



Annual Report
of the
Independent Monitoring Board
at

HMP Risley

for reporting Year
(1 April 2017 to 31 March 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 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 programs 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 concerns 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 custody.

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

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction to the report

This report presents the findings of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Risley for the period April 2017/March 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

MAIN JUDGEMENTS

Are prisoners treated fairly?

It is the opinion of the Board that overall prisoners are being treated fairly. Budget cuts are still affecting safety within the prison. Having said that, staffing levels have improved throughout the year which has enabled prisoners to attend the various workshops available and attendance at healthcare appointments. On arrival at Risley Reception, prisoners are allocated to a specialist wing (B Wing) for assessment, and their welfare and safety.

At the start of the year, there were still problems for families wishing to book visits to prisoners. This has since improved, with the introduction of the online booking system and allocated visit times. It is certainly not perfect, but is a vast improvement on the previous system.

Are prisoners treated humanely?

The prison's focus on decent and humane treatment is demonstrated through the decency agenda introduced by the Safer Living Department, including a Room Ready programme and ensuring that all new prisoners receive a decency pack. There is an ongoing programme of upgrading all cells within the prison.

Are prisoners prepared well for their release?

Prisoners are encouraged to develop skills through a good educational provision and training in a range of workshops. All agencies are aware of the prisoner's imminent release.

MAIN AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

TO THE MINISTER

As there are increasing pressures on the prison and prison staff from the use of psychoactive substances (PS), what strategies are being considered to tackle this national problem?

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

The IMB receive a large number of applications regarding loss of prisoners' property. Can the Prison Service introduce a streamlined system of handling prisoners' property when being transferred between prisons? This would avoid unnecessary distress for prisoners being transferred and also minimise the amount of compensation claims

Regarding the use of psychoactive substances (PS), the violence experienced by both officers and prisoners, and attendance by emergency services in dealing with these problems, what plans are there to allocate additional resources to support prison governors in tackling this major issue?

TO THE GOVERNOR.

Can the prison develop a more efficient approach to handling prisoners' property, on arrival, departure and movement within the prison estate?

The Board still has concerns regarding vulnerable prisoners with mental health issues being held in the Care and Separation Unit for unacceptable periods of time. Can a more appropriate specialist area be considered for holding these prisoners?

The Board are still concerned about the performance of Amey in relation to cleanliness and the time taken to react to routine maintenance and repairs.

Improvements

The Board would like to commend the prison on the recruitment of additional staff and the setting up of the specialist wing (B Wing) for new prisoner arrivals, and also the appointment of a dedicated Diversity and Inclusion Manager who ensures that clear and concise guidance is given to all staff on their responsibilities in relation to the care of those with protected characteristics.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE ESTABLISHMENT

HMP Risley is one of the largest Category “C” training prisons in the UK, currently housing an average of 1115 male prisoners.

The prison continues to be a hub for foreign national prisoners in the North West and UKBA staff are permanently based in the prison. The population profile showed that at the end of this reporting year there were 140 foreign nationals, 180 sex offenders, 50 IPPs and 70 lifers.

The Risley estate consists of 7 residential wings, 2 of which house vulnerable prisoners/sex offenders. There is also a care and separation unit with its own outside exercise area.

The training facilities within the establishment provide 12 workshops and 14 education classrooms together with a library. There is also a health centre with full-time doctors and nursing staff.

In addition, dental, ophthalmic, podiatry and physiotherapy services are provided.

Other facilities include a sports hall and two gymnasiums.

To cater for the various faith groups of the prisoners, there is a multi-faith centre which is supported by several ministers from the various faiths and a Muslim Iman.

B Evidence sections 4 – 11

4. SAFETY

Over a period of two days, the needs of prisoners arriving at HMP Risley through Reception to the Induction Wing (B Wing) are assessed and provided with the following information:

Room 1

General presentation by two prisoners, which takes between 30 and 40 minutes.

Room 2

Shelter, mentoring programme, safer custody, CGL (drug support), Phoenix (family issues) and the library.

Room 3

Chapel, Education, Induction Officer

Assessments are carried out in the education block on the afternoon of Day 1.

In the first two days on B Wing, prisoners will attend an induction course which includes a general presentation given by two prisoners and a presentation by employees of Shelter.

They also will be given presentations by Safer Custody officers, drug support staff and any family issues will be covered. Inductions are also carried out by staff from the Chapel. An introduction pack detailing IMB representation in the prison is given to every prisoner, which contains details of how they can contact the IMB. Prisoners are also made aware that on every wing in the prison there are locked boxes which are used for prisoners to leave any application forms addressed to the IMB only.

A number of prisoner forums have been held and a prisoner survey went out to all prisoners. In the responses to the survey, 53% did not feel safe on A - E Wings and 24% did not feel safe on F and G Wings. In the same survey 61% of responses from A - E Wings stated that they had not been a victim of violence and the response on F and G Wings was 80%. When asked about bullying, 63% on A - G Wings responded that they had not been a victim of bullying.

The ACCT plans have quality checks and any concerns are fed back to the relevant manager. Recently, there has been a large decrease in the number of ACCTs.

The Samaritans attend the prison fortnightly to meet with the Listeners and are in regular communication with the Safer Custody department. Samaritan telephones are available on each wing. However, the quality of the signal is sometimes of concern.

Risley no longer has safer cells; however, there are five gated cells if required.

The use of force has increased and Risley is part of a pilot scheme with officers being trained in the use of PAVA spray. PS and substance misuse are the main drivers for violence and debt within the prison.

5. EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS

Equality and fairness continues to have a high profile at HMP Risley, where there is a clear and coordinated diversity and inclusion policy committed to promoting fair and equitable outcomes for all prisoners in an inclusive, supportive and tolerant environment.

The initial and ongoing identification of prisoners with protected characteristics is working well and the prison has a good understanding of the make-up of its population. Equality related data is monitored and presented for review and discussion at the regular Diversity and Inclusion team meetings, with actions identified, agreed and monitored by the team.

Diversity and inclusion, including coverage of the nine protected characteristics and how to make a complaint if required, is now comprehensively covered within the induction sessions; however, the Board would like to see more DIRF forms made readily and freely available on the wings.

The over-arching diversity policy has been reviewed this year with the welcome appointment of a dedicated Diversity and Inclusion Manager who ensures that clear and concise guidance is given to all staff on their responsibilities in relation to care of those with protected characteristics. Progress made in this area over a very short time is both significant and encouraging, with approval recently obtained to appoint two equality representatives from the prisoner population on each wing.

Proactive focus on the management and investigation of an increased number of DIRF complaints is ongoing. However, due to recent Senior Management Team changes whereby all DIRFs are now dealt with by the Diversity and Inclusion Manager rather than a separate management strand being responsible for each protected characteristic, there is a danger that DIRF complaints may not be responded to within appropriate time standards unless either an additional resource is allocated to the D & I department, or a further review of the DIRF process is undertaken.

Monthly disability, BAME, LGBT and Over-50 forums have recently been introduced, and these have been welcomed warmly by the prison population, who are actively participating in organising new initiatives such as regular over-50s quizzes as well as entertainment for LGBT and Black History months. Both BAME and Prisoner Council meetings include an agenda point to discuss the recommendations arising from the Lammy Review.

All transgender prisoners at Risley are treated in line with PSI 17 (2016). Steps have been taken to improve the management of transgender prisoners' issues and needs surrounding provision of care e.g. ensuring all items allowing prisoners to live as females are now easily available to order on the canteen sheets.

Disabled prisoners are flagged up on arrival at Risley and should be seen within 24 hours; however the Board notes that there have been lengthy delays with some prisoners receiving wheelchair assessments. In addition, the Board notes that not all education buildings are DDA compliant and the Board is assured that planning is being undertaken to address this.

There is a good range of multi-cultural literature available in the library and there is to be the introduction of induction information booklets in languages other than English.

All faiths are well catered for at Risley with data and observations relating to religious issues collated by the Chaplaincy and presented at the regular Diversity and Inclusion team meetings. However, there have been regular occurrences where prisoners have not been escorted to the chapel services in a timely manner but the introduction of an additional session of prayers on a Friday may go some way to improving the situation. Prisoners continue to report that the Chaplaincy provides invaluable pastoral support and participation by the prisoners in the services is encouraged. Support is offered to families following a death in custody and also to other prisoners who may be affected.

Data available shows the IEP (Incentives and Earned Privileges) scheme is fair and effective, and that prisoners make good progress under this scheme where it is warranted. All IEP reviews are conducted in line with the Lammy Review recommendation number 24 regarding fairness and effectiveness.

Risley has a designated visiting area where family visits take place. Family days are held every 3 months with good interaction between prisoners and their children and a variety of toys and games being provided by the prison. The visits area has benefited from new, more comfortable seating this year, but the noise level when the visiting room is full continues to be unacceptable. There is the potential to resolve this at a minimal cost.

Due to new regulations, regarding prisoners' mail coming into the prison, which now has to be photocopied, there have been major delays, but because of the increase in staff the problem has improved.

The Visitors' Centre outside the gate is small and frequently overcrowded, often with over 100 visitors. Disabled visitors have great difficulty using the toilet facilities.

Over the year, there has been a substantial decrease in Diversity and inclusion related applications made to the IMB, and any issues raised to the prison have been fully investigated and responded to in a prompt and robust manner.

Faith and Religious Activity

The primary role for the Chaplaincy is to provide worship, faith support and pastoral support for prisoners and prison staff of all faiths and none. The Board work closely with the Chaplaincy as they provide 7-day coverage at the prison and are a fountain of knowledge regarding prisoners.

The Chaplaincy provides support in a wide range of areas, receiving applications to see prisoners on the wings daily, either when stopped personally on the wings, via officers on the wings, from their place of work/education or by general apps. The apps are responded to the same day or the next day.

A chaplain will visit every prisoner within 24 hours of their arrival and complete a chaplaincy reception/induction. The chaplain will refer the prisoner to his own faith chaplain for an additional visit if he requests. Every day they visit prisoners on the Care and Separation Unit and visit all prisoners on open ACCTS (self-harm support), as well as reviewing ACCT reviews. They also visit all isolated prisoners at least once a week, providing a comprehensive report to Safer Custody on their findings and attending all Care and Separation (segregation) reviews. A Chaplain will visit prisoners who are in hospital for a period of time; they also provide help and support prisoners at times of serious illness in their family and during bereavement.

The Chaplaincy deal with all deaths and serious illnesses of relatives and friends on the outside. Where it fits the criteria, they complete the paperwork for security to risk assess whether the prisoner can attend the hospital/funeral. This can only be done after the process of confirming the serious illness/death. They offer to light candles and say prayers for serious illness and bereavement of relatives on the outside and any other issues that are required. This is done in the peace and tranquillity of the chapel.

6. SEGREGATION/CARE AND SEPARATION UNIT

Data shows that there has been a significant increase in those held in the CSU due to the misuse of drugs. The number of prisoners in the unit varies from day to day.

Prisoners located in the CSU fall into three categories: misdemeanours committed, threats from other prisoners or those who have self-harmed and are put in the CSU for their own protection until transfers can be arranged to other wings or establishments.

All prisoners on arrival in the CSU are seen by Healthcare and they monitor the prisoners thereafter on a regular basis. A Governor, Healthcare and the Chaplaincy visit the CSU on a daily basis.

Under statutory regulations, IMB are informed of any new prisoners arriving in the CSU and visit as soon as is possible, to ensure that all their statutory needs are met. Segregation reviews are carried out routinely as required and Board members attend the majority of reviews.

The prisoners within the CSU have access to a shower, some of their own property, and an outside yard for exercise.

The Board considers the CSU to be a very well run unit with staff providing a high standard of care. The CSU continues to be clean and relatively peaceful, given its purpose. At a time of extreme difficulty in relocating prisoners from the CSU to other establishments, the Board have witnessed the hard work the officers put in during the reviews, particularly to achieve relocation to other establishments when appropriate to do so. The prisoners inform us they are well treated by the officers who form a small, dedicated and appropriately trained team.

The Board does however remain concerned about the vulnerable prisoners with mental health issues held in the Care and Separation Unit for unacceptable periods of time. We believe more appropriate accommodation should be provided for these individuals.

7. ACCOMMODATION (INCLUDING COMMUNICATION)

There is an on-going programme of refurbishment of wings and showers but the view of the Board is that the progress of the programme is too slow.

Some of the problems with the accommodation on various wings, as mentioned in previous reports, are still ongoing: mainly general maintenance, and planned maintenance of central heating and showers (presently the heating is controlled manually by Amey which causes problems, particularly at the weekend.)

TV reception on various wings is still poor as is the telephone reception for prisoners' use.

Generally, the residential areas are clean and tidy but with the majority of the areas ageing, they are in need of comprehensive refurbishment.

The Board is also concerned that cell clearances are not carried out promptly when a prisoner moves location within the prison, leading to loss of property.

Meals are served on time generally, subject to incidents which may happen within the prison. The Board is concerned regarding staff supervision of meal portion control, as when food is brought to the wing for distribution to the prisoners, there is no check that each prisoner is given the same size portion as there is a favouritism amongst the prisoners on the serveries.

8. HEALTHCARE SERVICES. (including mental health and social care)

Healthcare Services (physical and mental health) are provided by a joint partnership arrangement between Bridgewater Community NHS Foundation Trust (BCHT) and Greater Manchester West NHS Foundation Trust (GMW) respectively. The service aims to provide primary and mental health services within the prison setting that are equivalent to those which would be available within a community setting.

At Risley all new prisoners are assessed by a nurse. There are plans for the reception nurse to be based on the new induction wing (B Wing) after the completion of the refurbishment of two new rooms.

Waiting lists for dental/optometry services are within national time scales. There are currently 8 dental sessions per week and 2 sessions monthly for optician clinics. There are 6 external hospital appointments per day and access to regional in-patient beds at HMP Preston, Liverpool and Manchester, although access to these beds remains difficult.

The healthcare building is clean and well equipped. The latest infection control audit was 96% (green rating).

There is an established mental health team from Greater Manchester Health Trust (GMMH) including registered nurses, psychological wellbeing therapists, counsellor and psychiatrist. All prisoner referrals are discussed at a weekly single point of access meeting. All new/first ACCT reviews are attended by the mental health team representative.

There is also a substance misuse team (from a separate provider, CGL/Pathways) comprising a specialist GP (substance misuse) and two nurses during the day.

A Healthcare Improvement Adviser attends several days a week and offers wellbeing services for both staff and patients, which is commissioned by NHS England from Warrington Borough Council. Their role is an integral part of the Prison Health Improvement Group (PHIG) and ensures the implementation of the Prison Health Improvement Plan, a multi-disciplinary approach to wellbeing across the whole prison.

Feedback from a recent prisoner (patient) survey is good.

9. EDUCATION AND OTHER PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITIES

The department is run by an experienced and enthusiastic ex-further education lecturer. The Governor drives forward initiatives and constantly looks for improvement in the service, believing strongly in the value of education which is impacting on provision in the prison.

On arrival prisoners are assessed using a diagnostic test - this enables them to be allocated to the most appropriate provision. The most important and mandatory provision is for prisoners, where necessary, to gain basic skills in literacy and numeracy: this will then enable them to undertake work within the prison. An example of this is where they would need basic numeracy to do joinery - measuring and calculating length and widths etc.

The prison recognises that the greatest need is for Level 1 English. This is highlighted by the influx of prisoners from various part of the country and foreign nationals who lack basic literacy.

On the courses all prisoners are set targets of achievement, which are regularly reviewed and monitored. Progress towards targets is recorded. All prisoners are provided with individual learning plans. There has been a reduction in the cancellation of courses as there are now more officers available to escort prisoners regularly. A variety of study is encouraged, although long distance courses are not available at the moment.

More staff are employed who have worked in industry, bringing a different dimension to learning opportunities and also a maths specialist is in post.

In conclusion prisoners generally like the range of courses offered and are willing to attend. There remains a hard-to-reach group - these are mainly sex offenders (who have to be separated from the main groups of prisoners) and those allocated to the segregation unit (CSU).

From January 2019, drop-in type courses will be offered on F and G wings (sex offenders). They will be varied to enrich opportunities e.g. art appreciation, book reading, painting. A specialist tutor will offer a particular type of course on the CSU to encourage prisoners to function better, become more reflective and try to prevent self-harming. This could include mindfulness, in-cell exercise and yoga.

As the Governor has given priority to all education in the prison, there has been a positive outcome with numbers of prisoners participating on the courses continually increasing.

10. WORK, VOCATIONAL TRAINING and EMPLOYMENT

At Risley there is a comprehensive range of prison work available including joinery, building maintenance and industrial cleaning, with plastering and hospitality/catering being available to the standard of Level 2 NVQ. Allocation of the work to prisoners is fair and quick and, once allocated to work, the prisoners' attendance is good. There has been an increase in prisoners attending full-time activity, but not all prisoners want to attend courses. The prisoners who do want to attend have to apply and wait for a vacancy.

There are recognised qualifications linked to this work but there is an opening for a construction qualification and stronger links between the prison and local employers could be forged.

It is a priority of the prison to ensure each prisoner is given the opportunity to learn to enable them to gain employment on their release.

11. RESETTLEMENT PREPARATION

Board members have attended resettlement meetings with prisoners and the feedback from attendees is that the offending behaviour programmes are helpful. There have been delays in prisoners receiving their sentence plan, but this is improving and they are of good quality.

All prisoners who are due for release are informed 12 weeks prior to their release date that they are involved in the resettlement preparation programme.

All communication with regards to multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) is co-ordinated through the public protection unit within Risley.

All advice and assistance is available to prisoners attending the resettlement programme prior to release. Assistance is provided by an organisation called Purple Futures who, in turn, contract the work out to Shelter.

The Board would be unable to make fair and constructive comment on the co-operation between external probation services and the Community Rehabilitation Company, as we were unable to contact a member for comment.

Family visits and family days are encouraged by staff in the Visits Centre.

UKBA have staff resident at Risley and there is an ongoing progression programme for deportees.

As part of the resettlement preparation programme, prisoners are assisted in completing a bank account application form, but are unable to progress their application as they do not have access to the internet whilst in prison.

C Section – Work of Board

The Board has been able to meet its commitment to monitoring duties even though we are well below full complement. Each week Board members attend the prison to conduct rota monitor segregation reviews. We also respond to prisoner applications and observe prison management meetings. Board members also attend ACCT reviews and Family Forums.

Board meetings are held on a monthly basis and the Governor has attended on a number of occasions in order to brief the Board on up to date prison matters and issues from rota reports. As Risley is a training prison for new staff, the Board also give presentations to new operational officers on the work undertaken by the IMB, and ensure that the prison officers are aware that members of the Board are available to prisoners if required.

The Board makes every effort to attend Rule 45 reviews and 72 hour reviews. The Board also maintains its own records on individual segregation reviews which enables the Board to maintain a continuous overview on each prisoner.

Having been given total access to files within the Safer Custody Department, all incidents and ongoing incidents are fully and professionally documented.

The Board receives 24 hrs notice for attendance to ACCT reviews and attend as often as we can.

BOARD STATISTICS	
Recommended Complement of Board Members	20
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	6
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	6

Total number of visits to the Establishment	379
Total number of segregation reviews attended	247

D Section - Applications

Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
ACCOMMODATION	40	5
ADJUDICATIONS	3	9
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY	0	5
EDUCATION	0	7
FAMILY MAIL/CALLS	9	8
FOOD - KITCHEN - CANTEEN	9	6
HEALTH RELATED	61	36
PROPERTY (ALL AREAS)	51	56
SENTENCE RELATED HDC	84	66
STAFF/ PRISONER RELATED INC. BULLYING	27	22
TRANSFERS	11	26
MISCELLANEOUS	50	63
TOTAL NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS	345	311