



Annual Report
of the
Independent Monitoring Board

at

HMP HEWELL

for reporting Year

1st October 2017 - 30th September 2018

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Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody

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1 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.

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Hewell for the period October 2017 to September 2018. IMB evidence comes from observations made on visits, scrutiny of records and data, informal contact with prisoners and staff and prisoner applications.

Main judgements

The judgements below should be considered within the context of an establishment which is on a long journey of improvement after many years of poor performance. Staffing levels have improved, but many staff are new and inexperienced and need to manage a complex prison population. The Board remains concerned by the inadequacy of accommodation, which provides a poor environment for staff and prisoners alike.

Although the Board believes that HMP Hewell is not providing a service appropriate for the 21st century, the Board remains confident that there is determination to move the prison forward and to succeed in the complex and difficult challenge of making the prison a safe, secure environment for all. The Board believes that poor environment, boredom, access to drugs, tobacco and mobile telephones can lead to debt and the fear of other prisoners demanding repayment. It is noteworthy that when issues are identified and raised, the Governor and senior management are receptive in dealing with the underlying concerns.

The Board continues to be impressed with the way a willing and largely dedicated staff respond to, and support some of society's most difficult and disturbed individuals.

Are prisoners treated fairly?

Although procedural justice is important to the Governor, the Board has concerns that a lack of consistency in implementing rules and regime allows a justified view by prisoners that they are unfairly treated.

The control of prisoners' property, nationally, continues to be a problem.

Are prisoners treated humanely?

The Board believes that prisoners overall are treated humanely. However, Board members have observed the behaviour of some prisoners (e.g. making excessive noise when locked in cell, undertaking "dirty protests", verbally abusing both staff and fellow prisoners, demanding extra food, demanding priority over other prisoners etc.) severely testing fair and humane treatment by others.

Prisoners with disabilities have problems accessing the showers. Wheelchair access is poor. Although much improved, rubbish accumulating around the site or where it is dropped from the cell windows remains of concern.

The ageing fabric and condition of the Grange is deteriorating and does not lend itself to a humane environment. Despite this, the Board believes that officers and employees work hard to treat the prisoners humanely.

Are prisoners prepared well for their release?

At both prisons the Board has not seen evidence that prisoners are well prepared for their release. As in previous reports, the Board remains concerned that the closed prison environment, with a substantial "churn" of prisoners each month, results in many men not having a reasonable chance to be supported in order to look forward to and develop the skills needed for employment. It is unrealistic to expect reasonable provision for rehabilitation when the remand population is so high.

Main Areas for Development

TO THE MINISTER

Will the Minister instruct HMPPS to move all Public Protection (IPP) prisoners out of Cat B local prisons so that his response to last year's report ("HMPPS focuses on giving IPP prisoners the support, opportunities and motivation they need to progress more quickly so that offenders have the best possible prospect for securing release...") can be achieved?

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

Will HMPPS guarantee that improvements and developments such as the modernisation and improvement of the fabric of the buildings and support in terms of both experienced officers on detached duty and expertise under the special measures regime at HMP Hewell are not compromised or reduced by the need to take remedial action at other prisons (e.g. the 10 most challenging prisons and HMP Birmingham)?

Will HMPPS review staffing levels and the contracts with health care providers to take account of the increase in court workload as a result of the reduction in numbers at HMP Birmingham?

Will HMPPS provide the funds to provide toilets at the Grange suitable for 21st century occupation?

The Board remains of the opinion that the system for moving prisoners' property from prison to prison is not fit for purpose.

TO THE GOVERNOR

Will the Governor review the embedding of rules and regime across the prison (especially with regard to non-attendance at work or education) to ensure that consistency is achieved?

Will the Governor devise a method by which all segregated prisoners receive their full entitlement to exercise, shower and phone calls?

Improvements

Window replacement and refurbishment has started.

The installation of anti-drone netting is complete.

"Hewell Newsletter" and "We are HMP Hewell" illustrate the determination to improve communications with staff and prisoners.

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

HMP Hewell is a local adult male Category B prison (House blocks 1-6) combined with an adult male Category D open prison (Hewell Grange).

For House blocks 1-6:

Baseline Certified Normal Accommodation (CNA)	814	(‘uncrowded’)
Maximum CNA	1074	(‘crowded’)
Operational Capacity (Op Cap)	978	(reduced to this in January 2018 to take account of the window replacement and refurbishment)

For the Grange:

CNA and Op Cap are both 224

Healthcare is provided by CareUK. Mental health services are provided by South Staffordshire Trust.

Educational services are provided by Milton Keynes College. Careers information and advice is provided by the Coventry/Solihull/Warwickshire Partnership (CSWP), under the banner of the National Careers Service and/or by Outreach. The latter two groups are funded by the Learning and Skills Council, through OLASS (Offender Learning and Skills Service). The library service is operated by Worcestershire County Council.

Maintenance is undertaken by AMEY.

House blocks 1 to 6 are a purpose-built prison opened in 1993 with single and double cells and shared showers.

Hewell Grange is a three-story Grade II listed country house built in 1894. It held young offenders from 1946 until 1991 when it became an adult male open prison. Accommodation in the main house is in dormitories with shared toilets and showers. There are 2 purpose-built hostels. The prison is set within a large area of parkland with some parts being Grade II listed and containing a prison farm with a dairy, pig unit, market garden and farm shop.

In June 2018 it was announced that HMP Hewell would be subject to special measures.

B Evidence sections 4 – 11

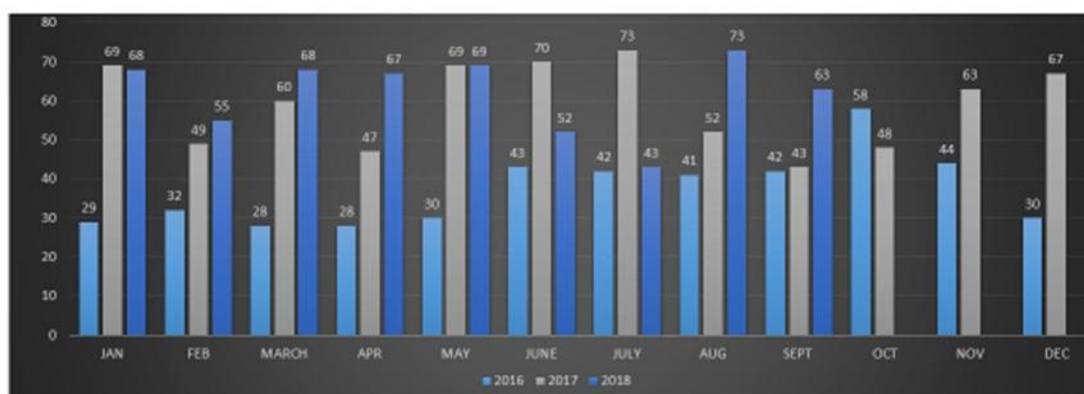
4 SAFETY

House blocks 1 – 6 – The Cat B Prison

During the reporting period Board members observed that the prison has become a safer place; however, they have also reported feeling unsafe during some visits to the prison. They report being spontaneously greeted by both prisoners and staff when they walk around and have had fewer unprompted conversations with both prisoners and staff, when they have been told that the prison is not safe, and that individuals do not feel safe. Assaults, prisoner on prisoner, continue to be regularly reported in the daily briefing. Less frequent, though still significant, are reports of assaults on staff members. It is likely that whereas twelve months ago violence was unpredictable and indiscriminate, it is now related to conflicts between individuals and thus more focused.

The following chart illustrates that violence remains an issue and has risen again towards the end of the reporting period.

Incidents of Violence Annual Comparison



Incidents involving new psychoactive substances (NPS) are also regularly reported in the daily briefing and, as in previous reports, the ready availability of such illicit drugs puts prisoners and staff at risk. The attendant problems of debt, bullying, intimidation and violence are evident and well reported across the Prison Service. NPS incidents also add to the demand for emergency services. The availability of illicit mobile phones continues to make the management of these problems even harder.

The Board continues to believe that staffing levels are insufficient to meet the needs of the prison, especially when conflicting priorities and unpredicted events arise. Numbers of these events remain high, and safety is compromised at these times due to a need to move staff. Such events include “blue light” emergencies, attendance at NPS incidents, constant watches and bed watches, all diverting staff from normal duties. The deployment of staff to these events is almost inevitably at the expense of other tasks. Moreover, this results in officers in prisoner areas with little or no knowledge of specific prisoners, and therefore, less likely to recognise dangerous patterns of behaviour. This compromises the ability to intervene and deescalate situations where needed.

Visits to Reception have found a careful and thorough process. However, the reduction of numbers at HMP Birmingham and the consequent redirection of prisoners from courts to HMP

Hewell has caused some late working and the Board is concerned that the extra workload was not followed by extra resources. Medical staff report that occasionally there are not enough staff to deal with the number of new arrivals and late working is claimed to not be recognised by their employer.

ACCT (assessment care in custody teamwork) documents are regularly inspected by Board members and are considered to be completed satisfactorily.

The number of deaths in custody has increased from four to ten. Four have been investigated by the PPO and reports received. Three have been investigated by the coroner and were of natural causes. A further one is considered, subject to the coroner's inquest, to be from natural causes and all these were to a large extent expected. Of particular concern is:

- the one where another prisoner has been convicted of manslaughter;
- one self-inflicted and
- four probably resulting from drug misuse.

The Grange – the Cat D Open Prison

Board members, prisoners and staff consider the Grange to be safe with a negligible number of incidents of violence reported.

In the last report the Board raised its concern that there continue to be a number of IPP (imprisonment for public protection) prisoners, whose sentences have expired and who were still being held in HMP Hewell. In the Minister's response we were told that "HMPPS focuses on giving IPP prisoners the support, opportunities and motivation they need to progress more quickly so that offenders have the best possible prospect for securing release...". An analysis of segregation records for the reporting year show that fifteen different IPP prisoners were segregated during the year, three on two occasions and one three times. In segregation reviews, members met men who claim that as they have no idea when they may be released, they had concluded that good behaviour was irrelevant and that they were also unaware of any significant support to progress to parole. Our last report gave the example of an IPP prisoner who claimed to have severe autism and was held in the Segregation Unit because his frustration over continued imprisonment was expressed by disruptive behaviour, sometimes violent. As the date for his parole hearing approached Board members were saddened, though not surprised, that this prisoner was again returned to segregation as his behaviour was again unsuitable for normal location. Unsurprisingly parole was refused.

IPP prisoners in conversation continually refer to their feeling of complete unfairness and powerlessness of the sentence that has kept them in prison for many years "over tariff".

The Board remains of the opinion that for most if not all of these IPP prisoners a Cat B Local Prison does not provide the environment for them to be able to prove to the satisfaction of the Parole Board that they are no longer a threat to society, so as a priority they should be moved to an establishment better able to understand and deal with their complex behavioural needs.

Access remains poor in the Category B prison and non-existent in the Category D prison for wheelchair users, and those with mobility issues.

Members' observations of the Visits Centre and of visits at both prisons have found positive supporting environments.

The Board has received a number of applications relating to responses through the "Comp 1 system" received from this and other prisons. In a number of cases the quality of response was very unsatisfactory, often not answering the question in an understandable way or claiming that someone else should respond but not forwarding the complaint.

On rota visits and through applications Board members have become aware that there is a real lack of consistency across the prison (e.g. cell allocation once on a house block, issuing incentive and earned privileges warnings and how serveries are managed).

6 SEGREGATION/CARE AND SEPARATION UNIT

The Board is pleased that the operation of the Segregation Unit has remained stable over the reporting period, maintaining the improvement reported last year.

The unit when visited is mainly reported as calm.

Over the year Board members have observed prisoners putting considerable energy into extremely bad behaviour; however, relationships between officers and prisoners are considered reasonable and board members continue to observe examples of staff engaging positively with prisoners. Members have been impressed at the lengths to which managers have gone to re-integrate segregated prisoners appropriately onto normal location. There is a conscious effort to ensure that the length of time prisoners spend in segregation is as short as possible and an exit plan for all prisoners is created and implemented.

The Board remains satisfied that Rule 45 reviews are well conducted with prisoners having all procedures explained to them. The prisoners have ample opportunity to speak and are encouraged to do so and ask questions of all agencies present, including the IMB.

As in the previous year, all documentation is accessible to Board members who inspect regularly and sign the visits file to confirm attendance following a visit to each segregation cell. Board members have carried out a full Segregation Unit review most weeks, at which prisoners have the opportunity to speak to a member of the Board in confidence.

Vandalised cells are more speedily repaired than in the past; however the Board has received complaints from prisoners in cells where they do not have a working cell bell, hot water, etc. Also, the Board remains concerned that tables are not provided in any cell.

The Board has concerns over cleanliness especially when a prisoner has been on a dirty protest and the length of time taken to fully clean the cell and surrounding areas.

When the unit has over 15 prisoners it is impossible to give each prisoner their entitlement to exercise, shower and phone calls.

The Board has been impressed with the take up of voluntary in-cell education by segregated prisoners and their interaction with the staff member from Education.

7 ACCOMMODATION (including communication)

Overall both prisons give a better impression than in previous years. Maintenance has improved though there remain noticeably variable levels of cleanliness.

House blocks 1-6

The general cleanliness of HMP Hewell remains variable with areas regularly littered and dirty. Despite efforts to ensure that outside areas are regularly cleaned, litter outside the house blocks, as last year, remained a problem throughout the reporting year.

During the reporting period, parts of House Block 1 have been closed for replacement of the windows and partial refurbishment. Prisoners have complained about the level of noise and the fact that it was only a partial refurbishment.

Throughout the year the Board has received complaints/observed issues about portion size, quality and how hot the food is. However, when tasted, food has been considered edible. Servery staff have again been observed not wearing proper attire.

Hewell Grange

Hewell Grange is an old listed building, which continues to create difficulties and challenges for maintenance. For example, windows are single glazed, so board members are regularly informed of cold dormitories. Whilst the dormitories remain shabby, they are kept reasonably clean and tidy.

As reported last year there have been continual problems with the toilets with Board members being informed about problems with them at almost every visit. They are not considered decent and dignified. It is appropriate to note that the shower block is now repainted and in a better condition than in previous years.

At the start of the reporting year the fire alarm system was replaced. The new system was prone to false activation resulting in evacuations and attendance by the fire brigade.

For a long period, the entrance barrier was not working.

Prisoners are found to be courteous and helpful, speaking enthusiastically about their life at the Grange.

It is noteworthy that governors and staff have been observed to have a detailed knowledge of the prisoners and are seen giving information in a friendly but authoritative style.

Property

As in previous reports there remain constant problems with prisoners' property evidenced by applications to the Board and the Prison Service's complaints procedure.

Communication

The Governor continues to communicate his vision for improving the prison to staff through full staff meetings and written briefings. "Hewell Newsletter" focuses on keeping prisoners informed of key messages and it now less likely for members to meet staff and prisoners who claim to have no knowledge of developments within the jail. "We are HMP Hewell" fulfils a similar purpose for staff.

8 HEALTHCARE (including mental health and social care)

The Board again regularly visited Healthcare and observed appropriate interaction between staff and prisoners. The Board is not aware of any prisoner being denied escort to or bed watch at outside hospital.

EDUCATION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

The Board has insufficient evidence to come to a judgement regarding education and other activities.

9 WORK, VOCATIONAL TRAINING and EMPLOYMENT

There remains a varied and interesting range of vocational training activities and employment across both prisons that are well thought of by prisoners, often enthusiastically. However, non-attendance figures reported on the daily briefing are of concern. Throughout the year Board members have met prisoners out of cell undertaking no meaningful activity.

10 RESETTLEMENT PREPARATION

At both prisons the Board has not seen evidence that prisoners are well prepared for their release. Conversations with prisoners suggest that prisoners do not feel that they are being prepared for release, but that they are being detained until they can be released.

When members have met with enthusiastic prisoners in workshops and discussed their plans for after release the prisoners have aspired to working in their old job or another job unrelated to the workshop.

As in previous reports, the Board remains concerned that the closed prison environment, with a substantial “churn” of prisoners each month, results in many men not having a reasonable chance to be supported in order to look forward to and develop the skills needed for employment. It is unrealistic to expect reasonable provision for rehabilitation when the remand population is so high.

C Section – Work of Board

This has been the second consecutive difficult year for the Board. There were only 4 members who carry out all duties and of these only 3 are undertaking training for the new members appointed during the year.

As last year, the Board prioritised its work focusing on the Segregation Unit, being present for Rule 45 reviews and dealing with applications. Board members have visited most areas of both prisons during the reporting year, however these visits have not provided sufficient evidence for judgements to be made. There therefore remain areas of the prison that the Board is unable to comment upon.

BOARD STATISTICS	
Recommended Complement of Board Members	20
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period (active)	8 (5)
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period (active)	10 (7)
Total number of visits to the Establishment	372
Total number of segregation reviews attended	98

D Section - Applications

Code	Subject	Current reporting year	Previous reporting year
A	Accommodation including laundry, clothing, ablutions	6	4
B	Discipline including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	2	2
C	Equality	4	1
D	Purposeful Activity including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	3	7
E 1	Letters, visits, phones, public protection restrictions	6	2
E 2	Finance including pay, private monies, spends	5	2
F	Food and kitchens	7	4
G	Health including physical, mental, social care	14	8
H 1	Property within this establishment	20	19
H 2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	34	11
H 3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	2	5
I	Sentence management including HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	13	3
J	Staff/prisoner concerns including bullying	13	6
K	Transfers	14	5
L	Miscellaneous	3	14
	Total number of IMB applications	151	93