



**Annual Report**  
of the  
**Independent Monitoring Board**  
at  
**HMP OAKWOOD**

**for Reporting Year**

**April 2016 – March 2017**

**Published**  
**August 2017**



*Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

### Introductory Sections

| <b>Section</b> | <b>Topic</b>                        | <b>Page</b> |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>1</b>       | <b>Statutory Role</b>               | <b>3</b>    |
| <b>2</b>       | <b>Executive Summary</b>            | <b>4</b>    |
| <b>3</b>       | <b>Description of Establishment</b> | <b>8</b>    |

### Evidence Sections

|           |                                                             |           |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>4</b>  | <b>Safety</b>                                               | <b>10</b> |
| <b>5</b>  | <b>Equality and Fairness</b>                                | <b>14</b> |
| <b>6</b>  | <b>Segregation/Care and Separation Unit</b>                 | <b>17</b> |
| <b>7</b>  | <b>Accommodation (including communication)</b>              | <b>18</b> |
| <b>8</b>  | <b>Healthcare (including mental health and social care)</b> | <b>20</b> |
| <b>9</b>  | <b>Education and Other Activities</b>                       | <b>21</b> |
| <b>10</b> | <b>Work, Vocational Training and Employment</b>             | <b>22</b> |
| <b>11</b> | <b>Resettlement Preparation</b>                             | <b>23</b> |

|  |                                |           |
|--|--------------------------------|-----------|
|  | <b>The Work of the IMB</b>     | <b>25</b> |
|  | <b>Applications to the IMB</b> | <b>27</b> |

## 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**

This report presents the findings of the Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) at HMP Oakwood for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017. IMB evidence comes from observations made on prison visits, scrutiny of records and of data, informal contact with prisoners and staff and from prisoner applications forms.

Within the reporting period the IMB are pleased to note the ongoing progress that the prison has made in relation to its performance against comparator groups. The prison's practice of involving prisoners in managing their own affairs has continued to be successful. The year has seen the increase in the number of Listeners, the development of the Help and Support Line, the ongoing development of the Prisoner User Voice Council and Your Consultation Group.

Staff churn does however continue to be an area of concern. The numbers of officers under the age of 25 to those of other ages appears to be increasing and is often commented upon by prisoners who do not always find it easy to talk to younger officers. The management run frequent recruitment campaigns and the IMB are satisfied that everything is being done that can be. However, we have to note that the prison is located in an area offering many job opportunities in competition with the prison, including two other public prisons on the same site. On several occasions the staffing status has been deemed to be acute and volunteers from the staff were requested to cover shifts. We are concerned that some new recruits do not last on the wings for long before seeking alternative employment. As a way of addressing this, early in their training, new recruits are now exposed to interaction with prisoners on the wings in order that they are better prepared about the role of a Prison Custody Officer. A total of 165 recruits have been trained over the reporting year.

---

### **Main judgements**

---

#### **Are prisoners treated fairly?**

The IMB are of the view that prisoners are treated fairly by both the management team and staff at the prison.

#### **Are prisoners treated humanely?**

In general, the Board can state that within the reporting period the prison, with the current management team, have ensured that all prisoners are treated humanely and that discipline is used appropriately. We are satisfied with the general diligence and security. The increased and ongoing threat of illegal items such as drugs and mobile phones entering the prison using drones, throw overs and passes during visits is managed very well with a good detection rate.

#### **Are prisoners prepared well for their release?**

The IMB are of the view that prisoners are not prepared well for release. There is no target set for the prison in relation to Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) but across the reporting year there has been 3 months where no prisoners were subject to ROTL and the highest number was 44 out of 1605 for one month. The total for the reporting year was 227. Whilst the reason for this is the change in ROTL policies and regulations set nationally for CAT B. The board remains concerned that this has an effect on the rehabilitation and resettlement of prisoners at Oakwood However the prison have set targets themselves which are monitored monthly and the information available indicates that: - In relation to going into employment the target was 30% and only 18.2% was achieved; in relation to training and education there was a target of 10% and only 0.7% was achieved. However, prisoners leaving custody and going into accommodation was a success at 98.6%, which exceeded the target of 87%

## **Main Areas for Development**

---

### **TO THE MINISTER**

There are no matters that the Board wish to bring to the attention of the Minister.

### **TO THE PRISON SERVICE**

The transfer of prisoners' private property across the prison estate remains a concern, particularly when the compensation claims for loss of property by prisoners are taken into consideration. The cost in time and effort in locating such items is of concern financially but also absorbs a tremendous amount of time trying to track down the lost property by the officers at HMP Oakwood and the IMB Board members.

### **TO THE DIRECTOR AND SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM**

- How can improvements be made to the staffing at the prison bearing in mind the churn of staff over the last year? (See page 4)
- How can the reduction in the numbers of Mental Health nurses be monitored to ensure that the Mental Health needs of prisoners are not compromised? (See page 20)
- There are ongoing problems with recruiting a Church of England Minister for the prison. Can work be undertaken with the Bishop of Lichfield to maximise efforts in recruiting a Minister to ensure that all faiths receive the support and guidance from the faith of their choice? (See page 15)
- How can improvements be made with security in the Chaplaincy Department? (See page 15)
- Some families with young children make long journeys for sometimes a 1- hour visit. What can be done to assist these families further to maximise time and travel costs? (See page 15)
- The information on the HMP Oakwood website in relation to bus times etc. is often incorrect. What can be done to improve this communication? (See page 15)
- The lack of information given to prisoners' families is a concern particularly if they do not have access to the internet. How can the SMT improve this communication? (See page 15)
- How can the prison ensure that all families and prisoners are aware of the support services that are available to them? (See page 16)
- How can the Director work with the Governors of HMP Featherstone and Brinsford to improve facilities for visitors waiting for a bus at the end of the drive? Currently there is no covered waiting area, leaving visitors and staff subject to the inclement elements. (See page 16)
- What steps can Healthcare put in place to ensure that the attendance at reviews in the Care & Separation Unit (CSU) is on time on all occasions? (See page 17)
- What steps can the SMT take to ensure that the IMB are informed when prisoners are kept on constant watch on all house blocks? (See page 17)
- What steps can be taken to ensure that the food once on the house blocks remains hot and sufficient food is provided for the numbers on each house block? (See page 18)

- What steps can the SMT take to ensure that prisoners employed in the serveries wear the correct protective clothing on all occasions? (See page 18)
- What steps can be taken to ensure that the issue in relation to who is responsible for the washing of servery protective clothing is resolved? (See page 18)
- Whilst it is recognised that end of life care is satisfactory and has had a good audit recently .What steps can be made further improve the end of life care for the growing number of elderly and vulnerable prisoners? (See page18)
- What steps are the SMT taking to monitor the impact of the introduction of the double cells in the prison? (See page 18)
- What steps are the SMT taking to ensure that there are sufficient work places available in the prison with the increase to 2106 prisoners? (See page 22)
- What steps are being taken to improve the links with employers in the area? (See page 22)
- What steps can be taken to improve the information coming from other prisons when prisoners are transferred? (See page 23)
- What steps can the SMT take to reduce the number of complaints in relation to Healthcare? (See page 27)
- What steps will the SMT take to ensure that there are sufficient education places available to meet the needs within the prison? (See page 21)

## Improvements

---

### Issues from 2015/6 report

- Healthcare not including emergencies - there have been issues with escorts for outpatient hospital appointments. There is provision for 4 escorts daily, two in the morning and 2 in the afternoon. However, the number of escorts is not sufficient for the demand of a large prison population. During the year 80% of hospital appointments have had to be rescheduled due to emergencies and prioritising of patients. For the same patients, this breaches 18-week waiting times for hospital appointments. This is a major cause for concern and adds to the frustration of prisoners. We also presume that this incurs an unnecessary cost to the local NHS service due to cancelled appointments.  
*Whilst some improvements have been made (as of December 2016 the number of escorts was increased to 8 per day) there are still occasions when it is not possible to have escorts to take prisoners to hospital, particularly if the prisoner requires several officers owing to challenging behaviour.*
- Healthcare - the policy for pain relief required during the night is being discussed but is yet to be formalised. This needs urgent consideration as the prison does not have Healthcare staff in the prison at night and is reliant on out of hours agency. The Board also considers that nurses need to be based on house blocks and CSU rather than all in the Healthcare Department building  
*Paracetamol is now available for prisoners to purchase on canteen and can be retained in-cell, except for prisoners in the CSU. There are also triage nurses based on the wings and in CSU.*
- Healthcare - the entire top floor of the Healthcare Department at the prison remains “mothballed” due to its change in status from Category B to Category C when

commissioned. The Board's concern is that unnecessary costs are being incurred by NHS and G4S due to prisoners having to be transported to hospital when some of the necessary facilities are available in the "mothballed facility". This facility could also service the 2 adjacent HMP establishments, creating a greater cost saving to the NHS, Ministry of Justice and G4S and of course the risk always associated with prisoners being transported to and treated at local hospitals.

*Whilst we were advised that discussions were taking place in relation to the use of the accommodation it does not appear that the space will become available as an in-patient facility, despite the growth of the elderly population in the prison. The accommodation is currently used as a training facility.*

- Healthcare - the Board have monitored a slight increase in the numbers of prisoners self-harming and those suffering from mental health issues. The Board considers that an increase in Mental Health Nursing facilities is required throughout the establishment  
*Whilst self-harming in the prison has reduced the Board are concerned that the number of qualified Mental Health Nurses has also reduced at a time when the mental health needs of some prisoners has increased.*
  
- The Board is aware of numerous issues with the loss of property when prisoners transfer between establishments. This appears to be an ongoing issue nationally and is not just an issue at Oakwood; virtually every IMB board deals with countless issues of missing property. This appears to relate to the prisoner transport escort vehicles being unable to carry the property at the time of transfer due to lack of storage and space on the vehicles. The implications of cost in time absorbed by prison staff alone indicate the need for a major review and action is required to remedy this ever-ongoing situation and cost.  
*This continues to be an issue across the prison estate and no improvement has been evidenced at HMP Oakwood.*
  
- The Board is concerned that during the reporting period no prisoners have been allowed ROTL to enable them to work outside of the prison environment, which is a requirement of the resettlement programme. With no scope for ROTL the progress for prisoners towards release is limited.  
*There has been some improvement with the numbers of prisoners allowed ROTL but this is not consistent and the prison is well below its target*
  
- The Board is concerned with the number of drugs entering the establishment despite the security measures currently in place. The Board is also concerned about the long-term effects on prisoners of the use of drugs such as Black Mamba which are entering prisons. This is very much a priority concern of the Board. The Board urges the government to make such drugs illegal as soon as possible.  
*There have been a substantial number of measures taken to stop drugs getting into the prison, which has had some positive effects, but this remains a problem.*

## ▪ DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

---

### **Main role**

HMP Oakwood opened on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2012. It is operated by G4S through a contract with the National Offender Management Service (NOMS); it had an operational capacity of 1605 until a revamp commenced in July 2016 and by the end of March 2017 is now 2106. The staffing group is diverse and represents a good mix of ethnic backgrounds.

The prison is well maintained with flower beds created by prisoners in the general areas and on some House blocks.

A NOMS Controller, Deputy Controller and Assistant Controller are based within the prison and are active in the control and management of the contract between G4S and NOMS. The NOMS Controller was seconded to HMP Birmingham during the latter part of the reporting period.

**Category** C although built to a Category B standard.

### **Main providers of Healthcare, Education, CRC (Resettlement), Maintenance etc.**

GEOAmev (transport to and from other prisons)

DHL (ordering and delivery of canteen items)

Aramark (catering services)

Worcestershire Primary Healthcare Trust (until 1<sup>st</sup> April) and then Care UK (health care provision)

Milton Keynes College (education provision). OLASS is delivered by Milton Keynes College

Staffordshire Library Services

Lloyds Pharmacy Services

### **Main voluntary providers**

All Nations Church

Members of the Chaplaincy Team

Help & Advice Line for Offender's Wives, Partners and Families (HALOW)

Kids Club Network

Storybook Dads (CREATE)

Prison Reform Trust

Shannon Trust

### **Accommodation and Facilities**

The prison has the following accommodation units; -

- Ash (vulnerable prisoners) at the beginning of the reporting period 492 places and currently 662.
- Beech (Mainstream prisoners) at the beginning of the reporting period 476 places and currently 647
- Cedar (mainstream prisoners) including Chestnut 476 places at the beginning of the reporting period and currently 636. Chestnut is a part of Cedar house block
- Douglas (lifers and indeterminate sentence prisoners) 91 places
- Elm (Family support) 70 places
- CSU has 24 standard cells, 2 dirty protest cells and 2 special case cells

Cells are equipped with a WC, shower, wash basin, and telephone (restricted through a prisoner telephone (PIN) system) bed and storage. With the increase in the number of places offered at the prison (501) a substantial number of cells have had bunk beds installed which has reduced the space available to the occupants.

Elm continues to develop its role as a Family unit and several programmes have been introduced to help prisoners maintain positive relationships with family members and children. At the end of the reporting period it has been announced that ELM may become a Drug Recovery Unit. Whilst the work on ELM will transfer to another house block this announcement has not been well received by prisoners currently on the house block. Healthy Living wings are available on each of the house blocks.

Ash and Beech have their own induction wings. Ash in its role as the unit for vulnerable prisoners has seen the age of the prisoners increase and their abilities decrease and several prisoners are now using wheelchairs or mobility aids.

There are several cells that have been adapted for wheelchair users and for the use of Listeners.

Each house block has an education block and a total of 420 education places are provided each morning and afternoon by Milton Keynes College each day across the prison site

There is a wide range of opportunities for prisoners to work in and learn new skills in preparation for life outside prison.

#### Any uncommon features

An aviary has been installed for a Harris Hawk and it is intended that one of the prisoners on ASH will be tasked with caring for the bird upon arrival.

Changes over the last year

- The change of contractor within Healthcare to Care UK took place in April 2016
- The opening of Skills C in July 2016
- Farms and Gardens has been changed to a Mechanical Plant and Construction Training Area to enable prisoners to learn building and engineering techniques, hopefully preparing prisoners for a trade upon release. The horticultural activities are continuing to take place across the estate and have helped to enhance bare areas of the establishment.

The Health Advisory Service (HAS) is organised by prisoners and supports them with health related matter, a presentation was given at Stafford University about the service. This is an area the Board feel should be promoted with other prisons.

## B Evidence sections 4 – 11

---

### 3 SAFETY

---

This has not been an area for a thematic review however the IMB can comment as follows

\*The prison has a good admission process whereby the prison staff and a nurse work closely together alongside at least 2 trusted prisoners. This means that overall the assessment on arrival at HMP Oakwood is carefully managed and the prisoners' needs are catered for. The Admissions Team have been very busy over the year with the increase in numbers and with the transfer of prisoners from HMP Birmingham following the recent concerted indiscipline and the staff and prisoners working in Reception should be commended for the work they have undertaken. The IMB have been impressed with the cheerful and welcoming reception that prisoners receive on arrival at the prison.

\* In May 2016, there were 24 Listeners in the prison and additional prisoners were being trained. There are Listeners cells on the house blocks and they provide support when required.

\* There is a Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) system in place which is used to manage the perpetrators of abuse.

\* Prisoners who are thought to be at risk may be made subject to an Assessment Care in Custody Teamwork (ACCT). The prison currently has 28 trained assessors and 64 trained case managers.

\* A safer custody Audit was undertaken in the late spring of 2016 and received a green outcome.

\* An internal security audit took place in February 2017—and achieved a Green outcome.

\*Security and Drug Strategy Meetings are held monthly and the IMB attend as observers. A range of topics are discussed including mobile phone blockers, prisoner movements, exercise yard lighting and the use of body-worn cameras.

\* The telephone number of the Samaritans is included on the prisoner telephone number system (PIN).

\*Mandatory Drug Testing (MDT) programme is in place and now encompasses the testing of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS).

\*There is an ongoing issue in relation to the use of drones around the prison but the IMB are of the view that the Security Department, together with the Police and two other HMP establishments adjacent to Oakwood, are proactive in dealing with this issue as far as they are able.

\*Birds of Prey are being introduced to the prison in the new reporting year.

\*The SMT have a zero tolerance to assaults against staff and refer any assaults to the Police. During the reporting year one prisoner received 19 months for such an incident.

\*The staffing levels in the Drug Misuse Team have been reduced meaning that caseloads are high. In Sept 2015 there were 25 staff; as of October 2016 there were only 11 directly involved.

\*There is evidence obtained through Security Information Reports (SIR) that there is a high level of activity in bringing drugs into the prison to trade. There have been several incidents that have involved prisoners under the influence of drugs.

\*Drones continue to present challenges and in October 2016 a drone was found in the grounds with a large package which contained mobile phones and a quantity of Mamba.

\*A range of drugs have been found within the prison, including Ecstasy, cannabis, steroids, testosterone tablets, heroin and opiates and every effort is being made by the security staff to tackle the problem and several steps have been made.

- In June 2016 six males, were seen outside the perimeter fence of the prison. Shortly afterwards a drone was found inside the prison grounds and a quantity of drugs were seized.
- Lighting in the exercise yards is being improved and fire and rip proof netting is now being installed.
- Discussions take place between Police on site and Staffordshire Police on a weekly basis and this ensures closer liaison regarding referred cases
- 148 body-worn cameras have been introduced, including a small number to Healthcare staff based on the wings
- In October 2016, a case was successfully heard against a prisoner who had been trafficking drugs in the prison and an additional 2 years were added to his sentence.
- Several drones and throw overs have been successfully intercepted.
- Following the disturbances at HMP Birmingham additional security chains have been fitted to strategic gates within the estate.
- Two members of staff were suspended following an intelligence report. This is now subject to the court process.
- A portable metal detector has been acquired and has been successful in locating unauthorised mobile phones, especially during night patrols.
- The number of failures in MDTs has risen dramatically since the introduction of tests relating to the detection for NPS from approx. 10% to 30%.
- A house block is to be subject to a change of use in order that drug abusers can receive intensive support during a period of sustained abstinence in order for them to remain drug free.

\* Prisoners entering HMP Oakwood with Alcohol related problems are also evident and Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) is available in the prison to provide help and support

\*With the acute shortage of staff several courses which were organised to assist prisoners have been suspended e.g. Healthy Living course, Health and Nutrition, Health and Fitness, Yoga and Body composition measurement.

\*Comments have been made by prisoners that induction can be too intense and much goes over their heads. Efforts are being made by lecturers from Milton Keynes College to reinforce the induction process and bring speakers into classes to clarify services that are available.

The following Deaths in Custody have occurred

7<sup>th</sup> April 2016 Mr DH

Recommendations from the Prison and Probation Ombudsman's (PPO) independent investigation were:

- The Director and Head of Healthcare should ensure that requests for prisoners to go to hospital are prioritised; and that there is a clear and auditable process to ensure that appointments are arranged without delay.
- The Director and Head of Healthcare should ensure that all staff undertaking risk assessments for prisoners taken to hospital understand the legal position and that assessments fully consider the health of a prisoner and are based on the risk the prisoner presents at the time

The inquest was held in September 2016 and a verdict of Death by Natural Causes was recorded.

12<sup>th</sup> July 2016 Mr T M

At the Coroners Court on the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2017, the Coroner pronounced that Mr T M's death was from natural causes. However, there were three recommendations made by the Medical Reviewer

1 That staff should ensure that an ambulance is called if a Code Blue is received. The Coroner heard that this had been implemented by way of an instruction issued by the Director of HMP Oakwood in September 2016. The Coroner accepted this.

2 The Head of Healthcare should ensure that all records of medication are accurate and reviewed. The Head of Healthcare outlined several process changes that had been made and the Coroner accepted this.

3 The Head of Healthcare should ensure that ongoing monitoring of conditions, such as high blood pressure and the requirement for urgent blood tests should be managed more effectively. The Head of Healthcare explained further changes to processes and the method of information flow that had been made to ensure that these issues were managed more effectively. The Coroner accepted this.

30<sup>th</sup> August 2016 Mr D H

5<sup>th</sup> October 2016 Mr K A

11<sup>th</sup> October Mr ST 2016 (prisoner died 3<sup>rd</sup> Jan 2016) inquest adjourned

8<sup>th</sup> December 2016 Mr M G

15<sup>th</sup> January 2017 Mr K M

23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017 Mr P M

The Board acknowledge the care and attention paid to families of the deceased, counselling of prisoners near the situation and friends of the deceased. This help is also extended to staff members who were involved who were shown compassion and care.

A number of serious incidents have occurred and in monitoring this the Board are concerned that they are not always informed within acceptable time scales that an incident is taking place and the Command Suite has been opened. Whilst information is now being provided by the CSU in relation to admissions and incidents this is not done on a consistent basis.

## 4 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS

---

The Board has not undertaken a thematic review in relation to protected characteristics and equality related issues during this reporting year.

The Measuring of Quality of Prison Life Survey (MQPL) was last carried out in February 2016. There were some outcomes that gave rise to concerns and several emerging issues were noted

~ The presence of illicit drugs and safety.

~ Participants were notably more negative than in the previous survey regarding the level of drug use being high and drugs causing a lot of problems between prisoners.

~ This was also the case regarding the extent to which participants felt that the prison prevented drugs from being smuggled in and that staff allegedly turned a blind eye when prisoners broke the rules.

~ Notably more negative than typical perceptions towards statements in the Prisoner Adaptation Dimension, appear to suggest prisoners at HMP Oakwood were more likely to feel the need to get involved in trade than the average training prison.

~ Although participants were notably more negative than typical regarding there being a lot of threats and bullying, certain prisoners running the wings and weak prisoners getting badly exploited and bullied at HMP Oakwood, perceptions towards statements regarding safety were like a typical training establishment. This included those referring to the delivery of personal safety, feeling relaxed and safe around other prisoners and staff responding promptly to incidents and alarms.

~ Perceptions of maintaining family contact were improved.

~ The living conditions were regarded as decent, clean, modern and well equipped.

~ Healthcare was a popular topic for participant's negative comments.

~ Prisoners were negative about having to ask repeatedly to get things done.

Since the survey was undertaken the prison are to be commended for undertaking wider involvement and carrying out more selective surveys to test the quality of life.

### **The Board has undertaken a thematic review of the Chaplaincy and has the following comments**

The Chaplaincy is situated in a Multi-Faith Centre. The aim is to help support and inspire and to respect the integrity of all traditions and cultures. During the reporting period there has been one full time vacancy which has had an impact on the team. There is however, a Chaplain on call 24 hours a day on a rota basis. There is extensive information on the prison Kiosk system in relation to the provision and services available from Chaplaincy. This is supplemented by a notice board on each wing which is updated weekly.

The Duty Chaplain sees all prisoners at induction, and daily visits are made to prisoners in CSU. Appropriate systems are in place to notify the Duty Chaplain of any prisoners who are seriously ill, suicidal or in the event of death.

All faiths and creeds are catered for in the prison and many of the Chaplaincy Team provide their services on a voluntary basis. The All Nations Church provided all the prisoners with a mug containing sweets, a Christmas card and a pair of socks, which were handed out on Christmas Day. This was much appreciated by the prisoners. Through the Angel Tree Project over 150 gifts were given to prisoners' children at Christmas.

There are plans to commence an Alpha Course (Evangelistic course, which seeks to introduce the basics of the Christian faith through a series of talks and discussions) and a Sycamore Tree Course (Victim Awareness programme that teaches the principles of restorative justice)

Periods for fasting and specialist diets are catered for across the prison. In addition, regular speakers are invited into the prison to celebrate events – for instance the Sikhism Founders Birthday Lecture. The prison has commenced providing faith artefacts e.g. increased number of Rastafarians has resulted in the provision of head gear purchased in bulk.

- There have been some problems with the collection of prisoners from the wings to go to the services. It was felt that coverage of Sunday morning services by officers was insufficient in number and it was agreed that a minimum of 2 officers must always be present.
- There are ongoing problems with recruiting a Church of England Minister at the prison which leaves a substantial number of prisoners without support from the minister of the faith of their choice. This has been drawn to the attention of the Bishop of Lichfield who has asked to visit the prison.
- There has been an incident following a service when prisoners were involved in an altercation.
- There was a knife found outside the chapel which raises the issue of safety for the Chaplaincy Team.
- The doubling up of cells has created some difficulties in relation to the diverse religious observances of some of the prisoners and the effect this can have if the prisoner sharing is not of the same faith.
- In August the Chaplaincy Team raised concerns about staff cover at Sunday services but to the credit of the Senior Management team action was taken to improve the shortfall.

### **The Board has undertaken a Thematic Review of Visits and has the following comments**

The Board is impressed with the facilities that are provided. The Visitor Centre is run by HALOW and is bright, warm and provides good facilities for refreshments, children activities, toilets and information. A new Visitor Forum has been commenced which is informal but includes those who are attending that day.

The facilities overall are good but the prison acknowledge that chairs and tables in the Small Visits Hall need replacing. Whilst the rooms used for visits are bright and airy they are not children centred – however prisoners have become involved in designing and painting murals to improve this area. Arrangements are also in hand to create a better area for nappy changing and to create an area for visitors to pray if required. There are some facilities for disabled visitors at the present time, including wheelchairs for loan for use throughout the visit, a lift to the visits floor and some provision for those with hearing problems but the board is of the view that this requires a review and improvement.

The Small Visits Hall lends itself better to family visits as there is no fixed seating. To compensate for the fixed seating in the large hall children's activity workers are available. Family links are encouraged throughout the prison for example Kids Club. The intervention is offered to the whole prison and men who attend are encouraged to move to ELM house block, and to apply for other courses such as Family Learning or become involved with the Barnardo's worker. The last PULSE survey on the emotional health of prisoners highlighted that some prisoners did not feel that they were supported in maintaining family ties so the prison intend to address this.

ROTL is being allowed in a limited way to support family events. The prison needs to consider developing a policy to support ROTL for this activity where appropriate and within the National Framework

The prison makes every attempt to promote family relationships. Adult family events are now offered for those with parents and siblings. There are family learning events for the whole family which are appreciated by the prisoners. There are also Relationship Courses available.

Many of the visitors spoken to by the Board complain about the long journeys that have to be made to see their loved one, often with young children. They complained that the prison website is not up to date with information about transport often inadequate or incorrect, adding to the pressures they already feel when visiting a prison.

The prison offers inter-prison visits when necessary, with the host being the higher category prison.

For those subject to closed visits a clear process is in place to review the position every month. As an initial step, prisoners could be placed on no contact visits and be monitored closely.

Prisoners are aware of their visiting entitlement but do complain that visits can be cut short when there is a large group of visitors going through security checks.

Visitors complained that they felt vulnerable waiting for a bus at the end of the drive – particularly on dark afternoons and evenings and in inclement weather.

#### Areas of Concern

- The long journeys families make with young children for an hour visit—some talked about leaving home at 5am to get to the prison by 12 noon.
- The incorrect information on the Oakwood website in relation to bus services.
- The lack of information given to prisoners' families by the prison about visits and facilities that is available for them to maintain family relationships, particularly if they do not have access to the internet.
- The need to improve the visits area for visitors with disabilities.
- There is a need for the prison to ensure that all prisoners are aware of the services available to support family links.
- The prison needs to develop a policy in relation to the use of ROTL to support family events where appropriate and within the national Framework and prison procedures

## 5 SEGREGATION/CARE AND SEPARATION UNIT

The Board has undertaken a Thematic Review of Visits and have the following comments.

The CSU is visited on a regular weekly basis and all prisoners are seen by a Board Member. Through this process we can ensure that each prisoner located in the CSU is following a plan, which is aimed at returning him to mainstream location if at all possible.

The accommodation is similar to that on the house blocks but is regularly damaged by prisoners located on the unit and the Board have observed that some cells look tired and in need of some upgrading. However, the bedding provided is clean and prisoners are encouraged to keep the cell and themselves clean and tidy.

The Board was not being informed of new arrivals to the CSU but this has been recently rectified. A technical problem rather than human error was the basis for the omission.

The thematic review has been able to determine that all the appropriate paper work is maintained in the CSU and systems are in place in relation to reviews. Prisoners are provided with information about the reasons for being in the CSU and are given the opportunity at reviews to ask questions. The Director and SMT visit on a regular basis to talk to the prisoners.

The Board is concerned that the CSU appeared to have staffing shortages on occasions, which can be illustrated by staff being unable to operate a 3-Officer unlock on occasions or to provide officers to stay with a prisoner who required close supervision within the Healthcare Department. During the year this resulted in a serious incident at height within Health Care when it was necessary for the National Tornado Team to be called.

Following a number of incidents a heavy-duty Perspex cover has been fitted to the railings on the upper floor in the CSU to prevent prisoners from climbing over.

The atmosphere in CSU on occasions gives rise for concern as the prisoners can be volatile and play to an audience when placed in cells facing the concourse where prisoners walk from work placements back to house blocks.

On occasions when a dirty protest takes place, the Board are concerned that the bespoke Dirty Protest Cells are not always brought into use.

The Board are unable to determine if authority is correctly given when a prisoner is segregated, as this can occur when Board members are not present. However, a procedure is now in place for the Duty Director to give approval and checks can be made at review that the procedure has been followed correctly.

The Board takes care to monitor reviews –it is rare that a member of the Board is not present at the review and the outcomes are monitored carefully and any concerns raised with the Director weekly. There have been concerns that on occasions reviews are delayed as Healthcare professionals are late in attending. Overall the reviews are well chaired, with the prisoner present and focus on plans to enable a move back to the normal environment as soon as possible.

The Board are aware of prisoners being held in the CSU pending a Police investigation. On occasions there have been concerns about the length of time a prisoner can remain in CSU whilst these investigations take place.

There are prisoners kept behind cell doors on constant watch on house blocks but this information is not currently made available to the Board.

---

## 6 ACCOMMODATION (including communication)

---

This has not been an area where the Board has undertaken a Thematic Review, however from the weekly rota visits there have been ongoing concerns in several areas in relation to catering

- Food is often cold when served on the wings and complaints are often made by prisoners. Temperatures are taken by Board members and when they are too low the matter is brought to the attention of officers. The quality of the food is too frequently the subject of complaints from prisoners.
- Prisoners have not always been wearing the correct protective clothing and this has continued to occur throughout the year.
- The washing of clothing used in the serveries is an ongoing issue—the washing machines on the wings do not wash to a temperature that is high enough for infection control.

Residential Services is not an area where the Board has undertaken a detailed review. However, we have the following comments.

Overall the accommodation is clean and the SMT keep a close watch on this aspect of prison life.

Each cell has its own shower and toilet facilities –sadly with the increase in prisoners a substantial number of cells have been converted to sharing, thus reducing the privacy for prisoners. Risk assessments have been put into place to identify prisoners who would pose a risk if sharing.

There is concern about the difficulty the bunk beds could create for some of the older and larger prisoners and that shared cells have less space for storage of personal possessions. On Ash house block, the staff provide good support and care to those who are terminally ill or dying from Natural causes or age related conditions however there is no End of Life provision within the prison that afford space for family to visit when a prisoner is in the terminal stage of care. There are close links in place with Compton Hospice. It is unfortunate that the ward space in Healthcare could not be used for the care of prisoners whose life is coming to an end and where they could continue to receive support from friends and staff.

Induction units are in place on two of the house blocks and the SMT regularly review how prisoners should be managed in terms of space e.g. Chestnut Unit was set up on Cedar house block to work closely with each individual prisoner using a tailored progress plan to address issues that led to them being downgraded to basic IEP status. Chestnut Unit works closely with the Basic Intervention Group, Safer Custody Department and Programmes Department using the concepts of reward ethos. The aim is to understand the root cause of the poor behaviour and progression back to normal location.

The wing houses 56 single cells, 1 double cell and a disabled cell. Each cell has a phone linked to the PIN system.

### Causes for concern

- There is a need with the growing elderly population in the prison to consider better End of Life Care facilities.
- There is a need to keep a close watch on the double cells to determine if this arrangement is creating more situations where incidents occur and increase the need to place prisoners in CSU.

## Prison Council

Prisoner consultation meetings and actions are facilitated under the direction of the external organisation of User Voice.

The meetings are held monthly with approximately 20 prisoners attending to represent their house blocks. Every month members of the prisoner council meet the SMT and Department heads to discuss grievances and objectives.

There are a wide range of prisoner-led initiatives within the prison which is having a positive effect and the Director and the SMT should be proud of these initiatives and consider how they could be spread to other prisons. The Board also notes that the SMT have implemented and supported a range of initiatives in relation to charity work within the prison.

## 7 HEALTHCARE (including mental health and social care)

---

This has not been an area where the Board has undertaken a Thematic Review; however from the weekly rota visits we have the following comments and concerns in relation to healthcare provision –

The transition to Care UK from the previous provider went well with no major problems.

The Board is satisfied that Health Services are provided to all patients/prisoners as required. Care UK has introduced clinics led by nurses on some wings and this has been well received as has the nurse triage and dispensing of medication.

Care UK have arranged for specialist clinics to take place in the prison and have formed links with a hospital to enable the GP to have direct contact with a consultant.

All prisoners with mental health problems have a Care Co-ordinator who is responsible for the health and well-being of the prisoner whilst at HMP Oakwood. There remains a shortage nationally of secondary mental health beds, although regional beds can be utilised where appropriate to transfer prisoners to 24-hour healthcare. In the last reporting year, there have been 2 prisoners transferred to this facility

There is an ongoing problem of a shortage of nurses and a reliance on agency nurses. The prison has put in place a nurse-led process in Admissions to enable any prescription requirements to be dealt with on admission and discharge.

Prisoners are also allowed to have pain relief in cell and administer it themselves.

There has been some improvement with the number of visiting psychiatrists but at the same time the GP cover has been reduced and the number of Clinical Nurse Specialists has been increased. In addition, since April 2016 mental health and substance misuse services have been subcontracted to an inclusion service. There are psychological support services available.

At the present time, the Board has been advised that prisoners are seen within contracted timescales in relation to all outpatient requirements. We have however received some reports that prescriptions are not always available on time and in some cases, there has been a considerable delay as prescribed medication was not available.

A prisoner-led group Leading Individuals Forward Together (LIFT) is run on Ash house block. The aim is to provide support to those suffering from depression and anxiety.

Within the later part of the reporting period there has been Health in Justice Commissioners posts put in place. It is intended to hold a Local Delivery Board between Care UK and the Prison providers in the next reporting year.

Complaints have reduced following the transfer of the service to Care UK. But they still average at around 32 per month, which is of some concern.

There is a prisoner-led service HAS, which acts as a bridge between prisoners and the Healthcare provider.

### Concerns

- The number of complaints received in relation to healthcare provision
- The ongoing use of agency staff

## **EDUCATION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES**

---

This has not been an area where the Board has undertaken a Thematic Review.

## **8 WORK, VOCATIONAL TRAINING and EMPLOYMENT**

---

This has not been an area where the Board has undertaken a Thematic Review; however we have the following comment in relation to vocational training and employment provision –

- The main part of the commercial workshops is made up of assembly work; there is also recycling and carpentry available.
- Once a prisoner has been through the induction process they are allocated work within 24 hours mainly into the commercial workshop, from where they can apply for other positions. Attendance overall is good and is monitored daily by the SMT. Work is only cancelled for exceptional reasons.
- The Board believe on average 88% of prisoners are in work-related activities daily, and only 1- 2 % are in no work at all. The retired population are also involved in activities on the wings.
- The commercial workshop reflects the work available in factories which reflects the work available in the local area.
- All qualifications are to industry standards.
- At the present time, there are no strong links with employers in the area.
- In May 2016, there were on average 320 places available in this area including Skills for Success, Functional Skills, Bricklaying, Painting and Decorating and Window Fitting. A new course has commenced with Rail Track and other projects such as the Eureka project and Forklift training have come on board.
- A new Skills Centre was opened in July 2016 providing 8 large workshops.

### Concerns

- The Board are concerned that with the increase in prisoners there will not be sufficient work places available in the prison in the future.
- The Board are concerned that there are currently no strong links with employers in the area.

## **RESETTLEMENT PREPARATION**

---

This has not been an area where the Board has undertaken a Thematic Review; however we have the following comment in relation to Resettlement Preparation –

The Offender Management Unit (OMU) has been subject to a recent internal audit which scored 3 out of a possible 4. The audits encompass all aspects of the current management model and highlighted the effects that work not completed by previous establishments has on HMP Oakwood e.g. in January 2017 74 prisoners transferred into the prison without an Offender Assessment System (OASys) report mainly from HMP Birmingham. During the increase in the number of prisoners accommodated at HMP Oakwood a majority of prisoners were transferred in with incomplete paperwork.

The high level of complaints directed at the OMU during the early history of HMP Oakwood, have significantly reduced. Complaints now average at 25 a month with the majority being regarding Re-Categorisation or Home Detention Curfew (HDC) appeals.

Prisoners should arrive at HMP Oakwood with an initial Sentence Plan and a Start of Custody OASys. The work should be completed in the first 16 weeks after sentencing. A substantial number arrive at HMP Oakwood where this work has not been done.

Timings of Sentence Plans vary mainly due to the backlog. There are currently 354 prisoners who do not have an OASys – meaning 83% of the population does. Of the 354 approximately 200 will be the responsibility of the prison with the remainder being the responsibility of the Probation Service. Between 3/1/17 and 15/3/17 330 new prisoners arrived at HMP Oakwood with no OASys/Sentence Plan.

OMU Offender Supervisors do focus on the criminogenic side of the pathways to ensure that where offending behaviour is linked to Accommodation/Employment Training and Education/Finance/Drugs/ Alcohol/Thinking/Emotional Wellbeing/Health appropriate interventions are put in place or recommended.

HMP Oakwood has a very good relationship with Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) with 100% submissions of reports and attendance for MAPPA Level 3 cases. Positive comments have been received about the quality of the information and active part the OMU plays in specific cases.

Resettlement Co-ordinators are available to all prisoners and complete the Resettlement Induction Tool on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of the prison induction. On-going support is available throughout the sentence.

Three months prior to release prisoners are allocated to Resettlement Case Workers who assess support needs and provide any relevant support throughout the sentence.

The Resettlement Team is managed externally by a Head of Service and Senior Probation Officer. The Resettlement Team is not operating with a full complement of staff and this has impacted on service delivery and the poor performance against targets.

All prisoners have a bank account within 2 days of arrival in custody.

Whilst the performance in relation to obtaining accommodation for prisoners is good the performance in relation to Employment and Training and Education is poor.

Concerns -

- The Board are concerned about the low number of prisoners on ROTL throughout the reporting year
- The Board is concerned about the poor performance of the provider in relation to access to education, training and employment for prisoners on release.

## C Section – Work of Board

The Board has held 12 meetings during the reporting year. There is some concern about the commitment from the Director in relation to attendance at the meetings which means the Board do not always have access to up to date reports of the current situation within the prison.

The Annual Team Performance Review was held on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2016.

The Board has trained 3 new recruits during the reporting year and during the same period 5 members have left. We are concerned about the number of probationary members that leave almost immediately following the completion of training. This loss of members means that the Board is not able to attend as many meetings within the prison as they would like—thus our main contact with prisoners is via our weekly visits to the prisons and dealing with applications.

Board members have however attended the following meetings: -

Security, Substance Misuse, Prisoner Council and performance-related meetings. The Board would like to comment that these meetings are informative and assist in our work at the prison.

The Board has had a member involved in the National Council/Secretariat Communications Group during the reporting year.

The Board has supported training in relation to the National Monitoring Framework and the New Annual Report Framework.

Board members have attended the regional IMB meetings and provided secretarial support on occasions

---

| <b>BOARD STATISTICS</b>                                      |                        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Recommended Complement of Board Members                      | 20+                    |
| Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period | 15                     |
| Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period   | 13<br>(6 probationary) |
| Total number of visits to the Establishment                  | 553                    |
| Total number of segregation reviews attended                 | 402                    |

- The Board have made 267 rota visits during the reporting year
- The Board have attended 402 Reviews throughout the reporting year
- The Board have attended 260 adjudications during the reporting year. We are concerned that on occasions adjudications cannot proceed owing to the lack of the presence of Reporting Officers. The same situation arises in relation to adjudications before the External Adjudicator.
- The Board have undertaken 50 statutory visits to the CSU throughout the reporting year.

## Section - Applications

---

This year's applications have in the main followed the trend of previous years.

The Board continues to find prisoners try to use the IMB application process rather than the prison complaints system. This has been improved by the introduction of a Communication Information Co-Operation Support (CICS) rep. on each house block. This is a prisoner who is paid to help prisoners on his wing to address any issues they may have before needing to use the complaints system.

The Board continues to have a substantial number of applications in relation to property, both external to the prison during transfer and within the prison. The Board continues to be concerned of the cost to the Prison Service of replacing the lost items.

Sadly there has not been a reduction in the number of applications sent to the Board about health-related matters. The Board had hoped that with a change of contractor these would reduce. Most of the applications seem to be related to medication being stopped or reduced.

The other area of note is the vast increase in Staff/Prisoner concerns including bullying from 6 on 2016 to 76 this year. This is an area which the Board would like to discuss further with the Director and Controller in the next reporting year.

During the reporting period a total of 437 applications were dealt with.

These can be broken down into the following categories

| <b>Code</b> | <b>Subject</b>                                                                             | <b>Current reporting year</b> | <b>Previous reporting year</b> |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| A           | Accommodation including laundry, clothing, ablutions                                       | 19                            | 5                              |
| B           | Discipline including adjudications, IEP, sanctions                                         | 5                             | 9                              |
| C           | Equality                                                                                   | 11                            | 6                              |
| D           | Purposeful Activity including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell | 5                             | 9                              |
| E 1         | Letters, visits, phones, public protection restrictions                                    | 26                            | 12                             |
| E 2         | Finance including pay, private monies, spends                                              | 24                            | 22                             |
| F           | Food and kitchens                                                                          | 10                            | 13                             |
| G           | Health including physical, mental, social care                                             | 89                            | 88                             |

|     |                                                                                   |     |     |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|
| H 1 | Property within this establishment                                                | 64  | 23  |
| H 2 | Property during transfer or in another establishment or location                  | 86  | 75  |
| H 3 | Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)                                              | 15  | 3   |
| I   | Sentence management including HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation | 62  | 50  |
| J   | Staff/prisoner concerns including bullying                                        | 76  | 6   |
| K   | Transfers                                                                         | 17  | 15  |
| L   | Miscellaneous                                                                     | 24  | 37  |
|     | <b>Total number of IMB applications</b>                                           | 533 | 373 |