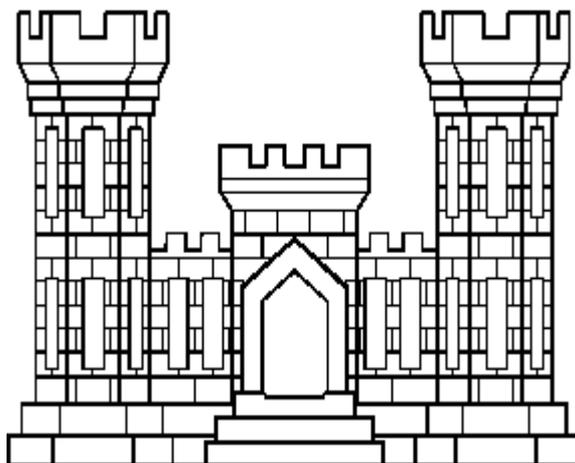




**2010 Annual Report**  
(1st Nov 2009 – 31st Oct 2010)

of the  
**Independent Monitoring Board**  
at

*H. M. Prison & Remand Centre*



**EXETER**

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## 1.0.0 Statutory Role of the IMB

The Prisons Act 1952 and the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 require every prison and IRC to be monitored by an independent Board appointed by the Home Secretary from members of the community in which the prison or centre is situated.

### 1.1 Board is specifically charged to:

a) 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.

b) inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority as he judges appropriate, any concern it has.

**c) 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.**

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

## 2.0.0 The Establishment

HMP Exeter was built during the 1850s and dominates the northern sector of the city of Exeter. This busy, inner-city establishment, constrained by its inability for expansion, receives young and adult male remand and sentenced prisoners from courts in Cornwall, Devon and West Somerset.

It has a traditional Victorian layout with three main wings (A, B, C) emanating from a central area. B wing has the First Night Centre and Integrated Drugs Treatment System facility. D wing, (added later), housing vulnerable prisoners, is a three-storey building with no integral sanitation. Privacy locks were introduced in July 2008. There is a full-time Healthcare Unit. Pharmacy provision is covered by HMP Channings Wood.

HMP Exeter is one of 140 prisons in England and Wales. There is overcrowding and a concomitant high amount of disruption as prisoners are frequently transferred in and out of the prison. The Prison Reform Trust estimated that in October 2010, HMP Exeter was the 5<sup>th</sup> most over-crowded prison in England and Wales (162%).

- 2.1 The Certified Normal Accommodation is 316; the Operational Capacity is 545.
- 2.2 At the year-end the actual staff count was 305, making up 290 whole-time-equivalent (WTE) staff. There were 37 WTE uniform Officer Support Group (OSGs), including five casual staff, 133.22 Prison Officers, 27.5 and Senior Officers. There were 36 specialist administrative staff in security, finance, probation and custody roles; 9 interventions specialists and 4 Senior Non-Operational Managers. There are 28 administrative support posts. There are 6 'prisoner contact' roles that management considers could be carried out by non-uniformed staff. The Board would like to see a decrease in the number of uniformed staff undertaking administrative jobs. Vacancies stood at 8.8 WTE Prison Officers, 3 works staff, 2.4 specialist administration staff and 7 others. Sickness levels for officers averaged 13.5 days per annum: the aim is to reduce this to 10 days or less. There have been 5 long-term absences, caused through symptoms of stress/depression. Managers can fund physiotherapy to enable staff to return to full duties as soon as possible and where it is physically or emotionally beneficial, restrictive or recuperative duties are provided with a view to returning to normal duties.
- 2.3 During the period of this report, the Governor had a budget of £12.9m. Due to the age of the building and the wide array of tasks undertaken to deal with the risks and needs of the population, some innovative and major works have commenced this year. Healthcare refurbishment has cost in the region on £350,000 to £400,000.

- 2.4 HMP Exeter has created the first Women's Support Network in the Prison Service. The aim of the group is to encourage skilled and experienced female staff to be heard within the prison system.
- 2.5 The Ministry of Justice provides performance ratings for all prisons, both private and public. The ratings are: 4 - Exceptional performance; 3 - Good performance; 2 - Requires development; 1 - Serious concerns. HMP Exeter has maintained the status of Level 3.

### **3.0.0 Executive Summary**

- 3.1 This report covers the period from 1st November 2009 to 31st October 2010. In it Exeter IMB has reported on important and serious issues that we believe need to be addressed at Ministerial and Prison Service level, as well as noting the enormous amount of good work which is carried out throughout the prison, often against the odds in terms of human or other resources. As is customary with these reports, we do not chronicle the day-to-day work, which the prison conducts thoroughly and satisfactorily.
- 3.1.1 The Board is of the opinion that, in the main, prisoners are provided with a safe, just and respectful environment whilst being treated equally and with dignity. Most prisoners say that they feel safe and the IMB believes that this reflects the generally good relationships between prisoners and staff. In particular we mention the work undertaken in the Segregation and Care Unit and by the Social Inclusion Manager and team. This should be viewed with the background of staff changes, budget cuts, and uncertainty - all occurring in an old prison with a transient population and insufficient purposeful activities.
- 3.1.2 As a Category B local prison, Exeter also has to cope with system demands to deal with general overcrowding, Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) prisoners who should only be at Exeter for a limited period, Foreign Nationals who have served their sentences and other prisoners who might benefit from an external, specialist psychiatric service. It would clearly assist the prison to meet its stated purpose if these factors were not added to the mix.
- 3.1.3 At the end of our reporting period the full extent of the cuts to prison funding and their consequences was unknown. We are concerned that a sharp and significant reduction in funding could well have a detrimental effect on the prison, particularly with regard to overcrowding, the availability of educational and other remedial activities and the staffing needed to maintain these and other interventions designed to reduce re-offending.
- 3.1.4 There were four deaths in custody during this reporting year. Two were in an outside hospital and two in the prison. The Inquests have yet to be completed, and therefore the associated reports from the Ombudsman and Coroner are awaited. The Board is concerned about the delay in the Inquests for two prisoners who died during 2009. The Coroner awaits information from the family of a prisoner who died during 2007, after which a full Inquest can then be held. Recommendations made following previous deaths have resulted in a new local protocol being written. The IMB remains concerned at the length of time taken for the completion of some Coroners' Reports.
- 3.1.5 The Chairman and Vice-Chairman appreciated the invitation from the Governor to attend the feedback from the HMCIP Inspection. HMIP and IMB share concerns regarding D wing where privacy locking

(introduced in July 2008), gives free access to recesses (toilets and showers) throughout the night with no supervision by staff. This seems to be a weakness in the safety and security on the Wing for both prisoners and staff.

### **3.2.0 Issues for the Minister.**

- 3.2.1 What plans are in place to clarify the role of all prisons, local prisons in particular? (3.1.2)
- 3.2.2 Does the Government recognise the link between the use of mobile phones, illegal drug use and violence in prisons? If so, why does the situation persist? Can the Minister give re-assurance that resources, such as mobile phone blocking, will be available to demonstrate the Government's care of prisoners and staff. (4.4.4)
- 3.2.3 What are the plans / timescale for the removal of the ill-considered IPP sentences? (3.1.2.)
- 3.2.4 Will the Minister make a statement regarding the supervision by staff to ensure the safety, at all times, of prisoners and staff on D wing at HMP Exeter? (5.4.0)
- 3.2.5 In response to Lord Bradley's Report in 2009, David Hanson, Minister of Justice at the time, said the government supported the changes needed to divert offenders from prison into appropriate psychiatric services. Does this remain government policy, and if so, what progress is being made? (3.1.2)
- 3.2.6 On 30th June 2010, in his first major speech as Secretary of State, Kenneth Clarke said: "More than half of the crime in this country is committed by people who have been through the system. We must now take action and shut off this revolving door of crime and re-offending." We applaud the Secretary of State's declared aim, but question whether the proposed reduction in interventions programmes at Exeter will assist in this. (5.5.2)

### **3.3.0 Issues for the National Offender Management Services.**

- 3.3.1 What is the time-scale for the creation and implementation of policy, guidelines, and procedures for prisoners who are over 55 years of age? (4.2.4)
- 3.3.2 At a time when recruitment of front-line staff has slowed down, would the Prison Service explain the justification for having experienced, qualified officers engaged in administrative / non-prisoner contact posts? (2.2)

### **3.4.0 Issues for the Governor.**

- 3.4.1 The IMB and HMCIP note that there is insufficient purposeful activity and evening association. The library is frequently difficult for prisoners to access. What plans are there to remedy these deficiencies? What is the time-scale for the plans? (3.1.1)
- 3.4.2 Would the Governor revisit the administrative arrangements for Visits Bookings and provide a review? (5.6.2)
- 3.4.3 Is the Governor satisfied that all Prisoner Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPS) are prepared according to the associated policies? (3.4.2)

**3.5.0. Other issues not requiring a response.**

- 3.5.1 The early fears of the national Workforce Modernisation Scheme have diminished. We would like to see the experience of Developing Prison Service Managers utilised more to benefit staff and prisoners.
- 3.5.2 p-Nomis was rolled out and supported by training. The IMB records its appreciation to be invited to attend. (Two members completed the training.) However, the Prison Service has recently decided to change the Management Information Reports and hence this has disrupted the Board's opportunity (and that of other departments) to provide up-to-date information for this Report.
- 3.5.3 During the period of this Report, we are pleased to note a generally tidier appearance of the estate and that work parties are employed in 'green' recycling. We hope this will continue as we consider that there is still room for improvement.
- 3.5.4 The IMB notes that the relationship between prisoner and keyworker is sporadic and deplores the possibility that time required developing the keyworker role may become even less of a priority due to budget restraints. We believe that officers who have not undergone the requisite training should do so without delay so that no-one can be unaware of the full range of these duties.

#### 4.0.0 Areas where reports are required

##### 4.1.0 Health Care

- 4.1.1 Mental, as well as all other areas of Health Care have been through a long period of uncertainty with inevitable consequences for the delivery of these services. However, we can now report that there has been some imaginative and creative thinking exercised in pursuing the most effective way to deal with the mental health needs of our prison population. The delivery of this most difficult and testing area of health care is undergoing a sea-change in its approach.
- 4.1.2 We believe that a majority of prisoners have some need of mental health care, but much of the care does not come with a neatly packaged diagnostic label, and much is complex in both expression and treatment. The In-reach team will now be disseminated throughout the prison. They will carry keys and be seen around the prison, on the landings rather than in an office. They will aim to reach, not only those inmates exhibiting severe symptoms, but those whose problems are deemed behavioural, and even those who might be considered the 'worried well'.
- 4.1.3 There is always the question of how sane a person can be when functioning in an abnormal environment; under constraint with a great loss of power and responsibility whilst also having almost limitless time to dwell on events and their role within them. **It is to be hoped that the keyworker scheme really takes effect, and the mantra of purposeful activity can have true meaning throughout the establishment, despite budget restrictions.**
- 4.1.4 Exeter was awarded a grant from The King's Fund under the health charity's Enhancing the Healing Environment project. The project is designed to stimulate organisations to understand the impact of their surroundings on prisoners and staff. Previous projects in London prisons had turned outside spaces into peaceful gardens and redesigned reception areas. Exeter is among ten provincial prisons and young offender institutes to be selected for pilot schemes. Matching funding was being sought as Exeter sought to align this project with a review of its healthcare strategy. Prisoners were being involved in the project's development. One option is to improve the exercise area - jocularly referred to as 'the rabbit hutch' – in Exeter's Health Care Unit.
- 4.1.5 King's Fund's experience in other institutions has shown that making the healing environment more pleasant can make a significant difference to staff attitudes as well as reducing violent tendencies among patients. In prisons, where physical and mental health can play a critical role in prisoners' behaviour, the fund argues that improving health care offers wider positive benefits for the teams involved and for the prison population as a whole.

## 4.2.0 Diversity

- 4.2.1 **IMB Policy:** Exeter IMB is committed to an inclusive approach to diversity that encompasses and promotes greater interaction and understanding between people of different backgrounds including race, religion, nationality, sexuality, marital status, disability and age. We recognise that a fully inclusive approach to diversity must also respond to differences that cut across social and cultural categories such as mental health, literacy and drug addiction.
- All members of Exeter IMB are committed to undertake their duties in a manner that is appropriate to everyone within the establishment regardless of their background or social situation. The Board will monitor to establish that relationships between staff, prisoners and visitors are conducted fairly and without prejudice. Where this is not the case, the Board will alert appropriate authorities and individuals including the Governor, Senior Management, Area Manager and the Prisons Minister.
- 4.2.2 Foreign Nationals continue to be the main diversity concern, especially those awaiting deportation having served their sentence. The average number of Foreign Nationals at Exeter Prison remained between 30 and 35, the same as in the previous year. Of those prisoners, some 8 to 10 were sentenced-expired and awaiting asylum decisions and the necessary papers to enable them to travel. However for security reasons they were not held in Immigration Removal Centres. **These prisoners occupy much-needed cells and their continued detention in prison is unjust.** The prison is now holding forums twice a month for Foreign Nationals and is making good use of the Big Word. The range of nationalities continues to be diverse. Eastern Europeans form 40 per cent of the Foreign National population, Asian/Indian 20 per cent and Chinese 40 per cent.
- 4.2.3 Young prisoners numbered 44 at the year-end. They are not accommodated in specially designated areas. They share landings, though not cells, with adult prisoners. They participate in the same regimes. **This is inadvisable but, fortunately, does not seem to have caused particular problems.**
- 4.2.4 At the year-end Exeter Prison had a significant number of prisoners aged over 55, including some over 70. (Precise numbers could not be obtained from the prison intranet systems). These prisoners are treated with consideration and are usually placed on A2 or C2 wings to avoid them needing to use the stairs.
- 4.2.5 The Vulnerable Prisoners (VPs) are accommodated predominantly on D wing and kept apart from other prisoners. Increasing numbers of VPs required a substantial overflow to B wing, where separation was less easy, though by the year-end steps were being taken to

eliminate VPs from B wing. VPs continue to share the visits room; the social inclusion officer has not received any complaints.

- 4.2.6 The Black History Month celebration in October was a great success. A speaker from Exeter University gave a talk on the history of slavery.

### 4.3.0 Learning and Skills

- 4.3.1 Exeter seeks to maximise the chances of prisoners not re-offending when they are released through encouraging learning, and by helping them develop communication, teamworking and leadership skills. There are severe limitations as to what can be achieved. Remand prisoners are not required to work or study; long-term prisoners are unlikely to find a suitable in-house course; detoxification programmes exclude others; and it is difficult to meet the needs of the large proportion of short-term prisoners. However Exeter works hard to overcome these handicaps, for instance by encouraging remand prisoners to work or study, and longer-term prisoners to apply for Prisoners' Education Trust grants to undertake distance learning with the Open University. **Overall we believe the prison offers appropriate courses for the majority, though anticipated budget cuts will mean that lean resources must stretch even further.**
- 4.3.2 Learning and Skills at Exeter prison continues to be provided by the same three contractors – Tribal, Strode College and A4E, with a manager responsible for co-ordinating the provision and ensuring performance against contract. This will continue for the next four years. New arrangements to require providers to deliver 100 per cent of contracted hours are working effectively. **Delivery by providers is regarded as consistently positive, with none of the problems reportedly encountered at some other prisons.**
- 4.3.3 During the year a focus on providing courses which give prisoners a better chance of employment on release has continued. New courses introduced include an upgraded Prepare for Release Programme, Maximus Training. Over 50s' Gentlemen's Club, Assertiveness and Anger Awareness, Citizenship and Diversity, Way4ward and MoneyMatters. **Exeter's education induction process has been recognised as 'best practice' in the area and is being used as a model for other prisons.**
- 4.3.4 Peer mentoring now features in education programmes. The Education Department has a capacity for 50 prisoners. Courses run are Personal Confidence, I.C.T. and Entry I.C.T., Entry Level Group, ESOL, Understanding Business, Alcohol Awareness (with one-to-one support), Family Man, CSCS, Skills for Life Numeracy, Skills for Life Literacy and Art, Alcohol Awareness courses with tests sponsored by British Innkeepers provide a certificate to enhance a participant's employment potential.
- 4.3.5 The Learning Zone has seven classrooms with accommodation for a further 50 prisoners. At the end of the year the following courses were being run: Initial & Presentation, Diagnostics, Preparation for Release, Anger Awareness, Budgeting, BICS, Health & Safety and Perspectives.

Ten prisoners were studying with Open University or other distance learning courses. Strode College offers Outreach for prisoners unable to attend classes, visiting cells and using available rooms for one-to-one and small-group teaching. Enhanced Thinking Skills courses continue to be provided by prison staff.

- 4.3.6 Lack of space limits education places on D Wing to 20, though this number is in the same proportion as those available to the other wings. More courses are provided and the replacement of old tables and chairs has improved the learning environment. The classroom is being repainted and fitted with computers and air-conditioning. D wing courses include Skills for Life Numeracy and Literacy, Social and Life Skills, IT, Health & Safety, and classes for Older Prisoners.
- 4.3.7 D wing Workshop runs an NVQ programme in Performing Manufacturing Operations for local company N-Ergy. This is accredited by Weston College to a Level 2 standard and the courses benefit from peer mentoring. In the 12 months to the end of October, 22 D Wing learners had achieved NVQ accreditation. The Main workshop increased attendance by 25% in the last few months of the year. They also have accredited NVQ programmes with support from n-Ergy.
- 4.3.8 The kitchens offer NVQs in Food Preparation and Cooking, engaging some six to eight prisoners at a time. Prisoners unable to complete the course are credited with completed units, enabling them to continue their studies on release or transfer to another prison.
- 4.3.9 Library facilities are timetabled to accommodate wings, SCU and HCU prisoners between 9 a.m. to 12 noon and 2 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. from Monday to Saturday. The library is closed on Sundays. The Board would like to see this facility more accessible to all prisoners.
- 4.3.10 Waste awareness courses were being planned for yard parties – leading to a Level 2 certificate recognised by employers such as local councils or energy companies.
- 4.3.11 The appointment of a Movements Officer during the previous year continued to benefit attendance levels: for instance prisoners should no longer have to forgo a class to attend a healthcare appointment. Towards the end of the year B Wing prisoners were also able to attend. The use of Incentive and Earned Privileges (IEPs) also continues to play a part in encouraging attendance. The Key Performance Target for attendance is 80 per cent. This has been consistently exceeded and at times attendance has been above 87 per cent. **Credit is due to the enthusiasm of staff members in working to overcome the physical, financial and human resource constraints.**

- 4.3.12 Following the positive commendation of HMCIP for the quality of its educational performance given the resources available, the prison was working during the year on a number of recommendations. It was hoped that some basic steps, such as ensuring that prisoners' Learning Plans were correctly signed off, would raise Exeter's learning and skills from Grade 2 to Grade 3 - very good for a Category B local prison.
- 4.3.13 Steps to combat re-offending include a better flow of information about the local employment market. Job centres will supply regular vacancy bulletins which should help the prison tailor the choice of courses to increase released prisoners' employability. The European Social Fund's 'Way Forward' project, managed by A4E, provides a bridge into employment. Of fifteen recently released prisoners, five had got jobs.
- 4.3.14 At the year-end, the effect of public spending cuts was already being felt. **There was concern that even greater emphasis on specific job-related courses should not be at the expense of education in the life skills of literacy and numeracy. Tighter budgetary limitations will make it impossible to increase the overall availability of education and skills courses, so demand will continue to be unmet. An offender learning review is scheduled for early in 2011, though under current circumstances any meaningful strategic planning is not possible.**

#### 4.4.0 Safer Custody

- 4.4.1 The prison experienced four deaths in custody during the year and in May 2010 the Governor published an updated 'Death in Custody' local protocol for the prison. It includes a mission statement highlighting communication with bereaved families and with staff and prisoners as well as multi agency work with other professionals. The protocol also details necessary responsibilities and systems following a death in custody. After a death in custody, a nominated member of the Board follows up the processes until an Inquest is heard. When possible, the member attends the Inquest; the chairman may be asked to supply a report for the coroner but the IMB does not have contact with the prisoner's family or friends.
- 4.4.2 Safer Custody Team: The posts of Violence Reduction Officer and Suicide Prevention officer should have been permanently filled in April 2010, but at the year-end no appointment was confirmed. The manager of the team has been impressive in his ability to ensure that the vital and complex work of this area has been tackled despite the lack of permanency amongst his staff. Much of the work is carried out by an extremely efficient and enthusiastic administrative assistant who displays impressive skills and knowledge across the whole area of Safer Custody. The IMB has been impressed by the dedication of this small team and their

commitment to advancing Safer Custody procedures throughout the prison. Their success to date was evidenced in the successful results from the audit completed in August 2010. **It is to be hoped that the importance of their work will be appropriately recognised as soon as possible with a full team of permanent staff in post.**

- 4.4.3 Safer Custody Meetings: Between November 2009 and April 2010, the prison showed little commitment to holding regular Safer Custody meetings and the ones arranged were often cancelled. However, with the responsibility for this area given to another member of the senior management team, the meetings are now well established and generally well attended. It should be noted that in response to current financial constraints, the IMB will not be observing these meetings but will continue to receive the minutes and other information presented, and will submit a report as appropriate.
- 4.4.4 Violence Reduction: The incidence of illegal drug use and attempts to import mobile phones into the prison has continued, with a consequential impact on the number of violent incidents brought to our attention. We believe that the Prison Service should consider investing in modern technology such as mobile signal blocking or X-ray body search equipment to help eradicate this behaviour and significantly increase the safety of the prison population.
- 4.4.5 Violence Indicators: The most recent HMIP report was critical of the lack of evidence of the collation of indicators of violence in the prison. There is evidence that figures regarding violence reduction are now being routinely presented at the Safer Custody meetings for monitoring. **The IMB will be interested to observe how these figures are analysed and acted upon by senior managers through the next reporting period.**
- 4.4.6 Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT): There has been evidence of improvement in the instances of the open ACCT documentation following the prisoner around the establishment, though there is a tendency for the good practice to lapse. Again, it is an issue that is regularly addressed at the Safer Custody meetings. **There is a need for on-going monitoring of the good work to date on completion and monitoring of ACCT's and the necessary training of staff.**
- 4.4.7 The Training Department has overall responsibility for delivering training to all staff members. This recognises that it is a significant task to ensure that staff receive initial training, on-going and refresher courses. This includes a three yearly refresher for completing ACCT documents.
- 4.4.8 Listeners: The regular transfer of prisoners from Exeter results in frequent vacancies for Listeners, and the subsequent need for

regular training. The IMB has been impressed by the teamwork between the Safer Custody team and the local Samaritans, the latter frequently giving up their time to support and train new Listeners. There are weekly group supervision sessions and at the time of writing this report, the Samaritans were about to begin yet another Saturday training scheme for new members. Ideally, the prison will have at least three Listeners on D wing and nine in the main prison. At the end of the reporting year, the number was down to three in the main prison, hence the urgent need for more training. **The IMB applauds the impressive work to train and support Listeners.**

#### **4.5.0 Separation and Care Unit (SCU), including adjudications.**

- 4.5.1 The physical resources of SCU remain the same as last year. The Unit has nine cells – eight of which are single occupancy and designed similarly to a normal cell on a wing; of these, two are anti-ligature, and one can accommodate a prisoner on dirty protest because of its special wall paint / drainage. There is also provision for special accommodation which is designed to be used for violent or refractory prisoners to prevent them from injuring themselves, others, damaging property or creating a disturbance. The prison is required to inform the IMB when a prisoner is located to such accommodation. It has not been used during the period of this report. All cells have duvets, except for ‘dirty protest’ prisoners, for whom duvets are seen as a ‘reward’ when they cease such behaviour.
- 4.5.2 All staff working in the Unit are fully trained to deal with the complex, often stressful, needs of the prisoners, maintain accurate and timely paper and computer records, ensure the adjudication process is correct and fulfil the requirements of PSOs 1600 (Use of Force) & 1700 (Segregation). The Board is delighted that an officer received a commendation – proposed by his SCU colleagues – in recognition of his outstanding work in the Unit.
- 4.5.3 Until September 2010, there have been three Board members visiting each week with additional visits to accommodate the need to attend reviews. Due to budgetary constraints, it is likely that, in future, only two visits per week will be the norm. In practice, it is difficult for members to synchronise visits with Good Order or Disciple (GOOD) reviews, and Segregation & Monitoring Group (SMARG) meetings, as the timing and occurrence of these is often changed at short notice.
- 4.5.4 The Board is aware that adjudications have decreased – in part due to the commendable use of Incentives and Earned Privileges (IEP) scheme, but perhaps also to the complexity of compiling evidence on pNomis. The Board has the following concerns:

As mentioned in the past two Annual Reports, we would hope that more constructive use of prisoner's time could be initiated by the library, gym and especially by the teaching department. Prisoners are sometimes inappropriately located for too long in the Unit whilst awaiting transfer to other establishments, and in particular, to mental health resources, thus blocking the use of cells. We recognise that such moves are dependent on factors beyond the control of HMP Exeter.

- 4.5.5 We continue to be impressed by the professional, concerned yet firm approach by staff in this Unit. They work as a team in dealing with incidents, supporting their colleagues, maintaining legal documents and promoting fairness by quickly establishing a rapport with prisoners. We record our appreciation of these officers as they demonstrate a courteous, helpful, good humoured and knowledgeable approach.

## **5.0.0 Reports on other areas**

### **5.1.0 Catering and Kitchen**

- 5.1.1 The catering department has made some positive innovations with its menus. These have included much more in-house catering and allowances for the different diets required to meet ethnic, religious and other needs which have increased over recent years. The effort is commendable. The A & C wing serveries have been modernised with that in B wing due to be completed in the very near future. We are concerned about the time taken to refit the serveries. The civilian staff are now up to full complement with experienced caterers.
- 5.1.2 An advisory Food Safety Action team meets every three months. A new educational program has been introduced in conjunction with the NVQ qualification with Strode College. This course can be completed in two months and has proved very successful.
- 5.1.3 The floor in the prisoners' rest room is in urgent need of repair. Regrettably this work has been delayed due to a shortage of funds. We were concerned about the lack of calibrated food temperature probes in the serveries. We are pleased this has been remedied.

### **5.2.0 Chaplaincy**

- 5.2.1 The Chaplaincy Team continued to provide a high level of involvement with prisoners of all faiths, and none. The team consists of employed and voluntary people. There is a good network of local church based people who run many activities such as music, faith study courses and discussion groups, who work alongside the Chaplaincy team.
- 5.2.2 The support of prison officers is vital to ensure that prisoners can access the many activities. Generally rotas are structured to support these events.
- 5.2.3 The non-availability of an Imam is still a problem for Muslim prisoners. This seems to be a national problem and is acknowledged by the Prison Service Chaplaincy Service. The World Faith Room is now located opposite the main Chapel.
- 5.2.4 Though the most visible activity of the Chaplaincy team is the running of Worship Services, we acknowledge their work in the daily rounds to prisoner locations, liaison with prisoner families in times of crisis and in ensuring that dietary restrictions to certain faith celebration times are communicated to the kitchen team. We acknowledge the availability of the Chaplain to help prison staff when they have a personal need.
- 5.2.5 The prison awaited the appointment of a new co-ordinating Chaplain.

### **5.3.0 Reception and First Night Centre (FNC)**

- 5.3.1 Both the First Night Centre and Reception have moved into refurbished accommodation in the last year. Taking the First Night Centre away from B Wing, which housed drug dependents, was a positive move. However the new FNC with only six cells is a relatively cramped space and gives officers little room for rehousing incompatible cellmates or accommodating new arrivals requiring single cells.
- 5.3.2 The new Reception area is a great improvement with a variety of rooms for individual interviews or for waiting. Waiting times for prisoners on discharge have been lengthy because of staff pressures in Healthcare, for example. One snapshot monitoring of discharges showed that, out of the five seen, three were leaving prison with no fixed accommodation. Whilst there has been evidence of good practice with respect to the resettlement of prisoners, we are not at all confident that advice and guidance at a crucial time has been given to all prisoners.

### **5.4.0 D wing**

- 5.4.1 The IMB remains concerned that some of the most vulnerable prisoners in Exeter are secured in a night-unlocking system that appears to fail to assure their safety and wellbeing. The concern about D wing (the VP unit) is compounded by the fact that the system, which is effectively a nocturnal no-go area within the prison, makes it difficult for any first-hand independent observation and monitoring to be carried out.
- 5.4.2 Members' personal observations of the night-time regime have been brought to the attention of the Governor at IMB board meetings and reassurances received in response. However the board's concerns remain. Officers and prisoners have expressed to our members their concerns as to the safety of current arrangements. In the absence of any physical patrols, night staff must rely on video monitoring, even though the quality of the system does not enable them to identify prisoners and their cell locations with certainty. In the event of an incident being observed, the wing's two night staff are not permitted to intervene and must summon other staff before the landing doors can be unlocked. Inevitably there would be a delay, possibly of some minutes, before the summoned help arrived.
- 5.4.3 To protect themselves we understand that some prisoners are choosing to improvise in-cell sanitation and subsequently slop out, rather than access the toilets. From more than one source, we are given to understand that some prisoners are sharing cells all night. The situation is difficult for staff, intolerable and unsatisfactory for

some prisoners. We believe another management review would be advisable.

## 5.5.0 Reducing Re-offending

- 5.5.1 Senior staff changes seemed to leave this important area of prison activity in strategic limbo for part of the year, though by year end it was clear there was a renewed drive and focus. On occasions staff shortages continued to impose constraints on delivery as officers in specialist areas were switched to other duties. However the attitude of team members remained remarkably positive in the pursuit of improved prisoner capabilities along the eight nationally defined RR pathways: accommodation; education, training and employment; health; drugs; alcohol; finance, benefit and debt; children and families; and attitudes, thinking and behaviour.
- 5.5.2 At the end of the reporting year there was great uncertainty about the impact of public spending cuts. We understand that from April next, the prison will not deliver its own Thinking Skills Programme (TSP) or Short-duration Drugs Programme (SDP). A peripatetic service, which is to serve specified treatment sites, is to be centred on Channings Wood. However we are informed that Exeter, as a Category B local prison, will not be 'on the map' for these resources. The value in the thinking skills programme is in helping change the mindset of prisoners who, because of a cognitive deficit, are given to irrational or anti-social thought. **We are concerned that the significant number of prisoners who do not transfer to a Category C prison will never benefit from these cognitive behavioural and addiction courses. A greater concern would be if this elimination of a key local capability was followed by others, and that this would effectively reduce Exeter to a criminal warehousing facility.**
- 5.5.3 A positive achievement at the end of our year, was an agreement with mental health charity MIND to provide a service on one day per week.
- 5.5.4 IMB Exeter has expressed concerns at the lack of evidence to indicate how well each individual establishment is performing in reducing the rate of re-offending. We understand that statistics ranking prison performance are now being released. **This is welcome. It would be useful if an establishment-by-establishment breakdown of performance by each of the eight pathways was compiled and shared. This should identify areas of underperformance, and the potential to spot which prisons offer best practice and thus raise standards generally.**
- 5.5.5 Following a major review of Offender Management Unit and an allocated Offender Supervisor for each offender and staffing changes, it was hoped there would be more time for individual case

management. As part of the new reducing re-offending strategy, a detailed review of the concerns and aspirations of prisoners about to be discharged is to be conducted. Exit questionnaires by each prisoner, factored against the prisoner's offence, age, length of sentence, ethnicity, geographical area and support needs, should provide a useful analysis and guide to improving or refining future provision. **A system limitation appears to be that 'AUR' Automatic Unconditional Release prisoners due for release in less than a year are not checked-on after release. South West area discussions reveal a willingness by the police to add this task to duties the of neighbourhood officers. This could be a considerable community benefit.**

- 5.5.6 For prisoners aged 55 and over with age-related needs, the PCT-funded Resettlement and Care of Older Ex-Offenders and Prisoners (RECOOP) is providing regular sessions, which have examined issues including access to the library, wheelchair access and steps, buddy helpers and fetching meals, pensions and dementia. **With the prison population mirroring the general ageing demographic trend, this attention is needed and welcome.**
- 5.5.7 The independent Exeter charity St Petroc's provides a well-regarded service in helping released prisoners find accommodation. On reception every prisoner has an accommodation assessment and those identified as needing support are referred to the charity. The target for getting released prisoners into accommodation is 80 per cent. During the year to October the percentage achieved was 90.2 per cent. In a recent 'snapshot' of 60 prisoners on release, 53 had 'sustainable' accommodation to go to. Exeter releases approximately 30 prisoners a week into the community.
- 5.5.8 The prison's weekly Employment Board puts prisoners in suitable jobs or training which will benefit them, while ensuring that prison security is not jeopardised. This is useful and positive. However intense pressure on budgets risks limiting the availability of what are regarded as the 'softer' skills of literacy and numeracy, and favouring courses which are directly related to skills for a particular job. **We are convinced that encouraging literacy and numeracy skills is vital in the efforts to maximise a prisoner's chances of securing a job on release, and should not be sidelined.** Exeter is actively considering adopting an initiative originated at HMP Dartmoor, which unlocked a fund of prisoners' fines to support a restorative justice programme aimed at changing attitudes through prisoner links with victims. **This would be a serendipitous use of such funds.**
- 5.5.9 The effectiveness of a 28-day Integrated Drug Treatments System (IDTS) programme introduced in B-wing at the start of the year was handicapped by the number of vulnerable category prisoners accommodated on the wing. A successful push to eliminate Rule 45 categorisation has, at our year-end, removed that problem, although

IMB will need to monitor the safety and humane treatment of the former R45 prisoners now re-located on the main wings.

5.5.10 After a promising start, a concerted effort to share information between the many volunteer bodies which take an active interest in prison life has been in the doldrums for much of the year. This useful networking exercise is due to be revived and celebrated. There is an impressive number of partner and voluntary agencies working with HMP Exeter, who offer support and advice to prisoners. (Annex A)

## **5.6.0 Visits**

5.6.1 Visits by family members and friends are important to prisoners and a structure is in place to facilitate this. A new visits hall, provided by using a portable building provides a modern environment for visits. However the accommodation seems less spacious than the previous facility.

5.6.2 The process for making a visit booking is not as efficient as we would wish. Local management seem not to recognise that there is a problem, or not able to improve the clerical staffing allocated to the task. A streamlined clerical process could make the 'off hook' time unnecessary, freeing the single booking telephone line to take new calls. Staggering staff lunches would also help callers, who themselves may only be able to call during their lunchtime.

5.6.3 The Choices Consulting Team, who run the Visitor Centre, are doing a valuable job in welcoming visitors to the establishment. However, they have also commented upon the difficulties some families experience when trying to make a visit booking. Choices also run the same facility at HMP Channings Wood and Dartmoor and report that visit booking there does not create the problems experienced at Exeter. Perhaps there is scope for management to see if systems and procedures used in these establishments can be adopted for Exeter.

## **5.7.0 Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice & Throughcare Scheme (CARATS)**

5.7.1 B wing is now at last regarded as 'fit for purpose', with a modern, well-furnished and equipped suite for Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice and Throughcare Scheme (CARATS) newly completed and risk-assessed. CARAT staff are being freed from some unnecessary and bureaucratic form-filling. Instead they will use 'nodal mapping' in more one-to-one sessions with prisoners with acute substance misuse problems.

5.7.2 Alcohol has, up to now, been the poor relation to drugs in terms of treatment and counselling. This is despite the knowledge that in the longer term alcoholism is more detrimental and that alcohol is a

factor in at least half of all 'domestic' crime. From December 2010, CARATs was due to deliver individual and group sessions in the IDTS facilities adjoining B Wing. It is hoped this will improve the support for prisoners with substance misuse issues, and compensate somewhat for the loss of the SDP courses.

- 5.7.3 From April 2011 a full time alcohol support worker was due to work alongside the CARATs team to support those in need. This is an additional post. We understand that the South West is to be the only prison region in the country to deal specifically with cocaine and alcohol addiction. **A review of alcohol-related interventions was long overdue and is most welcome.**

## 6.0.0 **Work of Exeter IMB**

- 6.0.1 The full complement of members is 13 – three members resigned during this year and none was recruited.
- 6.0.2 A full board meeting takes place monthly; however, due to IMB budget constraints it has been decided that in future this will be reduced to 10 per annum. The Governor or his Deputy has attended for part of every meeting. Additionally, there have been inputs from IMB members, prison staff, the Regional Representative of the National Council and the Deputy Head of the Secretariat.
- 6.0.3 There is a system for attendance at any major incident, where members act as impartial monitors both during and post-incident. 4.4.4 (Violence reduction), 4.5.5 (SCU), 5.4.2 (D-wing), 6.0.3. (IMB procedures), 3.1.4 (Deaths in custody) However, having discussed this key element of IMB work with other boards in our area, we have concluded that it would be helpful if the roles and duties of members who attend a serious incident were set out in a Memorandum Of Understanding with the prison. We are grateful to have been invited to attend hot de-briefing sessions.
- 6.0.4 A weekly rota, whereby at least two members visit the prison, allows each member to meet staff and prisoners, respond to applications from prisoners and carefully monitor most areas of the establishment. Individual members have designated areas of the prison regime to which they give special attention. Members may also attend relevant meetings although such meetings are often cancelled or re-arranged at short notice. Therefore to make best use of the IMB budget we have recommended that members seek minutes of meetings and discuss issues with appropriate personnel instead.
- 6.0.5 The Chairman, Vice-chairman and BDO attended relevant national training courses. Two members attended the Annual Conference; two members attended a media training event.
- 6.0.6 A member of the Board, who is a member of the national Network of Speakers, gave seven talks to local organisations during the year. A number of donations were made to charity.
- 6.0.7 This year, a Service Level Agreement was signed with the Governor and three members prepared a local IMB Handbook. Significantly, IMB obtained the use of an office – a clear message to show the 'Independent' role which we play. We are supported in our work by a clerk and deputy. Regrettably, despite the best endeavours of some staff, we have been unable to secure a dedicated computer terminal to enable us to adequately access prison records.
- 6.0.8 For Exeter Board, this has been a year of consolidation with a background of uncertainty of budget restrictions for the

establishment and the IMB. The austerity measures will undoubtedly impact on what can be delivered. Well-resourced IMBs can perform an invaluable service as the eyes and ears of the wider community, maintaining an independent oversight of prisoners' welfare and the proper management of the establishment. The effects of budgetary constraints will arguably make the role even more important in future. At Exeter we will therefore strive to improve our monitoring.

- 6.0.9 National statistics show that it costs about £40,000 per year to keep a prisoner. At Exeter, due to the professionalism of the Finance Manager, this figure is some £23,000, one of the lowest costs for a local prison. The cost of the IMB's watchdog role is tiny by comparison; the local IMB budget permits £25 per year for each prisoner.
- 6.0.10 We observe staff who daily deal with difficult and challenging people whom society has excluded. We appreciate very much the help and support given by them to enable members of Exeter IMB to fulfill their statutory duties.

Mrs Heather M Wilson  
**IMB Chairman**  
**HMP Exeter**

### Annex A

<b>EXETER BOARD STATISTICS</b>	
Recommended Complement of Board Members	13
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	13
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	10
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	0
Number of members leaving within reporting period	3
Total number of Board meetings during reporting period	12
Average number of attendances at Board meetings during reporting period	9
Number of attendances at meetings other than Board meetings	42
Total number of visits to the prison (including all meetings)	236
Total number of applications received	98
Total number of segregation reviews held	N/A
Total number of segregation reviews attended	N/A

	<b>APPLICATIONS STATISTICS</b>	<b>2007/8</b> %	<b>2008/9</b> %	<b>2009/10</b> %
	Accommodation	4	2	7
B	Adjudications	0	8	0
C	Diversity related	3	2	7
D	Education/employment/training	0	2	0
E	Family/visits	10	8	6
F	Food/kitchen related	4	3	8
G	Health related	8	14	22
H	Property	11	20	8
I	Sentence related	10	2	16
J	Staff/prisoner/detainee related	3	6	4
K	Transfers	13	12	4
L	Miscellaneous: Licence recall, confidential, other	34	25	22
	<b>Total number of applications</b>	114	104	98

## **Annex B**

### HMP Exeter – Partner organisations 2009/2010

AA  
ACCOOP  
Alabare Christian Care Centre  
A4E  
Barnardos  
CAB  
Choices  
Crossline, Plymouth  
Devon HIV team  
Exeter Homeless Action Group  
Exeter Prison Fellowship  
Devon County Council Library Service  
IAG  
IMB  
MIND  
Inside Out Project  
Job Centre Plus  
N-Ergy Group  
Next Step  
Official Prison Visitors  
PACT  
Pathways  
Prince's Trust  
Royal British Legion  
Samaritans  
Sexual Abuse line  
Shaw Trust  
Shelter  
SSAFA  
St Lloyes Foundation  
St Petrocs  
Strode College  
The Extra Mile  
Toe By Toe  
Tribal  
Victim Support  
Way4ward  
Workways  
YMCA