



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

**HMPYOI Deerbolt**

for reporting Year  
1 October 2017 to 30 September 2018

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*Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody*

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## A Sections 1 - 3

### 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 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**

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This report, summarising the observations and judgements of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMPYOI Deerbolt for the period 01/10/2017 - 30/09/2018, is based on evidence from visits to all areas of the establishment, meetings with staff and prisoners, documentary evidence, investigation into prisoners' applications, and Board discussions.

### **Main judgements**

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#### **Are prisoners treated fairly?**

The Board believes that prisoners are treated fairly, although we are concerned about the prisoners who spend the majority of their time on accommodation wings due to a lack of provision of suitable purposeful activity, (see Evidence Section 9, page14 ).

#### **Are prisoners treated humanely?**

The Board has witnessed frequent examples of supportive treatment of prisoners, including those on ACCTs and those in the Segregation Unit, by a range of staff members and other workers in the prison.

#### **Are prisoners prepared well for their release?**

Deerbolt is not a resettlement prison but does release a high number of prisoners on licence. The lack of purposeful activity does not help in preparing prisoners for release. The Board is concerned that there is a lack of a programmes available for sex offenders at Deerbolt, (see Evidence Section 10 page 16).

### **TO THE MINISTER**

A.

There has been an increase in the levels of violence during the last six months of this reporting period, which is a cause for concern for the safety of staff and prisoners. The Board believes this is an issue affecting many prisons which requires further action at national level beyond measures already announced. A more violent prison population requires more prison staff and the Board observes that the problem is exacerbated by the fact that most new recruits are very young, rather than coming to the Prison Service after a career elsewhere that would have equipped them with valuable life experience and skills.

B.

The percentage of prisoners who are not involved in purposeful activity during the day is too high. The Board believes that this does not contribute well towards preparation

for release. This is a problem that the Governor and his senior team are doing their best to address, but the Board observes that part of the difficulty comes down to staff numbers and resources, since activities are frequently cancelled due to staff shortages, sickness and holidays.

(See Evidence Sections 4 Safety page 7 and 9 Education and Other Activities page 14)

## **TO THE PRISON SERVICE**

Last year, the Board reported concerns that staffing shortages had led to a restricted prison regime. The restricted regime remains in place at Deerbolt, which has a negative impact on both prisoners and staff. The prisoner profile at Deerbolt has changed since benchmarking set the staffing levels.

### **Improvements**

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- There are now suitable medical treatment rooms on all accommodation wings, the lack of which is something that has been reported by the Board for a considerable length of time.
- A No-Smoking policy has been introduced.
- The introduction of the Academy system has provided a more approachable way of learning to some prisoners.

### **3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ESTABLISHMENT**

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#### **3.1**

A maximum of 513 sentenced male prisoners aged 18-24 are accommodated at HMPYOI Deerbolt, near Barnard Castle in County Durham. The age intake of the prison has been widened to include prisoners over the age of 18 and up to the age of 24 rather than only up to age 21, hence the new designation HMPYOI. There is no restriction on the length of prisoners' sentences. The operational capacity has been reduced for periods of time to allow for safety work on wings. Actual prisoner numbers have fluctuated during the year but have generally been between 50 and 100 less than full capacity

#### **3.2**

The main providers of services in the prison are NOVUS (education), Amey (Works/maintenance), G4S (Health Care) and Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys (TEWV) NHS Foundation Trust (Mental Health). Visitor care and support is provided by the voluntary agency the North East Prison Aftercare Society (NEPACS), which also offers provision for family visits and group work with young fathers.

#### **3.3**

The purpose-built establishment was opened in 1973. It includes an administration centre, nine residential wings with exercise yards, substantial industrial workshops and education classrooms, a gymnasium and chapel, a Reducing Reoffending Unit (RRU) and Visitor Centre. The buildings have been reasonably maintained but are of an age to require continuing improvement. In addition to new fire safety measures, many cells have been fitted with Mark 8 windows so as to inhibit access of drugs, etc. to the prison. A program of shower refurbishment has continued through the year.

#### **3.4**

There are extensive areas of grass, and cultivated plots of flowers and vegetables, which are generally well kept and constitute an attractive environment.

#### **3.5**

Prisoners are received from a wide catchment area so that young offenders from the local North East region are in a minority and many prisoners find themselves far from home. This impacts on prisoners both in terms of continuing contact with their families and home communities and also on their resettlement. As far as budgets allow, the prison makes provision for these needs.

## B Evidence sections 4 – 11

### 4 SAFETY

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- Despite the introduction of body-worn cameras at Deerbolt during the past year, levels of violence and bullying have steadily risen as the year has progressed and at the time of writing, they are continuing to do so. This is a concern to the Board. Statistics show an increase in the violence within Deerbolt that the prison believes is due to an increase in mobile phones and drugs entering the prison and gang formations. This corresponds with the information that Board members have elicited during Rule 49 reviews. Whilst the report following the Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) inspection in April notes that levels of violence at Deerbolt are comparatively low, there has been a notable sudden increase in violence (including assaults on staff) since the inspection.
- There continue to be prisoners who have been victims of violence or bullying, who choose to isolate themselves because they fear for their own safety. In addition, a number of the older prisoners (over 21 years) make the decision to socially isolate themselves due to the lack of appropriate purposeful activity on offer to them. The effect of cell confinement is detrimental to their wellbeing and the Board is concerned that these young men are often left for very long periods of time without any support or purposeful activity, through no fault of their own. This issue is also raised in the recently published HMIP report.
- Due to low staffing levels, Deerbolt has put in place a restricted regime on the wings resulting in the reduction of association time for prisoners. This has led to understandable frustrations on the part of the prisoners and staff alike. Staffing forecasts showed that 112 Band 3 officers were expected to be in post by the end of October 2018 and thereafter a full regime was expected to resume, although at the time of reporting, a restricted regime continues to be in place and this is a concern to Board members. Meanwhile prison staff openly acknowledge to members of the Board that they constantly feel under pressure and exposed to potential threats of violence.
- The Board is concerned that newly recruited Operational Support Grade staff (OSGs) appear to be trained to a basic standard when entering the establishment and thereafter rely on other newly trained officers to provide their training. We have heard of officers who have only been serving for one year being expected to train new OSGs. This is not considered by the Board to provide an adequate level of training. A number of senior officers, who were experienced and respected by both staff and prisoners alike, have left the prison over the past year.
- Rule 49 reviews reveal that much of the violence is due to continuing high levels of bad debt. Mobile phones and drugs are continuing to be brought into the prison and

distributed. The prison does continue to be alert to the contraband issue and continues to take action in an attempt to prevent drugs entering the prison. Such action includes: all paper correspondence being photocopied in case of impregnation of psychoactive substances, replacement of outer cell windows, searching of prisoners on return from the exercise yard and supervision of all movements.

- The number of prisoners on ACCTs has remained largely stable throughout the year, with a few spikes. It appears that initial assessments and care plans are put in place promptly.
- In January 2018 the maximum prisoner age was increased from 21 to 24. Whilst there were initial concerns about this change and the impact and influence older prisoners may have on the younger men, the fears have not thus far been justified and there appears to have been little impact generally.
- There continue to be gang rivalry-related incidents, despite the prison having repeatedly flagged up the issues to HMPPS and requesting that transfers to Deerbolt of individuals known to be involved in gang-related issues should be considered more thoroughly.
- Safety Data from July 2018-September 2018

	July Average population 410	August Average population 416	September Average population 401
Bullying	44 (10.7%)	29 (6.9%)	24 (5.9%)
Violence	44 (10.7%)	75 (18.0%)	65 (16.2%)
ACCT	25 (6.1%)	22 (5.3%)	20 (5.0%)
Self Harm	4 (0.9%)	4 (1.0%)	19 (4.7%)
Damage	16 (3.9%)	14 (3.4%)	23 (5.7%)

## 5 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS

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- Equality is dealt with by the Diversity and Equality Management Team meetings (DEMT). The meeting is chaired by a governor grade, supported by the strand leads for the protected characteristics. In addition, there are strand leads for Travellers and Veterans.
- The frequency of the meetings this year has been variable with staff shortages cutting into equality hours and affecting attendance.
- There are BME and Diversity champions on every wing and they have met several times across the year. A Travellers' forum also meets. They are then able to feed comment and questions into the DEMT meeting via a prisoner representative. A notable learning from this was that prisoners are unaware of the Discrimination Incident Reporting Form (DIRF) system .
- This is supported by the fact that staff members submit nearly all DIRFS. This year there have been 21 submitted. The DIRFs were investigated well but there were some delays due to staff being redeployed from equality duties.
- There continues to be a time lag in the publication of Hub data, which is unhelpful to the equalities work in Deerbolt to the point where it is no longer being used. However, data is collected locally for the strands.
- Data of note includes:
  - Typically, only one or two prisoners will identify as gay or bisexual at any time.
  - Approximately 6% of the prisoners are foreign nationals at any one time.
  - The proportion of prisoners with a recorded disability including learning disability, learning difficulties and mental illness is approximately 25%.
  - Approximately 20% of prisoners are Muslim and this year 73 took part in Ramadan.
- The chaplaincy has been understaffed for much of the year but has worked to ensure that relevant chaplains covered all religions practised in Deerbolt. Work on Diversity and Equality this year has included an Equality fortnight with displays focusing on the protected characteristics. A Calendar of Events was produced which included religious festivals and local, national and international events. Black History week and LGBT month were recognised.
- Visits in Deerbolt are well supported by the charity NEPACS with family days and father and child days being run across the year.
- In our report last year, we reported on the problem of arranging accumulated visits. This has improved somewhat this year with some successful accumulated visits happening. But it remains difficult to make the arrangements with receiving prisons, particularly in the London area, due to pressure on accommodation.

## **6 SEGREGATION/CARE AND SEPARATION UNIT**

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- The Board would like to commend the Segregation Unit staff. Members have noted positive staff interaction with the prisoners in often very difficult and trying conditions. Due to ongoing staff retention issues throughout the prison, at times, staff in the Segregation Unit appear to work under unacceptable pressure, as they are under resourced.
- Since March 2018, numbers held in segregation have been consistently high: on some occasions, with no spare cells in the Unit, prisoners have been held in segregation conditions on normal location. The Board is satisfied that officers document the reasons and take into account operational risks; nevertheless, the Board observes that segregated vulnerable prisoners cannot always receive the same level of support when accommodated away from a dedicated Segregation Unit.

## **7 ACCOMMODATION (including communication)**

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- Our spot-checking of cells indicates that they are generally fit for habitation and wings are kept clean and reasonably well decorated. Some individual showers in J wing (where each cell has its own shower) are subject to ongoing improvement; all the other wing showers that we have seen are in fair condition. Fire prevention upgrades have been completed on all wings with the exception of F wing where the refurbishment is now in progress. The non-smoking policy adopted this year was introduced carefully and without noticeable ill effects.
- Privacy screens, preventing an open view of the cell toilet from the door, have been fitted in cells, where needed.
- Unfortunately, progress in a number of areas highlighted in last year's Annual Report has been limited or non-existent:
  - A large proportion of cells are still not equipped with curtains, or with the battens and Velcro strips to which the curtain material attaches. The necessary materials are to hand, but the other demands on the contractor's workforce have meant that the fitting of these, given a lower priority, is not advancing.
  - Many cell windows are bent, broken or partially missing. We understand that the funding has been secured for replacement of the outdated windows by Mark 8 windows to be undertaken on all wings, but there is no sign of this happening. The Board regards these matters as important enough to be treated as urgent. The new windows are an essential step in reducing the quantities of drugs getting into the prison. As mentioned elsewhere, the apparently ready availability of dangerous drugs at Deerbolt as at other prisons is hugely detrimental to Health and Safety for both prisoners and staff.
  - New lockers have been purchased and are ready for installation in cells, but currently this is only being done when a cell is damaged or the existing locker rendered unusable.
- We have been assured that the works contractor, Amey, is now co-operating actively with the prison management in undertaking repairs and improvements, and has been able to employ qualified staff for joinery and other tasks, so we look forward to seeing a marked rise in the tempo of prisoner accommodation enhancement.
- The grounds of Deerbolt offer an attractive and reasonably clean environment, thanks in part to excellent work by the gardens department. However, there is still unsightly and potentially unhygienic litter close to some wings (especially where windows are damaged) and around the often over-full bins near the kitchens.

- The display boards on wings (e.g. in association areas and entrance lobbies) suffer from over-crowding. In some cases, where the keys to sealed display boards have been lost, we have seen posters dating from 2014 still on display. We are glad to hear that this is to be addressed with the implementation of a coordinated approach to the display and removal of notices, once the inaccessible boards have been broken open. The arrangements on wings for boxes in which complaint forms (including IMB Applications) are stored need to be improved, to make sure prisoners can access them easily.
- The mail/censor room has been moved to a larger and more suitable location in recent weeks and early indications are that its operation is now more efficient and effective. We have noted that there is less build-up of correspondence waiting for photocopying or the attention of sniffer dogs.

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

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- A nurse carries out a health screening for all prisoners on the day of their arrival at Deerbolt.
- Prisoners have good access to all primary healthcare services. GP appointments are available within two days and same day access is available for urgent problems. The waiting time for an initial appointment with a dentist has increased during the reporting period to 9 weeks. However, the provider has recently recruited more dentists so anticipates the waiting time will reduce.
- Every accommodation wing has a medical treatment room that is equipped with the appropriate hand wash facility. This is a significant improvement that has been achieved within this reporting period. At the time of writing, a whole-system approach to improving the privacy in the administration of medication has commenced. Prisoners have complained about the lack of privacy; this is being addressed with healthcare professionals being supported by the senior management team at Deerbolt
- Mental health services were independently assessed during June. They were found to have met 86% of competencies, which is an improvement of 4% on last year's results. Access to mental health nurses is quick, with urgent access available on the same day. Delays in transfer to mental health hospitals were outside the NHS guidelines.
- The counselling services have long waits; at the time of writing this is 27 weeks for 1:1 appointments and 8 weeks for group sessions. These waiting times are not necessarily longer than would be expected in community settings. The waiting time for a psychiatrist is 3 weeks and all appointments are made within the guideline timeframe.
- There is a calendar of health promotion topics throughout the year at Deerbolt. The mental health team organised a users' forum in August and are looking at developing more mental health promotion, as guided by the HMIP inspection.
- The prisoners have high regard for the standard of care they receive and are particularly complimentary about the nursing staff, including mental health nurses.
- Prisoners are aware of the complaints procedures. There have been only approximately 20 complaints received throughout the reporting period. These complaints are well handled by the healthcare manager, with each prisoner receiving a response.
- Healthcare staff are very responsive to the urgent needs of prisoners even when there are a high number of calls. Calls for healthcare to attend a prisoner peaked at 143 in one month. There were only 2 subsequent transfers to A&E that month. The average number of prisoners requiring a visit to A&E is approximately 4 per month; there were no A&E visits due to psychoactive substance misuse during the reporting period.

## **9 EDUCATION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES (including work, vocational training and employment)**

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- The Academy system for providing education and activity is now well established at Deerbolt. The Board understood originally that it had three main objectives:
  1. To incorporate English and Maths teaching into craft activities,
  2. To create activities that match possible job opportunities, thus promoting post release employability and so reducing re-offending
  3. To offer activities which might fully engage prisoners mentally, offering challenges and personal development, rather than just helping pass the time productively.
- The first objective has been realised. Integrated education is popular with prisoners, as improving writing and arithmetic skills is much more effective for prisoners when offered in a practical context. An unexpected benefit of the integration is that absence of education staff should not mean prisoners having to stay on wing, as the practical activity continues. Conversely however, absence of industry instructors now has a greater impact.
- The second and third objectives have proved more elusive. Activities with links to the outside world have proven hard to get off the ground for a variety of reasons. However, the Board believes it is good that Deerbolt has explored a number of really novel ideas for Academies, and it would be wrong to criticise any innovations which had to be altered or had not succeeded, for fear of discouraging experimentation which may in future develop really effective schemes for helping young prisoners turn their lives around.
- To show statistically whether the change to Academies has enhanced post release employability would not be possible for several years until the cohort of prisoners who are now benefitting from Academies complete their sentences and seek jobs. Even if the adoption of Academies were associated with any improvement, it would be impossible to prove cause and effect as many other potential causations are involved. The most immediate measure of the performance of education and activity is Offenders' Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) efficiency (attendance v. maximum capacity of activities) and percentage of prisoners held on the wings during the day. Both these measures improved after the Academy system was introduced, but have tended to fall back during 2017-2018. OLASS efficiency peaked at 84.14% in October 2017 but had fallen back to 65% by January 2018. The reasons for prisoners staying in cell on a particular day, are analysed in the table below:

Prison Roll		387	100%
Allocated to an Activity		301	78%
Attending an Activity		220	57%
In Cell not attending Activity		167	43%
Allocated but no Activity due to staff shortage		52	
Allocated to a running Activity but not attending		29	
Reasons for not attending include			
Sickness			
Mental health			
Barred from the Activity due to behaviour			
Attending an Adjudication			
Refused to go to the Activity that day			
Not Allocated to an Activity		86	22%
Reasons for not being Allocated			
CSIP Note 1	22		
Part time Activity not scheduled that day	13		
On Induction but no induction programme that day	7		
Self-isolators	5		
Receiving Education on wing	17		
No suitable Activity	22		

Note 1: CSIP = Challenge, Support and Intervention Plan

Note 2: Some Activities are not open to “high-risk” prisoners: not enough activities are offered for these men.

## **10 RESETTLEMENT PREPARATION**

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- Deerbolt is not a Resettlement Prison, but nonetheless has to release a high number of prisoners on licence.
- As a result of this a contract with Durham Tees Valley Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) provided a Through the Gate service. After a poor start and a change of staff, all low and medium risk prisoners due for release are seen in the final 3 months of their sentence, assessed re accommodation/ employment/finances and referred to the appropriate outside agencies. Deerbolt houses prisoners from all over the country, and the Board believes it would still be better for most prisoners to be prepared for release in a local prison in their home area where staff would have first-hand knowledge of local issues and opportunities.
- Deerbolt has a mix of prisoners, including those serving life sentences, sex offenders and gang members. There are no programmes designed for sex offenders and little in the way of resources to deal with other specific offences or sentences.
- The prison has introduced a key worker scheme, whereby officers on each wing will have a responsibility for up to 4 prisoners. This will include regular meetings and record keeping of contact, and passing information to Offender Management Unit.
- A key part of resettlement preparation is the provision of suitable education and activities which will prepare semi-institutionalised young men for life outside and for employment. Deerbolt does try to offer such activities but as reported in Section 9, far too few prisoners actually access them.

## C Section – Work of Board

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Recommended complement of Board members	14
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	13
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	12
Total number of visits to the establishment	324

## D Section - Applications

A	Accommodation	4	0
B	Adjudications	7	5
C	Equality & Diversity (inc religion)	0	1
D	Education/employment/training inc IEP	9	4
E 1	Family/visits inc mail & phone	18	28
E 2	Finance/pay	2	5
F	Food/kitchen related	2	1
G	Health related	3	3
H 1	Property (within current establishment)	20	13
H 2	Property (during transfer/in another establishment)	12	14
H 3	Canteen, facilities, Catalogue shopping, Argos	4	2
I	Sentence related (incl. HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-cat etc.)	9	5
J	Staff/prisoner/detainee concerns (incl. bullying)	11	18
K	Transfers	5	18
L	Miscellaneous	6	13
	Total number of IMB Applications	114	130
	Of total: Confidential Access	2	2