Annual Report
to
The Secretary of State
covering the period
1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016

The Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Pentonville
LONDON
N7 8TT
Executive Summary

If staff morale weren’t already knocked by the publication of HMIP’s report in June, then November’s announcement that 9 new prisons would be built and “ageing and ineffective” Victorian prisons would be closed did not help matters. Pentonville urgently needs a timetable for its replacement or for reducing the population and upgrading the facilities.

The culture of any organisation is affected by many variables. We endorse the approach taken by the Governing Governor to encourage his staff to reflect critically upon the way they interact with prisoners. His weekly newsletters, staff focus groups and upbeat presentations helpfully set the tone but his positivity has not yet engaged everyone, and morale is often low.

In an attempt to maintain staffing ratios ‘temporary regimes’ have regularly been in operation. Prisoners would not know until Monday morning the pattern for the week to come. Officers were regularly redeployed from one wing to another or sent from other prisons on detached duty. As a result it was difficult for prisoners to know day-to-day, shift-to-shift, who would be looking after them, and for officers to forge and maintain relationships with prisoners. We are concerned about the impact this has on those prisoners who are too frightened or overwhelmed to ask for help from unfamiliar staff, and we recognise that this instability is equally unsettling and unsatisfactory for officers.

Cleanliness was a priority throughout the year. Despite improvements, including re-painting communal areas and some cells, conditions cannot be described as decent when most men share cells designed for one person, with a barely screened toilet, and many prisoners do not have a full complement of cell furniture.

Spice (a synthetic cannabinoid, more formally known as a New Psychoactive Substance or NPS) is a major challenge in every prison today. Board members have witnessed incidents of prisoners collapsed, necessitating extensive teams of medical staff and prison officers to help them recover, and survive. The Chief Inspector of Prisons tells us 39 prisoners in England and Wales have died as a result of legal highs in the last few years and Spice is driving a whole illicit economy, violence, self-harm and bullying. Recent media clips of London prisons show parcels being thrown over walls, lines from cell windows and now drones. Pentonville’s security team works with the police and use drugs dogs to make every effort to stop Spice and other contraband getting in. But it is like holding a hand up against the incoming tide, when dilapidated windows in this ancient building make most parts of it porous.
One action could make a big difference. Replace the 100 worst windows on the most exposed aspects of the prison to:

- prevent drugs and other contraband being hauled up on lines
- impede drones which can be steered to the ledges outside broken windows
- stop mobile phones and drugs being passed between cell windows
- improve the environment, by stopping rubbish being thrown out.

Pentonville has had the ambition to replace windows for 2 years. In October 2015 the Minister for Prisons wrote to the IMB saying that MoJ Estates had developed a proposal and would submit a business case for funding. By December a business case had been agreed. At the time of finalising this report - June 2016 – only 10 windows have been replaced. And not 10 of the worst because the glazing units were the wrong size. 100 more are supposed to follow. Everyone is waiting. The IMB would like the Minister to set a date for this work to be completed in 2016.

Day to day, fixing the building or repairing equipment sits with Carillion who have repeatedly failed to respond to maintenance jobs in timely fashion since their contract began on 1 June 2015. Because repairs have not been carried out efficiently, cells have been out of action for days with prisoners unable to wash or dry their clothes. Even worse, in the last few months, there have been chronic shortages of basic kit (towels and toothbrushes) and inadequate supplies of soap in the Healthcare Centre owing to mismanagement of the order and supply chain. Another shocking example is the lift for wheelchair access to the visits hall which has been out of action for 6 months. This is distressing for prisoners and families and frustrating for staff. If the lift cannot be fixed another solution must be found - and quickly. The Board doubt that a problem with wheelchair access to the Ministry of Justice would be allowed to languish for 6 months.

We note with regret that there have been four deaths in custody during the last year, of which three were apparently self-inflicted (compared with one self-inflicted death last year). All such deaths are investigated by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman. For the second consecutive year, recorded instances of self-harm have fallen from 450 to 392. We are pleased to report that violence has also reduced in Pentonville. There were 847 incidents compared to 870 last year. This bucks the national trend of an increase of 26% in assaults and 31% increase in serious assaults. There may be several reasons: publicity and advocacy by other prisoners; body-worn video cameras; or simply giving prisoners more to do.

It would have been hard to spot a year ago that Pentonville is a resettlement prison. Now, there is a clear focus on improved education provision, new workshops are opening to offer skills qualifications and there is the prospect of partnerships with local employers for work or training on day release. However, shortages of officers and restricted regimes have at times impinged on the number of prisoners able to take up these opportunities. The contract with the CRC for resettlement services has been slow to bed in.
Healthcare provision includes in-patient beds for the most acutely unwell, primary care services, drug detox programmes, and a rich variety of occupational therapy. The waiting times for GPs, dentists and opticians are similar to those experienced in the community. The IMB believes that the mental health provision is good but nowhere near sufficient for the needs of such a large population. Approximately a third of prisoners are regarded as being drug dependent. It is not clear that a progression regime for these men is working effectively. There must be a clear drug strategy which encompasses resettlement to reduce the risk of prisoners, whatever their sentence, walking out of the gate to find the nearest dealer. We commend the dedicated staff working in the Healthcare Centre who remain calm and cheerful while working with a high turnover of men with extremely challenging needs and behaviours.

Every prisoner is vulnerable but some are more vulnerable than others. We applaud the efforts to review the criteria for prisoners housed within the Vulnerable Prisoners Unit (VPU) and to encourage more men into the ‘open’ regime of normal location wherever possible. Notwithstanding this, sex offenders continue to be poorly served by remaining in Pentonville for significant periods. There are limited safe employment opportunities; education classes have to be held to be in the open space in the VPU; and the prison has no courses enabling them to address their offending behaviour.

A prisoner may be segregated from the main population for the maintenance of good order and discipline in the interest of the prison (GOOD), or for his own safety. The sparse regime in the Segregation Unit means he has no social time with other prisoners, no education and more limited access to telephones and showers. The poor condition of the cells in the unit has often been noted, including cockroaches, the lack of natural light and poor ventilation. Cells in the unit were also frequently out of action owing to flood or fire damage.

We welcome the fact that there is no culture of prisoners being held in segregation for long periods of time, and the Governors’ handling of the GOOD reviews are to be commended for their encouragement of open discussion by the wider team and the IMB. The IMB is hopeful that the recent implementation of the Progression Regime (which is clearly signposted in the unit) will continue to improve conditions for the prisoners.

By sharing data with other London prisons about Closed Visits, we revealed that Pentonville had a disproportionately high number of prisoners subject to the Closed Visits regime. The evidence was presented to the Governing Governor and since then the quality and transparency of the Closed Visit reviews has improved, so that the number of prisoners required to talk to their families in a closed box has reduced. The impact of Closed Visits is often that prisoners will choose to forfeit seeing their families at all during the restricted period.

It is a cause for optimism that in the New Year it was announced that a good number of staff would be transferring to Pentonville from the women’s prison HMP Holloway after its
closure. This should relieve the pressure on existing staff and bring new energy and experience of a different culture so that the prison can provide better continuity of care for all prisoners. Pentonville might soon be in a position to run a full regime, giving staff the professional satisfaction they deserve, and the prisoners the care (and hope) they need in order to turn around their lives. However, more staff is not in itself enough. The condition of this 174-year old prison is poor and nothing short of a massive injection of capital will improve the conditions for any but a handful of prisoners.
1. THE STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

The Prison Act 1952 requires every prison to be monitored by an independent board appointed by the Secretary of State from members of the community in which the prison is situated. The Board is charged to:

- satisfy itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in custody within its prison and the range and adequacy of the programmes preparing them for release.
- inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority as it judges appropriate, any concern it has.
- report annually to the Secretary of State on how well the prison has met the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have on those in its custody.

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

This is the report of the Independent Monitoring Board, Her Majesty’s Prison Pentonville, for 2016. It covers the period from 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016.
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3. DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

Her Majesty’s Prison Pentonville on Caledonian Road in inner North London is a Category B men’s local prison primarily serving the Magistrates’ and Crown Courts in north and east London. The four cell blocks remain in size and layout much as they were when the prison was opened in 1842 though cells originally intended for one prisoner now regularly hold two.

Pentonville holds Category B and C adults and, since November 2013, Young Adults between the ages of 18 and 20. Most weeks the population is near to 1290 which includes approximately 120 Young Adults and over 300 foreign national prisoners. Local prisoners who serve most of their sentence elsewhere may return to Pentonville, which is a Resettlement Prison, for the last twelve weeks of their sentence. The average length of stay in Pentonville is seven and a half weeks.

Certified Normal Accommodation (CNA) is the Prison Service’s own measure of uncrowded capacity. For Pentonville the CNA is 909 prisoners. A prison’s Operational Capacity is the maximum number of prisoners it can hold without serious risk to safety, security, good order and the proper running of the planned regime. During the reporting year the prison’s approved Operational Capacity was 1316.
4. THIS REPORT

This report records the working of HMP Pentonville from 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016. It is intended to monitor progress or lack of progress during that period. Each section details the work of a specific area of the prison that is of concern or particular interest to the Board.

The Executive Summary above identifies particular matters that the IMB considers a priority. We list specific questions for the Secretary of State, the Deputy Director of Custody, and the Governing Governor below.
5. PARTICULAR ISSUES REQUIRING A RESPONSE

5.1 Questions to the Secretary of State

1. Were it not for the closure of HMP Holloway, Pentonville would be facing another year of inadequate staffing owing to disappointing levels of recruitment. What is the Secretary of State doing to improve recruitment into the Prison Service in London?

2. Can the Secretary of State assure the Board that the management and continuation of the nationally agreed maintenance and stores contract with Carillion will deliver much better service, or be terminated?

3. The Board notes that contraband is getting in easily through ancient and broken windows. Will the Secretary of State guarantee that the worst 100 windows will be replaced by the end of 2016 and that every cell window will be replaced by September 2017?

4. Will the Secretary of State guarantee the money and labour for a solution for wheelchair access to the visits hall as a matter of urgency?

5.2 Questions to the Deputy Director of Custody

1. On what grounds is NOMS satisfied that the number of drugs dogs stationed at HMP Pentonville is adequate to ensure full and proper implementation of its drug strategy?

2. What is NOMS going to do to remove the blockages to transfer of Vulnerable Prisoners from Pentonville to more appropriate establishments?

3. When will young adults cease being held at Pentonville?

5.3 Questions to the Governing Governor

1. Will the Governor commit to increasing and protecting officer resources for the Safer Prisons and Equality team in the long term?

2. What improvements will the prison make this year towards improving and streamlining the Property system for prisoners?
6. EQUALITIES AND INCLUSION – INCLUDING FOREIGN NATIONALS

The Safer Prisons and Equalities team oversees matters pertaining to Equalities and Foreign National prisoners under the leadership of a governor. The team is well organised and committed, but officers in this small team are regularly re-deployed elsewhere within Pentonville.

Equalities

The prison schedules equalities meetings for prisoners and staff every other month but these have been poorly attended owing to the crowded schedule of management meetings held at the same time. The Board hopes that the timing of these important meetings will be changed to allow better attendance by staff and prisoners.

The Discrimination Incident Reporting Form (DIRF) system (by which incidents of discrimination, harassment and victimisation are reported for investigation) has had another year of mixed success, both in terms of the numbers submitted (20 in June, 4 in December and 6 in March), and the appropriateness of the allegations recorded in the forms. Training amongst staff and prisoners as to the proper use for DIRFs remains an important area of focus. Owing to the redeployment of key staff members there was a backlog in completing investigations into DIRFs generated in 2015 until Spring 2016.

The Social Care Act came into force in April 2015 and coordinating provision for eligible prisoners now also falls under the remit of this over-stretched team, in conjunction with Islington Council. It has been a steep learning curve, but the process is now embedded and provides support for the most vulnerable, especially the increasing numbers of very elderly and infirm prisoners.

The data collected on disability and sexual orientation remains incomplete as prisoners often choose not to answer the questions at all, or truthfully, for fear of reprisal. However in the case of trans-gender prisoners, Pentonville has good systems in place for managing their reception into prison and providing them with the appropriate personal supplies from HMP Holloway although the prison’s NOMIS database still does not allow for their gender to be accurately recorded. It is acknowledged by the prison that alternative provision will need to be made soon in light of Holloway’s imminent closure.

Prisoners over 60 are the fastest growing age group in custody. In mid-March there were 24 prisoners aged 60-80 years and one aged 81 years. There are regular over-55s group meetings in the library with input from Age Concern (although these are not open to vulnerable prisoners for security reasons); they also asked for dedicated gym time but owing to redeployment of PE Instructors this was not possible. We hope that this will become possible over the coming year.
Foreign Nationals

Foreign Nationals make up about one quarter of the total prison population and, of these, there were 19 immigration detainees at the end of the reporting period (compared with just under 30 at the end of March 2015).

Over the last year a third Home Office Immigration Officer has been recruited which is making it easier for Foreign Nationals in normal location to access their help. The monthly workshops continue to attract anywhere between 50-80 prisoners who come together to socialise and speak with outside voluntary organisations who provide specialist advice. Data on the use of the simultaneous translation phones which came into use in March 2015 to help non-native English speakers is sparse. We have no sense of how often they are being used.

For those in the VPU it is much more difficult to access Immigration help as they cannot move freely around (and often ask the IMB to act as intermediaries for them), and so we are pleased to report that a quarterly Foreign Nationals workshop for vulnerable prisoners is now up and running.
7. EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND SKILLS

7.1 Workshops

After the skills assessments which are done as part of induction when a prisoner enters Pentonville, so long as the prisoner has cognition and sufficient comprehension of English to function safely using machinery or equipment, he can apply for work or training.

Pentonville now has over 700 spaces for ‘purposeful activity’ in the morning and in the afternoon, Monday to Friday. One of the biggest challenges, as for any prison, is to get the prisoners engaged in an activity and then get them to see it through to completion, Narrowing the gap between places (over) allocated and those who attend has improved recently, helped by a competition between wings each month to get the best turn out. This is important because any activity space not taken up is a rehabilitation opportunity wasted.

Work is available around the prison such as cleaning, painting, assisting in the kitchen with preparation of food, serving meals and sorting kit in the clothing store.

A Recycling Centre is about to open where prisoners will sort plastic and bedding for washing and re-use.

Opportunities for training and acquiring a qualification have increased.

The textile workshop has increased capacity to 40 places and offers a qualification in health and safety for industrial sewing machines. While turnout for a whole day’s work is very good, afternoon-only attendance can be poor.

Carpentry is taught by one instructor to 10 prisoners. It is popular and if a prisoner does not attend the instructor follows up himself. This is not practical with a big group.

Industrial cleaning teaches skills that the prisoners can immediately deploy on the wings. The new painting and decorating workshop, starting soon, will have 8 ‘rooms’ for 8 full-time trainees.

All available space in the prison is being utilised for workshops and other activity.

Moving into employment

Getting a job is hard for any former prisoner. With the focus on resettlement, Pentonville has been developing links with local businesses which might provide a stepping stone for practical experience. If a company can put prisoners through a training process, the approach will be to release prisoners on temporary licence (ROTL) to work during the day. The focus is on businesses of a size to steer prisoners into a job.

First is a partnership with a large, local decorating company which has given advice about keeping the painting and decorating course in prison relevant.

Other links in development are with a coffee company which will give barista and customer service training; and a football club with a big building project.
7.2 Education

Education has been run by Novus (part of Manchester College) since February 2015. Since Novus took over, and with a new manager of education, there have been considerable improvements to the education provision. It now feels as if there is a clearly defined and understood direction for education and a clear sense of what needs to be done to move in that direction. A curriculum review took place in the summer and part of the autumn and there is now more compatibility across London provisions in terms of a curriculum offer. The curriculum offer at Pentonville has widened both in the scope of provision and in the levels offered. There are plans to further increase the offer for the future, including a course on nutrition and personal development, and to work with other areas of the prison, such as the Day Centre and Gym, more coherently. This year has seen the development of Open University and Prisons’ Education Trust courses and there are now 16 prisoners engaged on a range of higher level courses. This number is expected to rise in the future.

The development of virtual learning has been slower than planned but is being developed and it remains a priority for Novus. There have been some other encouraging developments over the year. For example, a 10-week module drawn from degree level criminology was held with a mixed group of students- 12 prisoners and 12 third year undergraduates from the University of Westminster. The module was taught at Pentonville and a graduation ceremony was held at the prison. A three-day course on breaking down barriers in relation to masculinity in the 21st century was delivered by ‘Man Up’. 10 prisoners completed the course and a graduation ceremony was held.

The quality of teaching and learning has been high on the agenda over the year. All teaching staff have had classroom observations with some tutors being observed 2 or 3 times. Novus has achieved Direct Claims status for a large range of the provision. This means that the Education Department has been approved to issue certificates once students have been assessed rather than wait for external verification. This applies to City and Guilds and other vocational qualifications.

Attendance remains a challenge, though there has been an improvement over the year. It currently hovers around 56%. The attendance percentage represents the number of prisoners who actually attend the class on any one session. Efficiency (the number of learners who are able to attend education and work for any one session when you take out visits, court appearances, doctors’ appointment etc) is around 63% over the year. However, the success rate is now 71% and should go to around 80% by the end of the calendar year. Shortages of prison officers over the year involving regime changes, including lockdowns, have made attendance at education difficult at times.
7.3 Library

The number of recorded visits to the Library this year are lower than the previous year. The Pentonville Library is airy, freshly painted, with a good stock of books and computers and committed staff. Last year the Board described it as ‘scandalously underused’.

A prisoner’s statutory entitlement to library provision is weekly access for a minimum of 30 minutes. The Prison Service Instruction says that: ”Sufficient staff must be allocated to ensure that prisoners have at least the minimum access to library set out in this PSI. Library staff are not responsible for the movement of prisoners.”

In May 2015 the Governor agreed that the library had not been at the top of the priority list; that now they were in a position with extra staff to effect change. He added that they knew what was wrong; it was about detailing consistent staff and getting them to do their job right. However it was also about the amount of time the library had available. The IMB agree. We are still waiting for change.

Since October the library team has effectively stopped relying on prison officers. A ‘drop-in’ timetable was introduced for prisoners on ‘free-flow’ to improve access. New prisoners are automatically added to the library list by the Activities Hub so applications to use it are simpler.

Only 15 prisoners, sometimes nearer 20, can be accommodated safely by library staff. This number cannot increase towards the 30 or 40 per session the library could hold without the reinstatement of uniformed staff support. Boosting the number of education visits and a re-boot of the Turning Pages reading programme also need escort officers.

The library continues to be a beacon for the service with 6 Book Challenge, Family Fables and special events such as author visits and a Black History Month panel debate with the Prison Council. The criminology course (mentioned in Education) was held in the library, which kept the ‘drop-in’ service for prisoners running alongside.

7.4 Physical Education

The new main gym was opened in April 2015 and there are now three separate facilities for prisoners to engage in physical education for up to 3 sessions a week. Attendance at sessions has improved and the gym is popular amongst prisoners but shortages of prison officers have at times made attendance problematic. Assessed courses in basic health and fitness and an advanced course to enable prisoners to become qualified personal trainers are offered. Gym staff are developing new partnerships with external bodies. For example, a partnership with Arsenal FC, which will focus particularly on young offenders, is being planned.
Healthcare services within the prison are commissioned by the NHS, and delivered by Care UK (for physical medicine, and dentistry and optician services) and by Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health NHS Trust in respect of mental health services.

The health needs of prisoners differ substantially from those of an age-equivalent group of men in the general population, in that the rates of substance abuse and mental health problems are markedly higher and that for a proportion of prisoners their physical health has suffered as a result of their lifestyle before conviction. The aim is for the level of medical care delivered to be ‘equivalent’ to that in the community. Despite the specific critical points outlined below, the board is broadly satisfied that adequate medical care is delivered, despite the special challenges of the prison population and environment. Where there are deficiencies, it is normally a consequence of the shortage of prison staff who are crucial for escorting and supervising patients and supporting the medical staff, rather than any lack of care or skill on the part of the doctors or nurses.

**Healthcare Centre**

There is a purpose-built Healthcare Centre, which provides 22 in-patient cells, as well as consulting and treatment facilities. Most of the patients are there for mental rather than physical reasons. Severely disturbed patients are transferred out to NHS hospitals under the provisions of the Mental Health Act when appropriate (the prison is not permitted to deliver compulsory medication under the MHA), and currently the delays in that process are shorter than in recent years. The care of some challenging in-patients in the Healthcare Centre can require more than one officer to support nursing staff and in the current situation of officer staff shortages this has proved problematic and detrimental to patient care. Nevertheless, the wards in general run well and the patients are cared for, with a recently improved schedule of activities and occupational therapy. There was however a long period in 2015 (2nd March – 13th August) during which there were no phones usable by patients within the Healthcare Centre, which caused understandable resentment.

**External hospital appointments**

Patients are also, when necessary, escorted to outside hospitals for specialist attention and admitted as in-patients when required. These processes are very demanding in terms of the number of prison officers required for escorts and bed-watches, and the board has been concerned during the year about the reported number of external appointments cancelled and deferred because of unavailability of escorts. The prison has some X-ray and ultrasound facilities, to reduce the need for external visits, and the introduction of ‘telemedicine’ where external consultants can discuss matters via a video link, has been talked of over the last year or two, but has still not commenced.

**GP, nursing and pharmacy services**

GP consultations, nursing, and pharmacy dispensing services are delivered on the wings. The problem of failure to attend perhaps a quarter of appointments is a persistent one, and the
reasons for it (which can range from disinclination to practical impossibility because of conflicting obligations) are being studied. We were concerned earlier in the year that prisoners in the VPU too often had their GP appointments cancelled because of lack of prison officer escorts but we believe this has been alleviated by some consultations taking place in the VPU itself. (For clinic appointments in the Healthcare Centre however, the problem remains). Some efforts are made to encourage prisoners to adopt healthy lifestyles and to accept inoculations, but it is unclear whether the staff are in a position to deliver an adequate degree of preventive medicine.

Medical screening on reception

Newly arrived prisoners are medically screened at Reception, both for physical and mental conditions and risks of self-harm, and to identify immediate substance abuse issues (such as withdrawal). This is a vital function, but the medical staff complain that they are sometimes under pressure to process faster so that prisoners can be moved to other locations and that they are not given sufficient background information on individuals. They also note that there are inadequate privacy facilities for confidential questions posed by officers as part of the screening process, which include matters such as mental state and sexuality.

Mental health

Research suggests that the majority of men in prison suffer from some form of mental illness and this is the impression that board members receive in their interactions with prisoners. The Board believes that the mental health provision is good but that it is nowhere near sufficient for the needs of such a large population.

A mental health in-reach team offers assessment, triage and wing-based treatments and liaises with organisations in the community for those prisoners requiring mental health aftercare on release. In the second half of our reporting year, the team was dealing with a caseload of between 70 and 80 prisoners a month. We note with concern that there are very few appropriate spaces either on the wings or in the Healthcare Centre itself for one-to-one mental health treatment so that even when a prisoner is unlocked, his session often takes place on an open landing or at his cell door. Worse still, however, is the problem of prisoners not being unlocked at all which is attributed mainly to a shortage of custodial staff. It is bound to be detrimental, and is, in any case, wholly inappropriate, that mental health assessment and therapeutic support should have to take place through the locked doors of cells.

Daycare

Daycare, which provides activities and support for prisoners with mental health conditions, is now led and partly staffed by Occupational Therapists who work alongside other mental health team members. The result has been a marked and welcome expansion in the therapeutic activities on offer including groups for prisoners who hear voices, as well as those who require support for management of mood, anger or anxiety or who have a dual diagnosis of substance abuse and mental illness. Daycare continues to offer creative activities such as music and pottery. Board members frequently comment on how bright and welcoming the
environment there is and prisoners tell us that they find it helpful and enjoyable. It has been
the case for most of the year that the numbers actually attending are lower than hoped: it
seems that this is only partly owing to custodial staff shortages and requires further
investigation.

**Enhanced support service**

The Enhanced Support Service (ESS) under the leadership of a clinical psychologist has
continued to provide support to up to a dozen particularly disruptive prisoners often from
among the many with Personality Disorder. This appears to have been successful in diverting
some especially difficult cases from the in-reach team, freeing them to give their attention
elsewhere.

**Mental health awareness training**

The board has had the impression for some years of a fairly widespread wish among officers
to understand mental illness better. Over the last year, mental health awareness training has
been offered for prison staff and others such as general nurses from primary care and Phoenix
Futures’ personnel. There is a mental health session in the compulsory training for staff and
volunteers new to the prison and also a slot in the new Pentonville Development Programme
for Prison Officers which all prison officers are required to attend. This has led to a marked
increase in referrals over the last year from approximately 150 per month to 280. It is
encouraging that such referrals are said to be almost always appropriate, and although there is
still some resistance, staff feel that officers now engage more positively with the training.

**Drug dependency**

Approximately a third of prisoners are treated as being drug dependent and put on the
Integrated Drug Treatment System (IDTS). This is a stabilisation and detoxification
procedure administered by both medical staff and workers from the Phoenix Futures charity
which gives advice and organises support group sessions. About 75-100 prisoners per month
join the IDTS programme. The fact that most prisoners remain in Pentonville for only a short
time limits the extent of treatment that can be delivered. About 85% of prisoners on IDTS are
willing to engage with Phoenix Futures.

Drugs seem to be available across the prison despite the best efforts of Security to keep them
out. Mandatory Drug Testing continues with a target of no more than 13% of prisoners being
found with traces of drugs in their system. For nine out of the twelve months of our reporting
period the results have been well below this, but this does not reflect the availability of
artificial cannabinoids, mainly Spice, for which testing is difficult, and expensive. As well as
the normal illegal drugs available in the community, there is also a substantial problem with
alcohol dependency which often co-exists with other drug dependencies.
Treatment for alcoholism is perhaps less available than it should be.

Drug dependent prisoners are meant to be allocated to F and then E wings, where specialist support and various opiate substitutes (such as methadone) are dispensed under controlled conditions. However we have heard that there are many prisoners with such needs not in the specialist wings, whereas there are many in those wings who could be moved off them, so the accommodation may not be most efficiently used. There is also J wing, which is a ‘drug free’ wing for those who express a commitment to avoid the drugs illegally available throughout the rest of the prison.

**Through the gate care**

We are greatly concerned that, given the number of prisoners with drug problems who are released each month, perhaps 70 or so, the number who receive effective ‘through care’ (which is arranged through the CRC) is a tiny minority. Such care would seem essential to enable treatment and advice to continue during the vulnerable period immediately after release.

Responsibilities for rehabilitation have over the last year been shifting as the result of radical and nationwide changes to the probation and allied services; the IMB remains concerned and will continue to monitor the adequacy of such support as the new system settles down.
9. SAFER CUSTODY (suicide prevention, self-harm, violence reduction and listeners)

Deaths in custody

 Sadly we have to report that in this reporting year there were four deaths in custody, of which three were apparently self-inflicted. This compares with one self-inflicted death last year.

Self-harm

 There were 392 recorded instances of self-harm, a welcome reduction of 58 from last year’s figure.

The ACCT is a document used to record and monitor the well-being of prisoners thought to be at risk of self-harm, and to plan appropriate support for them. Overuse of these documents would be counter-productive, and the prison seeks to strike the right balance of opening them when indicated without doing so unnecessarily. Despite careful management checks, ACCT documents are all too often not adequately completed.

Listeners

 A major part of the prison’s efforts to keep prisoners safe is the Listener scheme. Listeners are Samaritan-trained prisoners who engage with those prisoners who are in distress and in need of support. The scheme is well supported by management, but there is anecdotal evidence that at basic grade officer level Listeners sometimes find their work is not as well facilitated as might be hoped, especially during night state. A second suite for Listeners became available during the year, a very welcome development.

Cell bells

 Cell bells are available for use by a prisoner in the event of an emergency. They are much misused by prisoners and are not always answered with the diligence that a genuine emergency would require. The prison has not yet found an effective solution to the inappropriate use of cell bells, and too often there is an unacceptable delay in the response. Some random monitoring of responses is undertaken, but this merely confirms the existence of a problem without solving it. Experience has shown that neglect of cell bells can have tragic consequences, and a recent inquest underlined this point.

Refusing food

 From time to time prisoners choose to go without food. Some will term this a hunger strike, the prison speaks of food refusal. Food refusals should be carefully recorded and monitored, but there is evidence that this is patchy and inconsistent, though the Board is not aware of any negative outcomes from lapses in recording.
Violence

The incidence of violence in prison must always be a matter of concern, particularly in the context of reduced staffing. Pentonville has bucked the national trend of increases in violence. The number of recorded violent incidents showed a modest and encouraging reduction to 847 compared to last year's figure of 870. Young prisoners (18-20 years) account for a disproportionately high number of violent incidents.

The prison gives widespread publicity to its policy of zero tolerance towards violence and this is reflected in the approach to adjudications on allegations of assault and fighting. In more serious cases the police are asked to investigate with a view to prosecution. At an individual level there is an Enhanced Support Service which seeks to engage prisoners who have displayed violent tendencies. Although such interventions are in some cases effective, the limited nature of the facility means that it cannot make a major contribution to the overall reduction of violence within the prison. The same can be said for Review Boards in which individual, troublesome, prisoners are examined with a view to curbing their violent behaviour.

It may not be easy to assess with precision, but it is thought that a significant factor in containing violent behaviour has been the introduction of body worn video cameras. These are worn by some officers, and switched on if there is a perceived threat of violence. It is said that they often have an inhibiting effect on prisoners, as well as proving to be a valuable evidential tool for later disciplinary proceedings.

Perhaps the major concern over violent behaviour is the effect of Spice. There is growing evidence that prisoners under the influence of this substances are more inclined to behave violently and to exhibit exceptional levels of strength and energy when they do so.
10. THE WINGS (including quality of prisoner life and prison regime)

10.1 C, D, E, F, G and J wings

There have been repeated complaints across the wings about problems in prisoners obtaining items such as kettles, televisions, adequate changes of kit and towels, as well as repairs to damaged areas like showers and the fabric of the cells. A number of these are directly attributable to the poor level of service provided by Carillion. There have been prolonged delays in getting repairs done, obtaining furniture and even basic maintenance completed. In addition there have been complaints about delays in property being delivered from reception.

There were continued tensions around restrictions on association, lockdowns and cancellation of activities, owing to staff shortages for much of the year. Regime changes and a shortage of staff at times during the year have meant that prisoners have spent more time locked in their cells and less on association with reduced opportunities to have showers and use phones. This was less of an acute problem towards the end of the year. Also potentially very serious are concerns raised by prisoner Insiders (on C-wing) that cell bells were not being answered for one or two hours.

There have been sporadic reports of violent incidents, particularly involving Young Adults, earlier in 2016. Many of these are housed in G wing so the impact here is disproportionate. This wing has 350 plus prisoners and is by far the largest in Pentonville.

The exercise yards and outdoor areas are frequently filthy, poorly cleaned and maintained. There are often large quantities of rubbish along the edges and in the gulleys. This poses a potential health and fire hazard for staff and prisoners, particularly those in G1 whose windows are facing the yard. This would be improved by the planned replacement of windows which will prevent rubbish being thrown out of cells, but the replacement programme has been delayed. The issue of showers is acute on G wing as there are insufficient showers for so many men and frequent comments about lack of cleanliness.

Shortages of canteen items and access to working washing machines have contributed directly to a “sharing” economy with payment of interest for “borrowed” items and laundry. Debt leads to bullying and violence.

Despite all this the wings seem to work because prisoners accept the conditions in which they live and make the best of them. The mood of prisoners has regularly been reported as “better than expected” and even “cheerful”. Relations with staff are reported to be good, prisoners sometimes commenting that prison officers are doing their best in difficult circumstances, albeit occasional dissatisfaction with some officers is reported. Some officers express appreciation of prisoners’ co-operation in helping them to run things smoothly, in the face of difficult conditions. Indeed a recurrent theme emerging from conversations with prisoners is that staff shortages are behind the problems they experience. With staff (on D-wing)
reporting that shortages have led to ratios of 40 prisoners to one prison officer, it’s hard to disagree with this analysis.

'Drug free' Jubilee Wing (or J Wing) continues to be a positive and cheerful place. Many of the 63 prisoners have benefited from the drug stabilisation regime on F wing, progressed to the 'maintenance' regime of E wing and actively committed to personal improvement, including working and attending education and therapy organised by Phoenix Futures. However, there have been complaints from staff and prisoners that some men have been located here because of a shortage of space elsewhere, and they have not truly 'bought into' the ethos of the wing. For much of the year there was little drug testing owing to staff shortages (which also affected prisoners' access to the library and gym), although it was reassuring to note that when the twice monthly tests resumed in January the first round of tests led to only two prisoners testing positive and being sent to other wings. A new Wing Governor, and the re-grouping of J wing with F Wing, has resulted in more frequent drug testing and the articulation of a clearer vision for this small population.
10.2 Segregation Unit (E1) and Adjudications

Segregation Unit

The Segregation Unit at Pentonville continues to be an area that demands a lot of IMB time and is a topic of some debate. The number of prisoners in the unit varied - it was occasionally at full capacity with a small number on overflow. There were frequently Young Adults in the unit. Use of the Special Accommodation appeared to be limited. It is used only when needed, with prisoners being moved out after an appropriate and usually brief period of time.

Good Order and Discipline (GOOD) reviews were handled sensitively and with clarity. The high levels of considered input from the wider team, including mental health, probation, chaplaincy and Phoenix Futures has been commented upon and praised in the IMB weekly reports. Governors handling the GOOD reviews have been helpful to IMB members and willing to discuss individual cases. The poor condition of the cells in the unit has often been noted by the IMB, including cockroach manifestation, the lack of natural light and poor ventilation. Cells in the unit were also frequently out of action owing to flood or fire damage. Issues with the electrical wiring in the cells have also been reported.

Segregation Prisoner In-Cell Observation Forms were sometimes incomplete, with gaps in the written observations. There were very few reports of specific incidents involving officers and their treatment of the prisoners.

The IMB is hopeful that the recent implementation of the Progression Regime (which is clearly signposted in the unit) will continue to improve conditions for the prisoners.

Adjudications

All adjudications, including those handled by the Governing Governor and those by an external District Judge, were dealt with fairly, thoroughly and with respect for the prisoner. The adjudications were adjourned where appropriate, principally in order to allow a prisoner the opportunity to obtain legal advice. Some IMB reports commented upon the insufficiency of the evidence and paperwork provided by HMP Pentonville, and adjudications were quite often either adjourned or dismissed because the reporting officer was not available to give evidence. Possession of mobile phones, drugs and, increasingly, weapons represent the majority of infractions referred for adjudication. Many charges of possession of a mobile phone involved both cellmates being automatically charged. This is not entirely satisfactory but it is difficult to conceive of a viable alternative.

The growing number of adjudications represents a very heavy workload for the Governors and the external judges. It was remarked upon by some Governors that some of the cases should have been dealt with by the officer on the wing, via the Incentives and Earned Privileges regime, instead of being referred for adjudication.
10.3 Vulnerable Prisoners’ Unit (F5)

The top landing of F wing (F5) accommodates vulnerable prisoners, mainly sex offenders and is lighter and airier than much of the rest of the prison. Relations between staff and prisoners are generally good with some officers being particularly helpful and sensitive to prisoners’ needs. The Board notes with concern, however, that in 46 of the weeks between 1st April 2015 and 31st March 2016, the unit had too many prisoners and some had to be accommodated on other F wing landings. On 23 occasions the overflow was above 6, and on 14 occasions it was above 10. Protection appears to have been maintained for these prisoners but ensuring their safety and maintaining the already limited regime for them creates difficulties for over-stretched staff.

There were various other problems – most reported on last year too, and still unsolved. For much of our reporting period there were clothing shortages although (apart from a late prison-wide problem over towels), the supply had improved by the end of the year; Education sessions still take place during Association on the noisy open landing; library sessions are frequently cancelled; and – a particular worry – a lack of staff to escort prisoners to the Healthcare Centre means missed medical appointments. On several occasions F5 prisoners complained that they thought their food had been spat on by other prisoners before it reached them. They also alleged that their bedding had been urinated on. Prison investigation produced no verification of this but in view of the known hostility towards sex offenders, continued vigilance by staff is certainly needed. It is good to report that work is now consistently available for some F5 prisoners but as we said last year, Pentonville has no courses enabling sex offenders to address their offending behaviour and yet there is huge difficulty in transferring them to more suitable establishments. It can only be said, therefore, that their particular rehabilitation needs cannot be met at Pentonville.

10.4 Young Adults

The number of Young Adults (YAs) continues to be high as the numbers are between 100 and 146 at any one time. The average number is around 120. They account for between 7-11% of the prison population although significantly they are responsible for 25-40% of all violent incidents (including fights, assaults on staff and assaults on other prisoners). There have however been a number of violence reduction initiatives which has reduced the percentage of incidents committed by YAs over the last year. YA-specific interventions include the following:

- Life coaching – Spark Inside was commissioned to provide a programme of life coaching workshops for prisoners under 25 at Pentonville. The programme (named ‘Heroes’ Journey’) is designed to enable young people to identify their skills, strengths and ambitions; to understand change and how to navigate change. The
sessions were delivered in custody during their transition “through the gates” and whilst resettling into the community. Starting in November 2015 three groups took part in this programme over 5 months. The programme is now being evaluated with a view to being permanent.

- YA peer supporters/mentors have been introduced. Training is via the Certitude course.
- The education curriculum has been reviewed and the provision for maths and numeracy expanded. As is reported elsewhere, the Head of Education states that a third of YAs are engaged in education. In addition education is being introduced into the workshops which will benefit those YAs who do not want to go the Education Department.
- Activities have increased – for example the number of physical education instructors has been increased by 50%, from 8 to 12. They deliver qualifications in PE as well as facilitating more recreational gym sessions. YAs continue to be prioritised in the Activities Hub.
- Staff training – staff have had gang awareness training and there has been an improvement in the use of intelligence around gangs leading to more informed decisions about who should reside where.
- The introduction of body worn video cameras is reported to act as a deterrent to violence.

Whilst improvements have been made with regard to violence reduction, it still remains the case that the violence caused by YAs is significant which has a huge effect on the already limited prison resources and the administration of the prison. It is therefore still very much in doubt that Pentonville is the right place for YAs long term.
11. KITCHEN AND CANTEEN

The recruitment of civilian staff to run the kitchen and manage the prisoners who work there has continued this year and is now complete. The numbers of prisoners working in the kitchen fluctuate, averaging at about 15, but it is always the case that they enjoy their work, the time spent out of their cells and the fact that they have work with clear purpose. There have been ongoing problems with the equipment - with ovens, ventilation and fridges failing to work and repairs not being done speedily. The worst problem was the failure of all the freezers which work from one compressor leaving the prison to cope with the waste food and the need and cost of hiring alternative freezers for months.

Providing food for Muslims observing fasting during Ramadan was addressed in a new way this year with special individual heated containers so that meals could be delivered at the usual time and kept by the prisoners in their cells until dusk. This relieved kitchen staff and Muslim prisoners from the late night delivery of food and despite some concerns that the new containers would not work, overall it was a success.

There have been a number of changes in the meal regime this year. A few years ago the prison served two hot meals a day and was one of the last prisons to change to serving baguettes at lunch with a hot meal in the evening. This evening meal was sometimes served before 5 pm which we commented on as being inappropriately early. Late last year a change was introduced with hot meals being served at lunch and baguettes in the evening. The logistics of serving times, especially for the largest wings, were sorted out with time although prisoners did complain about the change. With the cold meal inevitably being less filling than the hot, many prisoners told us that they ate their breakfast (which is distributed at tea time) in the evening to tide them through to the next day.

The range of food is limited with few fresh vegetables or fruit and a lot of carbohydrates. The meals offer sustenance rather than a really healthy diet, especially for the Young Adults. Prisoners’ complaints focus on the limited choice and the portions being too small but Pentonville took a local decision to spend £2.20 per day on food for all prisoners and this provision encompasses the needs of the many prisoners with special diets.

The Canteen system has settled into a better working order with fewer complaints. Issues about quality of the goods and the cost continue to arise but complaints are fewer if the system is seen to be working. However it seems that about 10% of packs assembled at The Mount have something wrong with them and although prisoners can claim refunds, these take a week or more to be credited to their accounts. Problems such as a failure to deliver canteen packs to 30 prisoners in one week in November still occur so that there is still a need for a better system to be firmly embedded.
12 CHAPLAINCY

On average about 50% of the prison population (between 620 and 650) are registered as Christian, and are catered for by two full-time clergymen - one Church of England and one Roman Catholic – and four sessional chaplains and volunteers. Between 35 and 50 of the Christians are Orthodox, predominantly Romanian, and arrangements have been made for an Orthodox priest to visit the prison with a group of volunteers once a month. At other times these prisoners attend the Roman Catholic Mass where they may, if they wish, receive Communion. Other denominations including Quaker, Mormon, Jehovah's Witness and the Free Church are also catered for by visiting pastoral representatives.

Muslims account for approximately 33% of the prison population (between 390 and 420) and are overseen by two full-time imams (one of whom is the Managing Chaplain) supported by two sessional imams. Other faiths - including Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism, Buddhism and Paganism - are represented by a team of sessional chaplains and volunteers, each of whom spends an average of six hours a week in the prison.

All prisoners are visited within 24 – 48 hours of arriving. The relevant full-time chaplains are informed by the Duty Chaplain whenever a prisoner of their registered faith is seen. The Managing Chaplain provides this information for the other sessional chaplains. All prisoners in the Segregation Unit and in the Health Care Centre are visited by a member of the Chaplaincy Team on a daily basis. Also prisoners on an open ACCT are visited on average once or twice a week. All other prisoners who have made an application to see a chaplain are seen within 48 hours. Pastoral support from chaplains at the time of a serious illness or death of a family member was mentioned in the Prisoner Forum as being of a high standard and greatly appreciated.

Christian services are held in the chapel which has a capacity of 120. Muslim prayers are conducted in the mosque with a capacity of 180 and also in the sports hall which can take an additional 120. A room next to the chapel which had exclusive use as a synagogue has now been refurbished for multi-faith use.

The Muslim lending library which the Chaplaincy has been running in the mosque for the last three years has expanded with the receipt of nineteen boxes of Muslim religious books from Holloway prison. Earlier in the year a Christian lending library was set up in the chapel to which prisoners have access after group sessions. This has proved very popular.

In addition to running faith groups Chaplaincy has set up a counselling service for prisoners in need (such as those on ACCTs or suffering from bereavement). This is operated by a trained counsellor who comes in twice a week.

Chaplaincy is also involved in providing resettlement services. The Alpha Course, which consists of mentoring sessions for prisoners of all faiths due for release, has now been
supplemented by the Mosaic project, sponsored by The Prince’s Trust, which runs similar sessions for Muslims.

Chaplaincy has also set up an Official Prison Visitors (OPV) Scheme which consists of volunteers visiting prisoners who are in need of outside social contact. There are currently three regular visitors and another four are being processed.
13 VISITS

The visits hall has recently been deep cleaned, new tables have been installed, new prisoners’ paintings adorn the walls, and the cubicles used for closed visits have been freshened up with a new coat of paint as have the rooms used for legal visits.

Booking a social visit

Normally between three and four days’ notice is required to secure a social visit, particularly if it is in the afternoon. Visitors can book visits by telephone or e-mail. The prison email booking system (a hundred emails a day) appears to be working well with requests normally confirmed within a day.

The telephone booking system improved significantly in the last six months ever since calls were diverted to and handled by a call centre in Birmingham. Previously visitors had to wait hours to get through on the phone; now the average wait time is seven minutes. There was a problem, however, with callers being given wrong information about Pentonville’s ID requirements. Callers were told it was possible to enter the prison without an accepted photo ID (such as a passport or driving licence) provided they produced a birth certificate. This may apply to other prisons but not to Pentonville. The result was that as many as 35 visitors were turned away at the gate each week for not having a suitable photo ID. The prison has attempted to put this right by reminding the call centre of its ID requirements. This attempt has been only partially successful because there are still numerous occasions, though admittedly fewer than before, when call handlers continue to give out the wrong information with the result that at the time of writing about 15 visitors are still being turned away each week. This problem needs to be fixed permanently.

Security

Visitors have complained about the length of time it can sometimes take to be processed and given a wristband for entry to the prison. A biometric system is in place where visitors’ fingerprints and facial photographs are taken on their first visit, which are then used as proof of ID for subsequent visits. Unfortunately there are only two fingerprint terminals in place and there is no separation in the queues between new visitors who take longer to process and those who need only to confirm ID biometrically. Even longer delays can occur if only one of the terminals is working, as happens from time to time.

All visitors are subjected to a search before entering the visits hall. This used to cause delays when only two officers carried out searches but delays have been significantly reduced ever since a third officer was brought in.

Several visitors complained of instances where prisoners they had come to see were mistakenly reported as not being in the visits hall resulting in their visits being delayed or cancelled altogether. This problem occurs when a prisoner fails to make his way to the visits
hall on time and is initially reported as a “no show” to the visitors centre; and then when he eventually does turn up, there is a delay or failure in reporting his arrival.

No wheelchair access
A major problem exists for providing wheelchair access to the visits hall. The disabled lift, which was previously used by five visitors a week, has been out of action for six months, apart from one week when it was repaired but then soon broke down again, trapping an officer in it for two hours. Disabled visitors are no longer able to make visits unless they are prepared to suffer the indignity of being carried up and down the stairs (assuming there are officers available and trained to provide this service).

Child play area and family days
A large area at the back of the hall which was hardly ever used before has been developed into a child play area, three times larger than the existing one. This has been paid for and will be managed by the charity Bright Horizons.

A substantial increase in the number of interactive family days organised by Spurgeons, one of the UK’s largest children’s charities, has been a positive achievement. Family days are for Enhanced or Standard prisoners with children aged from three to thirteen and the focus is on the parent bonding with his children through structured activities. On average about 30 prisoners attend each session. 19 sessions have been planned so far for 2016. Spurgeons also assist with Arsenal Days which consist of soccer activities in the gym managed by Arsenal coaches and the team mascot Gunnersaurus. These are normally held during half term holidays and are restricted to not more than 12 Enhanced prisoners and their children owing to the small space available.

Closed visits
Of some concern has been the disproportionately high number of prisoners (as high as 6.6% of the establishment) placed on closed visits. If a prisoner is suspected of being involved in illegal possessions he may be put on closed visits, purely for reasons of security. Closed visits are intended as a preventative measure not a punishment. Prisoners, however, regard the imposition of closed visits as a punitive measure and are particularly aggrieved if they are kept on closed visits after being found not guilty on adjudication. In recent months the prison has been more systematic in implementing a policy of lifting closed visits in such cases unless continued restrictions are considered necessary on the basis of intelligence received, and the number of prisoners on closed visits has shown a steady decline as a result.

Legal visits
Pentonville has a large remand population but there is not enough space for solicitors to be able to see a client quickly. Between 5 and 7 days’ notice is required for a legal visit because
of the limited number of rooms and sessions available. Currently there are five time slots a day for legal visits in ten rooms. The prison has applied for funds to increase the number of rooms to 17 which should create an extra 175 possible legal visits a week and make it more possible to arrange visits at much shorter notice. At present the only time when a solicitor can book a visit at very short notice is on Friday mornings when legal visits are accommodated in the visits hall which has a capacity for 47 prisoners. There are usually places available at this time, the explanation for this being that many solicitors prefer to meet their clients in separate rooms rather than in the open area of the visits halls where total privacy cannot be guaranteed.
14 RECEPTION, A WING & FIRST NIGHT CENTRE, and INDUCTION

14.1 Reception

A lack of staff, particularly during the Summer and at peak times, led to an acknowledged occasional haste in processing prisoners into and out of the prison, as there are so many aspects that have to be dealt with for each prisoner (for example, in relation to property bags, medical screening and the Cell Sharing Risk Assessment process, which relies on the interview plus a check of records of in-prison assaults). At the turn of the year, staff reported fewer late arrivals/finishes than in the past. Whereas the screening for medical or drugs withdrawal problems on Reception now generally works well, it does seem to take too long to allocate appropriately prisoners reporting or displaying mental health issues. Reception staff are responsible for processing and delivering the parcels for the prisoners and there were periods (notably during the Summer) when staff shortages and re-deployments meant that parcels were not processed and large backlogs developed. By early January, the property store looked tidy and the parcels backlog was small. However, when trying to trace property for prisoners it was again apparent that the system for doing so is incredibly laborious and open to mistakes. There must be a more streamlined system for doing this.

14.2 A Wing and First Night Centre

Arriving prisoners now go through all the reception processes and have a cell allocated before being taken to A Wing’s First Night Centre (FNC), where they are met by an Insider. These are prisoners who have been trained to assist other prisoners in various ways. Most prisoners then stay on A Wing for about a week and do not access work or education until they move off. While conditions on A Wing improved over the year, particularly with the efforts to improve cleanliness and attitudes of staff to the prisoners, serious grumbles remain about the limited association periods, faulty equipment and poor staff morale. Staff shortages have made the presence of Insiders especially important in helping newcomers, especially those in prison for the first time, to adjust and find out what they need to know. Alas, however, especially from the autumn, a lot of the Insiders’ time was spent sourcing kettles, pillows, etc, for new prisoners on their arrival. The condition of cells that have been made ready for the new prisoners improved but more needs to be done.

14.3 Induction

On their first day, most prisoners attend an Induction course, conducted jointly by an officer and an Insider. Aided by computer slides, the prisoners are told about PIN phones, Canteen, IEP system, managing relationships with staff and other prisoners, visits, medical assistance, Listeners, etc. On their first afternoon prisoners should undertake a Basic Skills Assessment (BSA), designed to test their maths and English. However, there is a problem in getting all new prisoners through the BSA system, with reasons for non-attendance including cell changes, lost ID cards and court appearances. In the following days, prisoners are introduced to Education, the Library, and aspects of Healthcare. The Induction process is generally
notably clear and sensible, with foreign national prisoners better dealt with (the guide to the prison is available in a variety of languages) and issues such as how to get a PIN number to make a phone call really emphasised. But there are undoubtedly difficulties for prisoners in having to absorb a large amount of information quickly, and this is especially so for those whose first language is not English or whose literacy makes use of printed induction information less accessible (though several multilingual and bilingual prisoners can help).
15 RESSETTLEMENT

Responsibility for the provision of resettlement services including post-release supervision and associated pre-release planning in respect of low- and medium-risk prisoners lies with the London Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC), formed in June 2014. In 2015 ownership was transferred to MTCNovo. Contracts have been placed with Penrose and Novus to provide CRC services within Pentonville. Their remit extends to all offenders subject to supervision, now including all offenders sentenced since February 2015 to sentences of less than 12 months. St Mungo’s Broadway provides housing support. High-and very high-risk prisoners remain the responsibility of the National Probation Service.

All prisoners are assessed using a ‘Basic Custody Screening Tool’ on three occasions. The first assessment, which sets down basic information on resettlement requirements and flags up any immediate needs, is undertaken by a prison officer offender supervisor on or shortly after reception. A second, more detailed assessment is undertaken by a member of the Novus team within five days. Penrose assumes responsibility for further assessment and planning for release in the final 12 weeks of a prisoner’s sentence, when prisoners are assigned a resettlement worker from the Penrose team. The team is contracted to provide support and advice for, among other matters, accommodation, employment, opening bank accounts and managing debt, and in relation to the specific needs of sex workers and victims of domestic violence.

Penrose resettlement workers carry an individual caseload of 40-60 prisoners. They liaise with other agencies and with supervisors in the community to generate a release plan. The Penrose team co-ordinator estimates that they complete around 210 such assessments per month, achieving approximately 90% coverage of eligible prisoners. A twice-daily ‘surgery’ enables prisoners, having made an application during the last twelve weeks of their sentence, to access resettlement workers direct.

The new service has bedded in after a slow start but there have, inevitably, been gaps and problems. There have been some concerns about the quality of the Novus assessments. Debt advice has proved difficult to achieve and resettlement workers feel ill equipped, because of the specialist knowledge required, to deal adequately with sex workers and victims of domestic violence. Release arrangements can be complex and are not always as robust as they need to be and liaison with Offender Supervisors is not well developed. Problems with duplication, liaison and coordination between Novus and Penrose services resulted in plans at the end of 2015 to merge them under Penrose.

The provision of housing support, for which demand is high, was a problem during the year. Contractual issues meant that for much of the year St Mungo’s Broadway was under-staffed and unable to meet need. Prisoners are unable to access housing services independently but have to be referred by the CRC team, or (if serving a sentence of 12 months or over) an offender supervisor via the CRC team. This has meant that some prisoners with tenancy problems, eg those sentenced to a very short sentence or on remand can be left high and dry. St Mungo’s Broadway has commented on difficulties in placing homeless prisoners, for whom provision in the community is limited.
A small resettlement wing is designed to house prisoners during the last 12 weeks of their sentence. However population pressures have meant that many prisoners who do not meet this criterion are sent there. There was little relevant publicity material on the wing about resettlement processes and what information was displayed was out of date and potentially misleading. More generally, the Board has found little simplified information (eg booklets and/or posters) available to prisoners, other than the Induction Book, on the role of CRCs and when, where or how they could be contacted, what resettlement services are available and how to access them.
16. OFFENDER MANAGEMENT

The offender management function was compromised by a shortfall in the agreed complement of Offender Supervisors (not all eligible prisoners had an assigned offender supervisor) and their frequent redeployment to other roles to cover for lack of staff elsewhere. One result was a substantial backlog in the completion of prisoners’ OASys, the assessment system used to assess risk, and identify offenders’ needs, including the need for offending behaviour work. The organisation of the Offender Management Unit meant that staff tended to work in silos, with different teams or individuals being responsible for different tasks. A reorganisation to provide a more integrated casework model so that each prisoner will be dealt with by his assigned casework team is planned.

No offending behaviour courses are offered at Pentonville. Penrose offers a short non-accredited programme, Getting it Right, for all prisoners in the last few months of their sentence.

By the end of the year Pentonville housed a number of life sentenced prisoners who were either awaiting transfer to a prison more suited to their needs or a recall hearing. All but one had been in Pentonville for under 12 months, the maximum time deemed acceptable by the prisons Inspectorate.
17 PRISONERS’ REQUESTS AND COMPLAINTS

Applications (or Requests)
Following consultations with prisoners and staff, a new Applications (also known as Requests) system was introduced at the end of October 2014 and has continued in use since. A team of Insiders (prisoners employed to assist their peers) was established on each wing to advise prisoners and, when needed, to assist them with filling in general Applications (eg excluding those relating to Healthcare and PIN phones). The Insiders are available at a desk during association periods and have access to information on a wide range of prison matters. They also receive up-to-date training delivered by various prison departments, and are 'on hold' (not transferred to other prisons) to ensure consistency. As well as providing advice, and sometimes help, the Insiders log all applications and the responses. With some margin for flexibility, responses should be made within five working days. Wing staff continue to have a role in dealing with prisoners’ personal issues and Insiders have been told to direct all queries of a sensitive nature to them. As evidenced in part by a reduction in the number of complaints during 2015/16 (see below), this new system has proved beneficial.

Complaints
Prisoners’ Complaints (and written Applications to the IMB) are still submitted via separate boxes on the wings. While some officers go to considerable lengths to try to resolve difficulties on the wings over matters such as property and PIN phones, the majority of prisoners’ complaints result from a failure by staff at several levels to deal quickly with their queries and problems (particularly as many prisoners have limited literacy and problem-solving skills). This not only causes log-jams in the written complaints system but can also lead to an unnecessary and costly escalation – for example with prisoners taking to the netting over relatively minor matters. Several reviews in recent years have led to revisions in the system but prisoners still have little confidence in the complaints system. Many still complain to Board members that they receive late replies or none at all. There were 4,129 complaints in 2014/15, an average of almost 80 a week, compared with just 44 a week in 2008/09, and we remain concerned about the increased number of prisoners’ written complaints in recent years. However, the most recent figures show a decline in the number of complaints. In the 12 months to February 2016, 3,368 complaints were recorded, an average of about 65 a week, and a reduction of around 18 per cent compared with the previous year. The prison continues to monitor a sample of complaints and replies, and this has shown that there are still worrying delays in the system, but the vast majority of replies do provide informative and useful answers to the complainants.
18 MAKE-UP OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

In March 2016 the IMB consisted of 18 members. During 2015, six members resigned, one went on sabbatical and seven new members have been appointed.

18.1 Weekly rota visits

Members on rota duty regularly monitor the prison’s facilities and treatment of prisoners, getting a sense of how Pentonville is running. Key areas such as Healthcare, the Segregation Unit and the Vulnerable Prisoners’ Unit, are reviewed each week with other areas visited less frequently. The IMB member who is on rota will visit the prison several times during the week and write a report at the end of it. This report is circulated to other Board members and to the Governing Governor, who responds in writing to specific concerns in time for our monthly Board Meetings, part of which he also attends to update the IMB and to answer questions.

18.2 Applications

Members speak to prisoners who have put in written applications. In the period of this report, the IMB received 1141 such applications. This was a decrease of 22% on last year. Some applicants are not seen on the first occasion because they are at court, on visits or otherwise engaged; arrangements are made for them to be seen the following week if their problems cannot be addressed without their being seen. Prisoners may also put in applications under confidential access. These are dealt with by the member on rota. Additionally, members will meet prisoners, as well as staff, during their visits to the prison. They frequently receive and respond to prisoners’ oral applications if they are urgent. It should be noted that this means that the number of appeals for assistance is higher than the figure above suggests.
Table showing breakdown of applications over the last ten years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Year to 31st March 2016</th>
<th>Approximate percentage of written applications dealt with</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Property and Cash</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfers/Category</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence Calculation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regime</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephones</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal issues</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requests / Complaints</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullying</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General IMB advice</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing/Resettlement</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>&lt;1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licence recall, etc</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjudications</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Nationals</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation</td>
<td>&lt;1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-man status*</td>
<td>&lt;1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial abuse/incident</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Included in bullying statistics
ANNEX 1 BOARD STATISTICS

Part 1 General Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recommended complement of Board members</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Members at start of reporting period</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Members at end of reporting period</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of new Members joining during the reporting period</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Members leaving within the reporting period</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of written applications received</td>
<td>1141</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part 2 Membership at end of March 2016

Camilla Poulton  Chair
Ann Waters  Vice Chair
Sara Zalin  Vice Chair
Barry Baker
Alan Bevan
Sophie Bowles
Gordon Cropper
Nicola Finnerty
Gabriel George
Anna Hart
Sally Inman
Omar Khan
Susan Lee
David Miller  Information Officer
Naomi Rich  Board Development Officer
Jatinder Sidhu
Jennifer Thomas
Mollie Weatheritt