



Annual Report
of the
Independent Monitoring Board
at

HMP Woodhill

1 June 2016 – 30 May 2017

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Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody

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Section 1

The Statutory Role of the Independent Monitoring Board

The Prisons Act 1952 and the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 require every prison and Immigration Removal Centre to be monitored by an independent board, appointed by the Minister for Justice, from members of the community in which the prison or centre is situated.

The Board is specifically charged to:

- (a) 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.
- (b) Inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority as it judges appropriate, any concern it has.
- (c) 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.

The Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Woodhill is committed to treating all with respect and fairness, regardless of race, colour, ethnicity, religion, belief, national origin, gender, age, marital status, sexual orientation or disability.

Section 2

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Throughout the year IMB members have had free and unconstrained access to all areas of the prison. The co-operation and support provided by the Governing Governor, Senior Management Team (SMT), uniformed and administrative staff has been greatly appreciated.

Overall Judgement

As a core local, resettlement and high security prison, HMP Woodhill remains a complex establishment, which is extremely challenging to manage.

The Board deeply regrets to report that the concerns raised in the first five paragraphs of the previous year's report are essentially unchanged. Staff shortages and restricted regimes were also highlighted in the reports of 2014 and 2015. The situation has worsened in 2016/7.

The depleted senior management team have again worked tirelessly to try to maintain stability, deliver a decent and safe regime and maintain performance. The Board is deeply saddened to report again an unprecedented number of deaths in custody during the first part of the reporting year. However, there have been no deaths so far in 2017, and very significant work has been done around all aspects of safety.

It is a tragedy that the woeful state of the service overshadows the number of lives saved, local achievements and the dedication and hard work of so many staff.

The levels of assaults, violence and use of force continue to rise across the whole estate, including Woodhill.

The last two year's reports indicated serious staff shortages, which have only worsened throughout this reporting period, affecting all grades and all areas. Restricted regimes and the deployment of a significant number of staff on detached duty remains a feature of this reporting period. Cross deployment of staff and the use of detached duty staff contributes to lack of ownership on units, inconsistency in delivery of services and the interpretation of rules. This is reflected in prisoners losing confidence in procedures and process. This year has seen increases in numbers of complaints and the escalation of complaints to IMB and PPO. Staff at Wing and local level should have addressed a significant percentage of these complaints.

New staff are entering the service but retention rates of experienced staff is poor. The number of inexperienced staff is regularly between 40 and 60% per unit. This puts a strain on experienced staff who are cross-deployed from other areas to support them. The significant and continuing loss of experienced staff throughout the service impacts on the mentoring and support of new staff joining the service. The pay structures that are in place can result in staff effectively taking a reduction in salary if they are promoted. Staff doing the same job may well be on different salaries, with different terms and conditions. There is a huge skills gap with too many staff having to 'act up' into more senior positions

The prison has again functioned for the entire reporting period with restricted regimes in place. The Board maintains its belief that the inability to deliver a full regime to all prisoners for this, and the previous two-year's reports is an unacceptable erosion of standards. The subsequent boredom and isolation increases the chances of disorder and reduces the opportunities for rehabilitation.

The Board believes the impoverished regime and reduction in staff time to engage with prisoners are major contributing factors in the increase in incidents of self harm and increase in violence. The prison service as a whole, and local management, have responded to these increases by implementing new strategies and increasing the amount of data analysis and checks. However, the reality is that staff have

less time, and know prisoners less well. This growing dependence on processes dehumanises prisoner contact.

To reduce the amount of self-harming and number of deaths in custody, quarterly meetings monitor progress on the implementation of the recommendations of the Safer Custody action plan. Three independent reviews have taken place and the outcome of a judicial review was published at the end of May 2017. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) reviewed the Westminster Drugs Project (WDP) processes. No single cause or single repeated failing was identified in the investigations into the deaths in custody.

The tragically high number of deaths in custody contributed to a huge increase in the number of open ACCT (Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork – reduction of self harm procedure) documents. In the early spring of this year nearly 10% of the population were on an open ACCT. The increased workload for the staff dealing with this number of ACCTs was unsustainable.

The Board wrote to the Minister at the beginning of February warning of the impending crisis due to critical staffing levels. Both Education and workshops were closed for nearly two weeks in early February because there were no uniform staff available to move or supervise prisoners. At one point, lack of staff resulted in the prison being unable to meet its commitments to produce prisoners for the courts.

Population pressures have not improved and worsened following the riots and the forced relocation of hundreds of men. There remains a chronic shortage of spaces in the Cat B adult estate and the VP estate. The pressure on the delivery of appropriate care to meet the needs of increasing numbers of elderly prisoners continues to grow. Despite repeated requests there is still no national policy in place.

Staff shortages impacted negatively on the attendance of meetings and the delivery of training within the prison.

The SMT has worked hard to improve engagement with staff and develop ownership through consultation, but progress continues to be badly hampered by staff shortages. There is a deep frustration that the ethos of the SMT cannot be realised in these circumstances and 'burn out' is a real concern.

The Board remains so deeply concerned by the failings in the delivery of the Works contract that the Board wrote to the Minister in February 17. The Board's view has not improved from the previous report which stated 'Cells remain out of action for an unreasonable length of time. The fabric and maintenance of the entire establishment is in jeopardy with some outstanding work having to be reported through Health and Safety before repairs are done. It is an unacceptable squandering of public money that allows the very significant capital investment made in building a new prison to be wasted by not maintaining and repairing it.'

The Board is deeply concerned with the number of long term segregation prisoners, the high incidence of dirty protest amongst segregated prisoners and numbers of segregated prisoners on open ACCTs. The use of special accommodation has significantly increased. In the case of one prisoner it was twice used for over 20 days. The resulting conditions are degrading and inhumane. The Board believes this is indicative of a system that is inadequately resourced and has too few experienced staff, managers and mental health practitioners to manage difficult and challenging behaviour. Too many men who are accepted as needing to be transferred to hospital are subject to totally unacceptable delays. These delays are outside the control of the prison service and are consequence of a shortage of beds in secure hospitals and an under funding of mental health services in the community.

The Board is deeply disappointed that despite the repeated warnings of reducing staffing levels, overcrowding, budget cuts and impoverished regimes, successive policies have continued to drive forward cuts and changes that have resulted in a service that is barely fit for purpose.

Main Areas for Development

To the Minister

To provide sufficient resource for the prison service to become fit for purpose.

To work with healthcare providers to ensure that there is sufficient capacity within secure hospitals to provide timely transfer for those needing hospital treatment.

To ensure there is sufficient budget to provide an adequate mental health service for men in custody

To ensure there is sufficient capacity in the estate to allow for the progressive transfer of prisoners, including ISPP prisoners, to work through their sentence plan.

To develop a national policy to address the needs of older prisoners

To ensure that there is a recruitment/remuneration policy that is fair to all.

To improve the services for the rehabilitation and resettlement of prisoners.

To ensure that the national contract for Works services is operating effectively.

To ensure there is sufficient multi disciplinary resource to effectively manage and progress men held under national MCBS.

To publish the review of Safer Custody undertaken by Stephen Shaw.

To the Prison and Probation Service

To work with healthcare providers to improve the assessment and expedition of transfers to secure hospitals.

To develop specialist training, interventions and strategies for the management and reintegration of long term segregated prisoners.

To ensure that outside contracts are robustly monitored to ensure the effective delivery of services.

To develop a meaningful rehabilitation strategy.

To develop and improve the provision of Education and work opportunities to prisoners on discreet and specialist units.

To ensure there are sufficient multi disciplinary resources to assess and manage the men on CSC.

To the Governing Governor

To continue with the progress made in ensuring that prisoner safer custody is maintained, as has been recently demonstrated by the significant reduction of deaths in custody.

To develop an effective relationship with Carillion to ensure repairs and maintenance are carried out to acceptable standards and within reasonable time scales.

To ensure the provision, care and management of kit and furniture across all House Units.

To ensure the effective control of vermin across all units.

To implement an effective system of maintaining prisoner information cell cards on all House Units.

To ensure that SMARG (Segregation Management and Review Group), Use of Force and Adjudication Standards meetings are held on a regular basis.

To deliver training and develop strategies to better manage long term prisoners and prisoners on ACCTs in segregation back to normal location.

To control and improve the quality of responses given to prisoners under the request/complaints procedures.

To improve and standardise the standard of cleaning across all House Units.

To standardise the adherence to rules about furniture and fittings on all units.

To develop staff training to deliver consistency of application of rules and policies across all House Units.

To ensure personal protection equipment is properly maintained and easily located when needed.

To develop work and education opportunities for men held in discreet units.

Improvements

The Board is pleased to highlight significant improvements in safer custody and the reduction of deaths in custody.

The Board is pleased to report an improvement in the control of New Psychoactive Substances as testing and detection become better.

The Board welcomes the introduction of a dedicated prisoner information TV channel.

Towards the end of the reporting year the Board has observed an improvement in the management of ACCT documents.

Since the beginning of 2017 the Board is pleased to see more consistent implementation of the Violence Reduction policy.

The Board supports the use of body worn cameras, which was initiated in the spring of 2017.

The introduction of the 'no bib' policy in Visits has resulted in a more relaxed atmosphere.

The Board welcomes the initiatives developed by the Reducing Reoffending Team to build links with national and local businesses.

Section 3

DESCRIPTION OF THE ESTABLISHMENT

1. HMP Woodhill prison is located in Milton Keynes and is part of the Prison Service's High Security Estate. It is a complex and important prison with multiple functions. Designated a core local Category A prison, it is one of only three in the country. It is mainly a local and resettlement prison holding adult male remands and those sentenced to less than 12 months from the South East Midlands (Thames Valley, Northants, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire). Woodhill also receives Cat B or Cat C offenders for their last period of custody for resettlement purposes, for release to their local area. The prison holds starred-up and Restricted Status Young Adults (18 – 21), and potential Category A prisoners from across the Midlands. The Cat A requirements add significantly to the security and control requirements placed on the establishment. Woodhill also provides a very small facility for protected witnesses, which is managed under the National Protected Witness Programme. In addition there are two Close Supervision Centre (CSC)/Rule 46 units and a Managing Challenging Behaviour Strategy (MCBS) unit, which are administered and managed under a national strategy through the Security Directorate.

2. Certified normal accommodation has remained below the operational capacity (819) due to one unit remaining closed throughout the reporting period. Operational capacity: 819.

3. Over the period of this report, the population has comprised 70 – 75% sentenced prisoners, and 25 – 30% remand prisoners. The age range is predominantly 30 – 39 years and prisoners are predominantly white.

4. During the reporting period, the main accommodation was made up of 4 individual House Units, a Healthcare Inpatient facility and a Segregation Unit.

- House Units 1–4 are divided into two wings, A and B. Each wing was designed to hold 60 prisoners in single cells. Some of these cells have been converted into doubles, so that each Unit can now hold 180.
- House unit 1 has the First Night facility and Induction unit on 1B, with a mix of remand and convicted prisoners on 1A.
- House Unit 2 has the dedicated drug stabilisation unit on 2A, with a mix of remand and convicted prisoners on 2B.
- House 3 (2 wings) accommodates a mix of remand and convicted prisoners.
- House unit 4A holds a mix of remand and convicted prisoners.
- House unit 4B is the vulnerable prisoner (VP) unit.
- House unit 5 with 90 spaces has remained unoccupied throughout the reporting period waiting for remedial building work to be carried out to make it fit for occupation.
- House unit 6 has 5 discreet wings, 4 of which are occupied, and holds the CSC and MCBS prisoners as well as those subject to the national protected witness scheme.

In early 2017 the National Prison and Probation Service decided that Woodhill will change its role in 2018 to become a prison for long term Category B prisoners with a Category A facility retained in House Unit 6. House Unit 6 will include the Close Supervision Centre, a Separation Centre and a Protected Witness Unit.

EVIDENCE SECTIONS 4 – 11

4 SAFETY

	2015	2016	Jan 1 - May 31 2017
Use of Force	506	396	213
Self – harm incidents	404	430	289
ACCTs opened	619	911	407
Assaults: prisoner on prisoner	180	157	77
Assaults: prisoner on staff	88	93	42
Violent incidents	239	246	116
Deaths in Custody	5	8	0
Near misses	1	2	4

There were no self-inflicted deaths in the first five months of 2017.

Woodhill has invested resources over and above the benchmarking levels for Safer Custody since mid 2015.

In the period from December 15 to June 16 the following reviews of the safer custody process took place:

A joint healthcare and prison review commissioned by the Governing Governor.

A safer custody review commissioned by the DDC, conducted by a multi disciplinary team from HQ. The terms of reference were issued in January 16 and resulted in the setting up of the Safer Custody Task Force, which provides the service with specialist and expert resources.

The Task Force introduced the following measures:

- Additional 'Early Days' information for new arrivals;
- Safer Custody Staff on duty during the evening in Reception;
- Additional Insiders and Listeners on the Wings;
- Additional Safer Custody and Violence Reduction trained staff;
- All ACCT reviews carried out by Safer Custody trained staff; and
- Family members being able to attend and be involved in ACCT reviews.

CQC review of WDP substance misuse team practices. There were no significant findings and WDP were fully compliant

A review commissioned by Woodhill led by a team of psychologists to look at the 'softer areas' such as prisoner and staff perceptions of safety. The results will inform local policy and training.

The Minister commissioned a review of all safer custody processes, led by Stephen Shaw. The Board is disappointed that the outcomes have not been published.

The judgement of the JR heard in April 17 concluded that the evidence for a system failure could not be established and it did not show that the same mistake was repeated, but rather that different mistakes were made in specific factual circumstances, and were characterised as individual errors.

The Board continues to be very concerned that wings are not able to keep cell cards up to date.

Improvements in the detection of 'Spice' have resulted in a decline in its presence and use.

The Board has been greatly concerned with the numbers of Cat C prisoners in segregation who refuse to return to normal location. The Board believe this is an indication of bullying and high levels of debt on the Wings.

There follows some sample data to illustrate some of the issues highlighted in this report:

Date	No of ACCTs	Prisoners on Violence Reduction 1 process	Prisoners on Violence Reduction 3 process	No of cells out of action	Spaces available in the prison (out of approx. 720)
4.10.16	48	20	0	8	9
2.11.16	34	31	4	9	8
3.12.16	37	53	1	10	10
2.1.17	53	71	5	5	6
3.2.17	50	63	2	9	15
2.3.17	49	48	7	14	15
2.4.17	49	58	2	12	15
2.5.17	47	47	18	13	17

The number of prisoners on ACCTs has been significantly above what might be considered 'normal'. Since the beginning of the year there has been a significant increase in the number of prisoners being monitored under Violence Reduction level 3 as better use has been made of the VR strategy. The number of cells out of action (primarily due to delays in repairs) is far above the pore-private contract numbers. Finally, the small number of available spaces makes management of the prison very much more difficult, meaning that prisoners cannot be located in the optimum place and there is little or no flexibility to cater for individual circumstances.

There are insufficient constant supervision cells for the needs of the population. The 'annex' to the segregation unit, which is supposedly out of use, has been frequently used to located prisoners in crisis on constant watch.

The location and variable state of repair of personal protection equipment for staff use has been a concern during the reporting period.

5 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS

Equalities meetings were frequently cancelled or postponed for operational reasons.

The Equalities and Diversity team have not had a consistent management structure in place for the majority of the year.

The prison has not been able to deliver a full regime for the entire year.

Staffing shortfalls have resulted in Education and workshops being closed for days at a time. Men have spent increasingly long periods of time locked up.

The Board is concerned that Induction is frequently delayed and is not always delivered if prisoners are not located on the First Night Unit.

A black and Muslim focus group was started in October 16 to primarily address HMCIP Expectations and to gauge how negative perceptions felt by our Black & Muslim prisoners can be improved following the HMCIP recommendations for improvements. All participants were handed The Young report.

Discrepancies in levels of prisoner pay for work and unemployment between different establishments remains an on going concern.

There has been some progress made in the availability of education on the discreet units but it remains poor. No meaningful work opportunities are available.

6 SEGREGATION, CLOSE SUPERVISION AND DISCREET UNITS

The Board is concerned with the consistently high number of prisoners on open ACCTs in the segregation unit

The Board is concerned at the number of prisoners who refuse to return to normal location. The Board believes this is an indication of bullying and high levels of debt on the Wings. There is a general lack of a coordinated and consistently delivered multidisciplinary strategy to manage these men out of segregation.

The Board is concerned with the high number of men on dirty protest in the segregation unit.

The Board is concerned with the increase in the number of times special accommodation has been used and for the length of time prisoners have been kept in those conditions.

A prisoner remained in special accommodation for over 21 days. He later transferred to secure hospital.

The Board wrote to the Minister in February 2017 detailing deep concerns with the physical state of the unit and the delays in transferring men to secure hospital. There is little improvement.

The Board is deeply concerned that there has been little attempt to hold Use of Force, SMARG or Adjudications Standards meetings.

The Board is concerned at the number of men held on what is a closed wing adjacent to the segregation unit either as an 'overflow' to the segregation unit or on constant supervision because no other appropriate cells are available.

Rule 45 reviews are not always held on time and have a poor multidisciplinary attendance.

CSC, MCBS and PW

These Units are in House Unit 6. A constant problem throughout the year was keeping the fabric of the building in a reasonable state of maintenance and getting repair work conducted. It took nearly 10 months to get a window that had stuck open repaired. The time it was opened included winter. Equipment and facilities remained broken for months despite the best efforts of staff and the Board to hasten repairs.

The men held in the CSC are among the most challenging in the system and progress in rehabilitating them is extremely slow despite intensive efforts. Prisoners in MCBS are less challenging and there are considerably fewer resources devoted to their rehabilitation. It appears that they have a much lower priority. The Board believes that greater priority should be given to their needs so that they can be more effectively managed and progressed.

The staffing shortages meant that towards the end of the year, even the men in the PWU had to be locked in their cells at times because the staff had to be redeployed to other areas to keep the prison safe.

CSCs are too full, despite record numbers of prisoners progressing out. In the last 2 years 9 have been de-selected and continue to progress, 1 has been de-selected and is waiting for a progressive move and 2 are awaiting reviews, which are expected to recommend de-selection. None of these men have gone from CSC to hospital; they are all on normal main location.

Numbers of referrals and the waiting list for men to come into the system continues to grow.

There is no clinical psychologist in post for the men held on the CSC. The Board has heard evidence from the MH team that this is an unmet need.

7 ACCOMMODATION, INCLUDING COMMUNICATION

The Board is concerned that there is now a significant rodent problem

The loss of property is the most common subject of complaints. The attitude of the service and contractors is woefully poor. Once a prisoner is separated from his property, particularly when moving from one establishment to another it is almost impossible for him to be either reunited or compensated.

The fabric of the establishment continues to deteriorate. Many areas are poorly maintained and dirty. Wings vary enormously in standards of cleanliness. Wing offices are poorly equipped, dirty and with broken furniture. Lengthy delays in getting repairs completed are the norm, meaning that cells are out of action for unacceptable lengths of time.

Supplies of appropriate furniture and fittings are problematic. Cells are too frequently inadequately furnished.

There is a shortage of lockable cabinets.

Mattresses are in a poor state of repair. Prisoners regularly use pin boards to counteract sagging.

COMMUNICATION

The SMT have made every effort to publish restrictions in advance in order to allow prisoners to manage their reduced time out of cell as well as possible.

Too many notices on Wings are undated or out of date.

The use of cell cards is sporadic throughout the prison. If cell cards are not up to date it is impossible to know immediately the identity of prisoners, which is vital in an emergency and to control the location of prisoners

The quality of responses to complaints is inconsistent. Too many are poorly written, not dated and not signed. There are too many gaps in staff knowledge coupled with a tendency to not take responsibility. "I am cross deployed/this is not my unit/I don't normally work here/ I don't know anything about this wing' are responses too readily offered in answer to almost any question.

Too many meetings are cancelled at little or no notice.

The provision of application and complaint forms is inconsistent.

8. HEALTHCARE , MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Staffing problems persist with approaching 50% of healthcare staff being agency. The mental health team is underfunded and under staffed.

The overriding issues have been the number of inquests and the shortage of permanent staff with several vacancies unfilled. The resulting pressure has translated into overload on existing staff and increase in sickness as a response. Further losses are likely in both primary care and mental Health. Retention is an additional problem. Ongoing recruitment campaigns have not been successful and the long time to achieve security clearance (up to 9 months) results in loss of interested applicants. Agency is used where possible. Two administrators have not been replaced. There is increased reliance on staff goodwill to keep the system working. It is fair to say staff shortage is a country wide problem. Attendance at reviews is not always possible.

The start of online prescribing at the end of January 2017 has been a great improvement.

Bids for new contracts have been postponed and current contracts extended to 2019 when re-rolling

and upgrading work in the establishment are completed. Many staff will remain keen to work for the NHS which could be a problem for an alternative contract winner.

Attendance at some clinics can be down to 50% and there is room for improved communication from all parts of the prison to reduce this waste of clinician's time (e.g. A nurse printing her morning patient attendance list 3 days before will always get no-shows, as will dentist and nurse clinics if wing staff don't cancel appointments in advance).

Nursing staff feel it is important the designated officer is close to the drugs admin window all the time to prevent abuse, rather than in the general area.

A review of the health screen assessment template has resulted in more detail on mental health, self-harm and suicide, previous ACCTs, substance misuse and family support. Mental Health has delivered a crisis service and been stretched; with better staffing this has improved. With impending loss of staff at the end of the year group work and one to one work will become difficult if not impossible (see CQC report 13/1/2017). Attendance at ACCT and rule 45 reviews will be restricted to those patients being seen by Mental Health. Communication issues between primary mental health staff and records of recovery practitioners have been addressed. CQC report of 13/1/17 said prisoners did not have equitable access to MH services.

Inpatients. Early in the reporting year this unit moved back to its original location. No money was available to open the upstairs fully ready part of the unit. Due to the nature of some of the patients therapeutic/work activity is limited. There is a significant lack of available spaces in secure hospital units and delays in getting men assessed for admission. Access to secure hospital accommodation after assessment takes far too long so patients can remain inappropriately placed for weeks or months.

Pharmacy. Staffing has been an issue. Pharmacy are planning a minor ailments service, and a Medicines Use Review for prisoners to ensure they know why they are prescribed particular medicines, It is acknowledged that it is sometimes not possible to administer a drug at the optimum time for therapeutic effect, and that there is no secure storage for a prisoner holding their own medicines. An in house formulary is being developed.

C&NWL. Board meeting 20/1/17. "17/18 budget requires savings of £29M to break even. The committee felt savings of this order unrealistic".

C&NWL Foundation Trust Board report 25/1/17 'As the MH sector seeks to stabilize large acute hospitals Mental Health could lose out.'

Both of these issues may impact on delivery at Woodhill, or question whether C&NWL will bid for the contract again.

9. EDUCATION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

For very significant periods from the end of 2017 into the first 3 months of 2017 uniform staff shortages were such that Education was frequently cancelled.

It was a travesty that a fully staffed Education department had staff sitting around in empty classrooms, with no one to teach. Efforts were made to try to take some work out to the Wings but little impact was made.

In addition the Workshops managed by Milton Keynes College were also shut on many occasions due to staff shortages

There has been some progress in the delivery of Education to the segregation and discreet units. A distance learning coordinator is in post.

Links are in place with the OU Education Trust to specifically develop work for high risk prisoners who cannot get clearance to go off the wing. The number of Wing based jobs is too limited to meet the current need.

10. WORK, VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

Thames Valley CRC has had a great success in opening bank accounts and providing Experian credit checks to prisoners.

A series of highly successful Employer Engagement days have been run.

The Resettlement department, assisted by the Chaplaincy team are building valuable links with the local community, local and national employers.

Skills based training offered by Milton Keynes College has suffered shut downs and low student numbers as a consequence of uniform staffing shortages

Numbers of men able to access work has been negatively impacted on by a requirement that all prisoners must achieve basic level Maths and English before applying for a job. This has particularly affected both the kitchen and gardens. In addition Cat B and remand prisoners are no longer able to work in the gardens. Both areas are unable to fill the workspaces available.

There is no meaningful work available to men on discreet units.

11. RESETTLEMENT PREPARATION

Prisoners should be located at the resettlement prison near their home area shortly before release so that proper preparations can be made to reintegrate them into normal life to help reduce reoffending. However, the lack of spaces in the prison system and inadequate resources provided for resettlement mean that the system is not working as it was designed to do.

Two CRCs (Thames Valley and BeNCH) provide resettlement services. Both suffered from inadequate staffing and insufficient resources when they commenced the contract. BeNCH have made negligible progress, the service offered is inadequate. By contrast Thames Valley now have a fully staffed, enthusiastic team and deliver a good service. There is great disparity in the service offered by the two CRCs.

12 THE WORK OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

1. The Board members at Woodhill again worked exceptionally hard this year. This small number of fully trained members has undertaken all duties whilst providing mentoring for new members as well as dealing with a large number of applications.

2. All Board members use the secure webmail service (www.cjism.net) to disseminate information, as instructed by the IMB Secretariat and the IMB National Council. As repeated in previous reports, it is a cumbersome and slow system, which frequently fails. Storage space on the system is frustratingly low.

Training

During the reporting year the Board had presentations from senior managers, heads of department and attended modules of the IMB training programme:

BOARD STATISTICS	
Recommended Complement of Board Members	16
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period (incl. two members in their Probationary year)	9
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period (incl. three members in their Probationary year)	8
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	3
Number of members leaving within reporting period	3
Total number of Board meetings during reporting period	12
Average number of attendances at Board meetings during reporting period	7
Total number of visits to the prison	512
Percentage of segregation reviews attended	78%
Total number of applications received (General and Confidential)	524

13 APPLICATIONS

Subject	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Accommodation	8	15	22	9	15
Adjudications	8	14	8	18	5
Equality & Diversity (including religion)	2	8	8	14	14
Education/employment/training inc IEP	28	52	51	47	31
Family/visits inc mail & phone	42	63	66	78	52
Finance & Pay	10	20	29	20	13
Closed Visits	0	0	7	9	0
Food/kitchen related	10	7	12	7	15
Health related	52	70	60	60	71
Property (within current establishment)	54	47	42	41	43
Property (during transfer/in another establishment)	20	27	42	57	57
Canteen, facilities, Catalogue shopping, Argos	8	14	15	10	8
Sentence related (inc HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-cat, etc.	72	92	79	62	43
Staff/prisoner/detainee concerns inc bullying	52	37	67	81	70
Transfers	17	30	24	20	11
Miscellaneous	104	54	67	34	54
Returned/unclassified			92	47	22
Total number of IMB applications	487	550	694	614	524