



IMB Annual Report

HMP & YOI Brinsford

July 2010 – June 2011

CONTENTS

	Page
1. STATUTORY ROLE	1
2. THE BOARD	2
3. APPLICATIONS	3
4. THE ESTABLISHMENT	4
5. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
6. REGIMES AND RESIDENCES	6
7. HEALTHCARE AND MENTAL HEALTH	7
8. LEARNING AND SKILLS	8
9. SAFETY	10
10. SEGREGATION UNIT (IAU)	11
11. DIVERSITY AND RACE EQUALITY	12
12. SECURITY AND DRUGS	13
13. RESETTLEMENT	14
14. VISITS AND VISITORS CENTRE	15
15. KITCHEN	16
16. PHYSICAL EXERCISE	17

STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

The prison Act 1952 and the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 require every prison and IRC to be monitored by an Independent Board appointed by the Home Secretary from members of the community in which the prison or centre is based.

The Board is specifically charged to:

1. Satisfy itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in custody within its prison and the range and adequacy of the programs preparing them for release.
2. Inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority as it judges appropriate, any 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 custody.

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

THE BOARD

Recommended complement of Board Members	16
Number of Board Members at the start of the reporting period	7
Number of Board Members at the end of the reporting period	9
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	3
Number of members resigning within the reporting period	1
Total number of Board Meetings held during the reporting period	12
Total number of visits to the prison, including Board Meetings	361
Total number of applications received	185
Total number of segregation reviews held	100
Total number of segregation reviews attended	100

Board Meetings are held on a monthly basis. They are attended in part by the Governing Governor, who provides the board with a written report and responds to any issues of concern in addition to the ones highlighted in rota reports.

The board at present is under-strength and is conducting a recruitment program.

APPLICATIONS

APPLICATIONS	JULY 2005 JUNE 2006	JULY 2006 JUNE 2007	JULY 2007 JUNE 2008	JUNE 2008 JULY 2009	JULY 2009 JUNE 2010	JULY 2010 JULY 2011
ASSOCIATION	-	-	-	-	-	4
CANTEEN FOOD	1	-	-	16	9	8
CELL CONDITIONS	1	2	1	2	1	6
COMPLAINTS - STAFF	5	3	2	1	6	10
DISCIPLINARY CONCERNS	1	2	1	4	8	12
EDUCATION & LIBRARY	1	3	3	13	9	8
HAIRCUTS	-	-	-	-	-	-
IEP	1	3	1	2	1	4
LACK OF GYM	-	2	1	7	1	4
MISCELLANEOUS	13	18	18	26	65	58
MISSING MAIL & PROPERTY	13	6	15	27	20	19
PERSONAL HEALTH	19	14	6	5	7	6
RACE/RELIGION PROBLEMS	2	-	-	2	-	1
RELOCATION REQUESTS	3	-	-	11	2	5
TELEPHONE	--	-	2	1	3	7
TRANSFERS OUT	1	3	6	8	9	16
UNFAIR TREATMENT	-	1	6	-	7	3
VISITS & VISITORS	3	5	2	10	15	9
EMPLOYMENT ISSUES	-	1	2	2	1	9
TOTAL	64	63	66	137	164	189

Applications are made by either placing requests in any one of the eight application boxes, which are situated throughout the establishment, or verbally when prisoners see a member of the board.

THE ESTABLISHMENT

HMP & YOI BRINSFORD is located in Staffordshire, north of Wolverhampton.

Operational Capacity: - 577

There are five two-storey residential blocks.

OTHER FACILITIES

Healthcare, staffed by the PCT.

Kitchen.

Chapel and Multi-Faith building.

Education, classrooms and workshop facilities, staffed by The Manchester College.

Library, Staffed by Staffordshire County Council.

Well equipped gym and outside sports facilities, including an all weather sports pitch.

OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

Probation

CARAT Team

JHP

CAB

NACRO

HALOW

Trailblazers

De Paul Trust

Samaritans

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HMP & YOI Brinsford has an operational capacity of 577 Young Adults and this is the first full year of not being a split site with the Young People.

Brinsford is a complex site which now houses prisoners with longer sentences in addition to taking remand prisoners from the courts. With an average of 140 new receptions per month, this equates to just over 24% of the total population. With prisoners being transferred in from other establishments, as they are re-rolled etc, this in itself has created a more volatile population.

With such a varied population, including foreign nationals, the staff must be commended for doing an excellent job.

Education has been a concern of the Board for most of the reporting period, at times classes were operating with only one prisoner present, this is probably as part of The Manchester College target is based on the number of classes they run, regardless of attendance. In fairness it is the responsibility of the prison to get prisoners into class and this has improved towards the end of our reporting period.

As reported previously the Board has concerns around Healthcare, regarding the number of mentally ill prisoners who find themselves in this unit. In addition cells are being occupied for long periods of time by vulnerable prisoners, in order to keep them safe.

With the national reduction in funding the management, to date, have done an excellent job in implementing cuts to meet Brinsford's new budget without this having any serious impact on prisoners. With the continuing rolling programme of financial cuts, this is an area of concern to the Board and is being monitored closely.

The management and staff have maintained a positive and caring environment for prisoners, treating them all with respect, and for the majority the discipline of the regime is a positive influence.

Despite the imposed financial cuts it is felt that Brinsford is moving forward in the right direction.

In the early part of 2011 Channel 4 TV filmed a documentary at Brinsford featuring the excellent work carried out teaching prisoners to read:- Toe By Toe; and also sending recorded messages home to their families:- Story Book Dads. This documentary, Secret Millionaire, was screened in May 2011.

In February 2011 the computer and printer used by board members was removed from our office as part of the cost cutting exercise, as we were informed it was not being used for the required 40 hours per week. A computer and printer are of considerable importance in assisting the Board to carry out its duties, but it must be said that we visit Brinsford to monitor, not to sit at a computer for 40 hours a week. The Board was offered the use of any other computer in the establishment when not being used, but this has proved not to be practical. The cost of maintaining a computer is £140 per month and a printer £40, which it is felt is excessive.

REGIMES AND RESIDENCES

Brinsford has five residential units housing a population of Young Adults, 18 - 21 years of age. Residential units 1 to 4 are the original units and are identical in construction and layout, while Residential unit 5 is approximately two and a half years old and offers better facilities, i.e. separate showers and toilets for every cell.

Res 5 operates as an enhanced unit where the relationship and co-operation between prisoners and staff is generally of a higher standard, as the penalty for any misbehaving is immediate transfer back to a normal location. Conversely there is a real incentive for prisoners on other wings to gain enhanced status entitling them to apply for a move to this unit. Although the unit is relatively new there are concerns regarding the fragile fabric used in the construction.

Throughout the reporting period repainting and improvements have been taking place to improve the living conditions. In order to maintain a higher standard, personal officers not only work closely with a number of prisoners but are also responsible for the standards in their cells.

In order to stabilize the population cell moves are kept to a minimum and have to be sanctioned by a manager.

For several years there have been over 100 cells, throughout the prison, where a doorway had been constructed into the next room, which had been left empty. During this reporting period the beds have been moved into the second room, thus separating the living/sleeping area from the toilet and improving the dignity of prisoners living in double cells. It is now proposed, if it is cost effective, to install a shower in this area.

At the end of October the first night provision was moved from a dedicated unit to a Wing on Res 1, where in addition to this facility induction takes place.

IDTS. A 12 bed unit dedicated to help prisoners with a drug/drink addiction was opened in March 2011. Prisoners can stay on the unit for up to 28 days and are monitored by nurses 24 hours a day.

Freeflow continues to operate between residential units, education and the work place. This has not been without its problems, but has continued to improve throughout the year due to the dedication and hard work of staff.

CCTV. This is now operational on all residential units and the corridors used by prisoners.

Although budgetary cut backs, to-date, have been handled well, there is concern that future cuts could affect the regime of the establishment.

HEALTHCARE AND MENTAL HEALTH

South Staffordshire PCT are the providers of both in-patient and out-patient services at Brinsford, and although staffing levels during the reporting period have at times been low, they are now up to the required level.

It is a requirement that every prisoner arriving at Brinsford is assessed in the reception area by a nurse, with a full assessment taking place the following day.

There is a GP surgery and an out of hours on-call service available 365 day a year, with the following services also available:-

- Dental Clinic.
- Optician.
- Psychiatrist and Psychologist.
- Physiotherapist.
- Sexual Health.
- Chiropodist.

Specialist Nurses are brought in as and when required.

All in-patients have access to education, gym and association, and the IEP scheme is in operation on the unit.

Out-patients are treated in the newly refurbished treatment rooms on each wing , although at times, there is concern regarding the vulnerability of nurses as discipline staff are not always available.

The majority of prisoners using the Healthcare are for non clinical reasons, with mental health issues being the main concern.

There is also concern with cells in Healthcare being used for long periods of time by non medical prisoners, ie vulnerable prisoners.

Monies allocated during the previous reporting period from the Kings Fund for refurbishment work in the out-patients reception area was completed in June, and this, together with a complete repaint, has considerably improved the unit. This just leaves the staff kitchen area in urgent need of refurbishment.

LEARNING AND SKILLS

Education in Brinsford is delivered under contract by The Manchester College (TMC) and the Careers Information Advice Service is delivered by JHP. The library facility is delivered via Staffordshire County Council

Attendance in Education has varied significantly during the period, from a low of 68% of expected attendance in August 2010 and then a steady increase to a peak of 86% in January 2011 and 85% in February 2011 and then a steady decline to 73% in May 2011 with a final pick-up to 79% in June 2011.

There have been a number of initiatives made during the period in an attempt to improve the attendance and these were driven by two of the prison staff who had management positions and could make things happen. Unfortunately these two members of staff left Brinsford in March 2011 and the attendance numbers drifted down again.

For most of the period, to get prisoners to attend Education the prison could only “wield a stick” at the sentenced and remand prisoners who had signed up to Education at their Induction. Their non-attendance should have been dealt with by using the IEP (Incentives and Earned Privileges) Scheme with eventual down grading to Basic and loss of privileges. This has not always happened and complaints were received from prisoners that those on the wings not attending education and work accessed gym far more frequently than those who did. With prisoners, the ability to access the gym, particularly weight training, is seen as very important.

To be able to “offer a carrot” to encourage and reward those prisoners that attended Education, a new initiative was introduced in June 2011 with a change in the gym allocation system. Attendees at part time courses were allocated one session of gym per week and full time courses two. This initially appears to be successful with attendance now increasing. Despite this demonstrable success in encouraging more of the prisoners into Education, concern has been expressed that this initiative will not meet with the approval of OFSTED.

Raising the attendance numbers back up to approx 80% and beyond remains a continuing challenge to prison management. As stated earlier, within Brinsford, prisoners who refuse to attend Education after being allocated should be subject to an IEP warning and dealt with through the IEP process. It has been possible to check on who did not attend Education and to see whether any action was taken via the IEP system. A recent check showed that only 65% of those who had refused had been dealt with in this way and four of these should have been put on Basic, but this did not happen.

TMC started the period with a shortage of tutors and there were complaints about lessons being cancelled, but over the course of the period this situation has been dealt with and they are almost up to full strength. As a result of this, and with the prison experiencing difficulties in getting prisoners to education, classes have taken place with a few as one pupil in attendance. A large percentage of TMC targets are credited to the number of classes they provide, regardless of the number of pupils in attendance.

Promotional booklets have been produced and supplied by TMC for each educational area. The booklets give a brief outline of the courses held in that area and what that course can lead to with regard to employment or other courses that can then be pursued upon release; a number of courses were renamed to make them appear more attractive to prisoners.

TMC have tried to identify the employment opportunities in the local area and tailored courses to suit these opportunities. For example, they have recently arranged for a tutor to be trained to deliver a Barista Coffee Course. (A barista coffee machine is the coffee machine seen in the likes of Costa Coffee and Starbucks)

Toe By Toe (TBT), the reading plan run by the Shannon Trust, was being delivered via an unofficial arrangement with TMC but as they were not receiving any payment they felt that they were unable to continue with this. A plan was later devised that enabled the Library and Education to continue with this, and at the end of the reporting period, there were 45 prisoners on the scheme with 15 prisoners trained as mentors.

This was a short sighted policy as a prisoner unable to read would not be in a position to move forward on to any accredited course and ultimately this would not help with their employment prospects when released.

Toe By Toe and Story Book Dads was featured in a Channel 4 documentary which was televised in May of this year.

Re-profiling of prison officers duties meant the removal of the permanent Library Officer and Recycling Officer. This resulted in a change to the system where the Residential wings provided officers to cover the roles. The end result has been that the attendance at the Library has fallen and the Library has frequently closed on an evening due to the Library escort being unavailable. Despite this various initiatives have been run, including the Reading Agency's Six Book Challenge.

The Gardens Department operates the Waste Management Unit which has recently been successful in a bid for a new recycling building. When built, this will enable them to expand and improve their efficiency, but there are concerns regarding the availability of officers to supervise prisoners collecting material for recycling.

SAFETY

This unit, previously called Safer Custody, includes Suicide Prevention, monitoring of ACCT documents and Restorative Justice.

There has been considerable reorganisation in the last year. This section is now housed within the main prison building to enable easier access to prisoners. Due to the financial cut backs staff have been reduced, and now there is only one Senior Officer dedicated to the work of Suicide Prevention. Other staff who are involved with the unit now also have duties in other areas of the prison, which means that cover for this important role can be patchy if the Senior Officer is not available.

Anti-bullying is a key element in safer prison strategies which has varied in its application in Brinsford. Strategies were developed in previous years which included working with inmates identified as bullies. This work is not always available as staff working in the IAU at times are from other areas of the prison and may not be trained to deliver the necessary programmes.

The monitoring of ACCT documents depends on those individuals who have been trained in the correct interviewing and reporting techniques. Many staff have undergone this training but implementation is not always of the highest quality. Processes are being developed to improve staff awareness of the importance of these documents.

The average number of ACCT Documents open during the reporting period is 38, compared to 28 for the previous reporting period.

Adult Blue Band prisoners from Featherstone Prison are now used on a regular basis in the reception area, talking to prisoners new to prison and trying to put their minds at ease as to what to expect and what is required from them. As this has proved to be a success, at times they are used in other areas talking to prisoners.

The Board are impressed by the caring and dedicated attitude shown by all staff involved in this unit.

Due to staff cut backs, restorative justice, which has in the past been very successful is not now profiled.

SEGREGATION UNIT (IAU)

Brinsford's segregation unit comprises of 16 single cells and 2 special accommodation cells (quiet rooms), only 11 of which are equipped with in-cell electrics.

Each time a prisoner is located on the unit, the Chair of the Board is notified, and, to comply with PSO1700 a board member will see the prisoner within 72 hours. At all times Board members, where safe to do so, are able to speak freely and in confidence, with all prisoners.

Good Order or Discipline Reviews are carried out twice a week and chaired by one of a group of governors from the Safer Prison Team. The board have found this to be an improvement in consistency and knowledge of prisoners. Reviews are always attended by the IMB, Healthcare and Education.

The Board also monitors adjudications, which are carried out daily; these have increased by 151 over the last reporting period, and the monthly visit by the Independent Adjudicator, whose case load has also increased.

The unit is staffed by a dedicated team of officers, who are firm but fair when dealing with prisoners and they also maintain a high standard of cleanliness on the unit.

As a result of the financial cutbacks, the SO grade officer is now only profiled to work on the unit during the morning shift.

DIVERSITY AND RACE EQUALITY

Brinsford's diversity management team meetings are consistent and well structured, with regular attendance from various areas of the establishment - kitchens, education, chaplaincy etc, with residential wing representatives being encouraged to contribute to the discussions. The meetings are monitored by a Board Member with an external observer present. There is monthly feedback on the monitoring of information on Diversity, Disability and Race Equality.

Promotional information is available, ie Cultural Awareness Theme Days etc, which are all much appreciated by both staff and prisoners.

The diversity training - 'Challenge It - Change It' is also well attended.

The Brinsford independent RIRF Scrutiny Panel has amalgamated with HMP Featherstone and hold meetings bi-monthly.

The Board is satisfied that Brinsford has satisfactory procedures and policies in place, with all complaints being properly investigated.

Religious requirements are fulfilled by one full time chaplain and one imam, with other religions covered on a part time basis.

To improve the attendance at services as the number attending has dropped, the chaplain would like a 45 minute slot in the timetable, with no other distractions in place. It must be said that the services do include some very good musicians from the local community.

Muslim services and Ramadan are provided for, with an average of 80 prisoners attending the service.

Foreign National prisoners are housed throughout the establishment and managed by a designated manager. There are a total of 25 different nationalities at Brinsford, with the highest number being from Afghanistan. Surgeries are held with UKBA and immigration lawyers, and 'The Big Word' is in operation throughout the prison.

Disabled prisoners are catered for, with an average of 16% declaring a disability.

BME prisoners total 225 against a population of 521 = 43.2%.

The total number of BME staff is 32 with 30 being in contact roles. Expressed as a percentage this is 8.8 against a target of 7.00.

The KPT score is 83.66% against a target of 70%.

SECURITY AND DRUGS

The security department functions with a reduced number of Senior Officers, who also have other duties throughout the prison, this being as a result of the financial cutbacks.

Cell searching which is now targeted, as opposed to random searching, is carried out by officers working on the wings, who continually struggle to meet targets.

Volumetric Control, this continues to be a problem with excess canteen in most cells, which causes unnecessary problems during cell searching. The Board has mentioned this in previous Annual Reports and the Governor and Senior Management are continually addressing this issue, but it needs a more concerted holistic approach by all staff.

CCTV cameras have been installed during the reporting period on the main corridors and residential areas, these are monitored from the control room. The cameras have proved to be an asset in the day to day running of the establishment and monitoring sensitive areas, ie 'freeflow'. This is an area where prisoners are moving from one area of the establishment to another. Tapes have also proved to be a considerable asset in adjudications etc.

SIRs have increased by approx 100% over the second part of the reporting period, which is encouraging that staff are appearing more vigilant.

MDT targets are met with no significant increase in positive results. There were a total of 137 drug finds during the reporting period, mainly in the grounds adjacent to the perimeter fence and during visits.

Fire Safety training for all staff commenced at the end of the reporting period and will be completed within a short period of time.

A concerted indiscipline took place in February, which was contained on the residential unit. It lasted for about forty minutes, during which batons were drawn but not used. The rest of the establishment continued with normal regime.

Intelligence and CCTV were examined, which resulted in 7 prisoners being transferred to other establishments. The incident was allegedly linked to EDL and comments about the Quran.

Adjudication statistics show an increase from January - June 2011 of 630 compared to the same period in 2010 being 475.

Hard work by the security team enabled Brinsford to achieve a successful IOCCO Inspection - with one green and five amber recommendations.

RESETTLEMENT

It is acknowledged by senior management that this area continues to be of considerable importance in the assisting of reducing re-offending.

The Resettlement and Re-offending unit are scheduled to meet on a monthly basis, but as a result of other commitments only three meetings were held during the period January - June 2011. Due to the lack of strategic direction, reporting on resettlement and rehabilitation is seen as spurious, and it is unclear as to whether exit surveys are always completed.

To obviate the shortcomings in this area, and help prisoners, a new action plan is being put into place, which will be launched in October of this year.

The resettlement unit will be working more closely with all outside agencies to provide more support when a prisoner is released, in an effort to reduce anti-social and criminal behavior and of course re-offending.

Throughout the reporting period there has been a shortage of Psychology Assistants, which has not helped the overall situation, however we are advised that new staff have been employed and should be in post within the next few weeks.

During the reporting period the Board has had concerns with the time taken by external probation services in evaluating prisoners suitable for HDC.

VISITS AND VISITS CENTRE

Visitors arriving at Brinsford are processed quickly and efficiently by the staff in the visits centre who are all working on a voluntary basis for HALOW.

Due to the re-tendering process at present taking place, and the financial cut backs imposed by the prison, the staff are feeling very uncertain about the future.

There are difficulties being experienced by visitors as the nearest bus stop is approx one mile away and the only other available public transport is on a pre-booking service, operated by a private contractor, the cost being quite considerable.

The visits hall can accommodate approx 55 prisoners with their families, and operates five days per week with a visit lasting up to two hours. Refreshments are available but unfortunately there are no creche facilities.

The area is manned by a team specially trained officers but unfortunately, for the majority of the reporting period, the CCTV system has not been operational due to staffing difficulties. Drug dogs are now being used on a regular basis, but the Board feels that more use can be made of this facility, especially when prisoners are returning to the wings.

Family all day visits have continued, with healthcare and various agencies from both inside and outside Brinsford attending to give advice and help where required. Although a very popular day attendances on occasions have not been as high as one would have liked, due largely to security issues.

KITCHEN

Working within the agreed budget of £2.00 per person per day, Brinsford continues to provide good nourishing meals, meeting the needs of all prisoners including those with special dietary requirements.

Prisoners working in the kitchen alongside civilian staff are being trained for an NVQ level II qualification, which it is hoped will assist them in gaining employment upon their release.

The Board is concerned regarding some of the older equipment, ie extractor fans, which appear to break down with some regularity. This leaves both staff and prisoners working in a difficult environment with large amounts of steam, increased temperatures, and slippery floors.

At present, as the MOJ adheres to a national contract, with a percentage of products being purchased from foreign producers. As a result there is no opportunity to purchase products locally, which it is felt would be more beneficial. The Board also feels that with the greenhouses and large areas available within the grounds of Brinsford, it is in an ideal position for prisoners to assist in the growing of a number of products for its own consumption.

At the beginning of 2011, due to the nationally imposed cutbacks, kitchen staff were advised that savings would have to be made in the working hours. To avoid any member of staff being made redundant they worked together to resolve the issue. One member of staff moved to a vacancy at HMP Featherstone while the remaining staff agreed on reducing their working hours, thus meeting the required budgetary cuts. For this the staff must be commended.

PHYSICAL EXERCISE

Brinsford has extensive facilities available for its Young Adult population, these include:- Large Sports Hall comprising of a weights room, cv equipment. indoor sports pitches, climbing wall etc.

The Rowan Education unit also has a weights room with cv equipment.

Each residential unit has exercise equipment.

There is also a considerable outside area available including an All Weather pitch, and two sports pitches where competitive football and rugby are played in the local league.

The uptake for gym, the most popular being the weights, is only about 60% but staff are working on a new regime which should improve the uptake in the near future. Before prisoners are allowed to use any of the facilities they have to complete an induction course.

There is an ongoing problem with the flooring in the main gym, which although it has recently been replaced, in December 2010 approximately 20% of the floor was once again removed to look for a suspected water leak, but to date nothing was found and Brinsford is once again in a position of obtaining tenders to replace the floor. The Board's concern is that one would have thought that this work should have been covered by a warranty,

The staffing level for the PEO has remained the same, but the SO grade has been reduced to one, but there remains a positive attitude by all staff and a good job is being done.

All staff have free use of all these excellent facilities when not being used by prisoners.