



Annual Report
of the
Independent Monitoring Board
at

HMP/YOI STOKE HEATH

for reporting year
1 May 2016 to 30 April 2017

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Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody

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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.

Main judgements

Are prisoners treated fairly?

YES

Are prisoners treated humanely?

YES

Are prisoners prepared well for their release?

YES

Main Areas for Development

TO THE MINISTER

A review of the Amey Contract which in part is not fit for purpose and causes inefficiency and delays.

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

Some transfers in are still arriving without OASys

**The Governor's lack of control over the Resettlement Service contract.
Resettlement churn late in the sentence is not conducive to a good outcome.
A review of limited access to the Internet using a virtual campus facility in order to register and apply for Universal Credit.**

TO THE GOVERNOR

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

To provide additional beds in secure units for the mentally disturbed prisoners.

Improvements

The reduction in IDTS by 30%

The establishment of a smoke free wing

The security team have been very pro-active in trying to reduce the amount of illicit items entering the prison; they have liaised with the local police to mount operations to check visitors, this has resulted in a number of warnings and arrests. Those arrested and charged have been successfully prosecuted

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE ESTABLISHMENT

HMP/YOI Stoke Heath, located near Market Drayton Shropshire, is a closed Cat C male establishment holding both sentenced young Adults (18-21) and Adults 21 and over and remands from both categories within 8 wings (2 wings only hold Remand prisoners). A Wing is now smoke free in preparation for the whole prison to become smoke free by 31 July 2017. The prison was reconfigured to take on the role of resettlement for West Midlands and Wales in 2015/16 and the establishment currently houses 760 Category C and young Adult prisoners and 11 Cat D prisoners in the Clive Unit. The Clive Unit can hold up to 16 Cat D prisoners and the prison can also hold Cat D prisoners in closed conditions awaiting transfer. The prison population is mainly from the West Midlands 60% and Wales reducing to 23% with the remaining 17% mainly from the North West. HMP/YOI Stoke Heath is fully committed to the Prison Service objectives:

- Protecting the public by holding those committed by the courts in a safe, decent and healthy environment.
- Reducing crime by providing constructive regimes which addresses offending behaviour, improve educational and work skills and promote law abiding behaviour in custody.

In securing its objectives the prison adheres to the following principles:

- Work in close partnership with others in the Criminal Justice System to achieve common objectives
- Obtain best practice from the resources available using research to ensure effective correctional practice
- Value Diversity, promote equality of opportunity and combat unlawful discrimination
- Ensure staff has the right leadership, organisation, support, and preparation to carry out their work effectively.

B Evidence sections 4 – 11

4. SAFETY

There were 44 serious incidents during this reporting period and all were handled within the prison guidelines with an IMB presence. There was one death in custody, the prisoner was moved to hospital due to his medical condition having taken a substance yet to be identified. He died in hospital in December 2016 and the inquest is scheduled for October/November 2017. All tests done so far have proved inconclusive. 386 ACCT's were opened and 358 closed.

Reception; Most prisoners that arrive at Stoke Heath are transfers in so are familiar with prison routine; but if remanded they are asked if this is the first time in custody and treated accordingly. On arrival; details are confirmed, individual needs identified and seen by healthcare in private who assess the mental, physical health and substance misuse: prisoners are searched thoroughly/religious and cultural needs taken into account.

A number of prisoners have been arriving with mobile phone secreted about their person; the newly installed pole detector indicates who these people are.

Prisoners are allowed a free phone call on arrival; the phone has recently been moved to a position where it is possible to have a less public conversation.

Reception and waiting areas are clean if a little tired; a painting programme is planned for the spring.

The aim is for prisoners to spend as little time as possible in reception this is usually the case.

Self-harm and suicide prevention: Prisoners on an ACCT are discussed in the MASH (multi agency safe-guarding hub) meeting. This meeting is an in depth analysis of monthly figures of ACCT's opened, trends are noted and ACCT's closed also incidents of self-harm are discussed.

Throughout the year, there have been a number of prisoners with very complex mental health issues they have been located in health-care on constant watch until they can be transferred to a mental health unit.

Quality of ACCT's are discussed in the safer prisons meeting to ascertain if the documents are filled in properly. Generally completed with all information needed, occasional notices to staff are sent out to remind them of the importance of accurate record keeping.

Cell sharing risk assessment (CSRA) reviews are also discussed at Safer prisons meeting.

Bullying: Active TBB (Tackling Bullying Behaviour) strategy; perpetrators are often moved from wing to wing or cell to cell and searched frequently in order to disrupt their behaviour; other sanctions such as reduced canteen are available.

Victims of bullying are supported; they are monitored for at least eight weeks, their cases are reviewed at the MASH (multi agency safe-guarding hub) meeting, which is attended by the safer prisons governor, his safety team, healthcare, In Reach and IMB.

The security team have been very pro-active in trying to reduce the amount of illicit items entering the prison; they have liaised with the local police to mount operations to check visitors, this has resulted in a number of warnings and arrests. Those arrested and charged have been successfully prosecuted.

Particular problems with drugs mobile phones; those found with a mobile phone are referred to the police: on at least one occasion an extra six months was added to the sentence.

There are currently 14 Listeners at Stoke Heath; although not extensively used the listeners are available on a 24-hour rota prisoners can request to see a listener in private. Listeners are trained by the Samaritans; there are also Samaritans phones available.

The new plastic cuff policy is now standard procedure and will enhance security whilst prisoners are having MRI scans.

EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS

Equalities have made some real progress this year. Black History month was recognised with the showing of 'hidden colours' DVD. Dirfs (Discrimination Incident Report Forms) are answered as soon as possible. Equalities attend every traveler meeting. All prisoner applications are answered as soon as possible. The prison has held race relation and disability forums throughout the year. Every prisoner that declares a disability is interviewed on induction with regards to working etc. All prisoners with racist markers are interviewed. Disabled prisoners have PEEPS (Personal Emergency & Evacuation Plans) in place if needed and occupational health regularly come into the establishment to fit out cells with equipment to suit individual needs. The prison is in the process of finding reps for every wing.

3 SEGREGATION/CARE AND SEPARATION UNIT

There has been a small increase in the use of the segregation unit over the reporting year this is mainly due to the security team being pro-active; they have introduced random cell searches which have resulted in numerous finds of illicit items; phones, chargers, drugs and hooch. The Board have no concerns about this small increase.

The conditions and facilities of the unit are generally good; in particular, the red band keeps the servery very clean. The staffing levels are adequate; on adjudication days extra staff are brought in. All paperwork is diligently filled in.

The Board are told of newly arrived prisoners and advised of review dates.

100% of reviews are held within the specified time limit and are attended by a Governor, healthcare and an IMB member. The nurse is always asked if there are any medical concerns with the prisoner.

A safety algorithm is completed and if not deemed suitable for segregation the prisoner is returned to normal location.

Prisoners generally attend their review although a small number refuse to do so; if they do not attend, they are advised of the outcome. The prisoner is always introduced to those present; asked if he knows the reason for his location in SRU and the purpose of the review. He is given an opportunity to speak and a reintegration plan is discussed if returning to the wing. Prisoners are often returned to normal location within the day.

IMB members can speak freely with all prisoners in the unit at any time.

Prisoners on an ACCT have been assessed as fit to be segregated and the prescribed number of observations adhered to. They are re-located if their safety becomes an issue.

There has been a small increase of the use of CC (cellular confinement) this is usually a short-term punishment resulting from an adjudication.

There have been several prisoners kept in segregation for more than a month; this is because they have refused to go back to normal location despite the efforts of staff and governors to persuade them to return.

The policy is not to transfer a prisoner to another prison from the segregation unit however a small number have been this reporting year because of exceptional circumstances for safety reasons.

No use of special cell or restraints.

Dirty protests; there have been a small number; prisoners who have been trained in dealing with bio- hazards deal with these.

All Prisoners are monitored on return to normal location from segregation to ensure they have settled and feel safe.

4. ACCOMMODATION AND COMMUNICATION

The Board have noted over the period since the new Estate management contract had been implemented in 2015 with the appointment of AMEY regular concerns being raised by the Heads of Departments. These have appeared, in some form, in each report that the Heads supply to the Board for the monthly meeting.

The complaints have ranged from failures to provide cleaning staff through to delays and extended timescales to provide estimates for minor new works. It was even noted in a verbal report that an alarmed fence not working could have facilitated an attempted escape, which was foiled, and that it had not been tested by the contractor in the time period expected. The failures reportedly even extend to failure to provide cover for stores staff so that material issue was delayed, descaling of toilets and maintenance of washing & drying machines and kitchen equipment.

Minor works to bring unusable cells back into use have been a particular frustration as these were more easily rectified under the previous arrangements. Delays in estimating work to improve the reception area, classrooms, manufacturing workshops, provision of power for body worn camera re-charging equipment, waste disposal and wing conversion for drug re-habilitation have all been raised, some repeatedly over many months.

The Board notes that the Estates Manager no longer provides any form of update to the Board as part of the Heads report as was the practice for many years.

The Board invited John Winstone Contract Manger for the Prison Service with responsibility for three prisons to the October Board meeting. He described improving working relationships and a contract which was appropriate for day to day maintenance with adequate contractual penalties providing they were triggered. However the Board were concerned to hear that the contract apparently lacked flexibility in respect of minor new works and that developing quotes could be time consuming.

The Board is of the opinion, based on the pattern of concern we have heard and observed, that the contractual arrangements for minor new works is not fit for purpose and is holding back the Governor and his team from positive developments which would enhance safety, decency and facilitate improved re-habilitation opportunities.

The contract needs to be used to drive improvement in day to day maintenance by appropriately using the sanctions available.

4 HEALTHCARE (including mental health and social care)

This busy department was fully staffed for part of the year but unfortunately this situation has not been maintained and attempts at recruitment are in progress. Despite staff shortages a full range of medical services have been provided.

A new health check project to look for cardiovascular problems and diabetes in the over 35 age group.

We congratulate the staff for 3 awards given this year: One for complex care requiring extra intervention, the Henel Award for assistance with steroid abusers and the third one to the GP Dr. Khan for safe prescribing. The latter is for reducing the prescription of unnecessary drugs harmful to health and avoiding death in custody.

IDTS dependency has reduced by 30% over the last year with successful detoxes following the strengthening of support for those on methadone.

As in our reports from previous years the difficulties of finding beds in secure units for mentally and very disturbed prisoners continues and can only be rectified by increasing the number of these beds regionally and nationally. Caring for such disturbed patients is very demanding for the prison nursing staff as these patients often require constant watch supervision as suicide attempts have to be prevented.

5 EDUCATION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

The education department has been managed by NOVUS since 2011 and they deliver a wide range of educational services for the prison population. The initial 5-year contract has now expired but an extension has been provided and a tendering process for the next educational contract is expected in 2018.

This has enabled continuity of service with NOVUS maintaining a high base of services and taking opportunities to develop training delivery to effectively meet the needs of the prison population. The challenge of reducing budgets in previous years has been met maintaining both the quality and effectiveness of training delivery.

There is evidence that NOVUS continues to make the best of the financial resources allocated to them. They are currently delivering education and training above resource allocation (114%) and this has the potential in the future to return to previous figures of achievement when planned works are completed to expand current training provision.

This work includes the development of new workshops to expand and enhance training provision in wood working, car valeting and car mechanics. This will allow a greater number of prisoners to take part in each training session, and current plans to enhance delivery through partnership working and social enterprise is to be commended.

One note of concern is the length of time it is taking to carry out the works required and the training opportunities being denied to the current prison population. These courses were suspended in Autumn, 2016 and although it is possible that the work will be finished in August 2017, there is no certainty that this will be achieved. The delay is attributed to the restrictive nature of the current contract with 'Amey' who are responsible for the works. This work could have been completed much quicker by another provider, but there are financial penalties written into the contract should another provider be used for this type of work.

A wide range of courses are offered by NOVUS and it is encouraging to see that regular reviews are carried out to enable dynamic training delivery aligned to meet the needs of the prison population. Yearly curriculum reviews are completed to align activity with labour markets, employment opportunities, and social enterprise. There remains a focus on the delivery of all levels of functional skills for Maths and English which is a mandatory requirement for some with success rates currently at 80% plus. However this figure includes a lag which includes learners who are awaiting results and it is expected that the success rates achieved will be nearer to or above the 90% mark which will match results achieved in the previous year.

6 WORK, VOCATIONAL TRAINING and EMPLOYMENT

There remains a wide range of vocational training aligned to work based qualifications to increase employment opportunities upon release, and break the cycle of reoffending. Some examples include customer service, waste recycling, horticulture, brick laying, car mechanics, industrial cleaning, bio hazards, barista, cooking, etc.

There is a clear focus on providing as many opportunities as possible in preparing prisoners for the workplace and finding employment on release. An employment broker visits the prison on a fortnightly basis, and the working relationship with 'Through the gate' providers continues to develop but could be stronger. There are also good links with national organisations such as Pret a Manger, Greene King, and others who are able to assist with job opportunities for some on release.

There is clear evidence of the proactive preparation of prisoners for the workplace, and enabling opportunities for employment on release. Support and guidance is provided such as CV writing, interview preparation, job registration, and accessing of apprenticeships, all of which provide good examples of a work based ethos and focus. In previous reports the lack of use of the virtual campus has been highlighted and it has now been moved to the educational block which has seen an increased use and assists with a range of activities linked to both seeking and preparing for employment.

There is limited performance information available for both outputs and outcomes and this would assist in providing a stronger evidence base to provide the reassurance that resources are being maximised, and the right outcomes are being achieved.

7 RESETTLEMENT PREPARATIONS

An extensive, complicated and core part of the regime at Stoke Heath. The working relationships arising from the new contractual arrangements commented upon in last years report have developed positively with all parties learning how to extract benefit from a less than ideal structure. Nevertheless the Board is concerned the continued lack of direct control is sub-optimising results, the plans to give more power to Governors is welcome. The extensive programme is managed through close attention by the Resettlement Governor working to a detailed voluntary Action Plan. The Board sees evidence of this through attendance at alternate monthly meetings of all parties, this being reduced from monthly seems to have led to greater commitment and attendance. The Action Plan and minutes are widely circulated and comprehensive.

The Board would like to place on record some specific issues.

We wrote to the Minister in early 2016 regarding the absence of support to men to open bank accounts in the new contracts. We are pleased to report this is now fully back on track with a forward programme covering release dates to November 2017.

Universal Credit continues to give cause for concern in two respects. Men will need to have access to the Internet in order to register and apply. This cannot, at the moment, be facilitated whilst in prison so leaving an inevitable gap in funds available in the early weeks after release, this poses a real risk of re-offending, The Board believe it is quite within the power and capability of HMPPS to give controlled and limited access using virtual campus facilities to allow registration prior to release. The second issue is the availability of identification documents without which access is difficult, again this could be overcome by HMPPS issuing some form of written advice.

The provision of accommodation on release is another key feature. Much good work is done. However it is disappointing to hear that a once clear process using one form for all English local authorities and agencies has fallen into disuse since the new structure and apparently LA financial constraints. This means additional work with multiple forms required for one man where the location is being determined, despite the information being essentially the same.

Resettlement work is often disrupted by the “churn” in men being moved between establishments late in sentence. In particular we are advised that men are being sent to Stoke Heath within their last twelve weeks making work on accommodation and bank accounts, for example, rushed and inefficient. It appears to the Board that this is a matter for HMPPS centrally to address as the Governor and staff have little influence once a man has arrived.

OLASS (Offender Learning and Skills Service) funding was withdrawn pro-rata for a period whilst a Wing (approx. 15% of capacity) was being refurbished. However upon re-opening the funding was not reinstated for many months. Whilst this may seem a minor matter, it is clear from the regular monthly reports we receive that planning for the future has been uncertain with cuts to provision having to be prepared. The Board sees this an own goal by HMPPS, re-instatement should have been automatic.

The welcome relocation of drug re-habilitation to a dedicated larger wing has only recently been completed. The Board will monitor progress over the next twelve months. It is worthy of note that the transfer was delayed awaiting works estimates from AMEY due to the inadequacy of the contract.

There are a large number of positive developments including mentoring, NVQ Level 2 focus, enlargement of tailoring to use the old laundry. By its very nature Resettlement is about multiple small steps. The Board believes the determination and will of the team at Stoke Heath is of great credit, however the structure within which they are forced to work is sub-optimal, wasteful and potentially falls short of what could be achieved.

The ability of the team to measure their effectiveness is extremely limited. They can measure inputs such as courses, bank accounts, accommodation, job interviews and so on. However even the placement in Education, Training & Employment statistic that was available to the Governor is no longer recorded since the new structure, a retrograde step. A measure of re-offending amongst those completing twelve weeks resettlement at Stoke Heath is non-existent, apparently Stoke Heath is no exception. If this basic measure of success is not available how can the vast complex programme be judged?

C Section – Work of Board

BOARD STATISTICS

Recommended Complement of Board Members	17
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	7
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	9
Total number of visits to the Establishment	325
Total number of segregation reviews attended	160

D Section - Applications

Code	Subject	Current reporting year	Previous reporting year
A	Accommodation including laundry, clothing, ablutions	6	17
B	Discipline including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	9	7
C	Equality	8	3
D	Purposeful Activity including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	9	10
E 1	Letters, visits, phones, public protection restrictions	13	16
E 2	Finance including pay, private monies, spends	14	16
F	Food and kitchens	7	1
G	Health including physical, mental, social care	42	23
H 1	Property within this establishment	11	36
H 2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	44	36
H 3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	11	9
I	Sentence management including HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	46	28
J	Staff/prisoner concerns including bullying	52	36
K	Transfers	23	15
L	Miscellaneous	23	34
	Total number of IMB applications	318	287