

Annual Report

Independent Monitoring Board

HMP LEYHILL

February 2009 – January 2010

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Vice-Chairman: Stephanie Fairhead

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1. Statutory Role of the Independent Monitoring Board (IMB)

The Prisons Act 1952 and the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 require every prison and Immigration Removal/Reception Centre (IRC) to be monitored by an independent Board appointed by the Minister of Justice from members of the community in which the prison or centre is situated.

The Board is specifically charged to:

- 1 Satisfy itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in custody within its prison and the range and adequacy of the programmes preparing them for release.
- 2 Inform promptly the Minister of Justice, or any official to whom authority has been delegated, any concerns it has.
- 3 Report annually to the Minister of Justice on how well the prison has met the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have on those in its custody.

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

2. Description of HMP Leyhill

HMP Leyhill is a Category D Open Establishment in a rural setting and is located off the M5 motorway between Bristol and Gloucester. From August 2009 the occupational capacity was increased by 20 with places for 110 life sentence prisoners and 422 determinate sentenced prisoners. The prison is unique in the open estate in that it accepts sex offender and child offender life sentence prisoners.

For those prisoners who need to show they have made progress in their offending behaviour to obtain parole, they need to be tested in the community. As a result these prisoners work towards obtaining work in the local community.

As an open establishment, HMP Leyhill has a responsibility to:

- Protect the public by holding prisoners committed to their care in a safe, decent and healthy environment.
- Prepare prisoners for safe resettlement on completion of their sentence by providing a variety of constructive programmes that target reducing offending behaviour, improving education and work skills and promoting good attitudes towards behaviour.

The learning and skills provision at the prison is funded by the Learning Skills Council as part of the South West Offender Learning & Skills Council (OLASS) and provides the following support to prisoners:

- Tribal Ltd Information Advice and Guidance;
- A4e Personal Development and Social & Life Skills;
- Strode College Work Related Learning.

3. Executive summary

A Issue requiring a response from the Minister

At HMP Leyhill there are an increasing number of older and disabled prisoners remaining at the prison. The Board is anxious to know if there are any plans to create facilities more suitable for this category of prisoner and in particular for those unlikely to be released and who consider Leyhill to be their home?

The Board has been concerned about the delay in Parole Board hearings and the subsequent cost implications.

The Board is concerned whether any consideration has been given towards wage increases for prisoners and if not, why not? Poorer prisoners with little or no means of supplementing their income are finding it increasingly difficult, for example, to offset the rise in cost of goods purchased through the canteen.

B Issues of concern requiring a response from the Director General

There has been a significant increase in the number of IPP (Imprisonment for Public Protection) prisoners arriving at HMP Leyhill, some of whom have arrived at extremely short notice. Once they have been risk assessed, a number of these prisoners have had to be returned to closed conditions to enable them to undertake behavioural programmes that had not previously been identified. The Board questions why this category of prisoner is sent to open conditions at such short notice without having completed the necessary courses?

While the Board considers the recent NACRO (National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders) programme for prisons working with older prisoners as an excellent initiative, it questions why this been allowed to be introduced without the necessary funding to make it possible to train staff and put the initiative into effective action? With the increasing numbers of older prisoners remaining in prison this has to be a necessary provision for the future.

As in the last report, the Board questions why short term prisoners continue to arrive with no opportunity to find suitable work in such a short space of time with some of them barely having time to finish their induction period?

C Issue of concern requiring a response from the Regional Custodial Manager/DOM

The Board would like to know why some prisoners are sent to this particular prison when the courses they are required to undertake are unavailable and prevent them from completing the terms of their parole.

The Board questions why there has been little or no funding made available to improve the fabric of the buildings and, in particular, the state of the majority of recesses which are in need of total refurbishment?

The Board would like to understand why the Prison Service was unable to ensure that the Christmas canteen stock was fully available in a timely manner for prisoners to purchase. There seems insufficient realisation that this is a source of great frustration for prisoners.

D Areas of excellence

Throughout the year the Board has observed excellent practice taking place within the prison:

- The Security Department has an excellent system for the management of risk assessment;
- Sentinel continues to be a good and effective project;
- The Safer Custody team works efficiently;
- Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) is well managed by staff;
- Some excellent work is being carried out by members of the Prisoners Consultative Committee;
- The PE Department regularly surveys its users to improve opportunities and develop facilities for older prisoners;
- Reception, despite working under pressure, initiated a system to make provision for prisoners arriving at lunchtime;
- Through the Gate (TTG) has increased the number of prisoners working out;
- Effective preparation was made for the management of a possible outbreak of swine 'flu/ Norovirus;
- The award presented to the recycling department; and
- Recognition of the excellent support provided by the Imam.

E Overall judgement

As recorded in previous reports, the members of the Board continued to be fully supported by the Senior Management Team and members of staff when responding to Board queries and providing open access to all activities taking place. This enabled members to carry out their monitoring role and further develop their overview of the complexities and difficulties involved in the management of the prison. Once again, concerns raised by the Board were dealt with during rota duties, discussions with staff and at the regular monthly meetings with the Governor.

4. Leyhill Independent Monitoring Board

The main priority for the Independent Monitoring Board is to monitor the way in which the prison carries out its responsibilities with regard to its duty of care for prisoners.

For the first few months the Board had ten members with one member unable to carry out his responsibilities, due to family illness and which ended with his resignation.

Towards the end of the reporting period a recruitment campaign had been prepared in readiness for the start of the new reporting year.

Members of the Board continue to be made welcome by management and staff and are encouraged to observe meetings relevant to their monitoring role.

Members have taken a specific interest in the following areas and continue to monitor other aspects of the prison in a general way during rota duties.

Adjudications	Applications	CARATS	Canteen	Employment
Families	Healthcare	Offender Management Unit (OMU)	Prisoner Consultative Committee (PCC)	Psychology
Quality Improvement, Education and Induction	Reception	Requests and Complaints	Safer Custody	Security

Areas brought to the attention of the Governor for further discussion have included:

Canteen provision
 Dr Barnardos' involvement in the prison
 ECL (end of custody)
 Foreign Nationals
 Healthcare
 IMB participation with incidents
 IDTS (integrated drug treatment system in prisons)
 Management restructuring
 NACRO package for older prisoners
 Over 50's Forum
 Parole delays
 PPC (Prisoners' Consultative Committee)
 Recesses
 Short term prisoners
 Storybook Dads

5. Acknowledgements

I would like to commend all members of the Board for their hard work and commitment to their role as independent monitors and thank them for their excellent teamwork throughout a difficult year with only nine members and for the care and concern they always show towards prisoners faced with difficult problems.

On behalf of the Board I would like to thank the Governor, Mick Bell, the Acting Governor, Mick Morris, the Acting Deputy-Governor, Alex Reed, the rest of the Senior Management Team and the Business Support Unit as well as all other members of staff at HMP Leyhill for their support, advice, help and patience while dealing with our queries. In particular, I would like to thank Pat Carpenter, the IMB Clerk, for the excellent work and the professional way she has carried out her responsibilities to support the members of the IMB.

We continue to be encouraged to go to any member of staff and, in particular, the Governor with any query or concern we may have had and in doing so have always been treated with courtesy and respect. As a result we have felt confident that the issues raised have been taken seriously and fully dealt with. The positive professional relationship that has been established between the Governor, his staff and the members of the IMB has been to the benefit of prisoners at HMP Leyhill.

Judith Hurford

6. Adjudications

The Board monitored prisoner adjudications during the period and were satisfied that they followed the appropriate procedures. Several of those observed were adjourned for technical reasons and followed up with the Independent Adjudicator. The Board felt that prisoners were fairly and sympathetically treated in those cases monitored.

7. Applications to the Board

CODE	SUBJECT	
A1	Adjudications - internal	3
A2	Adjudications - external	
B1	Property related to previous prison/IRC	7
B2	Property related to (HMP.....)	3
B3	Canteen/Argos/Facilities List	
C	Health related	
D1	Visits	1
D2	Resettlement Issues	5
D3	Mail/Pin Phones	1
E1	Employment/Education	2
E2	IEP (incentives and earned privileges)	1
E3	Rule 45/49	
F	Food/Kitchen related	
G1	App about staff (inc. Bullying)	3
G2	App about prisoners/detainees (inc. Bullying)	
G3	App for staff	
H1	Basic sentence (inc. Remand Time)	2
H2	(HDC) Home Detention Curfew	11
H3	Immigration/Deportation	
H4	Categorization	
H5	Police Days	
H6	(ROTL) Release on Temporary Licence	20
H7	Parole Board	2
I	Transfers	9
J1	Cell quality	
J2	Wing/cell allocation	1
J3	Complaints:- forms/procedures	1
K	Miscellaneous	1
	Confidential	1
TOTAL NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS		74

During the Reporting Period the Board received 74 applications. This was a decrease of 60% over the previous year.

The main sources of applications were:-

	2009/10	2008/9	2007/8
HDC	15%	32%	27%
ROTL	27%	16%	15%
Property	13%	12%	3%
Transfers	12%	6%	6%

8. Canteen

Board members continued to monitor the canteen service due to the rapidly deteriorating service experienced at the end of the last reporting period. The year opened with great hopes for the new canteen supplier but the year began with basic items not included on the canteen list and several items included that were actually out of stock. The situation continued for many weeks with, initially, prisoners being extremely patient and good humoured, appreciating that it took time to set up a new service and were aware that the DHL staff worked hard to source out of stock items at the last moment.

Unfortunately, the service deteriorated and many complaints were made to Board members and in particular over the availability of the Christmas stock.

Members were aware that during the past year serious concerns were raised by prisoners on a regular basis with regard to the canteen list and their requests for particular items to be included. Prisoners with little money to spend were upset that the cheap tobacco they had previously ordered was unavailable to them but available at the Leyhill packing station for distribution to other prisons. In this case, it took several months before the situation was resolved.

As in the last reporting period, prisoners were upset at the increase in the cost of food items particularly as their wages had not gone up to help them absorb these higher prices.

The Prisoners' Consultative Committee (PCC) also monitored the Canteen situation and when complaints were made to the IMB, prisoners were also advised to pass their concerns on to PCC members. The PCC conducted a comprehensive survey of all prisoners with regard to canteen issues in the hope they would be able to negotiate on the make-up of the next list. Subsequently, PCC members were shocked and disappointed to discover that their consultation with all prisoners at Leyhill had been ignored and none of their items appeared on the new list. At the end of the period this issue had still not been resolved or acted upon.

Members of the PCC were concerned that the effect of this inaction was undermining its credibility and that other prisoners would be sceptical of its ability to represent their concerns effectively.

The Board was equally concerned that insufficient attention was given to the PCC's role.

9. Chaplaincy

The Board were pleased to see the Chaplain return to his post after his illness and acknowledged the excellent work carried out by the Chaplaincy team during his absence.

The Board recognises the significant contribution made by the Imam who is acknowledged within the Prison Service for his interpretation and understanding of the Koran.

10. Diversity

The ten disciplines under the umbrella of Diversity are regularly monitored by the use of the Smart programme that provides up to date information for the Senior Management Team (SMT). All functions are working well with no major problems.

In preparation for the new recruitment campaign, due to be launched in the next reporting period, it will be the Board's aim to increase its expertise through the appointment of members from a wide range of background and cultures.

11. Enterprises and Labour Pool

The Labour Pool was successful with prisoners working on site and a few on escorted placements outside the prison boundaries. During the year the 'boundaries' of the prison were extended and prisoners were able to work within the new boundaries, only having to sign out at the Gate.

The number of prisoners able to work out in the community increased to around one hundred due to further opportunities being identified by the Through the Gate (TTG) team.

Individual industries saw many improvements over the past year, an example being the market garden producing more palatable food for the prisoner with less waste. The prison was delighted to receive an award for recycling during this period. The recycling project grew with the prison generally achieving a recycling rate of 65%. There was an increase in the reprocessing of materials, a new food processor was trialled using equal amounts of waste food and sawdust to produce compost and the sawdust compressor continued to be successful.

The tonnage throughput by the Laundry increased and funding was available for replacement presses. Problems for the laundry continued to be a shortage of labour, due to prisoners being released to go on courses, and difficulties for managers not having backup when they went on holiday. Unfortunately, some NVQ qualifications were postponed due to staff shortages.

The training opportunities available through the Carpenters Shop and Fork Lift Truck training continued. The Road Transport Industrial Training Board visited to make assessments and training on Mobile Elevating Work Platforms is planned for the next reporting period. Due to staff sickness, there was a reduction in training for Industrial Cleaning.

The Transport and Car Valeting services continued to be efficient and the Print Shop work increased and dealt with both internal and private clients, including work for the Ministry of Justice.

12. Families Pathway

A new outdoor play area creating quality facilities for the visiting children was funded by The Princes Trust, built by prisoners from Leyhill and was opened to great acclaim. The provision for prisoners' families, and in particular for Family Days, was very good. Unfortunately, without a paid Playworker in place during the past year and since the end of the Barnardos Project, the situation became a cause of concern. However, by the end of the reporting period, there was an indication that funding would be earmarked to appoint a Playworker.

A leaflet entitled Children Matter was developed by the Chaplain and given to parents attending visits providing advice and information on the opportunities for prisoners and their families while the father was in prison. Similarly, leaflets to offer support and advice for both prisoners and families on the subject of domestic violence were made available.

Unfortunately, as in the previous reporting period, Board members were disappointed that the Storybook Dads initiative to develop an editing suite on site had not taken place.

13. Healthcare

Healthcare provision was delivered through the local NHS South Gloucestershire Primary Care Trust (PCT) who had stated that a commitment to improving prisoner healthcare was within its top ten priorities. A locum practice continued during the period as a new Contract was not in place and the negotiation/tendering process was ongoing. This uncertain situation gave rise to a difficult time for healthcare staff.

Healthcare staff were, at times, under particular pressure as the Practice Manager was involved in the discussions concerning the Contract and a member of the nursing staff suffered ill health. This gave rise to concerns being expressed by the Board regarding staffing levels, particularly regarding mental health care and weekend cover. Despite the difficulties the Healthcare staff continued to deliver an excellent service to prisoners with all clinics and mental health care being provided on the same basis as the previous year.

Whilst prisoner health was said by the PCT to be a priority, there has been little evidence of this in practice as little importance seems to have been attached to the negotiating, tendering and awarding of the new Contract (effective March 1st 2010) as this has now been ongoing for two years. The Board is concerned that prisoner health has not been given significant consideration during the tendering period.

The Board are aware of an increasing number of older and disabled prisoners remaining at the prison with few possibilities for fit older prisoners to work out. As a result, it considers the recent NACRO programme for prisons working with older prisoners as an excellent initiative but members were concerned that this has been rolled out without sufficient funding to support the initiative.

ACCT was well managed by staff and this, combined with the support given by the mental health nurse, may well be helping to reduce the number of ACCTs needing to be opened.

The Board were aware that effective arrangements were in place to tackle potential swine 'flu and Norovirus outbreaks.

14. Induction

The two week rolling programme, which covered a range of topics including health, relationships, the environment and basic literacy and numeracy, continued during the reporting period despite severe cuts by third party providers.

In addition to the reduction in services, the constant churn of prisoners, many of whom were short term, added considerably to the workload. Prisoners were given colour coded timetables to ensure they were able to follow the programme, much of which was provided on a prisoner to prisoner basis and the fact that it worked well was due to the good nature of both staff and prisoners.

The comprehensive Induction Manual was updated during this period and information, in several languages, was available on touch screens located within the prison.

15. Learning and Skills

All aspects of education and training throughout the prison are regularly reviewed and changes made to the Curriculum to suit the larger numbers of prisoners attending classes. This has resulted in extra classes being offered to prisoners. Leyhill has a dedicated team of staff who are able to offer prisoners a real opportunity to learn and develop skills that will help them to lead better lives when they are released.

The Head of Learning Skills has taken on a new strategic role within the prison to include all elements of learning and skills (including training in Industries) and work placements both in and outside the prison. The Co-ordinator of Learning and Skills now oversees the day-to-day delivery of Learning and Skills at Leyhill. The Education building is fully utilised and on some days classroom space is short.

Confirmation, due in April, of the successful tender for the three suppliers was delayed until August. Strode, A4E and Tribal were finally confirmed with a 25% reduction in the funding for Tribal, which has resulted in Tribal only being able to offer a limited service. Tribal are now working on a cluster basis with Eastwood Park, Bristol and Gloucester and are advising short term prisoners of the opportunity of leaving Leyhill with at least two qualifications (part of the two week Induction programme). The need for a tailored Learning & Skills programme has been identified by the Learning & Skills Co-ordinator to support the growing number of shorter term prisoners arriving at Leyhill. The programme has been developed with the full support of all three providers and is proving very successful.

A4E have been awarded the contract for the South West NOMS (National Offender Management Service) Employability Programme (Way4Ward). European Social Funds (ESP) is providing added value to our existing services and A4E will be working with prisoners before and after release into the community. The contracted number of hours for learning skills have been monitored and are on target.

The Learning & Skills Department continues to engage with the Voluntary Sector and outside agencies, who offer a range of NVQs (National Vocational Qualifications) to prisoners including Business/Admin, Team Leading and Performance Manufacturing.

The Quality Improvement Group (QIG) is made up of heads of departments from all areas of the prison. The group met quarterly during the period of this report to develop initiatives and quality standards, share concerns and have a better understanding of the work going on in other areas. It also discusses the current status of all areas in achieving their targets. A member of the IMB tries to attend these meetings on a regular basis.

16. Offender Management Unit (OMU)

There is a clear correlation between the volume of work in the OMU and the significant number of new receptions and the turnover of prisoners. Although much of the work is with relatively low risk prisoners, a high rate of turnover does give rise to a resulting heavy administrative workload with the release of prisoners on temporary licence, a situation that will need to be effectively managed to ensure that the work with high risk prisoners does not suffer.

The re-organisation of the OMU is ongoing with some staff training still outstanding and as a result, the unit has had insufficient time to demonstrate the expected improvements in the service provided. The forthcoming introduction of both the P-NOMIS project is likely to have a significant impact on the operation of the unit

through competition for available resources and, by so doing, creating the potential to affect adversely those areas of work that may impact upon prisoners. Currently, applications to the IMB from prisoners with concerns relating to issues surrounding release on temporary licence are sporadic with most being attributable to specific individual situations rather than any particular trend.

There has been, during the reporting period, a significant increase in the number of IPP prisoners arriving at HMP Leyhill, some at extremely short notice. After risk assessment, a number of these have been returned to closed conditions to allow the individuals to undertake behavioural programmes that had not been previously identified. This additional and avoidable work does inevitably distract resources away from other work.

The increased number of short term prisoners continues to provide a challenge, not only through the additional workload, but as an establishment structured to prepare prisoners for resettlement in the wider community, there is limited time available for individual needs to be addressed before release. In some cases, the length of time spent at HMP Leyhill prior to release into the community is so short that it is proving difficult, and in some cases impracticable, to find meaningful work for them during their stay.

Concerns expressed in the 2008/9 Annual Report relating to facilities for the treatment for alcohol abuse are being addressed by CARATS (counselling, assessment, referral, advice and throughcare relating to drugs) but this significant contributor to crime has yet to be given the profile it deserves.

17. PE Department

A good range of courses was available for prisoners to choose from throughout the reporting period including the opportunity for older prisoners to have sessions specifically geared to their requirements. The Department regularly surveys those using the gym, the fitness suite and those taking part in recreational activities for feedback in order to improve the service they provide.

The issues identified, but unable to be resolved, continued to be the need to enlarge the sports hall and the fact that there are restrictions on access to the sports field because of security issues. Good practice was observed in the fitness suite which was supervised by prisoners.

The fact that funding to improve the facilities continues to be unavailable, despite the increased prison population, has meant that the staff have had to work harder and be more creative in their efforts to provide the excellent opportunities on offer.

When a member of the PE staff retired he was not replaced. The Board were impressed at the way in which the team members worked together to overcome this reduction and maintain the high standard set.

18. Prisoners' Consultative Committee (PCC)

A Board member who observed the PCC meetings considers this to be one of the most important meetings taking place within HMP Leyhill as it provides a most useful insight into prisoner concerns and enables an important dialogue to take place between prisoner and management.

The majority of the Senior Management Team appreciate the significance of this exchange and consult and negotiate on a variety of topics with members of the

group. For example: a PCC member was invited to attend the Quality Improvement Group; the Healthcare manager attended a PCC meeting to ask what worked well and what improvements prisoners would like to see; and the group were regularly asked for their opinion on a variety of topics. Similarly, the Board took advantage of consulting with the PCC over the revision of the IMB Prisoner Application Form and this proved to be a very useful exercise.

The PCC met with a Governor, on a regular basis with an agenda. Discussion took place on all issues raised and any unresolved concerns were followed up with the prison personnel concerned. Once again, the opportunity for prisoners to bring items causing them frustration to the attention of management was excellent. While the majority of concerns were able to be resolved, a few continued to remain problematic. Chiefly among these were issues concerning the canteen provision (see item 8).

PCC members introduced a range of general concerns raised by prisoners. Prisoner wages, for example, have not been increased for some considerable time and older prisoners and those without the means of supplementing their income were finding it difficult to meet the cost of canteen price increases. The poor condition of the recesses, the majority of which continue to be in need of major refurbishment was also discussed.

Some prisoners felt that when they made complaints about bullying incidents they were in danger of being “shipped out” and this led to some of them being afraid to inform officers about the problems they were experiencing. Some also felt that the way their complaint was dealt with by certain officers did not give them confidence that allegations were taken seriously or thoroughly investigated. This concern was taken up by Governor Bell who went over the procedures involved when a complaint was made, making it clear that it was not policy to “ship out” victims of bullying and that each case was dealt with on an individual basis.

While it is difficult at times for the PCC to maintain continuity due to prisoner movements, some excellent work has been achieved during the reporting period. A significant example of the work undertaken by members has been the updating of the Constitution and the Compact, signed by prisoners on becoming members, through consultation with prisoners and management.

19. Psychology

Both programmes run by the Psychology department, the Enhanced Thinking Skills course and the Cognitive Skills Booster have met their targets. There is a new ETS course, the Thinking Skills Programme, beginning in April 2010.

The Sentinel Project continued well over the year, with 22 men on the project in December. The initial training was delivered to most staff and a new package devised though this has yet to be fully delivered to staff. A further training course for hostels and employers is also planned. This has been a very commendable project, well received by staff, though it relies heavily on the senior psychologists to deliver the training.

Work with lifers continued to be a major part of the department’s work where they are part of the team dealing with the crucial process of risk assessing long-term prisoners as to their suitability for release. The numbers of IPP prisoners has increased within Leyhill and the impact of this on the Psychology department will need to be monitored over the next year.

20. Reception

The Board often received requests to follow up property issues on behalf of IMB members from other prisons. While these requests were followed up, the Board encouraged any future concerns to be addressed through the request complaint procedure. The differing rules, or interpretations of rules, as to what a prisoner may have in sending and receiving prisons has put pressure on staff particularly at busy times. A new protocol was drawn up to manage the problems encountered by prisoners transferring to Gloucester Prison.

At the start of the period the Board were concerned that newly arrived prisoners remained on the transport van when Reception was closed during the lunchtime. However, the Board were pleased to see that the situation was changed to allow new arrivals to be sent for their lunch before being booked in.

Except for any particular reason, prisoners were now not transferred into HMP Leyhill on a Friday because of the additional work relating to prisoners coming back from working out and because of preparations for prisoners due out on ROTL the following day.

During the summer months it was noted that Leyhill had the second busiest Reception in the South West Area with around one hundred receptions in and a roughly comparable number of discharges. This was an example of a significant transient population bringing with it a range of problems for the prison to deal with.

21. Requests/Complaints

A Annual figures

Complaints answered within target dates			Outside target dates		
STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3	STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3
396	35	9	-	-	-

B Subject matter of complaints

	2009-10.	2008-9	2007-8
HDC (home detention curfew)	15%	13%	17%
ROTL (release on temporary licence)	9%	14%	15%
Property	17%	18%	11%
Cash / pin phones	8%	14%	9%

C Overview

- The request/complaints procedure deals effectively with the majority of the issues raised and responds within target dates.
- The number of request/complaints is a decrease of 27% on the previous reporting period. Applications to the IMB have also decreased during the same period.
- The source of request/complaints reflects the population distribution across the units.
- The subject matter reflects the subject matter of applications made to the IMB.

22. Residential

The kitchen managers continued to provide an excellent service to prisoners throughout the period despite having to manage on a low budget. Prisoners occasionally commented to members about the quality of the food on offer and, while the Board encourage them to make their comments known, it was rare to find a comments book on display within the dining area. This was disappointing as the majority of the comments were positive.

The state of the recesses continued to be a cause of concern for prisoners as highlighted by the PCC and Board members. While there was a small amount of money available and used very economically by internal works, the recesses remain an area in need of total refurbishment.

Access to television channels presented several problems although these were largely dealt with during the latter part of the reporting period.

23. Safer Custody

The Safer Custody team continued to meet quarterly to review work with vulnerable prisoners and those involved in anti-social behaviour. Departments across the prison were represented and the Samaritans and Prisoner Listeners also attend.

Despite an overall increase in prisoner numbers in that the prison is consistently fairly full, the number of ACCT cases opened was significantly lower than last year. The most vulnerable group continued to be those aged 25-35 years and in this period there was a shift in that the majority of the group had been in custody (but not necessarily at Leyhill) for more than a year.

Each case was dealt with thoroughly, procedures were followed and communication was good. The occasional individual who posed particular problems to himself or others was identified for particular care. Overall, the ability of the staff dealing with ACCT prisoners was very good.

Incidents of anti-social behaviour have remained at the same level as last year, although transfers out for this reason have reduced. Concern about possible reluctance to report bullying led to the introduction of a confidential reporting system. This was one issue that came from analysing an exit survey that also indicated that most prisoners see Leyhill as a safe environment.

The relationship with the Samaritans is good and they support the effective team of Prisoner Listeners.

24. Security

Once again, Board members would like to commend the Security Department for their continued success with the high quality risk assessment procedures carried out within the prison. This was highlighted by the Area Manager during a meeting of the IMB Chairmen in the South West Area.

Security information continued to provide evidence for risk assessment reaching around 200 SIRs per month at one stage. Security finds included pornography, drugs, mobile phones and chargers. MDT failures were on the increase due to a greater use of cannabis and opiates.

After an isolated incident, Board members were advised to be vigilant against being followed when entering secure areas.

In August the prison capacity increased to 532. Since that time the numbers fluctuated from below 500 to around 520 in November and dipped again in December and January.

25. Training

During the course of the year the Board arranged in house training sessions and members of the prison staff have been invited to talk to the Board on a range of topics. Topics have included changes taking place in the Offender Manager Unit (OMU), the proposed IDTS treatment programme and a discussion about the likely needs of the increasing number of older prisoners and an introduction to the NACRO training pack for working with older prisoners.

The IMB Chairman attended the Triennial Review training and individual Board members have joined internal prison courses for staff on a range of issues including mental health awareness, Sentinel and extremism.

Two Board members attended the IMB Annual Conference and a visit was made to HMP Bristol.