being provided to visitors. It decided to carry out an intensive monitoring exercise into this area over two days in February 2016. Board members observed staff dealing with telephone and email booking and interviewed 63 social visitors, seven legal visitors, and two doctors from Broadmoor Hospital. A report was sent to the Governor seeking his comments on eight significant issues. The prison responded by taking positive action to address all the issues raised. The Board is grateful for the action taken to address its concerns and for the prison's cooperation in the exercise. The Board intends a follow-up exercise to assess the impact of the action which the prison has taken.
- 12.13 The Board urges improvements to the email booking system, which is in use across the prison estate. A calendar facility to enable visitors to view the dates when visits are available would be helpful. This would save having to submit numerous email requests before finding a convenient available date and time.
- 12.14 The Board is pleased to report that there were four Family Days held in the Visitor Centre for enhanced prisoners, which were well received.

London Pathways Progression Unit

- 12.15 This unit has now been transferred to HMP Brixton.

13 PRISON MAINTENANCE

- 13.1 The Board is concerned about the effectiveness of the prison maintenance contract. The implementation of this external contract has not gone well. There is a large backlog of work and it is difficult to track the progress and priority of outstanding work. One example is the time taken to effect repairs to the lift and washing machine in the HCC.
- 13.2 The Board urges the Prison Service to look for ways to improve the service provided under the current contract and will continue to monitor the situation and report its findings both to the Governor and the IMB National Council.

14 BOARD DEVELOPMENT

- 14.1 During the year the Board invited a number of guest speakers to explain and discuss their roles in the prison enabling members to gain a clearer understanding of prison processes.
- 14.2 During the year, one member has left the Board through tenure and two new members have been appointed.
- 14.3 The Board currently has 17 members with three members dual-boarding and one on sabbatical leave. With this volume of members, the Board is able to fulfil all the required duties.
- 14.4 Members have made night visits to continue the monitoring programme developed at previous training days.
- 14.5 The Board holds a training day each year, which gives the opportunity to develop skills and plan for special activities in the following year.
- 14.6 The Board welcomed IMB members from HMP Woodhill for a visit around Belmarsh.

15 **BOARD STATISTICS**

15.1 The highest numbers of applications are again for property and healthcare issues. There were also a considerable number of applications concerning complaints about staff. The statistics for the year are as follows:

Area	Total for 2015-16	Total for 2014-15
Accommodation	16	17
Assault	25	10
Attendance to Activities	18	19
Bullying of Prisoners	5	9
Bullying of Staff	0	0
Canteen	9	16
Category Status	4	21
Complaints about Staff	66	65
Drugs and DST	0	0
E List	5	4
Food	9	6
Foreign Nationals	0	15
Healthcare	100	105
Housing Issues	0	3
IEP/Discipline	14	12
Legal Matters	6	13
Licence Recall	3	3
Mail	25	10
OMU	27	52
Others	36	47
Personal Finance	41	31
Property	155	114
Racial Discrimination	6	9
Regime & Adjudications	48	13
Resettlement	1	0
Safer Custody	10	11
Sentence Planning	29	
Telephone/Pins	54	35
Transfers	27	53
Visits	66	19
Totals for the Years	739	712

16 **GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ACCT	Assessment, Care in Custody Teamwork (formerly F2052SH)
BICS	British Institute of Cleaning Science
CSC	Close Supervision Centre
CSRA	Cell Sharing Risk Assessment
CRC	Community Rehabilitation Company
CTC	Counter Terrorism Clearance
DAS	Detainee Advisory Service
DOC	Duty of Care
FNC	First Night Centre
FN	Foreign National
GOOD	Good Order or Discipline
HCC	Healthcare Centre
HDC	Home Detention Curfew
HSU	High Security Unit
IE	Immigration Enforcement
IMB	Independent Monitoring Board
IMR	Inmate Medical Records
IP	In Possession
LPPU	London Pathways Progression Unit
NOMS	National Offender Management System
OMU	Offender Management Unit
PCT	Primary Care Trust
SMT	Senior Management Team
SSAFA	Soldiers, Seamen, Airmen Families Association
SSU	Special Security Unit
VP	Vulnerable Prisoner
VPU	Vulnerable Prisoner Unit