

THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

ANNUAL REPORT

HMP BRISTOL

AUGUST 2007 - JULY 2008

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of contents

- 1. Brief description of the prison and its function**

- 2. Executive summary**
 - 2.1 issues for the Minister**
 - 2.2 issues for the area manager**
 - 2.3 observations for the Prison Service**
 - 2.4 issues of Excellence and Commendation**

- 3. Significant changes since the last Annual Report**

- 4. The Care and Treatment of Prisoners**
The Work of the Board

2. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON AND ITS FUNCTION

HMP Bristol is a Cat. B local adult male establishment with an operating capacity of 614; the prison is closely surrounded by local housing and roads serving these residential areas. Prisoner accommodation is Victorian other than B and C wings which were built in the 1960's. The increase in the operating capacity since last year has been achieved by the opening of Medlock House (F Wing) which accommodates eight prisoners, situated in the annexe to D Wing.

The prison has a governing Governor, a Deputy Governor and six governor grades.

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3.1. Issues for the Minister

- 3.1.1. Overcrowding continues to be a serious issue at Bristol and affects the wellbeing of prisoners. Areas of the establishment allocated to 'special needs' (vulnerable persons, first night prisoners) are being used for 'general' accommodation. Healthcare beds are now included in the Operational Capacity figure resulting in many beds being occupied by 'lodgers' who have no healthcare needs but nowhere else to go. (Ref. Ann. Rep. 2006/2007)
- 3.1.2. The prison has improved dramatically over the past year but there is serious danger of all the good work being undone by severe financial restraint. The work the prison tries to do is grossly underfunded, particularly in workshops that have the potential for providing a considerable amount of meaningful activity for the prisoners.
- 3.1.3. Prisoners with mental health issues accessing suitable accommodation and treatment remains a problem. (Ref. Ann. Rep.2006/2007).
- 3.1.4. The Board is extremely concerned about the humanitarian and legal implications of having to keep foreign national prisoners in the establishment for up to two years after the expiration of sentence and therefore unconvicted.
- 3.1.5. The prison is insufficiently adapted to meet the needs of physically disabled prisoners. (Ref. Ann. Rep. 2006/2007).

3.2 Issues for the Area Manager

- 3.2.1. The smoking ban imposed by Healthcare in the exercise yard (shared by prisoners in the Segregation Unit who are allowed to smoke) is causing severe problems. Many prisoners who require medical attention refuse to go to Healthcare because of the ban, and a large percentage of lodgers housed in this unit feel they are being unfairly punished.
- 3.2.2. Transport of prisoners continues to be of major concern. At times, five cellular vehicles will arrive at the prison with prisoners having to wait an intolerably long time in the vehicle whilst the Reception process is undertaken. Some prisoners in the transport vehicles are en route elsewhere and this lengthens their journey time to an unacceptable degree.

3.3. Observations for the Prison Service

3.3.1 Whereas the Introduction to the HMCIP short follow-up Report 3-6 March was perceptive and identified a few areas of the prison not up to standard, there are a number of points beyond the control of the Governor and Senior Management Team that cannot be remedied but should be recognized and acknowledged e.g: Overcrowding – 26% above its certified normal accommodation (nearly every prison in the country is overcrowded); unsuitable and inadequate accommodation (financial constraints); cramped and inadequate Reception environment (financial and spatial constraints); no internal sanitation on one wing (financial constraints); 300 prisoner movements a week etc. (rising prison population). The Introduction identifies the many positive points about the prison, but once a report is published, points such as these are over-ridden by the negatives and headlined in the media to the overall detriment of the Governor and the prison. Victorian prisons were built to accommodate one prisoner per cell and crime was local; motorcars, motorways, drugs and mobile phones were in the future. We have now reached that future; crime is no longer local. Governors and staff have to accommodate, manage, re-educate and rehabilitate the prison population in conditions that were considered suitable over a hundred years ago. It is to the credit of governors and staff nationally these objectives are 90% achieved, and the Board would like this achievement to be officially recognized.

3.4. Issues of Excellence

- 3.4.1 The Segregation Unit (E Wing) continues to work with professionalism and competence; the Board has recommended this unit for the Butler Trust award.
- 3.4.2 The Senior Management team, now in place for over a year, has stabilized the prison with a dramatic, all round improvement in performance and morale; the rarity of complaints against staff and reduction in adjudications indicates the high quality of staff/prisoner relationships.
- 3.4.3 Medlock House (F Wing Resettlement Unit). The only local prison in the country with a dedicated Wing releasing people on temporary licence with a 100% success rate.

4. SIGNIFICANT CHANGES SINCE THE LAST REPORT

The prison was upgraded to Level 3 status in June 2008

Opening of Medlock House (F Wing) Resettlement Unit

Introduction of the Staff Recognition System / Employee of the Month

Commencement of the Integrated Drug Treatment Service

The prison is now up to 43 on the Weighted Scorecard (from 135).

5. THE CARE AND TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS

5.1 HEALTHCARE

Overall, healthcare provision in the prison is good. The Healthcare Unit occupies two floors: downstairs is the 20-bedded in-patient unit operated by the Avon and Wiltshire Partnership (AWP) whilst on the first floor is the out-patient unit operated by the Primary Care Trust (PCT) consisting of doctors' consulting rooms, meeting rooms, group-session therapy rooms, dental surgery and offices. Three general practitioners from Wayside GP Practice attend regularly, and other health practitioners include a dentist, optician, chiropodist and psychiatrist all of whom visit on a weekly basis. It was to be hoped that following the advent of the PCT last year, all nursing staff would be employed on a regular and permanent basis, but the prison still has a high dependency on agency nurses causing a considerable drain on finances but, overall, healthcare provision in the prison is good.

There are problems with the design of the Unit, particularly in relation to disabled prisoners, in that the outpatient care is on the first floor and there is no lift access; this poses a serious problem for prisoners in wheelchairs.

Beds in the Healthcare Unit are included in the operating capacity of the prison; in the current climate of prison overcrowding, at any one time a significant number of beds in the Unit are occupied by 'lodgers' (prisoners who are not in need of healthcare but are situated there because there is nowhere else to accommodate them). There is a need for at least two beds to be reserved for emergency healthcare use; on a number of occasions there has been no immediate space for a medical emergency.

Visiting professionals run clinics on sexual health and chronic infections such as hepatitis C and HIV, and a nurse from PCT runs an asthma clinic once a week; this seems to operate well. There is also an excellent counselling service.

Some prisoners with special dietary needs complain that the kitchen does not always provide the diet prescribed by the prison doctor; however, when such complaints are investigated it seems that most of these complaints are unfounded.

There is a problem with prisoners not having adequate meaningful activity in Healthcare. Also their association room is underused. This is possibly due to staff shortages.

A **major** concern at the time of this Report is a total ban on smoking in the Healthcare Unit and its exercise yard. It is quite understandable that smoking should be banned inside the Unit, but when the PCT took control of the Unit, smoking was banned inside and outside, including the exercise yard. This was a policy in line with that adopted with other Trusts in hospitals and their surrounding grounds. This ban, in effect, is serving as a double punishment; people are punished by being in prison, but if they require treatment in Healthcare, they are further punished by not being allowed to smoke at all, including outside the Unit. Since the initial transfer of responsibility to PCT, when this 'blanket ban' was imposed, the mental health services have been transferred to AWP, with PCT retaining responsibility for general healthcare. PCT, therefore, should no longer exercise a veto over the prisoners' right to smoke outside in the exercise yard. Furthermore, this yard is shared with the Segregation Unit, whose inmates are allowed to smoke in the yard. Therefore, a prisoner who is placed in Segregation, following adjudication, is allowed to smoke but well-behaved prisoners who have the misfortune to require in-patient help, are denied that privilege. The consequence of this ban is that prisoners are either refusing to go to Healthcare or, requiring medical treatment, are deliberately disruptive so they can be placed in the Segregation Unit where they are permitted to smoke outside.

Some staff in Healthcare strongly oppose this smoking ban on the grounds that a patient who is a smoker may progress and improve better if they are allowed to smoke. **The IMB unanimously opposes this**

smoking ban. In most instances, smoking has a calming influence on the patient in prison and this ban represents the removal of a human right that is available to all other inmates.

There is also cultural awareness issue in the Healthcare Unit. Staff needs to be more aware of the cultural relatedness to the reactions of some prisoners to certain situations and demands in the Unit.

However, overall, the prison is fortunate to have such experienced and dedicated staff in its Healthcare Centre. Undoubtedly, staff have the best interests of the prisoners at heart.

5.2 SAFER CUSTODY

The Safer Custody (S/C) and Violence Reduction (V/R) Manager is a stand-alone Senior Officer, full-time although sometimes there are requirements to provide cover to the residential wings at times of staff shortages. The Team is led by a Governor grade.

Liaison staff on each wing supports the Safer Custody Manager; a big improvement in monitoring is evident which will continue over the next twelve months.

A monthly Safer Custody and Violence Reduction meeting is attended by an IMB representative; it is a matter of frustration that action points for noted individuals on the Minutes are often not answered either by non-attenders or email; the Safer Custody Manager is putting in place a system to correct this.

Whereas bullying is not a major problem at the prison and anti-bullying monitoring books are open, more Security Information Reports and bullying referrals need to be brought to the attention of the Safer Custody team.

5.3. Self Harm and Suicide Prevention

The role of Listeners is an important arm of Safer Custody but because of a transient population numbers can vary from 13 – 3 over a period. They are on a roster basis 24/7. Listener suites are being made more available but there is still some way to go for the establishment as a whole. There are occasional delays in calling out Listeners during the night, however this is being tackled by each submitting a following report to the Safer Custody team. Interventions have now been set up for persistent bullies.

5.4. ACCT

The ACCT training is available to all staff and 65% had completed to date. All IMB members have completed the course.

ACCT files are opened sometimes as a precaution, but numbers are fairly consistent over the 12 months. IMB members check and sign the files on a weekly basis, and make entries if appropriate.

The monthly average of files open for the past 12 months was 24.75 and the approximate length of time was 8/10 days. This was a reduction of 15% on the previous 12 months.

ACCT files must always accompany the relevant prisoner when moving from the wing temporarily but this practice is not always followed; when this occurs IMB members raise this in their Report to the governing Governor and notify wing managers.

5.5 Violence Reduction

Anti-social behaviour such as swearing, shouting, smoking out of cell, loud music at unacceptable times, threatening words or behaviour is recognized by the Safer Custody team that can be precursors to violence by prisoners.

Officers continue to adopt a robust attitude to confront this behaviour and the success so far achieved is evident by the reduction in incidents. This process will continue.

5.6 Fatal Incidents

There have been two fatal incidents in the past 12 months; the Coroners Inquest is awaited on these.

Conclusion

Safer Custody and Violence Reduction are handled with professionalism and enthusiasm by the allotted team in conjunction with the PSO2700 guidance.

It is, however, worth observing that prison officers should not have to cope with the many mentally ill prisoners in an establishment not designed for purpose; whilst they do handle such inmates with care and respect, they are not mental health nurses albeit they receive some mental health training.

6. SECURITY

This department performs an important role maintaining the safety of the prison. Monthly meetings of representatives from departments and agencies ensure intelligence strategies and security procedures are developed across the prison.

Monitoring potential risks to security and ensuring illegal drugs and weapons are kept out of prison are key issues. The Visits area represents a significant route for drugs entering the prison. One difficulty is that limitations in the layout of the Visits area means it is not always possible to search visitors when a dog has indicated that they may be carrying drugs. In addition, staff are not always available to undertake searches of visitors. Such limitations on the scope to carry out searches prevent prison staff from taking effective action against the smuggling of drugs through Visits, which is compounded by visitors smuggling mobile phones into the prison.

The Board understands that plans are being developed to improve the layout of Visits. The Board also considers that ensuring appropriate staff are available for searching visitors should be given a high priority and that making special scanning equipment (eg: a 'Boss chair) available for use in Visits could offer a worthwhile deterrent against the smuggling of mobile phones.

7. GYMNASIUM AND SPORTS HALL

The new gym, now known as the 'Fitness Suite' is proving to be a notable success in terms of providing for the training and wellbeing of prisoners. The gym is able to accommodate 35 prisoners at a time, and usage is high, reaching around 1500 prisoner hours per week. The gym is also used for staff fitness programmes. The Board has noted some of the equipment requires repair or replacement and understands that funding is being sought for this. The sports hall is in a reasonable state of repair, though would benefit from redecoration. The showers and changing rooms at both locations are generally well maintained and clean.

Various courses are run for prisoners. For example, a ten-week non-contact Boxing Academy course was completed this summer for 10 prisoners, employing external tuition; this was considered a success and it is hoped that further courses will be held, possibly with in-house tuition. Prisoners are regularly surveyed for feedback on the gym and sports facilities.

8. KITCHEN

The kitchen is under phenomenal pressure to deliver 600plus meals three times a day, 365 days of the year. The Acting officer now confirmed in post will bring some long term benefits to the kitchen.

There is a varied and diverse range of meals provided. Catering staff work hard to fulfil a multitude of requirements for the diverse prison population: catering for numerous ethnic groups, vegetarians and vegans; the menu for Ramadan is especially to be commended.

The food is presentable, varied and generally well received. The initiative of introducing salad pasta pots at lunchtime is successful with increasing numbers of prisoners taking up this offer. The healthy food options are also regularly placed on the menu.

There is an on-going problem with Food Comment books not being used regularly - it appears no one wants to take ownership of the process; it is to be hoped that with the re-introduction of the Prisoners' Consultative Committee monthly meetings when kitchen staff are in attendance, this may result in more effective feedback.

9. HEALTH AND SAFETY

This is a highly efficient and effectively run department. The two officers who act as advisors to the prison encourage line managers to impose health and safety standards as routine in their daily work. An effective risk evaluation, assessment and risk management is reflected in the prison accident rate.

The Health and Safety Committee holds quarterly meetings and have regular liaison with the emergency fire services; a fire evacuation exercise of one of the wings took place in August 2007.

A national audit took place earlier this year with scores at HMP Bristol of H & S 69% and Fire Safety achieving 66%

.In April 2008, 83% of staff had completed the relevant H & S training course and 85% had completed the Fire Safety course.

10. CHAPLAINCY

The Chaplaincy is represented by the following faiths: Muslim, Buddhist, Pagan, Quaker, Mormon, Hindu, Roman Catholic, Church of England, Salvation Army, Jehovah's Witness, Methodist, Jewish and Free Church.

In November an Imam was finally appointed, much welcomed by Muslim prisoners; he commenced Muslim classes in the multi-faith room and organized regular Friday prayers. The prisoner representative at the Race Equality meeting was very positive about Ramadan 2007.

The Buddhist Minister comes in weekly and uses the multi-faith room for festivals; there has been a significant increase in festivals such as Buddha Day and Hindu Day.

The Pagan Minister visits regularly and uses the multi-faith room. The Salvation Army Officer comes in for sixteen hours per week.

The Church of England has Sunday service for all denominations and Communion on a Wednesday, plus Foundation for Living Courses (Bible Studies) on most wings weekly.

The Roman Catholic has a Sunday service for all, and New Journey to Faith course on the Safer Custody wing. All other Ministers visit when required.

The Chaplaincy continues to be involved in bereavement, family counselling, applications from prisoners, prayer and also organizes the Prison Visitor scheme. The Community Chaplaincy Project is due to open shortly, beginning with three prisoners.

Some concerns held by the Chaplaincy are the increasing number of elderly and disabled prisoners and the care that will be needed to support them.

11. OFFENDER MANAGEMENT UNIT (OMU)

This is a large department within the prison.

It is responsible for (1) Probation (2) Offender Supervisors (in liaison with probation officers) (3) Sentence Planning (4) Observation, Classification and Allocation (OCA), (5) Public Protection (6) Prolific and Priority Offenders. (7) Legal Services. (8) Bail Information. (9) Foreign Nationals. (10) Lifers. (11) Imprisonment for Public Protection Prisoners. (12) Home Detention Curfew and (13) Early Release Scheme.

The Unit has a large workload but is significantly understaffed. In spite of this, the Unit has achieved remarkable success in transfer of prisoners to establishments where their offender behaviour is satisfactorily managed and they are closer to their families. Family links are extremely important in successful rehabilitation and the OMU at Bristol is proud of its record in this important work, carried out by OCA office. Average monthly figures for the past year give a good indication of the large workload of this Unit:

Sentence planning:	82
Re-categorization	145
Immigration	86
Parole	2
Lifer	1
Re-calls	53
Sentence calculations	210
ECL (early release)	81
HDC (tagging)	101
ROTL (work outside)	10
Offender supervision	34

All this work carried out by staff below the target for staffing numbers:

Manager E (Governor grade)	1	
Principle Officer	1	1
Officers	13 (target 14)	
Administrative officer	4 (target 6)	
Administrative assistant	0.5 (target 2)	

Additionally, the Unit categorizes prisoners for Inscope (for anyone with a sentence over 12 months) and MAPPA (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements) where prisoners are assess 6 months prior to their release.

HMP Bristol is fortunate to have such a dedicated staff working hard for the benefit of the prisoners, in spite of severe budget restraints and staff shortages.

12. LEARNING AND SKILLS

Between August 2007 and July 2008 many changes have occurred within the Learning and Skills department with regard to the curriculum on offer. The group comprises Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS), Workshops, Physical Education and Library.

Olass

Delivers the Learning and Skills contract (in place since August 2006) and funds three learning providers to work with offenders across the South West region.

These are:

Unit one: Tribal – an Information Advice and Guidance provider.

HMP Bristol has three full-time advisors who provide the ‘cement’ for offender learning in that it signposts offenders to and through a relevant learning programme based on assessed needs. Priority now is to improve inter-agency working both within the prison (links with Sentence Management/OMU) and beyond (Citizens Advice, Connexions, local colleges).

Unit two: Strode College – which delivers Skills for Life and Vocational Training. Strode College, involved with offender education in Bristol prison for over ten years, is now the lead provider for OLASS. Strode College delivers programmes in Literacy, Numeracy, IT and English for speakers of other languages.

Unit three: Action for Employment

Here Social and Life skills and Creative Arts are taught. It is this unit that delivers programmes mapped to the Reducing Reoffending Pathways of Budgeting, Family/Parenting, Men’s Health, Accommodation, Drugs and Alcohol, Preparation for work and Cultural Awareness.

Each of these three units has a management structure in place and the three are co-ordinated by the Learning and Skills Co-ordinator and a Prison Service Manager F. This has the potential to be problematic with many different managers having slightly different priorities and no common line management. It works based on the goodwill and determination of those involved.

Workshops

Bristol Prison has four workshops and the last year has seen good development of the Recycling and Industrial Cleaning Programmes. Both provisions are now considered central to the day-to-day working of the prison whilst also providing currency in the form of qualifications for the learners and real cost-efficiency saving for the prison. The priority for the coming year for these areas is to increase the capacity of the workshops and to extend the qualifications available through the Greening Agenda.

Success in the recycling department has meant savings for the prison. A total of eighty-one tons of: glass, cardboard, paper, tins and plastic has been sorted, free of charge, over the year. This initiative has brought about a saving of over £16k, in addition to the benefits for the environment.

The three remaining workshops have had a year of uncertainty as the prison strives to get a balance between income generation, purposeful activity and meaningful work:

The Textiles shop remains a solid provider of purposeful activity and generates income since the introduction of hard charged goods. However, it is recognized that it is a too large space and that the skills being taught do not directly reflect the employment gaps of the South West region.

The Prison's Information, Communication and Technology Academy (**PICTA**) continues to provide an excellent range of meaningful skills for learners but again, occupies a large space which could deliver additional hours of other purposeful activity.

The **Carpentry** workshop provides work places for over one third of the Safer Custody Unit and generates some income through private contracts with local schools, charities and trusts. However, the skills learned by offenders are not accredited to provide work opportunities on release.

These findings are nothing new; the last regime review identified these idiosyncrasies and a number of bids have been submitted to secure additional funding to provide additional staff as necessary. There are plans to develop a facility for trade skills although this is also dependent on securing additional staff and funding.

However, despite a lack of resources, plans are being made to get the 40% of prisoners who want regular work, and cannot get it at present, into some type of employment; albeit the work envisaged may be somewhat monotonous.

Physical Education

The PE programme has had a difficult year because of recruitment problems. The PE staff worked hard to maintain a basic programme in the Weights room but have not had the leadership of a gym manager since the Senior Officer moved on last year; as a result the programme had been limited to providing regime hours. In May this year a new PESO arrived and has already set about bringing PE in line with national expectations. Although in its infancy, the new PE programme will provide a much improved balance across the four areas of Regime Provision, Offending Behaviour Support, Tackling Drugs through PE and Educational Programmes.

Library

The library is staffed by a professional librarian (30 hours per week) and is assisted by a Learning and Skills officer. There are 7,500 books in the library and all offenders have at least twenty minutes access per week; they are able to borrow books, CD's and games. The library is hindered by not having a secure internet link with Bristol Libraries and this is a priority for the coming year. The library works closely with the Education department in the development of such programmes as Story Book for Dads and Poetry Can.

Provision and Programme for Families of Offenders has improved dramatically over the last year and is evolving into something HMP Bristol should be proud of; in the last year these programmes have been developed:

Learning programmes for offenders (Parenting, Family Relationships, Family Man, Story Book Dads)
Counselling and Support for offenders and their partners
Community Family Trust and Time for Families
Family Days in the Visitors Centre

Partnerships with Prisoners' Advice and Care Trust
Partnership with Barnardo's to provide Children's Support Worker

In the coming year the staff are keen that the above initiatives are given time to stabilize and grow.

13. RECEPTION

Reception, housed in a Victorian building approached by steep steps, is far from suitable for purpose. However, it has been redecorated this year and is clean and tidy. A shortage of interview rooms means that prisoners are interviewed at a long counter, divided into workstations, giving little privacy; each reception interview takes an average of 45 minutes. Close-circuit TV has been installed enabling prisoners in the holding rooms to be monitored more easily.

The throughput of prisoners is very high with mornings and evenings being exceptionally busy; prisoners come from far and wide and often do not arrive until late in the evening, putting extra pressure on very committed staff that work well in the indifferent conditions dictated by the age and layout of the building. 254 (43.72%) of prisoners live within 50 miles of the prison; 130 (22.26%) live between 50 and 100 miles; 89 (15.32%) live over 100 miles and 108 (18.59%) have no fixed abode. These figures do not include prisoners from overseas and are taken from midway through the reporting year.

14. INDUCTION

Prisoners coming into custody are prioritised on the first-night landing situated on the fourth floor of A Wing; however, due to the high level of receptions this is not always achieved and priority is given to first time prisoners.

Prisoners used to be inducted in the First-night centre but since June this year the Induction Unit visits Reception daily to see all incoming prisoners, explain the regime and allocate where prisoners should be housed: the First-night centre, Safer Custody, Healthcare, Drug Detoxification Wing or residential wings. Prior to June new prisoners were seen on the same day only if they were on A4; if in Healthcare or lodged on another wing they were often not inducted until the following day which could be detrimental to their wellbeing – hence the new ruling.

HMP Bristol averages up to 90 incoming prisoners per week of which 20-30 first-time prisoners need full induction. In the last nine months there have been 1,921 prisoners received into the prison.

In Reception prisoners are interviewed by Induction Staff and given a booklet containing all the information they will need, with (most) translated copies available if required. There are Listeners and Insiders in Reception, the First-night centre and the wings for all new prisoners 24 hours a day.

The Induction Unit comprises a team of seven very experienced staff who provide a three-day induction programme incorporating education, CARATs (counselling, assessment, referral, advice and throughcare relating to drugs), Resettlement and everything relevant within the prison; this programme is delivered in the Induction Unit proper.

Problems that face Bristol Prison are the high numbers of new prisoners coming in daily and, due to the distances many prisoners have to travel, it means they often arrive late in the evening.

15. E WING (SEGREGATION UNIT)

There are twelve furnished, two unfurnished and four safer cells in the Unit, one being a camera cell and one a gated cell. Staff continue to approach their work in this unit with professionalism and competence;

with a 90% occupancy rate throughout the year, they have in their charge often very difficult offenders including prolific self-harmers, prisoners with mental-health issues and those on dirty protest; other segregated prisoners are there for security issues, cellular confinement, own protection, danger to females and pending adjudication.

It is a measure of the good staff-prisoner relationships in the prison that there were only 12 admissions to the unfurnished cells in this reporting year, as opposed to 54 in the previous year; occupation of these cells was for short periods only.

Over the year there were 326 prisoners segregated, including 7 on dirty protest (for which staff must be commended for their forbearance and tolerance). There have been no major incidents or mechanical restraints employed.

Over the reporting year there were 1075 adjudications held in E Wing.

There remains the long-standing problem for the Managers of the Unit being able to arrange reviews convenient to all. There is little multi-disciplinary attendance at review meetings; HCC staff always attend and MH staff when able, but because of the number of prisoners going through the Unit, and the short time a number of these men are there, the IMB is not informed regularly of review-timing despite the best endeavours of the officers. However, a member of the senior management team is now in the process of setting-up a regular day and time for E Wing reviews.

All staff in the Unit is up-to-date with C&R and ACCT training, and most are trained in Mental Health Awareness. Prisoners' paperwork is completed daily and checked by the IMB, but the amount of paperwork involved presents considerable problems to staff in this very busy unit.

Members of the IMB visit the Unit regularly and speak with each prisoner; if problems are expressed every effort is made to sort them on the day.

The Board has recommended the Segregation Unit for a Butler Trust Award.

16. MONITORING THE QUALITY OF PRISON LIFE (MQPL)

Last year's Annual Report highlighted the overall improvements made. HMP Bristol has, in general, maintained these improvements to the quality of prison life. There is clear leadership. Staff and prisoners are now aware of what is acceptable and what is unacceptable. Morale, overall, has improved.

Key Performance Targets (KPT's) for the most part, are being met. There are a few exceptions: mandatory drug testing, staff sickness and race equality. Recently, new management has been introduced to the drugs testing department and this is starting to have an effect. Staff sickness remains a stubborn statistic, with the KPT missed by 2% overall. Whilst the KPT for 'Time Unlock' was met from August 2007 to March 2008, the target has been missed since March. The KPT for race equality has been narrowly missed on a monthly basis; however, since the introduction of a new Diversity Manager, things have greatly improved and, if present trends continue, this target will be met in the near future.

Talking to prisoners and staff, there are definite signs of improvement since last year's report. The regime has been tightened and this has sent a signal to all that there is a right and a wrong way to do things, and the latter will not be tolerated. There are still some areas for improvement, however, but the signs are, for the most part, positive.

There have been many occasions, over this reporting period, when Prisoners' Assessment, Care in Custody and Treatment Forms (ACCTs) have not been taken out of Wings with the prisoner; for example,

when prisoners go to the education centre or to a workshop. These, worrying, oversights have been reported to the Senior Management Team and improvements are expected.

A new initiative, since the previous report, is the **Medlock House Project (F Wing)**. Opened on March 3rd 2008, it accommodates eight prisoners who have to satisfy certain criteria: be Cat. C or D, have less than a 12 month sentence, be drug free, have no adjudications in the last four months, be suitable for ROTL (release on temporary licence) and hold enhanced prisoner status. These prisoners will be out in the community; initially doing charity work and then, hopefully, move into working for an employer which may lead to full time employment on release. This project has private finance and has been a great success. (See Section 20).

In summary, by and large, the improvements to the Quality of Prison Life at HMP Bristol have been maintained over the reporting year. Given the changes in organization, and the expectations of those working within the establishment, progress should definitely continue.

17. REQUESTS AND COMPLAINTS

Requests and Complaints remain at a steady state, around 78 per month. This is an insignificant rise from last year when the average per month was 75. The number of complaints upheld was 61%, with 39% being rejected. Approximately one quarter of these complaints concerned prisoners' Property and Cash and this statistic appears to be a constant over years. There does not appear to be an effective system to resolve lost property. It is accepted that, on the odd occasion, the prisoner may be to blame.

When talking to members of other IMB Boards, they experience the same problem. There appears to be a culture of one establishment blaming another, usually involving a prisoner's transfer, with little apparent interest to co-operate. Chasing-up 'lost' property can take many months, and it is often the case that missing property is never found.

A national system, with timeframes for a response and, subsequently, a result, is overdue. Property is very important to prisoners' morale; they have no alternative but to trust those who are responsible for the security of their property in transit.

The other two main areas of complaint are:

Medical – around 10%

General conditions – around 9%

HMP Bristol is exceeding its Key Performance Target (the target being 95%) for satisfying complaints by around 3.3% (a one per cent improvement on last year).

18. DRUG STRATEGY

Illegal drugs continue to enter the prison mainly through Reception and Visits, according to Security information.

Drug Strategy meetings have been held at least every two months over the past year; number attending have varied. In July the committee membership was reformed and extended under a new chairman. Meetings are to be held bi-monthly in future with a live action plan to which members are invited to contribute as the need arises.

At the end of March all KPTs in the area of drug strategy were met. CARATS (Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice and Throughcare relating to drugs) met its assessment target. Recently the team has been split into two parts, one working on the Integrated Drug Treatment System (IDTS) and the other focussing on the needs of the rest of the prison. The Short Duration Programme continues to meet its targets for starts and completions, having exceeded them in the year ending March. The audit result for the programme in January was very good at 90%.

Random Mandatory Drug Testing met the 2007/2008 target of 12.5% positive coming in at 12.43%, but we noted considerable variation during the year. It reached 24.6% in October and 25.8% in February. The target for 2008/2009 is 12% positive. In the first three months the rate was 33.3%, 20%, 16.67%, although in July it came down to 3.3%. The prison has frequently not met the weekend random testing requirement. We are told by staff that an increase in 'on suspicion' tests and frequent testing in the prison has a big impact on the random MDT positive rate, driving it down. Between February and June only nine 'on suspicion' tests were done, although there were 11 in July. The July Drug Strategy meeting was informed that independent adjudicators have not been putting prisoners on frequent testing when found guilty of using opiates while in the prison. The ability to do weekend random and 'on suspicion' tests depends on having the security staff available to conduct them. A lack of staff also impacts on the ability to do frequent testing and voluntary tests. The 2008/2009 KPT for the number of Voluntary Drug Tests to be completed each month is 390. This was met in April but not in May (309), June (272) or July (363). We are encouraged that at the July Drug Strategy meeting it was announced that the issue of staff for drug testing is now being addressed; that staff training for more drug testers is considered imperative and that the prison is aiming for a more efficient use of staff resources.

The Drug Testing Centre has always appeared clean and well organized. With the introduction of IDTS the prison lost its drug free wing, but it is understood that there is currently a review to identify the best area for a new Voluntary Drug Testing Unit.

The Integrated Drug Treatment System (IDTS) commenced in the prison in May this year. A Substance Misuse Unit was established in C Wing last autumn providing 40 places with 24-hour nursing cover. Those identified as a drug user in Reception are sent there. Once stabilized, prisoners move to another floor of the wing for a maintenance or slow detox programme. It is early days for IDTS and it is recognized that there are issues that need addressing.

Work is in progress on a new Drug Strategy for the prison.

17. EXTERNALS AND RESOURCES

This office holds the responsibility of co-ordinating staffing levels of the establishment on a daily basis by managing the daily details of the wings shortfalls, initially to maximize existing staff resources who are currently on duty around the establishment then by controlling the hours the Governor provides by detailing Payment Plus hours (previously Contracted hours) to bring the staffing levels up to the profiled numbers.

The Resource Office is also responsible for contacting and arranging staff to cover bedwatches and all escorts on a daily basis.

It is difficult and time-consuming work for the officers in this department, regularly having to take into consideration shortfalls in staff, escorts and, on occasion, several bedwatches at the same time.

18. RESETTLEMENT

The whole of B Wing is a designated resettlement unit with the officer in charge leading the resettlement programme. It is pleasing to note a number of new initiatives have been implemented in this reporting year:

While there remain a (decreasing) number of Lifers on B Wing, there is a single regime to ensure the focus remains on resettlement.

All staff on the wing are being trained in resettlement duties.

Staff are allocated to resettlement duties for one month at a time to improve continuity and ownership.

Medlock House (F Wing)

Opened in February 2008, this wing accommodates eight prisoners nearing the end of their sentences. F Wing represents a major achievement of the Resettlement team with over a dozen prisoners now successfully reintegrated into society with both jobs and accommodation secured as a result of their stay on the Unit. There are over 600 successful ROTL (release on temporary licence) to date (last reporting year there were 4 ROTL). This reporting year has seen a 100% success rate. The Unit has operated at 85% capacity over the year. HMP Bristol is the only Cat. B local prison in the country to have a dedicated wing for releasing people on temporary licence.

One ex-resident now works as a manager for Click Sergeant and supervises prisoners working under him on ROTL.

There are strong links with outside agencies and employers, and two employees of Job Centre Plus work full-time in F Wing, offering interviews with all prisoners in the establishment. The Partnership Directory lists contacts for a range of outside agencies under the headings of the seven Strategic Pathways for Resettlement and is considered to represent best practice in the SW Area.

Funding for the Unit has come directly from Estates Group and as a result has had no financial drain on HM Bristol excising budget. The Unit has featured positively on BBC Radio Bristol, Venue Magazine and the Times Newspaper (Young Photographer of the Year).

F Wing addresses the HMCIP Expectation that prisons provide:

- # Work placements available to prisoners provide useful and purposeful training for prisoners and wherever possible vocational qualifications can be obtained alongside their work.
- # Prisoners are able to participate in community work both inside and outside the prison.
- # The prison has mechanisms and links in place to assist prisoners to resettle into the community on release, working closely with statutory and non-statutory agencies.

The Gym comes within the responsibility of the Resettlement Team. Vocational courses have been run and more are planned. A new SO is expected to provide further impetus to the value of this facility for resettlement in the next few months.

While Education also plays an important role in resettlement, it does not fall within the responsibility of the Resettlement Team.

There are difficulties in providing staff for the Resettlement team as they are drawn from a pool on B Wing and are often taken off resettlement work to perform other duties. About 3-4 staff are needed to cover the workload.

19. VIDEO-LINK

There are two courtrooms and three other booths available. Courtrooms are linked to 300 magistrates' courts and 60 crown courts round the country as well as some county courts. Booths are used for video-links with solicitors and probation and for inter-prison visits. Total use of the facility is about 1400 occasions a year, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays being the busiest days. Video-link courtrooms are not used where an interpreter is required.

Overall, it is a valuable and well-run facility that could perhaps be expanded and used more fully, especially with the current overcrowding where prisoners are likely to be locked out after attending court

20. LIFERS AND IPPs (Indeterminate Sentence for Public Protection)

The situation concerning lifers has improved greatly, with 35 remaining at the prison (last year it was 85) and those with Indeterminate Sentences for Public Protection (IPP) now number 16 (last year = 35).

There are difficulties, however, with prisoners with an IPP – and some of the remaining lifers – obtaining the requisite courses to satisfy parole boards. Sentencing plans often recommend that certain courses before release under licence should be considered. There can be long waits for course vacancies and this has, in the case of lifers, had the effect of actually lengthening prisoners' sentences. This problem may also affect those prisoners with an IPP in a similar way. It is only by transferring to a Cat C prison that these courses can be undertaken. This can, in itself, be problematic, in that if the prisoner is not considered to be ready for such a move or there are not sufficient places at the prospective prison for them. When prisoners are considered ready to go to a Cat. C prison, they can be in a lengthy queue for a course; for example, one prisoner at HMP Bristol was recently informed that the first available course for him would be in 2011.

21. PRISONERS CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

It is pleasing that the PCC has been reinstated after a period of two years (it ceased due to a lack of a permanent governor grade) and is proving to be effective. It is well attended by staff from residential wings, Healthcare Centre, Kitchen, Finance Office etc., and two prisoner representatives from each wing; meetings are chaired by a governor.

The meetings are characterized by open and frank discussions, prisoners' views are listened to and both staff and prisoners try to find solutions for various issues; suggestions that there could be more efficient policies for waste management, and improvement to telephone services (by adding more numbers to the prisoners' personal number list) have been acted upon; actions such as these make the PCC effective.

Initially Minutes from the meetings were not distributed to the prisoner representatives on the wings, therefore removing the ability to discuss relevant matters with other prisoners; however, this has now been remedied.

22. DIVERSITY AND RACE EQUALITY ACTION TEAM

In the reporting year there have been 1379 Minority Ethnic prisoners accommodated in the prison:

Asian = **190**

Black = **847**

Mixed = **272**

Other = **62**

Not stated = **8**

REAT (Race Equality Action Team) meetings are held on a monthly basis and chaired by the governing Governor; over 22 establishment-based heads of department, Wing assist Officers and Prisoner representatives attend each meeting. External agency contacts who attend are from the Bath Racial Equality Council and SARI (Support against Racist Incidents); six other outside agencies are notified of meetings but attend infrequently. However, the REO (Race Equality Officer) regularly engages with outside groups, local agencies and local schools to establish links.

A Diversity Audit in February found the prison deficient in many areas of Race Equality, following which the Governor appointed a Principle Officer responsible for Diversity; under the Diversity umbrella, the PO manages Race Equality and Equal Opportunities. The team comprises the Diversity Manager, the Race Equality Officer and an administrative assistant.

The Diversity Manager immediately produced the following Action Plan to ensure deficiencies were improved and compliant:

- # Regular REAT meetings with SMART Data monitored by a governor, the Diversity Manager and the REO.
- # Staff Diversity representatives appointed in all wings.
- # Staff Diversity training to be delivered in the community in partnership with SARI (Support against Racist Incidents). All staff to be trained.
- # Information placed in all areas for: Grievance procedures, Disability support, How to report a racist incident, Work life balance information, Gender Mix information.
- # Diversity policy statements for all areas to be prominent on external walls.
- # All new staff to attend a formal Diversity/Race Equality structured induction every Wednesday a.m. to be delivered by the Diversity Manager and the REO.
- # All staff who resign to be asked to attend an Exit interview, to ascertain reasons for resignation. If reasons are: Harassment, Discrimination etc. there will be an investigation process.

Following the HMCIP follow-up report, the Race Equality Action Team identified Impact Assessments and action points to be implemented over the next twelve months; by the end of this reporting year, all the required Impact Assessment and Action Point targets for that timescale had been completed.

The Diversity and Race Equality Action Team responded with immediate effect to the HMCIP follow-up report by producing an effective on-going qualitative strategy for monitoring, on a regular basis, this area of prison life. Much progress has been made and the Board commends this achievement.

23. FOREIGN NATIONALS

HMP Bristol averages 50-65 FN's at any given time, the breakdown covering 28 nationalities; when this statistic was obtained, the majority of FN's in custody were either from the African nations or of Afro-

Caribbean origin, approximately 48%. In November 2007 there were 48 FN's in the prison who did not hold a passport. At this time 12 FN's were serving over 4yrs, 16 up to 4yrs, 26 were on trial, 6 on remand and 4 convicted and awaiting sentence.

Each new FN prisoner is made aware at their induction of an FN Representative on each wing who will inform them of their entitlement and how to obtain the facilities they require. A named photograph of the Foreign National Wing representative is on each Wing notice board. Most languages are translated but difficulties remain with Chinese and Vietnamese. Much work has been done on various schemes to enhance the information available on a local level to FN prisoners.

A Foreign National Prisoner Policy, revised January this year, states clearly the commitment of HMP Bristol to its Foreign National prisoners: equality of treatment and the addressing of specific needs by incorporating both the Prison Service and HMP Bristol's Race Equality Policy. It also states its intention of meeting the legal needs of Foreign Nationals and to reduce the use of the prison as a 'Holding Centre' for those detainees who are no longer held in custody on behalf of the Courts.

An effective Foreign Nationals Steering Committee oversees, develops and supports the strategy for Foreign National Policy; the Committee is governor-led and includes the FN Manager, FN Co-ordinator, Legal Services Officer, Discipline/Custody Manager, Head of Residence and Head of Resettlement.

The role of the FN Co-ordinator is that of the driving force behind the strategy, providing central co-ordination and communication regarding FN issues, preventing duplication of effort and ensuring important issues are supported and visible.

However, one section of the FNP policy is unachievable: that of reducing the use of the prison as a 'Holding Centre' for detainees no longer in custody i.e. sentence expired. At any given time there can be up to eight Detainee-only Foreign Nationals who are unconvicted being held by the prison for the Immigration Service, several of whom are up to two years sentence expired. The majority of the Detainee-only FN's at HMP Bristol are transferred in from other serving prisons in the south west area and sometimes other regions due to existing population pressures; as Prison Service Orders dictate, any prisoner that has completed his sentence can be transferred to a facility that can accommodate remand privileges and facilities i.e. a local prison such as HMP Bristol.

Education holds (very popular) classes which involve or are specific to Foreign Nationals: ESAL (English as a Second Language), Entry Group – English, Maths and Bite Size – Literacy Workshops. The kitchen produces diverse menus and the IMB receives few complaints about the food. The Prison continues to have very good relations with Bristol Immigration – essential to the sharing of information. A number of instances of FN's serving their sentence at the prison that have expressed their wish to return to their home country post sentence, have had their requests 'fast-tracked' due to good communications between the prison and Bristol Immigration Officers.

The Board recognizes and gives credit to the Foreign Nationals Co-ordinator for the hard work and commitment devoted to this department of the prison.

24. VISITS AND VISITS INFORMATION CENTRE

The Visits Information Centre is staffed by PACT (Prison Advice and Care Trust). It has one full-time member (funded jointly by PACT and HMP Bristol) and a team of volunteers; it has been in existence for twelve months and opens from Mondays to Fridays. Visitors who arrive early may obtain hot and cold

drinks; there is a play area for children and toilet facilities. Leaflet information is available on Benefits, drug services etc.

The booking-in area, in another building nearby, has a biometric facility for face and fingerprint recognition and through which all visitors have to pass. With between sixty and ninety visitors per day, this can soon cause a bottleneck. There is a possibility of a second system when funding is available.

Prisoners have to apply for a Visiting Order (VO) that is then posted to their prospective visitor; they, in turn, have to phone in to book the appointment. Only one member of staff is detailed to the booking line therefore delays often occur with extra expense to the caller. However, a new innovative procedure has been implemented whereby a visitor, on leaving the establishment, can put a form in a drop-box with a future choice of dates; the Prison then telephones to confirm. This system shows every sign of being successful.

Convicted prisoners are permitted two visits per month, each of two hours. Remand prisoners have three visits per week of one hour each.

The number of drug indications by the passive drug dog for the reporting period was 138; mobile phone finds (and/or part of) x 13. There were 10 threats to staff and 19 miscellaneous incidents. This is in spite of signs and posters in the said areas relating to banned and illegal substances and objects.

The Independent Monitoring Board regularly monitors this area, and considers the work carried out is in a professional and sensitive manner.

27. LEGAL SERVICES

The Board has no concerns about the provision of legal services at the prison. The department continues to operate to the high standard praised by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons in her 2005 report. The department copes well with the ever-increasing demands of the various court schedules and has a range of information available to prisoners on different legal topics. There is ample provision for legal visits.

28. DISCIPLINE (IEP)

The IEP (incentives and earned privileges) system is working well in the prison. There are rarely more than a dozen prisoners on a Basic regime. Procedures are followed on all wings and prisoner/staff interviews, when observed, were done sensitively and constructively by staff.

Information regarding assaults in the prison is published monthly on pSimon.

Adjudications are carried out daily in a fair and impartial manner and attended, whenever possible, by a Board member.

29. THE WORK OF THE BOARD

The Board has an establishment number of 15. Currently, there are 11 members. The most experienced member, the Chairman, is due to leave in January 2009 and will return to HMP Gloucester where she is also an IMB member.

Over the reporting year, two have become active members, two are in their probation year and one has recently been confirmed in post. Three members have left the Board, and a recent local newspaper article has elicited much interest and many applications.

29.1 Training

Members continue to show an interest in training. Core training sessions, run monthly by HMP Bristol, are regularly attended by members of the Board. Members have attended training in: ACCTs, Security, Racial Incidents, Offending Behaviour, Personal Protection, SIR's and preservation of evidence, Extremism and Radicalisation, Corruption Prevention and Serious Incidents. Externally, one member has attended an Experienced Members' Course and, another, a Board Development Course. The improvements to the overall knowledge of prison procedures, together with a better sharing of information, has improved the effectiveness of the Board in their work.

Observations of prison staff during their training has confirmed our belief that training is carried out regularly and with good instructors. There is still some room for improvement, however, in staff knowledge and understanding of ACCT management.

29.2 Applications to the Board

In the reporting year there were 264 applications to see a member of the Board, with the main details as follows:

# Unjust treatment / victimization	69
# Prison transfers	21
# Parole / HDC	12
# Medical complaints	36
# Lost property	44
# Canteen/credit balance	25
# Legal information	15
# Misc. (not incl. above)	41

29.3 Visits by the Board

Rota A:

A weekly rota with the relevant member visiting the prison two days in the week and monitoring regimes, the Wings, Healthcare Centre, Segregation Unit (E Wing) and Kitchen.

Applications Rota:

A weekly rota taking one or two days per week, depending on the number of Applications.

Rota B:

A two-weekly rota in which all departments not covered by Rota A are visited over the course of the year.

Areas of Special Responsibility:

Each member has two or three special areas; they attend relevant meetings and report back to the Board.

Board Meetings:

Held monthly with an average 90% attendance.

30. Staff Recognition System / Employee of the Month

Whereas there is no formal (written) policy, HMP Bristol operates the following principles:

All staff, and particularly line managers, are encouraged to ensure they use all formal and informal methods of thanking and praising their colleagues, including a simple 'thank you' for a job well done.

'Employee of the Month', launched in April 2008, enables any member of staff to nominate a colleague; First, Second and Third places receive prizes of a voucher (and a carpark space for First place) and all those nominated receive a certificate. This scheme has been very successful, averaging around twelve nominations each month. Prizes are awarded publically at staff briefings.

The Board commends the Staff Recognition System for full and effective use of the performance management process.
