



Annual IMB Report

August 2015 – July 2016

HMP Bristol

Section 1

1. Statutory role of the IMB

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:

- (1.1) 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.
- (1.2) inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority as it judges appropriate, any concern it has.
- (1.3) **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 Bristol has maintained its status as a category B, public sector, local prison with an operational capacity of 614 adult males but with an actual population, for much of the reporting year, of less than 570 and occasionally closer to 500. The daily profile of prison population varies but there were approximately 133 (25%) on remand, 64 (12%) on recall and a further 50 (9%) convicted but unsentenced in early August 2016. Approximately three quarters of the population were aged between 21 and 49 and 480 (85%) had British nationality. The prison is situated on a compact site in the densely populated area of Horfield within the city of Bristol.

3.2 The prison was built in the mid-Victorian period but B and C Wings were added in the 1960s and a block for Gatehouse, Administration and Visits was developed in the 1970s. A number of tired-looking Portacabins are on site and the whole estate has about it an unmistakably historic appearance.

3.3 Primary healthcare is provided on the Wings in the first instance whereas the Brunel Unit manages prisoners with acute or severe mental health needs and those with exceptional disabilities. One floor of the First Night Centre was badly vandalised this year when used as a temporary Segregation Unit. An induction facility exists but as with the First Night Centre, due to staffing shortages this has hardly been utilised during the reporting year. There is a separate Wing for newly admitted drug/alcohol dependent prisoners.

3.4 The Governor is supported by a team of six senior managers.

Section 4 Executive Summary

4.1 Overall Perspective

4.1.1 The Board has had a difficult year monitoring a volatile local prison with frequent considerable staff shortages and low performance standards. The potential of a new 'transformative regime' has yet to be translated into day-to-day reality.

4.1.2 The Board acknowledges that the new Governor, appointed in September 2015, has inspired staff commitment to a new vision of HMP Bristol; he has considerable support from the DDC (Deputy Director of Custody) for the South West. The narrative of the last year centres, however, on a prison with staffing levels often well below the benchmark which, following an operational assessment in November 2015, was designated a 'red site' for stability and resourcing, four of five priority areas being rated red. This rating is uncommon but is a fair judgement that has also brought significant extra support from the Prison Service. Resources have, however, been stretched throughout this reporting year and this has hampered progress in achieving the standards of safety, decency and rehabilitation to which the Governor aspires. The Board's two previous Annual Reports raised with Ministers their increasing concern at the adverse impact of significantly reduced staffing levels on standards.

4.1.3 The Board's experience of monitoring the prison throughout this reporting year leads us to conclude that the challenge of survival through a 'winter of discontent' was close to overwhelming – where systems and procedures were often neglected, staff numbers and morale were low and prisoner behaviour often aggressive and confrontational. The 'green shoots' of a new regime in Spring were still being compromised during the Summer since, in spite of the presence of around 14 'detached duty' officers on site, operational staffing levels (averaging 42-44) were still too low to permit a full regime.

Key events March - June 2016

- **6 March:** Introduction of a new prison regime designed to enrol as many prisoners as possible in work/education. Promising results in first few weeks but full regime unsustainable because resourcing unstable.
- **May:** Series of incidents of concern to IMB: act of concerted indiscipline on a wing, serious attack on a prisoner, use of blade on an officer resulting in refusal of staff to return to duties because of safety concerns.
- **9 June:** Chair compelled to write to the Deputy Director of Custody expressing growing concern regarding the safety of staff and prisoners and prevalence of drugs in wings; stated that prison officer shortage was holding back essential improvements to regime and that resourcing needed to be addressed urgently.
- **27/29 June:** Visit of national high security estate to conduct a three-day illegal drugs search throughout the prison.

Despite these pressures prisoners have, for most of the year, been able to attend work/education. However, key aspects of the regime that depend on escorts have been regularly curtailed, notably induction, resettlement, and drug testing.

4.1.4 The Board has seen a number of senior staff changes over the year and is supportive of a new expectation of proactive leadership throughout the staffing structure. However, the intention to strengthen middle management, especially on the residential wings, has yet to be fully implemented. The challenges facing the senior team at HMP Bristol remain high, especially as there is a tendency among operational staff simply to blame staffing levels for any shortfall in performance. The Board is mindful that the work of frontline prison staff can be difficult, dangerous and distressing. A heightened sense of vocation and a protective layer of resilience are required at such times, but there remains a legacy of 'learned helplessness' and general malaise at HMP Bristol, where resources are not yet being fully utilised. There are, however, reasons to be optimistic about the prison's future especially with the new configuration of senior staff in post.

4.1.5 The Board is alarmed by the defiant use of drugs/unauthorised substances and associated violence and bullying within the prison. Drugs are prevalent on the residential wings in spite of increased discoveries, recent improvements in drug testing and the unannounced dawn arrival in late June of over 50 external officers to search all cells for contraband items. As reported nationally, the upward trend in consumption of NPS (New Psychoactive Substances) has added further challenge to maintaining a safe, drug-free institution and has often diverted scarce staff resources for emergency duties.

4.2 Main Findings

4.2.1 There has been no sustained improvement during the reporting year in standards of decency in and around the residential areas of the prison. Cells have too often been dirty and dysfunctional with broken windows (invariably vandalised to allow in more air) inadequate bedding and shortage of basic furniture. There is a notable absence on some wings of a clear 'domestic' routine. The deliberate littering of areas in the immediate vicinity of Wings has been a recurring feature. Access to cleaning materials and toiletries has been a common complaint which, when added to system errors in kit supply and distribution, has contributed to low standards in personal hygiene and appearance of some prisoners. While allowing for the shortcomings and complexity of Victorian prisons such as HMP Bristol, there is a serious backlog in maintenance issues and a culture of low expectation (section 5.8).

4.2.2 The Board has been very concerned that the prison is, at times, insufficiently safe for prisoners and staff. Levels of violence have fluctuated and improvements during the year in data capture and recording of self-harm/violence/bullying may account for some of the increase on the figures reported by the Board last year. There is however sufficient evidence to suggest that, with no margin to accommodate unexpected demands and a high level of officers on detached duty, staff have often felt overwhelmed and therefore reluctant to take responsibility for asserting their authority on the Wings.

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Strained relationships between prisoners and between staff and prisoners have resulted in indiscipline, fights and occasionally serious injuries to staff or prisoners. The more vulnerable are at greater risk of victimisation, debt, lack of support and crisis. The sad fact of three self-inflicted deaths in custody in the first six months of 2016 has raised questions about the quality of ACCTs (Assessment and Care in Custody Teamwork) and First Night Centre/Induction arrangements. The recent (2016) NOMS (National Offender Management Service) Safer Custody Report's findings that 'moderate' priority training was needed in ACCTs, CSRAs (Cell Sharing Risk Assessments) and emergency 'Code Red'/'Code Blue' responses also highlights measures that must be taken to improve whole-prison safety. The Board welcomes the planned actions to address these failings (section 5.6).

4.2.3 The Board has noted the impact of staff shortages on the regime, notably the reduction in the time prisoners spend engaged in 'purposeful activities' – a vital strategy in the aim of reducing reoffending and achieving resettlement back into the community. Whilst there has been some encouraging growth in education/employment opportunities during 2016, for much of the reporting year the levels of engagement have been disappointing. This has not been helped by a long-standing backlog of almost 20% of the population waiting for induction before scrutiny by security clearance department. The refusal to engage by some sentenced and on-remand prisoners, combined with those registered as unemployed, means that at the end of the reporting year some 40% were not in work/education. Even allowing for the fact that prisoners who are on remand/awaiting sentence can opt out of such activities, it seems to the Board that a 'gainfully employed culture' has yet to take root at HMP Bristol. This central feature of the new regime's vision would be achievable with greater staffing stability and commitment at all levels to prioritise work and/or education for all (sections 5.2 and 5.4).

4.3 Particular issues requiring a response from the Minister

4.3.1 The Board considers that under the leadership of the present Governor HMP Bristol has the potential to significantly improve the daily lives of prisoners. However, for much of the early part of the August 2015 – July 2016 reporting year, there was a downward spiral resulting in poor outcomes for prisoners. These outcomes are unlikely to improve without a stable and well trained officer complement, with a margin for addressing unforeseen problems. The Board also sees a need for changes to national policy to facilitate:

- *re-examination of staff benchmarking which is too restrictive and does not allow for sickness and additional tasks, for example emergency escorting to hospital and bed watches.*
- *greater financial autonomy for the Governor which would permit local purchase and the awarding and monitoring of small contracts.*

4.4 Particular issues requiring a response from the Prison Service

The following issues are outlined in Section 5 of this report, with many noted in previous IMB reports but yet to be fully addressed by the Prison Service:

4.4.1 Failure to enable the delivery of Resettlement Pathway Workshops by Catch 22, the community rehabilitation company, thereby compromising prisoners' resettlement prospects (section 5. 5).

4.4.2 Financial support urgently needed for a fit-for-purpose Segregation Unit, which is largely dysfunctional due to continual gross vandalism (section 5.7).

4.4.3 Slow progress in improving the fabric of the prison, with particular reference to the very poor condition and lack of decency in many cells and communal Wing facilities (5.8.1).

4.4.4 The absence throughout the year of a reliable, phone-based Visits Line in spite of concerns expressed by the Board for a number of years (section 6.2). The Board has been informed that a new system, soon to be provided externally, will address this longstanding problem.

4.4.5 Widespread use of drugs/NPS continues, underlining the urgent need for a more robust zero tolerance strategy concerning the supply and possession of these substances within HMP Bristol. The recent provision of CCTV (albeit only on one wing (C wing) with limited coverage) and body worn cameras are welcomed (5.6.8).

Section 5 Mandatory Areas for IMB Reporting

5.1 Equality and Inclusion

5.1.1 The Board remains vigilant over the prison's systems for ensuring that all prisoners, including those with 'protected characteristic' are treated fairly and equally. It has recorded no substantive issue of discrimination over the last year but there have been approximately 20 allegations of prejudice recorded through prisoner completion of the DIRF (Discrimination Incident Report Form). On such occasions, enquiries have been quickly made and corrective actions taken with no formal grievance procedures adopted. Relationships between prisoners have been generally congenial in terms of ethnic, sexuality, disability and faith characteristics although friction between prisoners continues in terms of machismo, 'turf wars', hierarchy, bullying and issues of debt. The Board has not encountered evidence of Muslim radicalisation.

5.1.2 The Board has welcomed the appointment of an Equalities Officer and the planned quarterly meeting of EDAT (Equality and Diversity Team) but is concerned by lack of focus and poor attendance due to competing commitments. The introduction of EDAT noticeboards on Wings has captured relevant information such as a calendar of multicultural events, translation services, telephone interpreting etc. However, the systematic quality assurance of DIRF responses and production of relevant data for analysis continues to be only a worthy aspiration.

5.1.3 Overall, the Board is pleased there has been an ascendant profile of Equality and Inclusion at HMP Bristol but aware that more work could have been done if circumstances had been different. The planning and organisation of Gypsy/Traveller Culture and Men's Health Weeks were particularly innovative and well received by prisoners and staff alike – another sign of the Equality and Inclusion issue being taken more seriously than last year.

5.2 Education, Learning and Skills

5.2.1 The Board has seen staff shortages in the Education Block (Weston College), Library and PE having dramatic effect on provision. In January 20 out of 34 education sessions were cancelled and Weston College staff absence peaked in March when 15 members were absent. This situation has been exacerbated by a backlog in prisoner induction - consistently in excess of 80 prisoners - and some drift in escort duty staff, caused by redeployment of officers onto higher priority duties within the daily regime plan. More recently, the presence of rats in the Education Block has worsened the situation, with some closures after an upturn in take-up/allocation and attendance back in the Spring, linked to the start of the new regime.

5.2.2 With the introduction of the new regime in March 2016 educational attendance increased significantly. Take-up of courses first depends on the motivation of prisoners to select from the options available and then hinges on security clearance by the Allocations Team. Of prisoners allocated during the reporting year, approximately 77% attended; the percentage increased to 98% in April. Weston College have reported that 90% of prisoners who commence courses attend the entire course, and of these 91% successfully complete all elements.

5.2.3 All prisoners are encouraged to aspire to a minimum of level 2 (GCSE A*-C) in English and Maths as a gateway towards all other learning in prison and beyond. Approximately 85% of prisoners fall below

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this level and so it is particularly unfortunate that recruitment of lecturers in horticulture, painting & decorating has been problematic over the last year. Equally, the Board regrets the lack of PE instructors, given the amount of prisoner interest in this area and its impact on health and well-being within the prison. Staff sickness in Education has also been a factor over the last year.

5.2.4 The Board commends the integration of education alongside workshop activities and the introduction of prisoner information desks onto Wings, with an element of marketing educational programmes. After a lengthy period of very limited access, the Library has recently seen an upturn in prisoner attendance, partly due to the enthusiasm of the new post-holder, but also to the increased availability of staff to carry out escorts from Wings.

5.2.5 Also commended is the improved teamwork/provision/delivery between Weston College/National Careers Service/HMP Bristol. The Board is assured by the third supportive OfSTED monitoring report in May 2016 following the 'Requires Improvement' judgement in the OfSTED inspection of late September 2014. It is encouraging that a full staffing complement is in place for the new academic year, but there remains a gap between good policy intentions and poor prisoner outcomes.

5.2.6 The Board acknowledges that there has been considerable investment in Peer Mentors. In the last year 30 prisoners achieved qualifications in per mentoring, including 5 "through the gate" peer mentors.

5.3 Healthcare & Mental Health

5.3.1 Medication and most of the healthcare is administered on the Wings and on a priority, daily routine, basis. The organisation of C Wing, around detox and substance misuse protocols, is well established. There is a sense of realism from nursing staff about the challenge of helping prisoners to confront their various addictions. Evidence from nursing staff indicates that a more tangible partnership between Bristol Community Health nursing staff and prison officers needs to become higher priority when there are medication rounds taking place on the Wings. The Board finds it unsatisfactory that agency nurses report incidents of verbal abuse from prisoners gathered for their medication. Nurses are also aware of occasional 'palming/diverting of medication' when there is no officer overseeing the process, or where officers present do not challenge such behaviour. The Board is concerned by the 'unfit-for-purpose' judgement on C Wing, made by the NOMS Violence Reduction Task Force on their recent visit. There is evidence of external hospital appointments being missed due to a lack of prison staff escorts. This issue has been mentioned in previous reports.

Brunel Unit

5.3.2 Mental health services are mainly provided on the Wings but the Brunel Unit (14 beds) is also operational - primarily for the care of prisoners with more severe mental health issues and with an emphasis on short term assessment, intervention, referral/transfer or reintegration. A compassionate approach to mental health is regularly shown and procedures for 'constant watch' are conscientiously followed in the Brunel Unit. The Board believes that last year's national AWP 'Outstanding Team of the Year' award to the prison's mental health team was well deserved. The Board acknowledges that collaboration between the prison, Avon & Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership and Bristol Community Health has vastly improved over the last few years. A new contract 'Inspire better health', which came into effect in April 2016, can be expected to achieve the closer integration between substance misuse and mental health services called for in a Prisons and Probation Ombudsman report on prisoner mental health published earlier in the year. The Board commends the expansion of the mental health team towards the end of this reporting year, to include a psychologist and two assistants to work with prisoners experiencing mental ill health. However, in the past year, the team has been unable to

achieve targets for delivering initial triage assessments due to shortage in operational staff needed to escort prisoners to appointments; only about a third of assessment appointments issued were attended.

5.3.3 The Board considers that the Brunel Unit provides an example of good practice in cross-discipline teamwork and genuine prisoner-centred outlook. Again, however, shortage of escorts (and on occasion mental health nurses) has resulted in regular cancellation of therapeutic groups available to prisoners residing in the Unit or on the residential wings. This is a longstanding cause of concern to the Board, mentioned in the last two Annual Reports. The role of Brunel Unit, as a location for 'lodgers' and the more extreme clinical cases (pre hospital), has also continued although this can cause serious disruption for those requiring a calm and stable regime.

Treatment for substance misuse

5.3.4 HMP Bristol typically manages 60+ prisoners per month entering a detoxification programme on C Wing and a further 60+ on extended prescribing programmes. The addictive personality, lifestyle, peer group and habits of many prisoners does make the drug-free option elusive but not impossible. The integration of clinical and psycho-social approaches has been a strength of the Bristol approach for some years. However, shortage of qualified permanent nursing staff on C wing has been an issue of concern. Difficulties in recruitment and retention have meant there has been heavy reliance on agency nurses to fill the gaps, albeit at a high cost. The Board welcomes the appointment of a new Lead Pharmacist whose team will be having a greater input and will be working more closely with nursing staff in dispensing medication on all wings.

5.4 Purposeful activity

5.4.1 Most of the work opportunities are part of the prison's day-to-day routines, e.g. cleaning, kitchen, clothing exchange store, recycling, painting, and orderlies in servery areas. Prisoners are also allocated to workshops for: textiles, GripIT, WH Kemp, Sofa Project, Lifecycle, Ink2Work, S & N Fragrance and Bob Martin – representing a much needed increase in work activity spaces compared to last year. All prisoners now have the option to do both work and education, or a combination of both full time, with some literacy and numeracy tuition taking place in workshops, thereby reaching out to those prisoners who have a lingering resistance to entering the education block. By April 2016, 486 activity spaces were available: sufficient to employ 90% of prisoners.

5.4.2 There was a significant drop in attendance in all purposeful activity in the second half of 2015. The level of attendance, defined as the percentage of prisoners attending who have been allocated to activities, fell from between 60% and 75% in April - June 2015, to between 30% and 40% for the period September 2015 to February 2016. This decline in attendance was attributed to the restricted regime, insufficient work spaces and poor productivity in the workshops. The introduction of the new regime and core day in March 2016 has seen a considerable improvement in attendance in all purposeful activity. By the end of the reporting year the level of attendance (of prisoners allocated) was between 60% and 65% working full time, a 100% increase in the April – June 2015 rate. Notwithstanding this improvement, at the end of the reporting year approximately 40% of the population were not in employment/education. The primary reason for unemployment is that the prisoner has yet to attend induction (see 5.2.1) although some - notably remand prisoners - choose not to work, or are deemed medically unfit.

5.4.3 The Board recognises that the issue of prisoner performance and achievement rather than just attendance deserves greater attention to ensure fairness in pay and better preparation for resettlement into the workplace on release. It is noteworthy that real progress has been made in response to the

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Justice Committee's observations concerning preparing prisoners for employment upon their release. In this respect the Board commends the efforts to create meaningful work and incentives for prisoners. Workshop spaces have increased from 130 to 170 and NVQs can be achieved. But alongside the establishment of a working culture in the prison, with routines and rewards, there is also a need for constraints and penalties (IEPs) for the 'work shy'.

5.5 Resettlement

5.5.1 Catch 22, a community rehabilitation company (CRC) with responsibility for conducting resettlement needs assessment, drawing up a resettlement plan for all prisoners and preparing them for release. Assessment (through Parts 1 and 2 of a standard screening tool) is a two stage process which starts with the Offender Management Unit (OMU). In practice, when Offender Supervisors were deployed to other duties, Catch 22 added the OMU task to their own, Part 2, assessment in order to achieve their targets. However, as prisoners could not be escorted to the Oak Centre, where Catch are located, completion of the paperwork has had to take place on the residential wings, where the environment has been far from ideal, given the noise factor and lack of confidentiality. This situation continues.

5.5.2 An average of 55-60% of prisoners are assessed as needing Pathway Workshop attendance, although the number dropped to 49% in July. The Board is concerned that Catch 22 has been compromised in its commission to deliver Resettlement Workshops, based on the 5 pathways of accommodation, employment/training/education, finance/debt/benefits, health and family/relationships. Workshops were cancelled for eight months from December to July due to an on-going lack of officers available for escorting prisoners from Wings to the Oak Centre where the workshops are conducted. Attendance for most of the reporting year has consequently been poor and frequent cancellation of visiting tutors became an embarrassment resulting in complete cancellation of the Workshops for the eight month period. It is pleasing to report that the Workshops were reinstated from August with good attendance into September as prison officer numbers enabled escorting of prisoners.

5.5.3 Settled accommodation lasting 3 months or more, arranged by Catch 22, is averaging 75% of prisoners preparing for release, including those with a history of substance misuse. Initial Probation appointments are also set up prior to release for all prisoners. Employment Workshops teach CV writing and preparation of covering letters.

5.5.4 The Board acknowledges the importance of The Restore Trust, a not-for-profit company on the prison site providing an 'outside the gate' facility where newly released prisoners are able to access help with accommodation, welfare, education and employment when resettlement planning has fallen short of the need within the prison. A contact rate in the high 90% range has been maintained in 2016. The Trust also offers the service of ex-probation officers who are 'tenacious in engaging with every released prisoner at the gate' and, in particular, in steering their compliance with licence conditions. A new partnership is also being built, by the Imam (Head of Multi Faith Team and member of the Senior Team), with Muslim Aid – a charity that provides mentoring support and housing on release.

5.6 Safer Custody

5.6.1 The Board continues to have significant concern about the safety of prisoners and staff. During the reporting year a total of 188 prisoner-to-prisoner assaults was recorded, 32 of which were classified as 'serious' (Violence Reduction Data 2015-16). The figure for prisoner-on-staff assaults was recorded as 59, seven of which were serious. The data include assaults resulting in injury during the use of Control and Restraint, although these are not distinguished from injuries sustained in other circumstances. Comparison with violence statistics for previous reporting years would be misleading, since it has been acknowledged within the prison that violent incidents have, for some time, been under-recorded. Capturing all violent incidents in the Violence Reduction Statistics remains a challenge, but recent improvements in recording and analysing violent incidents are beginning to provide a more accurate picture and a stronger platform for reducing aggressive outbursts. Control and Restraint protocols have been observed by the Board as professional, caring and appropriate.

5.6.2 A total of 652 ACCT (Assessment, Care in Custody and Assessment) documents were opened during the reporting year. This figure exceeds the number recorded in the previous year (by approximately 50), although as with statistics on violence, improvements in recording ACCTs may account to some extent for this difference (Safer Custody Analysis 2015-16). There have continued to be gaps in the timely completion of observation notes, the recording of reviews and any systematic quality assurance by senior staff. Acts of self-harm, leading to increases in constant supervision, and, sadly, the reality of three self-inflicted deaths this year are, once again, a cause for concern.

5.6.3 The prison responds in a compassionate and professional manner in such extreme circumstances and the Brunel Unit's focus on mental health assessment/monitoring represents a key pre-emptive measure against self-inflicted injuries. The Board concludes that, although there is care and concern routinely exercised by the overwhelming majority of staff towards prisoners showing signs of disturbed behaviour or changes in attitude/appearance/demeanour, there are still major lessons to be learned from the recommendations in recent reports by coroners, the Ombudsman and the NOMS Safer Custody Internal Audit of July 2016. In particular, the importance of robust assessment procedures at Reception and First Night - based on known risk factors - together with multi-disciplinary ACCT reviews of prisoners identified as being at high risk of self-harm. The Board is satisfied that action is being taken in response to these recommendations – including officer training and closer monitoring of case reviews (as recorded in NOMS audit) - and will monitor these actions closely.

5.6.4 The Board is concerned that listeners, peer mentors and 'Prisoner Voice' have not been at full capacity over the last year but recognise that this situation is being addressed. It welcomes the more recent recruitment of prisoner peer mentors and Prisoner Voice volunteers for their Samaritans training as new listeners. In this role they can respond to prisoners facing a personal crisis, articulate 'Prisoner Voice' at meetings as well as maintain daily dialogue with staff over a variety of prison issues. The introduction of Prisoner Information Desks, led by peer mentors, is another 'early warning' opportunity regarding any risk to safer custody through self-harm or aggressive behaviour.

Illegal Drugs in Prison

5.6.5 The Board has seen that much of the aggression in prison is exacerbated by drug consumption and trading. Illegal drugs are found throughout the prison with regularity, entering over the walls and

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more recently being brought in by drones. The increased availability of NPS in prison has led to some episodes of protracted rage whilst intimidation of those in drug related debt has become more frequent. Over the reporting period, this has been the main threat to maintaining a safe and decent environment for staff and prisoners. The effects vary greatly from, at one end, unprecedented and unpredictable violence and, at the other, a reduced state of consciousness. Pulse rates for those who use these substances can increase to very dangerous levels where life is threatened. Cardiac arrest can occur; a pulse rate of 250 per minute has been recorded in the case of one prisoner who had suffered a cardiac arrest. To treat prisoners who take NPS frequently requires hospitalisation, albeit for a short period. Prisoners appear to be unrepentant and ignore the dangers of NPS. One prisoner for example, after being revived through CPR after his heart had stopped, said he would, 'do it again'.

5.6.6 Staff, including nurses, have also suffered the ill-effects of NPS fumes. Nurses have a local policy to vacate the immediate area where Spice is detected. Their professional commitment is such, however, that they often remain at their workplace, despite being affected by the fumes, typically giddiness and headaches. Staff and IMB members experience the same effects. NPS and associated violence and unpredictable behaviour have undoubtedly contributed to some incidences of stress-related long-term sickness among operational staff.

5.6.7 Disruption to the normal daily routine through drug abuse has also been a feature of this reporting year. Hospitalisation takes escorting prison officers away from their normal prison duties. During one week, for example, 35 ambulances were called to the prison because of the effects of NPS. There have been a number of occasions during the past 12 months when prisoners were in 'lock down' because officers were attending to issues involving the effects of NPS and there was no margin in staffing levels. The irony is that 'lock downs' add to boredom and frustration.

5.6.8 Despite the efforts of the police and prison staff, NPS continues to enter the prison. Rota reports throughout the year record the brazen use of drugs on the residential wings and a reluctance on the part of some operational wing staff to challenge this. Officers have conveyed to the IMB that they do not have the manpower to conduct the necessary cell searches, even when nurses have reported the exact cell locations where Spice it is being smoked. However, a major initiative during May, involving external specialist staff, brought about a full search of all Wings over three days, resulting in the successful clearance of a significant cache of illegal drugs and illicit items. No doubt this exercise was very costly but, bearing in mind the dangerous situation in HMP Bristol, and high level of disruption, the Board considers this kind of initiative fully justified.

5.6.9 The safety of staff and prisoners has been at the forefront of the thinking of the Governor and his senior staff. The Board is aware of NOMS priority being given to supply and harm reduction, and of the prison's written warning to prisoners about the effect of such substances. Continued vigilance and stronger preventative measures are needed, however, in order to reduce the volume of drugs that continue to enter the prison.

Mandatory Drug Testing (MDT)

5.6.10 National policy is to randomly test 5% of the prison population each month. This has not been achieved throughout the reporting year due to staffing difficulties. For the same reason weekend and suspicion testing has for some time been very infrequent and voluntary drug testing, to encourage those who wish to cease the habit, has ceased. In order to achieve the monthly MDT target, staff are often given 'payment-plus' (overtime). This is triggered near to the end of the month, to catch up, which negates the random nature of the exercise and prisoners learn to predict when they can expect a test. The national MDT target is 10% (positive) but Bristol is currently working on a much higher 16%. A typical result is 37% positive, which is mainly for cannabis and excludes NPS.

5.6.11 The Board is concerned that a number of prisoners who have positive tests for illegal drugs have not been sanctioned through the adjudications process. The MDT office is not always occupied, which

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means that positive results, sent electronically, are not always picked up in time to comply with procedural deadlines. The process requires results, once received, to be externally verified which put another link in the chain. Analysis of the monthly MDT and adjudications logs indicate that the 'window' was missed in respect of almost half of prisoners who tested positive between December and July 2016. Only six adjudications arising from positive MDT tests were recorded in this period, all of which took place in one month. In other cases proceedings were 'out of time' and no disciplinary action could be taken.

5.7 Care and Separation Unit (Segregation)

5.7.1 The Unit has suffered unprecedented vandalism to cells over the past year. Prisoners in Segregation have 'trashed' cells with the result that only four of the 12 furnished cells in the Unit are currently in use. Repairs are slow to bring about and when they are effected more damage follows. This means that prisoners who have been placed on 'Good Order and Discipline' who should spend time in Segregation have to remain on a residential Wing. There was an attempt to open another spur on a Wing to use as the Segregation Unit, whilst repairs took place in the normal location. This exercise was not successful because the cells on the Wing spur were similarly vandalised. Some of the principal offenders were dispersed to other establishments. The Board is concerned that the lengthy delay in refurbishing these cells constrains the prison's ability to operate an effective care and separation policy.

5.7.2 Staff in the Segregation Unit continue to operate extremely patiently and efficiently, working under extremely difficult conditions. The GOOD reviews have occasionally failed to have a representative from Healthcare present but have otherwise been carried out in a fair and caring manner.

5.7.3 There were 1011 adjudications carried out between January and June 2016, of which 105 involved the Independent Adjudicator (a district judge) and 101 were referred to the Police. Under-recording, prior to January, partially explains why this number for 6 months exceeded the total for the entire preceding year (August 2014 – July 2015). The other factor is that there has been a very real increase in indiscipline and drug-related offences. The Board has observed a sample of adjudications and concludes, once again, that prisoners have been shown dignity and respect for their rights during hearings.

5.7.4 When adjudications for assault are referred to the police it is evident to the Board that the victim – whether prisoner or member of staff - is not always kept informed of the progress and outcome. To improve communication it has been agreed that a representative from the police will visit the prison monthly to provide an update on all outstanding referrals. The Board will monitor this initiative.

5.8 Residential Services (includes accommodation, food, catering and kitchens)

5.8.1 Whilst the standard of Wing cleaning is variable from just about satisfactory to inadequate, it is not helped by the poor condition of some facilities such as missing/cracked floor and wall tiles, leaking/broken toilets etc. – a pattern outlined in previous IMB reports. The result is a tired and dirty environment. This has been frequently compounded by poorly maintained communal toilet/shower/server/stairwell facilities, where an atmosphere of neglect has been tolerated. There may have been fewer sightings of cockroaches in serveries and cells this year but there remains evidence of their survival in the prison. Elements of some of the serveries need at least some cosmetic attention and the changing/toilet facilities in the kitchen warrant priority consideration especially as it constitutes a risk to food hygiene. Wing inspections, as the means of monitoring the condition of cells and communal facilities, have not been regularly completed resulting in inconsistency on and between landings/Wings.

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The Board therefore welcomes the recent, internal appointment of a Decency Lead alongside a new member of senior staff – both with a record of ‘can do attitude’ and impact.

5.8.2 The high throughput of prisoners – typically over half are on remand awaiting trial/ sentence, or serving a sentence of less than a year - may contribute to a disinclination to take ownership of their surroundings. Nevertheless, it is the Board’s view that the amount of litter and food waste dropped from cells onto the ground outside Wings has often reached unacceptable levels. While this may have marginally improved towards the end of the reporting year, there remains reluctance from some staff to intervene and implement sanctions according to IEP protocols. The external cleaning regime has improved but rats are not uncommon, causing serious disruption and costly intervention, not helped by food waste issues and inconsistent attention to the more hidden areas of the prison which appear almost forgotten.

5.8.3 The frequency of complaints from prisoners regarding insufficient kit and irregular kit exchange has declined this year although accessing cleaning materials and some other basics can still be an issue, primarily it seems because there has been a lack of explicit supervision of the distribution of clean kit on certain Wings. Recent substantial expenditure on new kit is helping the situation but there remain difficulties with hoarding and deliberate damage to clothes/sheets/towels etc. The Board has seen some progress in this area and is hopeful that systematic, long term solutions are going to be implemented under the dynamic leadership now in place.

5.8.4 The Board makes weekly visits to the kitchen where it observes productive and orderly teamwork between staff and prisoners. Qualifications in Health & Safety and Food Hygiene are encouraged and systems (eg knife security, dietary requirements) are well established. Prisoner satisfaction with menu range and rotation remains high and complaints tend to be more about quantity than quality of food served – simply addressed by deployment of an officer to supervise the integrity of portion control and guarantee greater fairness. The Board continues to view catering as a genuine strength of the prison where a positive attitude seems prevalent in the face of persistent equipment failure, food budget pressure, staff changes and occasional prisoner defiance.

Section 6 Discretionary Areas selected for IMB Reporting

6.1 Complaints

6.1.1 Prison records suggest that the number of written prisoner complaints can vary from approximately 60 to 120 per month. An evaluation exercise, carried out by the IMB on 4 separate months from the reporting year, concluded that there was insufficient oversight of the whole process and a sense that complaints were not accorded appropriate importance at HMP Bristol. Specific findings were that the complaints log was not always fully populated with key dates and response times, the complaint often had a response time outside the required target of 5 days and there were many occasions when there was no record of whether the complaint was upheld or dismissed. The incomplete recording of responses means that we are unable to confirm whether all complaints are investigated and whether appropriate action is taken.

6.1.2 The number of prisoner applications to the IMB, potentially as an appeal after the dismissal of a complaint by staff, has reduced to an average of less than 30 per month compared to approximately 40 per month 3 years ago. The Board accepts there must be a number of reasons for this trend (including the destruction/removal by prisoners of two IMB applications boxes early in 2016, which have yet to be replaced) but emphasises that renewed priority and leadership must be given to the official 'Comp1/Comp2' complaints system.

6.2 Visits Line

6.2.1 The poor service provided to prisoners' visitors through the Visits Line has been a recurring feature of Bristol IMB reports. The Board understands the difficulties experienced in managing with just one phone line for family/friends, but the situation has drawn a number of angry complaints to the IMB for a number of years from visitors about 'lack of pick-up' and being 'left on hold'. The position has been compounded by lack of the prison's entitlement to amend its own website's list of visiting hours/days. The imminent outsourcing of the service is therefore a solution worthy of close IMB monitoring.

Section 7 The work of the IMB

7.1 IMB Profile

Recommended Complement of Board Members	15
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	10
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	10
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	3
Number of members leaving within reporting period	3
Total number of Board meetings during reporting period	12
Total number of visits to the Establishment	?
Total number of segregation reviews held	?
Total number of segregation reviews attended	12
Date of Annual Team Performance Review	January 2016

7.2 Applications from Prisoners

Code	Subject	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
A	Accommodation	14	16	19
B	Adjudications	4	6	3
C	Equality & Diversity (inc. religion)	12	10	7
D	Education/employment/training inc. IEP	12	11	6
E1	Family/visits inc. mail & phone	48	51	27
E2	Finance/pay	13	16	38
F	Food/kitchen related	14	8	7
G	Health related	66	41	38
H1	Property (within current establishment)	56	33	36
H2	Property(during transfer/in another establishment)	54	49	40
H3	Canteen, facilities, Catalogue shopping, Argos	16	14	16
I	Sentence related(inc. HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-cat etc)	44	26	20
J	Staff/prisoner/detainee concerns including. bullying	35	24	23
K	Transfers	30	23	9
L	Miscellaneous	46	47	37
	Total number of IMB applications	464	375	326

The total for this year may be misleading and the distribution could be skewed. Two application boxes, in two Wings, have not been available to prisoners for most of the year, due to vandalism. The Board, despite continued efforts, have not been able to replace these boxes.

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