



Annual Report
of the
Independent Monitoring Board
at

HMP Huntercombe

for reporting Year

January to December 2018

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Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody

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1 STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

1.1 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.

1.2 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

2.1 The Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Huntercombe is pleased to submit its report on the prison for the reporting period 1st January 2018 to 31st December 2018.

2.2 Overall the Board is happy with the way the prison operates and notes that during the reporting period there were no serious incidents and that the number of violent incidents reduced by around 50% compared to the previous period (section 4.2). Additionally, the number of assessment, care in custody and teamwork documents (ACCTs) opened fell by 17% over the previous period (Section 4.1) and discrimination incident report forms (DIRFs) were down by 14% (Section 5.1).

2.3 The number of adjudications and referrals to the independent adjudicator (IA) increased by 15% and 10% respectively (Section 6.4); whilst the Board has identified some possible reasons for the increase it is an area that we will monitor closely for the forthcoming reporting period.

2.4 The prison successfully implemented the key working (phase 1) of offender management in custody (OMiC) programme in the latter part of the reporting period.

Main judgements

Are prisoners treated fairly?

As stated in previous reports, the Board considers that foreign national prisoners (FNP) are not treated equally within the prison system when compared to UK national prisoners in terms of resettlement support and preparation for release.

Within the prison, prisoners are treated fairly and decently; they have large amounts of association time and make extensive use of the prison's excellent gym and library facilities.

Are prisoners treated humanely?

The Board is confident that prisoners are treated humanely within HMP Huntercombe; our view is supported by the low level of applications received by the Board in respect of accommodation (A), equality (B) and discipline (C). The combined number of complaints – 15 – represents less than 10% of all applications to the Board (Section D). However, the number of complaints relating to accommodation (A) rose compared to the previous period; we believe this is due to the introduction of an enhanced wing which caused an increase in doubling-up (dual occupation of cells).

Are prisoners prepared well for their release?

No.

The Board has repeatedly raised the issue of lack of resource for FNP resettlement and again recommends that the budget for this activity be restored. The Board commends the prison for appointing a resettlement officer; however, this resource is often called upon to cover gaps in other areas and that there is no back-up for the officer. The chaplaincy is working to establish links in foreign countries to aid returning nationals.

Additionally, there is no provision for resettlement preparation for prisoners that are to be released in the UK. The Board acknowledges that the time between resolving a prisoner's removal status and their conditional release date (CRD) may be short; however, it should be possible to provide a means of quickly moving a prisoner to a non-FNP gaol and providing 'fast-track' resettlement preparation.

Main Areas for Development

TO THE MINISTER

Urgently change policy to provide a resettlement budget for HMP Huntercombe to enable it to provide resettlement preparation for FNPs (foreign national prisoners) to give them parity of treatment with UK national prisoners (section 11.2).

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

1. Resolve the problems associated with prisoner property; in particular the disparity between the amount of property that prisoners are allowed in different institutions and the problems associated with transferring property with prisoners between institutions. The Huntercombe Board's 2017 report refers, along with section 7.1 of this report.
2. Replace the prison kitchen (section 7.2)
3. Develop a plan for infrastructure management to address obsolescence and maintenance (section 7.3.7)
4. Ensure that no prisoner is transferred to HMP Huntercombe without an initial custody sentence plan and offender assessment under OASYs (section 11.1).
5. Implement video visits (section 11.7.3)
6. Include statistics on the use of guiding holds in the control and restraint analysis (section 6.5.2).

TO THE GOVERNOR

- A. Ensure consistency at adjudications with regard to advising prisoners of their right to legal representation and advice (section 6.4).
- B. Resolve the plumbing and ventilation issues (sections 7.3.4 and 7.3.5 respectively).
- C. Take steps to eliminate the backlog for dentistry and provide more dentistry services (section 8.2).
- D. Employ a permanent full complement of secondary mental healthcare nurses (section 8.6.2).
- E. Include in the analysis for lost sessions of work, vocational training and employment statistics the number of prisoners affected (section 10.10).
- F. Stop redeploying the resettlement officer to cover other areas of the prison (section 10.12).

TO THE IMB

Develop a recruitment process for IMB members that is professional and fit-for-purpose; provide the Board with a recruitment advertising budget (section C).

Improvements

- I. The number of violent incidents fell by 50%.
- II. The number of ACCTs opened fell by 17%.
- III. The number of DIRFs fell by 14%.
- IV. The use of release on temporary licence (ROTL) increased.

- V. The chaplaincy has expanded its involvement in the resettlement process by establishing more international links and through the employment of a Polish administrator and a Ghanaian volunteer.

3 DESCRIPTION OF ESTABLISHMENT

3.1 HMP Huntercombe is a Category C training prison for foreign national adult males.

3.2 The operational capacity is 480, split between six residential units with a mixture of single and double cells. The prison complex includes education facilities, an indoor gym, an outpatient healthcare facility, workshops, gardens, sports pitch, exercise yards, a visits hall for domestic visits, a cafeteria (run by prisoners) and a multi-faith room. The prison is in a rural location; access by public transport is limited.

3.3 Healthcare is provided by Care UK. Mental health provision is split between Care UK and The Midland Partnership; the latter providing in-reach and the drug and alcohol reduction team (DART) substance misuse services. Dentistry is provided by Time for Teeth through the Care UK contract.

3.4 Education, training, learning and skills is provided by Milton Keynes College.

4 SAFETY

4.1 Safer prisons

4.1.1 IMB Board members regularly attend the safer prisons meeting to ensure all aspects of this part of prison life are monitored effectively. The meetings are generally well attended from senior management through to prisoner participants. Various statistics are presented, scrutinised and explained so their relevance is well understood by attendees.

4.1.2 Prisoners identified as having complex needs were discussed, including the prison's first prisoner who identified as transgender. Approaches and strategies discussed at the meetings were implemented successfully on the wings.

4.1.3 Board members attend some of the ACCT reviews in order to ascertain their effectiveness and witness at first hand the support extended to vulnerable prisoners placed on this mechanism. Details are available of upcoming reviews via the daily sheet, and prison staff, subject to the permission of the prisoner, are always accommodating to IMB members attending the review. Our experience of attending reviews has generally been positive and we believe that most prisoners feel supported, despite the highly sensitive nature of the questions.

ACCTS opened during reporting period (January – December)														
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total	Avg.
2018	15	3	18	9	6	11	11	11	5	13	11	15	128	10
2017	10	6	12	13	18	18	17	16	12	13	8	12	155	13

4.1.4 The number of ACCTs opened during the reporting year was 17% lower than in the previous period. Most ACCTs were closed within two weeks, with many closed the same day. However, as the reporting year closed there were two ACCTs that had been open for three weeks. The principal reason cited for self-harm is regime and amount of time spent on basic.

4.1.5 The OMiC programme was rolled-out in the latter part of the reporting period and into the next year. This initiative provides every prisoner with an identified key worker (usually a wing officer) and allows for the prisoner and key worker to have regular one-to-one meetings. The objective is to build trust, identify prisoner concerns early to prevent them becoming issues that possibly lead to self-harm and violence. It is also expected that through OMiC engagement, prisoners can be moved off basic regime faster.

4.1.6 The prison reorganised shift patterns to allow for dedicated time for OMiC. At the close of the reporting period the indications were that the implementation of OMiC in Huntercombe had been well received by other areas of the prison including OMU (offender management unit) and the substance misuse team and by prisoners who gave positive feedback to IMB members. The Board congratulates the prison on the planning and implementation of the programme.

4.1.7 HMP Huntercombe continues to fulfil its duty of care to keep prisoners safe, it:

a) supports the SP (safer prisons) team in its effective management of the ACCT process;

b) continues to improve communication between HOIE (Home Office Immigration Enforcement) staff and prison staff in a visible effort to ensure that concerns around deportation are addressed;

c) encourages the continued involvement of the Samaritans to provide an environment where prisoners are trained effectively as Listeners;

d) provides regular suicide and self-harm (SASH) training to operational and non-operational staff, providing a support mechanism for everyone with direct interface with prisoners to consider what is required to fulfil the duty of care.

4.2 Violence reduction

4.2.1 During the reporting period the total number of violent incidents fell by 49% compared to the previous period. The prison has continued its policy of zero tolerance of violent incidents; during the reporting period, staffing levels were higher compared to the previous year, which contributed to the reduction in incidents.

Violent Incidents (All - January - December 2018)														
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total	Avg
2018	11	6	3	6	6	9	8	14	11	11	5	7	97	8
2017	11	18	16	8	18	17	25	20	27	14	13	11	198	17

4.2.2 A major factor in violence is the use of spice (synthetic psychoactive drugs). The prison utilises a variety of resources to combat the use of spice including intelligence led and random searches/testing, the drug dog, education and treatment via DART.

4.2.3 During the reporting period the prison became a no-smoking establishment and introduced an enhanced wing. The Board had cautioned about the possible impact of these initiatives and was particularly concerned about the consequence of doubling up as a result of the enhanced wing. The Board is pleased to record that its fears did not materialise and congratulates the prison on managing the implementation of the initiatives.

4.2.4 Use of force is reported in section 6; there were 91 incidents of use of force during the reporting period. Within that number there were a total of 15 injuries recorded, 11 to prisoners and four to staff. No injury required an individual to be hospitalised.

5 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS

5.1 Discrimination incident reporting forms (DIRFs)

5.1.1 Thirty-six DIRFs were opened during the reporting period; a reduction on the previous period. The Board received two applications relating to equality during the same period.

No of DIRFs and IMB applications relating to Equality			
	2018	2017	2016
No of DIRFs	36	42	89
Applications to the IMB re. Equality	2	2	4

5.1.2 This year we have been able to obtain an analysis of the nature of the DIRF applications and the number upheld.

DIRF Category	Number	Number Upheld
Race	21	7
Disability	1	1
Sexuality	2	1
Religion	8	2
Unclassified	4	0
Total	36	11

5.1.3 The Board examined the review process including reviewing the documentary records of prison staff, witnesses and the complainant interviews, and the collection of evidence (CCTV where available). The prison also takes into account past patterns of behaviour of the complainant/alleged perpetrator (which may/may not support or refute an allegation). The Board is satisfied that the process is robust and fair.

5.1.4 The Board concluded from its review that some prisoners use the DIRF process when they consider that a decision/outcome is not to their benefit, even when there is no direct evidence of discrimination in the decision-making process. In these situations, the DIRF process is being used as further avenue of appeal.

5.1.5 Included in the total are twelve DIRFs against prison officers; one was subsequently withdrawn by the complainant. None of the remaining eleven complaints were upheld. The Board looked at these complaints and could not identify any evidence of bias. The 'balance of probability' consideration will take into account an officer's previous record.

6 SEGREGATION/CARE AND SEPARATION UNIT (CSU)

6.1 The CSU comprises five cells, one of which can be used for constant watch. There is a sixth cell which is used for special accommodation and is not available for prolonged occupation. The unit is kept clean and tidy. The Board is satisfied that conditions, facilities, staffing and security in the CSU were all maintained at a humane and satisfactory standard and that processes for segregating prisoners were followed correctly.

6.2 There were 141 detentions to the unit in the reporting period, the average number of days awarded for each detention was 7.67. The table illustrates, by month, the number of detentions and the average days awarded per month

Month	Prisoner Detentions	Total Days	Av. Days/Detention	Shortest Stay	Longest Stay
January	15	98	6.53	1	17
February	11	93	8.45	1	20
March	14	129	9.21	1	19
April	13	82	6.31	1	11
May	8	67	8.38	1	16
June	15	85	5.67	1	12
July	12	110	9.17	1	24
August	10	84	8.40	1	21
September	12	96	8.00	1	20
October	11	38	3.45	1	16
November	11	114	10.36	1	21
December	9	85	9.44	1	30
Totals	141	1081	7.67		

6.3 Force (restraint) was used 56 times to relocate prisoners to the unit. This represents 62% of the total of 91 times that restraint was used across the prison for the whole reporting period. Of the few occasions witnessed by IMB members, the Board is content that the use of restraint was conducted satisfactorily.

6.4 Adjudications

6.4.1 The Board closely monitors the adjudication process. Overall the Board is content that the process operates efficiently and is fair and humane; however, we have observed variation in the explanation given to prisoners regarding their rights in relation to legal representation and advice. All the prisoners in the establishment are foreign and for most of them English is not their first language, therefore the Board considers that greater clarity and consistency of communication should be applied by all adjudicating officers.

6.4.2 The number of adjudications in the reporting period increased over the previous twelve months, as did the number of referrals to the independent adjudicator (IA). Since 2016 the absolute number of adjudications referred to the IA has more than doubled year-on-year.

Year	Total Adjudications	% Change	No. referred to IA	% - IA
2018	988	+ 15.2	103	10.43
2017	858	+ 45.7	48	5.59
2016	589		17	2.89

6.4.3 Whilst it is not possible to state categorically the reasons for the increase in adjudications and IA referrals the Board notes:

- a) The prison has a number of new and inexperienced staff. The Board considers that some situations that experienced staff would have handled on the wing were referred for adjudication by less experienced officers.
- b) All mandatory drug test (MDT) failures and possession of a mobile phone are referred to the IA.

6.4.4 The Board noted that towards the end of the reporting period the efficiency of the adjudication process was impeded due to staff sickness and redeployment.

6.4.5 The Board commends the CSU staff for their handling of a protracted dirty protest and for dealing with a long-term resident of the unit who was on an ACCT document and in the unit for his own safety.

6.4.6 The Big Word translation service is used when deemed necessary by the adjudicating officer or if requested by the prisoner. Generally, Big Word works well and the Board has no recorded instances of significant problems with the service.

6.5 Control and Restraint (C & R)

6.5.1 The use of C & R has increased year-on-year since 2015:

Table A

	C & R Incidents		
Year	Planned	Spontaneous	Total
2018	13	78	91
2017	4	84	88
2016	9	55	64
2015	8	52	60

Table B

The three techniques used with in C & R were used as follows:

	Number of times techniques used in year *		
Year	Personal Safety	C & R	Handcuffs
2018	4	62	22
2017	2	36	17
2016	3	37	18
2015	14	34	13

*These figures are included in the planned and spontaneous figures in Table A

6.5.2 Prior to 2018 guiding holds to ensure prisoner safety were not included in C & R statistics; separate figures for guiding holds have not been recorded for 2018. The use of guiding holds and an increase in use of C & R in dealing with prisoners involved in debt issues relating to tobacco have been given as explanations for the step increase in the use of C & R techniques.

6.5.3 The Board recommends that guiding hold statistics are recorded as a separate sub category of C & R.

7 ACCOMMODATION (including communication)

7.1 Property

7.1.1 Property remains a major area of complaint from prisoners to both the prison and the IMB. Complaints relating to other prisons and transport account for the majority of the property complaints.

	Prison	IMB
Total Prisoner Complaints - 2018	651	160
External property complaints	91	24
Internal property complaints	36	10
Total property complaints	127 (19.5%)	34 (21.3%)

Note: The number of property-related complaints to both the prison and the IMB represent approximately 20% of all complaints to each organisation respectively.

7.1.2 In our 2017 report the Board made a number of suggestions to improve policy, process and practice relating to prisoner property. The Board is dismayed that no action has been taken to resolve the issues raised last year and that we have found it necessary to repeat our concerns in the 2018 report.

7.2 Kitchen

7.2.1 Since 2013, the Board has reported problems with the kitchen; in our 2017 report we reported that the kitchen was not fit for purpose. During the reporting period the kitchen remained in a compromised position. A business case for replacing the kitchen was submitted in August 2018, yet at the close of the year no decision had been reached.

Despite the problems with the kitchen the staff have commendably maintained consistent quality in the meals provided; for the whole of the reporting period the Board has received one application relating to the kitchen/food.

7.3 Residential units

7.3.1 Problems with the hot water and heating boilers began in the autumn of 2018 and were not resolved by the end of the reporting period. During 2018 the Board received a total of eight applications relating to accommodation, seven of which were received between September and December and concerned hot water and heating. Three of the applications were communal applications from all prisoners on the Fry and Howard wings. In addition to the problems with the boilers the pipework is old and leaks are reported often.

7.3.2 Problems with the boilers affected all areas of the prison including the administration corridor and the CSU. There have been occasions when showers in the CSU have been without hot water and prisoners were transferred from the CSU to wings for showers. When the CSU showers are without hot water, prisoners are restricted to two - three showers per week.

7.3.3 The problems with the boilers have impacted the regime; showers for prisoners have had to be limited to two sessions per day; 8.30 - 10.30am and 1.30 - 3.30pm Monday to Friday; this is to enable water to heat. Further, due to Rich wing being designated for prisoners on the *enhanced* regime with single occupancy cells, demand on two other wings (Howard and Fry) is higher.

7.3.4 The Board is concerned that the plumbing in general and the heating boilers are failing. Breakdowns impact the regime and restrict the prisoners' access to hot showers; often the prison is cold too. Such conditions are not humane. Breakdowns also impose additional burdens on staff.

7.3.5 Window ventilation systems; the metal frames are old and are showing the ravages of age and use, consequently they no longer operate correctly. There is a shortage of privacy curtains in cells; it is noted that the prison has ordered curtains to be fitted in the early part of 2019.

7.3.6 Although repair and rectification work in respect of the areas noted are in process, the Board is concerned that there should be a programme for managing obsolescence and planned replacement of infrastructure and equipment.

7.3.7 The prison is maintained in a high state of cleanliness.

8 HEALTHCARE (including mental health and social care)

8.1 Healthcare at HMP Huntercombe is contracted to Care UK; mental healthcare, in-reach and DART are provided by the Midland Partnership, a recently formed organisation between South Stafford and North Stoke partnerships. The mental healthcare, in-reach and DART services are under the overall management of the Care UK contract.

8.2 Services provided:

- a) Two GPs hold surgeries totalling 25 hours on Monday, Thursday and Friday; on Tuesday and Wednesday GPs remain on-call. There are no GP surgeries on Saturday and Sunday.
- b) There are up to two dentistry sessions per week. In our 2016 and 2017 Annual Reports the Board noted backlogs for dentistry services; in 2017 extra clinics were provided to clear that year's backlog. During the reporting year there was a backlog for dentistry. The underlying causes of the build-up of backlogs have not changed - many of the FNP population have not had access to dentistry and have poor dental hygiene regimes resulting in often many hours work needed per prisoner. Many prisoners are determined to resolve their dentistry issues before they leave the UK.
- c) Podiatry, physiotherapy, hepatology, audiology and sexual health services.
- d) Psychological support services are provided; the Board is concerned at the delay of up to seven weeks for an appointment and will monitor the situation during 2019.

8.3 The smoke-free policy was phased in and completed successfully in February. Initially, there was a high take-up for the smoking cessation programme; demand subsequently reduced; the smoking cessation programme and non-drug therapies (NDT) programmes continue to be available.

8.4 Towards the end of the year, the NHS altered its recommended national policy regarding initial screening of prisoners at reception. The new process requires in-depth screening, lasting up to four minutes per prisoner, in reception on the day the prisoner arrives at Huntercombe. Previously, this would have been done in-cell on the second day, following initial screening in reception on the day of arrival. The consequence of this change is hold-ups in processing prisoners in reception.

8.5 Towards the end of 2018 the prison noted a shift from prisoners using new psychoactive substances (NPS), more commonly known as spice, towards cannabis. Cannabis is easier to detect than spice; as a result more prisoners failed mandatory drug tests. The prison routinely refers failed MDTs to DART and the IA (independent adjudicator).

8.6 Staffing

8.6.1 During the reporting period, healthcare was consistently short of permanent nursing staff. The permanent headcount budget was 5.4 primary care nurses; of these 1.7 were directly employed with the remaining 3.7 staff sourced from agencies/contractors. An issue with agency staff is the regular turnover of personnel.

8.6.2 The Board is particularly concerned that both secondary mental healthcare nurses have left post, one in the autumn of 2018 and the second at the start of 2019. The Board will continue to monitor the situation during 2019.

9 EDUCATION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

- 9.1 2018 saw a continuation of the successful relationship between the prison and Milton Keynes College; the IMB received only six applications from prisoners during the reporting period. Three of the applications were from the same prisoner regarding a complaint against his previous prison. The other three were resolved without any action by the IMB being required.
- 9.2 The Board welcomes the re-awarding of the provider contract to Milton Keynes College and will monitor the new role the governor will play in the curriculum decisions in 2019.
- 9.3 Provision of the ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) course was increased. This qualification is a key requirement to move to the next level of courses.
- 9.4 Provision of the Stoicism initiative was expanded. (The course educates prisoners to examine their own behaviour and presents opportunities to improve their understanding of how they can take control of their own behaviour when confronted by frustrations).
- 9.5 The library ran a number of initiatives to engage with prisoners. Breaking Barriers, a reading initiative in collaboration with South Oxfordshire Housing Association (SOHA) involved SOHA staff and Huntercombe prisoners participating in a joint book club. The 'club' read Pigeon English by Stephen Kelman; the author attended the final session. The event received wide acclaim with reports in several newspapers and two prisoners interviewed live on Radio Oxford.
- 9.6 The Reading Ahead agency awarded the prison a Bronze Award for the Six Book Challenge.
- 9.7 The prisoners wrote, produced and performed a Christmas show – Jingle Cells – which received wide support from prison staff and others.
- 9.8 Turning Pages continues to support prisoner to prisoner mentoring in improving reading skills. This opportunity is also available through the workplace.
- 9.9 The new regime, introduced in October, seems to have had the effect of reducing the redeployment of officers away from education support and gym instructor duties.
- 9.10 In August 2018 an outbreak of norovirus caused a number of class days to be lost because prisoners had to be confined to cells.
- 9.11 Throughout the reporting period staffing was kept under control; however, at year-end two posts were vacant pending curriculum decisions.

10 WORK, VOCATIONAL TRAINING and EMPLOYMENT

10.1 The prison attempts to provide appropriate qualifications for prisoners; however, as the majority will be returning to their country of origin at the end of their time at HMP Huntercombe, it is often difficult to source qualifications that will equip them with pertinent current and appropriate knowledge, e.g. the state of the economy in their returning destination. The introduction of a dedicated resettlement resource and careers advisor has improved the situation.

10.2 The Board is concerned that a 'one size fits all' approach to education provision at the centre of HMPPS will have a significant impact on Huntercombe. FNPs have different requirements from other prisoners in that the qualifications they obtain must be internationally recognised. For example, training in industrial cleaning currently culminates in a BICS (British Institute of Cleaning Science) qualification. However, nationally, there are indications that a WAMITAB (qualifications for those working in resource management, recycling, cleaning and street cleansing) is set to replace BICS. WAMITAB is not yet internationally recognised and of limited value to FNOs returning abroad. The WAMITAB course has some practical elements; however, it is a more classroom-oriented course and therefore less suitable for FNPs who may have language limitations.

10.3 The Prison Service should consider the impact on returning FNPs of any changes in qualification standards. The introduction of qualifications that are not internationally recognised may put FNPs at a disadvantage compared to UK national prisoners.

10.4 Increased use of ROTL has provided opportunities for post-release employment with four community placements and establishment gardens. One ex-prisoner is now working for a professional London football club in their community programme.

10.5 A textiles workshop was opened; it provided new skills and work opportunities for prisoners and also gave the prison an income stream from external contracts.

10.6 The only occasions of complete closedown of activities caused by prison regime restrictions were one instance of severe bad weather and the regular all-staff briefings.

10.7 The outbreak of norovirus in August caused a number of prisoners to be confined to cell thus missing activities. However, the fact there is a widespread community with BICS training helped the containment process.

10.8 The garden course closed from the end of September 2018 to the end of the year due to staff illness and essential works to the garden area; this resulted in the loss of 68 sessions.

10.9 Twenty-five industries sessions were lost due to a breakdown of the heating system in the industries workshop.

10.10 The recording of lost sessions does not adequately represent the impact on prisoners; the Board considers that recording the number of lost prisoner training/employment days (alongside the number of sessions) to be a more useful measure.

10.11 Staffing levels in industries were reduced due to unfilled posts that resulted in a significant number of meaningful activity places lost. This improved towards the end of the reporting period.

10.12 Towards the end of the reporting period there was an increase in the time the Resettlement resource was redeployed as cover. The Board is concerned that there is no cover for this function.

10.13 There were no applications to the Board during the reporting year in relation to work, vocational training and employment.

11 RESETTLEMENT PREPARATION

11.1 Offender Management Unit (OMU)

11.1.1 During the reporting year the OMU was short-staffed – as was the case in the 2017 reporting year too.

OMU Staffing 2018			
Position	Establishment	Actual	Difference (FTE*)
Senior Probation Officer	1.0	1.0	-
Probation Officer	4.0	2.6	-1.4
Offender Supervisor	4.5	3.2	-1.3

* FTE = Full-Time Equivalent

11.1.2 The impacts of staff shortages are:

- a) case officers have to limit their time with prisoners
- b) a backlog of OASys assessments. Every prisoner sent to Huntercombe comes from another prison and should therefore have had an initial custodial sentence plan completed before transfer. OASys assessments are required to assess risks posed by prisoners, identifying planning needs for the prisoner while in the prison and resettlement needs on release. During the reporting year the number of prisoners without an OASys assessment increased. OMU prioritised to ensure that prisoners trying to stay in the UK received OASys assessments; this meant that some prisoners who accepted deportation did not receive an OASys assessment.

Every prisoner released into the UK from Huntercombe had an OASys assessment completed – a significant achievement and credit to the OMU.

Prisoners without OASys Assessments		
2017	2018	Change
148	180	+ 32 (21.6%)

11.2 Resettlement

11.2.1 Since 2014, the Board's Annual Report has consistently expressed concern at the lack of a resettlement budget. In response to the 2017 report the Minister said

“HMPPS and MoJ have been looking at the level of resettlement activity currently offered to FNO only prisons to ensure it is appropriate.....While I am not able to indicate at this time what the resettlement support offer may be, I understand the need to clarify the policy as quickly as possible.”

11.2.2 In our 2017 report the Board raised concern that no resettlement provision was available for prisoners released into the UK.

Year	Removed directly from UK	Transferred to IRC	Total	Released in UK
2018	349	124	473	44 (9.3%)
2017	411	*	444	33 (7.4%)
2016	378	*	396	18 (5.2%)

**IRC removal figures included in Removed directly from UK*

Figures exclude transfers mid-sentence

11.2.3 The Board has raised the issue of the absence of a resettlement budget for the last four years; despite emollient words from ministers no action has been taken. The matters raised in relation to Huntercombe (for both prisoners sent to another country and those released into the UK) possibly occur in the other FNP prison (HMP Maidstone) and the rest of the prison estate – there are an estimated 10,000 FNPs in the general estate. (The Board notes that it may be easier in a non-FNP prison to provide support for a foreign national who is released into the UK). Given the number of FNPs in the total prison estate it may be appropriate for a central function to be established that can support all prisons that have FNPs.

11.3 Resettlement co-ordinator

11.3.1 The Governor has continued to fund a resettlement co-ordinator. During the reporting year the co-ordinator has contacted over 50 embassies and high commissions for information that can be passed to prisoners. He has produced a resettlement application for prisoners who want help, resulting in over 30 of them using it to seek information. Plans are being prepared for one-to-one sessions with prisoners who apply. The co-ordinator encourages prisoners who may be unwilling to accept the reality of deportation, to understand what is likely to happen to them, and therefore prepare better for their return.

11.3.2 Sixty working days were lost in 2018 due to the co-ordinator being redeployed to other duties (escorts, watches, etc).

11.4 Chaplaincy

11.4.1 Since the 2017 report, the chaplaincy has expanded its involvement in resettlement, working with representatives of faiths from around the world. It has contacts in various countries with whom returning prisoners can make contact on their arrival home. A Polish-speaking administrator was appointed in July and a Ghanaian volunteer has also joined the team.

11.4.2 Where prisoners have inappropriate clothing for the country to which they are returning, the chaplaincy uses local charity shops to obtain suitable clothing, and even sleeping bags

11.5 The Board commends the prison for the progress made with the resettlement co-ordinator role, chaplaincy and ROTL. However, the Board remains concerned that these positive initiatives are at risk due to the lack of a budget and support infrastructure from the Prison Service.

11.6 Release on temporary licence (ROTL)

11.6.1 The ROTL scheme was expanded during the reporting year and 13 prisoners were given ROTL.

11.7 Visits and families

11.7.1 The prison now has a Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT) worker concentrating on helping prisoners maintain family ties; the governor found the resources to increase the original three days a week to five. A custodial manager now also has special responsibility for visits. Help is on offer to assist families make visits, to help prisoners stay in contact with their families, and to signpost to other charities in this field. Monthly family days have been introduced (much oversubscribed) where prisoners and their families can spend the day together, eat together, even visit the gym and perhaps watch a film.

11.7.2 The prison has video and voice equipment to enable prisoners to have contact with family and others. The system has been available for almost two years but has not been implemented. This facility would enable those prisoners that do not get visits (often because of the distance involved and the cost of travel) to be able to maintain contact; approximately 60% of Huntercombe's prisoners do not receive visitors. Maintaining contact with family and connections is cited as an important factor in a prisoner's wellbeing and rehabilitation; this is particularly relevant to Huntercombe where virtually all prisoners are removed from the UK. For many prisoners their move to Huntercombe takes them further from their connections and/or increases the difficulty of travelling to the prison, given its rural location.

11.7.3 The video and voice equipment for prisoner visits should be implemented immediately.

BOARD STATISTICS	
Recommended complement of Board members	15
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	8
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	11
Total number of visits to the establishment	271
Total number of segregation reviews attended	15

C.1 Recruitment continues to be a problem; the Board has not achieved a full complement for over two years. The shortage of members places an increased burden on full members and acts as a disincentive to remain; it also puts at risk the Board’s ability to effectively discharge its statutory monitoring duties.

C.2 The rural location of the prison and limited public transport system act as disincentives to potential members. The public appointments recruitment process is a further drawback. The requirement to open campaigns is time consuming and laborious. Taken with the refusal to allow Boards an advertising budget and to insist on relying on free advertising does not work. There is a limit to how many times a local newspaper will run a free advertisement or print an article about the prison – negative articles are easier to get published. Parish newsletters and other free pamphlets have limited reach. Literature produced by the Secretariat about the IMB nationally has limited reach and impact.

C.3 The recruitment process is not fit-for-purpose and should be redesigned to make it professional, effective and swift. The Board needs a budget for recruitment advertising.

D APPLICATIONS

Code	Subject	Current reporting year	Previous reporting year
A	Accommodation including laundry, clothing, ablutions	10	4
B	Discipline including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	3	9
C	Equality	2	2
D	Purposeful Activity including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	6	7
E 1	Letters, visits, phones, public protection restrictions	5	3
E 2	Finance including pay, private monies, spends	3	3
F	Food and kitchens	0	2
G	Health including physical, mental, social care	19	16
H 1	Property within this establishment	9	11
H 2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	22	26
H 3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	4	3
I	Sentence management including HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	31	21
J	Staff/prisoner concerns including bullying	17	10
K	Transfers	14	5
L	Miscellaneous	11	12
	Total number of IMB applications	156	134

+22 (16.4%)