



Annual Report
of the
Independent Monitoring Board
at

HM YOI Aylesbury

for reporting Year
1st July 2016 to 30th June 2017

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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	6

Evidence Sections

4	Safety	7
5	Equality and Fairness	8
6	Segregation/Care and Separation Unit	9
7	Accommodation (including communication)	10
8	Healthcare (including mental health and social care)	12
9	Education and Other Activities	13
10	Work, Vocational Training and Employment	14
11	Resettlement Preparation	15

	The Work of the IMB	16
	Applications to the IMB	17

A Sections 1 - 3

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.

This report presents the findings of the Independent Monitoring Board at HM YOI Aylesbury for the period 01/07/2016 – 30/06/2017. IMB evidence comes from observations made on visits, scrutiny of records and of data, informal contact with prisoners and staff, surveys and prisoner applications.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Main judgements

The following issues have been identified by the board as having a significant detrimental effect on the safety, fair treatment and rehabilitation of prisoners at HMPYOI Aylesbury:

- 1 The recruitment and retention of staff employed at the prison, which is linked to pay and conditions and further exacerbated by long security clearance waits prior to starting employment. (pages 7, 12, 13 & 15).
- 2 The amount of purposeful activity provided. The total number of sessions provided by the prison is a disappointing 40% of the total required for full prisoner engagement in activity. Around 35% of the prisoners were attending no employment or activity sessions at all, at the end of our reporting year. (pages 13 & 15).
- 3 The maintenance and degradation of the structure and fabric of the prison (pages 10 & 11).
- 4 The length of time prisoners spend in segregation when transfer to other prisons is required, given the lack of any formal arrangement between prisons (page 9).

Main Areas for Development

TO THE MINISTER

Will the Minister:

Provide an improvement to pay and conditions of staff sufficient to enable the prison to recruit and retain enough staff?

Provide the resources to enable the Governor and Senior Management Team to manage the prison effectively and to enable each prisoner to have a more appropriate level of purposeful activity including employment?

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

Will the Prison Service:

Allow the prison to choose its own providers for maintenance of the fabric, to ensure better value for money and a more timely service?

Allocate resources urgently to ensure critical maintenance is completed properly and in a timely manner?

Centralise the arrangements for transfer of prisoners out of the Segregation Unit into other prisons, so that prisoners who need a fresh start elsewhere are not left waiting longer than necessary whilst staff spend time attempting to negotiate adhoc moves?

Speed up the vetting process so that new employees can start work sooner?

TO THE GOVERNOR

What actions will the Governor take to:

Retain the more experienced staff on the Wings?

Employ a dedicated officer to escort duties for healthcare, library and other services?

Improvements

The furniture in the Visits Hall has been replaced with tables and chairs which are too heavy and cumbersome to be moved easily. This means that they can no longer be used as weapons when fights break out.

The average length of time spent by prisoners in the Segregation Unit awaiting transfer to another prison is now no longer than 3 months.

No other improvements relevant to our judgements above have been noted over the year.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

3.1 Aylesbury Young Offenders Institution is housed in a mixture of buildings, whose ages range from Victorian to early twenty-first century. It holds the longest sentenced young adult males in the English prison system, the majority serving a sentence of four years or more and are aged between 18 and 23, with about one third over 21 awaiting transfer to the adult estate. Only 40% of the prisoners are of white ethnic origin, lower than in most other prison establishments. The Institution has a capacity of about 440 and has been almost full for most of the reporting year.

3.2 Prisoner intake covers most of England and Wales. Prisoners do not come directly from court, having begun their sentences at other Young Offender Institutions or the Juvenile estate. The prisoners are some of the most disruptive and challenging young men in the prison system. Approximately 15% of the prisoners are serving life sentences.

3.3 Numbers of uniformed, Learning and Skills, kitchen professionals, workshops and probationary staff have continued to be below required levels. Recruitment has been ongoing but has proven to be difficult. The prison has not been helped by the deployment of uniformed staff from other establishments on detached duty during the reporting year; the restricted regime in place meant that their presence was deemed unnecessary by the Ministry.

3.4 The establishment has seven residential units of differing sizes and ages. The majority of cells are for single occupancy. The three oldest wings are of traditional Victorian pattern but have been modernized over the years. The two which are the next oldest are showing signs of ageing, although they too have been modernized. The two newest units all date from the last quarter of the twentieth century. The Segregation Unit is five years old. The Reception Unit is housed in the modern healthcare building.

3.5 The Learning and Skills provider under the extended OLASS 4 contract remains Milton Keynes College. Carillion has the contract for maintenance of the prison fabric. Healthcare is provided by CARE UK.

B Evidence sections 4 – 11

SAFETY

4.1 The prison has become a more violent place during our reporting year. From 1st July 2016 to 30th June 2017 there were:

500 incidents of self-harm

246 ACCT plans opened to monitor prisoners deemed to be a danger to themselves

17 serious assaults on staff

237 prisoner-on-prisoner assaults

74 prisoner-on-staff assaults

182 fights

2 alleged sexual assaults.

4.2 Not only has the number of incidents of violence increased, the nature of the injuries incurred has worsened. There are more injuries caused by weapons, such as serious bruising and cuts to faces and other limbs. The severity of injuries has also increased; there were three facial fractures this year compared with none the previous year.

4.3 The IMB is firmly of the opinion that this increase of violence is a direct result of the worsening staffing situation at Aylesbury. Throughout the reporting year, the prison has been seriously understaffed. The budget allows for 180 prison officers, including senior ranks, but only 160 were actually employed at the end of the reporting year. The shortfall was not met during our reporting year by staff redeployed on short-term stays from other prisons. The average years of service at Aylesbury prison for Wing staff is currently between two and three years. The average length of service for the prison officers who resigned during the reporting year was 14 months, ranging from 28 months to one week. This is after full training; the service clearly has a problem retaining new staff. It does not help that once a person has been appointed, it can take up to 6 months for the vetting process to clear them for starting work.

EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS

5.1 The IMB has no findings relevant to our judgements to report in this area.

SEGREGATION/CARE AND SEPARATION UNIT

6.1 A prisoner can spend up to three months in the Segregation Unit awaiting transfer to another prison. Although this is an improvement on previous years, it is still much longer than is appropriate for prisoners in this age group and raises significant concerns for their mental and physical wellbeing.

6.2 There is currently no centrally organised facility for moving prisoners who are no longer safe in one prison to another where they can have a fresh start. Instead, it is up to staff to negotiate (and too often plead) with other establishments. There is also no requirement for such establishments to accept a transfer.

6.3 Once a transfer has been agreed, there is a further delay of before transport actually happens. The transport provider, Geo Amey, was charged with the transfer of prisoners from the Segregation Unit; they postponed arrangements many times. In a number of cases, the prison, in the interest of decency, had to make its own arrangements to transfer a prisoner to his new establishment.

ACCOMMODATION (including communication)

- 7.1 A key area of concern for this Board is the increasingly poor state of the prison. Ordinary maintenance seems to have a low priority resulting in the very fabric of the prison visibly decaying. Where repairs have been arranged, they are often poorly executed.
- 7.2 The parapet of the main prison building is in danger of falling off. Inexcusably, rather than repair it, an unsightly galvanised steel temporary corridor has been erected to protect pedestrians entering and leaving the building. This presents a dreadful welcome to visitors once past the main gates.
- 7.3 Roof gutters have not been maintained in years. In particular, F wing gutter is sprouting substantial weed growth, as are the gutters of several of the buildings. One of the chimney blocks on main prison has a substantial bush growing from the brickwork. There are similar growths in various places on the perimeter walls.
- 7.4 For three years several Wings have been heated by external hired-in temporary oil-fired units because the recently installed gas boilers failed. The boiler installers and the prison service are using the courts to decide who pays for this.
- 7.5 The Segregation Unit heating system was inoperative for at least a month over winter. When the replacement water pump eventually arrived it was found to be the wrong type, causing further delay. The temporary electric heaters deployed on the landings were not very effective.
- 7.6 Floors are lifting in many wings. In particular the floors on F wing, but also the floors on C wing. Some of these should be considered a tripping hazard. Floors on D/E wings are showing considerable signs of age and are spongy. These floors are apparently suspended on woodwork. As a consequence, there are lifting and unsightly floors in several cells around the basins and toilets.
- 7.7 Roof windows are in general problematic. In many cases these are for smoke extraction only. It is clear in hot weather that opening them to create through air would be beneficial. In many cases, cell windows are in a poor state of repair. Too many do not have functioning opening sections. The volume of unsightly rubbish put there by prisoners is becoming a problem.
- 7.8 The toilet discharge pipes pass vertically down through the wings. In many instances, these have leaked over the years and created problem areas around the toilet areas. Not only is this unsightly, but it raises substantial hygiene issues.
- 7.9 One of the core store rooms in the Kitchens has a roof leak allowing rain water to flood in. Staff collect this in buckets and other receptacles but too often in inclement weather the floors are flooded through into the cooking and preparation areas. This leak has been ongoing for over eight months and, despite significant effort on the part of the prison to expedite matters, seems to a low priority to Carillion. In the same manner, the doors on several of the wing trolleys (used for transporting food, particularly hot food) have hinges which have become defective. Ineffective repairs by Carillion mean that food is subject to inappropriate transport between buildings. We understand there are other significant defects in the Kitchens many of which raise efficiency and hygiene issues.
- 7.10 Additionally, the kitchens are seriously understaffed. There should be six professional cooks working in the kitchens, but there are currently only four, despite ongoing recruitment campaigns. The average shortfall over the reporting year is 1.5, or 25%. This creates serious difficulties when staff take leave or are ill; the need for security clearance makes it impossible to employ agency staff at short notice.
- 7.11 The equipment in the laundry breaks down frequently and it often takes weeks before repairs are attempted. Whole weeks of work were lost when the boilers failed.

7.12 There are only enough staff on G Wing for them to safely supervise showers on two of the three floors. Consequently, the showers on the third floor are used for storage and prisoners in that Wing often go without a daily shower. The working showers on that Wing are a disgrace, with peeling paint and mould.

HEALTHCARE (including mental health and social care)

8.1 Healthcare services are provided from a custom-built block, housing surgeries and dental facilities. Prisoners who have applied to receive healthcare are let into the waiting room at the start of each session, but need to be escorted back to their wings by staff from the wings. Increasingly, such staff are not available, so prisoners routinely spend a whole morning or afternoon in the Healthcare waiting room. This may be the reason why there has been a significant increase in the number of prisoners who change their mind and decline to visit Healthcare.

8.2 Providing some healthcare services, such as dentistry, podiatry and optometry, for prisoners in the Segregation Unit has been problematic this year. At least two prisoners had to wait several weeks to have their toothache treated because of a shortage of staff to escort them to the necessary facilities. These delays included scheduled appointments which were not honoured due to staff shortages, leading to unnecessary distress for prisoners. Similarly, prisoners on Rule 58 who need to be escorted individually to the Healthcare block by wing staff, have longer delays before treatment than in previous years.

8.3 Healthcare is possibly the only area of the prison where recruitment of new staff is not an issue, although they do suffer the common problem of long delays in the vetting of new personnel; both of the new admin staff had to wait 6 months before they obtained clearance to work in the prison.

EDUCATION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

9.1 Milton Keynes College provides the following courses to prisoners in a typical week:

- 24 hours of Maths (8 places)
- 24 hours of English (8 places)
- 18 hours of Painting & Decorating (10 places)
- 24 hours of Bricks Workshop (10 places)
- 18 hours of Horticulture (8 places)

Milton Keynes College has struggled to find teaching staff for a number of classes during the year, resulting in the discontinuation of the Car Maintenance course.

9.2 The prison ran a number of morning programmes during the reporting year to help prisoners address their behaviour and change it:

- Sex Offender Treatment had 2 groups of 9 prisoners for 75 sessions
- Thinking Skills had 5 groups of 10 prisoners for 19 sessions
- Resolve had 5 groups of 10 prisoners for 26 sessions
- Become a New Me had 1 group of 7 prisoners for 60 sessions
- Self-Change had 11 prisoners who completed the course which needs up to 80 sessions

9.3 The library was grossly underused during the reporting year. When the librarian left, it took 3 months to recruit a new one and another 3 months to vet him. During these six months the library was closed. Since January, each wing has been offered a weekly session for its occupants to visit the library and change books. The average take-up has only been 35%, ranging from 81% to 0% depending on the wing, mostly because wing staff judge that they are unable spare anyone to escort prisoners to the library. There are, however, other ways that prisoners can access the library: they can request books for delivery to the wing or their workplace will take them in a timetabled slot. Due to lack of escort staff, prisoners attending education did not attend the library as part of their courses for most of the reporting year.

WORK, VOCATIONAL TRAINING and EMPLOYMENT

10.1 There are not enough activities, be they education, programmes, work , PE or training to keep prisoners out of their cells for more than about 40% of the working week. The working week was changed from 5 days (10 sessions, one in the morning, one in the afternoon) to 4.5 days (9 sessions) early on in the reporting year to alleviate some of the stresses caused by lack of wing staff. Assuming an average prison population of about 433 this means that there are about $9 \times 430 = 3900$ prisoner-sessions per week to be filled for full employment of all prisoners.

10.2 The table shows the approximate impact of the various weekday activities offered by the prison.

Activity	Prisoner – sessions per week
Programmes	100
Industrial Work	430
Education	320
PE	415
Wing Cleaning	350

The total number of prisoner sessions provided by the prison is therefore about 1600, a disappointing 40% of the total number to be filled for full employment. To make matters worse, about 35% of the prisoners had no employment at all at the end of our reporting year.

10.3 In practice, the number of sessions which actually take place is often considerably less than this. Interviews with various agencies, external visits, healthcare needs, lack of staff to run workshops, refusal to attend and the suspensions of normal activity due to the alarms which are inevitable in a prison, all reduce the number of sessions which prisoners actually use in scheduled activities. For example, there were no activities at all on five days during the year due to full shutdowns.

10.4 Weekend PE sessions have been seriously curtailed by the redeployment of PE staff to allow the regime to run on the Wings. Only 48% of the planned weekend sessions actually took place.

RESETTLEMENT PREPARATION

11.1 The prison has been allocated the equivalent of 7.5 full-time probation officers, but the actual number has dropped steadily from 3.9 to 2.7 during the reporting year. This is despite constant active recruitment by the probation service. In addition, 5 full-time prison officers should be working in the Offender Management Unit, which handles sentence planning and resettlement issues, but at least 85% of this has been lost over the year due to redeployment of these staff onto wings to cover staffing shortfalls there. Recently, 2 of these officers have been ring-fenced to only work on offender management matters, so redeployment can only result in a loss of 60%.

11.2 The consequence is that each member of the department has 95 prisoners to oversee, about double the normal load. The mapping out of sentence plans for prisoners is therefore slow (many arrive from other prisons without sentence plans at all), regular meetings with prisoners to discuss their plans are rare and a lot of one-to-one discussions about rehabilitation just doesn't happen any more. The IMB has noticed an increase in the number of prisoners complaining about a lack of contact with their allocated offender manager.

C Section – Work of Board

12.1 In this reporting period we lost five members due to various reasons such as work commitments, moving away from the area, living too far from the area and tenure. At the end of the year there were seven members of which two were probationers. The board had a limited success recruitment campaign due to a lack of funding from the Secretariat.

12.2 There were 11 board meetings during the year. One had to be cancelled due to insufficient members to form a quorum. The board meetings that did go ahead usually had an element of training at the beginning. Each meeting had a governor or deputy in attendance to deliver a monthly report.

12.3 The work of the board was significantly hampered due to the loss of a regular clerk. Unfortunately this loss resulted in a significant burden being placed on the board. The prison has not been able to meet its obligation in providing adequate resources to support the administrative work of the board.

12.4 The IMB visited the establishment on 402 occasions during the reporting period. This is an increase of 135 visits.

D Applications

Code	Subject	Current reporting year	Previous reporting year
A	Accommodation including laundry, clothing, ablutions	16	21
B	Discipline including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	4	12
C	Equality	-	-
D	Purposeful Activity including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	10	7
E 1	Letters, visits, phones, public protection restrictions	4	3
E 2	Finance including pay, private monies, spends	2	23
F	Food and kitchens	-	-
G	Health including physical, mental, social care	4	4
H 1	Property within this establishment	12	62
H 2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	19	
H 3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	15	5
I	Sentence management including HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	8	11
J	Staff/prisoner concerns including bullying	13	19
K	Transfers	20	36
	Confidential Access	4	4
	Total number of IMB applications	131	207

BOARD STATISTICS

Recommended Complement of Board Members

14

Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	8
Number of Board members joining during year, number leaving	4 joined 5 left
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	7
Total number of visits to the Establishment	431
Total number of segregation reviews attended	423