



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Swaleside

**For reporting year:
01 May 2019 to 30 April 2020**

Published: August 2020



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Introductory sections 1 - 3

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 is situated.

Under the National Monitoring Framework agreed with ministers, the Board is required to:

- 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
- inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom authority has been delegated as it judges appropriate, any concern it has
- 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 resident and every part of the prison and also to the prison's records.

The Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT) is an international human rights treaty designed to strengthen protection for people deprived of their liberty. The protocol recognises that such people are particularly vulnerable and aims to prevent their ill-treatment through establishing a system of visits or inspections to all places of detention. OPCAT requires that States designate a National Preventive Mechanism to carry out visits to places of detention, to monitor the treatment of and conditions for detainees and to make recommendations for the prevention of ill-treatment. The Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) is part of the United Kingdom's National Preventive Mechanism.

2. Description of the establishment

The prison was opened in August 1988 as part of a group with HMPs Standford Hill and Elmley. However, from 1st April 2017 it became part of Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) Long Term and High Security Estate (LTHSE).

Resettlement services are not directly provided by Swaleside, as the establishment should not be releasing residents from custody, but use is made of these services from outside the prison.

The establishment is primarily a Category B Lifer Main Centre training prison which accepts first and second stage lifers, section two automatic lifers and IPP (Indeterminate Public Protection) residents (at Swaleside prisoners are referred to as 'residents'). At the time of writing there are 980 Category B and 103 Category C in the overall population. The prison, as part of the LTHSE, no longer takes returns from Category D prisons. There are 352 Lifers and 360 IPP residents. Between 1 May 2019 and 30 April 2020 17 residents were released directly from Swaleside. At the end of

April, there were no foreign national residents who had completed their sentence and were awaiting deportation (IS91).

The certified normal accommodation (CAN) is 1111 in single cells over eight wings. The CNA includes the care, separation and reintegration unit (CSRU) and the healthcare unit.

Contractors delivering the following services are:

- healthcare services are provided by Integrated Care 24 (IC24).
- Inreach (mental health) provided by Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust.
- Minster Medical Practice provides GP Services.
- Pen Optical for optical services.
- education since April 2020 by Milton Keynes College.
- maintenance services are provided by Government Facility Services Limited (GFSL).
- Spurgeons provide support for families at visits.
- Forward Trust provides treatment for drug and alcohol addiction.

All figures recorded in this report are as of 30th April 2020 unless otherwise stated.

3. Executive summary

3.1 Background to the report

As previously, the Board's report concentrates on major elements of concern or required improvement, with a focus on the treatment of residents under the headings of 'Fair and humane treatment' and 'Preparation for resettlement'.

At the time of writing the Board, the prison and, indeed, the whole country, find themselves in an unprecedented situation. With the establishment virtually locked-down due to the COVID-19 outbreak, arm's-length monitoring has become the current norm for the Board. New off-site techniques have been developed in order to allow us to maintain as much contact and up-to-date knowledge as possible, and we thank the prison management for facilitating this approach, and our clerk for going way beyond what we could have considered reasonable in the circumstances. I, as Chair, would also like to give my personal thanks to every member of the Board for fairly seamlessly dropping into a completely new monitoring regime, coming up with new ideas and being totally flexible, with no dissenters. I would also like to express my apologies to our two newest members for not being able to involve them in any direct monitoring work.

At the start of this reporting period the prison was fully staffed, however the effect of COVID-19 has been to dramatically change the regime with the prison short of roughly 100 staff, across all bands, at the beginning of the lock-down. Since then numbers have fluctuated between overstaffing and understaffing but have been well organised by the management team. The Offender Management in Custody (OMiC) keyworker scheme, which was successfully bedding in, has had to be suspended; but mention here must be made of the attitude of the residents which

has largely been supportive of staff in what everyone has accepted has been, and remains, a very difficult time.

The Board wishes to highlight the work undertaken by prison officers and governors, under very demanding circumstances, to safeguard vulnerable residents. These duties are carried out with the well-being of the individual as the clear priority. The Board also thanks all the staff of this prison for their help and for allowing the Board to carry out its role unhindered.

The Board feels that the general state of the Prison is far better than a year ago, with all indicators showing a positive trend. Part of this may be explained by a “we’re all in this together” attitude as a result of COVID, but this trend was developing well before the onset of the pandemic.

There is still a level of violence, which places Swaleside at the head of its comparator group, so no-one should become complacent as this level of violence is still unacceptable.

The Dedicated Search Team continues to impress.

It is disappointing that some residents choose to stay behind their doors. The most significant underlying reason is debt, usually brought about by drug trading, and unless this is addressed then this situation will worsen.

Last year we reported on the appalling state of the showers on the Wings. This situation has slowly improved. However, while new showers have been installed on some Wings, for others there has been no improvement or change at all (see *section 5.1*).

During the year the Board decided to direct some of its focus on GFSL maintenance and projects around the prison. This gave us a better understanding of the underlying issues as well as the problems that are inevitably brought to us. It has become increasingly apparent that a number of concerns from residents stem directly from the poor performance of GFSL in executing their tasks in terms of poor condition, maintenance or routine repairs.

External gutter and roofs are overgrown, paths and lawns are unkempt and washing machines, driers and cookers are out of service for unacceptably long periods of time. Boilers have been out of action and sewers have overflowed from time to time.

This results in frustration, not only in the resident population, but also the staff, who find it very difficult to track and monitor a problem after it has been reported. We, as a Board are continually replying to applications, informing the residents that a problem has been reported, that it is in hand and will be dealt with, when the issue has been outstanding for many months. IMB also has no way of tracking issues.

Senior Management has been attempting to hold GFSL management to account, but again this is a very frustrating process with little or no progress being achieved. GFSL would not survive in a commercial environment where they would have to

stand by their results, in competition with other organisations. The Board sincerely hopes that these outcomes are not a result of simply taking the cheapest option. Having responsibility for the well-being of 1111 residents without authority over GFSL is an invidious position for the Governor.

We will continue to monitor, but urge the Minister to examine this from the top down and at a national level (*see section 5.1*).

The kitchen is continuing to produce reasonable quality meals in numbers far exceeding its original planned capacity - given the budget available to it. The Board still deems it essential that the requirement to support HMP Stanford Hill residents is removed from Swaleside (*see section 5.1*).

The Healthcare contract was put out to tender later in the period, with a view to consolidating different services under one banner. This process was caught up in the COVID-19 problem and still awaits resolution (*see section 6.1*).

As with many other facilities within the prison, workshop sizes were designed to cater for around half of the current operational capacity. This fact, together with the lack of current work in some shops, low allocation numbers and low attendance numbers, means that too many residents do not have meaningful employment, and therefore remain unoccupied and inadequately prepared for release. This is not reflective of a training prison.

More opportunities for national vocational qualifications (NVQ) and similar qualifications must be found for the residents and this, in itself, requires the availability of more qualified instructors, plus additional workshop space. The amount of vocational training is woeful, particularly for men convicted of sexual offences (MCOSO) and vulnerable residents, which makes one cynical about the definition of 'Category B Trainer'.

It is of concern that, despite the apparent unemployment around the prison population, there is an almost daily failure to meet the required allocation to workshops and education. It seems to the Board that there is a failure to apply the discipline necessary to ensure that residents are required to engage in employment or education for their own benefit; however, the Board does accept that, with residents serving life or indeterminate sentences, it is difficult to apply the correct balance of incentive or penalty. The Board is still expecting a new approach to the incentives and earned privileges (IEP) scheme once we exit COVID-19. A revamp and expansion of the workshops is essential if the prison is to give residents meaningful skills for when they are ultimately released (*see sections 7.1 and 7.2*).

The Board very much supports and commends the community hub and its resident workers who are available to assist other residents with their problems (*see section 5.4*).

The Board fully supports the transition towards 'dedicated' wings which has also allowed the staff themselves to develop enhanced skills to support the services provided; though it must be noted that with both an MCOSO and a vulnerable

resident Wing there are logistical problems with the movement of residents, and these wings do not receive the same opportunities as the other wings (see *sections 2 and 5.4*).

There are three areas of success and innovation which deserve mention. These are the two innovations unique to Swaleside, which are the Swaleside Outreach Services (SOS) and the life-limiting illness meetings, plus the achievement in education, which is the number of Open University external education courses being run, and the successful results.

Overall, the Board is pleased with the progress which is being made on many fronts and do see the indications, not only of a safe and secure prison, but that an improved caring environment is being put in place for the residents. Management focus is firmly on the improvement of conditions for all residents.

3.2 Main Judgements

How safe is the prison?

Management focus has been set on safety all through this year. This has produced tangible results. Most violence measures have shown a decline, and there is a much better 'feel' to the prison, which has been helped by the work of safer custody staff and SOS.

At the start of the reporting period the prison was fully staffed, but during the year the rate of attrition surpassed that of recruitment and at one point became a deficit of 30. However, this was rectified in the second half of our year, and the keyworker scheme attained a good deal of success, reaching almost 70% coverage, prior to the COVID-19 outbreak. This undoubtedly had a positive bearing on the safety of the prison as residents' issues were largely resolved in a timelier manner, easing tensions.

COVID-19 disrupted most things, including the keyworker scheme, but various factors affected the prison in a positive way. These included longer lock-up in single cells which was welcomed by most residents because they felt safer from the risks associated with COVID-19; higher staffing levels (maintained with higher pay after initial self-isolations); extra telephone credits for residents; in-cell packs from Education and more direct consultation with residents.

One aspect that has been detrimental to the safe running of the prison has been the number of adjudications not proceeded with. At one point (in February 2020) this reached 44% of all adjudications in the rolling year, as opposed to a national average of 4%. This was due mainly to procedural issues, which have since been addressed. There was a slight improvement in March to 37% as the issues began to be resolved, but it is still a disturbing statistic.

How fairly and humanely are residents treated?

Residents are largely treated well, in the view of the Board. However, there are some negative aspects which work against fair and humane treatment. They include:

The lack of meaningful and rewarding work, generally, and in particular for B and H wing residents shows a real level of inequality (see sections 5.4 and 7.2).

Hygiene/cleanliness around the prison leaves a lot to be desired. The showers on some wings remain well below sanitary standards, as do serveries and self-cook areas. Wing window cages are filling up with litter and the areas around the outside of some wings are regularly smothered with rubbish thrown from windows – as this includes a lot of waste food products, it only helps to worsen the rat problem (see sections 3 and 5.1).

Misuse of drugs has become less of a problem, probably because of precautions taken over COVID-19. However, the apparent easy acquisition of mobile phones and weapons by some residents, not only increases violence and causes problems for others, but may also exacerbate debt problems and cause self-harm and suicide attempts, and is also the root cause of residents electing to stay behind their doors (see section 4).

How well are residents' health and wellbeing needs met?

The Board is satisfied that residents' needs are being adequately met in line with standards in the outside community. Management and staff have also handled the COVID-19 situation well, at a time when the prison has also suffered a tuberculosis (TB) outbreak. Everything has been handled in a very professional manner in order to safeguard residents' health.

Issues of outside hospital appointments being cancelled plus the COVID-19 and TB outbreaks meaning only critical appointments have been made has been a major concern.

How well are residents progressed towards successful resettlement?

The answer in respect of those residents nearing the end of their sentences is - not very well. Swaleside is not regarded as a resettlement prison. The Community Hub, Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT) and the Medway and Swale Advocacy Partnership (MSAP) do help in dealing with basic requirements but this approach is not consistent or reliable. Importantly, residents have not always been able to be transferred to their local resettlement prison within about 12 weeks of their release date as intended, partly due to the re-rolling of the prison into the LTHSE, and population pressures. However, this has now largely been addressed, although Swaleside did directly release 17 residents during the year. None of these went into employment and some of them had no accommodation.

One beacon on the horizon was the fact that Swaleside had the highest number of offending behaviour programme completions of any of the LTHSE prisons.

Some of the courses offered in the workshops and education department also go some way to preparing residents for release; however, these are very few in number compared to the overall population, and also do not address the lack of availability of vocational courses to MCOSO and other vulnerable residents (see sections 5.4, 7.2 and 7.5).

3.3 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

We believe that the effectiveness of GFSL should be examined, as its inefficiency affects so many aspects of prison life (*see sections 3 and 5.1*).

The state of Swaleside showers has been mentioned in several previous reports. There has been some progress in this area but still some wings have shower areas that are way below standard and have not been improved at all. The overall level of cleanliness leaves a lot to be desired with litter around the outside of many wings and the state of some of the serveries and self-cook areas often appalling. The rat problem, though partly addressed with the feral cats is still an issue. Replacement windows are essential if the prison is to prevent littering, improve hygiene and curb the rat problem. However, it needs the budget to be able to do these things (*see sections 3 and 5.1*).

The Board reiterates this year that the kitchen at Swaleside was originally designed to cater for about 650 residents, and was upgraded in its early years to allow for some expansion. However, a further problem arises in having to cater additionally for residents at HMP Standford Hill, bringing the total number of meals prepared to around 3000 daily. The Board have recommended that this added work should be removed from Swaleside, which we repeat. We are advised that this will not happen due to prohibitive cost. The Board must again point out that, given the pressure on equipment, more failures should be expected and, given the time taken for repairs/replacements to be obtained, these could ultimately become critical (*see section 5.1*).

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

The lack of equal opportunity for MCOSO and vulnerable residents needs to be addressed (*see sections 3.1, 3.2, 5.1, 5.4 and 7.2*).

Workshops at Swaleside were originally designed to support a prison with four wings. Swaleside now has eight wings with an operational capacity of 1111. This results in an unacceptably high level of unemployment and continued lack of vocational training, which should be remedied by creating more meaningful work for residents (*see sections 3 and 7.2*).

The lack of in-cell telephony in the inpatients department (IPD) and in some cells in the CSRU needs to be addressed (*see sections 6.1 and 7.4*).

There is an unacceptable number of cancelled outside hospital appointments which, apart from the distress that it causes patients, places a burden on the public purse and wastes NHS time which could usefully be used for other patients (*see section 6.1*).

Compared to previous years, the number of residents released directly into the community is low. This has taken many years to achieve and is to be commended. This trend should continue. Nevertheless, those directly released deserve to have the appropriate help to achieve similar employment and accommodation

opportunities afforded to those residents released from resettlement prisons. This does not happen.

In our report last year, we mentioned that it is essential that residents are provided with resettlement services, preferably in a prison nearer to their home as they reach the end of their sentences. This service has not been provided from Swaleside. Though there were only 17 residents released from the prison in the last year, none of them were found employment and several had no accommodation (see sections 2, 7.3 and 7.5).

TO THE GOVERNOR

The efforts to improve the appearance of the prison and cleanliness have been considerable, but some of the results have been disappointing. Efforts must continue in order to remedy this issue (see sections 5.1 and 6.1).

The efforts to prevent the ingress of weapons, phones and drugs are well appreciated and must continue unabated in order to improve this problem. The continued ingress of mobile phones is particularly worrying as a major route through visits has been cut off during the COVID-19 lock-down (see section 4).

Attendance at both workshops and education regularly falls short of expectations. This needs to receive more attention (see sections 7.1 and 7.2).

The efforts to provide reintegration services to residents in the CSRU are to be commended and improvement has been made in reducing the numbers of residents moved to the CSRU. This trend should continue (see section 5.2).

3.4 Progress since the last report

- The work of the Forward Trust on E wing is commended to the Minister (see section 5.1).
- The work of the life limiting illness committee should be recognised and applauded (see section 6.1).
- The Board commends the continued work of the SOS team in dealing with very demanding residents.
- There has been significant progress towards a safe prison with a decline in all violence measures, for the second year running, and the less frequent use of special accommodation.
- There were high levels of attainment in the keyworker scheme, prior to its suspension due to COVID-19.
- The reintegration initiative in the CSRU has been very successful in moving hard-core segregated residents back to normal location.
- The successful introduction of feral cats which has been partially effective in addressing the rodent problem.
- The Board commends the education department for its progress in expanding the number of residents on external education courses.

Evidence Sections 4 - 7

4. Safety

4.1 Reception and induction

There has been a considerable amount of improvement in the last 18 months. Complaints have gone from 10 per day to 3-5 per day. Given that the Board is now directing residents' straightforward property issues to the complaints process, this is a major step forward. With additional training for staff, there is minimal contraband coming into the prison, and greater awareness of trafficking occurring within the prison, and during outside hospital visits.

Induction appears to be working well, as the Board receives no complaints about the process, presumably because, for nearly all residents, Swaleside is not their first prison.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

During the reporting year there have been six deaths in custody, three of which are thought to be from natural causes, one self-inflicted and two unexplained. The Life Limiting Illness group has facilitated the management of deaths from natural causes by the creation of an 'end of life cell' and by counselling over 'do not attempt resuscitation' instructions (DNARs). The last two men to die in the prison had DNARs in place. The Board is impressed by the care taken during the death in custody procedure and the manner in which the governors, chaplaincy and family liaison officer ensure that the next of kin are approached, informed and supported.

There are eleven outstanding inquests and the Board is still concerned at the length of time taken for these to come to court. Although there has been improvement in this area, it still places unnecessary strain on relatives of the deceased.

Self-harm levels are comparable to last year, despite an initial increase coming with the COVID-19 outbreak.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

In our report last year, the Board again commented on the unacceptable level of violence in the prison, though found that violence had fallen on most measures and that the prison felt safer and calmer.

This year we can report that again all measures of violence have shown a decline as evidenced in the 2019/2020 quarterly performance and assurance reviews (QPARs), for the year ended 31 March 2020.

During the year the establishment has again taken great care to identify and record all assaults, which means that our confidence in the statistics remains.

In October, Management called in extra resources and, during a three day lock down search, 124 weapons were found, both rudimentary and sophisticated. It is surprising and shocking that many of these weapons were constructed in the engineering workshop at Swaleside (this later made the local and national press, where it was elaborated and speculated upon). As a result part of the workshop

was closed pending a security re-assessment. 125 mobile phones and related items were also found. It is interesting to note that there were only 18 drug finds during the searches.

The number of residents choosing to self-seclude remains fairly static in the ten to twenty range. There are varying reasons for this but the major one is bullying which is usually as a result of debt or threat.

4.4 Vulnerable residents, safeguarding

Safer custody continues to do a good job, along with the SOS team, in reacting quickly to any referrals.

Inreach continue to support residents with mental health issues, but have a very high workload and therefore some residents may not receive as timely intervention as they need.

Listeners (residents trained by Samaritans) continue to offer valuable and beneficial support at all times to those residents in crisis.

The introduction of in-cell telephony has negated the need for Samaritan phones, but there are still a few kept in wing offices in case there is a need when in-cell phones fail. The account is kept active for this reason.

Regular safeguarding meetings discuss various issues such as residents considering gender reassignment, wheelchair access and the level of self-harm. There was also the case of one resident who was dying from cancer where no communication was possible with him or his wife for months because no one could be found who was familiar with Makaton (sign language).

4.5 Use of force

A use of force meeting is now taking place monthly and this is attended by a Board member. This meeting allows random selection of particular incidents to examine body-worn camera footage and paperwork relating to each incident. The completion of the 'Annex A' reporting by staff in a timely manner has improved dramatically over the reporting period. At the last count there were just six outstanding as compared to several hundred late submissions last year.

Assaults by residents on staff reduced by about 15% when compared to the previous year and Swaleside's total for this is the fourth worst in the LTHSE. Similarly, resident on resident assaults have fallen by about 6% and Swaleside's total is the fifth worst in the LTHSE. On both measures, though, Swaleside finished the year with the worst totals in its comparator group, which consists of two other LTHSE prisons and three from the wider estate.

There were 431 unplanned uses of force by staff during the year and a disproportionate number of these occurred during the first weeks of the COVID-19 lockdown. Only five instances of batons being drawn occurred and just one of these resulted in a 'strike'.

A bespoke dojo has been constructed within the Sopwith Suite for staff training, to facilitate the inclusion of the use of PAVA spray and rigid-bar handcuffs. Provision has also been made for an armoury for the storage of this equipment.

4.6 Substance misuse

With the continued success of Rapiscan, and therefore the near closure of the postal route into the prison, illicit drug taking apparently reduced and the brewing of hooch increased proportionately. Then again, the levels of substance misuse have fallen over the lock-down period for COVID-19. This would appear to be because of a much lower ingress of those substances through visits and the fact that residents were having far less contact with each other.

The Forward Trust on E wing is still the main resource for addressing the drug problem (*see section 5.1*).

There is some concern that when normal visiting is resumed, ingress of substances will increase again, drugs will become more readily available and there will be a danger of residents who had weened themselves off, or had reduced their intake, suddenly increasing doses and causing serious risk to health.

The prison attained its mandatory drug testing targets and the number of residents testing positive was 17.81% against a target of 21.9%, despite a horrible spike in the first quarter of 2020.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

Considerable effort has been made during the year to improve the appearance of all areas of the prison and its cleanliness. This has made a significant difference and some areas, e.g. H wing, are a very good example of what is required. However, in other areas success has been more limited. A more robust IEP scheme could be used to help maintain the inside areas.

Prior to the personnel changes over this reporting year, A wing had a poor reputation being one of the major sources of incidents. The previous incarnation of the Open University digital study area had failed, largely because of the mix of residents on the wing and the lack of separation, leading to a loss of focus. However, over the last few months a major change of approach by the wing governor, custodial manager and officers has seen the wing evolve into one providing a safe environment for the residents, leading to it having fewer incidents than most others. The showers in the wing have now been improved such that they are considered good. Although other parts of the fabric of the wing still need attention, particularly the servery and the self-cook area, the general cleanliness is much improved. The wing staff have organised residents in decorating some of the common areas.

The showers on B wing have finally been renewed after an inordinately long delay and this has improved the hygiene and general decency of the wing. However, B wing also has an issue with the window cages, which constantly become filled with

rubbish and food waste. This is one instance where the culprits are obvious, and more could be done to encourage better behaviour by astute use of the IEP system.

There was one issue that occurred with the A and B wing showers. Once they had been refurbished, it was discovered that the water pressure was not good enough and they did not work. This necessitated a huge overspend to correct the problem - thought to be in the region of £200,000.

C wing is the least “specialist” in nature within the prison. It should work using the emotional well-being system which provides one to one help and support to residents with emotional and mental health needs. Although no data is available regarding this, it is thought from speaking to staff that much more could be done in this respect. Like other parts of Swaleside, cells which become available on C wing are more likely to be used to take in overspill from other areas rather than those residents who actually need this help.

Board members have noted that the self-cook area is popular with residents and well used. It is not as clean as it should be, but is better kept than equivalent areas of other wings. One problem appears to be the shortness of time between movement from work to lock-up, giving only a short period in which to cook, and even less in which to clean. With such a popular facility available, the practicalities of staff being able to resolve this seem difficult.

A further point to raise regarding food is that it has been noticed that what is supplied by the kitchen is satisfactorily cooked, but low in quantity. The best example has been that a baked potato with baked beans, ordered from the menu, comprised one large, level spoonful of beans. This amounted to approximately 12 beans for the meal. Heated trollies have been sent back to the kitchen empty, with some residents not having received a meal. This is not satisfactory.

At the time of writing, the wing has still suffered from delays in repairs. The residents' areas are in better condition than elsewhere, but requests on more than one occasion to repair staff toilets have met with no response; and the emergency control and restraint stairwells at the end of each spur contain a significant amount of bird droppings, where specialist cleaning has been requested, but no action taken.

At the time of the present COVID-19 lockdown, although Board members have not attended the wing, residents are said to be largely compliant and appreciative of what staff are doing to prevent the virus affecting the prison population.

D wing has been relatively stable for the last year. Most inductions in the prison are done on this wing and new arrivals are lodged on one spur. There are only two issues of note with the wing and they concern the condition of the fabric and fittings.

The showers and bathrooms have not been improved in any way in the last year and are in an appalling condition and unfit for human use. This does not fit with humane and decent standards.

Regrettably the servery area has also deteriorated in that the walls and ceiling have flaking paint, there are gaps in the plaster and some of the plastic covering

on the walls is loose and broken, and no longer provides any seal. There is a broken macerator which has not been touched for over a year. The aluminium coating on the surface of the cabinet where the food is served from is worn down to the original surface in a number of places. There is no doubt that this area would fail the most basic hygiene inspection. This is not a decent condition.

E wing is virtually two separate wings in that the Forward Trust side (south) is the rehabilitation wing and is generally clean and tidy. However, the west side cleanliness has been poor in the self-cook areas, as it is on other wings. The area outside E wing is a constant eyesore, with litter being dropped through the windows. Plans to replace the windows in the future are in hand and this will undoubtedly reduce this problem.

On G wing, the rat infestation worsened as the year went on. Rats were found on the '3s' and in cells. The main issue is the lack of cleanliness with residents leaving remains of food around the servery. Feral cats were introduced later in the year and have successfully reduced the rodent infestation in this part of the prison.

The showers, in all parts of this wing, continue to be a problem. Some effort has been made to make cosmetic improvements to the shower cubicles with painting of the coving and walls. However, this is treating the effect and not the cause. Unless, and until, the extractor ducts are cleared and working, the level of dampness in the showers will remain an ongoing issue. There is evidence of insects and black mould, and the showers have been deemed unfit for use for some considerable time.

The self-cook areas are often found in filthy condition. Raw food is left in pans and no cleaning is carried out after use. Supervision is required in these areas.

The conditions in the servery areas have improved dramatically, largely due to increased cleaning. This increase has been, in no small measure, due to the efforts of wing staff encouraging the residents to take more pride in their surroundings. Hopefully this will continue to be the case.

H wing is the tidiest and cleanest of all the wings. However, H wing residents suffer from a lack of equal opportunity across the spectrum of activities, faith, employment, education, visits etc.; to some degree this also applies to B wing.

Kitchen

The Board has repeatedly stated that the kitchen, despite some upgrade over time is not designed to cater for the amount of meals it produces and to have to also cater for HMP Stanford Hill, places an unnecessary burden on its capacity. If the Stanford Hill food preparation is not either put back to Stanford Hill or outsourced elsewhere, then the pressure on equipment will increase, and as these units get older, they will be susceptible to more and more faults and breakdowns.

Despite food preparation being adequate, there is a reported lack of quantity. This is to be expected with the level of funding per capita per day that is available. As is noted elsewhere, the wing 'self-cook' areas are very popular. This means that residents who have the means to purchase food have the facility to cook it to a standard and in quantities that they can afford. Those who do not have this financial advantage cannot, and have to make do with what is produced by the

kitchen. It must be emphasised that senior kitchen staff work hard to ensure that the best possible meals are made available for residents using the small budget available.

At the turn of the year, many C category residents, who had been working very well in the kitchen for some time, were transferred out of the prison, with the result that it was necessary to recruit and train other residents. This was dealt with speedily and effectively, and when last inspected by Board members the kitchen was working satisfactorily.

One problem this year has been the transfer of used heated trollies back to the kitchen. These have been brought back containing food which is sometimes burnt on to internal trays, sometimes from at least 24 hours before. The kitchen manager has worked hard to ensure that wing staff impress upon residents who work at the serveries that they must clean out trays properly before they are returned to the kitchen. When that has not been done, kitchen staff have had to perform the unpleasant task of cleaning out the food remaining, putting it through waste disposal equipment (which does not always work), and then scrubbing the trays clean. This has often been done in conditions that are unacceptable, being wet and very often nearly noxious to the point of nauseous.

Looking to the future, work has already commenced to alter pay scales of resident kitchen workers. This has gone to the senior leadership team for approval but, in light of the current COVID-19 situation, it is perfectly understandable that matters such as this are unlikely to be dealt with in the immediate future. Another measure put in place is that resident workers will receive a formal qualification on satisfactory completion of kitchen work to a certain level. This indicates that the kitchen is a part of HMP Swaleside which is able to provide training that will be of use to residents following release.

5.2 Segregation, special accommodation

As has been reported many times previously, the CSRU greatly benefits from a regular experienced cohort of officers. During this reporting period there have been an inordinate number of staff changes although in the latter part of the period it is pleasing to note that it became more settled. In particular the availability of regular senior officers and custodial manager has been beneficial. Operation of the unit during the recent COVID-19 problem has been exemplary due to the continued availability of regular staff members and additional resources.

A major change was introduced to the use of the CSRU generally, in that the procedure now adopted is for wing managers generally to manage their own problem residents leaving the use of CSRU for those residents where it is unavoidable.

A particular focus has been on the separation of function between the first and second floors, with the latter being used to house those longer-term residents thought to be suitable for reintegration to normal accommodation. This has brought about some good success with some six residents previously long-term in the CSRU being moved back to wings. This work has been supported by SOS

psychology and in-reach. The associated fabric changes to create a 'common room' have yet to be achieved because of budgetary constraint. The use of the second floor for reintegration has not always been achievable due to increased numbers of residents in CSRU generally from time to time. Occupancy of the CSRU declined to 13-15 residents for a major part of the reporting year but recently has crept up again to 17-18.

Use of special accommodation has been much reduced when compared to previous years (52 versus 66 last year) and, additionally, time spent in those cells has been very much shortened (usually around 45 minutes). This is to be commended.

The requirement to review residents in the CSRU is carried out diligently with appropriate authority being sought where required. Good order or discipline (GOoD) reviews take place regularly every Tuesday and Thursday chaired by a governor and are normally attended by a chaplain, psychology, Board member, healthcare (where possible), and occasionally in-reach and SOS. There have still been occasions when no healthcare representative has been present.

The fabric of the unit, including cell decoration, and cleanliness is good with an orderly (normally a longer-term CSRU resident) carrying out that function. The showers need urgent attention, and repairs to cells take far too long for effective operation of the unit. There are often two or three cells out of action.

In-cell telephony is a problem, with some phones not working.

Board members regularly attend the segregation monitoring and review group (SMARG) and use of force meetings. Active involvement ensures that the Board is aware of relevant trends and brings unsatisfactory figures to the attention of the senior leadership team where appropriate. SMARG figures indicate that use of CSRU is in line with the general prison population insofar as age and ethnicity is concerned.

5.3 Staff-resident/detainee relationships, keyworkers

Keyword started very late at Swaleside, reaching only 10-20% by November. There was a big push on the scheme in the first quarter of 2020, and by the end of January almost 70% coverage was achieved. Its effectiveness was reflected in reduced numbers of applications and complaints. This work suffered a suspension, however, with the COVID-19 outbreak. It has now re-started and is beginning to rebuild.

The prison is now fully staffed, after falling around 30 short during the year (allowing for the COVID-19-related blip). Apart from some initial self-isolation, Payment Plus has helped to ameliorate the impact of COVID-19, with ongoing staff sickness levels falling to an all-time low.

It should also be noted that complaints to the IMB regarding staff were down from 108 to 83, year-on-year.

5.4 Equality and diversity

There are still equality issues with some areas of the prison for the vulnerable resident and MCOSO wings. Common facilities such as visits and the library are not as accessible as for mainstream residents, and nor is the chapel. Job opportunities are restricted, as is access to various education courses. There is no access to ICT or catering.

The Board again commends the work carried out by the community hub, which is run by a team of residents as a resource for all residents. The hub assists with both internal and external issues guiding residents to the correct people or departments and providing information. The community representatives attend the monthly resident consultative meeting where issues raised by residents are discussed and often solutions found. The Board has, during the COVID-19 pandemic, donated dozens of audio books to the community hub which has acted as a library in lending them out to residents.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

The chaplaincy team continue to minister to the spiritual needs of residents. There have been changes to the personnel during the year; the anglican chaplain decided that her future lay solely in parish ministry and left the Prison Service in November 2019. To date it has not been possible to recruit a replacement, a situation that has not been helped by the COVID-19 pandemic. The team were fortunate enough to be able to secure the temporary part-time service of a retired Anglican Chaplain to cover the vacancy.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a massive disruption to the work of the chaplaincy; all corporate worship and faith specific groups were suspended and remain so. Ramadan and Eid-ul-Fitr were observed without any kind of community involvement and it was a credit not only to the imams, but also to the senior leaders' team, residential staff and the catering manager and her team that the fast and feast went smoothly. The same was the case for Easter (Christians), Passover (Jews). COVID-19 also took its toll on staffing with the managing chaplain and one of the imams having to shield and nearly all sessional chaplains and volunteers having to shield due to either age or health problems.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and in addition to the three major faith traditions of the Church of England, Roman Catholicism and Islam, the department has had visits from Pagan, Christian Science, Mormon, Jehovah's Witness, Buddhist, Sikh, Jewish, Hindu, Salvation Army and Free Church chaplains, as well as facilitating visits from the home ministry of less represented faith traditions. Unfortunately efforts to secure the services of a Rastafarian chaplain continue to be thwarted. The residents' faith council was suspended on the departure of the Anglican chaplain. There are plans to resurrect the council when things return to normal.

New residents are seen by one of the chaplains within 24 hours of their initial reception into the establishment. During the last year the chaplaincy department has liaised with residents' families where there has been serious illness (30) and bereavement (87). Chaplains made nine pastoral visits to residents in outside hospitals whose condition was deemed serious.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic it continued to be difficult to minister to those on the MCOSO wing owing to the lack of facilities and chaplaincy staff. There has been no progress in moving forward with the deputy director of custody's suggestion, mentioned in last year's report that a facility for chaplaincy activities and other events should be built within the confines of that residential unit. The establishment's vulnerable resident wing continues to cause similar issues, but to a lesser extent.

5.6 Incentives and earned privileges

New plans for this scheme were put on the back-burner given the emergency regime that was introduced in March.

5.7 Complaints

The prison complaints system has received a great deal of attention during the year and is now supervised very closely at senior leadership team level. The overdue complaints are specifically brought to the attention of the manager concerned. The Board is pleased with the operation of the complaints system and regularly monitors the situation and 'samples' the replies being sent. Justified complaints to the Board about the complaints system itself are infrequent, and usually arise because of issues with other prisons, or that the resident simply does not like the answer.

Numbers of complaints have remained fairly constant despite the effect of COVID-19, after reducing during the first quarter 2020.

5.8 Property

IMBs nationally seem to have a varied attitude to residents' property. Some Boards will help resolve issues; others will not under any circumstances. This stems from a directive of a few years ago when we were informed that we were not there to get involved with property issues, as this was a Prison Service role. There are times when Boards have to take a humanitarian stance as far as property is concerned, but if not all Boards are singing from the same hymn sheet, then it becomes impossible. No-one can lay their hands on the original directive, so IMB Swaleside would like a definitive response as to whether IMBs should or should not deal with property issues.

However, we do not consider it our duty to chase up routine property inquiries. Our monitoring role within the prison is significantly more important, along with the high volume of other applications. With a small Board it is necessary to prioritise our activities and straightforward property issues are clearly a matter for prison staff.

A property review has updated the facilities list and is due for amendment again by governors.

A container in the yard is being used as a "Branston" to hold property for one year, which gives easier access to stored property by staff and should alleviate some of the residents' concerns.

6. Health and wellbeing

The parlous state of the showers on some of the wings has been raised by the IMB at Swaleside for several years and is covered earlier in this report.

However the negative impact on residents' health and well-being must be recorded here.

6.1 Primary healthcare

Primary care is provided by IC24, with Minster Medical Practice providing GP services, Pen Optical for optical services and mental health (inreach) provided by Oxleas.

A change of staff management has brought improvements to the inpatient department (IPD). The 'end-of-life' cell has been giving excellent care to 'end-of-life' residents within the IPD.

One issue is the continuing saga of cancelled NHS appointments due to lack of escort. The latest figures are awful, showing 1392 cancellations in this reporting year. This is out of a total of 2102 appointments. These numbers are higher than last year. The burden and expense that this places on the NHS cannot be understated and needs urgently addressing, not only in this area but nationally. The prison staffing is profiled to allow for six accompanied external visits per day, plus any code red or blue; however, the demand is greater than this, as it includes appointments, funerals etc. Cancer patients are still prioritised but the consequences often mean other residents having to be put back on to a hospital waiting list.

Since the COVID-19 lockdown, there has been a maximum of one or two booked appointments per day, and these are only for fast-track cancer treatments or other such important conditions. Some days there are no escorts at all.

Complaints were down on doctor's appointments, which have had a three week wait. Currently dentists and opticians visit the prison on a regular basis, however diagnosis is mainly by telephone and treatment is restricted to painkillers and the repair of broken spectacles respectively.

Under COVID-19 conditions, with most of the routine consultations/triage being conducted over the telephone, there is a hope that post COVID-19, this, and the use of telemedicine, will continue. This will negate the need for such a high volume of routine escorts going out (hopefully on some days, none at all). IC24, the NHS and prison management are in discussion regarding moving this plan along in the future which could prove to be a valuable innovation.

There has been an ongoing issue regarding in-cell telephony in the IPD. Replacement wiring and new boxes are due to be fitted, but BT has refused to come in to the prison during the COVID-19 crisis. This sorry state of affairs means that residents in IPD do not have in-cell phones and are at a disadvantage to other residents as they are subjected to time limits on phone calls, which could be as little as 10 minutes per day.

During the year there have been many instances of latent TB amongst the resident population, with full-blown TB occurring sporadically. These situations have been dealt with appropriately by healthcare management and staff, under the watchful eyes of Public Health England. Towards the end of our reporting period the lockdown for COVID-19 has created a regime which has aided the approach to TB. All affected residents have been isolated and received the proper treatment.

Public Health England has been satisfied with the way that the healthcare staff have been dealing with this, but still declared the situation officially an outbreak.

Life limiting illnesses group

The life limiting illnesses group meets monthly and has now been in existence for over two years. It is followed by the safeguarding meeting which was initiated last year. The group identifies and plans how to manage life limiting illnesses and how to prepare for the death in custody of residents from natural causes. The purpose of this is so that due respect can be given to the dignity of residents in these circumstances.

It consists of the governor, healthcare, offender management unit (OMU), safer custody and chaplaincy staff, the GP, the family liaison officer, manager of the local hospice and various Kent County Council social care agencies and others. A Board member attends as an observer. The GP has only recently started attending but his contribution is most important to the group. The leading coroner in the area attended one of the early meetings.

The concept is to ensure decency for those suffering with life limiting illnesses or for those whose lives are coming to an end in the near future; to identify suitable treatment and, where appropriate, to make arrangements in advance for decency in death. For example this may involve formulating plans for dealing with issues such as arranging for social care assessments; seeking transfers to category C prisons; prioritising residents for external hospital appointments particularly for cancer treatment; providing suitable living conditions in an 'end of life' cell with appropriate furniture and fittings; planning for palliative care with GPs; issuing DNAR notices; contacting relatives; making applications for compassionate release and briefing of prison staff on these special cases.

There are currently around 15 residents on the agenda who are discussed and two residents with a DNAR. The last two deaths in custody at Swaleside were both residents discussed in this forum and with DNARs.

6.2 Mental healthcare

Mental health services (Inreach) continue to be provided by Oxleas. The service is located on the wing established as the emotional well-being support centre which continues to have significantly positive results in improving care for residents needing support.

The SOS started in August 2018 and is a partnership between HMPPS and Oxleas NHS. It is a multi-disciplinary team consisting of operational staff, psychologists

and a mental health practitioner, who work closely with men who are identified for the service. The aim is to help residents whose behaviour in prison is considered to be challenging, violent and disruptive, to better manage themselves and reduce their use of violence and disruptive behaviour. Needs of the individuals are assessed and individual management plans to encourage them to develop their strengths and help them progress through their sentence. The team work closely with violence reduction staff, and give regular and structured support to wing staff to help manage those men who exhibit challenging behaviour. The SOS has made a very positive contribution to helping Swaleside deal with its most difficult individuals and we strongly commend this initiative.

6.3 Exercise, time out of cell, gym

The gym remains popular and is available to be used by both residents and staff. There have been plumbing problems, although not as bad as the shower situation was over a protracted period in the past. Whereas the sports hall was previously little used, this is no longer the case; different games take place there now and usage by residents can be seen at every Board visit.

With regard to the gym, H wing residents are allocated sole use each week on Tuesday morning, Tuesday evening, Thursday afternoons and one weekend session, usually on Sunday. This facilitates activity for all ages and abilities.

Some of the older residents play racket sports or they have an indoor bowling green which they often use. Although a wide range of H wing residents use the gym, however, like all wings, a number opt to not use the facilities. It would be fair to say that this is due to a larger proportion of older residents on H Wing. The number attending each session is in the fifties, and gym staff have stated that the H Wing sessions are usually well attended.

6.4 Drug rehabilitation

On E wing south, the Forward Trust operates the substance dependency treatment programme which comprises a six month residential course, offering 24 spaces for this group. The Forward Trust is trying to establish a therapeutic community on E wing south, and currently 30 out of 50 places are occupied by graduates or those in therapy. At the time of writing, there are 18 residents engaged in the complete programme. However, the clinical load supported over the whole prison is around 415 residents who have a substance misuse problem.

Recovery Skills Workshops are lower intervention classes, helping the men address their issues in group form. These are run for the prison population in the education department over three weeks, but intensive one-week courses are run on B, F and H wings to make the groups inclusive.

There are currently 32 on the integrated drug treatment system (IDTS) course which covers the entire prison. This helps men dealing with heroin withdrawal, by use of methadone or Subutex.

The NHS commissioner awarded the Forward Trust a grant, and a new table tennis table, snooker table, sofas and potted plants have been supplied to E wing which were appreciated and have been good therapy for the residents.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

In education the most significant event this year was in April when there was a change in the contract to Milton Keynes. Swaleside was given control of the budget which was increased with the expectation of providing more vocational courses.

The result of the Ofsted inspection in December 2019 was 'Requires improvement'. The delivery of education was rated 'Good' but the personal activity was 'Requiring improvement' due to poor attendance figures. These figures reflect poorly on the department yet are largely out of its control to manage.

The normal classroom teaching of mathematics and English goes on as before. Art is particularly strong. Planning and preparation for holding more vocational courses has taken place and we can look forward to developments in this field in the future although the numbers involved are small.

The re-introduction of allocation boards has taken place this year with all residents having to attend a board two weeks after their arrival in the prison. This board consists of OMU, education, activities, attitudes, thinking and behaviour programmes, residence and security. Its purpose is to go through with each resident their abilities and aspirations to plot a personal education and training programme for their individual development during their sentence.

The highlight for the department has been the participation in the Open University (OU) and distance learning courses. This has increased substantially with 32 men participating in OU courses and a further 40 on distance learning. These figures are unusually high for an LTHSE prison. It is interesting to observe that residents taking part in these courses are very committed and absorbed by their learning, which not only improves their life skills and makes them become better behaved individuals, but also makes the prison a calmer place.

7.2 Vocational training, work

The whole of the resident population of HMP Swaleside cannot currently be accommodated in employment, and even fewer will have the opportunity to participate in any form of vocational training or leave the establishment with any certificated portable skills.

Industries

Overview: This reporting year has been rather erratic as far as the workshops are concerned.

Last year's comment regarding the lack of vocational training places still stands. The number of total workshop places and the proportion of those that can deliver

portable qualifications are still roughly unchanged, and none of these have been available to H wing residents.

A new head of reducing reoffending was appointed at the start of this period, but industries was beset with problems from the beginning. Various plans were initiated, but the length of time taken to move from the planning stage to full fruition was inordinate.

Industries employable spaces are only 73% allocated, but attendance is at only 58% of this.

Workshops: The flagship Ministry of Defence camouflage netting shop met with cost/quality problems, and has now closed; Pineapple Beds, which then occupied the MOD workshop space, could not supply enough work and failed; Woodland Lighting, an addition to Zone One, again could not provide continuous work, and failed.

It was hoped that the construction of double-glazed windows would start up in one of the workshops and the machinery was shipped in from HMP Coldingley. However, this hope proved fruitless given the security level required of the residents.

It is hoped that some initiatives, such as bicycle refurbishment, will go ahead, but the time taken to get everything lined up is excessive, not least the advertising for and recruiting of the appropriate staff.

Again, engineering and woodwork shine bright amidst the gloom. The second engineering shop came fully on stream, after monumental delays in the electrical installation. It produces security gates and beds for the prison estate, and awards two different welding qualifications. It is hoped that one of these engineering shops will ultimately provide H wing with some much-needed meaningful vocational training.

There were even more serious set-backs here, though, when, during a lock-down search halfway through the reporting period, dozens of weapons were found which had been manufactured in these workshops. This was highly publicised in the press, and the shop was closed down for a period of time and 14 residents were shipped out of the prison (*see section 4.3*).

Woodworking finally employed its third instructor. The Woodwise course continues to provide accredited qualifications for up to eight residents at a time. It has retained its fire door contract and produces these to the ISO 9001 standard, as well as producing many smaller items such as garden seats, gym benches, tables, planters, pigeon holes etc. This shop has been hampered by an unusable extractor for part of the year, due to a broken briquette compressor, and a failed printer, which has inhibited the printing of course materials for Woodwise. This latter issue could and should have been easily rectified.

Industrial cleaning no longer offers British Institute of Cleaning Science as a qualification, but has replaced it with a similar Wamitab certification.

Headphone assembly was due to start when the COVID-19 outbreak began.

A multi-skills shop has been setup in Zone One teaching a range of skills from electrical and plumbing to furniture assembly, tiling, bricklaying etc. It is becoming increasingly successful and the residents working there, and the instructors, are very proud of their achievements.

Recycling has suffered due to residents and staff having to work with a rat infestation and lack of funds to erect necessary buildings to facilitate processing.

DHL and Marley workshops continue to work well where staffed by H Wing residents.

Horticulture has ceased and there is no longer any qualification offered.

7.3 Offender management, progression

As has been stated over many reports, the Board is still concerned about residents being released from Swaleside (17 this year) since this is not a resettlement prison and has no means of supplying resettlement services for residents. This situation is still unacceptable given the stated agreement to transfer a resident to a prison in his home locality within 12 weeks of his release date.

There will however always be some releases from the prison due to residents being granted parole.

Offender assessment system (OASys) completion is still a problem, with 176 due for completion at the time of writing; five of these are initial, and the other 171 are reviews. A new system of telephone interviews is helping to address this issue, as is the identification of single points of contact (SPOCs) that should bring a number of essential topics together under one umbrella.

The resurrection of wing surgeries and foreign national clinics should also help.

Public protection meetings are held regularly, to discuss specific residents and identify sensitive areas. These are in depth and well attended.

7.4 Family contact

This has obviously become a problem with the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic as visits no longer take place. A point must be made here that the closure of visits met with almost universal approval by residents who were totally cognisant of the staff trying to protect all concerned. In-cell telephony plus the addition of £5 per week PIN credit certainly helped ease any tensions in this regard. Unfortunately, lack of in-cell telephones in IPD and part of the CSRU puts residents there at a huge disadvantage.

Family days continue to be successful and popular, the only issue seeming to be the restriction on numbers, which creates an inequality. The tea bar had started to become more popular with residents, their families and the staff, but obviously took a knock-back with the impact of COVID-19 in the latter stages of the reporting period.

7.5 Resettlement planning

As stated earlier in this report, the prison is not geared up to ensure that residents are released with the correct support in place, as this should take place at the local releasing prison. It leaves any resident released from Swaleside at a disadvantage as indicated. There is an OASYS back-log, which does not help, and though residents can earn some vocational qualifications during their stay at Swaleside, there are limited opportunities.

Educationally, there is more scope, which would allow more employment opportunity, but the take-up is disappointing.

F Wing is home to Swaleside's psychologically informed planned environment (PIPE) unit, for the treatment of personality disorder. This is split into two spurs, one for provision and one for progression.

Staffed by trained and dedicated officers and a team of psychologists, the unit is independently funded by the NHS.

Unfortunately the progression side of the PIPE unit is now being discontinued, and run down, as and when the residents leave the programme, or the establishment. It will continue to be an enabling environment, housing men chosen with the appropriate attitudes.

Recently this wing has piloted an 'opt out' scheme, where 24 enhanced men have chosen not to be provided with meals from the kitchen, but receive a credit and then purchase raw ingredients from the kitchen, which they then cook themselves. This has proven to be very successful, with clear benefits directly in line with the principles of the PIPE unit. Unfortunately, this has been deferred during the pandemic, but hopefully will be resumed as and when a normal regime returns.

8. The work of the IMB

Apart from the main duties of the Board, members have areas of special interest which are reported to the Board at its monthly meeting.

A member of the Board (usually the Chair) attends senior leadership team meetings and the Chair attends South East Area meetings. In addition during the year we started attending quarterly meetings with the LTHSE director via conference call, as we believe that time and cost considerations for a three to four hour meeting in the North of England with overnight accommodation are prohibitive.

Other meetings attended include: violence reduction, security, resident consultative, reducing reoffending, public protection, SMARG, use of force, life-limited residents and the safety intervention meeting. Where meetings are not attended, minutes are provided to the Board.

Inquests for deaths in custody were attended on all days, where possible.

With the unprecedented arrival of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the Board had to change its approach. We pre-empted the prison lock-down and invoked an 'arm's length' monitoring regime from 20th March, which included all members being rota'd over a period of time. We have continued our monthly meetings by conference call, with the Governor and our clerk dialling in. Applications are also

handled on a rota basis, and, apart from the residents who ask to see us face-to-face, have been on balance managed very well. The Board also introduced a weekly informal Zoom session. We also dialled in to all morning meetings; GOoD reviews; SMARG; use of force; senior leadership team; life-limiting illness and a sample of assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) reviews and adjudications plus twice weekly calls to CSRU and healthcare.

At this point I would like to pay tribute to our clerk, who remained our focal point in the prison, collected and distributed applications and replies, forwarded all daily reports, meeting minutes and notices, and, importantly, maintained a good sense of humour throughout.

Membership

At the end of the reporting year the Board comprised 12 members, including one JP. Two members were in training at the date of this report. Only one member lives on the Isle of Sheppey. There is only one female on the Board and nobody from an ethnic minority. Unfortunately the COVID-19 outbreak has caused issues for our new members who had not yet visited the prison on many occasions before we pulled out. One resigned, but, thankfully, the other two have maintained their enthusiasm, and we have found a way of keeping them involved during this difficult time by including them in everything that we can and setting them case studies to work on - not ideal, but better than nothing.

Recruitment

During the year the Board has had two successful recruitment campaigns. However, with attrition, we still managed to have fewer members at year end than at the beginning.

Visits to the Prison

Members of the Board made 465 visits to the prison in the first ten months of the reporting year. Apart from Board meetings, one member was usually in the prison most weekdays. With increased Board numbers, more of the prison could be monitored appropriately.

The Board also made a visit to HMP Rochester and hosted a similar visit by the Board of HMP Maidstone.

The Board was extremely concerned and quite disillusioned with the Secretariat when there was a proposal earlier in the year for a reduction in the number of rota visits annually to the prison. This is despite being informed that the review came from a separate working group and was approved by the Management Board.

Training

The annual team performance review questionnaire was completed and areas for improvement were identified and actions implemented. Currently, all members are up to date with their required training and have also taken part in other Prison

Service-arranged sessions. The BDO also arranges for a guest speaker at each Board meeting.

Confidential access

The Board received 35 confidential access complaints, down from last year's 52. Quite a number of these were inappropriate use of the system and were returned to the residents.

The Board still has a problem regarding confidential access complaint forms addressed to the Board where the complaints are made against named prison officers. It had been Board policy to copy these forms and hand them to the Governor for investigation, whilst the originals were kept on file for monitoring purposes. The Board cannot investigate prison staff.

Unfortunately management still will not accept 'comp 2s' passed to them by the Board. The reasons given were that these forms were addressed to IMB and not the Prison Service, and, as such, if the Prison Service dealt with them, it would be in contravention of the Prison Service Instruction (PSI) and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

The Board does not accept that this would be in contravention of the PSI, but did accept that it may have contravened GDPR. However, we do not know of any other prison that has adopted this approach regarding comp 2s passed to them by the IMB. We have recently been informed that there is no contravention of GDPR in this process.

Our Board's recommendation would be that the IMB is removed from what is a Prison Service form and that we simply rely on our own application forms, which carry the required signed waiver and are confidential in themselves.

The Board would like clarification on this matter.

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	19
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	14
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	12
Total number of visits to the establishment	465 (10 months)*
Total number of segregation reviews attended	420 (approximately)*

* No access to actual annual figures due to COVID-19.

Applications to the IMB

There was an increase in applications to the Board, a total of 836 against 764 last year. This may not be too significant in the wider context, as, prior to COVID-19 applications began to fall as the keyworker scheme started to bite. Of course, this scheme was side-lined as the prison went into lock-down.

Code	Subject	Current reporting year	Previous reporting year
A	Accommodation including laundry, clothing, ablutions	27	22
B	Discipline including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	11	28
C	Equality	20	23
D	Purposeful activity including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	40	27
E 1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	35	30
E 2	Finance including pay, private monies, spends	45	33

F	Food and kitchens	19	16
G	Health including physical, mental, social care	130	111
H 1	Property within this establishment	93	122
H 2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	61	74
H 3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	30	14
I	Sentence management including parole, release dates, re-categorisation	75	50
J	Staff/resident concerns including bullying	83	108
K	Transfers	48	32
L	Miscellaneous	119	74
	Total number of IMB applications	836	764



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