



Annual Report
of the
Independent Monitoring Board
at

HMP Huntercombe

for reporting Year
January 2016 - December 2016

Published
October 2017



Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introductory Sections

Section	Topic	Page
1	Statutory Role	3
2	Executive Summary	4
3	Description of Establishment	5

Evidence Sections

4	Safety 4.1 Safer Custody 4.2 Violence Reduction	6
5	Equality and Fairness	9
6	Segregation/Care and Separation Unit	10
7	Accommodation	12
8	Healthcare (including mental health)	14
9	Education and Other Activities	16
10	Resettlement Preparation	19

	The Work of the IMB	20
	Applications to the IMB	21

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

Main judgements

2.1 The main issue to affect the prison during the reporting year was the DiC (Death in Custody); the first in the establishment's 70-year history. The Board's concerns are detailed in the Safer Custody section (4.1); suffice to say, a major area of concern is the difference between the repatriation process and deportation process and the impact on the individual prisoner. The impact on the establishment is considerable too and the Board considers that simplification of the rules and processes around repatriation and deportation is required and would benefit the whole prison estate (that houses circa 10,000 FNPs [Foreign National Prisoners]) not just the dedicated FNP prisons.

2.2 The Board is concerned at the lack of resettlement services and support for FNPs; again, this is a subject that should be of concern to the whole prison estate. Specifics are contained in section 10.1, however, it should be emphasised that the lack of funded support to the prison is a hindrance to providing a full service to prisoners. The Board acknowledges the excellent work of the Prison Chaplaincy team and the Peer Mentors (prisoners) that provide support and advice to prisoners.

2.3 Education, learning and skills is another area that requires strengthened resource; problems with the Virtual Campus facility has hindered the delivery of services to prisoners.

Education, learning and skills is a component of preparing prisoners for release and an important element in supporting prisoner resettlement.

The Board commends the work of prison staff in this area.

2.4 Overall, the Board considers the prison to be well run; management, staff and contractors collaborate and work well together. Prisoners seem relatively content with the regime; there are few violent incidents, relative to the total prison estate. The prison works hard to deal fairly with prisoner complaints; the number of applications to the IMB has continued to fall.

Despite the foregoing, the Board is not complacent and undertakes its monitoring responsibilities vigorously.

2.5 The Board is happy to welcome David Redhouse, Governing Governor with effect from 30th October 2016 and looks forwards to a constructive working relationship.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

3.1 HMP Huntercombe is a Category C training prison for foreign national adult males who are of interest to HOIE (Home Office Immigration Enforcement).

3.2 The operational capacity is 480 Split between six residential units with a mixture of single and double cells. The prison complex includes education facilities, an indoor gym, a healthcare outpatient facility, workshops, gardens, sports pitches, exercise yards, a visits hall for domestic visits, a cafeteria (run by prisoners) and a multi-faith room. The prison is in a rural location; access by public transport is limited.

3.3 Healthcare was provided by Oxford Health until April when Care UK took over. Mental Health provision is split between Care UK and South Staffordshire & Shropshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust; the latter providing in-reach service. Dentistry is provided by Time for Teeth through the Care UK contract.

3.4 Education, training, learning and skills is provided by Milton Keynes College.

Evidence sections 4 – 11

4.1. SAFER CUSTODY

4.1.1 The Board continues to closely monitor this area and attends regularly at the monthly Safer Prisons Meeting and, where possible, attends ACCT reviews. The meetings are generally well attended and the statistics available delivered in a format commensurate with a general desire to provide a good and effective overview. The meeting incorporates Violence Reduction; it provides the IMB with a good understanding of where problems areas lie within the establishment and what is being done in mitigation.

4.1.2 Due to staffing levels, it remains a challenge to recruit enough ACCT Assessors. However, monitoring of several reviews over the reporting period has provided the Board with confidence that good and effective work is done to keep those prisoners placed on these documents as safe as possible. Consequently, the Board is content that the 'Duty of Care' within the establishment is good in this respect.

4.1.3 During the early hours of April 28th, 2016 a Death in Custody (DiC) occurred; it was the first DiC at Huntercombe in its 70-year history. Mr. Darius Lasinskas, a Lithuanian prisoner, was not on an ACCT document; however, he was the subject of consideration for repatriation. Board members attended as soon as possible to monitor the procedures undertaken by Huntercombe in the immediate aftermath.

The full recommendations made in the DiC report have been discussed with the SMT and as the findings are of public record it is unnecessary to fully list all the recommendations within this report. However, the Board makes the following observations:

- The Board monitored a substantial 'spike' in ACCT documents in the immediate aftermath of the DiC but with good management of the process this has now reduced to the normal low levels normally associated with Huntercombe.
- The 2015 report noted that much work had been done to ensure that officers were kept fully aware by HOIE (Home Office Immigration Enforcement) embedded within Huntercombe; the Board has continued to monitor this.
- In respect of deportation the process has improved in terms of information being effectively transmitted to prisoners; the Board considers that this is due primarily to increased staffing and stronger management within the immigration area.
- There has been an increase in the use of repatriation. Prisoners that are in the process of being considered for deportation can suddenly find that they are to be

repatriated (i.e. sent to their home country to serve out the rest of their sentence). The prospect of repatriation alarms some prisoners; rather than arriving home with a clean slate they have the worry of serving out their sentence thus having a criminal record in their home country and, serving the sentence within establishments where they may be 'known' and in their view making them vulnerable to violence etc.

- We understand that the Government has Prisoner Transfer Agreements (PTA) in place with around 100 countries and that the number of such agreements is likely to increase with a knock-on increase in the use of repatriation over deportation. The DiC report addresses the concern felt by Mr. Lasinskas regarding repatriation by the inclusion of two specific recommendations:
 - i) Ensure all prisoners receiving repatriation paperwork have a Risk Assessment completed by wing staff and this is recorded on their NOMS case notes and in the Unit Obs Book;
 - ii) To ensure the communication between OMU and all other staff concerning those prisoners receiving repatriation paperwork is effectively developed.

The prison SMT has advised the Board that these recommendations have been fully implemented; the Board will continue to monitor this area over the coming reporting period.

4.1.4 Repatriation is used relatively rarely; in 2016, only 9 prisoners left to be repatriated, as against 298 deportations. However, at the end of 2016 there remained 56 open cases. Many of the countries with a PTA in place do not have the same generous release on licence arrangements as the UK; thus, a prisoner may well find himself serving significant periods within his home country and leave prison with a criminal record. This would not be the case were deportation to be used.

4.1.5 The Board continues to be concerned about how little legal support there is (nationally) for FNPs. Assistance from Migrant Aid is still available; however, the scale of support is woefully inadequate for the level of issues. The establishment is not resourced to effectively address this area. The Board will continue to actively monitor.

4.1.6 Points of Commendation

1. The continued good work of the SP Team.

2. Improved communication between HOIE staff and prison staff as an evolving commitment to keep prisoners' safe.
3. The involvement of Peer Advisors (other prisoners) in helping prisoners understand what may happen to them and the process involved.
4. The ACCT process; the good work of officers closely involved in the assessment process to ensure an effective use of this mechanism in keeping vulnerable prisoners safe.

4.1.7 Areas of Concern

1. The continued requirement to recruit ACCT assessors.
2. The repatriation process - the level, clarity and timeliness of communication with both prisoners and the prison. Improved support and help with the repatriation process for prisoners.

4.2. Violence Reduction

4.2.1 Generally, Huntercombe is perceived as a 'safe' establishment with, compared to the prison estate in general, low levels of violence. That is not to say that levels/pockets of violence do not exist; however, they have continued low during this reporting year and, indeed, with the bringing on-stream of the newly refurbished Rich Wing in April 2016 allowed much less in the way of 'doubling-up' of cells on the Mountbatten Wings. However, recently, the requirement for Huntercombe to take an increased roll has led back to more doubling-up with the attendant problems that brings. However, with careful monitoring of CSRA, the knowledge of difficulties between certain nationalities and the zero tolerance towards violence should allow the prison to continue along its enviable path within the prison estate nationally.

5. EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS

5.1 Problems with Language Line continued in 2016. From 1st November Language Line has been replaced with Big Word. Initial observations suggested that this has resulted in an improvement although it is too early to arrive at a definitive conclusion.

5.2 A review of DIRFs and applications suggest that there was a relatively low level of incidents with a potentially racist overtone; acts of violence are rare. Most incidents relate to perceived verbal abuse – sometimes reflecting different cultural sensitivities within the prison. Of the 186 applications to the IMB only 4-5 related to allegations of discrimination of any type.

5.3 The level of DIRFs raised in the prison remains low (89 in total). On review, these appear to have been properly and thoroughly addressed and where the allegation has not been upheld a reasonably full explanation was provided to the complainant.

5.4 It remained the case in 2016 that an officer issuing an IEP was also responsible for the consequential investigation. Staffing levels in the prison are now significantly improved and it is anticipated this will result in fewer of these apparent conflicts of interest.

5.5 Points of Commendation

1. The DIRF system appears to be working well.
2. The introduction of Big Word as a replacement for the Language Line translation service.

5.6 Areas of Concern

1. Continue to review the possibility of conflicts of interest during investigation of IEPs.
2. Continue to monitor the effectiveness of Big Word.

6. SEGREGATION/CARE AND SEPARATION UNIT

6.1 The Care & Separation Unit comprises 5-cells one of which is a special accommodation cell. The cells, showers, exercise yards and general area are kept clean and the Unit is overall calm and well maintained by the staff. Staff respond well to prisoners on an individual basis within the accepted constraints. The Board is usually, but not always, notified when a prisoner is relocated to the Unit.

6.2 The prison consistently endeavours to return prisoners to the wings as quickly as possible. Long-stay prisoners (in excess of 10-days) are, with rare exception, nearly all OP, due to either refusing to share a cell or with a mental health issue that cannot be managed on a wing. For mental health matters, the CSU offers a calmer environment close to the Healthcare Unit whilst a space at an in-patient mental health unit is sought. The CSU staff are not trained in mental health yet provide kind and considerate care to prisoners.

6.3 During 2016 the prison held 589 adjudications with 13 appeals, 4 of which were upheld. Seventeen adjudications were referred to the Independent Adjudicator and 4 were referred to the Police. There were 2 dirty protests and the special accommodation cell was used on 2 occasions; one of these was overnight.

6.4 GOoD Reviews have not been held regularly on Fridays as had been previously agreed; the Board have not been notified when they are to be held. This has resulted in few attendances by the IMB at reviews throughout the year and creates a difficulty for the IMB to check and sign-off paperwork. If reviews are held at weekends, which has happened, there are no Mental Health Staff to attend.

6.5 The use of Control and Restraint Methods increased through 2016. There were 64 incidents logged of which 37 required C&R techniques to be used. Handcuffs were used 18 times and C&R was used twice to relocate to special accommodation and twice to locate to a cellular vehicle.

6.6 Listeners are available day and night subject to risk assessment.

6.7 The Language Line translation service has been replaced by Big Word. The new service seems to meet the translation needs better, connecting to it with individual passwords and ID numbers is proving 'time consuming'.

6.8 Points of Commendation

1. CSU staff run an efficient unit that provides well for the needs of individual prisoners

6.9 Areas of Concern

1. A regular time for GOoD Reviews (after the initial review) to be established to enable the IMB to plan attendance.
2. Lack of Mental Health staff at GOoD reviews held at weekends.
3. The CSU is used as a de-facto staging post for prisoners with mental health issues; this is unfair on the prisoners themselves, the CSU staff who are not mental health trained and causes segregated prisoners to be held in their cell on the wing which has a knock-on adverse effect to prisoners and staff.

7. ACCOMODATION

7.1 The refurbishment of all wings in the prison was completed by September 2015. However, due to staff shortages the Rich wing was not reopened until April 2016; this was to avoid impacting the whole prison regime which would have been the case had all wings been reopened in 2015. In April 2016, the prison roll was 430; in June 2016, it increased to 450 and by the end of the year was 480. The overall increase of 50 prisoners has resulted in an increase in double cell occupancy to 48 cells, 27 are located on the Rich wing. The increase in double cell occupancy has led to increased tensions and safety issues for both prisoners and staff.

7.2 Staff deployments throughout 2016 ended during the last few weeks of the year. The impact of the deployments together with staff shortages impacted negatively on the regime represented by the closure of several weekend gym sessions and weekend half-day lock-downs.

7.3 Recruitment for uniformed and kitchen staff has been slow and difficult; the kitchen operated with 4 instead of six staff for most of the reporting period.

7.4 Ramadan boxes were introduced and have proved successful.

7.5 The non-smoking policy was well implemented and has been successful with the take-up from prisoners exceeding expectation (surprisingly). The bottom landing on Rich, Fry, Howard and Mountbatten A wings are all non-smoking.

7.6 The registering of PIN numbers by DHL has been an ongoing problem due largely to staffing and training problems at DHL.

7.7 Kitchen – a new floor that was laid in 2015; by the end of 2016 several of the seams of the floor covering had split and in some places the flooring was lifting. There has been continuing problems with various items of kitchen equipment – the Food Mixer was condemned in September and has still to be replaced; the Potato Rumbler took 8-months to replace; a new Electric Oven was supplied that should have been gas; the Blast Chiller has been repaired several times throughout the year yet remains in an unserviceable condition.

7.8 Roof vents and windows on Mountbatten wing await repair.

7.9 There have been ongoing issues throughout the year concerning supplies to both the Kitchen and Wing Stores.

7.10 A heating boiler on a wing broke down; Carillion estimated 2-weeks to attend to. The Deputy Governor had to petition the Regional Estates Manager to authorise hiring a temporary boiler to provide hot water for 120 prisoners – the alternative was to evacuate the wing.

7.11 Points of Commendation

1. Small number of complaints received concerning food and catering.
2. The Kitchen has performed well, continuing to enlarge and improve menus within the constraints of its budget, staff shortage and ongoing equipment problems. The Kitchen was built to cater for 240 and caters for 480!
3. Staff are generally able to run and maintain clean and well-kept wings and communal areas in the face of ongoing staff shortages and deployments.

7.12 Areas of Concern

1. The Carillion contract – there appears to be a general lack of understanding on the part of Carillion management of the importance of maintaining a stable regime and the impact that infrastructure and equipment failure can have in destabilising the regime. The overall levels of responsiveness and completion of jobs is slow.

8. HEALTHCARE (including mental health)

8.1 In April 2016 Care UK, a private provider commissioned by the NHS replaced Oxford Health as primary healthcare provider to the prison. Mental Health provision was split between Care UK and South Staffordshire & Shropshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust; the latter providing in-reach service. Psychology provision was being reviewed to establish its necessity. Dentistry is provided by Time for Teeth through the Care UK contract.

8.2 The transition was disruptive and created uncertainty for many staff.

8.3 There are good working relations between the mental health and general nursing staff despite belonging to different organisation and sharing a working space. This, it is reported, is an area of friction in other establishments.

8.4 GP services were available for half the working week. The IMB received reports from prisoners and staff that it was difficult to get an appointment and that it could take as long as 14-days to see a GP; the statistics maintained by Healthcare indicate an average wait of 5.6 days for a GP appointment during the period May – December 2016.

8.5 Dentistry - a new dental suite was opened; the dental staff were impressed with the quality of the facilities and equipment; the service was available two-days per week and was very busy. The prison population has a large need for dental services; many of the FNP population have never had access to dentistry and have poor dental hygiene regimes; consequently, the unit performed many extractions. A promotional campaign on dental hygiene was rolled-out.

8.6 Substance misuse – the use of this service remained low. Shortly following transition the Clinical SMS Nurse left and the post remained vacant for approximately 7-months; the service was covered by other services.

8.7 NPS (New Psychoactive Substances) – the incidence of ‘spice’ taking and its consequences fluctuated during the year and further guidance and information on the effects was available to staff.

8.8 Applications to IMB – Approximately 8% of all applications to the Board related to Healthcare; including seven applications from 3 prisoners about the same issue. The

topics of referral to the IMB related to medication prescribing, podiatry, access to medical records, appointments and treatment/referrals. The low level of referrals suggests that despite the change of provider the service to prisoners remained relatively consistent. Referral issues reflected the situation in the community.

8.9 Points of Commendation

1. Primary and mental healthcare staff collaborate and work well together.
2. The Board observed careful handling of some difficult patients and how both prison and healthcare collaborated to find solutions.

8.10 Areas of Concern

1. The contract changes caused uncertainty for Healthcare Staff and was not a smooth transition
2. The prison was slow to update noticeboards to reflect the change of provider – Oxford Health staff were displayed until August.

9. EDUCATION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

9.1 Despite the lack of resource and commitment nationally, Huntercombe staff prioritise this area and maximise the sparse resource.

9.2 The library facility is good and has a large take up from the prison population (around 80%). Donations of books are frequently made (including children's books) which can be used to promote 'family' contact, allowing fathers to read to their children during visits. Reading Challenges and other innovative initiatives are regularly put together by staff and prisoner participation is good.

9.3 Notice Boards around the establishment specific to this area are well-maintained and extremely informative of the many education/skills opportunities available and the staff preparing and maintaining these are to be commended.

9.4 The Virtual Campus remains closed due to payment difficulties but the opportunity for Distance Learning exists and a new office has been provided for this purpose with currently a small group of learners starting OU courses.

9.5 Gym remains a pivotal area of prison life with a large take-up. Some staff have been trained in spinning and this is proving popular. Visits by the IMB provide a snapshot of a well-run and popular facility.

9.6 The Waste Management facility remains an extremely popular area at Huntercombe (where nothing is wasted) and continues to provide an important skill base.

9.7 Points of Commendation

1. Determination of the staff to maximise the scant resource available in this area; despite the low-grading in HM Inspector's Report, the Board is mindful of the effort and support given by staff in this area.
2. The Library facilities and the quality of prisoner information via the notice board system is excellent.
3. The Board is hopeful that the increased autonomy given to Prison Governors in respect of overall spending, will allow for better facilities to be provided.

9.8 Areas of Concern

1. The lack of resource currently available for FN prisoners to ensure better outcomes in respect of Education, Learning and Skills.

10. RESETTLEMENT

10.1 This is a major area of concern for the Board. Due to 'Benchmarking' the budget for resettlement is minimal. The only outside agency receiving funding is Migrant Help; its representatives attend the prison for 4-hours each Wednesday morning. The St. Giles Trust (17-hours per week) and the Shannon Trust both operate within Huntercombe but neither are funded by the prison.

10.2 There is little support for prisoners when returning to their home country; employment information is available for five countries only – those with the largest prisoner groups. HOIE does not have resources to work with a prisoner's country of origin and can only refer a prisoner to the Chaplaincy or Migrant Help. The Chaplaincy works with the "Through the Gate" scheme and local churches of FNPs released in the UK. It has also established links with The Salvation Army in France and Holland and is hoping to extend this to Nigeria. The Chaplaincy also works with the Diocese of Jamaica.

10.3 The Board is concerned about the availability of reputable legal advice. Migrant Help has a list of approved solicitors; due to the limited time Migrant Help are available most prisoners do not have an opportunity to access the service.

10.4 The Government TRACKS computer program is available but poorly used; it is not regularly updated and is not connected to the Internet.

10.5 Telephone access has not been increased to allow easier communication with families in different time zones.

10.6 During the reporting year the Board was aware of situations where prisoners were returned to their home country with no assistance (save for their actual delivery to their homeland), inadequately prepared and, often unable to move from the point of arrival to their home district. One incidence that stands out is the deportation of a Lithuanian prisoner in the winter without appropriate winter clothing.

10.7 There is a general lack of resource for providing resettlement support to FNPs. The Board is aware of the magnitude of the task given the number of nationalities the system deals with. However, that must not be allowed to excuse the inadequacy of facility. This is a major area of unfairness between the way UK national prisoners are treated and FNPs are treated.

10.8 Points of Commendation

1. Peer Mentors are to be commended for the multiple services and jobs they do regarding resettlement, including the initiative started in November 2016 of a weekly clinic on Patterson Wing for all new prisoners.
2. The Library continues to provide good resources.
3. The Chaplaincy provides excellent support to prisoners of all faiths, denominations and none.

10.9 Areas of Concern

1. No funding for staff to cover resettlement.
2. TRACKS program not kept updated and not linked to the Internet; consequently, the resource is not well used/
3. Prisoner access to legal advice.
4. Resources for HOIE to work with agencies in prisoner's country of origin.
5. Improved telephone access for prisoners to communicate with relevant time zones.

Section C – Work of Board

BOARD STATISTICS	
Recommended Complement of Board Members	15
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	14
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	10
Total number of visits to the Establishment	348
Total number of segregation reviews (adjudications):	
- held	589
- attended	142

Section D - Applications

Code	Subject	Current reporting year	Previous reporting year
A	Accommodation including laundry, clothing, ablutions	7	14
B	Discipline including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	7	6
C	Equality	4	15
D	Purposeful Activity including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	15	19
E 1	Letters, visits, phones, public protection restrictions	9	9
E 2	Finance including pay, private monies, spends	7	13
F	Food and kitchens	3	3
G	Health including physical, mental, social care	18	24
H 1	Property within this establishment	11	26
H 2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	27	
H 3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	9	9
I	Sentence management including HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	24	23
J	Staff/prisoner concerns including bullying	11	18
K	Transfers	6	6
L	Miscellaneous	28	21
	Total number of IMB applications	186	206

Glossary of establishment related terms and abbreviations used in this report

ACCT	Assessment care in custody teamwork
CSU	Care and Separation Unit
DiC	Death-in-Custody
FNO	Foreign National Prisoner
HMP	Her Majesty's Prison
HOIE	Home Office Immigration Enforcement
IA	Independent Adjudicator
IEP	Incentives and Earned Privileges
IMB	Independent Monitoring Board
NPS	Novel Psychoactive Substances
OMU	Offender Management Unit
SMS	Substance Misuse Service