



Annual Report
of the
Independent Monitoring Board
at

HMP Onley

**for reporting Year
2016-17**

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Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody

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A. Sections 1 - 3

1. STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

The Prison 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 or centre is situated.

The Board is specifically charged to:

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

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

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The prison has been characterised by a degree of turbulence this year associated with stringent resourcing, external scrutiny and significant management changes. Retrospective consideration of its responses to these challenges suggests a gradually improving picture. (4.3,4.5,5.7,5.8,6.1)
- The positive relationships which have been referred to in previous reports continue to prevail and do much to contribute to the humane and safe treatment of prisoners and override limitations of ageing buildings, shortages and malfunctioning of equipment and an arguably inadequately funded diet. (7.1,7.3,7.5)
- Security and safety remain a concern, although in the latter half of the recording year new approaches to managing these key issues are beginning to have a positive impact. However, until there is any improvement in the numbers of officers recruited and retained concerns over the implications of a restricted regime, timely allocations to education and training and inconsistent implementation of policies and strategies are likely to continue. (4.1,4.6,4.8,4.9)
- External shortcomings similarly continue undermine the prison's commitment to effective rehabilitation of prisoners by diverting staff and resources to remedying the omissions of other organisations and institutions. (5.3,5.10,7.1,7.4,7.6)

Main judgements

Are prisoners treated fairly?

Overall prisoners are treated fairly in the prison. (5.7 However, inconsistent approaches to prison procedures and the routine management of prisoners occasionally contribute to a perception of indifference and injustice. (5.3, 5.9,7.6,7.7,8.7)

Are prisoners treated humanely?

The prison emphasises the humane treatment of prisoners and this is reflected in the generally positive interactions between staff and prisoners both on the wings and in education/workshops. However, the shortage of basic supplies and the prevalence of malfunctioning equipment on occasions threaten basic standards of decent day to day living. Moreover, staff shortages leading to a restricted regime, result in prisoners too frequently being confined to cells. Whilst the prison management has sought to address these shortcomings there appears to be the need for a vigorous and sustained response to the issue of recruitment and retention at a national level. (7.1,7.2,7.4,7.5,7.6)

Are prisoners prepared well for their release?

The prison's wide range of education and training opportunities and the comprehensive approach to preparation for release are rendered less effective by staffing shortages which impact on the timely allocation to work/education, an absence of in-cell education opportunities and interruptions to the regime. The absence of OASys reports on arrival for more than 50% of prisoners and persistent difficulties in liaising with London probation teams inhibits the prisoner's progress towards successful rehabilitation. (9.1,10.3,10.4,11.1)

Main Areas for Development

TO THE MINISTER

- Although there have been recent measures to prison officer improve recruitment and retention there appears to be a continuing need for this initiative to be maintained in the interests of the safe and humane management of prison regimes. (4.1,5.5,7.3,9.4,10.3)
- In a context of rising food prices, it seems timely for a review of the allocation of resources necessary for the provision of an adequate and healthy diet for prisoners. (7.5)

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

- Instances of apparently poor performance by maintenance contractors and suppliers have caused a deterioration in the daily experience of prisoners. Would the prison service investigate the reasons why the provision of basic supplies and management of routine maintenance appears to be so problematic. This was an issue which was raised last year. (7.2,7.4)
- Prisoner progression and rehabilitation are undermined by the absence on arrival of OASys reports and poor communication by many London based probation teams. These fundamental shortfalls appear to require systemic overhaul at a national level. (Page 9 commentary on Improvements and 11.1)
- Successive reports have, over the past two years, identified the increasingly challenging and diverse nature of HMP Onley's population since it became designated as a London prison. The resourcing of the institution might be more appropriate where it to be reclassified as a complex prison. (See section 4)

TO THE GOVERNOR

- Currently prison practices, structures and expectations are undermined by occasional staff negligence or oversight which impact on the prisoner experience. Are there initiatives which might further embed expectations and minimise these threats to the maintenance of a fair and safe regime? (4.1,4.6,5.3,6.2,7.4,7.7)
- Consideration of the provision, where appropriate, of more extensive opportunities for in cell education and training. (4.10,9.5)
- Exploration of possibilities for the provision of transport for prisoner visitors to and from Rugby station. (5.9)
- Consideration of strategies for accelerating the placement of prisoners in an education, training or employment workshop. (10.3)
- Consideration of how the work ethic of the Assembly workshop might be enhanced. (10.2)
- Consideration of a transparent and equitable method of prisoner representation on the Prison Council. (5.5)

TO THE PROVIDER (of Healthcare/Education/Maintenance etc)

- The Board seeks assurance from the Healthcare provider that it has an established protocol for investigating and responding to instances of prisoners failing to turn up for appointments whether to receive treatment or collect medication. (8.6)
- Whilst recognising the issue of proportionality in considering two oversights/delays in hundreds of appointments and medical engagements, the Board nevertheless is concerned that the Healthcare provider encourages members of its team to err on the side of caution when responding to mental or physical health issues. (4.11,6.4,8.6,8.7)
- Onley's maintenance contractor(s) should consider ways in which they address malfunctioning equipment with a greater sense of urgency. (7.2,7.4)

Improvements

Any comments on improvements should be viewed in the context of the institutional turbulence referred to in section 2. The Board has identified a significant culture of improvement characterizing all aspects of prison management in the second half of the reporting year. Inevitably given the need for consultation and staff development to accompany significant change, it will take time for proposals to be adopted, embedded and impact significantly on outcomes for prisoners.

The current Governor has made considerable efforts to resolve the problem of officer shortages. Furthermore, since the submission of the Board's last report recent national initiatives have sought to address the issue of prison officer shortage. However, inadequate staffing levels identified as a concern last year continue to beset Onley with, as this report indicates, consequences for the regime. Inevitably a shortfall in staffing permeates all aspects of the prisoner experience. Given the employment/resignation churn any proposed increase in staffing is unlikely to improve this situation in the short term, particularly in a context where prison numbers have increased to Onley's maximum capacity. However, there is some room for limited optimism insofar as officers from Glen Parva are likely to be transferred to Onley.

The back log of OASys reports continues to impinge on prisoner progress although by the end of the reporting year some progress had been made on reducing the back log for which the prison should receive credit. During the reporting year 75% of prisoners arrived at Onley without an OASys report. This issue was identified in Onley's inspection report and its amelioration absorbs significant resources. The decline in applications pertaining to sentence management is arguably misleading insofar as the Board made a decision to reply to applications with a standard letter explaining that delays in the OMU were standard practice because of significant work overload.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

HMP Onley is a male adult Category C London Resettlement Prison, situated between Rugby and Daventry. The population is split 90/10% between London and the Midland Area prisoners.

In March 2017, the Certified Normal Accommodation (CNA) was 742. Prisoners are housed in 12 wings. This agrees with the Operational Capacity (Op Cap) of 742.

Wings A-I, including F Wing, the Care and Support Unit (CSU), radiate from a single corridor in the main block which also includes the Kitchen, Gym, Education, Chaplaincy and Healthcare. Wings J and K are located in a separate block as is the newest accommodation: L Wing. A wing is designated as a non-smoking wing.

The site, which is extensive, also has a sports hall, workshops, market garden and all-weather sports pitch.

Agencies delivering education are Novus and North Warwickshire and Hinckley College. Industry agencies include Halfords Academy, Industrial Material Recycling Ltd.(IMR), DHL Supply chain, Ricoh, JP Concrete and Cisco, together with PICTA.

Healthcare, Mental Health Care and Dentistry are provided by Northamptonshire Health care NHS Foundation Trust. The Coventry Samaritans train the Listeners and Peer Support.

The prison has undergone significant management changes during the reporting year with departure of the Governor and Deputy Governor, the former in July the latter in December. In the past six months, a new Governor has assumed responsibility and from, March 1st a new deputy is in post. Inevitably there has been a degree of upheaval for all staff with several senior members of the team covering management vacancies for a few months. This challenge of the second half of the reporting year has been made more acute by the implementation of a stringent post inspection action plan to which the management team has responded robustly.

B. Evidence sections 4 – 11

4 SAFETY

1. The majority of prisoners arrive in good condition and at a time of day when they are able to go through reception procedures in an appropriately thorough manner supported by staff and peers. There are occasions when prisoners arriving late on Friday afternoons have less thorough exposure to the reception process potentially jeopardising this key component of their induction experience. The prison induction process is clearly documented although the evidence emerging from some interviews with prisoners suggest that it is not consistently adhered to. When questioned about their induction experience five randomly selected prisoners felt that it had been rushed leaving them with queries about Onley specific routines. The current regime in which prisoners are locked up by 18.30 hours restricts new arrivals' access to peer support. Whatever the reasons for this lack of consistency, and typically it appears to be because of staff shortages resulting in the deployment of either too few officers or officers unfamiliar with the induction wing, it is potentially unsettling for vulnerable prisoners. The induction wing is an extremely busy area of the prison with many demands being made on staff by prisoners. Officers are typically very responsive to prisoners and appear committed to facilitating their familiarisation with prison expectations and routines but are numerically and experientially not always able to establish ideal levels of reassurance.
2. There is a well-established Listeners scheme supported by Coventry Samaritans and apparently valued by prisoners.
3. The HMCIP report attendant on the July/ August inspection highlighted concerns over Onley's capacity to maintain a secure environment evidenced by increasing levels of violence, self-harm and prisoners' perceptions of their vulnerability to bullying and violence. Whilst concerns continue, these threats to safety generally exhibited a declining trend during the second half of the reporting year following a concerted management drive to reduce the backload of Intelligence Reports and act on information received. Scores of mobile phones and caches of illicit substances have been recovered through cell searches. Whilst such finds are a significant cause for concern within the context of the supposed security of the prison environment, the fact that they have been intercepted does in the long term contribute to prisoner safety by reducing the root causes of much bribery, intimidation and violence. The institutional drive to erase staff corruption which has resulted in several members of staff being dismissed appears to be a contributory factor in the interception of banned items.
4. Nonetheless despite this tenacious approach to reducing the key contributory factors to high levels of violence, mandatory drug testing reveals extremely high numbers of prisoners failing the test. This situation is further complicated by the data which suggests that drug and alcohol related violence occurs less frequently than sector averages. The prison management demonstrates a high level of commitment to unearthing the source of the supply of drugs.
5. HMCIP reported 140 incidents of violence in the six-month period coinciding with first half of the reporting year, a figure which fell to 92 in the subsequent six months in the national

context of increasing levels of violence. However, despite this improving trend, these recent figures include a particularly vicious attack on a prisoner during Friday prayers and two separate incidents of assaults on officers in the CSU – one in November and one in January. (see Section 6.1)

6. There was one death in custody through natural causes during the year. The findings of the PPO acknowledged lapses in the prison's Healthcare systems for failing to recognise that the prisoner concerned was potentially susceptible to cardiac arrest and offer appropriate medical support. Officers' failure to observe the standard prison practice, at morning unlock time, of ensuring that each prisoner is awake contributed to the levels of distress experienced by fellow prisoners and the prisoner's family as it delayed the discovery and certification of the death. Nonetheless the evidence suggests that once the death had been discovered and certified the prison authorities took considerable care to convey the information to the family in a timely and sensitive manner and ensured the ongoing support of a family liaison officer.

5. EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS

1. The Board has identified ongoing good practice in respect of aspects of diversity. Key festivals and events of significance such as Black History month and Holocaust Memorial Day are supported by events and posters within the prison. Racist and homophobic incidents are robustly challenged by officers.
2. The prison seeks to accommodate the needs of the minority of ageing prisoners by, for example, having regular activities for such prisoners e.g. quizzes, age specific gymnasium sessions. Particular sensitivity was displayed in managing the care of a terminally ill prisoner who was released shortly before his death.
3. Despite examples of institutional support for diversity and associated explicit policies there are examples of practice which undermine equality principles. Discrimination complaints from prisoners were not, particularly in the first half of the reporting period, consistently responded to in a timely and appropriate manner. The Board encountered at least two incidents where delays and failure to communicate a response to perceptions of discrimination resulted in an escalation of prisoner anxiety and sense of injustice. There appeared to be no institutional intention to ignore these issues rather a combination of staff neither accepting responsibility nor considering the ramifications attendant on procrastination. The long-term impact on staff time in terms of resolution proved significant, which is arguably profligate in the current context of sparse resources.
4. See also section 7.5 for concerns over special diets.
5. The Prisoner Council is a monthly forum in which prisoners' views are treated in a respectful and considered manner. Prisoners are now able to make suggestions for the prison wide change agenda. Prisoners have expressed concerns to the IMB about the rationale underpinning selection criteria for wing representatives on this council. Investigations by the IMB appear to show a lack of clarity over the selection process which might be construed as a deviation from principles of transparency and fairness.
6. Communication from the Governor via a monthly newsletter ensures that all prisoners receive consistent messages about decisions relating, for example, to pay and the regime. This newsletter is an innovation implemented in the past six months which models transparency and appropriate levels of consultation.
7. An overhaul of the IEP system appears to have had a positive impact with prisoners understanding the system more clearly. There has been an overall decline in the number of prisoners on basic regime since 2016.

8. A new policy of surveying a sample of prisoners and staff (120 and 80 respectively) on the effectiveness of the amended regime suggest a management commitment to fairness. The emerging data is generally positive and conveys a sense of hope for the prison. The nature and declining number of applications to the Board and the results of routine visits and engagements with prisoners suggest that this optimism is broadly justified.

9. The Board's focus on visits half way through the reporting year generally yielded positive findings and certainly comparisons with last year's applications in this area suggest higher degrees of satisfaction. The booking of visits appears to be less problematic than was hitherto the case and the visits' hall is a pleasant, softly furnished area with toys and books available for children. Officer surveillance is sensitively but nonetheless robustly handled. The eleven family days held during the year are thoughtfully arranged to provide workshops and interesting activities in which families can engage. Despite these positive attempts to engage families the fact remains that the prison's location creates extreme hardship for many families and makes visits for many prisoners an impossibility. Not only is the prison situated over 80 miles north of London it is also eight miles from the nearest railway station from where there is no longer public transport access to and from Onley. This situation, which was raised as an issue last year makes the maintenance of family links increasingly financially and logistically challenging. During their focused investigation into visits the IMB received vociferous representations from prisoners' family members about this issue. A significant number of prisoners receive no visitors at all, frequently citing the cost and logistical complexity of the exercise as the reason. This absence of personal family contact arguably undermines the rehabilitation process.

10. Prisoners at Onley have all been in other prisons and understand the complaints system, although they are frequently frustrated by failures to meet deadlines. (see 7.6) Prisoners' awareness of the role of the PPO is less widespread although the Board has increasingly provided individuals with an information sheet in order to facilitate their access to the ombudsman. Information is also available in the library. As with many areas of prison life though the complaints system severely disadvantages individuals who are unable to read or write English effectively. Whilst many individual officers will offer assistance in such cases prisoners do not always seek help – not least because of personal embarrassment about their predicament. Furthermore, hard pressed officers might not necessarily have the capacity to engage in this type of support work.

6. SEGREGATION/CARE AND SEPARATION UNIT

- 6.1.** Typically, the segregation and separation unit is full – this was particularly the case in the first half of the reporting year. Additionally, some management changes at this time occasionally undermined the effectiveness of the review system. However, increased management stability has more recently impacted positively on the unit which is well run. Staffing appears to be a key strength – officers know and engage well with individual prisoners. There is a shared understanding of expectations which leads to a consistency of approach with a commensurately positive impact on prisoner well-being. Last year’s report acknowledged the frequency of extremely volatile circumstances within the unit – the overall situation now appears to be calmer. Although prisoners in this unit often exhibit extremes of behaviour it is calmly and consistently managed and minimised. There has been less need for and recourse to restraint than was the case last year. However, there is a significant caveat to this perceived decline in volatility. As has been indicated (section 4.4) there were two violent attacks on officers in November 2016 and January 2017. Apart from the injury and personal distress to the individual officers concerned such attacks lead to their subsequent absence from work which exacerbates staffing shortages.
- 6.2.** During the second half of the reporting year a concerted effort was made to introduce greater consistency to the conduct and outcomes of adjudications. Early evidence suggest that this is leading to an enhanced sense of parity and a decline in prisoners’ sense of injustice.
- 6.3** Prisoners receive appropriate exercise and have access to a daily shower, daily exercise and a well-stocked selection of library books. However, confinement with no access to in cell education is a concern – particularly in the cases of prisoners who are detained for lengthy periods of time in the unit whilst a transfer is being sought.
- 6.4** The unit is well supported by the mental health team although long term sickness during the reporting year resulted marginally less staffing stability than is typically the case. One incident with a resident identified as exhibiting acute mental health problems caused considerable concern during the reporting year. This man was detained for several weeks before IMB representations were made at Governor level to transfer him to a more appropriate setting. The delays appeared to be caused by an initial absence of urgency at a senior level and subsequent lack of a secure mental health placement.

7. ACCOMMODATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 7.1 Despite the ageing nature of the majority of the prison accommodation with attendant problems of ill-fitting and broken windows, wings and cells are generally clean and tidy. Internal areas are rubbish free although external areas in the immediate vicinity of wings continue to be marred by litter thrown from the cell windows. This has caused a significant problem with vermin – pigeons and rats - which impinges on standards of health and decency. In the second half of the reporting year concerted management intervention, which included the provision of additional bins and procurement of specialist vermin control teams, appears to have solved the rodent problem although there is a continuing problem of litter associated with some wings. Officers are vigilant and effective in ensuring that deliberate damage to cells and occasional fouling of the environment are dealt with.
- 7.2 Ongoing problems with supplies have been reported by officers and prisoners throughout the current year. Despite orders being placed kit, cleaning materials, toothbrushes and shower washes have all, on occasions, been in short supply to the potential detriment of prisoner health and self-respect. Similarly, malfunctioning equipment has been in evidence on several wings. Many of the washers and dryers are now extremely old and repeated attempts to resurrect them are largely unsuccessful. Officers and prisoners have complained about the impact of this situation on prisoner well-being. Staff prisoner relations are an observably positive feature of the prison but the shortages referred to inevitably cause mutual frustration and attempts at resolution are arguably diverting officers from their key functions.
- 7.3 Routine management of the regime appears to be well handled by wing staff who, as has been indicated, establish positive relationships. Such relationships appear to be rooted in the knowledge that individual officers have of prisoners. The IMB has observed many examples over the year when individual officers attached to a specific wing have made considerable efforts to resolve an issue which has the potential to distress and destabilise a prisoner. One officer, for example, took particular trouble to support a fellow Punjabi prisoner detained in the CSU who had serious mental health problems. Officer shortages which result in deployment of staff who are unfamiliar with the prisoners on the wing have the potential to undermine this stability.
- 7.4 IMB observations of food preparation and servery areas suggest that whilst the majority of staff are vigilant in ensuring appropriate standards of hygiene and fairness in terms of portion control there are occasional inconsistencies. The cleanliness of the food trolleys continues to be an ongoing area of focus following the inspection in July/August and inconsistencies have been observed in wing staff's expectations. Catering staff have all too often been operationally frustrated during the past year by malfunctioning equipment and potential threats to appropriate standards of hygiene which undermine the efficiency and safety of food provision. A breach in the external wall of the food store remained unattended for several weeks despite repeated notification to the contractor. A steam oven has remained out of service for several months. There is insufficient slack in the system to allow for reasonable accommodation of such ongoing threats to safe food preparation.

- 7.5 The provision of special diets for medical or religious purposes is occasionally problematic, not least because of the meagre budget allocated for food. Whilst the catering staff are both resourceful and imaginative in providing food for the range of religious festivals which are celebrated throughout the year, there are glitches. The prison typically accommodates very few Jewish prisoners but several have expressed concern that they have a relative lack of menu choice. There have also been occasional examples of prisoners requiring a gluten free diet not having access to appropriate menu choices. Towards the end of the reporting year an issue of responsiveness to the dietary needs of chronic diabetics has also been raised. Typically, prisoners are presented with carbohydrate heavy choices. Meal times, with the final meal in the day being served by 5 pm, appear to be particularly problematic for diabetic prisoners.
- 7.6 The misplacing of prisoner property which has caused concern for the past two years is a continuing anxiety for many prisoners. As the data on applications suggests, the volume of property applications has decreased over the past year. Investigation suggests that this decline in applications is because prisoners are now aware that the Board redirects them to use the prison complaints system and the PPO. Analysis of applications and conversations with prisoners suggests either an absence of resources or resolve on the part of the institutions with responsibilities for prisoners' property or a failure to communicate. Complaints to other prisons routinely go unanswered for considerable periods of time. The loss of personal items, particularly photographs and letters, causes the prisoners concerned distress and a sense of injustice.
- 7.7 Whilst the majority of property appears to go missing as a result of transfers from one prison to another, increasingly the Board has received complaints relating to property lost as a result of Onley cell searches. In such cases the appropriate documentation is not consistently completed making the location of lost property more problematic. In the context of a decline in the number of general property related applications (see 7.6) there has been an increase in the number relating to property losses within the prison.

8. HEALTHCARE (including mental health and social care)

- 8.1 Prisoners' access to medical care is broadly at least comparable to that on offer for the population outside prison. Waiting lists for dentistry and GP appointments have reduced over the past year. Hospital appointments are arranged as appropriate with no apparent disruption because of escort shortages.
- 8.2 The Board has no evidence that engagements between healthcare staff and prisoners are other than professional and courteous and care is typically taken to reassure prisoners who have anxieties about aspects of their treatment.
- 8.3 There have been occasions during the year when scheduled hospital appointments have fallen victim to officer shortages.
- 8.4 Waiting times for ambulances have been a cause for concern over the past year with unacceptable delays occurring in several cases compounding prisoner distress and creating additional anxieties for staff.
- 8.5 The prison has had cause to complain on several occasions during the past year about an apparent unwillingness on the part of its out of hours medical partners to respond to requests to visit. Whilst this failure has not resulted in any significant deterioration in a prisoner's condition it has the potential to have a calamitous outcome at worst and is arguably inhumane.
- 8.6 The Board has detected certain inconsistencies of response to situations where prisoners fail to attend medical appointments. Failure to turn up appears to arise for a variety of reasons:
- because newly arrived prisoners do not understand the procedure for notifying them of an appointment;
 - because certain prisoners feel highly vulnerable to threats if they move off their wing;
 - because, and this appears to be particularly true of prisoners suffering from depression or anxiety, they cannot motivate themselves to attend.
- Typically, but not consistently so, officers or medical staff will intervene to ensure that the prisoner is seen by the appropriate practitioner. However, it appears that this system is not fail safe and as such is potentially dangerous to the health and well-being of the individual concerned.
- 8.7 As is indicated (6.3) the prison's healthcare system was undermined by a slow internal and external response to a prisoner's very acute deteriorating mental health.

EDUCATION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

- 9.1 Onley offers a diversity of educational opportunities leading to nationally recognised qualifications. Currently these operate at 70% efficiency which, although exceeding the benchmark for London prisons is nonetheless indicative of opportunities lost to a population whose prior perception of education is typically lukewarm at best and more frequently negative. Staffing restrictions result in delayed allocation to classes which impairs the efficiency of the overall provision. As with vocational training and employment educational activities are vulnerable to staff absence and restrictions imposed by the regime. (see sections 10.3 and 10.4)
- 9.2 In broad terms, educational activities, evidenced by feedback, are well received by prisoner's – this reflects the good teaching observed by Ofsted and the commitment to improvement exhibited by the education staff. Once prisoners are allocated to classes their attainment and progression are good. Whilst computer based learning is undermined by poor hardware and software, the teaching environment is enhanced by instructional displays and posters and examples of prisoners' work. The latter in particular serve to motivate and increase prisoners' sense of self-worth.
- 9.3 Library provision is good in terms of opening hours, with a diverse stock of books and informative leaflets and posters. Librarians track usage and have proved responsive to supplying specific books for prisoners detailed within the segregation unit.
- 9.4 In the first half of the reporting year access to the gym appeared to be chaotic with sessions scheduled in a way which of necessity withdrew prisoners from their workplace or classes. Sessions were all too frequently cancelled because of the deployment of specialist staff to wing duties. The situation is now clearer and more coherent with gym sessions incorporated as part of the new IEP strategy outside the standard working day. The change in the allocation of gym sessions has also impacted favorably on educational and work sessions as prisoners are now not routinely removed from classes/workshops to attend the gym reducing disruption and barriers to prisoners' successful achievement of learning outcomes. (See also 10.4)
- 9.5 During the reporting year, there were no opportunities for in cell education. In addition to the implications of this absence for prisoners confined to the segregation unit for any length of time (see 6.3) this appears to be a lost opportunity to enhance the cognitive and emotional well-being of the minority of prisoners who elect to confine themselves to their cell.

10 WORK, VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

- 10.1 Onley's range of training and employment opportunities is impressive. Prisoners have access to a wide range of workshops and facilities with the capacity to harness and develop skills and allow them to accrue nationally recognised qualifications thereby enhancing their employability. Ricoh, DHL and Halfords are amongst three of the national companies currently creating such opportunities whilst more local links have been established with an FE institution offering a range of building trade linked courses with built in opportunities for prisoner progression. The prison runs a successful training café staffed by prisoners. When observed and interviewed about their employment prisoners generally seem both interested and positive about the experiences and there is considerable competition to be recruited by some of the workshops. Workshop staff are typically enthusiastic; engaging well with prisoners and modelling high standards of conduct, workmanship and expectations.
- 10.2 In contrast to this generally positive picture, at least one of the workshops fails to offer a high level of employment or skill challenge and the work ethos appears to be minimal. There has been an articulated prisoner perception that this is a location for the disaffected and disengaged. As such it appears to be counterproductive as a mechanism for developing skills, a work ethic and a sense of being a potentially valuable and valued member of the community.
- 10.3 The allocation of prisoners to work appears to be a relatively slow process resulting in newly arrived prisoners being under occupied for longer than is desirable. Routine monitoring of the Induction Wing typically shows a significant proportion of the prisoners not engaged in work or education. This appears to be a consequence of understaffing in the relevant department and is something which is apparently now being addressed.
- 10.4 Disruption to the daily pattern of work has also been a feature of the regime during the reporting year. Haircuts, gym sessions and staff shortages have all contributed to this situation with the consequent presence of many prisoners on the wings during working hours. However, there is a management commitment to establishing a work pattern which more realistically mirrors the external world of work. As the reporting year drew to an end the Governor had established the practice of writing directly to individual prisoners who demonstrated a history of recalcitrance over employment. This appears to be having the desired effect of increasing engagement.
- 10.5 The relatively low rates of pay have been a long-standing complaint of prisoners at Onley which has generally contributed to disgruntlement and a low sense of self-worth. The current Governor has been striving to overcome this historical anomaly by achieving greater sector parity in this area with effect from May 2017.

11. RESETTLEMENT PREPARATION

- 11.1 As has been indicated the backlog of OASys reports, although diminishing, continues to inhibit sentence planning. Similarly, Offender Management and Resettlement Staff and prisoners have identified problems with liaising with London based probation officers. This problem appears to be particularly acute in the 12-week pre-release period.
- 11.2 IMB members have encountered several instances of prisoners placed in Onley whose progression is dependent on participation in specific courses which are not available in the prison. This is unfair and particularly frustrating and demoralising to the individuals concerned.
- 11.3 Despite these external barriers the Resettlement Team appear to be extremely effective at managing the challenges associated with resettlement. The dedicated resettlement wing and the resettlement team's open-door policy combine to offer prisoners appropriate levels of practical and emotional support at a potentially challenging period in their lives. When questioned about this support prisoners were extremely positive and felt well served by the institution. Data suggest that the majority have bank accounts opened, housing confirmed and employment or education awaiting them. Figures for January 2017, for example, when 23 prisoners were released, appear to be fairly typical. 100% had settled accommodation, all had bank accounts organised and 69% were either in education or employment. In rare cases where prisoners are discharged with no fixed abode the Resettlement Team directs them to their local council and follows up for the next 28 days to confirm that the individuals concerned are not sleeping on the streets.
- 11.4 The Resettlement Team has developed a range of initiatives designed to reduce the risk of reoffending. These initiatives include the use of a consultant expert on gang violence and the introduction of parenting modules.
- 11.5 The omission from the Resettlement Team of a debt counsellor is a cause for concern. The IMB receives ad hoc requests from prisoners about this issue which obviously causes individuals worry about the impact of debt on their family and on their chances of successful resettlement.
- 11.6 Whilst, as has been indicated (5.8), the prison seeks to promote family links the reality is that many prisoners receive no or very few family visitors because of the prison's relative inaccessibility. Significant numbers of prisoners raise this as an issue with IMB members and again this prolonged lack of personal contact with family members undermines the resettlement process.
- 11.7 In general terms the training and education opportunities offered by Onley prepare prisoners for employment, although arguably current regime constraints prevent realistic exposure to the sustained reality of a working day. The employer links referred to (10.1) and the relationship with Employability Plus enhances employment chances

C. Section – Work of Board

Over the past twelve months the Board has fulfilled its role by undertaking the following activities:

- weekly rota visits;
- written and verbal responses to applications;
- engaging with prisoners during wing visits;
- observing a range of prison meetings including the prisoner council;
- attending all segregation reviews;
- monthly Board training sessions;
- annual Team Performance Review;
- attending Serious Incidents;
- visiting another establishment;
- responding to a national committee of enquiry request;
- engaging in a focused investigation into visits within the prison;
- participating in national training sessions and conferences.

The Board's recruitment practices have sought to demonstrate an appropriate commitment to equality. Over the past six months the Board's composition has become increasingly diverse in terms of ethnicity, disability, gender and age.

As the table below indicates the Board has struggled throughout the reporting year with declining membership. The incoming Chair resigned within three months and, with full support of the Board, the former incumbent assumed responsibility. Two members resigned in November and the Vice Chair took sabbatical leave, and subsequently resigned, in the week before she was scheduled to take over the Chair's role. Once again, the former Chair continued in the role. Whilst the Board addressed the recruitment challenge as early as October, the benefits of four new members will not be felt until later in the new reporting year and in any case, will still leave a shortfall in membership.

BOARD STATISTICS	
Recommended Complement of Board Members	19
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	9
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	8
Total number of visits to the Establishment	515
Total number of segregation reviews attended	278

D Section - Applications

Code	Subject	Current reporting year	Previous reporting year
A	Accommodation including laundry, clothing, ablutions	9	12
B	Discipline including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	8	7
C	Equality	1	1
D	Purposeful Activity including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	28	23
E 1	Letters, visits, phones, public protection restrictions	4	21
E 2	Finance including pay, private monies, spends	7	10
F	Food and kitchens	8	9
G	Health including physical, mental, social care	12	28
H 1	Property within this establishment	24	19
H 2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	37	65
H 3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	9	20
I	Sentence management including HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	57	162
J	Staff/prisoner concerns including bullying	19	19
K	Transfers	39	50
	Total number of IMB applications	262	446