



Annual Report
of the
Independent Monitoring Board
at

HMP/YOI Elmley

for reporting Year
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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 | 7 |

Evidence Sections

| | | |
|-----------|---|-----------|
| 4 | Safety | 9 |
| 5 | Equality and Fairness | 11 |
| 6 | Segregation/Care and Separation Unit | 12 |
| 7 | Accommodation (including communication) | 13 |
| 8 | Healthcare (including mental health and social care) | 16 |
| 9 | Education and Other Activities | 17 |
| 10 | Work, Vocational Training and Employment | 18 |
| 11 | Resettlement Preparation | 19 |

| | | |
|----------|--------------------------------|-----------|
| C | The Work of the IMB | 22 |
| D | Applications to the IMB | 23 |

1. STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

The Prison Act 1952 and the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 require every prison and IRC 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

Elmley continues its progress in stabilising the regime and reducing violence a marked improvement from the position it faced in 2014, but at a slower pace than previously. It remains a safer, more stable and healthy establishment with levels of violence and self-harm reduced. The levels of violence are also lower than its comparator establishment, but it is still too high and at a level staff should not have to contend with weekly. The Board commends the commitment, diligence and morale of the staff in post for these achievements in what is nationally a difficult and challenging environment. The Board has had positive feedback from a number of prisoners who spoke well of the prison and the care they receive. This is re-enforced by all the Senior Staff who visit the prison and comment on the cohesiveness, motivation and comradeship of Elmley staff. Further, it is endorsed by the fact that Elmley has reached **Level 3** performance in the Prison Rating System. It has not reached this level since 2009-10; and there are few prisons of the same size or complexity that have made it past level 2.

Elmley was built as a new prison and formally opened in February 1992, a 25th Anniversary Event was arranged in celebration; to which all past and present staff where invited. The first Governor joined the event as did the first Training Principal Officer who shared his memories of those early days. This was followed by a Long Service awards ceremony, and then a curry and chocolate cake lunch. A most enjoyable event, which further contributed to the pride and excellent team ethos of the Elmley staff.

The same cannot be said about works services provided by Carillion, which has been a total disaster. The Board reported last year on the inefficiency of the service and despite reassurances, it is unable to observe any improvement in delivery. All other establishment the Board are in touch with state the same. When it takes 3 months to attend to a major leak wasting thousands cubic metres of water let alone the cost. When it takes 3 months to replace 3 plastic bolts on the toilet doors in the Ladies in the Visitors Centre, when effective basic maintenance to equipment is not carried out and kitchen equipment is not maintained, when damaged cells are not repaired for long period, it is a serious situation. It is not as if the staff are not willing, it is the mountains of bureaucracy that is the problem.

Prison establishments have had their own internal workforce since 1842, and it worked well and to everyone's satisfaction. Repairs were undertaken expeditiously and as a priority, and major projects were scheduled according to priority. It has been known that someone in the upper echelons has desired to contract out work services for over twenty years. So it was not a rushed job planned on the back of a cigarette packet, detailed work was undertaken. What was surprising was the selection of Carillion, as it was known to be heavily in debt prior to the contract being agreed. What was expected, the Board presume, was that establishments would receive the same level of service there had been in the past; but now with an alleged saving of £125 million in costs. Had the former been achieved it would have been difficult to argue against it. In fact it was subsequently revealed that neither condition was achieved, leaving vital repairs to inmate accommodation unattended, and the £125 million completely disappeared because someone had used the wrong figures. The Board has to ask how you can miscalculate to the tune of £125 million.

This has been such a catastrophic blunder, and Carillion has just reported a £1.2 billion pre- tax loss for its last trading year. The value of its shares on the market have declined by 82% over the last 2 years, this is not surprising to the Board in what the Board has observed at Elmley. The Board would

recommend to the Minister that at the end of the current contract, works services is restored to 'in house staff', as before; so that establishments can be properly maintained and essential repairs affecting prisoners are executed expeditiously.

The Board were surprised to learn that the prison service spends around £30 million a year handling litigation claims from prisoners. That would pay for 1,000 prison officers. At Elmley the current potential liability is over £1,000,000. It currently has 113 claims so far, 23 for alleged falls from bunk beds, and claims for lost property due in some cases for alleged delay in cell clearance. A number of these claims are spurious. To combat them it is necessary to have clear and accurate documentation. The Board fully accept that point, but recognise that when wings are not fully manned, prisoners are being difficult or are seeking staff time, paperwork is not the priority. Also it is the standard in local prisons that cells are multi occupancy and most hold more than one prisoner, which only adds to the demands on staff time and the level of paperwork, and increases the necessity to have wings fully staffed: not something that has been achieved with consistency during the reporting period. So it was disappointing that Elmley was initially low on the list for recruiting the new offender management officers. Belatedly this has now been given the go-ahead. Recruiting and training is in itself is a slow process, but perhaps there is now some light at the end of the tunnel, and some of the 'neglected' tasks can be tackled.

The prison has suffered from an under complement in post of Officer Support Grade staff, whom carry out vital tasks rated of high importance to prisoners, such as 'pin phone numbers', correspondence, nights, and visits. Many of the existing Group have changed shifts, extended shifts, and undertaken lots of overtime to sustain these vital areas. So overstretched is this group that the Prison has now had to hire 6 Agency OSG's. Recruitment has produced a good number of suitable recruits, but the security clearance system is so long winded that it takes months get any appointed, and some are lost along the way. The negative outcome is that some vital tasks have to be undertaken by officers, hence causing shortfalls in the core day which negatively impact on the delivery of the regime

The other loss is best illustrated by an example of vigilance by a member staff. An OSG was assigned the task of carrying out an internal wall check; he observed a suspicious package on the Sports field. Upon investigation it turned out to be a substantial quantity of 'Spice', the weight of this package was approximately 228 grammes with an estimated Prison value of £20,250. The member of staff was an OSG in his first week at Elmley: Spice is a major contributor to prison violence so this was a very significant removal. The prison cannot afford to lose staff of this quality.

Will Headquarters give a greater priority to the whole processing and appointment of OSG's?

Elmley has lived under the shadow of its role being changed to a 'super reception prison' with a much larger catchment area. The Board had a number of unanswered questions about this with reference to the impact on prisoner population, workshops and treatment programmes. This is not now to go ahead, but plans are in hand to develop a Video Conference Centre with 18 video rooms, and to upgrade reception and the 'first night centre', and over a million pounds is required to commission this work. This development will add to the quality of the work in these areas.

The latest news is that under the Prison Estate Transformation Programme, the whole estate is to be reconfigured to ensure prisoners flow through the system, prisons are to be simplified into three main functions; reception, training and resettlement.

On the current planning, Elmley will incorporate all three of the functions; Trainer C (approx. 40%) Reception (approx 40%) and Resettlement (approx 20%). This means apparently there will not be major change to the population before March 2019. The Board will monitor how this evolves and will be interested in the commitment to 40% trainer and what this means for investment in that area.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

Elmley opened as a new prison in February 1992, it was built on the Bullingdon design and consisted of 4 house blocks each designed to hold 155 prisoners, and 7 in the segregation unit; giving it a CNA of 627. Later house block 5 was added (CNA of 120, but this was soon doubled to 240) and the double cells in original house blocks were trebled: this resulted in the OPCAP rising to 995. With the addition of house block 6 built in recent years; the OPCAP has risen to 1252. Prisoners are held in treble, double and a few single cells.

HMP Elmley is a local prison situated on the Isle of Sheppey, and is the local prison for Kent. For a long period it was part of the 'Sheppey Cluster' incorporating the three prisons on the island; it is now a standalone establishment. The baseline Certified Normal Accommodation (CNA) is 995 and the Operational Capacity (OPCAP) is 1252. Actual occupancy in 2016/17 remained constantly at the maximum level. Like other prisons in the south east of England it struggled to deal with the pressures created by the difficulty in recruiting staff and thus still has a number staff vacancies.

It is a Category B local prison serving all the Kent courts, and housing remand and sentenced adult prisoners (Category B & C) and remands and sentenced young offenders. The prison continues to house a large number of vulnerable prisoners, Foreign Nationals, those with Drug Dependency issues, Mental Health issues and Life sentenced prisoners, a growing number of very old prisoners and many with disabilities; it has one house block concentrating on Cat C prisoner.

Contractors delivering services are:

Healthcare provided by integrated Care 24

Inreach (Mental Health) provided by Oxleas

Education by Novus (Manchester College)

Maintenance Services by Carillion

TO THE MINISTER

The needs of the very elderly and infirm prisoners cannot be adequately met by a large, 'high turnover' local prison. Will the Minister ensure a clear strategy is introduced to deal with this growing problem, including the provision of sufficient dedicated and suitable accommodation?

Have there been any developments in obtaining earlier places at secure mental facilities for those prisoners diagnosed in need?

Will works services be returned to an 'in-house' provision when the appalling service currently provided by the contract with Carillion comes to an end?

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

For 2 years the Board has raised the issue of fitting the grills to the cell windows, approval was given for 106 to be fitted. NOMS wrote in March 2017 that discussions would now take place with MoJ as to whether a bid was required to install all the remaining grills. Could the Board be advised of the outcome of those discussions?

Will Headquarters give a greater priority to the whole processing and appointment of OSG's?

The problem of prisoners' personal property on transfer is far from resolved. Will more work on this be authorised?

A single drugs dog is inadequate for a prison of the size and complexity of Elmley if controlling drugs entering the prison is to be taken seriously. Will the Prison service review this?

The introduction of the CRC's has on the evidence available led to deterioration in all the services they provide. What steps, other than another level of bureaucracy, is the Department taking to both simplify and improve this vital service to prisoners.

Elmley initially had agreed complement of 6 Probation Officers in OMU. This is now under review, but with only 2 in post it is clearly understaffed. When will the result of this review be implemented?

Who is responsible to filling these posts?

Fining Carillion is one thing, how does it help Governors' get essential work undertaken.

TO THE GOVERNOR

What strategy is being planned to solve the problem of prisoners not having regular access to the library on a weekly basis?

4. SAFETY

The number of deaths in custody during the year rose steeply to 13 of which 2 were self-inflicted'. These sadly were the first self-inflicted deaths since 2014. The Board is always informed of the deaths. This increase is due to the aging population with pre-sentence medical conditions

This level puts a large emotional pressure on staff, and takes up resources in the aftermath. The Board is satisfied that Healthcare's approach to those that are ailing is intense, dedicated and caring. The follow-up to death is handled extremely well by management, chaplaincy, and staff, and they ensure the next of kin are informed and supported.

The Chaplaincy group work well as a team and support each other, and are very pro-active around the prison and have both a good knowledge of and the respect of their 'parishioners'. The Methodist Chaplain has been in post at Elmley since it opened. They are active on numerous committees, including Violence Reduction, Self-Harm, Equality, and Healthcare to name but a few. They are regular attendees and always make a sound contribution. They are lead trainers and quality controllers of the ACCT system. The positive pastoral care they offer to all is clear by the way they are greeted by so many prisoners, and the respect they receive from staff. They take the lead in contacting relatives whenever a death occurs. They always make Board members welcome, and offer support, guidance and advice when required. It is always an uplifting experience to be in their presence.

The average number on open ACCT's during the year has been lower and management endeavours to ensure that all reviews are held on time and the correct personal attend. The Prison Listeners continue to provide a most valuable service to Safer Custody; they work with dedication and efficiency. They are well trained by the Samaritan Volunteers. Being a local prison, the turnover of listeners is higher than is desirable and this creates a high training need. Fortunately there have been fresh and appropriate volunteers to fill the gaps. The prison appreciates the support and time given by our Samaritan contacts. All the Listeners along with our Samaritan supporters attended a mental health awareness day, which added skills to their role.

In a typical month there can be 330 new prisoners through Reception, and often a 100 of them are requiring the presence of a Listener that night to offer re-assurance and support for their fears and anxieties.

Despite heightened efforts to prevent entry, large quantities of 'Spice' are reaching prisoners and it is a growing problem that results in violence, self-harm, and assaults. It also has an impact on the health and mental health of the prisoners indulging, and places an increased burden on staff generally and particularly Healthcare staff. The result is that the pattern of violence is very uneven, when large quantities of 'spice' are in the prison the level of violence escalates. Staff have been vigilant and some large 'supplies' being detected and removed. The prevention of such drugs entering the prison is a priority.

The prison had an unannounced security audit in July and retained its 'amber/green' score (moderate). It was clear to the Board that in most of the individual modules Elmley was in the green area, but had been pulled down by a lower marking in a couple of key area. The Board is party to the

extraordinary work accomplished by the security team. Security intelligence gathering is excellent; it is collated, prioritised and acted upon. Target searches are arranged at various times of the day according to when staff are available, this has resulted in over 110 drug medication finds, over 80 mobile phones, over 80 phone chargers, a find of 30 litres and another of 15 litres of hooch, 28 home-made weapons, and over 20 debt lists and bank details, and a £10 and 2 £5 notes. They also arranged a complete drug search of the whole prison in co-operation from the Midlands' dog team. This resulted in a good quantity of illicit substances being disposed of. This area remains problematic and an uphill battle to remain in a stable position. The Security Team have contributed significantly to the safety of the prison. The Board, after reviewing the situation, have concluded that a single drug dog at Elmley is inadequate for the task if the Prison Department is serious about controlling entry and the abuse of illicit and dangerous drugs by prisoners.

The prison has been running an 'Aspire Higher' project for about 8 months, after a successful grant bid it will continue as the Eagle Project which is a pilot that is being run with HMP/YOI ISIS to develop a whole prison approach to working with young violent offenders, particularly those from a BAME background. The recent publication of the Lammy Report has highlighted the fact that many BAME offenders are associated with more negative outcomes inside prison in relation to involvement with violence, discipline and sanctions. Early results from the evaluation show some real success stories, notably a 71% reduction in the number of adjudications in the 3 months following completion of the course, a reduction of those on basic regime, and higher levels of engagement and employment. A two day training event is planned for November, January and March at an offsite venue and will be delivered by Frank Lowe, Head of the Adolescent & Young Adult Services at the Tavistock Clinic. The training for officers will focus on dealing with violence and stress and themes will include adolescence attachment theory and effects of trauma.

The Violence Reduction Forum together with Reducing Reoffending is implanting the RISE project. Key prisoners for targeting for the programme have been drawn up. It was proposed that a short term programme be drawn up as for many of the population, 7 weeks is the average stay at Elmley.

5. EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS

The team focuses on all groups who fall into this group but some groups are considered more vulnerable than others. In the prison as whole the average number of prisoners in each group is; Travellers 28 very few of whom are on basic, but only 45% are in employment. Young Offenders averaged 85 in the past but have risen rapidly to a peak of 144, with an unemployment rate hovering around 50%, and also a higher than average of failure to turn up for 'work'. Over 60's have declined slightly to 72, with the oldest being 88. Prisoners with a declared Disability have risen to 247 by the end of the reporting period: 68 in this group with recorded mental health issues and, 61 with learning difficulties, Vulnerable Prisoners 230. Foreign Nationals 189, of whom only 10 are of detainee status, on average 50 identified nationalities, including English, are resident at Elmley.

Minor issues raised by this group are dealt with at wing level, when unresolved it is raised via the Discrimination Incident Reporting Form, the average of which were 20 year, but have risen in the current year to 53. The Equalities Action Team Meetings have prisoner representatives from each House block which keep the meetings focused. The Team liaise closely with Social Services regarding entitlements to such items as special footwear, perching stools, and 'wheelie walkers' etc.

The focus of the Equality Team has been on the Vulnerable Prisoners, much aided by the active support of the Chaplaincy. These are housed on House block 6 which has an operational capacity of 300; and is 'home exclusively to Vulnerable Prisoners with a mix of sex offenders (66%) and the remainder mainly debtors. There are 27 prisoners over 65 in this group, three of whom are over 85 years old. A significant number of this group have been convicted of 'historic sex offences'. There is also a number with physical disabilities and a high number with acute medical requirements of which a number will die in prison. The Board raised this issue in detail last year, and will briefly re-iterate its concerns. With this ever increasing number of elderly and disabled prisoners, many serving long sentences; facilities in a local prison are now inadequate.

The increase in deaths in custody from natural causes is largely a result of the age related ill-health that attends a rapidly ageing prison population. This demographic shift has been dramatic, and as a result the number of prisoners over 60 has tripled in 15 years, and is now the fastest growing segment of the prison population. There is a projection estimate that by 2020 there will be more than 15,000 prisoners over 50 years of age. There was in 2015 172 deaths from natural causes in custody, 42% more than 5 years previously. There does not appear to be a clear national strategy, and prisons and particularly the Healthcare providers have been left to respond piecemeal, resulting in variable end of life care for prisoners and limited support for staff. The Board is of the view that a small number of dedicated units need to be provided which specifically cater for this group with appropriate facilities akin to a care home or even a hospice, and staff trained to manage not just an ageing population, but the end of prisoners life and death itself.

Concern about insufficient support for foreign national prisoners has been reviewed with a visit from staff from Headquarters Immigration. This has resulted in a doubling of the number of clinics they hold at the prison. They are also offering to provide training on immigration matters for the staff involved and for the foreign national peer support workers. Plans were also discussed for a resource centre on the House block to ensure more information is available.

6. SEGREGATION/CARE AND SEPARATION UNIT

This is a very well run unit despite the number of staff changes during the year, and the staff work well as a team. The systems put in place last year are working well. Staff are always very helpful to everyone who has cause to visit.

When a prisoner is placed in the special accommodation the IMB is informed. If a member is in the prison they are alerted and attend to observe that correct procedures are carried out by staff. Many of these locations are of a very short duration.

The Board attends as many GOOD reviews as possible. The fact that healthcare is not always in attendance is a concern to the Board. There are currently 2 prisoners who have been located for more than 42 days. Full paperwork has been submitted. The majority of the residents of the prison come from Kent, many come in with existing grudges, vendettas etc. and therefore wish to be 'segregated' from those they feel are a threat to them in this more confined environment.

The cleanliness of the unit is good, although the exercise yard does get littered at times. Staff are to be commended for the time they spend communicating with prisoners. Again the Visiting Judge has complimented the efficiency of the staff and the positive way they carry out their duties.

The Board is concerned by the number of adjudications which appear to be increasing, and likely to continue so when the smoking ban becomes operative, and is consuming more staff time, to the detriment of other constructive work.

There have been 4 dirty protests in the last month, some months there are none. At the moment no cumulative log is maintained, but staff will now do so. These events are totally repugnant, and are conditions that staff should not have to endure in their working day. In these difficult conditions staff continue to cope so well, as do the unit prisoner cleaners, and it is a credit to them and for which they get little recognition, and it all too easily becomes accepted as the norm. Of course very few in Head Office actually experience it in its full flavour first hand!

7. ACCOMMODATION (INCLUDING COMMUNICATIONS)

The kitchen suffers from the majority of its equipment being 20 years old, and that the kitchen was originally designed for a smaller population and now not the easiest for staff supervision. As previously reported there is a desperate need for a budgeted programme of replacement. The capital bid for 2017 was accepted but no funds have been released. Currently there are 2 coppers out of action and one oven. Of even greater concern is the serious problem with the refrigeration equipment which broke down completely in the hot weather. This essential cold storage had not been sufficiently maintained: and £3,000 worth of stock had to be thrown out, and temporary cold stores hired in.

Whilst a quote for new fridges has been agreed and a rolling programme of installation established, Carillion have put the minor preliminary work on hold, and at this point in time there is no start date.

The caterers play a key and vital role in their contribution they make in helping to create a safe and healthy prison. They are always there and deliver on time whatever is happening elsewhere in the prison. For example, on one particular day there was an incident in the prison that required the opening of the command post and a controlled situation throughout the prison. By a combination of circumstance only 2 out of the 4 approved staff number for the kitchen were at work. Despite that they just got on with the task of preparing the lunch for prisoners, but also managed to find time to provide sustenance to those members of staff on fixed posts and not able to get a break.

The dedication of the catering staff should be recognised and supported by ensuring that all kitchen equipment is maintained to the highest standard, and that funding is made available when it needs replacing.

The Catering Forum set up last year, with prisoner representation from all wings continues to be effective in greatly reducing the number of food related complaints. Relatively minor adjustments made to the menu have made prisoners feel their concerns have been taken seriously.

HB1 is the first night centre as well as being a residential wing, and having in the past to hold an overspill of vulnerable prisoners and 'outsiders'. This has changed in 2017 as the plans have been put in place whereby HB6 will be solely for Vulnerable Prisoner's and sex offenders. There is a strong case to make House Block 1 purely for Induction.

All new prisoners are seen on the evening of entry, fed and given general information, and breakfast bags. In the morning induction continues, and they are seen by the Chaplain, nurse, OMU, In Reach and then take an education test, which has to be undertaken if they wish to be enrolled in gym, work or education. There is now a clear syllabus partly led by an officer and a full education assessment and individual needs plan established. Having spoken to some of the 'insiders' they commend Elmley Prison induction as being "one of the best they have experienced". However, due to staff pressures, induction has not been functioning as efficiently over the last few months. The Board hope this situation can be restored once more staff are in post.

HB6 has an Operational Capacity (OP CAP) of 300 and is home to Vulnerable Prisoners (VP's). The 'historical sex crimes' trials are now producing many more elderly prisoners, some with very long sentences. These are in general requiring additional attention from staff, some needing wheel chairs

for movement, and are still unable to access some facilities such as workshops and recreation and they place a heavy demand on medical facilities. On current projections this house block will be at capacity with only sex offenders by February 2018. This house block provides the work force for the large modern laundry and on average 70 prisoners a day work there on shifts. Up to 40 work in other jobs and 18 are orderlies or cleaners on the wing.

At present there is no specific sex offender training, however, staff training for working with sex offenders is scheduled to start in November 2017 for all officers working on house block 6.

On average there are around 90 prisoners on medication including 16 on drug rehabilitation programmes. The HB has a dedicated nurse 2 days a week to attend to prisoners requiring programmed medical appointments.

The four original House blocks in particular, like the whole prison, are constantly full, and are looking tired both in terms of fabric and furniture. It is accepted that prisoners generally have little respect for prison property. As new prisoners arrive daily, they are entitled to be allocated a cell that shows a decent level of care and is properly equipped. A programme needs to be worked out so that this situation can be tackled and it needs to be properly funded. Like the Fourth Bridge, it is likely to be an ever constant need. An excellent proposition for a permanent prisoners painting party with an instructor and the correct equipment and funding for materials, The Board perceives that this could be combined with a certification course which would enhance rehabilitation potential on release

The visits facility is well run, clean and tidy with toys/activities for young children in a play area organised by the local PACT programme. There are plans to arrange a 'homework club' where fathers are encouraged to engage with their children in structured activities that promote the value of literacy and numeracy.

There is one issue that needs addressing in respect of property that visitors bring to the prison. They either do not know or are confused about what is allowed. The rules are available but not prominently displayed in the visits centre and it seems that different prisons operate a slightly different policy reference Clothing. This makes the receipt of property a long and laborious business for staff at the Gate who have to sort through every item and explain what is allowed and what not to the visitor. Unfortunately, the staff in the visitors centre can be subject to casual abuse that arises from such frustration.

GROUNDS

The horticultural team continue to provide a pleasant and colourful display of the extensive ground area in the prison, and in particular in the summer it is wonderful show of colour which raises ones spirit. It is a pity that this is spoilt to a degree by the rubbish thrown out of cell windows. The security grills, mention elsewhere in the Report, which should be fitted to all cell windows would eradicate a high degree of this. It is imperative that this installation should be funded and completed. Until then clearance of this unsightly rubbish has to be cleared by a prisoner work force which takes considerable time due to the extent of the ground area.

GYM AND PHYSICAL RECREATION

The gym and sports courts are popular and the small increase in staff has assisted in a much improved service this year. The maintenance of the equipment is problematic due to the length of time required in obtaining spare parts via the National Maintenance Contract. Purposeful activity is undertaken and includes verified certified courses for both staff and prisoners in C&R, First Aid, Manual Handling and Team Building.

The Board now reviews each month a 20% random sample of all prisoners internal Request and Complaint forms to management. Overall its findings are that 95% are responded to in good time and that 85% are of a good standard and comprehensively deal with the issues raised. A further 10% deal with the matter but at a minimum of detail and sensitivity. A few tend to give a rather standard answer that in the Board's view is not quite adequate. This has enabled the Board to discuss this with the Head of Offender Management in order to raise standards even higher. This has also afforded the Board an insight into the issues of concern to prisoners, to identify some who 'frequent complainers', and to take stock of the amount of paperwork that staff face in this area alone. The Board feel this is a good initiative, and can report that the complaint system is taken seriously and operates effectively.

8. HEALTHCARE (INCLUDING MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE)

The Healthcare provider IC24 has introduced employing paramedics on its staff. They have the right skills to respond to medical emergencies, providing a high level of care and preventing on some occasions the need for emergency escorts to outside hospitals. They have also employed an 'urgent care practitioner' who is skilled at dealing with cuts and broken bones.

The overall care for patients located in healthcare is of a high standard and this due to the commitment of all the staff. This is undermined to a degree by the lack of consistency in the prison being able to provide the two support staff allocated to inpatients to supervise the unlocking of prisoners to take showers, make phone calls, and take exercise and general association. This leaves the decision of unlocking violent or mental health prisoners to the nursing staff, unfortunately due to the potential risk to the safety of the nursing staff a prisoner can remain in his cell for a considerable length of time. The Board regularly get complaints from prisoners that they have not been able to get a shower for three days. This is not a satisfactory situation. The Board re-iterate that this remains a priority to be resolved once sufficient staff has been recruited.

A dentist and optician visit weekly and prisoners waiting for an appointment are prioritised according to need. The dentist will see on average 30 per visit, and the current backblock is 254. Which means some prisoners may have to wait over 2 months to be seen. How this compares with those in the community is not known. In a high turnover reception prison the 'requested need' is always going to be high. Any request to the Board about more urgent dentistry is always looked at positively and constructively by healthcare. The waiting list for the optician is currently 74 which would appear to be reasonable in a high turnover situation.

The mental health team provide an excellent service, but are continually challenged with the amount of mental health problems throughout the prison. The Board is concerned that the inpatient department is housing more patients with mental health issues than sick prisoners. The Board reported last year on the extensive time it takes to locate suitable secure unit accommodation for prisoners with such requirements. It also blocks a space available to others in the in care centre. This situation has not improved.

The outpatients department remains very busy and despite their efforts complaints by prisoners to the Board remain at a high level. Not all of these prove to be justified. When Board members make enquiries on behalf of prisoner's staff in healthcare is always very obliging.

9. EDUCATION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

The Librarians feel frustrated by the fact that despite several attempts to improve prisoner access to the library, all too often it fails to materialise due to other priority demands on the limited staff available. On average month 50 hours of allocated library time are lost. The number of books borrowed from the library shows a decline of 29% compared to the previous year. The loss of books remains too high but is marginally lower than the previous year. The Board receive a number of prisoner Applications about this situation.

Due to shortage of prison officers and cancellations by the education provider, attendance at classes has been spasmodic over the year with an average of 50%. This will hopefully improve now the classes have been relocated to a more accessible area. Qualifications offered are recognized nationally and distance learning supported by the prison.

Vulnerable prisoners have English classes 5 days a week on HB6 whilst Outreach is provided and encouraged at workshops, healthcare and on the house blocks. Suitable arrangements are provided to prisoners with learning difficulties at induction.

There is an innovative project to be rolled out to getting prisoners involved in producing a prison magazine.

10. WORK, VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

The majority of employment and education is on a half day basis, though a prisoner could work in the morning and undertake education in the afternoon. The best estimate of 'work opportunities', including wing cleaners and orderlies is 750 places. A further 30 are allocated as 'reserves' to fill spaces of those prisoners who fail to attend. The prison is constantly seeking fresh opportunities for constructive work. As remand prisoners are not required to work, and there is a constantly large number on drug detoxification, it is difficult to judge whether this is sufficient. Likewise with the quality of the work, there needs to be a degree of basic repetitive work due to the high turnover of the workforce. The Activity Office is regularly allocating 80 new placements a week, some due to previously allocated prisoners who have been 'sacked' due to a failure to attend. The Board receives few applications about labour allocation, and those that it does are invariably from someone who has been sacked for breach of the conditions or is seeking a wing cleaner job as their security classification precludes them from most other work.

The establishment is making a renewed effort to get those allocated to work and education to actually arrive for 'work'. It is regrettable that young offenders are some of the worst offenders. ESOL classes are always full and well attended, whereas remedial Maths and English is not, in one particular week out of 50 prisoners allocated only 17 turned up; the majority with no legitimate reason not to attend.

The Industrial Cleaning Academy continues its good work in both basic cleaning and bio cleaning, and has trained many prisoners to City and Guild standard, enhancing their work opportunities. It also saves the establishment up to £120,000 through the specialist cleaning it undertakes. It has now taken on a further development in that it will increase its practical cleaning work around the prison whilst maintaining the certification criteria.

The laundry continues its excellent work, but at a much-reduced tonnage to the level it was achieving until contracts were taken away by Head Office. Though, due to temporary closure of some other laundries some extra tonnage is being processed. It is slightly ironic that the laundry held large contract to undertake all the laundry for a large London hospital, which was very satisfied with the quality and delivery and had hoped it would continue. Due decisions made in Headquarters, Elmley was not allowed to even bid to renew the contract. Currently the establishment is now allowed to bid for a NHS trust contract and are awaiting the outcome of the tendering process. It would be good for the establishment to see the laundry return to the high quality, activity and output of the past.

The Bricklayers Trade Training workshop had developed into a multi skills centre with painting and woodwork. Research from knowledgeable personnel in the Construction Industry, indicated that the principal need in the industry is for bricklayers, so the course has reverted to its prime role. The full course takes 9 months, which may seem overlong for a 'high turnover' prison, but it is modular and prisoners can learn the skills necessary by fewer modules and hence less time.

The other workshops, with the exception of Sharpack which has withdrawn, continue to function despite too many days when they are closed down for lack of staff. There has been a degree of improvement in the latter part of the year, but this all depends on Hospital escorts and bed watches, which are unlikely to reduce with the current population.

11. RESETTLEMENT PREPARATIONS

OFFENDER MANAGEMENT UNIT

OASYS: The back log has continued to decrease over the year and from 192 this time last year, it was 123 in October and down to 96 by mid-November; this is due to the hard work of the team especially as staff have at times to be re-assigned.

The Board are given to understand that we are 1 or 2 full time personnel down on the full complement, this is an improvement on last year but all are not yet fully trained. Sickness now is not such a problem as in the past.

It should be born in mind that it takes between 4 – 6 hours to complete an OASYS so the loss of an 'offender supervisor' for 2 days creates a lot of work to be caught up.

HOME DETENTION CURFEW

The Board are at a loss as to what to comment in this area. Since the introduction of the CRC's nothing appears reliable nor even at times comprehensible. Home Circumstances reports for HDC are often late and all too often incomplete. In a recent case of a Parole Review on a young prisoner who made efforts to use his sentence constructively, the home report was still not available 4 weeks after it was due. This resulted in the whole review hearing being taken up with seeking a guarantee from the probation office involved as to when the report would be available. The consequence was that the formal review was eventually held 6 months late. *Fairness and respect!* NACRO, the provider for arranging accommodation for the homeless appears to be in conflict over its contract terms, and is falling well short of what it should be delivering. So bad is the situation on every front that a new layer of bureaucracy has been introduced whereby OMU's have now to complete a long and detailed report every Monday morning before mid-day using up staff time. It is not clear whether all this effort actually produces any results.

In terms of release on average 28 prisoners are discharged every month with no accommodation arranged: probably the group in the greatest in need of a stable situation and will more than likely re-offend. When all this was undertaken 'in house' very few, if any were discharged with no accommodation arranged. The numbers leaving with work arranged is better, but this because some are able to return to previous employment, and others are offered employment at the 'employment events, but the CRC record this in their statistics. The prison now sponsors regular employment events, with up to 25 employers visiting to offer live vacancies, based on interviews on the day. These events have been extremely successful, with over 200 jobs being offered since 2016. At the most successful event in June 2017, 47 of the 49 men who attended received a job offer. The employers were impressed by how well the men had been prepared for their interviews. Prisoners are offered help with CV's, and all within 16 weeks of discharge are encouraged to attend.

In terms of Bank Accounts, as the Board understands it, the prison only has arrangements with one banking institution with a limit of 40 accounts a month. This allowance is well below the monthly discharge rate. There is also an issue with remand prisoners, as they are normally released at virtually little or no notice. No information appears available as to what degree of support they receive from the supervision supervisors.

Will Prison and Probation explain the benefits of these now confusing and tortures arrangement?

It was accepted that only 2 Probation Officers in the OMU was inadequate and under review.

When will that review be announcing the outcome? Who is responsible for filling these posts?

PRISONER CORRESPONDENCE

There have been ongoing problems with correspondence being delayed (or lost) causing friction amongst prisoners, House block officers and staff in Correspondence. Correspondence staff are frequently moved to other duties, creating a backlog of mail. Although overtime is offered to clear the backlog, this appears to happen in response to a rise in complaints rather than the orderly running of the department.

The Board has raised the matter with the Governor who reports the issue is being addressed. Agency staff are now being employed that are not moved to other duties and correspondence is now running well. Unfortunately, this is clearly another manifestation of how the staff shortages impact on the stability within the prison population.

During the summer the Visitors Centre was given a makeover by Wilmott Dixon, one of Elmley's business partners. It was a project for their Academy, and they supplied the materials for the redecoration as well as new furniture, and installed outdoor play equipment for the children awaiting visits.

The contract for running the Visitors Centre has recently been awarded to Spurgeons in line with other prisons in the area. This was originally to commence on the 1st October 2017, but the contract is still being 'tweaked' and volunteers still being recruited, so no start date is known at this point. The plans are focused on maintaining family links that are important for reducing re-offending and creating a welcoming place for visitors, especially the younger ones.

It is of note that in the 'Comments Book' in the centre there are recent entries praising the existing OSG staff for their friendliness and helpfulness, so there is already a high standard to maintain.

The bi-monthly 'Family Days' held this year have been very successful and are usually oversubscribed. All the staff involved are fully committed to making every event successful and get involved in the activities arranged, especially those for the children. It is a privilege and pleasure to be in the establishment on these days and observe the happiness created.

The catering in the visits hall and the visits tea bar has been taken over by 'Not Just Porridge'. Although the prices are slightly higher the visitors on the whole feel the quality justifies the increase.

NJP will also work with the prison to improve the environment and catering in the Staff Mess. These plans involve vocational training for prisoners linked to opportunities for employment on release.

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for their interviews. Prisoners are offered help with CV's, and all within 16 weeks of discharge are encouraged to attend.

Wilmott Dixon in collaboration with the prison in preparing prisoners for the CSCS (Health and Safety Certificate) and those that obtain it are offered a job on release. The prison is also working in partnership with Wilmott Dixon to open a construction academy in the New Year offering training in skills such as dry lining.

The Senior Management of the prison held a 'planning day' in which they focussed on the priorities for the prison next year. This included preparation for the Offender Management Model in Custody and what it will mean for Elmley when the key worker role is introduced next year. It also outlined some of the plans for Elmley to become a more rehabilitative prison when it is better resourced. Individual departments are now charged with how they can specifically contribute to that goal.

Section C – Work of the Board

The Board remains well below its complement of 20 members; it lost a very experienced member but managed to recruit 2 new members during the reporting year. Two experienced members can offer less time to Board duties now due to heavy family commitments. The 2 new member’s probation induction is going well, and one has attended and the other is booked on the Induction Course.

Board meetings were attended on average at over 80% of members over the year; 300 Rota Visits and 111 Board Meeting attendances were undertaken, and there 8 visits for specific meetings, and 9 related to incidents. There were 6 external meetings, and in total 434 visits were made in respect of Board Duties.

The Board would wish to express its gratitude to our clerk who is always cheerful, keeps us directed and could not be more helpful.

| BOARD STATISTICS | |
|---|-----------------------|
| Recommended Complement of Board Members | 20 |
| Number of Board Members at start of reporting period | 11 |
| Number of Board Members at end of reporting period | 12 |
| Number of Board Members joining within reporting period | 2 |
| Number of Board Members leaving within reporting period | 1 |
| Total number of Board Meetings during reporting period | 12 |
| Total number of visits to the Establishment | 434 |
| Total number of Segregation Reviews held | Figures not available |
| Total number of segregation reviews attended | 84 |

Section D – Applications

The Board processed 493 applications during the year, a 30% decrease on last year. This bears out the earlier reference to the internal complaints system which from our monitoring is working more effectively.

Questions about Health Care were down slightly but still high. But with a turnover of 15 thousand prisoners a year and an aging population this not excessive, property issues, although well down on last year, remain the dominant concern raised, including those related to transfers. Property as a concern was raised at the 2014 Independent Monitoring Board Conference and the Prison Department is on record of stating it would tackle it. It would appear there is yet some 'refinement' to be done

Sentence related issues remain high on the list, but range from those who claim not to know their date of discharge or are challenging it, to those who feel they should be re-classified to 'D', or that their Oasys Report has not been completed and hence no sentence plan.

Queries about family visits and mail are down significantly, which is at least partly due to the Board's more intense involvement in this area and ongoing discussions with management. Food complaints are well down, showing the benefit of the Food Consultative committee. Those Applications received re food were mainly from 2 prisoners raising issues about their special diets

There are Applications about transfers, allegedly claiming a need to be nearer home. On investigation some of these are found to be spurious, or they are asking to go to an establishment that will not take them because of their negative behaviour either earlier in the current sentence or a previous one. At the same time, with the Service being at maximum capacity it is even hard to meet the needs of genuine cases.

The aim is to respond to each Application within days of receiving it; some clearly take longer depending on the degree of research required.

The Board believe a prompt, polite, balanced response to applications helps contribute to a sense of fairness in the system and thus aids the creation of a healthy and safe prison ethos. At the same time the Board will raise its concerns about any Application received that feels has not been dealt with adequately with the Governor.

The Board are encouraged that an 'Improving the Complaints System' committee has just been set up at Elmley to review the whole process and that Board members are to be involved.

| Code | Subject | Year 2014 | Year 2015 | Year 2016 | Year 2017 |
|----------|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| A | Accommodation | 11 | 34 | 11 | 9 |
| B | Adjudications | 17 | 25 | 20 | 17 |
| C | Equality & Diversity (inc religion) | 4 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| D | Education/employment/training inc IEP | 32 | 13 | 28 | 11 |
| E 1 | Family/visits inc mail & phone | 35 | 22 | 51 | 17 |
| E 2 | Finance/pay | 11 | 26 | 30 | 19 |
| F | Food/kitchen related | 14 | 7 | 22 | 10 |
| G | Health related | 108 | 71 | 102 | 84 |
| H 1 & H2 | Property | 196 | 121 | 133 | 88 |
| H 3 | Canteen, facilities, Catalogue shopping, Argos | 11 | 6 | 5 | 9 |
| I | Sentence related (inc. HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-cat etc) | 187 | 108 | 95 | 79 |
| J | Staff/prisoner/detainee concerns inc bullying | 45 | 42 | 48 | 49 |
| K | Transfers | 98 | 55 | 61 | 45 |
| L | Miscellaneous | 113 | 80 | 91 | 52 |
| | Total number of IMB applications | 857 | 604 | 697 | 491 |
| | Of total: number of IMB Confidential Access was: | 11 | 7 | 2 | 2 |