



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

**HMP Cardiff**

for reporting Year  
1 September 2016 – 31 August 2017

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*Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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### Introductory Sections

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

### Evidence Sections

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

	The Work of the IMB	14
	Applications to the IMB	15

### 1 STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

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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 had on those in its custody.**

To enable the Board to carry out these duties effectively, its members have a right of access to every prisoner and every part of the prison and also to the prison's records.

## 2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This report presents the findings of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Cardiff for the period from 1 September 2016 to 31 August 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.

Main judgements:

- The professionalism and commitment of staff resulted in the prison being able to maintain an overall atmosphere of good order and good relationships, which are a strength of the prison, despite the major challenges described below. By the end of the reporting period, plans were in place to address many of the problems described in the report; there were clear signs of change and we are optimistic that the resulting improvements will be reflected in our next report. (See pages 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9)
- The shortage of staff resulted in an unacceptably restricted regime which had a major impact on the operation of the prison and a detrimental impact on activities related to rehabilitation, such as education, training and the work of the Offender Management Unit. (See pages 11 and 13). However, firm plans were in place to move back to a full regime of provision towards the end of the reporting period.
- Aspects of accommodation did not meet acceptable standards of decency. A number of these issues related to maintenance, such as inadequate showers, and others were ongoing issues, such as the lack of screening around toilets in cells. These issues continued despite the best efforts of the Governor within the existing maintenance arrangements. Frequent shortages of basic kit, such as clothing and bedding, also had a negative impact on basic standards of decency. (See page 9)
- The increase in the availability of synthetic stimulants, popularly known as “spice”, coincided with an increase in self harm, violence and the use of restraint. (See page 6)

### **Main Areas for Development**

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#### **TO THE MINISTER**

Review the level of resources available to prisons as a matter of urgency. Our monitoring clearly indicated that the reduction in staffing levels had coincided with an unacceptably restricted regime. This regime has had major negative impact on rehabilitation and coincided with a significant increase in violence.

#### **TO THE PRISON SERVICE**

There were major issues relating to the prison building and facilities and current arrangements for maintenance appear to be not capable of addressing these.

It would appear that the smoking ban has had the effect of increasing the use of other harmful and illicit substances.

#### **TO THE GOVERNOR**

Clear plans were in place to address many of the problems described in this report by the end of the reporting period. Signs of improvement were clear and we welcome these changes.

### 3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ESTABLISHMENT

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HMP Cardiff is situated in the heart of the City. It is a men's Category B local training prison and largely serves South East Wales and the South Wales Valleys, though a number of prisoners are transferred from English prisons. It predominantly provides for prisoners serving short term sentences, remand prisoners and prisoners awaiting sentence. The prison has a Certified Normal Accommodation of 539 and an operating capacity of 820, with prisoners overwhelmingly accommodated two within each cell. The prison opened in 1827 and a large part of the accommodation continues to comprise of three Victorian wings. A major programme of refurbishment in 1996 resulted in the opening of three new accommodation wings. The prison also includes a range of other facilities, including a gym, a series of workshops and classrooms. A new health care centre was opened in May 2008 which provides 21 beds.

Cardiff's normal regime includes full time education, employment in the prison workshops and training courses. There is a resettlement unit that offers prisoners various offending behaviour programmes and work based courses. A detoxification unit also holds short term prisoners in preparation for release.

A range of public and commercial providers are responsible for delivering services within the prison. Health services are provided by Cardiff and Vale NHS Trust, learning and skills are provided by HMPPS in Wales and site maintenance by GeoAmey. Other services relying on providers from outside the prison include escort services and community rehabilitation. A number of voluntary organisations, such as the St Giles Trust and PACT, also provide services.

## B Evidence sections 4 – 11

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### 4 SAFETY

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In the reporting period there were 4 deaths in custody. Of these, 3 were from natural causes and the Inquest has still not been held on the fourth. It should be noted that the Health Care staff received an award for the palliative care provided to one man who died in prison.

There was an increase in ACCTS opened; in 2016 539 were opened and to date in 2017 560 were opened.

The Self Harm Data Tool recorded 12 incidents of self-harm in April 2017. In a 3 month period there were 71 incidents and in a 6 month period 117 incidents. It was noted that there was a spike of incidents on Wednesdays. Although no specific investigation of the reasons had taken place, it was suggested that this spike was perhaps explained by canteen being distributed on Wednesday and staff training taking place on one Wednesday per month leading to a restricted regime.

Listeners were available to all prisoners, but the turnover of prisoners in Cardiff meant there was a frequent need to identify and train new Listeners. There were phones available on some of the wings to contact the Samaritans, but these did not all work.

The Board undertook a review of Reception processes in 2016/2017. It identified a concern in relation to prisoners being received from Courts in Birmingham and Exeter. Long journeys after court meant that prisoners were sometimes not arriving on the first night wing until 22.00 hrs or later. On a more positive note first night support from both staff and peer advisors was both thorough and empathetic. It was observed that despite the late hour, assessments were carried out carefully, including assessments in relation to self-harm. This was an improvement as it was noted as a concern in the Board's Annual Report of 2016.

In March 2016 Cardiff became a non-smoking prison. This led to incidents of smoking other substances including nicotine patches, tea leaves and 'spice'. Board Members noted that air quality on a number of wings became worse due to the smoking of illicit substances. Non-smoking prisoners reported to the Board that whereas previously they would share a cell with another non-smoker, they did not feel able to complain about their cell mate to obtain a cell transfer when they were smoking illicitly. Improved vaping products were introduced in April and these do appear to be having a positive effect.

Prison statistics identified an increase in violence from 2015 to 2016 of 50%. Assaults against prisoners had increased by 15%, whilst assaults against staff had increased by 160%. Similarly 'Use of Force' incidents had shown an increase from 320 incidents in the period June 2015 - May 2016 to 435 for the period June 2016 - May 2017. Figures for 2017 had not been collated yet but there was unlikely to be a reduction in the figures.

Overall, there was an upward trend in both violent and self-harming behaviour. Work undertaken by the Safer Custody and Violence Reduction officers was important in controlling this increase, however, between February and June 2017 a minimum of 123 hours was lost to other duties because of staffing issues. This was a concern for the Board.

We were concerned that Equality & Diversity meetings within the prison were spasmodic and often cancelled. These meetings had not been seen as a priority and lack of attendance has also indicated that they had taken a back seat. This was recognised by the new Governor who took control, chairing the meeting, steering it back to a priority for staff attendance and providing a more informative agenda. The meeting was restored to a monthly schedule with assigned leads to oversee the protected characteristics.

An Equality & Diversity Action Plan was updated to ensure staff covered all the equality characteristics, and prisoner representatives were consulted to report any issues. Prisoner Diversity Representatives were active in Reception and other wings and regular meetings were held with them to input any issues at management meetings. A breakdown of all categories and ethnicities was provided at Diversity meetings to ensure that members of staff were aware of who was in the prison.

We observed first-hand the sympathetic treatment of a range of prisoners, including a transgender prisoner who presented demanding and difficult requests. Members of staff dealt with her compassionately and, as far as prison rules allowed, went the extra mile to accommodate her needs. Another example was a long ongoing and complex case of a foreign national prisoner to whom staff gave large amounts of time. On the whole, men from overseas were well cared for. The needs of men for whom English was an additional language were also recognised through provision in Education.

HMP Cardiff is an old Victorian building so not adapted for ambulatory disability but some wheelchair users were assigned areas that they could access and all were catered for in essential matters. However, it must be acknowledged that there were no lifts and many staircases. Attention to ensuring Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans must be conducted.

Family days were monitored, as were the special visits involving fathers' roles. Visitors reported a positive response and we observed excellent hands on training by staff; it was obvious that all enjoyed this facility. The visits room was significantly altered to provide enhanced child play facilities and areas for men to enjoy association with families. Family issues and parenting skills were also catered for through the education programme.

The IMB Board contained one BME member. The Board agreed in principle to operating practices to increase diversity, such as more flexible rotas to encourage younger working members. Members also attended events in the local mosque and a campaign placed posters in local Islamic centres. However, the Board continued to be overwhelmingly made up of older, white members.

## 6 SEGREGATION/CARE AND SEPARATION UNIT

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There was a considerable increase in Adjudications in relation to the breaking of prison rules; these related in the main to possession/use of 'legal highs', Spice, damage to cells, assaults and the disobeying of a lawful order. The majority were dealt with under prison rules with the more serious cases being sent to the Independent Adjudicator (IA) for sentencing. No fewer than 2413 offences were dealt with at Governor level with 375 matters referred to the IA.

The prison management adopted a more robust attitude towards illegal substances, including more severe penalties for possession. Matters relating to illegal drugs were referred directly to the Police as the sanction provided by the Courts was far in excess of that provided for under prison rules.

The Board was satisfied with the conditions, facilities, regime and staffing of the unit. The unit was visited each time a member was on duty and there were facilities to speak to a prisoner in private, if appropriate. The Board was promptly advised of all new arrivals and if a member was not on duty, messages left in the IMB office.

Review Board dates were prominently marked within the CSU. IMB members made every effort to attend, however Reviews were erratic in their timing and often postponed. As a result the IMB was present at very few Reviews; members often attended the prison for the specific purpose of a Review to find that this had been rescheduled. This matter was highlighted in previous reports. When IMB members attended, Reviews were properly constituted and conducted.

The Governor's daily round always reviewed detention to see if it was possible to return a prisoner to normal location and when the capacity of the CSU was exceeded, some suitable prisoners were returned to normal location "behind doors". There was a problem with Rule 45 prisoners located in CSU; they were assessed to establish why they could not remain on wings but their presence caused problems in locating other prisoners in the CSU.

Members regularly sat as observers at adjudications and were aware of the Prison Adjudications Punishment Guidelines relating to offences. Prisoners were offered guidance relating to offences. Prisoners were offered guidance should they wish to appeal against an adjudication.

Dirty protests were handled in accordance with the strict Bio Hazards and Health & Safety requirements and appropriate warning notices were posted. Efforts were made throughout by CSU staff to encourage the protest to stop and a shower was offered. There was an appropriate special accommodation cell available and there was little, if any, mechanical restraint used within the CSU. However, instances were witnessed when restraints were used whilst removing prisoner to the CSU unit but they were never excessive and were carried out only after a failure to de-escalate the situation.

The long awaited refurbishment of the CSU unit was completed, albeit it took twice as long to complete as scheduled. During this period, the unit was relocated and all credit to the staff, who worked hard to maintain the care and support in the temporary unit.

The Segregation Monitoring and Review Group met quarterly under the Chair at Senior Governor level, with a dedicated IMB member attending and providing a report. The panel also consisted of representatives from Mental Health Team members, Healthcare Wing Officers and Chaplaincy. There were also referrals to the CARATS team (counselling, assessment, referral and advice through-care service).

In conclusion, the Board was satisfied that the unit was staffed by experienced and highly trained officers who provide professional help to all prisoners in their care.

## 7 ACCOMMODATION (including communication)

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There were a number of initiatives to improve the general environment of accommodation areas, such as the creation of painting teams. However, despite the best efforts of the Governor within existing contractual arrangements, there were major accommodation issues which had a negative impact on standards of decency within the prison. Shower facilities were out of use for long periods or failed to function properly, such as on A2, where they were closed for several months. The showers on F4 regularly malfunctioned or were out of use for long periods. The window in the showers on F3 was missing for several weeks. The refurbishment of the Care & Separation Unit over-ran by several weeks, leaving men temporarily accommodated in an area which had no showers.

A major issue of decency was the continued absence of privacy curtains around toilets within many cells. There was a major problem of rising damp within the Healthcare unit, with large areas of peeling paint and bare plaster. Inadequate heating, dampness and mould in cells were ongoing issues in winter on F Wing. The men's holding room in the visits area lacked adequate ventilation and was stifling in hot weather.

The supply of kit was another area where ongoing problems resulted in major issues affecting decency. There were regular shortages of kit on wings. Men regularly did not have a weekly change of items such as sheets, towels, socks and tee shirts.

Prison staff faced major challenges as a result of staff shortages and the continuation of good relationships and good order was largely explained by their continued hard work and dedication. The Governor was active in managing the shortage of staff within the prison and this included providing men with a predictable, though restricted, regime. However, due to these staff shortages, there was a limited regime within the prison for the whole period of this report. Men spent unacceptably long periods of time locked in cells with reduced access to purposeful activities.

Canteen arrangements worked efficiently and the prison was active in making ongoing adjustments to the items available to smokers, such as vaping equipment, in an effort to reduce problems arising from the smoking ban. However, the quality of air in areas of the prison, resulting from the smoking of illicit substance, was a continuing problem. There was good provision of food, which offered a choice of appropriate menus. The prison made the provision of food to the men a priority even when there was disruption to the normal regime.

## **8 HEALTHCARE (including mental health and social care)**

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The healthcare unit is housed in a relatively new two story building. There were extensive problems with damp in the walls which could not have been hygienic for prisoners who were unwell. Beds for in-patients were sometimes taken up by prisoners who were in need of protected accommodation. In-patient care was always made available for those in urgent need of care and observation.

Bed-watches at outside hospitals were always covered, though this sometimes impacted on the prison regime if a number of staff were involved; on the whole it was well managed by In-vision (the Detail Office). Escorts for outside hospitals were sometimes cancelled at the request of the prison due to staff shortages, when efforts were made to re-arrange them. There was also a high refusal rate from prisoners not wanting to attend appointments, when they were required to sign a disclaimer.

Prisoners were mainly seen in the GP consulting rooms in the Healthcare Centre for booked appointments, but if needed the GP attended the Wings, depending on urgency and circumstances. During August, 32 out of 37 GP clinics were held and 3 out of 3 urgent GP clinics. The GP did a weekly Ward round for Healthcare in-patients and all men were given the opportunity to speak to the GP. The GP attended the CSU 3 times per week to ensure the men were fit to be located there.

There was a major demand for psychiatric care, which levels of staffing did not meet. There was only one primary care nurse and there was a long list of men waiting to be seen for an initial assessment; many men were not assessed within the 28 day deadline as they left the prison before they could be seen. There were three psychiatric clinics per week with booked appointments, seeing a maximum of 21 men. The psychiatrist also did a weekly review of his patients in the Healthcare in-patient unit. The maximum wait for a psychiatric appointment was 8 weeks, but any prisoner who presented as acutely unwell was seen the same day. The In reach psychotherapist saw men on the wings three times weekly, though waiting times were up to 4 months. There was no Psychology input.

There was a full quota of opticians. There were monthly clinics. 8 out of 14 Dental clinics were held in August. The permanent dentist left and her replacement was delayed because of vetting problems. There was a part-time temporary replacement, but the prison was owed 17 sessions. There were good links with the local dental hospital.

Each prisoner who arrived at HMP Cardiff was offered New Reception Screening, Secondary Health Screening and BBV screening, where possible within 72 hours. In August four out of six BBV clinics were held. Some patients declined screening. Referrals were made to Social Care and an assessment could take up to 14 days. Healthcare leaflets were given to each prisoner with information on how to complain.

Relationships between Health providers and commissioners were good with efficient and flexible communication. The Healthcare staff had won two awards in the last twelve months: one for palliative care, which they shared with a local team of district nurses and one for successful student placements.

A monthly Veterans group was established. A number of charities such as the British Legion, Help for Heroes, SSAFA and Hire a Hero established links with those who attended in order to provide support and Through the Gate services.

HMP Cardiff offered a good range of education and training opportunities. During monitoring visits to teaching rooms and workshops there was invariably a positive atmosphere and good relations between tutors and the men. The constant turnover of men in the prison, low levels of prior attainment and increasing numbers of men with English as an additional language, posed a continuing challenge, but these were dealt with well. Teaching observed in English as an additional language lesson, for example, was highly imaginative.

The prison continued to seek to meet the needs of the varied prison population through new provision. The new Family Matters course focused on issues such as parenting, family budgeting and managing anger. It was also very pleasing to see the reintroduction of painting and drawing through the Creative Literacy course. The lack of creative arts provision was raised in previous reports and it was encouraging to see the high standard of work being produced, which it was planned to display around the prison.

The number of activities offering qualifications was the subject of ongoing review. One issue faced by the prison was that the average length of sentence in Cardiff was typically quite short. The turnover rate of prisoners created a challenge in generating courses with sufficient duration and content to qualify for certification. This issue was addressed with a large degree of success by structuring courses around short modules.

However, despite the best efforts of staff, the restricted regime, which operated for the whole period of this report, had a major negative impact on provision. Part time and sometimes spasmodic access to courses by the men made it extremely difficult to take forward planned developments and to achieve expected outcomes. The restricted regime also affected the attitudes of many men towards education and training in the prison, reducing interest and lowering motivation. During many Board monitoring visits, attendance on courses was a fraction of those enrolled. On 14<sup>th</sup> October 2016 there were only 12 men attending courses on the whole Education corridor and only 2 out of 9 men in Induction. On 6<sup>th</sup> February 2017 there were 7 out of 23 men attending Workshop 5 and 2 out of 5 in Workshop 3. On 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 there were only 23 out of 42 men present on the Education corridor, with 5 out of 12 in Music, while there were also only 5 out of 20 men in Induction.

Clear plans for a return to a full regime were in place towards the end of the reporting period.

## 10 WORK, VOCATIONAL TRAINING and EMPLOYMENT

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The prison offered the usual range of activities such as wing cleaning and kitchen work, as well as breakfast packing, bike shop, laundry, recycling, painting teams and gardening. In addition there were opportunities to take on responsibilities such as education orderly, peer advisor, listener and gym orderly. The prison attempted to achieve full allocation to purposeful activity and operated a scheme whereby it offered men three opportunities to find work or an activity that they were prepared to attend. If work was refused on two occasions they were spoken to by one of the Activity Hub staff and offered one of the roles available.

Vocational courses continued to be a strength within the prison. Network Rail courses were popular and a programme was held in April of 2017. 9 men successfully completed the course, and each was offered employment on release. The prison was planning to run another programme starting in October 2017. Bike maintenance and vehicle repair workshops were also popular and both of these provided industry recognised qualifications. Other courses, such as BICs and street maintenance, also provided training and certification directly related to employment.

The Activities Hub monitored and reported on rates of involvement. More than 90% of men were regularly allocated to purposeful activity throughout the year. Reasons for non-participation or dismissal from activity were monitored and reported on and the levels of unacceptable absences were typically very low (around 0.5%).

During the last year, a partner employment fair was held in an attempt to create greater connection with local businesses and colleges. Prisoners had the opportunity to enquire about job prospects and arrange follow up interviews after release and these opportunities appeared to be well received by the men. It was intended to repeat this on a more regular basis. Follow up evaluation of the success of the day was being carried out.

Access to Gym courses had lapsed somewhat in the early part of the year due to regime pressure, but it was good to see that they had picked up again after June. Attendance at the gym suite for circuits, weight (and, on occasions, football) was operating at almost full capacity as observed in September. It was also good to see a growing emphasis on activities that focused on the 'softer skills'. A Tools for Change Workshop gave men the opportunity to explore their attitudes and beliefs with a view to developing healthier approaches to everyday situations. It touched upon anger management, self-esteem and resolving conflict amongst other topics. This course ran throughout the year and was normally fully subscribed.

A new Skilled Helpers training was also started for peer advisors. This provided skills training in areas such as social care, mentoring and drug and alcohol rehabilitation awareness. The first group of twelve men had begun undertaking this course, which can lead to an NVQ level 3.

It must be stated, however, that much of this provision was seriously affected by the restricted regime and much of it was operated on a part-time basis.

## 11 RESETTLEMENT PREPARATION

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HMP Cardiff Offender Management was inconsistent owing to the level of staff shortages and staff being redeployed to other areas of the prison. The Offender Managers were required to see every prisoner on entry, approximately 400 prisoners per month. This constant turnover led to poor communication between Offender Managers and inmates. A new contract was awarded in April and it was hoped that this would help deal with the financial issues.

Owing to staff shortages and the large volume of work, a number of prisoners never received a sentence plan, however what was recorded was of good quality.

'Pathways to Reducing Reoffending' was poor with little emphasis on its importance. There was a lot of enthusiasm from staff, but there was also a marked lack of resources and again a shortage of staff.

Advice and assistance prior to release was not as good as it should have been, even though St Giles saw every prisoner. There was no one from the Benefits Office on site. The men were given a list of telephone numbers for them to ring to get assistance. More housing advice was needed for the homeless – who were offered a hostel or told to report to their local Housing Authority. PACT and other charities had 'at the gate' pick up, which was very helpful to the more vulnerable men.

Communication between the Probation Service, Community Rehabilitation and Prison staff was good, with meetings held regularly to update on any new initiatives. St Giles Trust saw all prisoners during their sentence, but due to the 'churn' within the prison, this amounted to 400 prisoners each month. There was a specialist housing officer and, from August, a staff member from the Job Centre who worked with the Caseworkers.

Family links were encouraged with PACT running family days, baby groups and a Christmas event for the children. Unfortunately, this year saw the PACT budget being reduced and we are yet to see what impact that will have.

## C Section – Work of Board

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<b>BOARD STATISTICS</b>	
Recommended Complement of Board Members	17
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	8
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	11
Total number of visits to the Establishment	511
Total number of segregation reviews attended	30

## Section - Applications

Code	Subject	Current reporting year	Previous reporting year
A	Accommodation including laundry, clothing, ablutions	5	10
B	Discipline including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	1	14
C	Equality	4	9
D	Purposeful Activity including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	25	37
E 1	Letters, visits, phones, public protection restrictions	21	39
E 2	Finance including pay, private monies, spends	23	11
F	Food and kitchens	9	14
G	Health including physical, mental, social care	38	56
H 1	Property within this establishment	14	17
H 2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	12	8
H 3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	12	8
I	Sentence management including HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	26	23
J	Staff/prisoner concerns including bullying	26	18
K	Transfers	35	26
	<b>Total number of IMB applications</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>384</b>