

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**OF**  
**THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD**  
**AT**  
**HM YOUNG OFFENDERS INSTITUTION AYLESBURY**  
**1 JULY 2007 TO 30 JUNE 2008**

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### IMB STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

**In all its activities the Board will uphold the principles of fairness and humanity in the treatment of prisoners while giving full weight to the maintenance of discipline and the interests and concerns of staff.**

## 1. Aylesbury Young Offenders Institution

Aylesbury Young Offenders Institution is housed in a mixture of buildings, whose ages range from Victorian to late twentieth century. It holds the longest sentenced young adult males, aged between 18 and 21, in the English prison system and has a capacity of 443 when full, which it has been in recent years. (52.3% of prisoners are minority ethnic). Prisoner intake covers most of England and Wales. Prisoners do not come direct from court, having begun their sentences at other Young Offender Institutions or the Juvenile estate. The prisoners are some of the most disruptive and challenging young men in the prison system. Not surprisingly many of these young men have been classified as "dangerous" by the courts and received indeterminate sentences. The number was rising during 2008, reaching 90 by June 2008. In addition there were about 80 lifers at the same time.

The age of some of the buildings impacts the work of the prison. We commend elsewhere various refurbishments that have taken place, but more needs to be done. In particular, the gate, which we understand is a listed building, imposes significant restraints on visitors and staff. The gate is used by both vehicles and pedestrians. If vehicles are entering or emerging, pedestrians are forced to stand to one side, in all weathers. Modern vehicles are of increasing length and it is sometimes impossible to keep both inner and outer gates closed while processing a vehicle. A new gate would also help improve staff working conditions.

While the IMB had some success in recruiting additional members, it remains severely under strength, since 1 new and 1 existing member left. The Board has attempted to maintain as effective a monitoring capability as it could with limited membership resource. Despite all of this, members have a unique and privileged position within the establishment with access to observe the daily running of the prison and to feed back our observations and concerns to the management. Fortunately we have a good relationship within the prison where areas of concern can be discussed openly.

## 2 Executive Summary

- In Aylesbury YOI, there were no deaths in custody in 2007/8.
- 175 ACCT plans were opened during 2007/8, 20% fewer than 2006/7.
- The 215 incidents of self harm among prisoners, in 2007/8, is 38% fewer than 2006/7.
- The number of prisoners with severe mental health issues continues to cause concern.
- Race equality issues are managed effectively
- The newly refurbished kitchen was opened. There have been very few complaints to the Board.
- The ongoing refurbishment of wing showers has continued.
- The main education building has been refurbished.
- Recruitment and retention of tutors remains an issue, and partly as a result, classes have been cancelled, sometimes at short notice, so reducing purposeful activity.
- There have been renewed efforts to ensure young prisoners complete courses at Aylesbury. However, some prisoners were unable to, because of transfer to other establishments.
- The Board believes that the local Healthcare system works very well, and is of the opinion that the young prisoners have very good access to health care at Aylesbury.

- 1 • Electric power sockets and TV aerials were installed in 4 segregation cells in 2008.
- 2 • The change in the way prisoners can be dealt with under the Anti Bullying policy, continues to impact delivery.
- 3 • The design and age of the gate impacts on pedestrian and vehicular visitors, as well as staff.
- 4 • There were 91 cases of assaults by prisoners on other prisoners during 2007/8 and 15 assaults on staff. Very few resulted in criminal prosecution.
- 5 • The nationally imposed core day was implemented. However, there are major concerns about the impact of further year-on-year efficiency savings mandated on the Prison Service.
- 6 • For much of the year, the Board again operated with a small number of members. 2 members left, and 1 new member has been recruited. A new, and hopefully successful, recruitment campaign has been run.

### 3. Conclusion

7 As in previous years, the IMB is pleased to report that the governor and his staff continue to work hard to provide as safe and as caring an environment as they can within the resources provided by the Prison Service. Pleasingly, there were no deaths in custody during the year. There was also a significant reduction in the number of self-harm incidents.

8 We note that there are a number of excellent training facilities provided, such as the Toyota-supported motor workshop and the Laing workshop. We also note that, as in many prisons, there are insufficient resources to provide work and education for all prisoners. The Gym continues to offer a wide range of courses and purposeful activity.

9 It is evident that the care and safety of prisoners is a priority for management and staff alike and there is generally a positive “can do” attitude. Aylesbury continues to examine the service it provides and how it can be improved. The Board notes the continuing excellent healthcare provision, although it is aware of the need to provide additional dental services. During the year, Board members have seen staff treat inmates with compassion and patience. A good example of this in practice is the work of the segregation unit.

10 However, there are a number of issues which have been raised during the year, and these are highlighted below. Some of these need to be addressed by Ministers, others by the Prison Service.

- 11 • Increased number of prisoner on staff assaults
- 12 • Classes still cancelled at short notice, especially afternoon ones, due to staffing issues
- 13 • Difficulty in getting prompt placement of seriously mentally ill prisoners in secure hospital beds
- 14 • Impact on Indeterminate Sentence Prisoners and Lifers of insufficient resources for their necessary risk reduction courses.
- 15 • The impact on Re-settlement activities in particular resulting from further year-on-year efficiency savings
- 16 • Need for further refurbishment, including the main gate.

### 4. Changes since the last report

- 17 • Showers on F & G Wings were refurbished by October 2007
- 18 • Installation of in-cell power points and TV aerials in 4 segregation cells.

- 1 • Refurbishment of A Wing showers begun.
- 2 • A New Head of Learning and Skills appointed
- 3 • New kitchens opened
- 4 • Additional dental sessions provided
- 5 • Smooth implementation of new core day

## 5 Diversity

6 The Board believes that diversity is well managed at Aylesbury. Race equality issues are managed effectively through the bi-monthly REAT meetings. Monthly meetings are also held involving prisoner representatives. Appropriate numbers of staff are of BME origin. The chaplaincy represents a diverse number of faiths. The kitchen provides food suitable for adherents to differing faiths and allows those who wish to observe Ramadan to eat at appropriate times. No complaints received by the Board during the year highlighted any racial involvement.

## 6 Learning and Skills

7 The Head of Learning and Skills who was only appointed in 2007, unfortunately left early in 2008, with the post not filled for some months. However, a new Head of Learning and Skills was appointed in May, with the person currently in post.

8 The education provider at Aylesbury, remains Milton Keynes College. The recruitment and retention of tutors and senior staff remains an issue, along with sickness of tutors. We note that classes are still being cancelled, sometimes at short notice. We have observed that some young prisoners have had to remain on their wings with no purposeful activity, although they have been allocated to classes. The young prisoner population has been largely stable, and the establishment has made strong efforts to ensure young prisoners can complete their courses. This is particularly the case since the new head of L & S has been in post. However, some prisoners have still been unable to complete their courses because of transfer to other establishments.

9 There are some 180 prisoners involved in education courses. These include the excellent motor vehicles courses, plus other courses such as Bricklaying, PE and Recycling. Other prisoners are involved in wing-based work or re-settlement and offending behaviour courses. All these provide qualifications for the prisoners involved, to differing levels. As with many establishments, there is not enough work or education for all prisoners. It is difficult to provide work for all sex offenders, largely limited to wing activities and work in the laundry, although SOTP programmes are provided.

10 Demand outstrips supply of courses such as ETS which prisoners need to complete to reduce their assessed risk. Indeterminate sentenced prisoners can become frustrated by the long waiting lists for these courses, which they understand are essential to terminate their indeterminate sentences. This is also the case for life sentence prisoners.

11 We note that money has been made available for the updating and repair of the Education building. This work commenced during 2008, but was not fully complete by the end of our reporting year, June 30th. Work has included replacement of ceilings and a new roof.

12 The IMB are pleased that the prisoner radio station (known as Con-fusion) is now running smoothly, following its launch in August 2007, although it is difficult to monitor how much it is listened to. The revised national core day was implemented in May. There have been no complaints received by the Board regarding the changes to Friday afternoon education and work. The change went very smoothly.

## 7 Healthcare and Drugs Strategy

1 The healthcare facility rarely has any in-patients, and then mainly prisoners who have returned from outside hospital operations. This is as a result of local establishment policy, to ensure general treatments are provided on the wings, rather than centrally. This policy is still carried out now that healthcare is commissioned and provided by the local PCT. The Board believes that this system works very well, and is of the opinion that the young prisoners have very good access to healthcare at Aylesbury.

2 However, we did receive more complaints from prisoners this year regarding healthcare, the majority of which involved prisoners' views that their dental treatment was delayed. Many prisoners had little or no contact with dentistry services prior to coming to prison. Compared with the previous year, we are aware that more clinics are provided by the PCT, and at least 2 clinics are run each week, and the Board has looked into all complaints, finding that waits did not appear excessive. However, we are also aware that recommendations have been made to the PCT to provide more sessions.

3 The healthcare unit also houses the constant watch cell, which has been used on a number of occasions during the year, for prisoners considered to be at serious risk of self-harm. The Board has always visited such prisoners as a matter of course.

4 Out-patient clinics run smoothly.

### Drug Strategy

5 Aylesbury YOI has an effective Drugs Strategy management team which monitors the referrals to the CARATS team and the subsequent allocation of places on the accredited P/ASRO programme. The Board has been impressed by the well-coordinated way in which all relevant departments work together to ensure PASRO is successfully delivered to the maximum number of prisoners.

## 8 Safer Custody

### 1/. Suicide and self harm

6 Aylesbury YOI takes a strong and well-managed approach to Safer Custody. The Board is particularly pleased to report that **there were no deaths in custody** during the year under review, nor, it should also be said in any recent year. This is a tribute to the hard work put in by staff in delivering Safer Custody. This is also illustrated by the fact that during the reporting year, there were 215 incidents of self harm among a small number of prisoners. This compares with 344 in the same period last year (A reduction of 38%). In the same period, 175 ACCT plans were opened, compared with 220 in the same period the previous year, a reduction of 20%.

7 As in previous years, the Board has seen many cases of staff acting diligently, patiently and compassionately with prisoners whose mental health has caused concern particularly where self harming has been involved. The Board remains concerned at the continuing number of prisoners whose mental health problems have been serious enough to suggest the need to be moved to secure hospitals but where this has not been possible due to the general shortage of beds in secure units nationally. The IMB is well aware that this is a matter of national concern, and that some extra beds have been provided in recent years, although still insufficient.

1	<p><b>2/. Anti-Bullying</b></p> <p>The IMB has commented previously on the prison’s long-standing, and effective policy for dealing with bullying issues. Prisoners who reach the final stage (Level 3) of the policy, are normally referred to the YPDU (Young Prisoner Development Unit). This entails 28 days on basic regime while receiving training modules specifically addressing bullying behaviour. In the year under review, there were a total of 16 prisoners who reached level 3, and who were placed in the YPDU as a result.</p>
2	<p>We have, however, also noted that it has not proved possible to ensure all prisoners completed all the modules, since they are no longer held under Rule 46, and therefore cannot be kept from associating with other Young Prisoners. The Board has discussed this on a number of occasions with senior managers and is aware that the existing procedures need to be updated because of the changed conditions. Another factor is that staff intended for the YPDU have been moved off to other tasks in the prison.</p>
3	<p><b>3/. Assaults within the prison</b></p> <p>As in the prior year, there have been a significant number of assaults by prisoners on other prisoners, (91), some quite serious in nature. As with the previous year, we understand that unfortunately, few, if any, cases of prisoner on prisoner assaults are investigated by the local police, even when requested. Many prisoners decline to continue with a complaint. There have also been an unfortunate number of assaults by prisoners on staff (15). In all cases which involved prisoner assaults on staff, where these were serious enough, the Governor declined to adjudicate the case in favour of asking for a police investigation.</p>
4	<p>The IMB understand that mobile phones have been the cause of a number of prisoner on prisoner assaults during the year. As with the rest of the Prison Service, prisoners have found ways of getting mobile phones into the YOI. Management are alert to the danger, and staff have been vigilant during 2007/8, finding a significant number of phones. A typical month will see around 8 phones found.</p>
5	<p>The Board has also noted that the Crown Prosecution Service rarely takes action following assaults on staff. Only 1 of these resulted in a prisoner being prosecuted. We note that several prisoners have remarked to members of the Board, that because prison overcrowding has almost stopped transfers, one way of achieving a transfer is to assault a member of staff. Prison management is aware of this and has reduced this expectation by transferring few prisoners who have committed assaults. We understand that in a parliamentary answer (Hansard written answers for July 8, 2008), the Secretary of State for Justice, Mr Jack Straw, said that on February 18, 2008 HMPS and the POA announced a joint commitment to zero tolerance (of assaults on staff) and that he would be pursuing with the Attorney General and the Home Secretary a more vigorous approach to prosecuting alleged assaults on staff. No such vigorous approach by Thames Valley CPS had been detected at the time of compiling this report.</p>
6	<p><b>Segregation</b></p> <p>The Board has highlighted for some time, its concern at the standard of accommodation in the segregation unit, one of the oldest parts of the prison. We were pleased that during the last quarter of 2007, 4 cells were provided with electrical power outlets, in addition to the 2 which had been refurbished. The 4 cells have been used mainly for those young prisoners held under Rule 46 (Good Order or Discipline), not punishment, enabling staff to maintain wing entitlements to TV’s and radios. We have noted that the staff in the unit</p>

1	<p>work extremely hard with some very difficult prisoners, to provide the best regime they can.</p>
2	<p>During 2007/8, 373 prisoners spent time in the segregation unit as part of “removal from wing”, (2006/7, 303). This entails only a minimum loss of privileges. In addition 87 prisoners spent time in the segregation unit under “Good Order Or Discipline” which is not punishment (2006/7, 41).</p>
3	<p>As a footnote, we are very pleased to note that funding has been made available for a completely new segregation unit, for completion during 2009.</p>
4	<p><b>10 Kitchen and Catering</b></p> <p>At Aylesbury, the kitchens are managed by the prison itself, not an external caterer. The new kitchen opened in September 2007, and is a great improvement on the temporary ones in use for the prior year. While the number of prisoners employed in the kitchen has varied, it has provided a constant source of productive work and training.</p> <p>The Board is pleased to report that the kitchen has managed to produce good, hot food in a reliable manner, with a good number of choices. There have been very few complaints to the Board about food. Board members observe meals being served on the wings each week, and also sample the food. The serving of food is well organized, fairly handled and works well. We note that 3 days a week, there are baguettes for the lunch meal and a hot meal in the evening, and for the rest, a hot lunch.</p>
5	<p><b>11 The Work of the Board</b></p> <p>For most of the year, the Board again operated with a small number of members. Out of a nominal complement of 10, there were at the beginning of the year 6 fully trained members, and 1 member in training. During the year, 2 probationary members were appointed. Unfortunately, during the year, 1 member left for personal reasons, plus 1 probationary member who could not make any kind of time commitment.</p>
6	<p>At the end of the reporting year, therefore, there were still only 6 trained members, plus 1 probationer. The Board has attended 15 (out of only 17) Segregation Review Boards, together with a small number of prisoner inductions. As a footnote, since the end of the reporting year, 1 further new member was appointed. 3 further prospective members were interviewed, all of whose papers have been sent to the IMB Secretariat for submission to the Minister. (the Board still awaits a response from the Minister after 2 months). There were 12 Board meetings during the year, 75% being attended by all members. Members undertook 199 Rota visits during the course of the year, almost 50% more than the previous year. The Board also attended the 1 major incident during the year, where the Command Suite was opened.</p>
7	<p><b>Members of the IMB at 30/6/08</b></p> <p>Chair: Mr I Wilkinson  Vice Chair: Mrs M Molton  Board Development Officer : Mr L Grant  Mr P Chapman JP,  Mr J Lennon,  Mr A Payne,  Mrs P Allender,</p>

## Appendix

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### Applications to the IMB

In 2007/8, the Board handled 161 applications from prisoners, 5 more than 2006/7..

The main topics were:

<b>2007/8</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>2006/7</b>	<b>%</b>
Property	12	Property	18
Transfers Out	11	Transfers out	12
Confidential Access	8	Employment	5
Healthcare	5	Adjudications	3
Total	161	Total	156

2

It should be pointed out that none of the applications submitted under Confidential Access could be considered as Confidential. All were, however, given a response.