



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board

at

HM YOI Aylesbury

For the Reporting Year

1st July 2017 to 30th June 2018

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Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody

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STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

The Prison Act 1952 requires every prison to be monitored by an independent Board appointed by the Secretary of State from members of the community in which the prison or centre is situated.

The Board is specifically charged to:

- (1) satisfy itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in custody within its prison and the range and adequacy of the programmes preparing them for release.
- (2) inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority as it judges appropriate, any concern it has.
- (3) report annually to the Secretary of State on how well the prison has met the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have on those in its custody.

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

This report presents the findings of the Independent Monitoring Board at HM YOI Aylesbury for the period 01/07/2017 – 30/06/2018. IMB evidence comes from observations made on visits, scrutiny of records and of data, informal contact with prisoners and staff, surveys and prisoner applications.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Main judgements

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

- 1 The recruitment and retention of staff employed at the prison, which is linked to pay and conditions and further exacerbated by long security clearance waits prior to starting employment. (pages 8, 13, 15 & 16).
- 2 The amount of purposeful activity provided. The total number of sessions provided by the prison is a disappointing 66% of the total required for full prisoner engagement in activity. (pages 13, 14 & 15).
- 3 The poor maintenance and degradation of the structure and fabric of the prison (page 11).
- 4 The length of time prisoners spend in segregation when transfer to other prisons is required, given the lack of any formal arrangement between prisons (page 10)

Main Areas for Development

TO THE MINISTER

Will the Minister:

- Provide an improvement to pay and conditions of staff sufficient to enable the prison to recruit and retain enough staff?
- Provide the resources to enable the Governor and Senior Management Team to manage the prison effectively and to enable each prisoner to have a more appropriate level of purposeful activity including employment?

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

Will the Prison Service:

- Allow the prison (where appropriate) to choose its own providers for maintenance of the fabric, to ensure better value for money and a more timely service?
- Allocate resources urgently to ensure critical maintenance is completed properly and in a timely manner?
- Centralise the arrangements for transfer of prisoners out of the Segregation Unit into other prisons, so that prisoners who need a fresh start elsewhere are not left waiting longer than necessary whilst staff spend time attempting to negotiate ad hoc moves?
- Speed up the vetting process so that new employees can start work sooner?

TO THE GOVERNOR

What actions will the Governor take to:

- Retain the more experienced staff on the wings? Employ a dedicated team of officers to escort duties for healthcare, library and other services?
- Reduce the exposure of wing staff to violent assault by prisoners?
- Improve the retention of wing staff who are new to the Prison Service?

Improvements

The incidence of acts of self-harm by prisoners has been dramatically reduced from 451 in the previous year (2016/17) to 255 in 2017/18.

The number of prison officers on the wings has improved compared with the previous year; there were reduced numbers of detached duty staff at the prison during our reporting year.

The kitchen staffing situation has improved; there is now only one vacancy in the team.

The loss of time in education due to lockdowns, alarms and shortage of escort staff has dropped to 4.3%, considerably improved on last year's figure of 10%.

The amount of purposeful activity which gets prisoners out of their cells during the day has improved; there are now 150 prisoners in full-time employment, against last year's figure of 130. The number of prisoners with no employment or classes to take them out of their cells is now very low.

The Offender Management Unit staffing situation has improved over the year; it is now fully staffed.

The number of planned weekend PE sessions which took place rose from 48% to 57%.

The whole prison is now a smoke-free zone, improving the health of both prisoners and staff.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

3.1 Aylesbury Young Offenders Institution (YOI) is housed in a mixture of buildings, whose ages range from Victorian to early twenty-first century. It holds the longest sentenced young adult males in the English prison system. For our reporting year, sentence length ranged between 4 years and 26 years, with about 15% serving at least 10 years and approximately 8% serving life sentences. Prisoners are aged between 18 and 23, with about one third over 21 awaiting transfer to the adult estate. Less than half of the prisoners are of white ethnic origin, lower than in most other prison establishments. The institution has a capacity of about 440 and has been almost full for most of the reporting year.

3.2 Prisoner intake covers most of England and Wales. Prisoners do not come directly from court, having begun their sentences at other Young Offender Institutions or the juvenile estate. The prisoners are some of the most disruptive and challenging young men in the prison system. Halfway through the reporting year, Aylesbury YOI became part of the Long Term and High Security Estate (LTHSE), recognising the challenging nature of its occupants.

3.3 The day-to-day regime at Aylesbury was changed in March to bring it into line with that operating in other similar prisons. Monday to Thursday are divided into morning and afternoon work sessions, each lasting for three hours, separated by lunch. Friday has only a morning work session, a change put in place last year to save on staffing. Showers, recreation and exercise happen outside these work sessions and at weekends.

3.4 Numbers of uniformed, learning and skills, kitchen professionals, workshops and probationary staff have continued to be below required levels. Recruitment has been ongoing but has proven to be difficult. The prison has been helped by the deployment of uniformed staff from other establishments on detached duty during the reporting year; they were especially necessary for the introduction of the new regime in March.

3.5 The prison has seven residential units of differing sizes and ages. The majority of cells are for single occupancy. The three oldest wings are of traditional Victorian pattern but have been modernised over the years. The two which are the next oldest are showing signs of ageing, although they too were modernised over 20 years ago. The two newest units all date from the last quarter of the twentieth century. The Segregation Unit is six years old. The Reception Unit is housed in the modern healthcare building.

3.6 The learning and skills provider under the extended OLASS 4 contract remains Milton Keynes College. Carillion had the contract for maintenance of the prison fabric; this was taken over by the Prison Service when Carillion collapsed earlier this year. Healthcare is provided by CARE UK.

SAFETY

4.1 The table below shows evidence in respect of safety in the prison. Data for the previous reporting year have been included for comparison.

Violence indicator	Reporting year	
	2017-2018	2016 - 2017
Incidents of self-harm	255	451
ACCT plans opened for prisoners at danger to themselves	217	191
Fights	119	174
Prisoner-on-prisoner assaults	241	222
Prisoner-on-staff assaults	92	71
Serious assaults on staff	33	14
Sexual assaults	0	2

4.2 Apart from the welcome dramatic drop in the number of incidents of self-harm by prisoners and the welcome reduced number of fights, all the other figures in the table suggest that the prison has become a more violent place. Serious assaults on staff have more than doubled.

4.3 The IMB is firmly of the opinion that this increase of violence is a direct result of the poor staffing situation at Aylesbury. The Prison Service allows Aylesbury to employ 110 basic grade prison officers. At the start of the reporting year, there were only 65 of these officers employed by the prison. By the end of the reporting year, thanks to an effective recruitment drive, there were 92 basic grade prison officers. However, their collective experience of the job is not good, as approximately 30% of basic grade officers have less than one year's experience of the job.

June to June Reporting Year	Number of Basic Grade Prison Officers starting at Aylesbury
2017 - 2018	27
2016 - 2017	9
2015 - 2016	13
2014 - 2015	10

Furthermore, the eight basic grade officers who left the Prison Service during the reporting year had only been in post for an average of nine months. This is after full training; the service clearly has a problem retaining new staff. It does not help that once a person has been appointed, it can take up to six months for the vetting process to clear them for starting work.

EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS

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

SEGREGATION/CARE AND SEPARATION UNIT

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

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

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

ACCOMMODATION (including communication)

7.1 A key area of concern for this Board over many years has been the increasingly poor state of the prison. Ordinary maintenance appeared to have a low priority resulting in the very fabric of the prison visibly decaying. That appears to have changed in the past quarter, but there is much catch up work still to do.

7.2 We were pleased to learn in March 2018, nine months into our reporting year, that a new Estates Manager had been appointed along with (as we understand it) a new reporting line and managers further up the chain. Coinciding with the replacement of Carillion at the beginning of the calendar year by GFSL (Government Facilities Services Limited) and the restructuring of the prison estate so that Aylesbury is now part of the LTHSE, we have witnessed a welcome change in attitude towards repair and maintenance of the prison.

7.3 However, there is much work to do, both structural and cosmetic. We understand from staff that the booking system for repairs is still rather cumbersome and response times variable.

7.4 Particular concerns of the IMB include the poor state of many of the floors within the wings, the cells, and other areas of the prison. At the time of this report, F&G wing floors are particularly poor, with floors in A&C wings also in need of urgent repair or replacement. Edges, centrally, mid-wing, have lifted; and create tripping hazards and make cleaning more difficult, trapping cleaning fluids and dirt.

7.5 The showers in many of the blocks are in a poor state. Ventilation is often insufficient, mould is evident, paintwork peeling and odour present. The showers in F&G wings are infamously problematic and have been the subject of contract disputes delaying repair, but we note the showers in main prison wings are also in need of attention.

7.6 The use of the temporary boilers continues, as it has for many years. These have been in place for so long that even these temporary boilers are from time to time replaced. We note the ongoing problems with the boilers for the laundry.

7.7 The repair or replacement of kitchen equipment, an essential part of the running of the prison, has been a problem with the tilting kettle, in particular, out of order. Other cooking facilities, for instance two of the key ovens, were much delayed in their replacement and commissioning. The wing trolleys remain a source of trouble, with loose door hinges.

7.8 The parapet to the main prison building is falling off and a temporary galvanized steel corridor was erected a year or two ago. This is unsightly and provides a poor welcome and impression to the visitors. One wonders what visitors assume about the state of the accommodation blocks if this is their welcome.

7.9 We have pointed out in the past the lack of attention paid to gutters and drainage. This past year saw some blockages which necessitated immediate attention, but many of the gullies and drains still need attention. We note there remains a bush growing out of the brickwork of the main prison's chimney stack, symptomatic of the historic lack of attention to detail

HEALTHCARE (including mental health and social care)

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

8.2 Healthcare is possibly the only area of the prison where recruitment of new staff is not an issue, although they do suffer the common problem of long delays in the vetting of new personnel; six months for clearance to work in the prison is still not unusual.

8.3 Pathways provides intensive rehabilitative therapy for 45 high-risk prisoners. This involves one-to-one sessions as well as group meetings, on average about three sessions per week altogether. There is a waiting list of prisoners who wish to take part. Since there is no problem recruiting staff to deliver these sessions (apart from the usual long hold-ups for security clearance), financial constraints mean that only 45 prisoners can be treated at any one time. The IMB considers Pathways to be an important rehabilitative tool and is disappointed that its application is restricted by cost.

EDUCATION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

9.1 The table below summarises the classroom-based courses that Milton Keynes College provides for prisoners in a typical week, following the change in regime in March 2018. A session lasts for three hours.

Course Description	Sessions per week	Students per session
Functional Skills Maths	2.25	8
Functional Skills English	2.25	8
Level 2 Business Venture	4.5	10
Level 1/2 Barbering	9	6
Art	4	8
Music and Radio	9	10
Painting and Decorating	7	10
Horticulture	7	8
Level 2 Peer Mentoring	4	8
Education and Training L3	0.25	10
Believe and Achieve	0.85	8

9.2 In addition, Milton Keynes supports a number of distance-learning and cell-based courses, as shown in the table below.

Course Description	Course Duration (h)	Students per year
Money Management	20	130
Positive Parenting	28	47
Open University	750	11
A-level courses	450	13
AS-level	450	5
GCSE	250	5
Miscellaneous L2 courses	250	18

9.3 Milton Keynes College has struggled to find teaching staff for some classes during the year, resulting in the permanent discontinuation of the Car Maintenance and Motorcycle Maintenance courses. The Bricklaying course has not run since the end of March due to similar staff recruitment difficulties.

9.4 The prison ran a number of morning programmes during the reporting year to help prisoners address their behaviour as shown in the table below.

Programme Description	Sessions per week	Prisoners per session
Thinking Skills	0.84	8
New Me Strengths	1.44	8
Resolving Violent Behaviour	2.4	8
High Risk Sexual Offenders	3	8
Medium Risk Sexual Offenders	0.4	8

9.5 The use of the library has improved considerably since the start of the new regime in March. About 100 prisoners now visit the library each week, both from their place of work and the wings. This is about one-quarter of the prison population. However, prisoners can apply in writing to request books for delivery to the wing.

WORK, VOCATIONAL TRAINING and EMPLOYMENT

10.1 There are not enough activities, whether education, programmes, work , PE or training to keep prisoners out of their cells for more than about two-thirds of the working week. The working week is 4.5 days (9 sessions). Assuming an average prison population of about 420 this means that there needs to be about $9 \times 420 = 3780$ prisoner sessions per week available for full employment of all prisoners.

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

Weekday activity	Prisoner-sessions per week
Programmes	65
Industrial work	846
Class education	418
Cell education	173
Cleaning	695
PE	164
Pathways	135
Total	2496

The total number of prisoner sessions provided by the prison is therefore a disappointing 66% of the total number needed for full employment (a mixture of education, programmes, work , PE or training). Only 36% of the prisoners are in full-time employment.

10.3 In practice, the number of sessions which actually take place is often considerably less than this. Interviews with various agencies, external visits, healthcare needs, lack of staff to run workshops, refusal to attend and the suspensions of normal activity due to the alarms which are inevitable in a prison, all reduce the number of sessions which prisoners attend for scheduled activities.

10.4 Weekend PE sessions have been seriously curtailed by the redeployment of PE staff to allow the regime to run on the wings. Since the start of the new regime, 12 of the scheduled 28 weekend PE sessions had to be cancelled for this reason. However, the 57% of planned weekend sessions taking place is an improvement on last year's figure of 48%.

RESETTLEMENT PREPARATION

11.1 The prison is part of the LTHSE and does not ordinarily cater for prisoners who are due for release.

11.2 The prison has been allocated the equivalent of 4.5 full-time probation officers, but the actual number was only 3.3 during the reporting year. This is despite constant active recruitment by the Probation Service. The consequence is that each member of the probation team has about 37% more prisoners to deal with than they should, resulting in delays to discussions with prisoners about parole, release dates and other matters to do with resettlement.

WORK OF THE BOARD

12.1 In this reporting period we lost five and gained four members. Of the five members we lost, three were probationers. At the end of the year there were six members, of which two were probationers. The board continued to recruit throughout the year with mixed success.

12.2 There were 11 board meetings during the year. They went ahead even though on four occasions there were only one or two board members present.

12.3 The work of the board was supported by a clerk which has been an improvement since the last reporting period during which we operated for long periods without dedicated clerical support.

12.4 The IMB visited the establishment on 207 occasions during the reporting period. This is significantly less than the 431 visits during the previous reporting period.

12.5 The IMB continued its work with a severely depleted board. As noted, this caused us to only make around half the visits that were made in the previous year. We anticipate the number of visits should return to normal soon as soon as our new round of probationary members are appointed as full members.

12.6 The Appendix shows the number of applications handled by the Board were broadly in line with previous years. We saw a significant increase in the number of complaints relating to the mishandling of property, particularly where this involved a prisoner transfer. We get the impression that in certain prisons processing and handling of prisoner property is not accorded the priority it should be. In response to one query we oversaw, staff at a previous prison washed their hands of the issues without much investigation and suggested the prisoner contact the Ombudsman.

12.7 We also saw a doubling in the number of accusations against staff in respect of bullying and mishandling of prisoners (now 15 percent of complaints to the Board), though these were largely unproven and may have reflected the increase in violence generally within the prison.

A APPLICATIONS

Code	Subject	Current reporting year	Previous reporting year
A	Accommodation including laundry, clothing, ablutions	9	16
B	Discipline including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	3	4
C	Equality	0	-
D	Purposeful Activity including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	6	10
E-1	Letters, visits, phones, public protection restrictions	6	4
E 2	Finance including pay, private monies, spends	2	2
F	Food and kitchens	4	-
G	Health including physical, mental, social care	3	4
H 1	Property within this establishment	27	31
H 2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	28	
H 3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	9	15
I	Sentence management including HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	11	8
J	Staff/prisoner concerns including bullying	22	13
K	Transfers	19	20
	Confidential Access	3	4
	Total number of IMB applications	152	131

BOARD STATISTICS

Recommended complement of Board members	14
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting year	7
Number of Board members joining during the year	4
Number of Board members leaving during the year	5
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting year	6
Total number of visits to the prison	207
Total number of segregation reviews attended	225