



H.M.Y.O.I. PORTLAND

INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR TO

31st MARCH 2011

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Board's Overall View

We described last year's Annual Report as possibly the most complimentary ever produced by the IMB about HMYOI Portland. We are pleased that once again there are a number of positive trends to report.

- At the beginning of the reporting period, Portland's score in the annual national survey measuring the quality of prison life (MQPL) showed a significant improvement between March 2008 and May 2010.
- Resettlement targets are frequently exceeded and are higher than those of comparable establishments.
- Use of the Care and Control Unit (CCU) has reduced over the year as the wing staff have been managing more of the prisoners with behavioural problems on the wing. There has also been little use of the special cell – a cell with cardboard furniture which violent prisoners cannot use to break out.
- Collingwood has become a Release On Temporary Licence (ROTL) wing and more prisoners are going out to work. This is a positive improvement, and should be encouraged.
- There have been some good and interesting initiatives coming from Reducing Re-offending, which show imagination and commitment to improving inmates' lives in the YOI and beyond.
- Drugs remained a very slight problem at Portland.

However, latterly, the prison has been experiencing a sense of uncertainty with regard to the future. There are a number of reasons for this:

- Staff have been concerned about public sector pay, jobs and pensions, a number of changes in working practices and the uncertainty and extra work involved in the introduction of P-NOMIS..
- The demolition of two wings (Rodney and Hardy) which began in February has caused some disruption. The most obvious effects are that Healthcare has required officers to escort the prisoners into and out of the "ring of steel" surrounding the building site, reducing the number of clients able to be treated at any one time. The Chaplaincy team, also affected by the works, has been relocated within the prison.
- Prison Service economies stopped much-needed renovation work, including really quite essential investment in a new educational building and new boilers.

- There has been a change in the prison population over the year, as the London prisoners are now going to Isis, leaving Portland with a catchment area of the South West. The ethnic and religious mix has changed. Rather than a substantial number of hardened young Londoners with gang backgrounds in many cases, we are seeing more of the “inadequates”, often with mental health concerns, from the Bristol and South Wales area.
- The YOI is looking forward to a year in which it will start to receive older prisoners, with the attendant anxieties as well as advantages that may present.
- In December it was announced that Portland would examine partnership with Dorchester prison, which is intended to safeguard the strengths of both prisons whilst giving time for functional areas from both sides to develop ways in which they could enhance their area of work in future, with our Governor Steve Holland becoming Governor of both prisons.

The Board wishes to commend the Management for the way they have kept us informed of all the changes happening in the Prison Service, as well within the YOI and the local cluster.

Issues of concern

There have been repeated problems with the education contractors (mostly Strode College) over lack of delivery due to staff shortages, and the length of time taken to recruit new teachers. This resulted in 5909 out of 31,000 timetabled hours being lost, where the prisoners were locked up instead of being in classes.

There have been several serious assaults on staff, and there is a concern that the prisoners are not always punished properly for this. Police action to investigate often seems tardy. There is an anomaly in the law which fails to allow judges to award prisoners recalled under licence extra days for assaulting prison staff.

P-NOMIS is still causing problems, and when prisoners are recalled information about their previous behaviour in custody does not always appear.

The number of prisoners with behavioural problems remains high; but only the 15% who are considered the highest risk receive any treatment. The rest, who are a huge drain on staff resources, get no help.

The caseload for treating alcohol addiction covers 20% of the population, with the list of prisoners needing help increasing. Short term prisoners needing assessment are blocking the system. The provision of treatment for alcohol misuse falls short of the requirement.

Conclusion

Portland is on the threshold of a period of great change.

Conditions of custody for prisoners at Portland have improved manifestly over the past three years; progress perhaps reflected in the reduction to 95 in the number of Applications received by the Board. The IMB hopes that the YOI will be able to maintain its positive momentum despite the considerable challenges detailed above and in the following Mandatory Reports.

Signature.....

Roger Davies (on behalf of the Board)
17 June 2011

MANDATORY REPORTS

Diversity and Race Relations

A1. A key feature of the year was the result of the MQPL (Measuring the Quality of Prison Life) survey carried out in May 2010. This survey explores Young Offender perceptions of their time at Portland. Whilst there had been no change in the scores from March 2006 to March 2008, there was a statistically significant increase in satisfaction between March 2008 and May 2010. Overall results for non-white respondents at Portland were marginally better than for white respondents.

A2. A consultation process known as Dialogue conducted with the help of Bournemouth University has been conducted on Nelson Wing and in Resettlement. The results may have contributed to the positive survey scores in the MQPL achieved by Nelson. The process is being extended to other wings.

A3. Comprehensive data are analysed for assessing diversity across all activities at Portland. In general this indicates that all categories were in range with no problems highlighted to the Race Equality Action Team.

A4. Disabled access to the Visitors' Centre is being improved. The system of Visiting Orders has now been changed to make it more user-friendly and is being monitored. In particular changes to accommodate large groups are in hand, and the literature distributed in advance is being improved.

A5. The mandatory diversity training programme Challenge it, Change it has now been delivered to 73% of staff. While its delivery is still incomplete, members observe that the emphasis on showing and expecting respect between all those within the Establishment, promoted by the course, has been beneficial, not only to the atmosphere but more concretely in reducing violence and creating safer custody.

A6. There have been considerable and well-received improvements in how the requirements of Ramadan are accommodated. These included creative ways of enabling Muslims to eat a hot meal after their fast, by providing appropriate menus and good quality individual food flasks.

Reducing Re-offending: Learning and Skills

A7. The provision of workshop and vocational training and education continues to be contracted out, mainly to Strode College and A4E. Delivery of courses by Strode College continues to be disappointing, although performance has improved marginally through the year.

A8. There have been 25 changes in personnel in the last two years, with staff retention now proving a bigger problem than recruitment. Inadequate provision is made for cover for staff who are absent or on leave.

A9. In addition the contract allows Strode College to 'make up' their contracted hours by putting on Railtrack and Streetwork courses which are weighted at three hours for one, though these are in fact sub-contracted anyway to the Buffer organisation.

A10. Even when inmates successfully complete courses, exams, qualifications and certificates are not always available to them. There seem to be several causes:

- Prisoners being moved from the prison at short notice and without sensible consultation between departments, just as they are about to take an exam or test.
- Staffing fluctuations.
- The secure laptop which enables online assessments to be carried out under exam conditions and answers uploaded securely was under-utilised. Do all Strode instructors know it exists?

A11. A local manager has been appointed by Strode College and reliable staff sickness cover is promised. IMB members have noted a slight reduction in the number of classes cancelled.

A12. There are some positive examples of progress in the workshops area, which include:

- Barbering and Industrial Cleaning – both popular courses where qualifications are being achieved.
- Railtrack – new funding for this highly regarded course.
- Street Works and Forklift Driving.
- Horticulture – with the continuing interest of Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall and the Eden Project.
- Livestock husbandry – pigs have been added to the existing livestock.

A13. The condition of the Old Education Building is deplorable and not fit for purpose for prisoners or staff. The IMB had welcomed the news that a new Education Department was to be built despite the public expenditure cuts. Current serious doubts about whether this project will go ahead are very disappointing.

A14. The library continues to do good work. Activities include:

- An innovative project (Storybook Dads) which encouraged fathers and other prisoners to write and record a story for their child, or young relative, decorate the present and send it off as a Christmas gift or give it at a Visits session. 27 young men completed this project in the last year.
- The library introduced 882 new books and 146 new CDs this year. Over 15,000 books and nearly 3,000 CDs were borrowed in the last year. There are also newspapers and magazines which the latest survey says is the main reason why prisoners visit the library.
- Library staff have restarted a Toe-By-Toe reading project this year. 17 mentors have been trained and the scheme is available on most relevant wings. The problem appears to be finding learners, as many who cannot read disguise the fact.
- A new distance learning coordinator has been appointed, coinciding with an increase in the number of prisoners doing correspondence courses for higher than

basic level qualifications. This number remains modest, at under 20. We hope to see progress.

- On a less upbeat note, the reading group for more advanced readers has had to be abandoned, as there are not enough staff to make it viable.

A15. Assessment and establishment of learning plans seemingly operated in a reasonably efficient and timely manner.

Reducing re-offending: Other new initiatives

A16. There have been a number of interesting projects implemented this year – all aimed at increasing both the educational level of prisoners and their social skills and particularly aimed at those disaffected from learning:

- Working with Parelli horses, which have been brought into the prison for the purpose. Prisoners who participated and observers who saw the project were enthusiastic and impressed by what it had taught them, particularly in anger management and patience.
- A Harris hawk has been introduced with the allotted task of keeping the seagulls away. This initiative has produced an unexpected and welcome side effect: prisoners who look after the hawk can get a falconry qualification, and give themselves a strong possibility of work in this, apparently growing, field.
- Restorative Justice – a dialogue between offenders and those affected by their crimes. Over 40 staff have been trained and it has now started to be an integral part of working practice.
- Chance to Change – an intensive course to change behaviour, of which the staff have great hopes.
- Way4ward – coordination of agencies once prisoners have left the establishment to provide re-settlement support.
- Sailing and water activities – including raft building and sailing on ‘Tall Ships’ as part of the Prince’s Trust scheme.
- Father’s days have been expanded to one a month and to include siblings.

Healthcare

A17. There is now a good management structure in place and the team is coping well despite constant staff shortages. The nurses are stretched by having to service two clinics on the wings as well as in the healthcare centre.

A18. Due to the demolition of two wings, Healthcare has been fenced off from the main prison since February: therefore officers have had to be deployed to accompany prisoners who have appointments. The number attending clinics at any one time was limited to 20.

A19. A new Telemed conference facility has been introduced during the year which allows prisoners to be assessed through a tele link by a doctor or consultant. This has cut down on the number of hospital visits, and has proved very useful.

A20. New prisoners were seen at Reception for their induction. This caused problems for the nurses due to space limitations; extra room is needed if there are eight or more arrivals at one time.

A21. A new dentist was appointed. The transition took a while to get organised, but waiting lists have been reduced, although we have noted that prisoners sometimes fail to turn up if gym is an alternative choice.

A22. There continue to be many young men with mental health problems being sent to Portland; with the vulnerable ones being cared for on Beaufort wing. The more aggressive ones are now managed on the general wings, and only when they become violent are they sent to the segregation unit.

Safer Custody & Violence Reduction

A23. Considering the age of the prisoner population the rate of violence in the prison is considered low, though some is serious. Assaults have led on occasion to serious injury. In those instances police response has been disappointing, with unacceptable delay in interviewing victims and witnesses, collecting evidence and in charging the perpetrators. Sentences passed have given the impression, via lenient or concurrent awards, that prison staff or other prisoners are not entitled to the same treatment as other members of the public and this sends a message to prisoners that an assault in prison is something which can be ignored or played down.

A24. The work of violence reduction is overseen by a monthly team meeting for violence reduction and a quarterly meeting for safer custody, both chaired by a governor. Two dedicated officers run the schemes and manage the wing officer specialists and the prisoner representatives. Each wing or department is expected to be featured in the meetings and this has made for large numbers and unwieldy discussion. There has also been some reluctance on the part of some members, particularly prisoner reps, to speak candidly or at all. Attendance has been a constant issue.

A25. As a result, towards the end of the reporting year, separate meetings have been held with prisoner wing reps and with staff wing VR officers and reports from those have been given to the main meeting. It is felt that a truer picture of the issues have thus been available and prisoner reps have not been compromised amongst their peers. This has led to their being able to do a more effective job in preventing some potential violence and bullying on the wings, on free-flow and in other areas of the prison. They are also effective in underlining the virtues of forethought in preventing incidents from arising or of the consequences on a prisoner's behaviour records or adjudications of unwise action. A start has been made in introducing Restorative Justice practices in place of or as a consequence of adjudications. So far this is a work in progress, as staff involved are feeling their way and the concept is new and alien to most prisoners.

A26. The number of ACCT books open at any one time is considered low and most are closed quickly. There are a good number of assessors trained, though they are called on rarely. No assessor wishes to give up their role as it is regarded as a worthwhile contribution and it brings a valuable transferable skill to other work with prisoners. All prisoners, whether on an open ACCT book or not, are assessed on reception into the

prison, as is their cell-share risk assessment. Reviews are regular and timely and SC officers monitor the quality of the conversations with at-risk prisoners. Almost all staff are now trained in the use of ACCT books and procedure, though there were at the end of the reporting year still a small number of people resisting the training.

A27. A small number of prisoners are subject to anti-bullying monitoring and interventions. Violence reduction and safer custody staff are active in minimising the effects of bullying but it is often an invisible side of pressure on vulnerable prisoners, who are usually reluctant to name the source. No training dates have been available for this work. As part of the Action Plan there is a desire to support victims and at the end of the reporting year a scheme to run a self-help group for victims of bullying was being discussed.

A28. There has been discussion also about how to assist habitually self-harming prisoners to cope in the long term with their need for and the effects of this practice. Again, the lack of training dates available is a constant drag on progress in the managing of this area of care.

Care and Control Unit (CCU)

A29. The teams of Officers in charge of prisoners sent to the CCU for disciplinary reasons or for their own protection, showed their customary professionalism and great patience in dealing with some challenging behaviour. The IMB congratulates them on achieving successful outcomes for their difficult charges and constructing plans to enable them to move on to more constructive activities.

A30. The sea-change in this unit was in the number of prisoners routinely confined here. No longer was this near the maximum which could be accommodated, but remained at low levels with commendably short stays in the majority of cases. This was in part due to the use of more pro-active interventions for minor transgressions (using the Incentives and Earned Privileges Scheme) on residential wings.

A31. Further restrictions, such as accommodating prisoners in the Special Cell to prevent them harming themselves, were only infrequently needed and then for short periods only.

A32. The CCU held daily adjudications chaired by a Governor, to deal with offences committed by prisoners whilst at Portland and reported by staff. These often seemed to be of a minor nature and were awarded light punishments. The IMB believes that many could have been dealt with satisfactorily by the Management of their Residential Wing, if an appropriate procedure existed.

A33. CCU staff were generally good at notifying the IMB of new arrivals in the Unit.

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS & ACTIVITIES

Chaplaincy

B1. There has been a lot of change this year including the transfer of the Church of England (CofE) Chaplaincy Coordinator to another prison after 10 years, his replacement going straight on long term sick leave; the change in policy of not assigning London prisoners to Portland resulting in almost 50% fewer Muslims; and major disruption - for different reasons - of the two worship venues.

B2. Staffing remained at three full time chaplains: CofE, Roman Catholic (RC) and the Muslim Imam, now the Chaplaincy Coordinator, who cater for all faiths with the help of a small team of part-time volunteers.

B3. There has been no access to the Chapel since February as it is inside the building site for the demolition of Hardy and Rodney Wings. Due to concerns about the Chapel's deteriorating structure and the likelihood of continuing restricted access, it was decided to convert the Mosque into a Multi-Faith Hall or Chaplaincy Centre. The transition was far from smooth as the RC, CofE and Muslim services had to take place in a classroom in a building which suffers badly from leaks during rainstorms. Buckets lining the stairs and corridors have proven an unusual diversion on the way to worship while waiting for the renovations to the new Chaplaincy Centre to be completed.

B4. Despite the physical challenges and personnel changes, the Chaplaincy remains, spiritually, at the heart of Portland and the IMB congratulates them, and in particular the Imam, on the support offered to prisoners of all faiths, or no faith and those on an ACCT document, as they work through life issues with prisoners in a way that is meaningful and positive, adding to the quality and decency of life in the prison.

Kitchen

B5. The kitchen typically served 480 prisoners per day throughout the year consisting of a hot meal every lunch time and on Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings; a cold packed meal on Monday to Thursday evenings; and a cereal breakfast every day. There were four choices of menu, including Halal and vegetarian options.

B6. The entire kitchen catering equipment is now supplied under the national ARP contract which means that it is kept up to date, is reliable and serviced by outside contractors on a five-year maintenance agreement. The kitchen's cleanliness and tidiness have often been noted in IMB Rota reports, so it was no surprise that a Gold award was achieved on the recent inspection by the Environmental Health Officer. We congratulate the Catering Manager, his adult staff, and all concerned.

B7. There was an emphasis on getting prisoners who work in the kitchen an NVQ qualification; this year 9 prisoners achieved an NVQ Level 1, with 5 currently on the NVQ course. There are currently 18 prisoners working in the kitchen.

B8. The Catering Manager has commendably set up an allotment area with the intention of giving prisoners a chance to gain horticultural skills and to be able to feed them the occasional home grown fresh produce. This is still in the early stages although it is expected to develop to allow prisoners who have achieved ROTL status the opportunity to work outside on the allotments.

Psychology

B9. The number of prisoners with behavioural problems remains high; but only the 15% who are considered the highest risk receive any treatment. The rest, who are a huge drain on staff resources, get no help.

B10. Staff shortages in this department have been an issue again this year, which has meant that there has not been a single CALM (Control Anger and Learning to Manage) programme, as the only member of staff qualified to deliver it left at the beginning of the year. The only courses that were run were 7 TSP (Thinking Skills Programme) ones, which only allowed places for 70 prisoners in total, which is a small proportion of those that need help. This is an area of the prison where we feel there is room for considerable improvement.

B11. The IMB notes that there is no communication between the psychology department and the mental health team, and question whether this could allow those that need help to slip through the net.

Gym and sports

B12. The Gym is well equipped and there has also been recent investment in facilities like the new sports pitch and multi use games area. The well trained instructors were able to offer a broad range of vocational and non-vocational activities.

B13. Last year there was a review of gym activities. The main changes were that day time Gym would focus on accredited courses and that recreational Gym would be mostly evenings and weekends. This involved changing the shift patterns for the officers which caused some disaffection. The changes have yet to fully bed in.

B14. The Football Academy proved highly popular; rugby has now been introduced and cage cricket may be next. There has been an increased amount of football and rugby being played, and Portland hosted visiting teams of football and rugby players during the year. Some prisoners have been allowed out to play in local teams, and we are glad to report that there has been no abuse of this privilege as yet.

Drugs and addictions

B15. There were few positive drug tests (averaging 1.1% of prisoners tested), with a reducing rate over the year.

B16. The Independent Drug Treatment System (IDTS), a national initiative for the delivery of methadone maintenance programme, is in place but has only been needed on

an infrequent basis. The trained nurse worked two days a week with the local Weymouth drugs team. The numbers peaked at four and was mainly as a result of new arrivals.

B17. Over the year an average of 20% of Portland prisoners needed treatment for alcohol addiction with the numbers needing help increasing monthly. The need to assess short-term prisoners blocks the system. A self-assessment questionnaire is helping to identify prisoners' needs. Portland's provision to meet the needs of alcohol misuse issues falls short of what is required. Very disappointingly, funding for the one alcohol worker has been withdrawn and the service is now being provided by Counselling Assessment Referral Advice & Throughcare Service (CARATs).

B18. Portland's Prisons Addressing Substance-Related Offending (P-ASRO) Team run a very successful programme to reduce prisoners' dependence on drugs and several go on to do the course and training for voluntary work when they are released. The recent audit recorded 55 completions in the year against a target of 52.

B19. A CARATs worker is available in Reception every time a prisoner is discharged. The CARATs runs short information-based workshops on harm reduction, motivation and relapse prevention with the help of IDTS and healthcare staff.

Foreign nationals

B20. There were 112 foreign national prisoners during the year at Portland (37 at the end of the year). All prisoners have been assessed by the immigration officer on a one-to-one basis. Immigration surgeries were held monthly, compared to fortnightly in the previous year.

B21. At the end of the year five foreign national prisoners were held on IS91; all were made aware of why they continued to be held in custody after completing their sentences. One prisoner had been held in excess of a year after sentence.

B22. All wings had two foreign national representatives, who gave support, encouragement and assistance to other foreign national prisoners. The representatives met weekly with the Foreign National Liaison Officer for advice, support and open discussion regarding any problems on the wing.

B23. The new Call4Five international calling cards have been introduced which means foreign national prisoners now get more than five minutes [per week] to speak to family and friends.

B24. Facilitated Return Scheme (FRS) is for foreign national prisoners who are eligible and wish to return home; they are given a cash remuneration to help with resettlement. All foreign national prisoners are made aware of the scheme on induction, and also through the Foreign National Liaison Officer.

THE BACKGROUND OF THE PRISON

C1. HM Young Offender Institution (YOI) Portland was built in 1848 on the island of the same name, as a convict prison. It became a Borstal in 1921 and a YOI in 1988. Today its operational capacity is 483 young men aged between 18 and 21 years, serving sentences up to 10 years. Some prisoners, including foreign nationals awaiting deportation, are held above that maximum age.

C2. Accommodation consists of seven residential wings; six in original buildings and a recently added Rapid Build block. A free standing Care and Control Unit holds those segregated for disciplinary reasons or for their own safety. Certain wings have a dedicated purpose: Grenville House is an Induction Unit, Beaufort is a Skills Development Unit, Raleigh is the Resettlement wing and Collingwood a 'Super enhanced' wing housing prisoners who may be deemed suitable for employment outside the prison on ROTL. Accommodation is mainly in single cells. There are double cells on some wings, some which are used to temporarily house a prisoner with a help-mate.

C3. Education from basic literacy to higher education and vocational training is undertaken by Strode College and A4E with initial assessment carried out by Tribal Hubs. A limited number of places are available on offending behaviour programmes and drug and alcohol abuse counselling.

C4. A Health Care Centre is operated by the local NHS Primary Care Trust. NACRO and other voluntary agencies work to reduce re-offending.

INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

The Role of the IMB

D1. The Prisons Act 1952 and the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 require every prison to be monitored by an Independent Monitoring Board appointed by the Secretary of State for the Home Office (now Ministry of Justice), drawn from members of the community in which the prison is situated.

D2. 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, of 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.

D3. To enable the Board to carry out its duties effectively its members have the right of access to every prisoner and every part of the prison and also to the prison's records.

IMB Diversity Statement

D4. Portland IMB is committed to an inclusive approach to diversity which encompasses and promotes greater interaction and understanding between people of different backgrounds including race, religion, gender, nationality, sexuality, marital status, disability, age etc. The Board recognises that a fully inclusive approach must also respond to differences that cut across social and cultural categories such as mental health, literacy and drug addiction.

D5. The Board values this approach within its recruitment and Board development practices to increase the repertoire of skills and awareness amongst its members of the diverse needs and perspectives of the population within Portland YO1.

D6. All members of Portland IMB will undertake their duties in a manner that is accessible to everyone within the establishment regardless of their background or social situation. The Board will monitor to establish that the experiences and interactions between staff, prisoners and visitors are fair and without prejudice. Where this is not the case the Board will alert appropriate authorities and individuals including the governor, senior management, area manager and the Prisons Minister.

IMB statistics

D7. The IMB complement remained at 14 throughout the year, five men and nine women with no retirements or resignations and no newcomers.

D8. IMB members made 372 visits to the prison during the year excluding attendances at the monthly IMB meetings. Visits by one or more members took place on 220 days in the reporting year, 49 of which were Saturdays or Sundays. Only twice in the year was there a gap of more than three days between members' visits. The extra security implications of night-time visits meant that this was scarcely attempted, but efforts continue to be made to expand our role.

D9. At the kind invitation of the IMB of HMP Exeter, IMB members visited that prison and were able to compare and contrast the cramped inner city site with Portland's relatively "wide open spaces".

D10. Governor Holland or his deputy has attended part of every monthly IMB meeting. The IMB has been grateful for the concise written reports he has provided beforehand and for his frankness in answering questions at the time. An innovation has been an additional summary each month from the Senior Management Team of what are the current preoccupations and activities of all the main prison departments. This has been much appreciated and formed a useful tool.

Applications

D11. Prisoners apply to the IMB to examine requests and complaints. Applicants are seen within three to five days. IMB members interview applicants, record and deal with the application. Applications are reviewed at every IMB meeting.

D12. In this year the IMB has dealt with 95 applications, the highest number involving prisoner's routines (19), followed by missing property (15) and transfers (11). White British are our main applicants.