



**HMP Brixton**

**Independent Monitoring Board**

**Annual Report to the Secretary of State**

**1<sup>st</sup> September 2010 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2011**

## **SECTION 1: STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB**

The Prisons Act 1952 and the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 require every prison and IRC to be monitored by an independent Board appointed by the Minister of Justice from members of the community in which the prison or centre is situated.

The Board is specifically charged to:

**(1)** satisfy itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in custody within its prison and the range and adequacy of the programmes preparing them for release.

**(2)** inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority as it judges appropriate, any concern it has.

**(3)** report annually to the Secretary of State on how well the prison has met the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have on those in its custody.

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

<b>SECTION 2: CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>Section 1: statutory role of the IMB</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Section 2: contents</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Section 3: description of the prison</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Section 4: executive summary</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Section 5: core reporting areas</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Section 6: additional reporting areas</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Section 7: the work of the Board</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Section 8: glossary of prison abbreviations used</b>	<b>25</b>

## **SECTION 3: DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON**

HMP Brixton currently serves the courts of South London as a category B male local prison. At the time of writing the prison is due to re-role and by spring 2012 it will have become a category C resettlement prison.

The certified normal accommodation is 503 and the prison has an operational capacity of 798. The average number of prisoners held is between 725 and 775. Many single cells are in double occupancy resulting in cramped conditions. Wings (apart from D Wing) do not have communal eating areas and meals are eaten in cells, the majority of which have integral toilets (with or without a curtain). Most of the prison buildings are Victorian, much of the prison is in need of modernisation and some parts are in a poor state of repair. There is a general lack of regime and workshop space.

Brixton operates with five residential wings and houses a mixture of about 50% remand and 50% sentenced prisoners:

- A wing - 263 prisoners in 143 cells (mostly doubled, one with disabled access);
- B wing - 160 prisoners in 86 cells (mostly doubled);
- C wing - 133 prisoners in 69 cells (all doubled, one with disabled access);
- D wing - 25-bed inpatient facility;
- G wing - 222 prisoners in 151 cells (61 doubled, one with disabled access) - Specialist substance misuse wing.<sup>1</sup>
- The CSU has 8 cells, 1 of which is gated and 1 is 'special'.

The prison's annual budget is £18,700,000 (excluding healthcare and education costs) - the average prison place costs about £38,500 per annum. The population is varied in age with a wide range of offences. Around 30% of prisoners are foreign nationals some of whom have a limited command of English.

The Core Day regulates provision of exercise periods and purposeful activity for each wing. The minimum time that prisoners spend in their cell every day is 18 hours - some prisoners can spend up to 21 hours in their cells although most prisoners have short times out of cell during the day for food collection, medication etc.<sup>2</sup> The Board recognises that this is due to lack of regime space.<sup>3</sup> Food at the prison has improved since the previous report although meal times remain early (11.30am and 4.30pm).

Some prisoners hold jobs within the prison such as wing cleaning and servery. HMP Brixton offers a range of educational courses under a contract with Kensington and Chelsea College with four years to run. The most popular courses are the National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) available to prisoners working, for example, in the kitchen or the gym. The prison runs an on-site radio station called Electric Radio, which is well subscribed.

Healthcare is delivered by a consortium led by Care UK which includes the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLaM), with pharmacy and other services provided by Lambeth Community Health; dental services are provided by Weymouth

---

<sup>1</sup> HMCIP

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

**Group. NHS Lambeth (the Primary Care Trust) is the commissioner and holds the contract with Care UK.**

**The Chaplaincy team represents all the major world religions and is particularly active, with some outside faith groups involved in services. Other outside agencies that are involved in HMP Brixton include Probation, the Borders Agency, CARAT, Adfam, PASRO and St. Giles Trust. PACTS, which staffed the Visitor Centre over the year, is due to be replaced by Spurgeons Charity from September 2011.**

## **SECTION 4: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Introduction**

The prison's performance status has been maintained at 3 (indicating that it is meeting the majority of targets) and it continues to have an operational turnover of about 7,000 males per year, which is a mix of prisoners on remand and sentenced.

### **Policy issues requiring a response**

- National Prison Service DHL contract is causing the prison to lose money – approx. £100,000 in 18 months. As 2011/12 is only year 3 of this 10-year contract the Board is keen to understand what options there are for improving this situation. In July 2011 the Board sent a letter on this issue to the Secretary of State for Justice and is awaiting a response; (reference p.15)
- The Board is concerned that the present Education Provider's contract does not stipulate a requirement for the provider to enter data onto the MIAP database and therefore this valuable resource cannot be fully used across prisons. The Board would like assurance that this will be addressed in future Education Provider contracts; (reference p. 11)
- Transgender prisoners: the instance of a pre-op transgender prisoner in Brixton highlighted a conflict between the legal guidelines that require her to live as a female (to qualify for the operation) and her placement in a male prison. This situation is not peculiar to Brixton and the Board would like to see clear policy guidance for prisons about how equal opportunity, human rights and sex discrimination should be handled in this situation (reference p.9)
- Given the number of prisoners coming into prison with age-related and other health issues (including drug/alcohol misuse) and the change of inmate population on re-role, it is a major concern to the Board that these needs will not be met due to possible under funding of healthcare and changes in commissioning. The Board would like assurance that there will be an assessment about the future level of need for health and age-related care programmes on re-role.
- The Board recognises the efforts that Brixton makes to replace damaged curtaining in cells around toilets but would like this to be a priority to provide a minimum level of decency.

### **Operational issues requiring a response**

- In the light of the delayed transfer-out of a prisoner with mental health issues (reference p.12) and the mistaken release of another prisoner (reference p.19) the Board would welcome the speedy results of the investigation and would like assurance that appropriate steps have been taken to address this;
- There is evidence of homophobic bullying by prisoners within the general population (excluding the vulnerable prisoner unit). The Board recognises that the prison has made some efforts to combat this, such as including a discrete

- The Board understands the difficulties in providing purposeful activity within the current site, but would like to see more opportunities for prisoners to access activities – including improvement in the numbers of prisoners accessing afternoon education and library sessions. (reference p.11,12)

#### **Other issues of concern not requiring a response**

- The Board acknowledges that Brixton’s annual budget will be decreased significantly (in the region of £2-3million) after re-categorisation. The Board recommends that careful consideration needs to be given to where the cost savings can be made;
- Given the site constraints and location of the drugs-free wing there is a concern that the problems will outweigh (or reduce) the possible gains. However – it is welcomed as a positive step towards a more effective resettlement programme;
- The extra support for foreign nationals should continue and be improved, as this is an area that will be even more important after re-role. Ideally these should include an increase in ESOL/Literacy classes, information available in different languages and use of translation services for key information points; (reference p.9,10)
- Continued improvements are necessary in the completion of ACCT files and in the standard of Comp 1 responses; (reference p.14)
- Teams within the prison (especially when closely linked such as Safer Custody and Security) should communicate more effectively; (reference p.13,19)
- Whilst recognising the difficulties of staffing, the Board continues to be concerned about the inconsistencies within the Personal Officer scheme and recommends that more be done to improve the effectiveness of Personal Officers. Some officers do this well and ways need to be found to make this good practice more consistent; (reference p.15)
- The HMCIP report 2010 highlights that Brixton Prison is overcrowded and has limited resources for ‘purposeful activities’. In the light of the plan to re-role as a resettlement prison the Board would like to see a commitment to reduce the present prisoner numbers and increase the amount of activity offered.

#### **Other issues or excellence not requiring a response**

- The Board commends the senior management of HMP Brixton for their proactive attitude in developing partnership working;

- **The Board recognises that a major benefit to the prison is the commitment of staff at all levels towards providing a humane regime;**
- **The Board is delighted that the general areas of the prison have shown improvements in the overall standard of cleanliness and appearance. Work teams repainting outside areas over the summer, wing cleaning competitions and commitment to keeping the bin areas tidy (including the work of the Vermin Control Officer) are showing real benefits.**

## **SECTION 5: CORE REPORTING AREAS**

### **Diversity**

#### **Good practice**

- The number of RIRFs has decreased from 120 during 2009 to 95 during 2010, which the Board welcomes as a genuine reflection of progress. During the reporting year the IMB has received 16 applications that are primarily about diversity - compared with 18 in 09/10 and 19 in 08/09 – suggesting the fall in numbers is not due to a lack of confidence in any particular complaints route;
- The levels of use of force were disproportionately high for black prisoners for seven months of the reporting year. The Board welcomes the fact that the Equality Department have been pro-active in addressing this issue. No obvious explanation has been found, but the numbers are now back within range;
- The Equality Department has particularly focused this year on provision for Muslim prisoners, following HMCIP comments. Muslim focus groups have been introduced as well as offering a different menu and adding alarm clocks to the Canteen list for Ramadan;
- The Equality Department's paperwork on complaints of discrimination has generally been completed to a high standard;
- Recently the prison received a pre-op transgender prisoner. The Board would like to acknowledge the professionalism of the prison in ensuring the prisoner's safety by placing her in CSU. The prisoner was transferred quickly to an appropriate prison but the Board has concerns about this being the only option available to the prison and considers that placement in CSU is not appropriate long-term.

#### **Concerns/Issues**

- Most of the complaints of discrimination relate to general issues of respect for prisoners with occasional incidents involving extreme racist views. Twenty nine of the incidents reported on RIRFs in 2010 involved staff (either on prisoner or staff on staff). The Board understands that the system is self-reporting and that subsequent investigations have cleared members of staff of racism. The Board would like to see a continued focus on eliminating racist behaviour. The Board supports the prison's disciplinary policy to ensure that racist behaviour and language by staff is tackled robustly;
- Around 30% of the prisoners in Brixton are foreign nationals. During the reporting year there was a four-month gap with no foreign national coordinator on the prison staff. There was difficulty in recruiting prisoners to be foreign national co-ordinators that has been addressed by advertising on the prison radio. The Board is pleased that prisoners can now be given a "hold" to stay in Brixton to perform this role and that this will continue after re-role;
- The number of foreign nationals retained in Brixton under immigration detention continues to be of concern to the Board;

- The prison has focused on increasing the take-up of a weekly free five-minute phone call home for foreign national prisoners who are not receiving social visits. The number of prisoners making use of this is now around 35 at any given time. The Board urges the prison to ensure that foreign nationals not receiving social visits are aware of this right as the Board feel that uptake is low;
- Information in different languages is now available within the prison, which the Board welcomes; however, some of the information is out of date and the Board would like to see regular means implemented to address this;
- Telephone translation services are used within the prison but usage varies significantly by wing. In the last six months of the reporting period the Big Word was used three times on the whole of G wing and not a single time on B wing. Given the demographic in Brixton the Board finds these statistics concerning;
- The Board would encourage measures to ensure the translation service is used more widely especially for key information points such as induction, adjudications etc. IMB members have experienced significant difficulty in accessing telephone translation services, partly due to the lack of a room with a phone. The Board recommends that this is available on all wings at all times;
- Members of the Board have been approached with complaints about homophobic bullying by prisoners and some prisoners have asked to transfer to the VPU because of this. The Board recommends continued emphasis on the unacceptability of homophobic behaviour with the same importance as on racial prejudice. The Board recognises the efforts that the prison has made to include a discrete section in the induction pack on sexuality.

### **Learning and Skills: The Education department**

#### **Good Practice**

- The number of education classes cancelled due to staff sickness and leave has improved slightly but the provision was still only 80% over the year;
- Prisoners are offered 10.5 hours of education per week with about 500 places available – including vocational and in-cell provision. Within education there are 320 FTE places;
- There is now a database (MIAP) that allows staff to access and enter prisoner's educational achievements on their learner record, created on admittance to the prison system. The Board hopes this will improve speed and efficiency in record transfer across prisons, especially when prisoners are transferred;
- If a prisoner is taking a higher level course on arrival they can be supported in distance learning and exam invigilation;

- There are several courses that are very well attended and successful – notably Radio production, ICT and Graphic Design. The education department has plans to offer a wider range of subjects next academic year;
- The Board welcomes the partnership arrangement with Gordon Ramsey to build a new kitchen and deliver a vocational qualification in hospitality/catering as a positive step to enable prisoners to find employment on release.

### **Concerns/Issues**

- The new prison vetting process means that it is no longer possible to use Agency education staff at short notice which may result in further class cancellations;
- The Board has concerns that limited numbers of prisoners will be able to access the catering opportunity due to length of sentence, movement and security. Whilst the Board welcomes the potential gains, there remain concerns about the removal of the tailoring workshop area and the disruption to existing textiles, graphics, Radio and ICT classes;
- The changes in the education department have led to some motivational issues within the existing education staff, largely because they are unsure about how re-role will affect current classes and staffing;
- There are 212 full time and 121 part time jobs available in the prison. The Board would seek reassurance that once HMP Brixton becomes a category C resettlement prison these opportunities will expand and a wider range of education and training will be offered so that prisoners are sufficiently prepared for release;
- The Windmill Centre is still not fully used, especially for afternoon sessions. The introduction of the new NOMS system at the end of the last reporting period caused significant disruption – with prisoners missing classes because they had not been put on the list. Some prisoners are not able to access the full number of education hours for a variety of reasons such as: legal visits, social visits, healthcare, sickness and court attendance.
- The Board is very concerned to learn that the prison education contract stipulates that any classes that are cancelled by the provider return a 100% attendance rate and therefore give a misleadingly positive attendance result.
- Due to prison admin staffing constraints and lack of clarity about who should enter data onto the MIAP database there has been limited use of this valuable resource. This needs to be addressed in future education contracts.

### **Learning and Skills: the Library**

#### **Good Practice**

- The library in HMP Brixton is run by the Borough of Lambeth and is well-stocked with novels, legal reference, general reference, large print and graded reader books as well as newspapers/magazines in different languages and books on CD;

- The library offers facilities to help with career planning and housing and Jobcentre Plus run sessions on work and benefits for prisoners about to be discharged;
- A 'Toe by Toe Reading Plan' operates, enabling prisoners who can read to support those who struggle with literacy;
- The Board welcomes the development of smaller in-wing libraries; we understand that they will be monitored by the prison to ensure that there are not too many extra demands on staff and space.

### **Concerns/Issues**

- There have been technical delays in the 'Virtual Campus' that mean it is not working. 'Virtual Campus' is a new, secure computer system that prisoners can use as a one-stop resettlement shop. When it is working, prisoners will be able to apply for training and jobs online and find out about support resources and contact tutors inside and outside the prison. It will be possible to create a CV regardless of literacy level by ticking relevant boxes which can then be inserted to create an automatic standard CV;
- Although the library is well advertised throughout the prison (using posters and the radio) attendance levels are still relatively low. The Board recognises that the library is a fantastic resource but that even more needs to be done to get prisoners attending. The Board believes this to be a priority especially when Brixton becomes a resettlement prison.

### **Healthcare and Mental Health**

#### **Good practice**

- Over the past year there has been a continuing reduction in waiting times for medical and dental appointments and transfers to secure hospitals;
- The Board welcomes the clinics for chronic conditions, regular health promotions, the monthly prisoner representative meetings and the co-operation between healthcare and prison management to reduce the number of missed appointments;
- There is now an integrated drug treatment for new arrivals;
- The uptake of hepatitis B vaccination has increased, although the high churn following the London riots reduced numbers;
- The Board acknowledges the staff commitment across the prison and especially on healthcare wing (this was also commended in the 2010 HMCIP report and by independent mental health advocacy services);
- D Wing is unfit for purpose, but is maintained as well as can be expected. Prisoners value the decoration on the wing and the tiny garden.

### **Concerns/Issues**

- The Board was concerned to hear that the prison did not transfer one prisoner with serious mental health issues on D-Wing for **13 months** after the completion of his sentence. The Board understands that this has been investigated and the recommendations implemented;
- The constraints of the prison regime and accommodation are inappropriate for men with severe mental health problems and this was highlighted in the HMCIP report. The resources for prisoners with learning and physical disabilities, despite staff efforts, are not up to the standard of care in the community;
- There are few trained drugs testing staff and therefore any drugs testing programme is limited by availability of staff – this needs to be addressed by the time that the drugs-free wing comes into operation and the prison is re-rolled.

### **Safer Custody**

#### **Good Practice**

- The introduction of monthly cleaning competitions has seen a marked increase in cleanliness across the prison;
- The Listeners continue to provide support to fellow prisoners and their numbers have been sufficient throughout this reporting period. The standards of the Listeners' rooms are high and well structured for the service that is offered;
- The SCG meetings are well attended by both staff, prisoners and interested parties. The minutes are available on the shared drive;
- The safety of the limited number of VPs on C4 is ensured by having separately accessed education, exercise and meals from the rest of the population; however, a high level of vulnerability remains for many prisoners (such as homosexuals) within the general population;
- There is a markedly lower number of violent incidents on C4 in comparison to other landings and the staff work hard to engage with prisoners to maintain this;
- The CSU was redecorated in July 2011 which has improved the atmosphere significantly; however the cells, furnishings, heating and general facilities continue to need improvement;
- The Board has relatively few applications from CSU prisoners (9 out of a total of 532) and segregation information is usually available, however entry of adjudication data on P-Nomis is sometimes delayed.

### **Concerns/Issues**

- The Safer Custody Team (SCG) and the Security Department seem to work independently of each other. The Board would recommend more structured sharing of information between these two groups;

- The use of perpetrator management and victim support plans is minimal and the standards of completion vary. The SCG has done some work this year to raise the profile of these documents (by printing them on blue paper) but their use is still very low;
- The overspill for VPs is held on C2, this does not offer the same levels of safety as the designated VPU on C4. This was also raised in the HMCIP's report on Brixton in December 2010;
- In this reporting period the Security team has not been as thorough in the interrogation of information and statistics as previously, and this is a concern;
- ACCT completion overall has improved – this needs to continue, with further work to be done on the quality of “interactions”;
- The turnaround time and standard of completion of comp 1 forms is poor and needs to be monitored by the prison;
- In the reporting period there have been three deaths in custody on: 18.10.2010, 02.10.2010 and 27.05.2011. Of these the death on 02.10.2010 was in a Hospice and the death in May was due to a stroke;
- In addition two inquests were completed in October 2010 and April 2011 on deaths that took place more than 3 years ago – the Board remains concerned about continued delays.

## **SECTION 6: ADDITIONAL REPORTING AREAS**

### **Personal Officer Scheme**

#### **Good practice**

- Personal officers have been allocated to cells on their wings and the IMB has been assured that they are now making P-Nomis entries which are being checked by wing managers.

#### **Concerns/Issues**

- There is a varied commitment to the Personal Officer scheme from individuals. The Board gets applications from prisoners who have tried to resolve issues through their personal officers but with no success;
- The IMB surveyed P-Nomis entries and noted that personal officers are generally making entries no more than once a month (and for some prisoners not at all). The entries usually do not describe assisting the prisoners with day-to-day concerns.

### **Canteen**

#### **Good practice**

- Each Wing has a prisoner Canteen rep who attends weekly meetings with the senior staff member in charge of Canteen. This enables ongoing prisoner input into improving the Canteen system, and useful information sharing to keep prisoners up-to-date with the latest changes / developments;
- The Canteen list offers a wide range of items – approximately 300 items that are most popular with prisoners. The list is regularly reviewed by Canteen reps who request additions and deletions, making the process democratic and transparent, and has worked particularly well in areas such as Ramadan;
- Prisoners receive information about the Canteen on arrival. A new leaflet has been designed which, once approved by DHL, will be received by all prisoners on reception.

#### **Concerns/Issues**

- National Prison Service DHL contract is not working financially for Brixton prison - the prison has lost approx. £100,000 in 18 months. As 2011/12 is only year 3 of this 10-year contract the Board is keen to understand what options there are for improving this situation. In July 2011 the Board sent a letter on this issue to the Secretary of State for Justice and is awaiting a response;
- New prisoners can face a delay of nearly two weeks in getting Canteen items, due to the schedule of each Wing ordering at a set time each week, plus the delivery time. Basic packs are available in the interim but the items available are limited;
- Prisoners and staff are often unclear on how the Canteen system operates and/or when and why changes to the system are made. This results in

frustration for prisoners and a lot of time spent by the Head of Resettlement (who was the lead for Canteen) and other staff in resolving or explaining Canteen issues. The Board has suggested that each Wing should have a staff Canteen lead, alongside the prisoner Canteen rep – to increase understanding and share information about Canteen;

- Clearer Canteen information needs to be given at induction and the Board recommends including a Q&A sheet – at the time of writing this is being taken forward by the prison;
- There are concerns about the proposed changes to DHL Canteen deliveries in 2011/12 that will result in more delays and confusion. Delivery will become a single weekly delivery dispatched from the Isle of Sheppey. The Board will monitor this closely next year.

### **Chaplaincy**

#### **Good practice**

- The Chaplaincy team represents all the major world religions and is particularly active, with some outside faith groups involved in services;
- The needs of Muslim prisoners in particular have been addressed and provision shows improvement and is mentioned in the HMCIP report;
- In the summary of his report on the prison the HM Chief Inspector of Prisons noted, "the highly visible chaplaincy exemplified Brixton's positive work" in the area of resettlement;
- The department continues to run a wide range of well-attended chaplaincy activities and services throughout the week;
- The resettlement agenda is supported through the Debt Programme and partnerships with mentoring agencies, enabling men to leave the prison with community support;
- In preparation for the change in Brixton's role the Chaplaincy team are seeking to develop a full-time, five day a week, resettlement programme. It will also expand its programme of evening activities.

### **Induction, Reception and First Nighters (C Wing)**

#### **Good practice**

- First night cells are now cleaned and are being maintained to an acceptable standard (they have been repainted during the reporting year);
- The induction arrangements for prisoners who have been placed on G-Wing for drug treatment reasons have improved.

## **Concerns/issues**

- At the time of writing, the induction booklet, visits information, healthcare forms and telephone pin applications (all in the induction pack) were almost impossible to read for several months of the reporting year because they had been photocopied so many times. The Induction Pack is a key resource for prisoners and needs to be easily legible - the Board will continue to monitor the material;
- The translated induction material is much easier to read but is now out of date. The Board recommend that the prison addresses this and ensures that key translated information remains up to date;
- The HMCIP inspection recommended information be put up in the holding cells in reception so that prisoners have something to read and can access key information while they wait to be processed. The prison has accepted this recommendation but this has not happened yet;
- During the reporting year there was an attempted suicide by a recently received prisoner who had not been put on an ACCT. The Board recommends more rigorous checking of first nighters to reduce the possibility of future incidents.

## **Resettlement**

### **Good practice**

- Brixton prison consistently exceeds the 80% NOMS resettlement target for prisoners having accommodation to go to on release. Between September 2010 and July 2011 the rate achieved each month ranged from 82% to 87%;
- The prison works with a range of partners to support prisoners with resettlement – statutory, voluntary and community sectors such as St Giles Trust; Jobcentre Plus, Chaplaincy, Primary Care Trust, End2End and Pact. This provides a good basis from which to support a range of prisoner resettlement needs;
- Discharge Boards are held weekly for prisoners who are approximately two weeks ahead of release – a notable proportion (approximately 35%) of prisoners fail to attend these Boards, which can result in problems on release. The prison tries to avoid such problems by seeing nearly all prisoners that don't attend the Board to address any outstanding issues before they are discharged;
- At the weekly Discharge Board meetings Jobcentre Plus staff attend to provide job search advice. When the online Virtual Campus facility is working it will allow Jobcentre Plus staff to search live job vacancies for prisoners during these weekly meetings;
- The use of Home Detention Curfew is very low – earlier in the year only one or two prisoners would be released on HDC per month. The prison has now reviewed this and implemented improvements to the system for processing HDC applications. An HDC Board meets weekly to consider applications and there is

a good range of representatives including a Governor, wing staff member, OMU staff member and the prisoner;

- In addition weekly HDC surgeries are now held on each Wing enabling applications to be processed more quickly and prisoners to get immediate updates on their application. The HDC monthly release rate had increased to five or six per month in each of the months May to July 2011. Staff are committed to monitoring and improving the process for HDC releases;
- The Chaplaincy run the Time for Families course and a Debt programme, and is one of the sources of mentoring prisoners on release;
- Southwark Council provides an officer to come into Brixton prison once a week to aid the resettlement of prisoners returning to Southwark. This has proven beneficial for these prisoners and the prison is keen to replicate this with other boroughs. Lambeth has stated its interest in establishing a similar arrangement;
- The proposed partnership arrangement for catering/hospitality within education will hopefully aid resettlement and jobs on release;
- Brixton prison's re-role to become a Category C prison from 2012 will bring significant changes. The increased focus on resettling prisoners into London boroughs will require sufficient resources and planning. The initial stages of the re-role have been well handled by the prison and the IMB has been well informed. This will be an issue of keen interest for the IMB in the coming year.

#### **Concerns/issues**

- Brixton prison has a Resettlement Strategy that was published in April 2010 and was due for review in December 2010. The review is yet to happen. The Strategy document provides useful information on resettlement services and processes in Brixton, but doesn't include clear development objectives for how resettlement practice in Brixton can continue to improve;
- Quarterly resettlement partnership group meetings are a useful forum for resettlement partners to network. They provide a good opportunity for information sharing. To achieve greater impact the meetings could be more action-focussed e.g. on developing resettlement strategy and problem-solving;
- The Board would like to see better use made of the Windmill Centre to aid more prisoners in accessing employment, training and education opportunities prior to release. The Centre could be used more often and for a wider range of activities. All courses / activities need to be well publicised;
- Less than 50% of prisoners have a part-time job in the prison. Further consideration of how more prisoners could access work in the prison would be welcomed particularly in the light of the prison's re-role;
- There are staff that have resettlement skills and knowledge that is not being fully utilised due to other (administrative) pressures within their role – if this could be changed more resettlement support could be offered.

## **Security**

### **Good Practice**

- Brixton has retained two dog handlers each of whom has two dogs, one passive and the other active. The Board notes that the dog searches on the wings continue to find banned items – G-Wing being the most prolific. The Board would like to see these searches happening more frequently, particularly to aid the operation of the proposed ‘drug-free’ wing;
- There was a serious incident on B-Wing following the London riots; the Board understands that the prison dealt with the situation appropriately. The Board were informed but not present as the incident was over very quickly;
- The Board appreciates the speed with which the prison implemented appropriate procedures to investigate an allegation of assault against a Manager;
- The Board recognizes the Prison’s support of staff that report alleged incidents to the Governor if they occur.

### **Concerns/Issues**

- The Board was concerned to hear of the accidental early release of a prisoner;
- The fitting of nets and grills on cell windows has had limited effect in reducing the use of drugs and mobile phones in the prison;
- On average there are 3.5 searches of staff a month. The Board asked for more random searches on staff arriving at the Prison (including the use of search dogs) as a deterrent to all staff tempted to bring in contraband. At the time of reporting this has not been implemented;
- Despite the introduction of a device to block mobile phone signal there has been limited impact due to restrictions imposed by Ofcom on behalf of the local residents;
- The Board is aware that the furniture in the visitors’ hall is not yet fixed to the floor. This allows prisoners to position themselves in such a way that restricts officer observation, making the exchange of contraband items easier. The Board recommends that the furniture be attached to the floor to minimize this risk;
- Although communication between officers in the visitors’ hall and those watching CCTV footage is good, the CCTV does not cover all areas of the visitors’ hall, consequently there remain opportunities for the transfer of illicit items. The Board recommends that CCTV is installed to monitor all aspects of the hall;
- More training is needed for staff in the security section so they can collect, respond to and handle any intelligence received with confidence. Information sharing with the Security department is underdeveloped, especially in relation to gang related activity which can result in violent incidents;

- The Board is concerned that the processing of INTEL is not time efficient. For example, there has been up to 8 days backlog of unprocessed SIRs. There is only one trained analyst deployed on INTEL although there have been more than 3,300 SIRs received relating to drugs and gang related violence in this reporting year;
- The dog section is often not being used to its full capacity for visitor searches due to staff shortages. The handler needs at least one other officer with them at all times so that appropriate searches can occur.

## **Visits**

### **Good Practice**

- There is a visits timetable at Brixton with four slots daily from Monday to Saturday and visits on Sunday afternoons for enhanced and working prisoners. All these slots provide good opportunity for remand prisoners to attain their entitlement of three visits per week. However, the Board recommends that the timetable extends to evening visits;
- There is now a fully operational biometric system – operational from April 2010 – whereby visitors' data (such as fingerprints and photographs) are entered onto the computer so that they can be both identified and deterred from bringing in contraband;
- The visitor centre outside the prison gates enables visitors to store property and access any support and information they need from PACT. The Board understands that, from September 2011, the PACT service will be replaced by the children's charity Spurgeons (as the outcome of a competitive tender across London);
- The Board welcomes the provision of water and fruit juices to the vending machines as a healthy alternative to the high sugar drinks that were the only option before;
- There have been changes to the booking system to make booking visits a less time consuming procedure. One of these schemes is letting visitors book at the visitors' centre where staff take the completed forms and later call the applicant to confirm their visit. Email bookings have also been introduced. Although this process was only introduced in July, initial reports suggest it is working and being well taken up.

### **Concerns/issues**

- With reference to the visitors' centre, a new manager will be in post from August. It is hoped some of the upkeep issues the centre faces (e.g. lockers are in poor condition with failing locks) will be addressed when Spurgeons takes over;
- Over the reporting year there have been continued delays involved with booking visits by telephone. This is particularly problematic when anyone in the visits

### **Issues around re-roling as a Category C resettlement prison**

Whilst not in the reporting year, the planned re-role will raise some considerable issues for Brixton. As a consequence the Board thought it appropriate to comment on our concerns and the good practice that we have seen to date.

#### **Good Practice**

- A senior manager has been recruited to plan and project manage the re-role;
- 12 Latchmere House prisoners were transferred to Brixton in August and are currently on day release – this will be a good means of piloting the management of day release prisoners;
- Relationships with the community continue to be positive and this has been promoted well by the Prisons Governor and Senior Management;
- The prison management team appear to be embracing the change with energy and enthusiasm.

#### **Concerns/Issues**

- Security (in terms of day release);
- Reduction in staffing levels and the effect on staff morale;
- Substantial financial cuts;
- Not enough space if the operational capacity remains the same at 798;
- Not enough education;
- Not enough employment;
- The proposed new building will provide more workshop space which is very welcome, but there will be a delay of at least a year before it is commissioned.

## **SECTION 7: THE WORK OF THE IMB**

The Board recruited nine new members this year, which has meant that despite several resignations from the Board it has operated on at least 75% of its recommended complement this year. This has allowed for a more structured approach to applications and rota visits. Each Board member is expected to carry out one rota visit between monthly Board meetings. This allows for three to four members to carry out a rota visit in any one week. During a rota visit a Board member is expected to complete any outstanding applications and to attend segregation reviews and adjudication hearings in addition to monitoring the day-to-day operation of the prison. Each member also has an area of special interest that they focus on for the reporting year. This involves observing prison meetings on the area, arranging information-gathering meetings with the relevant prison staff, and additional monitoring e.g. of completion standards of ACCTs. This work culminates in this written report but is also used on a weekly basis to challenge the prison as well as, less frequently, to write to the minister on points of particular concern.

As a result of the HMICP report in December 2010 that showed that 39% of the prisoners questioned had not heard of the IMB we have recently attempted to tackle this issue. We have put up extra posters on the wings and landings, carried out a survey (which had 70% uptake), a member of the Board was interviewed on the prison radio and the Board have tried to raise visibility by attending more association times. Hopefully a more stable prison population after the re-role and a more stable board will see this percentage decrease. However, the total number of applications to the IMB during this reporting period was 532 – an increase of 9% over the previous period.

<b>Board Statistics</b>	
Recommended complement of Board Members	<b>20</b>
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	<b>12</b>
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	<b>16</b>
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	<b>9</b>
Number of members leaving within reporting period	<b>5</b>
Total number of board meetings during reporting period	<b>12</b>
Average number of attendances at Board meetings during reporting period	<b>11</b>
Number of attendances at meetings other than Board Meetings	Not recorded
Total number of visits to the prison (including all meetings)	Not recorded
Total number of applications received	<b>532</b>
Total number of segregation reviews held	Not recorded
Total number of segregation reviews attended	Not recorded

## Applications to the IMB

<b>Code</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>2007/8</b>	<b>2008/9</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>
A	Accommodation	37	34	41	36
B	Adjudications	5	7	11	9
C	Diversity Related	10	19	18	16
D	Education/employment/training	33	21	24	28
E	Family/visits	48	79	61	72
F	Food/kitchen related	25	37	27	36
G	Health related	62	65	55	62
H	Property	102	98	92	112
I	Sentence related	17	18	15	22
J	Staff/prisoner/detainee related	44	41	38	36
K	Transfers	27	28	29	34
L	Miscellaneous	66	62	64	69
	<b>Total number of applications</b>	<b>476</b>	<b>509</b>	<b>475</b>	<b>532</b>

## **Section 8: GLOSSARY OF PRISON-RELATED ABBREVIATIONS USED**

**AA** Administrative Assistant  
**ABS** Anti-Bullying System  
**ACCT** Assessment, Care in Custody & Teamwork – replacement for F2052SH  
**ACR** Automatic Conditional Release  
**AO** Administrative Officer  
**ARD** Automatic Release Date  
**ATOS** Company responsible for assessing long-term sick  
**BCU** Briefing and Casework Unit – PS unit handling adjudication appeals  
**BME** Black & Minority Ethnic  
**BOV** Board of Visitors – now IMB  
**C & R** Control & Restraint  
**C2W, CTW** Custody to Work – pre-release focus on housing, employment and lifestyle issues  
**CARATS** Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice & Throughcare Scheme – drug & alcohol team  
**CC** Cellular Confinement – a punishment  
**CCD** Criminal Casework Department (Croydon)  
**CLAIT** Computer Literacy and Information Technology  
**CCT** Criminal Casework Team (part of Home Office Immigration & Nationalities Dept)  
**CMU** Case Management Unit – work on sentence planning & progress  
**CNA** Certified Normal Accommodation  
**CRD** Conditional Release Date  
**CSH** Contracted Service Hours (pre-agreed paid overtime)  
**CSU** Commissioning Support Unit  
**DASU** Drug And Alcohol Support Unit  
**DH** Dog Handler  
**EDR** Earliest Date of Release  
**EMU** Estates Management Unit  
**EO** Executive Officer  
**EPDG** Estates Planning & Development Group  
**EGP** Ex Gratia Payment  
**ETA** Employment & Training Allocation  
**ETE** Employment/Training/Education  
**ETS** Enhanced Thinking Skills – an OBP  
**F2050** Prisoner's basic record  
**F2052A** Prisoner's wing record  
**F2052SH** Record for prisoner currently at risk of self-harm  
**FLED** Facility Licence Eligibility Date (when prisoner may be considered for ROTL)  
**FOCUS** Financial Outstations and Central Unified Systems – the PS accounting system  
**GOOD** Good Order or Discipline – Segregation under Rule 45/49 (historically GOAD)  
**HCC** Health Care Centre  
**HDC** Home Detention Curfew – the Tag  
**HDCED** Earliest Date of Release on HDC

**HEO** Higher Executive Officer  
**HMCIP** Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons  
**ICA1/2** Initial Categorisation & Classification Forms for Adults/YOs  
**IDU** Inmate Development Unit  
**IEP** Incentives and Earned Privileges – Prisoners can be on Basic, Standard or Enhanced  
**IG** Instruction to Governors  
**IMB** Independent Monitoring Board  
**IND** Immigration & Nationality Department  
**IRC** Immigration Removal/Reception Centre  
**JSA** Job-Seekers Allowance  
**JSAC** Job Simulation & Assessment Centre (for officers seeking promotion to SO)  
**KPI/KPT** Key Performance Indicator/Target  
**LDR** Latest Date of Release  
**LED** Licence Expiry Date  
**LIDS** Local Inmate Database System – IMB can use this to check location, dates, etc.  
**LSC** Learning & Skills Council  
**MAPPA** Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements  
**MDT** Mandatory Drugs Testing  
**MSL** Minimum Staffing Level  
**MQPL** Measuring the Quality of Prison Life  
**NACRO** National Association for Care & Resettlement of Offenders  
**NC** The National Council for IMBs  
**NEC** National Exchange Centre- building between VTC & Boiler Ho. used for ETE  
**NOMS** National Offender Manager Service – amalgamation of the Prison & Probation Services  
**OASYS** Offender Assessment System – computerised risk & needs assessment  
**OBP** Offending Behaviour Programme  
**OCA** Observation, Classification & Allocations – a Reception task  
**OLASS** Offender Learning and Skills Service (part of LSC)  
**OSG** Operational Support Grade  
**OI/OR/OP** Own Interests/Request/Protection – Segregation under Rule 45/49  
**PASRO** Prisons Addressing Substance-Related Offending – an OBP  
**PCO** Prison Custody Officer  
**PCT** Primary Care Trust – National Health component responsible for healthcare  
**PEI/O** Physical Education Instructor/Officer  
**PER** Prisoner Escort Record  
**PESO/PEPO** Physical Education Senior/Principal Officer  
**PIN** Prisoner Information Notice  
**PMU** Population Management Unit (central)  
**PO** Principal Officer  
**POA** Prison Officers' Association – the main trade union  
**POELT** Prison Officer Entry Level Trainee  
**POPO** Prolific and Other Priority Offender  
**PPO** Prisons and Probation Ombudsman  
**PPP** Public Protection Panel

**PS** Prison Service  
**PSI** Prison Service Instruction  
**PSO** Prison Service Order – see [www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/resourcecentre/psispsos/listpsos](http://www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/resourcecentre/psispsos/listpsos)  
**RFW** Removal from Wing – a punishment  
**ROAD** Remission of Added Days (up to 50%)  
**ROM** Regional Offender Manager  
**ROR** Restoration of Remission – now ROAD; Risk of Reconviction;  
**ROTL** Release on Temporary Licence – e.g. to work in mess; town visits; home leave  
**ROWD** Review of Works Departments (may involve privatisation/civilianisation)  
**RRA** Assistant to the RRLO  
**RRLO** Race Relations Liaison Officer  
**SAU** Standards Audit Unit  
**SCG** Safer Custody Group  
**SED** Sentence Expiry Date  
**SEO** Senior Executive Officer  
**SIN** Staff Information Notice  
**SIR** Security Information Report  
**SLA** Service Level Agreement  
**SMARG** Segregation and Monitoring Review Group  
**SMT** Senior Management Team  
**SO** Senior Officer  
**SPDR** Staff Performance & Development Record – reviewed annually  
**TOIL** Time Off in Lieu (of payment)  
**TSU** Technical Support Unit – part of PS responsible for repairs/installations (“Works”)  
**TUPE** Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) – staff transfer  
**VDT** Voluntary Drugs Testing  
**VO** Visiting Order – sent out by prisoners, allows named people to visit  
**VTC** Vocational Training Centre  
**Gold Commander** Headquarters controller for serious incidents  
**Silver Commander** Person in establishment in charge of serious incidents  
**Bronze Commander** Local Sub Commander for serious incidents  
**Operation Tornado** System to provide extra staff and resources for serious incidents