



H.M.Y.O.I. PORTLAND
INDEPENDENT MONITORING
BOARD

ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR TO
31st MARCH 2010.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Board's Overall View

1. This is probably the most complimentary report that the Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) has ever written about Portland Young Offenders Institution (YOI). Many aspects of prison life at Portland have improved over the year. New initiatives have provided major improvements in the variety and delivery of education and training, and an increase in the provision of gym and sports (see paragraphs A6 to A9 and B28 to B31). There has also been a reduction in violence together with a lower level of occupancy in the Care & Control Unit (see paragraphs A33 to A35). Background details of the prison are given at Annexe C
2. Our role (details are at Annexe D) is to monitor the just and humane treatment of prisoners and the range and adequacy of the programmes preparing them for release. The Board reports on how well the prison meets the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have on those in its custody. Portland has performed extremely well against these criteria and the rate of beneficial change appears to be increasing.
3. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) last year submitted a very "positive report on a prison which has travelled a considerable distance and is actively seeking to improve the life chances of the young men it holds." The transformation of Portland towards a model prison is commended by HMIP: "Managers recognised the problems of location and environment, but were nevertheless determined to create a space in which young men could have new and different opportunities."
4. Local management has encouraged a greater sense of purpose and we have observed improvements in the quality of staff-prisoner relations. Indeed one consequence of the HMIP report was that Portland became a showcase for resettlement ideas and played host to visitors keen to see good practice in action.
5. For several years the Board had called for the closure and replacement of Rodney and Hardy, two unsatisfactory residential wings that lacked integral sanitation. Hardy was closed in 2009 and Rodney was closed in early 2010 following the submission of the HMIP report. We applaud these actions.
6. The Board urges the continuation of plans to replace the closed wings. Without this, and the consequent reduction in the roll from 624 to 483 prisoners, the Board has a concern that the strides that have been made in transforming Portland will not be completed. Recent investment at Portland in facilities and management effort, which has kindled its success, should be continued rather than diminished; denying investment now can only adversely affect its morale and thus its performance in the rehabilitation of prisoners.

Issues of Concern

7. Since all instruction is undertaken by outside contractors, it is imperative that the prison is able to work well with these agencies. We have been aware of many occasions when, for example, workshops were closed due to lack of cover instructors. Making sure that these contractors perform properly is a difficult management task but is essential for the continuity of the prisoners' education. We are hopeful that the working relationships between the prison and these contractors can be improved as soon as possible (see paragraphs A10 to A13).

8. It seems to be an indefensible waste of scarce resources to use skilled officers to do little but lock-up the 31% of prisoners who were at Portland for 3 months or less. The shuffling around of prisoners to fit them into an inadequate provision of places in the prison estate, as well as sentencing policy may exacerbate this. It usually takes a month to get new arrivals into education, due to the need for multiple assessments. We are concerned that there is no mechanism allowing short-term prisoners access to specifically appropriate education (paragraphs B12 to B14).

9. Although the facilities for disabled visitors have been improved in the visitor reception area, we are concerned that the only facility inside the prison is a very small room next to the closed visits rooms on the ground floor, making it difficult for the visitors to take proper advantage of the refreshments area upstairs (paragraphs B15 to B18).

10. The average monthly caseload for treating alcohol addiction covers 20% of the population with the list of prisoners needing help increasing monthly. We are concerned that the provision to meet the needs of alcohol misuse issues falls short of that required; another alcohol worker is needed just to keep up with the current caseload (paragraph B34).

11. Following the closure of Rodney and Hardy we wrote to the Prison Minister since we understood that plans were being prepared to build a new Education block at Portland. This building would be very beneficial. However, we understood that it was to be constructed on the Sports field. We were concerned that building there would have the effect of greatly limiting the value of recreation facilities at the prison which are, in our view, so essential for this age group. We believe the Minister's reply confirmed that building of the Education block would continue but excluded the option of building it on the Sports field.

12. Our last cause of concern is the transfer of prisoners' money from privately run prisons. Applications to the Board have regularly featured privately run prisons failing to send prisoner's money with them. We understand that the money is still transferred by cheque which takes up to two weeks to arrive thus causing unnecessary anxiety.

Roger Davies (on behalf of the Board)
7 June 2010

MANDATORY REPORTS

Diversity

A1. Regular publication of monthly monitoring data and race impact assessments are available in the Mosaic newsletter, in the library, and in the visitor centre. These enable prisoners to form a judgement on how well BME prisoners are being treated. Prisoner representatives feel that the relationship between prisoners and staff is good. Monthly meetings are held, with different prisoners attending to obtain a greater range of views. They act as mediators and listeners on racist issues, and do a good job on the wings.

A2. HMIP commented, "in a prison where 40% of the population, but almost no staff, came from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, work on race and religious diversity was rightly prioritised. Nevertheless, black and minority ethnic and Muslim prisoners continued to have worse perceptions in some areas than white and non-Muslim prisoners, particularly with regards to relationships with staff."

A3. The Diversity, Race, Equality Action Team (DREAT) monitors standards for good staff and prisoner relationships and is overseeing a programme to implement the recommendations of HMIP. This work is enhanced by a service level agreement with Dorset Race Equality Council. Challenge It Change It training has been provided for staff and at present 32% have attended.

A4. An exit survey is providing useful information about prisoners' experience of Portland. Visitors were asked to complete a survey on their experience of visiting Portland. Those who did made favourable and encouraging comments. There is a noticeable improvement in relationships between officers and prisoners.

A5. Prisoners participated and suggested their own ideas for Black History Month, and after a very slow start, wing reps and staff worked to make it a great success. Four prisoners were given Release On Temporary Licence (ROTL) to link up with the Dorchester Multi-Cultural Group as part of this. The IMB Diversity statement is at Annexe C.

Learning & Skills

A6. A great deal of important work was done in the past year to increase the number of training workshops. Additional workshops were opened and a new timetable was introduced. There has also been increased emphasis on including literacy and numeracy elements in vocational training, for example in the gym, kitchen and laundry, although this has met with mixed success.

A7. Twenty workshops now give many more young offenders the opportunity to train in various skills. These are Brickworks level 1&2, Hard landscaping, Building Operations, Multi-Skills, Carpentry, Motor Mechanics, BICS (British Institute of Cleaning Science), Kitchens, Painting & Decorating, Barbering, Horticulture, Groundsmanship, Forklift Truck driving, Railtrack (track maintenance), Street Works, Laundry, Industrial Cleaning, Recycling, CES (clothing exchange) and Radio Station. There is also vocational training in the gym.

A8. Research tracking the employment history of those who attended Railtrack courses (covering over 100 participants) showed that only 14% had re-offended in the three years the course has been run compared with a national rate of 70%. This is an outstanding result.

A9. The prison is working with N-Ergy which offers NVQ qualifications through enrolling students at Weston College. NVQ's are delivered in the laundry, CES and Recycling workshop to ensure every workplace is able to offer valid qualifications on release. A new group, called Return to Learn Pathway, aims to get those unable to cope with a classroom environment back into learning. Written in collaboration with external agencies, this course is a motivational tool to help re-engagement, and has also been used for IPP prisoners who have specific needs in this area.

A10. Since all instruction is undertaken by outside contractors, it is imperative that the prison is able to work well with these agencies. Assurances had been given by Strode College that instructor cover would be increased in order to ensure that less workshop sessions would be cancelled by the contractors at the last moment. Better arrangements were also promised by the other contractors A4E so that suitably qualified managers would cover for absent teachers. During the HMIP inspection it was noticeable that there were few absences and an improvement in delivery performance. Subsequently, the loss of A4E staff has posed problems.

A11. Effective co-ordination is also key in ensuring that those prisoners who are able to get qualifications are not moved from the prison before they take their exams. This does occur.

A12. In the spring motor-cycle and carpentry workshops were re-opened and cover instructor arrangements improved for the motor-mechanics workshop. However the motor-mechanics and multi-skills workshops were later closed.

A13. Making sure that the contractors perform properly is a difficult management task but is essential for the continuity of the prisoners' education. We are hopeful that situation surrounding the working relationships between the prison and these contractors can be resolved as soon as possible.

A14. Chickens, goats and budgerigars have been introduced. The chickens are not just therapeutic but are also part of a small business allowing the prisoners to obtain bookkeeping qualifications at level 2&3 which in turn will give them increased employment prospects. The horticulture course was featured in a film by Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall. The students are also working towards their first small animal care qualification. Although they have a lighter side they are providing useful qualifications with one prisoner intending to look for farm work on release.

A15. The introduction of a new education timetable at the beginning of June brought some initial disruption. The timetable aimed to provide more tailored courses and greater consistency in the allocation of young offenders to gym and library so that less planned class sessions would be missed. Communication between education and residence provided wing staff with more accurate information about student allocation.

A16. Many of our prisoners have children (currently 15%). The first Fathers Inside course was delivered in June also a story-writing workshop in August, both linked to family days.

A17. Other initiatives included an initial radio workshop in June to start a project in radio production and media. Further workshops were held in November and December. Stand-alone accreditation was gained for the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) course on Beaufort enabling shorter-stay learners to gain a certificate before release.

A18. A concern flagged up by the HMIP was the lack of opportunity/support for prisoners at level 3 and above. Action is needed to take this on board. The Information Advice and

Guidance (IAG) team has detected increased interest in university courses amongst prisoners.

A19. Towards the end of the year staff expressed concern that education hours were being cut back, notably with art classes and we were concerned that art experience with its known positive impact on re-offending was being lost for some prisoners. However the Head of Reducing Reoffending insisted that there was no reduction in education hours, simply a re-distribution of the hours to better suit the sentence plans of the population.

Healthcare & Mental Health

A20. The local NHS Primary Care Trust provided medical and nursing care including an optician and a dentist. There were clinics for psychiatry (with one-to-one counselling), hepatitis B, asthma, smoke stop, sexual health and phlebotomy. Talking therapies are provided by the Primary Mental Health Team for anxiety management. This is a recent addition which is working well.

A21. There were four posts for general nurses, five healthcare assistants, four mental health nurses, two admin staff, a manager, doctor and dentist but throughout the year there have always been vacancies for nurses. There has been one temporary manager, one seconded manager and two managers with no prison service background. However, the current manager has been in post for three months and the unit is working well.

A22. The constant turnover of staff, especially the lack of continuity in leadership, has caused many problems, but the dedicated nursing team continued to provide good consistent care for the inmates. All the staff who weathered this difficult period should be congratulated.

A23. The appointments system, refined during the year, is now more efficient. The system could be so much better if there was an extra phone to facilitate communication with the wings. The Board has frequently drawn attention to this need and hopes it will be given a higher priority.

A24. There are still many vulnerable young men with mental health problems sent to Portland. There have been fewer more seriously disturbed prisoners held in the Segregation Unit (CCU) since the opening of Beaufort Wing which is very successful in caring for them. The more aggressive prisoners have been managed for short periods in Segregation to stabilise their behaviour. However, when they are sectioned under the Mental Health Act, their removal to a suitable place for treatment still takes an unacceptable time. The In Reach team continue to give good support to the Healthcare staff and are persistent in pursuing appropriate treatment for the young men in their care.

Safer Custody & Violence Reduction

A25. A strong team consisting of a principal officer and an officer very experienced in the subject have led the Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) programme aimed at identifying, monitoring and establishing a suitable regime for those prisoners who may be at risk of self-harm and suicide. This level of manning has enabled great attention to be paid to the subject with regular meetings being held with residential staff responsible for the day to day care of inmates to study individual cases and hold reviews of their progress.

A26. The Safer Custody committee, chaired by a governor, has held quarterly multi-disciplinary meetings to oversee the situation. These have been, on occasions, poorly

attended, due partly to a subject overlap with the Violence Reduction committee, who meet monthly, and the great pressure of the many prison meetings.

A27. It has been difficult to identify the reasons for a drop in the numbers of prisoners on ACCT books this year. It has not always been possible to provide the wished for activity to counter depression, but fewer prisoners who had been recommended to “keep their minds active” have been allowed to remain isolated in their cells. A general increase in sports and training provision has helped here.

A28. As always, great credit must go to the Samaritans for having provided a telephone helpline for prisoners (sometimes abused) and for training prisoners to act as listeners to hear in confidence the problems of their fellows; a highly valued safety valve. Night staff did not always appreciate the need to release listeners to carry out their work during the night, and this need was explained again by the management. The release of trained volunteer prisoners has made it difficult to maintain cover in all the wings, but the Samaritans have held training sessions and also have attended the induction of arriving prisoners when their availability permits.

A29. None of this sadly prevented the Death in Custody on 22nd November 2009 of a newly arrived prisoner. He had shown no symptoms of being especially troubled and the usual first night observations were followed. The staff dealing with the very difficult family contacts did so with great sensitivity and efforts were made to provide all the information that relatives wished. The coroner’s report into this case is still awaited.

A30. There has been a notable reduction in assaults; with violent incidents down almost 25%. New initiatives have been introduced that have proved effective. There are now violence reduction staff and prisoner representatives on all wings who produce reports for the monthly meetings.

A31. The Incentives & Earned Privileges (IEP) scheme has now been implemented to help encourage prisoners to think before acting, as now anyone caught fighting will automatically be put down to basic, it no longer requires an adjudication.

A32. There has been a reduction of prisoners on basic, which implies things are improving, and the low unemployment has had a positive impact.

Care & Control Unit (CCU)

A33. This is visited by the rota duty member on average 3 times weekly. Reviews are held on Wednesday afternoons and are attended by a member. There were a few problems during the staff change over in mid-year when the Board was not notified of time changes or prisoners arrival in the segregation unit. This was quickly resolved and staff now inform us of all incidents that need to be reported to the IMB.

A34. There have been 83 care & restraint removals from wings. The special cell has been used for 9 prisoners. The use of the unit has decreased during the year, the last three months have seen an occupancy averaging 3 per week with several 3 or 4 day periods with no-one.

A35. The CCU staff treat their charges with endless patience and compassion, and have introduced a reward scheme for good behaviour which has produced a marked improvement in the attitude of the prisoners on the block.

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS & ACTIVITIES

Chaplaincy

B1. The chaplaincy team consists of 3 full time chaplains: Church of England, Roman Catholic and Muslim, together with others who attend on a part-time basis. Efforts are being made to recruit a Sikh chaplain.

B2. Much of the work consists of one-to-one sessions; some in response to an individual's immediate need, whilst others are part of planned ongoing engagement with prisoners. Each group session lasts for a full morning or afternoon, with 10 prisoners being permitted. Several church leaders from the London-based black-led Christian Churches have attended and spoken at Church of England Sunday services.

B3. There are ongoing concerns about the state of the chaplaincy premises. The structure of the chapel continues to deteriorate.

B4. The mosque was an area of contention as it is a place where large numbers of prisoners meet together, regardless of wing separation. In six weeks of violence in August/September 35 prisoners were excluded from services. The imam was very co-operative and a management decision was taken to insist on standard issue trainers being worn to the mosque, thus eliminating opportunities for switching to other peoples shoes. Since then the trouble has evaporated.

B5. A CCTV camera has been installed in the mosque and in the chapel to identify trouble makers. This has been beneficial from a security aspect, but has privacy implications.

Kitchens & Food Service

B6. There have been improvements and innovation in this area; with a variety of menus to accommodate the different cultures within the prison. The manager continues to have wing consultative meetings and food tasting sessions to improve the menus. The variety of choices and menus have resulted in a lot less complaints from prisoners.

B7. 18 to 20 prisoners work daily in the kitchens preparing food, cleaning, cooking with some also doing formal education. A teacher has been co-opted once a week to improve the basic skills of the prisoners working there. We generally observe the kitchens to be working well, with prisoner very clear about their roles in a very clean environment.

B8. In the previous year the manager set up a system for reducing food waste which has been widely copied. He was recently awarded a gold hygiene award and is now engaged in using the prison gardens and greenhouses to grow vegetables and salads.

Psychology

B9. The forensic psychology department deals with Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) and Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) cases plus sex offenders for the offender management unit. These prisoners account for around 15% of the roll. Prisoners with behavioural problems that do not fit into these categories have little chance of intervention as there is provision for a clinical psychologist on only one day a week.

B10. During the year six Enhanced Thinking Skills (ETS) courses were run together with two of the new Thinking Skills Programme (TSP) course, which replaced ETS, and one Controlling Anger and Learning to Manage programme (CALM). The ETS/TSP courses had places for only 70 prisoners. For this age group there is no specific emotional management course focussed on instrumental violence, which is prominent in the offences of many prisoners held at Portland.

B11. A review of psychology services in the South West is currently in motion. The majority of our prisoners suffer from some form of mental health issue but currently help is provided for less than a quarter of them. The turnover of staff in psychology is a cause for concern. Over the last seven years fifteen people who have joined the department have left.

Sentence Management

B12. The YOI has the ambition to reduce re-offending by educating and training the young prisoners in its care to be able to lead a more productive life. The Board has been distressed by the number of prisoners sent here with only a short time to serve, for whom nothing can be done in the time available. Data for the year show that 31% of prisoners were at Portland for three months or less and 49% of discharges were at Portland for 4 months or less.

B13. It seems to be an indefensible waste of scarce resources using skilled officers to do little but lock-up these prisoners. The shuffling around of prisoners to fit them into an inadequate provision of places in the prison estate, as well as sentencing policy, exacerbates this.

B14. The increasing number of prisoners on the IPP scheme is taking up a disproportionate amount of staff time; and there is concern that progress towards their release is very slow. The Board is aware of prisoners coming up for review electing to stay in their cells rather than take advantage of the courses on offer for fear that they may get involved in a skirmish with a fellow inmate which could reduce their chances of release.

Facilities for Visitors

B15. The visits experience has vastly improved over the last two years, and those that have been coming to the prison for some time have commented on how much more welcoming the visitor reception area is for them with children's facilities and some improvements made for disabled visitors.

B16. 43% of prisoners responded to the Needs Survey that they received no visits from family or friends whilst at Portland. However, when a weekly bus service from London to the YOI and back was introduced for a six-month trial period to offer cheaper travel opportunities for parents and friends there was virtually no demand and the service has therefore been discontinued.

B17. The visitor search area has been improved and looks much cleaner and brighter; the whole area now enables the staff to work in a more professional way. The visits room has had a facelift with some attractive new paintings plus new tables and chairs. However the stairs area which leads to the visits room would benefit from a coat of paint.

B18. There is the lack of facilities for disabled visitors. All that is available is a very small room next to the closed visits rooms on the ground floor, which makes it difficult for the visitors to take proper advantage of the refreshments area upstairs.

Resettlement and Working Outside

B19. Unemployment within the prison is now in single figures with everyone being offered the opportunity to fill their time constructively. Indeed HMIP commented that this was “some of the best resettlement work we have seen”. It is vital to continue this programme if we are to have a positive and purposeful environment for both staff and prisoners.

B20. A teacher from the St Giles Trust delivers a course leading to an IAG qualification, and the prison has just been successful in a bid to get a further member of staff from St Giles. This person will be working with those who are vulnerable due to being gang members that have expressed a desire to leave the gangs. The worker will be placed in Resettlement for 2 days every 3 weeks and the remaining time will be supporting those released in the community.

B21. The Prince’s Trust Courses are held throughout the year and have proved popular. The Army Careers Sergeant has visited the prison to see if any suitable prisoners would be interested in joining up on their release.

B22. There is an ongoing music project with Billy Bragg. The aim is to offer alternative forms of self expression (to anger etc) and to continue this through song writing workshops. He has already donated instruments and run two workshops. There are plans to run a musical evening to launch further classes which he will attend. Music lessons now take place in the evening for two groups and are proving very popular.

B23. The YOI has made strong links with the Greater London Authority, London youth organizations, such as the innovative community, sports and youth group, London Tigers, and many other agencies who are able to offer strong partnerships and services both in custody and release. Additional work is also taking place around this and the success is shown by inclusion in the London Development Agency (LDA) resettlement work for London which offers substantial funding and support for young offenders.

B24. Collingwood wing has been turned into a ROTL wing where those who have qualified are able to obtain work outside the prison. There are various opportunities for them but progress has been slow due to the slow security clearance for ROTL mainly because of slow responses from probation offices.

B25. The Resettlement Road Show featured 26 stands which highlighted some of the opportunities for accommodation, employment, training, mentoring and faith associations on release. This year the range of visitors increased significantly and included partners from London, through the LDA project, and from Bristol, Southampton and Plymouth. It was extremely popular and 180 prisoners attended.

B26. There are still housing problems as a result of prisoners being moved to Portland at the end of their sentence. However the success of Portland in finding accommodation still exceeds that of London prisons, which is a credit to the team.

B27. The year end resettlement Key Performance Targets were all achieved. Accommodation 93% (target 90%), Employment 32.1% (target 30%), Training/Education 40.9% (target 28%).

Gym & Sports

B28. One of the most notable recent successes has been the provision of a splendid sports field. This is something the Board has campaigned for again and again. Along with

the expansion of gym facilities, it is of enormous benefit to these young men in letting off steam, teaching teamwork and training them in co-ordination and self-control. The completion of a second gym has allowed an increase in the number of gym sessions offered for all prisoners from 1 to 2 per week. Prisoners on the highest privileges also receive extra PE in the evenings.

B29. A Football Academy has been created inspired by the former international player Ian Wright. The first one selected 24 prisoners and was filmed by Sky TV and broadcast during the Autumn. Funding has been secured from the Football Association to roll out the programme for another two years. The current design has 14 prisoners on a half-day course for 16 to 18 weeks incorporating the most successful parts of the original programme which included team building and coaching. Matches have been played outside the prison, and some of those who have been released have joined large sports clubs.

B30. A Rugby Club has also started with 36 prisoners involved, who have played their first matches during the year.

B31. Other initiatives include a Running Club, Fitness Club, Circuit Training, Weightlifting, Physiotherapy, First Aid and the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. In order to deliver these extra activities staff have been giving up their free time. The quadrangle in the centre of the prison has been made secure and transformed into 2 extra exercise areas, one tarmac and one grass which are providing extra space for exercise in the evenings.

Drugs & Addictions

B32. Positive drug testing remains very low with only two cases this year and security information suggests a very low level of illegal drug activity within the establishment. It remains to be seen if this will change with the withdrawal of one of the two drug locator dogs and one handler and the ending of the central Voluntary Drugs Testing (VDT) programme as part of the budget cuts. Responsibility for VDT has now been passed to wing staff.

B33. The Independent Drug Treatment Services (IDTS), a national initiative for the delivery of the methadone maintenance programme, is in place but has only been needed for two clients this year. The trained nurse works two days a week with the local Weymouth drugs team.

B34. The average monthly caseload for treating alcohol addiction covers 20% of the average population with the list of prisoners needing help increasing monthly. Short-term prisoners needing assessment are blocking the system. A self assessment questionnaire is helping to identify need. The provision to meet the needs of alcohol misuse issues falls short of the requirement, another alcohol worker is needed just to keep the current caseload going.

B35. The Prisons Addressing Substance-Related Offending (P-ASRO) team run a very successful programme to reduce prisoners' dependence on drugs and several go on to do the course training for voluntary work when they are released. The recent audit recorded an unprecedented 99% achievement.

B36. The Counselling Assessment Referral Advice Throughcare service (CARATs) runs short information-based workshops on harm reduction, motivation and relapse prevention with the help of IDTS and healthcare staff. Over 50% of the clients have been temporarily referred to the P-ASRO programme to look at relapse in depth. They also refer clients to the alcohol service for the same reason.

Foreign Nationals

B37. Up to 80 foreign national prisoners have been held at Portland during the year. A small number of these, between two and ten, were held beyond the end of their sentence on an immigration detention order (IS91). Of concern is the fact that some prisoners were held on IS91 for many months. Much more needs to be done at the UK Borders Agency to reduce delays in implementation.

B38. Last year a total of 148 foreign national prisoners had one-to-one sessions with a variety of departments, engaging with solicitors, Immigration, UK Border Authority, phone card purchases etc, most with positive results. An immigration team is now based at HMP Verne, which means regular access meetings can take place at Portland. There are still problems with cancellation at short notice and late arrival of the team. There are also problems with transport which ferries prisoners to the immigration courts in Wales failing to turn up on three occasions. This causes frustration and anxiety to prisoners, staff and everyone else.

B39. New phone cards have been issued which can also be used internationally; they last only about 5 minutes but are much cheaper to purchase.

B40. There are now two or more foreign national prisoner representatives on all wings; the reps are responsible for mentoring, discussions, encouragement of good behaviour, any help or assistance to all new arrival foreign national prisoners. They need to have a high profile on the wings and attend meetings and regular liaison with the foreign national officer. Pay and dedicated T-shirts for these reps were introduced during this reporting year.

The Background of the Prison

C1. HM Young Offender Institution (YOI) Portland was built in 1848 on the island of the same name, as a convict prison. It became a Borstal in 1921 and a YOI in 1988. Today its operational capacity is 483 young men aged between 18 and 21 years, serving sentences up to 10 years. Some prisoners, including foreign nationals waiting deportation, are held above that maximum age.

C2. Accommodation consists of seven residential wings; six in original buildings and a recently added Rapid Build block. A free standing Care and Control Unit holds those segregated for disciplinary reasons or for their own safety. Certain wings have a dedicated purpose: Grenville House is an Induction Unit, Beaufort is a Skills Development Unit, Raleigh is the Resettlement wing and Collingwood a 'Super enhanced' wing housing prisoners who may be deemed suitable for employment outside the prison on ROTL. Accommodation is mainly in single cells. There are double cells on some wings, some which are used to temporarily house a prisoner with a help-mate.

C3. Education from basic literacy to higher education and vocational training is undertaken by Strode College and A4E with initial assessment carried out by Tribal Hubs. A limited number of places are available on offending behaviour programmes and drug and alcohol abuse counselling.

C4. A Health Care Centre is operated by the local NHS Primary Care Trust. NACRO and other voluntary agencies work to reduce re-offending.

INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

The Role of the IMB

D1. The Prisons Act 1952 and the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 require every prison to be monitored by an Independent Monitoring Board appointed by the Secretary of State for the Home Office (now Ministry of Justice), drawn from members of the community in which the prison is situated.

D2. 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 Secretary of State or any official to whom he has delegated authority, as it judges appropriate, of any concern it has.
- (3) 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.

D3. To enable the Board to carry out its duties effectively its members have the right of access to every prisoner and every part of the prison and also to the prison's records.

IMB Diversity Statement

D4. Portland IMB is committed to an inclusive approach to diversity which encompasses and promotes greater interaction and understanding between people of different backgrounds including race, religion, gender, nationality, sexuality, marital status, disability, age etc. The Board recognises that a fully inclusive approach must also respond to differences that cut across social and cultural categories such as mental health, literacy and drug addiction.

D5. The Board values this approach within its recruitment and Board development practices to increase the repertoire of skills and awareness amongst its members of the diverse needs and perspectives of the population within Portland YOI.

D6. All members of Portland IMB will undertake their duties in a manner that is accessible to everyone within the establishment regardless of their background or social situation. The Board will monitor to establish that the experiences and interactions between staff, prisoners and visitors is fair 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 prison minister.

Statistics

D7. The Board began the year with 11 members, and ended it with 14, thanks to a successful recruiting initiative during the summer of 2009. Whilst this is still below our

notional entitlement, there seems no need to augment our numbers, in view of the reduced roll arising out of the closure of Hardy and Rodney Wings during the year.

D8. It is advantageous for our monitoring role that two of the new members live closer to the prison than many of their colleagues. When their probationary period is over, they will be well placed to react at short notice to any Serious Incident or other emergency.

D9. IMB members made 399 visits to the prison during the year, excluding attendances at the monthly Board Meetings. Visits by one or more members took place on 240 days in the reporting year, 42 of which were Saturdays or Sundays. Only once in the year was there a gap of more than 3 days between members' visits. The extra security implications of visiting at nights meant that this was scarcely attempted, but efforts are being made to expand our role in this direction in future.

D10. The Board Development Officer arranged visits to HMP Feltham and our neighbours at HMP The Verne during the year, and our colleagues at The Verne kindly twice invited Portland members to share in a training event, which is much appreciated.

Applications

D11. These are taken 'on the hoof' or through the 'tri-ply' prison system and delivered to the IMB communication tray. Applicants are seen within 3-5 days. Members collect, record and deal with the application. This may often involve a considerable input of time, pursuing and challenging prison staff at Portland and elsewhere to reach a satisfactory conclusion, and teamwork, passing applications to members who have a specialist interest or knowledge.

D12. Applications are reviewed at every Board meeting where we monitor the nature of the application, ethnicity and his residential wing. We carefully record the time taken for the application to reach us and for us to reply.

D13. In this year we have dealt with 101 applications, the highest number involving property and cash from previous establishments, followed by requests for transfers, complaints about distance from home and the number of movements around establishments, foreign national issues, licence recalls and Home Detention Curfew (HDC), and regime. White British are our main applicants.

D14. One cause of concern is the transfer of prisoners' money from privately run prisons. Applications to the Board have regularly featured privately run prisons failing to send the prisoner's money with them or even shortly after they depart. We understand that the money is still transferred by cheque which takes up to two weeks to arrive thus causing unnecessary anxiety.