



HMP RYE HILL

INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

ANNUAL REPORT

April 2010 – March 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 Home Secretary 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.

Section 2

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Section 3: Description & Function of the Establishment.

- HMP Rye Hill opened in January 2001 and was operated by Global Solutions Limited on a 25 year contract to the Home Office. In August 2008 GSL was bought by G4S who took over the running of the prison.
- The premises are purpose built with eight residential units consisting of two Vulnerable Prisoner units where prisoners are held separately from other prisoners, three units where the majority of prisoners have signed a Voluntary Drugs Testing compact, a reception unit and two general units..
- The prison is a Category B male training prison with certified normal accommodation of 600 and operational capacity of 664, recently reduced to 625. It held 611 offenders at the end of the current reporting period.
- **The prison holds up to 120 offenders under traditional lifer sentence but currently there are 276 life sentenced offenders of whom 157 are held under Indeterminate Sentence for Public Protection.**
- **There are 526 category B, 84 category C offenders and 1 category D offender.**
- **The number of category C offenders has been greatly reduced over the year from 178 in March 2010**
- **There are also 106 foreign national offenders. This is also reduced from last year.**
- The ethnic breakdown remains reasonably stable at approximately 61% white, 22% black and 11% Asian.
- Health care is provided by G4S themselves.
- The Education provider is City College Manchester.
- Catering is provided by Aramark.
- Links with Samaritans are established together with a Listeners Service.

Section 4: Executive Summary

The reporting year April 2010 to March 2011 has again been one of progress and setbacks.

The Board believes that the progress reported in the previous year has been maintained and that the prison has been stable and safe where offenders are treated with respect. (See 5.4)

There are signs that routine good practice is better monitored and better embedded by Rye Hill management. This has tended to improve stability and clarity of expectations on staff. (See 5.4) However its maintenance is a constant work in progress and entirely dependent on a consistent and thorough approach by management. This is a positive effect as far as it goes but we need to be confident that the improvement is secure.

The reduced operational capacity should reduce the pressure on, e.g. the Personal Officer scheme but this may not be so in practice. (See section 3)

There has been a significant shift in the Category B to C ratio over the year. Category C offenders have been replaced progressively by Category B offenders. (See section 3 & 6.21)

A Rectification Notice was issued on March 12th 2010 following longstanding contractual concerns on staffing levels, shortfalls in PS1700 compliance and concerns highlighted to G4S regarding Healthcare in a report by the Regional Manager Custodial Services.

Following a review on September 13th 2010 the Rectification Notice on Healthcare was lifted and after a further review on December 13th 2010 the remaining areas were removed from rectification. (See 5.4 & 5.5)

Changes in management have been made in CSU and procedures and paperwork tightened. The processes appear to have become more embedded but this needs to be maintained. (See 5.5)

There remain a high number of ISPP offenders which complicates the delivery of courses to other life serving offenders. (See 5.4)

The library has been relocated to specially adapted Portakabins between the wings and is more easily accessible and each offender gets two sessions per week on a rota basis. (See also 5.3)

Key Issues.

For the Secretary of State

The blocking of signals from mobile phones within the prison remains a key issue in the interests of security and good order. **This serious issue has been reported over at least 4 years and remains unresolved.**

The implications of the effect of the high number of ISPP offenders on the offenders themselves and on other life sentenced offenders remain a problem. HMP Rye Hill houses 157 ISPP offenders out of 611, a very high proportion. **This was reported last year.**

The progress of category C offenders is hampered by being in a category B establishment. This is detrimental to their needs and progression to resettlement and the operation of the prison. Offenders should be located in prisons appropriate to their category. **This was reported last year.**

Equality of treatment between the Contracted estate and other prisons should be progressed with respect to the provision of the P-NOMIS data base and the training of IMB members of the contracted prisons estates in its use. **This was also reported last year.**

CRB clearance for prospective staff and IMB members should be speeded up and use of a single clearance for multiple uses should be made available. **This issue remains unresolved.**

Property issues, especially on transfer between prisons, cause problems for both offenders and staff. It would be helpful if property cards were computerised throughout the prison establishment

For G4S and Rye Hill

Mandatory information to the IMB from CSU must always be provided and the process completely embedded. Established and agreed times for reviews should be adhered to. Mandatory reporting of serious incidents to IMB should also be provided and embedded.

There is a need for staff stability in Healthcare. Staff attrition and occupation of Healthcare by those waiting for psychiatrist appointments or outside beds continues to concern the Board.

Rearrangement or cancellation of meetings at short notice should be avoided.

The lack of Sunday and Bank Holiday visiting should be readdressed. **This has been reported over many years and remains unresolved.**

Drainage from showers should be maintained regularly.

Section 5: Essential Reporting Areas

5.1 Diversity

Improvement

- DREAT meetings are now held on alternate months and at the scheduled time showing a significant improvement over the previous reporting period.
- OASys has been transferred to Offender Management resulting in improvements to the assessments and the final recommendations

Trends

- A high number of senior staff attends the DREAT meetings indicating the great importance placed on Diversity at Rye Hill.
- Each unit has an Offender Representative who regularly attends the meetings.
- The monitoring of range setting for adjudications, I&EP, complaints, CSU and the Use of Force has improved. Any problems are identified and resolved.
- Many racial complaints are found to have 'no racial aspect' and tend to clog the system.

5.2 Healthcare & Mental Health.

Developments

- The lifting of the Rectification Notice in September improved morale in Healthcare.
- A new scheme to have a Healthcare Champion on each unit has been developed.
- Long waiting lists for both optical and dental services have persisted. This remains concerning.

Improvements

- The change of IDTS provider resulting in greater co-operation and exchange of information with other relevant services has benefited offenders.
- The clerical worker dealing with hospital appointments has been able to co-work with the hospital personnel dealing with them to enable suitable times to be agreed. It has therefore been possible to work with the prison to ensure that a reasonable arrangement can be maintained for escorting offenders to outside appointments.

Concerns

- Staff attrition in Healthcare leading to lack of stability continues to concern the Board.
- **Even with the increased services for those with mental health issues, Healthcare has been occupied almost entirely with those waiting for appointments to see the psychiatrist, or for assessment for, or waiting for a bed in an outside establishment. This continues to be a significant concern.**

5.3 Learning & Skills

Developments

- The library is now housed in new Portakabins located between the wings
- There are two sessions per week for each offender organised on a rota..
- About 25% of the prison population uses the library and are allowed to take out dictionaries, DVDs and audio self help books.
- Since the library has moved location, the staff area has expanded and an extra classroom has become available.

Concerns.

- A number of books go missing but some are picked up in Admissions at departure. It is accepted that about 25% are replaced annually. The Board believes that the audit trail systems could be improved to address this.

5.4 Safer Custody

- **The Board is satisfied that over the reporting period the prison has continued to be a safe environment and that offender and staff morale has improved.**
- **The high number of ISPP offenders continues to stretch resources particularly in respect to courses necessary for life sentenced offenders to progress.**

Developments

- Improved anti-social behaviour policy has broadened the remit to include victims into anti-bullying procedures. The new system has significantly improved identifying and recording. It has also increased staff and offender confidence in the system. Hence number reported is up and ACCTs are down. It is also having an effect on I&EP levels/proportions. This is positive but it will need to be sustained.

Improvements

- Reduction in ACCTs. (see above)

Concerns

- The new policy has increased the workload for staff that is already pressed. Hopefully this is in the short term.
- Training would benefit from improvement..

5.5 Care & Separation

Developments

- Rectification has been lifted.
- While confidence has increased the Board remains aware of the need to keep a careful check, particularly on the over use of CSU for insufficient reason, e.g. expediency when under pressure, men perceiving CSU as a means to gain transfer to another prison, 'resettlement'.

Improvements

- Unit management/ administration have improved in reliability and efficiency.
- Rectification was lifted in December

Concerns

- Targets set for offenders held in CSU are often meaningless.
- Support plans with an exit plan other than 'seek transfer' need to be more coherent and instigated sooner (technically the PSO says they must be in place after 30 days. Rye Hill is adhering to this but good practice dictates action much sooner than that. (30 days in CSU is a long time).
- There are still situations where offenders are toggled between CSU and Healthcare. This is not satisfactory.

Trends

- While there remain fluctuations, the overall trend is towards improvement.
- The impression has been that offenders have remained in CSU for decreasing periods. However it is difficult to find evidence to support this.
- **NOTE.** Policies and Operational Guidance were again reviewed in March 2011. While the review covers the concerns outlined above, the resulting practice remains to be seen.

Statistics

Admission numbers:

| April | May | June | July | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | March |
|-------|-----|------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| 19 | 17 | 11 | 20 | 15 | 13 | 17 | 21 | 28 | 29 | 16 | n/a |

Minimum stay: 1 night (all months)

| Maximum stay | April | May | June | July | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | March |
|--------------|-------|-----|------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| | 86 | 11 | 34 | 29 | 44 | 54 | 70 | 41 | 28 | 21 | 54 | n/a |
| Average stay | 6 | 16 | 6 | n/a | 11 | 17 | 10 | 10 | 17 | 10 | n/a | n/a |

Section 6: Other Areas. (Alphabetical order)

6.1 Accommodation

Improvements

- Operational capacity was reduced to 625 from 664 thus easing the pressure on cell accommodation and reducing the need for double cell use
- The installation of the Uni-Link computerised system in all units, CSU and Healthcare is of great assistance for offenders and staff alike. Its use for ordering food, arranging visits, checking account balances, topping up phone cards etc. has made significant improvements in efficiency.

Concerns

- Cell ventilation remains a problem.
- The intensive use of the showers requires more regular maintenance of the drainage system

6.2 Adjudications

- The number of adjudications has risen.
- Rostering of staff allows them to attend adjudications.

Statistics

| | 2009 –2010 | 2010 –2011 |
|-------------------------------------|------------|----------------------------|
| Proven | 469 | 504 (inc 50 by ext. adj.) |
| Dismissed | 469 | 363 |
| Transferred out during Procedure | | 104 |
| Not proceeded with Out of time | | 42 6 |
| Not continued, no reason given | | 6 |
| Total | 938 | 1025 |

6.3 Bullying

Developments

- This has now been subsumed into **Violence Reduction**.

Improvements

- Reports of suspected bullying have increased.
- Potential victims are better identified and victims are better supported.

Concerns

- The Board believes there is still some way to go in this area.
- The paperwork/recording/systems have improved but evidence of lower levels of bullying on the units is less clear

6.4 Catering, Canteen & Kitchens

Developments

- There have been fewer complaints about canteen with errors rectified rapidly.
- The Unilink system of ordering canteen items in all units using thumbprint identification is working well.
- The number of items available has been reduced by about 30 because of the ban on glass containers.

Improvements

- A hot meal is now provided at lunch and baguettes remain an option.

Concerns

- The Comments Files in the serveries do not work efficiently.

6.5 Complaints

Trends

- There has been a 28% reduction in complaints received. This is a positive trend.

Statistics

- There have been 2673 complaints this year compared with 3752 last year.

6.6 Drugs

Developments

- Communications between IDTS and CARATS has been properly established and teamwork improved.

Improvements

- Groups are being completed by more offenders than in the past.

Concerns

- Excessive demands for administration reduce the time available for counselling.

6.7 Foreign National Prisoners

Developments

- There has been a 16.5% reduction in Foreign National Prisoners during the reporting period from 127 to 106.

Improvements

- Delays in provision of paperwork from other agencies reported in 2010 have reduced, mainly due to the acceleration of paperwork from the Parole Board

Statistics

- At the end of the reporting period there were 106 FNP offenders from up to 36 countries in HMP Rye Hill representing 17.4% of the total population
- Jamaica provided the highest proportion of FNPs at 16% with Poland at 10%
- **The proportion of FNP offenders remains high compared to most other prisons.**

6.8 Gym & Sports Hall

Concerns

- Accredited courses have been scrapped due to financial cutbacks.

6.9 Health & Safety

- More staff is going on H & S courses and becoming more involved in the process.
- Staff training is ongoing.
- Complaints have fallen

6.10 Incentives & Earned Privileges

Developments

- Use of the system to manage behaviour has improved.

Concerns

- **As reported last year the Board continues to be concerned by the high number of offenders on enhanced level and the low number of basic level offenders.**

6.11 Induction

Concerns

- The Board was disappointed to find information on the work of the IMB in the Induction Pack issued to offenders on arrival was dropped without reference to the Board.

6.12 Life Sentenced Prisoners

Statistics.

Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb Mar.

Lifers 121 122 118 115 113 115 109 106 107 112 117 119

ISPPs 162 167 152 148 143 148 150 157 161 162 157 157

- A stable proportion (20%) of the population is serving traditional life sentences. The population of ISPPs (26%), some of whom are on a short tariff, has risen slightly

6.13 OASys & IT

Improvements

- The backlog of parole reports and offender forms has been cleared.

Concerns

- Although parole reports are up to date delays in Parole Board hearings causes long delays for offenders adversely affecting transfers.

Trends

- There is an increase in transfer requests driven by the need to complete specific courses as part of an IPP sentence plan. Suitable places at prisons offering the required course are not always available extending offender's wait for possible parole.

6.14 Offending Behaviour Programmes / Management

Improvements

- SOTP targets were met for the first time at Rye Hill.

Concerns

- The unavailability of courses can result in offenders being held back from reducing their risk and moving on.

6.15 Preparation for Release / Resettlement.

- **The Board has concerns for Category C offenders who should be progressing through their sentence and have access to ROTL.**

Statistics

| | ISPP | Lifers | Total |
|---|------|--------|-------|
| Pre-Tariff Paper Reviews | 27 | 10 | 37 |
| Post-Tariff ICM Directions outstanding. | 14 | 5 | 19 |
| Post-Tariff outstanding Oral Hearings | 4 | 9 | 13 |
| Post-Tariff Scheduled Hearings | 3 | 2 | 5 |

6.16 Prisoner – Staff Relations

Improvements

- An extra quality check has been incorporated into the complaints response process to ensure that all points on the complaint have been covered.
- Staff/offender relations have largely remained good.

Concerns

- The level of self harm incidents remains concerning. Many are related to a small number of offenders who persist in this action.

6.17 Property

Concerns

- Property still goes missing especially during transfer from another establishment.

Trends

- Applications to the Board have increased slightly over the reporting period.

6.18 Purposeful Activity

Concerns

- The unit jobs are classified as full time, i.e 6.5 hours per day, but most take barely quarter of this time giving rise to misleading total of activity time.

Statistics

- The weekly hours of purposeful activity range from 27.03 to 31.80

6.19 Reception & Admissions

Improvements

- Use of the BOSS chair resulted in fewer failures than last year.

Trends

- Numbers of transfers in and out has increased to 30 to 40 per week with additional court and hospital appointments.
- Use of consistent staff is an advantage.

Concerns

- The volume of property being sent to Branston is increasing.
- Retrieving property from Branston is challenging.

6.20 Security

Improvements

- The number of Security Intelligence Reports has remained between 500 and 600 per month leading to targeted searches for contraband.
- Mobile phone detection and confiscation has increased through targeted searches and the use of the BOSS chair.
- The closed circuit television camera system has been updated.
- More dog handlers are undergoing training and another dog is in use.

Trends

- Drug tests indicate a downward trend in drug supply
- There are signs of a reduction in Use of Force and of the seriousness of the incidents where some limited force was used.
- Higher levels of contraband finds indicate better intelligence.

Concerns

- Contraband still manages to enter the prison

6.21 Transfer

Trends

- The proportion of category C offenders has been progressively reduced during the latter part of the year and there were 84 (178) Category C and 1 (4) category D prisoner out of 611 at Rye Hill at the end of the current reporting period.

6.22 Visits & Visitor Centre

Developments

- New visiting times have been introduced resulting in more visits slots.

Improvements

- A new electronic booking system has been introduced significantly reducing the amount of paperwork

Trends

- Saturday visits have become busier.
- There has been no evidence of an increase in passes during visits.

Concerns

- Visitors do not always get their full visit time due to the closeness of allotted times.
- The visits area is very clinical and boring for children.
- **The Board remains concerned that Sunday and Bank Holiday visits are not available.**

6.23 Vulnerable Prisoners

NOTE: VPs at Rye Hill have all been convicted of a sex offence

Improvements

- SOTP reached its target for the first time ever – a positive result.
However the targets were reduced because of past failures to achieve them.

Trends

- There are signs of an increased flexibility in the use of the VP units

Section 7: The Independent Monitoring Board 2010/11

7.1 Membership & Recruitment

- The Board remains significantly below establishment strength of 17 members. Again prioritisation of monitoring areas has been in operation for most of the reporting period.
- At the end of the period there were 13 members.
- 5 members left during the year.
- 5 new members were recruited during the period.
- Support from the Secretariat has been much appreciated.
- Clerical support was sporadic for much of the year until a permanent clerk was appointed.
- The Chairman and Vice Chair were re-elected to office for 2011.
- A new Board Development Officer was elected for 2011.

7.2 Board Meetings

- Monthly Board Meetings have been reasonably well attended with 104 out of 152 possible attendances. The majority of absences were by those who have since left or were employment related. The Director or a representative has attended. The Ministry of Justice Controller or her deputy attended most meetings.

7.3 Rota Visits

- These continue to be completed on a weekly basis with non mandatory areas visited rotationally.
- Each visit results in a formal report that is discussed with the Director at the monthly Board Meeting or earlier if urgent issues arise.

7.4 Applications to the Board

- Completed applications continue to follow an auditable paper trail and were collected at least weekly by the Board from all units, including CSU and Healthcare, from the installed red boxes or taken directly from offenders by members.
- 342 applications were received during the period compared with 303 and 411 for the previous two years, an increase of 13% over 2009/10.
- 24 applications were received under Confidential Access but most were not matters requiring CA and were treated as normal applications.
- Applicants were normally seen within five days and most issues resolved quickly.
- Property issues resulted in 65 applications, 19%, increased by 4% from last year.
- The increase in accommodation applications was mainly due to issue of cell equipment such as kettles and fans.
- The Board is to be commended for the timely responses particularly as it was significantly below strength for most of the reporting period.

Statistics

| Subject | 2006/7 | 2007/8 | 2008/9 | 2009/10 | 2010/11 |
|-------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| Accommodation | | n/a | 13 | 16 | 36 |
| Adjudications | | n/a | 9 | 7 | 5 |
| Diversity related | | 18 | 13 | 17 | 14 |
| Education/employment/training | | n/a | 60 | 21 | 25 |
| Family/visits | | n/a | 13 | 12 | 12 |
| Food/kitchen related | | n/a | 7 | 5 | 7 |
| Health related | | n/a | 30 | 32 | 38 |
| Property | | 45 | 64 | 47 | 65 |
| Sentence related | | 11 | 29 | 30 | 18 |
| Staff/prisoner/detainee related | | n/a | 54 | 19 | 19 |
| Transfers | | 24 | 29 | 20 | 19 |
| Miscellaneous | | n/a | 90 | 87 | 84 |
| Total number of applications | 230 | 242 | 411 | 303 | 342 |

Note. 'Miscellaneous' includes complaints, finance, mail, canteen etc.

7.5 Training

- The newly elected Board Development Officer was involved in the recruitment process, the training of newly appointed members and the organisation of monthly Board meeting pre agenda training sessions and talks. He has attended the IMB training course and was also a National Trainer.

Training has included:-

- New member induction
- Experienced members courses
- Annual conference
- Regional and Contracted/SLA Chairs meetings
- Monthly pre agenda meeting sessions
- Annual Team Performance Review

7.6 Budget

- A budget allowance was communicated to the Board for the period 2010 – 2011
- Increased fuel prices, new member and mentor attendances have added strain to the budget but the total spend has remained within the allowance. .
- It is hoped that those expected to control budgets will be given proper and appropriate information and training in doing so.

7.7 Board Statistics

See chart below for Board statistics

| | |
|---|-------|
| Recommended complement of Board members | 17 |
| Number of Board members at start of reporting period | 13 |
| Number of Board members at end of reporting period | 13 |
| Number of new members joining within reporting period | 5 |
| Number of members leaving in reporting period | 5 |
| Number of Board meetings during reporting period | 12 |
| Average number of attendances at Board meetings during reporting period | 9 |
| Number of attendances other than at Board meetings | 555 |
| Total number of visits to the prison | 660 |
| Number of applications received | 337 |
| Number of CSU Reviews scheduled to be held | ca145 |
| Number of CSU reviews attended by Board- mostly multiple reviews | ca135 |

Acknowledgement

This report has been compiled from information gathered by all members of the Board.