



ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BOARD FOR HMP VERNE

COVERING THE PERIOD

May 2009 to May 2010



SECTION 1

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.

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 the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority as it judges appropriate, 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.**

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

Until 2003, Independent Monitoring Board IMBs were known as Boards of Visitors. The principle of independent monitoring of prisons is one that has been around since Tudor times, Although IMBs of today are very different from those that existed in the past.

SECTION 2

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SECTION 3

DESCRIPTION OF HMP THE VERNE

HMP The Verne is a Category C male training establishment. The original buildings date from about 1873 when it was a citadel fortress-overlooking Portland Harbour. It was taken over as a prison in 1949 using the casemates in the citadel defences for dormitory accommodation, (D wing housing 72 prisoners in 9 dormitories) and workshops. The prison accommodates mainly long term, life sentence and Indeterminate Public Protection prisoners, about 60% of whom are foreign nationals, representing over 50 different nationalities.

In addition to D wing, the prison consists of six purpose built house blocks constructed in the early 1970's known as A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2 wings. All prisoners have keys to their rooms. Each wing can accommodate approximately 90 prisoners and most occupy single cells. D wing houses the Kainos facility.

Operational Capacity 585 as at 5th May 2010.

Kainos (from the Greek for a new beginning) provides an environment for prisoners to address their offending behaviour through course work, community living, team building, social interaction with volunteers and ongoing individual assessment. It began in 1999 and currently operates at HMPs The Verne, Swaleside and Stocken. Prisoners wishing to move to D wing have to demonstrate that they have reached a certain level of social maturity and undertake not to use drugs. The Kainos regime is based on the Christian ethos of do unto others as you would have done to you but is not overtly religious and does not require any religious commitment.

SECTION 4

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1 MATTERS OF CONCERN

ISSUES FOR THE MINSTER

- 1.1 The year on year reduction in the prison budget already in force for a number of years, the increased amount now being sought to reduce expenditure and cut costs is going to lead to increased risks due to lower staff numbers, work not being carried out and courses being cut.
- 1.2 The continuing long delay of cases waiting to be heard by the Parole Board. (22.3). This has been reported in the last 2 annual reports.
- 1.3 The Board is concerned at the lengthy period of time it takes to carry out Vetting and Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks. This is severely impacting on getting personnel in post with the effect that certain work is not been carried out.

ISSUES FOR THE RCM

- 1.4 The inadequate, cramped space and conditions of the room occupied by DHL severely restrict what items can be held. There are no fridge facilities. As The Verne is the hub for several local prisons, prisoners at other establishments will be affected by this problem.
- 1.5 The delay in time taken in processing new employees at the Shared Service Centre (SSC).
- 1.6 The establishment continues to receive prisoners on a regular basis who do not meet the strict criteria of HMP the Verne (23.1)

ISSUES FOR THE GOVERNOR

- 1.7 There were several adverse articles in the national and local press during the year, which negated the generally good work being achieved in the prison.
- 1.8 Relationships with the Union representatives have been strained and this needs to be addressed as it has affected morale amongst the officers. This affected family visits at the start of the year. There was a period of working to rule.
- 1.9 As reported last year the prison has only had the services of a locum Doctor. This locum doctor has been at the prison for over a year,

however he is shortly to leave and the board is concerned that the new arrangements agreed will not provide the standard of care required.

- 1.10 It is disappointing that a replacement psychologist was not employed, but the appointment of a second trainee psychologist is welcomed.
- 1.11 Prisoners pay rate applications continue to be raised on a regular basis with the IMB members. These often indicate that the rates of pay at the Verne are lower than at other prisons.(23.5)
- 1.12 As reported in previous annual reports internal meetings are still cancelled or re-arranged at short notice without notification being given to IMB members. There has however been a reducing incidence of this occurring, which is pleasing to report.
- 1.13 The implementation of the new In-Vision for self-rostering is causing difficulties and officers are finding it difficult operating this new system.

SECTION 5

AREAS THAT MUST BE REPORTED ON

2 DIVERSITY

- 2.1 The Board accepts and agrees that everyone has right to live in an environment free from any forms of discrimination, racial abuse, offensive remarks or discriminatory actions.
- 2.2 The IMB endorses the Governor and staff at the Verne in working at their obligations, that everyone should be treated with mutual respect, without prejudice.
- 2.3 The Race Equality Officer (REO) & Diversity and Equality Action Team (DEA) work diligently with staff and prisoners to eradicate any forms of racial discrimination or abuse. Every effort is made to enhance and encourage good staff and prisoners relationships and to develop better cultural understanding. Examples were a charity fun run which raised over £500 for local charities, a black history month and musical events.
- 2.4 The Board feels that the move of the REO to offices adjacent to the offices of the United Kingdom Border Agency are to be welcomed, as they are now centrally located with good access.
- 2.5 Equality Impact Assessment has been introduced and focus groups meet. The REO, Prison management and staff are to be congratulated on the good work that is being carried out.

3 LEARNING AND SKILLS

- 3.1. The new Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) contract published in June 2009 appears to represent a very large cut in resources. There is a lack of clarity about the responsibilities of the different contractors as far as funding is concerned
- 3.2. There continues to be concern about humidity and temperature in some offices and classrooms in the Education block.
- 3.3. Prisoners at the Verne can too easily change their work or education activity, with no involvement or advice of the from prison staff, who would focus on their sentence plan and on the increasing their likelihood of gaining employment on release. The weakness of the procedure has been recognised and the intention to make changes has been expressed.
- 3.4. The painting and decorating trainers are concerned that the new standard has raised the entry-level criteria to level 2, and consequently some of the learners are struggling to complete the work. Trainers have requested more support with embedded learning from the teaching staff.

4 LIBRARY

- 4.1 The library is pivotally situated and is a well used resource lead by a proactive and conscientious Librarian.
- 4.2 The Librarian, her assistant together with their team of Library Orderlies are to be congratulated on winning the team of the year in the Dorset County Council Pride Awards. In addition the library received a good OFSTED rating, the highest grade for a prison library.
- 4.3 It was pleasing that certificates were presented to prisoners during National Adult Learners week.
- 4.4 The number of books borrowed has increased and there is a regular review of the book stock held to try and reflect the population of the prison and in particular Foreign Nationals.
- 4.5 In the small room above the library prisoners are able to use a small number of computers, not connected to the Internet, which are situated there.
- 4.6 There has been perseverance this year to set up the printing of foreign newspapers and it is pleasing to report that newspapers are being printed just as the year-ends.
- 4.7 The current library contract is possibly not legal under European law.

4 INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE CENTRE

- 5.1 The IAG Centre at the Verne has been recognised as being of very high quality. In July 2009 however the provision was reorganised and the IAG Manager post abolished. The emphasis is now on clustering and the advisors are community based and move from prison to prison. Induction for new prisoners was spread over a 2-week period, but this is likely to reduce to a few days at the most and there is concern that the quality of induction may deteriorate.

6 HEALTHCARE AND MENTAL HEALTH

- 6.1 The Health Centre, which comes under the local NHS PCT, continues to work under pressure and often with staff shortages.
- 6.2 As reported last year there is a regular turnover of staff. This often means that a Healthcare representative is not being present at regular prison meetings e.g. Public Protection and at which their input would on many occasions be beneficial and helpful.
- 6.3 It is disappointing to report again this year that there is not a permanent doctor. The position has been advertised several times but the remuneration is not sufficient to attract applicants. The prison has been fortunate in having the services of a locum doctor who has been with the prison for over a year, but has given notice that he is leaving.

- 6.4 The video link scheme to enable doctors to access consultant expertise is operating and has led to some reduction of prisoners needing to attend Dorset County Hospital (DCH). The age and illnesses suffered by the older prisoners' means that there would always be a need to transport prisoners to hospital for treatment.
- 6.5 There are still occasions occurring when outside appointments are being missed because of the lack of prison escorts. It is felt that this is often because the PCT and the prison do not understand each other's operational procedures.
- 6.6 The Board was appalled that the substantial sum of money allocated to the prison Healthcare to make alterations for the introduction of the Integrated Drug Treatment System (IDTS), was appropriated for use elsewhere. This was due to start in April 2010 but its introduction has had to be delayed
- 6.7 There is a problem with prisoners missing fixed appointments at Healthcare.
- 6.8 The Board feels that the Healthcare staff works diligently in difficult circumstances, often without a full complement of staff and at times with very demanding prisoners.

7 DENTAL SERVICES

- 7.1 There was a new Dental contract signed in September 2009.
- 7.2 The dental waiting list remains high with appointments fully booked months ahead. Prisoners often need considerable work carried out and the present number of sessions is not adequate to meet the needs.

8 PUBLIC PROTECTION

- 8.1 Regular monthly meetings take place. These are chaired by the either the Head or Deputy of OMU with attendance variable – rarely any representative from health care, and often no one from Residential or Security. However, the meetings always take place as scheduled.
- 8.2 The agenda is fixed, with new cases being assessed and review dates for these set in the first part of the meeting, followed by reviews of existing cases then Child Protection and Mail monitoring issues.
- 8.3 It was decided recently that the Child Protection and Mail Monitoring section needs to be overhauled, as there is often little or no information available as to why measures had been put in place initially.

9 SAFER CUSTODY/ SUICIDE AWARENESS

- 9.1 The Safer Custody meetings are held monthly with Suicide Awareness being incorporated into the meetings quarterly.
- 9.2 The optimism voiced by the IMB in the 2009 report has unfortunately failed to persist throughout the year. The appointment of a non-uniform Safer Custody Co-ordinator, whose post was meant to be safeguarded (i.e. the person doing the job was not meant to be moved to another area in the event of staff shortages/changes) did not last long. Over the past 6 months the ownership of the meeting has changed several times since the co-ordinator was moved to another job, with a Governor grade chairing it at present. Unfortunately the Governor concerned was not informed as to what precisely the role involved, so is on a steep learning curve at the moment. However, she is extremely enthusiastic and is determined to get Safer Custody back on track.
- 9.3 Attendance at the meetings has once again fallen, partly as a result of those concerned not being informed of the date/time of meetings. This is particularly true of Samaritans whose presence is crucial at the Quarterly meetings, but who are rarely sent reminders of the meetings.
- 9.4 The relocation of the Care Suite is an on going saga, with very little progress being made since this time last year. An SO is to be delegated in charge who will be based on C1 wing and will be directly involved with the Suite and the Listeners. There is also to be a Listener's Manager. However there is still a debate as to what the exact function of the Suite will be.
- 9.5 There have been problems with the Care Team responsible for staff care –especially needed in the event of a death in the prison. This had almost ceased to exist, but thankfully is now being resurrected. This is crucial to the well being of the prison staff in the event of a tragedy such as the suicide of a staff member or prisoner. There was 1 staff suicide and 3 prisoner deaths this year.
- 9.6 There have not been many Anti-bullying files opened in recent months, and there are some concerns that not all incidents are being reported – and if not why not.
- 9.7 There continue to be problems with personnel not being trained in ACCT (Suicide and Self-Harm), the reasons being the same as those mentioned last year –shortage of qualified trainers and staff not being aware of the importance of attending such training

- 9.8 The Listeners, who are trained by the local Samaritans, provide a very professional service to their fellow prisoners, fulfilling their role compassionately and effectively. They work very well with the prison staff, and their requests for ongoing training are listened to and responded to by the prison whenever possible.

10 SEGREGATION UNIT

- 10.1 The Segregation Unit (SEG) comprises seven cells, which have their own toilet facilities; there is a separate bathroom and an exercise yard. One cell is equipped with paper mache furniture for incident destructive prisoners.
- 10.2 The Board visits the unit at least twice a week and can report that the officers always provide a respectful, firm but fair approach to prisoners in the cells.
- 10.3 The board is pleased to report that the adjudication figures went from a high of 75 in June 2009 down to 35 in May 2010. There was an average of 44 adjudications per month. The biggest cause at adjudications (29%) was for disobeying a lawful order, followed by possession (26%), which includes the presence of substances in urine examples.
- 10.4 Efforts are being made to improve board attendance at Adjudications and Reviews. Records are consistent with requirements, but would benefit from more comprehensive recording analysis.
- 10.5 The board has observed that officers are doing their best to implement the changes entailed by the amendment of PSO 1700. Some of them however, e.g. 'improvement of exercise yards' will be dependent on the availability of funding. Others such as 'Prisoners on ACCT should only be segregated if they are at risk to others' would seem to be a matter of judgement and circumstance which might be difficult to justify in a subsequent enquiry.
- 10.6 As in the last report, there are two areas of concern for the Board;
- 10.6.1 The length of time prisoners are held in Segregation whilst transfers are being planned is sometimes inappropriate. But the Board understands that such moves are dependent on factors outside the Verne's control.
- 10.6.2 There are no formal arrangements for prisoners to continue education or to be able to work during periods of time in Segregation.
- 10.5 The Board commends the staff of the Segregation Unit for their care, commitment and patience with prisoners when dealing with some very difficult situations. Their work is exemplary.

SECTION 6

OTHER AREAS OF THE PRISON ON WHICH THE BOARD HAS ISSUES TO REPORT

11 AMENITIES

- 11.1 The Board is pleased to report that regular quarterly meetings take place. This committee enables prisoners' wing representatives to air residential concerns or grievances on behalf of those on their wing.
- 11.2 As canteen queries constitute the largest number of queries, it is disappointing that the DHL manager is not always able to attend these meetings. The meeting is held on one of the busiest days in the week for DHL and if this meeting were held on another day answers to questions could be provided more rapidly.
- 11.3 There have been problems with the introduction of P-NOMIS particularly regarding prisoners' pay. In addition any changes to the list of items kept by DHL is through PIES. It is felt that a representative from the PIES department should also attend these meetings to avoid items being carried over so answers can be sought.

12 CANTEEN

- 12.1 The prices being quoted by the new supplier, DHL are higher than that of the previous supplier. Regular quarterly reviews of items are undertaken although prisoners often complain of limited choice. The level of prison wages, which are lower than at other prisons continues to be a concern, especially with increasing supplier prices.
- 12.2 The range of products offered by DHL is 800 items. Each establishment selects up to 375 items. At present the number on offer at The Verne is approximately 200. The reason for the lower number is so items can be listed on two sides of an A4 piece of paper.
- 12.3 Storage of certain items is not possible due to the cramped conditions and lack of fridge facilities.

13 CHAPLAINCY

- 13.1 The Board congratulates the whole of the Chaplaincy team on the superb work it carries out meeting the spiritual needs of the prison population through the various services held.
- 13.2 A wide diverse range of other activities are arranged and include such as the fortnightly 'pat' dog. Visits and live musical events.
- 13.3 The presence of an Imam for 2 days a week continues to have a stabilising effect on the Muslim population of the prison.
- 13.4 A Sikh Minister was appointed in December 2009 and helped to reduce the tension between Sikhs and Hindus

14 DRUGS AND DRUG STRATEGY

- 14.1 The Verne continues to work to reduce drug and alcohol abuse.
- 14.2 Constant intelligence gathering and action by Security into combating drugs getting into the prison is delivering results. This year there were 13 positives from Mandatory Drug testing and 5 positives from Voluntary Drug testing, although 4 were attributed to medication.
- 14.3 The Verne prison officers administering drug control are struggling to keep the system going in the face of various national policy changes.
- 14.4 It is pleasing that the drug detection dog and handler have had their work position secured for at least the next 12 months. They form a beneficial unit in the battle to prevent drugs entering the prison. Drugs have been detected on visitors periodically by the detection dog during weekend visits. The drug detection dog makes regular checks on the wings. The detection dog and his handle have also achieved good results in prison drug dog competitions.
- 14.5 The Drugs Strategy multi-disciplinary Committee continues to meet quarterly and is always well attended. The committee monitors, evaluates and ensures good service delivery; the IMB attends these meetings.

15 GARDENS

- 15.1 A new garden instructor was appointed and a reversal of the deterioration in the appearance and standard of work carried out in the gardens and estate last year has achieved a notable improvement this year.
- 15.2 It is hoped that it will be possible to reintroduce the availability of NVQ qualifications so as to assist future employment possibilities.

- 15.3 Chickens and ducks are kept and cared for extremely well by one of the prisoners.
- 15.4 The new poly tunnel is being well used and a welcome addition to the 2 greenhouses in enabling the growing and supplying of many of the plants used in the prison estate.

16 GYMNASIUM

- 16.1. In October 2009 the gymnasium team received an outstanding achievement award, the Dorset Criminal Justice Board 'Working with Offenders' National award for "continued commitment to delivering qualifications which have transformed the lives of prisoners".
- 16.2. Since October 2009 one officer has retired, one officer has been dismissed and it is taking time to recruit a replacement. The Verne was rightly proud that it could offer NVQ level 3 qualifications in the gymnasium, in addition some prisoners proceeded to take a Certificate of Education. It is doubtful whether in the future the gymnasium will be able to provide qualifications to the high standard previously obtained, and this is to be regretted.
- 16.3. During the year a trim trail has been established in front of the accommodation blocks. There have been problems with the equipment, together with health and safety issues, so this is not yet operational.
- 16.4. The playing field is well used for organised sporting activities and also to enable prisoners to exercise and train on an individual basis.

17 HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 17.1 A member of the IMB attends the quarterly H&S meetings, duly reporting back to the Board. It is pleasing to report that there were no serious incidents in the prison during the year.
- 17.2 It is felt that the H&S department at The Verne, which includes a full time Fire Officer and part time clerk, are all very committed.
- 17.3 Regular internal courses are held for both the officers and civilian staff. The majority of the IMB has attended both a health and safety and manual-handling course.
- 17.4 Due to the age of some buildings dating back to about 1873 some areas continue to be damp and require de-humidifying on a regular basis. These areas (casements) house Education, Library and the Kainos residential wing as well as various office facilities.

- 17.5 There is very good liaison and rapport between Portland & Weymouth Fire brigades with a 'Memorandum of Understanding' in force to enable both stations to hold regular exercises within the establishment.
- 17.6 There are areas not being fully utilised because of Health and Safety legislation.

18 INCENTIVES AND EARNED PRIVILEGES

- 18.1 For a number of years now, HMP The Verne has had 75% or more of its population as enhanced prisoners. During the past year a firmer approach has been taken towards the incentive scheme and the awarding and maintaining of enhanced status, which dropped to nearly 65%, now stands at around 70%. At the same time standard prisoners, though low in overall numbers, approximately tripled. There was some resentment at first, but this has now settled and the prison seems mostly comfortable with this change.

19 INDUSTRIES

- 19.1 The industry management endeavours to find work and outlets for the workshops' products. The recession has resulted in fewer contracts being obtained. Much of the current work is for the prison estate.
- 19.2 There is a capacity to make a large and varied range of products, which are manufactured to a high standard and well constructed.
- 19.3 It is to be regretted that the supply of well made and varied garden furniture sold locally at various agricultural shows has been discontinued.
- 19.4 The board is concerned that there has not been sufficient work to keep both the prisoners and expensive machinery fully occupied and used. On visits to the workshops prisoners are often observed not having any work to carry out.

20 KITCHENS

- 20.1 The kitchen staff strive hard to produce good and varied meals within the per capita allowance. The small increase in the daily allowance during the year has meant that it should be marginally easier to come within budget.
- 20.2 Prisoners have appreciated the continuing theme meal days. Many have taken place during the year. These are also a welcome challenge for the kitchen staff to set menus and access appropriate ingredients within tight budget restraints.

- 20.3 One manager was dismissed during the year. Weekend working of managers is scheduled to cease shortly, although it is not thought that this will have a major impact. There is a constant challenge of meeting regular changes in prisoner kitchen staff, coupled with rotating rest days, education commitments and gym sessions, but this is managed satisfactorily. The long-term sickness of a permanent member of staff has caused difficulties.
- 20.4 Whilst the kitchen tries to provide NVQ training for prisoners to improve future employability, the constant turnover of prisoners makes this difficult to achieve.
- 20.5 The Board has attended several food meetings this year run by the kitchen manager and this has been well received by both kitchen staff and prisoners alike.
- 20.6 The Board feels that the kitchen staff does an excellent job in providing very acceptable meals of quality and quantity throughout the year, combining this with accommodating food requirements of religious festivals such as Ramadan and Christmas.

21 KEY PERFORMANCE TARGETS (KPTS)

- 21.1 The Board continues to receive regular updates each month on the Key Performance Targets, but the relevance and usefulness of some appear questionable. It is not easy comparing establishments, which are often so different in their composition and make up.
- 21.2 Management at HMP The Verne works hard at keeping the prison on its KPT targets.

22 OFFENDER MANAGEMENT UNIT (OMU)

- 22.1 The number of life sentence prisoners in the Verne has risen during the year and there are 52 Lifers held. In addition there are 18 Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) prisoners as at April 2010, with little variance in this number throughout the year.
- 22.2 Lifer Prisoners continue to come to the Verne, often to attend courses no longer available here, but which they need to complete as required under their LSPs (Life Sentence Plans) and this continues to be a concern. This can impact on Lifers attending Parole Board hearings not having carried out courses and programmes set down in their LSP. The result is that prisoners are refused parole and face prolonged sentences. Surely information offered on courses at prison establishments should be more accurate.

- 22.3 As reported in several previous years' reports, the Board has been told that not much progress has been made in reducing the large backlog of cases waiting to be heard by the Parole Board.
- 22.4 It is disappointing that many prisoners arrive at the Verne without a completed OASys. The Offender Supervisors are to be congratulated on the completion on average of 60 OASys per month (10% of the prison's population), clearing the backlog of outstanding non completed OASys and also assimilating the changes brought about by the introduction of OASys revision 4.3.
- 22.5 The Board was pleased that a second Forensic Psychologist in training was appointed and also the return to work of the existing Forensic Psychologist in training after a period of illness.

23 PRISONERS AND PRISON REGIME

- 23.1 The establishment continues to receive prisoners who do not meet the strict Verne prisoner criteria. This causes extra work and specially the use of the limited number of Segregation cells to hold these prisoners pending transfer to other establishments.
- 23.2 At the start of May 2009 Foreign National prisoners made up 59% of the population at The Verne, with Nigeria being the single biggest group with 14%. In May 2010 Foreign National prisoners represented 56%. of the population
- 23.3 The Board is pleased to report that the UKBA set up in January 2009 is well established. It is having an effect on the re categorisation reviews of Foreign National prisoners. The Board still feels that it is illogical for the location of the UKBA to be at the Verne, particularly as the UKBA staff costs from this relatively isolated location to other establishments that they look after are higher.
- 23.4 The prison has had 4 deaths, (3 prisoners) and a prison officer who committed suicide. The Board was impressed by the quick and compassionate action taken by both Governors and staff in dealing with relatives of the deceased and advising the prison population. The Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO), is investigating the circumstances of the deaths.
- 23.5 As reported in last year's report prisoners are now all paid on a flat rate basis. This has removed any incentive to work harder and continues to cause resentment, particularly amongst those prepared to work harder to earn more.
- 23.6 The level of pay as compared to other establishments, (especially London prisons from where many of our prisoners are transferred) is also an

issue, about which the Board regularly gets applications, especially as this impacts on what they can buy at the Canteen, whose prices are uniform across all establishments.

- 23.7 The Board is pleased to report several initiatives, which have been tried out or brought in during the year. These have included the trial of a mobility scooter, a portable hearing loop system, a text phone, the installation of 6 benches for elderly prisoners.
- 23.8 It is a credit to staff, governors, prison officers and others that they continue to maintain a careful and sensitive balance between maintaining discipline and helping prisoners where they can.
- 23.9 Kainos, who were successfully awarded a new contract at the start of this year, have continued their programmes, subject to some modifications. Their work is carried out in D wing where dormitory conditions apply and continues to provide a haven for appropriate and selected prisoners. It is remarkable for the sociable regime that is maintained by the prisoners themselves.
- 23.10 The whole layout of the Verne, with offices in at least 8 separate buildings, means that staff who should talk with one another often do not do so. The daily morning inter-departmental meeting, which an IMB member often attends, assists communication but does not fully make up for the physical layout of the prison. It is not a simple problem to overcome.
- 23.11 The Board was pleased that work started in the year, in conjunction with the Kings Fund, to explore the setting up of an older prisoners (55years+) unit.

24 RACE RELATIONS

- 24.1 The Race Equality Action Team (REAT) meet bi-monthly, when all issues pertaining to the multi national population of the Verne are discussed; representatives include wing representatives, a good cross section of staff and managers and is regularly attended by the IMB.
- 24.2 The Board is advised of the number of Race Incident Report Forms (RIRF) and the reasons for them being raised. New Bridge also reviews these RIRFs. Many of these relate to perceived discrimination and use of inappropriate language.
- 24.3 The REO has joined the Dorset Equality Partnership.
- 24.4 There have been a number of excellent Diversity events organised again this year to develop greater awareness of Diversity issues. These include a Gypsy & Traveller awareness day in conjunction with Dorset Community

Action Group, an International over 35's football match, and a Diversity Fair, Multi cultural poetry competition and World music events.

- 24.5 As the Board has reported in previous reports the high spirited nature of some foreign nationals prisoners can seem irksome to other people and staff are to be congratulated for their professionalism in ensuring that good relations exist in such a cosmopolitan community.

25 SECURITY

- 25.1 The introduction of the BOSS chair during the latter part of the year will hopefully reduce the amount of mobile phones being brought into the prison.
- 25.2 Ongoing training has been encouraged by security staff of wing officers, to keep daily records of incidents that occur, thus enabling the security department to keep abreast of trends.
- 25.3 Mobile phones and Sim cards being discovered continues to be problem.

SECTION 7

26 THE WORK OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

BOARD STATISTICS	
Recommended Complement of Board Members	14
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	12
Number of members at the end of the reporting period	11
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	1
Number of members leaving within the reporting period	2
Number of attendances at meetings other than Board meetings	188
Total number of visits to the prison	308
Total number of applications received	59
Total number of segregation reviews held	
Total number of segregation reviews attended	

Code	Subject	2008/09	2009/10
A	Accommodation	1	0
B	Adjudications	1	2
C	Diversity related	5	3
D	Education/employment/training	5	1
E	Family/Visits	0	1
F	Food/Kitchen related	0	0
G	Health related	7	3
H	Property	13	12
I	Sentence related	9	10
J	Staff/prisoner/detainee related	18	5
K	Transfers	5	6
L	Miscellaneous	20	16
	Total Number of Applications	84	59

The breakdown of Board application statistics was only started last year. We therefore only have 2 years statistics.

27 REPORT OF BOARD DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

- 27.1 Regular training sessions take place on a monthly basis before our Board meeting.
- 27.2 The presentations and training are invariably of a high standard and are given by people showing enthusiasm and commitment for their work.
- 27.3 In House training this year has included a talk on Requests and Complaints, and the visiting Judge spoke about his role and sentencing procedures. We have been given guidance on OASys, and have attended sessions on ACCT and Health and Safety.
- 27.4 It has been necessary to co-ordinate the training and mentoring of 3 new IMB members in their probationary year.
- 27.5 Visits to other establishments are also important. There is always much to learn from others and sometimes much to give. We visited Wormwood Scrubs in June this year. Many prisoners arrive at The Verne from this London prison, often with problems and applications, which originate from their time there.
- 27.6 We were visited by Dorchester IMB, who wanted to see how UKBA operates and to learn about the Kainos wing. Many of our prisoners to be deported, and also those failing the prison criteria, are transferred to Dorchester.

28 MEMBERSHIP

- 28.1 The Board has a nominal roll of fourteen. The year started with 12 members. During the year we recruited 1 new member and lost 2 members who resigned.
- 28.2 Our current strength is 11 members, with 1 in the probationary year and 2 awaiting ministerial appointment at the end of their probationary year.
- 28.3 It remains difficult to recruit new members and in particular BME members with only 5.9%(2006) being in this category in Dorset.
- 28.4 We continue to seek new members, often in co-operation with the other two establishments in the area, HMP Dorchester and Portland YOI. The close proximity of 3 penal establishments within a 15-mile radius and a relatively low population in this part of Dorset means that members often come from outside the immediate locality.

29 BOARD VISITS

- 29.1 The Board arranges for 2 members to be on duty every week to carry out Rota visits, as well as attending to prisoner applications, weekly induction talks and monitoring meetings.

30 BUDGET

- 30.1 The allocated budget for travel and subsistence is totally inadequate. The isolation of the prison, coupled with the distance many members travel dictate that a more realistic budget is required. Unless a revision can be agreed the present level of pressure on our budget will continue with overspends.

31 THE CLERK TO THE BOARD

- 31.1 Our clerk's main prison work duties changed during the year, although her new role still embraces being the IMB clerk. The Board is exceptionally lucky in having a motivated, conscientious and diligent clerk who looks after us exceptionally well. She keeps us informed and up to date with pertinent information that assists us in our monitoring role.

32 CONCLUSION

- 32.1 The Board works in a constructive and flexible way and as a team there is a good esprit de corps. In our contact with prisoners and overall monitoring of the prison emphasis is placed on ensuring that prisoners are treated with fairness and respect.
- 32.2 The Board is 3 members under strength and it will be necessary to recruit new members in the coming year.
- 32.3 There have been no major SMT changes this year, which has helped with the implementation of the WFM change and reorganisation programmes. This stability has undoubtedly helped to reduce problems and deal with changes many of which ongoing.
- 32.4 The Board in conclusion thanks the Governor, who regularly attends and briefs us on current issues at our monthly meetings. The Governor operates an open door policy, which enables us to get swift and prompt responses to any matters that we need to discuss with her. The Board is also appreciative of the help and co-operation of the rest of the SMT, officers and staff generally in enabling them to carry out their monitoring duties. It has certainly made our job very much easier.

DISTRIBUTION

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Governor

SW National Council Representative

IMB Chairs of South West Area

All members

South Dorset MP