



HMP/YOI Isis

**REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD
JANUARY – DECEMBER 2016**

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2 Statutory Role of the IMB

- 2.1 The Prisons Act 1952 requires every prison to be monitored by an Independent Board appointed by the Secretary of State from members of the community in which the prison is situated.
- 2.2 The Board is specifically charged to:
- satisfy itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in custody within its prison and the range and adequacy of the programmes preparing them for release,
 - inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority, as it judges appropriate, any concern it has, and
 - 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.
- 2.3 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's records.

3 Description of the Prison

- 3.1 HMP/YOI Isis – named after the River Thames - opened in July 2010. It is a public sector training prison for convicted men, with a mix of young prisoners between the ages of 18 and 21, and Category C adults up to the age of 40. It is situated in Thamesmead in South-East London. The certified normal accommodation (CNA) is 478. The operational capacity (OP CAP) i.e. the maximum population it can safely and decently hold is 628.
- 3.2 Although sited within the original perimeter wall of HMP Belmarsh, HMP/YOI Isis is a completely separate prison.

4. Chair's Introduction

- 4.1 This is the sixth report of the Independent Monitoring Board for HMP/YOI Isis. Over the past few years, we have commented on the “temporary” restricted regime which was imposed during the summer of 2013 as a result of a national recruitment freeze and which continued through into 2016. This extended period has been caused by the inability of NOMS to staff the prison to the agreed “benchmark” level once recruitment was restarted.
- 4.2 HMP/YOI Isis is designated as a Training Prison, to assist in the re-training and rehabilitation of sentenced prisoners, and we concur with the view expressed by HMIP following their inspection in May that “as a Training Prison Isis is completely failing in its central purpose”. This is primarily caused by the cutbacks in officer numbers and funds available to the prison for training/education, over several years in a time of Government austerity.
- 4.3 2016 has been a year of “two halves” following the appointment of a new governor in July. Building on work started by her deputy who was Acting Governor for four months, Emily Thomas has introduced some refreshing changes into the prison regime with positive signs being seen in the latter stages of the year, particularly around decency and reduced violence. However, Isis is still not able to operate a full regime because of the shortage of staff. Although prisoners are out of their cells for more of the day, they are only able to attend training and education for half of the week and are locked in their cells for 14 hours each night.
- 4.4 Our hope for 2017 is that the changes currently being made across the prison, together with much needed improvements in numbers of officers available and funding, will result in HMP/YOI Isis becoming fit-for-purpose as a Training Prison thereby improving the rehabilitation and resettlement of prisoners, and hence reducing reoffending.
- 4.5 This report is made up of individual contributions from members of the Board. I am extremely grateful to them for these contributions and also for their dedication and hard work during the course of the year.
- 4.6 I would like to thank the Governor and her senior team for continuing to welcome the Board's contribution to life in Isis. They rightly regard regular monitoring, on a local day-to-day basis, by independent eyes and ears as important for both the prisoners and staff alike.

Peter Ward
IMB Chair

5. Executive Summary

- 5.1 The IMB's most serious concerns that remained unresolved during 2016 are:
- Lack of staff and the prison's inability to operate a full training regime,
 - Lack of opportunities for prisoner training and purposeful activity,
 - High levels of violence, and
 - Continuing poor standards in the spurs including deeply stained toilet pans, lack of lavatory privacy in double cells, poor levels of cleanliness in the serveries and in the food trolleys, and an inability to consistently apply food safety processes such as the recording of food temperatures.
- 5.2 During their inspection in May 2016, HMIP commented that, of the 29 recommendations that were made following their 2014 visit, 20 had not been achieved. If recommendations made by the IMB in the 2015 report and frequently raised in rota reports had been implemented, some of the later HMIP recommendations would have been unnecessary. In particular, recommendations relating to attendance at education and skills learning, improving in-cell education in the segregation unit, and improving the food hygiene and cleanliness in the houseblocks remain outstanding. It is of concern that little action was taken as a result of last year's IMB recommendations.
- 5.3 Despite excellent facilities for education and training being created when the prison was opened in 2010 at a significant cost to the taxpayer, these facilities were severely underutilised in 2016. Typically, at any one time in the week, there were only 100 prisoners across both the education classrooms and the Skills Zone, out of a population of over 600. Simply put, despite the efforts of the Governor and her staff, Isis is failing in its role as a training prison.
- 5.4 The continuing inability of NOMS to staff the prison to the agreed "benchmark" level following the recruitment freeze of 2013 remains a major concern. As mentioned in previous IMB Reports, this has been caused by a number of factors including successive Voluntary Early Departure (VED) schemes, poor pay particularly in the South-East and low morale affecting both recruitment and the retention of existing staff including experienced officers. During this last year, over 30 new officers were recruited for the prison, but the overall staffing complement of officers only increased by three.

- 5.5 Since May, the regime has improved, but the difficult staffing situation means that there is still not a full regime and cross deployment continues to disrupt important functions, including offender management and Safer Custody. Crucially, the houseblocks staff's ability to establish meaningful relations with prisoners and to provide the support and help they need to resolve even simple problems is severely limited.
- 5.6 The lack of control by the Governor of operations critical to the effective running of the prison has had a detrimental impact on the prison's ability to meet the expectations of a modern prison during 2016. The IMB would like to see the Governor having more control, appropriately resourced, of activities relating to recruitment, education, and maintenance. Recruitment in 2016 was managed centrally by NOMS; education, workshops and prison maintenance are all outsourced by NOMS to private contractors and are outside the control of the Governor. However, very recent announcements from the Government have indicated a proposed shift in emphasis away from centralisation with a view to empowering Governors locally. That is to be welcomed provided sufficient resources are made available to them.
- 5.7 High levels of violence continue to be a concern, with violent incidents (as reported by the NOMS Incident Reporting System) being 60% higher compared to the similar period in 2015. January and August were particularly bad with 40 or more incidents of violence reported in each month. In the final quarter of 2016, the monthly average number of reported violent incidents has dropped from 24 to 10 incidents, although the number of assaults against officers has remained worryingly high.
- 5.8 During the year there has been a continuing problem of prisoners' property being lost when they transfer from other prisons to Isis and either an inability by, or disinterest from, the transferring prison to trace this lost property. The Board received 120 Applications from prisoners concerning property in 2016, of which over 90% related to transfers from another prison. The system of hand writing, and re-writing, property cards for each prisoner is not fit for purpose, nor is the system for following up on lost property between prisons.
- 5.9 Like HMIP, the IMB feel that the promotion of equalities is poor. Insufficient time is given to co-ordinating equality matters, with the Equality Officer's post being vacant for a significant proportion of the year, equality meetings only being held irregularly, and prisoner representatives being unsupported. On the evidence to date, there must be doubt about the prison's ability to drive any marked improvement in this area without an investment in senior leadership over a sustained period.

- 5.10 The lack of OMU resource means there are still around 240 prisoners without a completed OASys and associated sentence plan at any one time, a proportion we find unacceptably high. Despite consistently highlighting the issue, the number of prisoners arriving without an OASys report remains at around 60%, making it very difficult for Isis to provide those prisoners within the establishment with a meaningful sentence plan.
- 5.11 Information that will allow an assessment of the impact of CRCs on levels of reoffending is not yet available. However, in the 2nd year of the operation of CRCs there is evidence of under-resourcing leading to heavy, possibly unmanageable caseloads and a reduction in services such as those delivered by De Paul. The IMB is concerned that CRCs will not be able to fully meet the expectations placed on them, as a cornerstone of the Government's drive to reduce re-offending.

Issues for the Minister

- 5.12 As in previous years, the Board has been concerned at the poor staffing levels in the prison and the inability of NOMS to staff the prison to the agreed "benchmark" level established in 2014. Simply hiring new officers is not enough, as evidenced by the net increase in officer staff of three in 2016 after over 30 new officers were recruited. The Board asks the Minister to review the issues of staff retention, compensation and motivation practices adopted by NOMS to ensure that they support prisons in delivering government policies relating to prisoner training, rehabilitation and resettlement. (13.15)
- 5.13 The Board commends recent announcements about increasing local autonomy and asks that the Minister pursues that initiative vigorously to give back control of the prison to the Governor and her staff together with the resources necessary to manage a full regime. In particular, the Governor needs to have full control of services such as education, catering and maintenance. It is pleasing to see that a first step in relation to devolving the staff recruitment process has already been taken. (7.5, 7.6, 13.14)
- 5.14 If the prison is to become a full "Training Prison" aimed at rehabilitation and reducing reoffending, the Minister is urged to look at additional funding for Education, Learning and Skills (7.7)

Issues for the Prison Service

- 5.15 In 2015, the IMB raised the following issues, which continue to be outstanding and continue to have a detrimental effect on prisoners; their lives, rehabilitation and resettlement. The Board reiterates its request to the prison service to:
- recruit now to the full “benchmarking” staffing level so that the full training regime at Isis is implemented as previously promised. This requires appropriate forward looking resource and staffing plans that take account of levels of attrition and availability, with measurable actions and agreed timeframes. Retention of experienced staff is critical to effectively managing the prison population, (13.15)
 - reconsider the whole principle of cross-deployment of staff within prisons. It is de-motivating and encourages poor performance. The cross-deployment of staff into operational roles on a daily basis should be minimised, particularly around essential core functions such as offender management, equalities and safer custody, (10.5, 13.13)
 - refocus efforts to ensure all prisoners have appropriate sentence plans and OASys assessments, rather than accepting the status quo that has developed over the past years (10.6), and
 - implement the delayed proposal to install in-cell telephones across the establishment during 2017, as noted in the NOMS response to our report last year. There is good evidence that this will reduce the incidence of self-harm and bullying. Running costs are self-funding and the systems are entirely secure with listening facilities. (13.12)
- 5.16 Ensure that there is an effective system for the transfer of property when prisoners move from one prison to another. Too frequently prisoner property is being lost without trace, causing distress to the prisoner, cost to the prison service in the form of compensation, and significant time taken by the receiving prison in trying to locate newly arrived prisoners’ property. The Board again raised this in 2015, but nothing has been done and it is the Board’s view that the situation is worsening. (13.3, 14.5, 14.6)
- 5.17 Re-introduce the funding for the art classes for prisoners, which have a clear and positive impact on their rehabilitation. (7.5)

Issues for the Governor

- 5.18 Ensure senior management leads the promotion of equality in the prison and that there are sustained improvements in the prison's co-ordination of equalities activities, the training of staff and the challenge to racist and discriminatory prisoner behaviour. (6.3 – 6.6)
- 5.19 In expectation of the return to a full regime, continue to work on increasing the number of training, education and work activities available for prisoners. Continue to develop a culture in the prison where prisoners are expected to be actively occupied with purposeful activity during the greater part of the day. (7.5, 7.6, 9.4, 9.5)
- 5.20 Continue to improve the reception and induction of newly arrived prisoners. In particular, reducing time spent in the vans, enabling showers to be taken and phone calls to be made no matter what time prisoners arrive in G spur, having hard copies of information available at the induction programmes and revising arrangements for canteen deliveries. (13.2, 13.5, 13.7)
- 5.21 Continue to address the high levels of violence and particularly the level of assaults on staff. (11.2, 11.3)
- 5.22 Improve supervision of the cleaning of trolleys and trays before they are returned to the kitchens from the Houseblocks, and ensure compliance with food safety processes in the serveries, including the taking of food temperatures and completion of temperature books at the time of testing. (13.20, 13.21)

6. Equalities

- 6.1 For the majority of the year, the prison has had a young population, aged 18 to 30 with the wide range of ethnic minorities reflecting the prison's catchment area across London. The age cap was raised to 40 in the final quarter. Prisoners who classify themselves as black make up 44% of the population, with 33% classified as white, 11% Asian and 9% classifying themselves as of mixed ethnicity. There are two main faiths amongst the prisoners with 43% Christian and 40% Muslim.
- 6.2 The HMIP report of October 2016 stated that the promotion of equalities was poor and had not improved since the last inspection; the prison did not follow its own policies and it was not clear that those with protected characteristics were even correctly identified. It further stated that work to support individual minority groups was limited; there was insufficient evidence of progress following diversity meetings; no forums except for travellers and little done to encourage tolerance around issues of sexuality. The IMB agrees with this assessment.
- 6.3 The Equalities Officer left the prison in June 2016, a replacement was not in place until September and then he was replaced after a month. There has been one equalities meeting since June. Although eight equalities representatives were recruited from the prison population, all but two had left by October and recruitment is underway for a new cohort. A bi-monthly equalities meeting was reintroduced in October but it is too early to comment on the success or otherwise of this group.
- 6.4 The prison needs to develop and implement a programme to challenge racist and discriminatory prisoner behaviour. It is planned to widen the newly implemented Personal Intervention Plan scheme to include those demonstrating racist or discriminatory behaviour. Although to be welcomed, the prison's lack of progress in tackling equalities issues over the past three years means that there is significant doubt that this will have any impact unless staff are trained to recognise and understand discrimination and how to support prisoners to change their behaviour. The senior management team has said it will take more responsibility for leading on equalities, however, this has been said before with no obvious signs of improvement.
- 6.5 The prison has enlisted the help of the University of Greenwich to research what "good looks like" in three other prisons, which have positive inspection reports in this area, and then to help Isis introduce and sustain good practice. The new equalities officer has also been

provided with an external mentor. These are early, but positive, steps that the prison understands the need to promote equalities effectively.

- 6.6 The action plan to address the recent HMIP report covers the basics but on the evidence to date, there must be doubt about the prison's ability to drive any marked improvement without considerable senior leadership over a sustained period. The prison wants to improve, but past evidence shows that it has been unable to sustain its commitment or provide enough resources for equalities to thrive.

7. Education, Learning and Skills

- 7.1 It is a stated priority of the prison that prisoners should be engaged in education or work, and IEP warnings should be issued to those prisoners who refuse to go to work or education. The education provider is Novus, appointed as The Manchester College in 2015
- 7.2 The IMB has expressed concerns regularly throughout the year, that attendance is poor at the Academy and in the Skills Zone. In the months to July, the position had not improved and appeared to have deteriorated. In 2015 the number of prisoner planned attendances had been between 5100 and 7035, but in 2016 planned attendances had fallen from 6399 in January to 3511 in July. (Equivalent figures are not available for the second half of 2016).
- 7.3 In the Skills Zone, for a significant part of the year members have reported that workshops were continually closed. The fitted interiors workshop opened in December 2015 but during the first part of the year was closed and only in recent months has it been operating normally. Long-term sickness has also meant that painting and decorating classes have been cancelled on a regular basis. In the last quarter of the year as well as the mainstay of the Skills Zone - the barbering workshop - the bicycle repair, painting and decorating, fitted interiors and carpentry workshops have been open at various times.
- 7.4 The provider, as well as filling vacancies, has appointed a new Manager for all of its activities. Managers are actively monitoring individual learning plans and lesson plans as well as introducing a programme of lesson observations.
- 7.5 The curriculum plan has resulted in the art class and the entry level cooking course being closed. New vocational courses have been opened including industrial cleaning, health and safety and food hygiene. These courses are to be welcomed as they all strengthen the CVs of prisoners; increasing their employability. However, the closure of the highly successful and well attended arts classes deprive the prisoners of the opportunity for rehabilitation, and there is a growing

body of evidence to suggest they can have a significant impact on prisoners' lives, particularly in helping them move away from crime

- 7.6 In December all workshops in the Skills Zone were in use, and any future increases in learners will only be possible where there is capacity in the workshop or where a workshop can be located elsewhere. In the Academy, it has been the norm throughout the year for 7 to 10 classrooms to be empty. If the provider is delivering the curriculum for which it is contracted, this suggests that there is capacity to increase the curriculum offer for classroom based activities, with appropriate resources.
- 7.7 However, there will not be sufficient places for training and education in the prison for all of the prisoners, once a full regime is in place, because of funding restrictions. If the prison is truly to become a "Training Prison" aimed at rehabilitation and reducing reoffending, then additional funding needs to be provided for Education, Skills and Learning.
- 7.8 The prison expects prisoners to achieve level 2 functional skills in English and Maths. These are taught in a traditional classroom and there is minimal embedding of functional skills into other practical classes and activities. The Board has questioned whether young men who have not taken to classroom learning in the past are best served by this approach.
- 7.9 In the academic year 2015/16 40 prisoners participated and completed Open University and other distance learning programmes. The programmes are at varying levels from 1 to 4 and in a range of subjects including plumbing, bookkeeping and project management.

8. Healthcare & Mental Health

- 8.1 The provider for healthcare services is Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust. The healthcare team has 18 primary care staff including three lead nurses and the mental health team comprises 4 staff including a mental health lead nurse. This complement includes three posts that are currently vacant and being covered by bank or agency staff; these are two primary care staff and one mental health nurse. The team are dedicated professionals and the Board commends their work.
- 8.2 A new training strategy and curriculum for all staff working in health care services in prisons has been initiated by NHS England, NOMS and Health Education England. This is a response to the continuing violence and suicides within prisons. Bespoke training around risk and mental health will be offered to all front-line staff in 2017.

- 8.3 A monthly Patient Forum is now up and running which provides opportunities for the prisoners to contribute to the development of health care facilities. Patient surveys are conducted on a quarterly basis and the results of these have been encouraging. Health care peer mentors will be introduced in 2017 through the cluster wide patient experience forum.
- 8.4 The following clinics are available to prisoners

Clinic	Frequency
GP	3 per week
Dentist	2 per week
Sexual Health	2 per week
Psychiatry/ mental health	2 per week
Optician	1 per month
Podiatrist	1 per month

Clinics as required are also provided for vaccinations, minor ailments, ADHD, counselling and psychological therapies, smoking cessation and long term conditions such as diabetes and asthma.

- 8.5 Poor attendance figures at medical appointments have been a major problem throughout the year. In the last quarter of the year, there were 1828 planned appointments, of which 652 (36%) were not kept. This is being addressed by allowing the prisoners to make their own way to their appointment from activities and a more pro-active approach to encourage prisoners to attend, including asking prisoners if they still want their appointment via the biometric system a few days before it is due. It is also hoped that the introduction of health peer mentors will result in fewer “did not attends” (DNA’s). A GP surgery on the houseblocks is under discussion.
- 8.6 Following questions raised by the IMB, since November 2016 prisoner’s identity must be verified before medication is dispensed. The arrangements for “in possession” medication are being revised to be in line with Thameside and Belmarsh. A more measured approach will be taken that considers the patient as well as the drugs to be administered.
- 8.7 MDT now tests for psychoactive substances, which is another step forward in tackling and reducing substance misuse. The use of drugs has significantly reduced during the year with a reduction in bizarre behaviour amongst the prisoners as they become more aware of the dangers of Psychoactive Substances such as Spice.
- 8.8 Prisoners are given a primary health screening on arrival, which is risk orientated and to find out about their medication. There is then a

secondary health screening within 48 hours, where the prisoner's mental and physical health is explored in more detail and they are given referral pathways.

- 8.9 The age limit cap for prisoners at Isis is due to be removed in 2017 and this will present Healthcare with a number of additional demands. The introduction of older prisoners with more long-term conditions, more prisoners using Methadone and more prisoners with mental health issues will need staff with the skills and capability to look after these prisoners. Also, if daily receptions are to be introduced in the New Year, this will have implications for Oxleas Trust as health staff will have to be taken off other duties to deal with inductions. Plans are currently being discussed to address these additional needs.
- 8.10 Prisoners with a variety of mental health problems continue to be a major consumer of resources across the prison. The Mental Health team of four qualified professionals attempts to monitor and treat those with mental health problems. However, the Board remains concerned that a small number of prisoners with serious issues continue to be managed at the prison, rather than in a facility such as HMP Belmarsh which has the in-patient facilities and additional staff to manage these conditions.

9. Purposeful Activity

- 9.1 Purposeful activity at Isis includes education and skills programmes in classrooms, workshops and the library; physical education in the gymnasium; religious practice in the multi-faith zone; prisoner behaviour programmes; rehabilitation activities; special issue groups such as equalities or safer custody; and work in a variety of orderly positions across the prison.
- 9.2 At the beginning of the year, there were significant difficulties ensuring that prisoners were engaged in purposeful activities. The main reasons for this were the restricted regime and the number of places available.
- 9.3 Since July, the prison has focused on prisoners participating in activities and rather than just collecting information on participation in education, the prison has monitored the numbers engaged in work, education, and other activities ("purposeful activity"). Also, the allocation to work and education places has been centralised. However, there is still progress to be made in allocating prisoners to activities to which they are suited.
- 9.4 Since August over 500 prisoners (out of approximately 600) have been routinely listed on a daily basis to attend activities and regularly over 75% of prisoners have attended and on occasion this has

increased to over 80%. This is an improvement over the previous year. However, these are not generally full time (i.e. nine half-day sessions per week) jobs or courses because of the restricted regime still in place and some of the activities are more occasional than even half time. When the staffing levels allow a full regime to be put in place, without an increase in places/jobs there will not be enough activities to occupy most of the prison population.

- 9.5 The reasons for non-attendance at activities include the prisoner not being required, refusal to attend or other reasons such as sickness. Worryingly the majority of non-attendances are because of refusal by the prisoner. As an example, in December, an average of over 100 prisoners refused to attend purposeful activity on any one day.

Library

- 9.6 The Library is run by Greenwich Leisure Ltd on behalf of Greenwich Council and provides a good range of reading, reference material and computers for research by prisoners on education and employment opportunities, together with provision for other activities in a pleasant environment. During the year the library manager has been on long term leave and has now left the prison. This has affected the library's ability to cover some events and activities including Family Visit Days and Storybook Dad. The Deputy Librarian and supporting staff, together with two prisoner orderlies, have continued to manage and provide library services.
- 9.7 There were 14,330 attendances in 2016. The table below shows the monthly attendances, which drop off in the latter part of the year:

Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
1531	1435	1844	1507	1359	1198	1071	1016	717	935	1006	711

The table above shows that in the latter part of the year attendances fell with December attendances being less than half the attendances in January. The prison needs to review the reasons for these changes. Prisoners are able to attend the Library from education classes, all workshops and the kitchen. The library sessions have been increased from 20 minutes to half an hour. Access for prisoners from the house blocks is inconsistent and still needs to be improved. An outreach service is provided once a month on a Saturday, for prisoners unable to visit the Library. The Board is pleased to see that an induction session has now been included for new prisoners.

Gym

9.8 The gym has been short of staff for the majority of the past year. There is an establishment of 6 officers but only four full time staff in post. It is planned to recruit to the vacancies but it is unlikely that these staff will be in place before the beginning of summer 2017. This shortage has had an effect on when prisoners can use the gym and what facilities can be used once there. Prisoners have consistently praised the gym staff and said how important going to the gym is for them.

9.9 In 2016 additional training courses have been offered to prisoners:

- First Aid at Work
- Manual Handling
- Diet & Nutrition
- Level 2 Gym Instructor.

These additions are appreciated, particularly taking account of the level of staffing through the year.

10. Resettlement

10.1 The 'Through the Gate' model of resettlement has been operating across the prison estate for nearly two years. Catch 22 provides the service in Isis, passing over responsibility for prisoners on release to other bodies or the National Probation Service. Catch 22 starts to work with prisoners 12 weeks before release. This includes developing support plans and referring to other organisations within the prison for such issues as, substance misuse, employment, benefits and debt. On average, just over 50 prisoners were released every month with nearly all having a resettlement plan on release.

10.2 There is more intensive support for prisoners who have been heavily involved in gangs, with Trident, Lifeline and family and gang workers working together to plan the release of the young men to a safe environment. The prison also hosts a number of schemes and initiatives to help with resettlement, including the Trailblazers mentoring scheme for young people, pop up restaurants and job fairs. Catch 22 provide the 'Getting it Right' course for lower risk prisoners released to London addresses. There have been some challenges in getting the men to attend, but attendance has improved since running the course leading up to the participants' Home Detention Curfew (HDC) date.

- 10.3 There were generally good accommodation, employment, training and education outcomes recorded for prisoners on release. However, there is an indication that there has been a decline in the percentage of prisoners having accommodation on release from around 98% at the beginning of the year to 92% and 93% in November and December. As was noted in last year's report, there are still some concerns that De Paul who are now contracted by the CRC to provide the accommodation service, have been working with only one full time member of staff this year (a planned reduction from 2.5 last year). Generally because different organisations deal with the young men after release the sustainability of outcomes is not known. There is also an outstanding issue with communication between services in the prison and probation officers, which sometimes means that offender managers in the community are not aware of the specific needs of the prisoner on release.
- 10.4 The resettlement services in the prison will face challenges in the year ahead. There has been a change in policy and a higher number of prisoners are being given early release through HDC. This means that release planning needs to start earlier for those prisoners likely to get HDC. Perhaps a bigger challenge is the changing age profile of the prison population in Isis, with a higher proportion of older prisoners. The prison and the organisations working with resettlement will need to ensure that the different needs of these older prisoners on release are addressed. The IMB will monitor this over the next year.

Offender management unit (OMU)

- 10.5 Staffing the OMU has been challenging throughout the year with long term offender supervisors' absence meaning the team was usually at six rather than the planned eight. Similarly, vacancies in administrative roles have depleted the team resource that has for most of the year run with five rather than the 7.5 full staffing model. Cross deployment exacerbates the problems. Efforts to improve staffing levels and ways of working are on an informal hold until the new Offender Management Model is implemented in April 2017. To date only limited information of the new model is available to the OMU.
- 10.6 The lack of OMU resource means there are still around 240 prisoners (out of 600) without a completed OASys at any one time, a percentage we find unacceptably high. Despite consistently highlighting the issue, the number of prisoners arriving without an OASys report remains high. In July to September, 70% of new arrivals had no OASys, reducing to 60% in the months October to December, thus making it very difficult for Isis to improve the number of prisoners within the establishment with a sentence plan. Only a handful of reports are completed each month with the exception of

June, when authorised Payment Plus did see 20 completed, but appetite amongst staff for overtime was short lived and monthly completions subsequently dropped again.

- 10.7 Attempts to fund CRC personnel to get on top of the back log failed and it is hoped that the current plan to utilise probation staff will make an impact on the number outstanding. Despite assurances from the OMU that the lack of a sentence plan does not prevent a prisoner being re-categorised, there is a clear perception amongst the prisoner population that this is the case.
- 10.8 Cross-deployment of OMU staff was significantly worse than in 2015 with typically 55-60 hours a month of OMU officer time lost, in December this increased to 140 hours lost. Whilst appreciating the on-going challenge to adequately staff the prison with officers on the ground, particularly as the restricted regime is lifted, it concerns the IMB that this is consistently at the expense of properly managing the prisoners' time in and through the establishment and thus jeopardising the best possible long-term outcomes.
- 10.9 This year has seen welcome trends in Home Detention Curfew (HDC) reviews. The number being deferred is on a downward trend and the approval rate is increasing. However, the number of HDC reviews held within 7 days after the "due date" is still less than 30%, meaning that 70% of the applications are delayed and the prisoner is not being considered for release in a timely fashion. Ultimately, this increases the prison population. It is mainly the poor quality or late responses from the CRC that is responsible for delays.
- 10.10 Communication between the Offender Supervisors and prisoners has improved over the last year with the biometric system being a very useful channel. Whilst issues with OMU remain second only to property issues in applications to the IMB, the volume is half that of 2015. Less successful has been the use of prisoner OMU reps which currently number only two.
- 10.11 Transfers to other establishments remain challenging but we note that the transport issues responsible for a backlog that accrued over the summer appear to have been cleared.

11. Safer Custody

- 11.1 Keeping prisoners safe is one of the four key tests for a healthy prison, and it is encouraging to note that the number of violent incidents (fights between prisoners, assaults on prisoners, and assaults on staff) has started to drop off in the last quarter of the year.

- 11.2 Last year we reported on the high, and increasing, levels of violence across the prison. This trend continued during the first nine months of 2016, with reported fights between prisoners increasing from 45 in 2015 to 101 in 2016. Also during 2016, the number of assaults on staff and prisoners remained dangerously high with 44 staff assaults and 80 prisoner assaults. The prison staff at Isis should be commended for the way they continue to deal with these dangerous situations.
- 11.3 In the final quarter of 2016, the monthly average number of violent incidents has dropped significantly, although the number of assaults on staff remains high. While there is no apparent single reason for this encouraging fall, a combination of the improved regime, an older mix of prisoners, improved violence management procedures, dedicated violence reduction officers, prisoner violence reduction reps, and changes made around decency to the Basic regime all have contributed to the drop in violence.
- 11.4 During 2016, the average monthly number of ACCTs opened, following self harm or threats to self harm, rose from 15 to 20. There is a robust process of ACCT management, which is embraced by staff across the prison. Regular management checks are undertaken and there are several checks completed by the Duty Governor each month. A Duty Governor override is also completed for any prisoner in Segregation on an open ACCT.
- 11.5 Tragically, there was the first death in custody in February of a young man who had been transferred into the prison three days before his death. The Coroner and the Ombudsman are still investigating the circumstances.
- 11.6 The prison has a dedicated and committed Safer Custody team, which is responsible for monitoring violence and incidents of self-harm within the establishment. Monthly meetings are held which involve Listeners, Violence Reduction representatives and the Samaritans, as well as prison management. An IMB member also attends.
- 11.7 The majority of Use of Force incidents occur in the first 6 months and last 6 months of a prisoner's sentence at Isis. There is a disproportionate number of Young Offenders involved in the use of force. The prison is considering the practicalities/benefits of a 'resettlement spur' and/or issuing warning letters to pre-empt poor behaviour.
- 11.8 The requirement for Use of Force paperwork to be completed by the officers involved has been tightened. The paperwork has to be completed in 72 hours. A checklist has been introduced to ensure the correct information is included. There has been mixed success in

achieving the changed requirements, partly owing to the influx of new staff but also healthcare has been slow to complete their F213 forms.

12. Segregation Unit

- 12.1 The Segregation Unit continues to provide a clean and safe environment for prisoners receiving punishment or held under Rules 45 and 49. It is shortly to be renamed the Care and Separation Unit (CSU). The unit comprises 16 standard cells, 2 unfurnished special cells and 2 dirty protest cells. One of the special cells was used just once during the reporting year. The two dirty protest cells, however, have been used regularly.
- 12.2 Board members have continued to visit the Unit on a weekly basis and speak to each prisoner held there. The Board is of the view that the Unit is well run and that the prisoners there, who are often disturbed and potentially difficult individuals, have been well-managed. Unlike other areas of the prison, it has, for the most part, been able to maintain its prescribed staffing level.
- 12.3 Board members have also continued to attend adjudications, including those presided over by the independent adjudicator, and the weekly GOOD reviews. Concerns have been raised about inconsistencies on the part of wing staff in reporting prisoners, sometimes for very trivial offences, thus unnecessarily increasing the numbers of adjudications. It has often been felt that such matters could and should have been handled in different ways. However, following the introduction of more rigorous checks by supervisors, the number of adjudications has now reduced, and the system of reporting has been streamlined. This includes prisoners being provided with timely information about their alleged offences and not routinely locked behind their doors prior to transfer to the Unit for their adjudications. These changes are to be welcomed.
- 12.4 The regime in the Segregation Unit has recently been improved. Prisoners are now allowed a daily shower and phone call instead of on alternate days. Exercise is still only 30 minutes per day instead of the HMIP recommended one hour. In-cell education is still not provided in the unit because it is not included in the education contract - something that, in the Board's view, should be included in the future - but activity packs are planned to provide help with such matters as alcohol abuse, drug use and anger management.
- 12.5 The Board continues to have concerns about prisoners who see bad behaviour and transfer to the Unit as a means of achieving transfer to another prison. Managing refusals to return to normal location is one of the key challenges for Segregation Unit staff. Such refusals lead to continuing bad behaviour, including serious damage to cells and

furniture, dirty protests, self-harm and further adjudications. However, with the support of dedicated Unit staff, many of these difficult situations are resolved amicably and it is to be hoped that prisoners will learn that they cannot force the prison to facilitate prison transfers.

- 12.6 Serious damage to doors, windows, fixtures and fittings and furniture has been caused on several occasions during the past year incurring substantial repair and replacement costs. As a result, some new heavyweight unbreakable furniture is currently being trialled in a number of cells with the objective of similarly furnishing all the downstairs cells.
- 12.7 The current national policy of part-charging prisoners for the cost of repairs does not work. It is counterproductive because it provides no incentive for prisoners to go to work to earn money, it increases debts and therefore fuels further bad and threatening behaviour and bullying. For the amount of money actually recouped which is minimal, it simply is not worth the effort.

13. Residential Services and Regime

Induction

- 13.1 The prison continues to take sentenced prisoners from other establishments on a twice weekly basis, and not directly from court. HMIP was concerned that the arrangements for receiving new prisoners, were not good enough. The Reception facilities have recently been redecorated creating a more welcoming atmosphere.
- 13.2 Improvement has been made during the year with the processing of necessary documentation enabling prisoners to transfer to the houseblocks more quickly. The holding rooms are cleaned regularly and have new notice boards with useful information. The sanitary conditions are generally up to standard although the toilet bowls are still in need of a deep clean. Prisoners have commented on the time spent sitting in the prison vans outside Reception. Arrival at lunchtimes, even though some officers work during their lunch period, coupled with staff shortages or when receiving a large number of prisoners and several bags of property, has exacerbated the situation.
- 13.3 A new property card is hand written for each new arrival as officers find that often the existing card is not complete or is inaccurate. The existing card is then stored in the prisoners' core records. The introduction of electronic property cards should be considered. Difficulties still continue when prisoners arrive from other establishments without some or all items of property. Wherever possible, reception staff try to contact the transferring establishment to locate the missing property. All too frequently the property is not

located and the prisoner is left having to submit a complaint and finally resorting to a complaint to the PPO. The IMB believe that this is unacceptable and that the system for transferring property should be improved.

- 13.4 The Board is pleased that listeners, violence reduction reps, and an induction peer mentor together with a safer custody officer are now normally available to talk to prisoners in Reception. This helps to give some reassurance to prisoners who may have problems and concerns on arrival.
- 13.5 First night facilities have improved throughout the year. Information leaflets, an in-cell bag containing fresh duvets and all necessary personal requirements are placed in the newly decorated cells and the in-cell toilet bowls have now been deep cleaned. A television and kettle are issued to all first night prisoners on standard conditions. Earlier in the year, this was not the case with a shortage of both items also cells were dirty with unsatisfactory sanitary conditions. Evening meals are available to all new arrivals together with the facility to shower and make a telephone call, however under the current regime, prisoners arriving late afternoon are not offered either a shower or telephone call.
- 13.6 The prison does not have a prison shop; therefore prisoners are not able to purchase items within their first 24 hours (commented on by HMIP). Canteen can only be ordered weekly between Friday and Sunday and delivered the following Friday. Some prisoners can therefore have a long wait for their canteen
- 13.7 In recent months, improvements have been made to the Induction programme, aiming to give prisoners a comprehensive and valuable introduction to the prison. Departments and agencies have more time in the programme to conduct their sessions. There are still some teething problems, which are in the process of being solved. The feedback from prisoners is generally positive but many have commented that they are not given a timetable of the Induction programme, an issue that should be considered.

Residential Blocks

- 13.8 There are two similar residential blocks, Thames and Meridian, each consisting of four spurs at three levels radiating from a central hub providing accommodation for approximately 80 prisoners per spur in a mixture of single and double occupancy cells. There are a few fully equipped cells for prisoners with disabilities. Thames 'G' spur is designated for the induction of recently arrived prisoners.

- 13.9 The regime has significantly improved throughout the year, with prisoners now offered a shower and use of the phones every day. A split regime, implemented for violence reduction, whereby one house block goes off-wing for activities in the morning while the other house block has association, and vice versa for the afternoon, means it is now possible for prisoners not on basic to be out of their cells all morning and afternoon. However, the regime still lacks evening association. This means prisoners spend 14 hours locked in their cells overnight.
- 13.10 This split regime also reduces the number of hours prisoners can be working or in education each day and limits the number of prisoners available to be allocated to work or education to half the prison population at any one time.
- 13.11 A fault in the design of the toilets in cells throughout the prison means they can only be cleaned by use of specialist drilling equipment. This has left many in a filthy condition, and whilst steps have been taken throughout the year to clean them, many are already starting to deteriorate again.
- 13.12 The pilot in-cell telephone system, originally promised for 2013, has still not been delivered and there are no plans for its implementation. Such a system is known to have major benefits including a reduction in violence, bullying and self-harm, and in supporting family engagement. It is also mainly self-funding after the initial investment.
- 13.13 Cross deployment of staff is a daily occurrence. This has made it hard for positive relationships to form between staff and prisoners and has led to a lack of ownership on the part of staff when it comes to dealing with prisoners problems on the spurs. This also makes any attempts at a personal officer scheme meaningless for most prisoners.
- 13.14 Repairs within the establishment often take longer than they should. The introduction of a new external project board, which only meets once a month to approve any repairs that fall outside of the scope of the current contract with Mitie, can add up to an additional month to repair times. There is concern that new arrangements giving the prison contract manager for Mitie additional responsibility for Medway STC as well could lead to further delays in responding to repairs in a timely manner.
- 13.15 Most of the problems encountered in the prison have at their root the lack of staff. This has been a significant problem since the decision to allow a voluntary early departure scheme in 2012 and to freeze recruitment in 2013. For the prison, this has meant that they have been unable to achieve the benchmark staffing level. For the

prisoners it means not only is their regime severely curtailed, but processes to support their rehabilitation and resettlement are under pressure and the staff on the spurs, often the first port of call for help and support have not the capacity to always provide a considered response. In 2011 the officer attrition rate at Isis was 5.5%, while by 2016 it had risen to 14%. In 2016 over 30 new officers were recruited, but the overall complement of officers increased by only three.

- 13.16 Security activities around mobile phones and drugs have shown significant improvement throughout the year. Many of the acts of violence appear to be related to the use of drugs, particularly Psychoactive Substances such as Spice, but the prison has a proactive programme of drug detection which has resulted in 62 “finds” during the year, as opposed to 24 in 2015. Similarly, the number of mobile phones and related items found has increased from 24 in 2015 to 133 in 2016

Catering and Kitchens

- 13.17 It was pleasing to note that, at a recent full inspection by HMIP, it was acknowledged that the work of the skilled and enthusiastic catering team had clearly led to the impressive survey results which showed nearly 60% of the respondents thought that the food served was good. The kitchen continues to produce high quality food with a varied and balanced menu. It also caters for faith dietary requirements as well as various festivals, which is greatly appreciated by the prisoners.
- 13.18 The Food Safety Management Assessment conducted in July awarded Green Stars throughout noting that food was being prepared and cooked in well kept conditions with a good standard of hygiene discipline in place.
- 13.19 The NVQ Level 1 in Food Preparation and Cooking and NVQ Level 2 in Food Production and Cooking qualifications are offered in both the Kitchen and The Quays Restaurant (which prepares, cooks and serves food for the staff of the prison). Successful pass rates are high across both locations, with only 10% failing the courses.
- 13.20 Although the cleanliness of the trolleys being returned to the kitchen from the houseblocks has improved, it is still very variable and this needs to be consistently upheld as stated in previous Annual Reports.
- 13.21 The temperature books are still not being correctly maintained and are often completed retrospectively and in some cases a random number is entered or on occasion not completed at all with the books not being able to be located or having to be retrieved from a cell. This is unacceptable as these books are required for auditable purposes. Temperatures must be taken and recorded at the point of service and

the books retained in the servery. Greater attention needs to be paid to this matter.

13.22 Switchback, the through the gate charity, won the Robin Corbett award for prisoner rehabilitation with the “learning through doing” approach. 24 18-30 year olds from Isis have participated in the past year and some of the trainees have moved on to become chefs in West End Restaurants, taken up employment at a new social enterprise cafe in London or are in full time employment working in markets or events.

Chaplaincy

13.23 A dedicated team of chaplains covering a wide range of religions provide pastoral care and support for prisoners. The prison has been without a Roman Catholic chaplain for the whole of 2016, although adequately covered by the Chaplaincy Team and support by a Roman Catholic lay reader. It is expected that a new RC chaplain will start in 2017.

13.24 The improved regime has enabled more prisoners to attend courses and activities. The Sycamore Tree ran courses in January and June, but the October course was cancelled as the facilitator was not available. The Isis Prisoners Band performed at Sunday Services and the Carol Concert. This gives prisoners the opportunity to learn and improve their musical talents.

13.25 The numbers of prisoners belonging to a particular religion varies throughout the year, but looking at November as a sample month 40% of prisoners were Muslim, 17% Christian, 10% Anglican, 16% RC and 14% of prisoners had no religion. The number of Muslim prisoners means that Friday prayers have to be held in the visits hall. The Church of England/Free Church services & RC Mass take place every Sunday in the multi-faith suite.

14. Board Applications, Attendance and Training

14.1 Board membership was 14 members at the end of 2016. The Board operates two weekly rotas, one for the rota visit and one for Applications. Two new members were welcomed to the Board in 2016.

14.2 A comprehensive weekly rota report on monitoring standards within the prison is produced and most Applications are now heard within the week they are received. Individual members have developed familiarity with their areas of special interest including attending relevant prison meetings as observers and providing contributions for this Annual Report.

14.3 The following is a table of categories of Applications received by the Board during 2016:

Category	Total in year
Accommodation	3
Adjudications	10
Alleged assaults	11
Attendance to activities	7
Bullying	4
Canteen	5
Category and sentence plan	22
Complaints about staff	15
IEP and Discipline issues	19
Drugs/DST	0
Foreign Nationals issues	0
Healthcare	30
Home detention curfew/OMU	64
Kitchen/food	2
Licence recall	0
Mail	26
Parole	0
Payments for activities	7
Personal finance	11
Pins/telephone access	5
Property	120
Racism/discrimination	5
Regime issues	45
ROTL	0
Safer Custody	18
Transfers	24
Visits (including legal visits)	9
Violence Management	0
Others	16
Total	478

14.4 The total of 478 was lower than the 611 in 2015 and significantly lower than the 1037 received in 2014. The major drop in the monthly number of applications was in the spring of 2015 which coincided with the introduction of the Prisoners' Council has continued.

- 14.5 During the year there has been a continuing problem of prisoners' property being lost when they transfer from one prison to another and either an inability by or disinterest from the transferring prison to trace this lost property. The Board received 120 Applications from prisoners concerning property in 2016, of which over 90% related to transfers from another prison. (24 related to HMP Thameside and 14 to HMP Pentonville). The system of hand writing Property Cards for each prisoner, together with the system of following up on lost property, is simply not fit for purpose.
- 14.6 No one party appears to take responsibility when property cannot be located. There is an urgent need for clarification and better control nationally over prisoner property policy and procedures. In many cases, the prisoners have complained to the PPO who has awarded compensation out of prison funds for the lost items.
- 14.7 Attendance at Board meetings has been good. The Governor or her deputy has attended every meeting and provided the Board with an update on prison issues and a response to our weekly rota reports. Information received from the prison via CJSM on a regular basis by way of NTOs, NTSs and daily morning meeting notes has been of real help in keeping members informed about prison life.
- 14.8 Each Board meeting has been preceded by a 30 minute training session delivered by members of prison staff on a wide variety of subjects arranged by the BDO in conjunction with members of the prison.

15. Glossary of Abbreviations

ACCT	Assessment, Care in Custody Teamwork
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
BDO	Board Development Officer
CJSM	Criminal Justice Secure Mail
CNA	Certified Normal Accommodation
CRC	Community Rehabilitation Company
DNA	Did Not Attend
GOOD	Good Order or Discipline
HDC	Home Detention Curfew
HMIP	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons
IMB	Independent Monitoring Board
IEP	Incentive and Earned Privileges
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
MDT	Mandatory Drug Testing
NOMS	National Offender Management Service
NTO	Notice to Offenders
NTS	Notice to Staff
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
OASys	Offender Assessment System
OLASS	Offender Learning and Skills Service
OMU	Offender Management Unit
OP CAP	Operational Capacity
ROTL	Release on Temporary Licence
TMC	The Manchester College – TMC Novus
YOI	Young Offenders Institution