

DOVER IMMIGRATION REMOVAL CENTRE

ANNUAL REPORT 2010



ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DOVER
INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD FOR
THE PERIOD: 1ST JANUARY- 31ST DECEMBER 2010

Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody

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Statistics quoted in this report have been based on information provided from the departments concerned.

Numbers in brackets refer to the number for the previous year.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report covers the period 1 January to 31 December 2010. The Prisons Act 1952 and the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 require every Prison and Immigration Removal Centre (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 IRCs;
2. inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority as it judges appropriate, about any concern it has; and
3. report annually to the Secretary of State on how far the Immigration Removal Centre has met the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have on those held in the Centre.

To enable the Board to carry out these duties effectively its members have right of access at any time to every detainee and every part of the Centre and also to the Centre's records.



2. DOVER IMMIGRATION REMOVAL CENTRE AND ITS PURPOSE

Situated on high ground overlooking the port of Dover, the IRC occupies the site of fortifications built in Napoleonic times and is surrounded by a deep dry moat. Previously used by the Army, it became a prison in 1952 and five years later housed young offenders until April 2002 when it was re-designated to serve as an IRC operating under 2001 Detention Centre Rules.

Of the 10 established IRCs, Dover is one of only three being managed by the Prison Service on behalf of the UK Border Agency (UKBA), the others being managed by the private sector. It holds appellant or failed asylum seekers and ex-foreign national prisoners while they await administrative removal, deportation or release.

With accommodation for 316, detainees are housed in five separate residential units named after Cinque Ports. Sandwich, the induction unit, accommodates 53 detainees and has 6-bed dormitories together with a number of single rooms as have Hastings (52) and Romney (53). On Rye unit 100 detainees share double rooms and Deal has 58 single rooms. Other buildings within the Centre contain departments contributing to the detainees' general welfare and recreational needs.



3. PROGRESS ON CONCERNS RAISED IN 2009

Matter reported	Progress in 2010	Current status
<p>Removal Delays The long delays in processing deportation documents of Ex-FN prisoners. There had been little progress in reducing the time taken to resolve complex cases resulting in unacceptably long periods of detention in some cases.</p>	<p>Although the number of Ex-FN prisoners has fallen, the average length of detention rose significantly in 2010 (see Section 8).</p>	<p>No improvement</p>
<p>Transportation of Detainees The unnecessary transfer of detainees to and from Dover IRC, often at short notice or during the night and often without adequate refreshment.</p>	<p>Transfers to and from Dover continue to take place for no obvious reason, often at night and often involving long and circuitous journeys (see Section 12).</p>	<p>No improvement</p>
<p>Drugs Continuing evidence of drug abuse in the Centre</p>	<p>Following development of a drugs strategy, drug abuse appears to be under reasonable control (see Section 11).</p>	<p>Slight improvement</p>
<p>Condition of the estate and the management of repairs and maintenance While the opening of three new important facilities were welcome additions, refurbishment of the showers in the residential units was not completed after several months of work. The system for managing such projects was also questioned.</p>	<p>Although refurbishment of showers in the residential units has progressed, it has taken a very long time and work on Deal unit has not been completed. The units are generally in a reasonable state of repair (see Section 13).</p>	<p>Some improvement</p>

Matter reported	Progress in 2010	Current status
<p>Lack of guidance and direction from the new education service provider Questions about the running of the department, including pay and recruitment issues, had remained unanswered for many months, undermining morale and making it difficult to recruit and retain staff.</p>	<p>Although much uncertainty remains about guidance and direction from the education service provider, the Department has adapted to the new arrangements and has delivered a good service to detainees (see Section 16).</p>	<p>Some improvement</p>
<p>Frequent closure of the library Inadequate cover for library staff when they are on sickness or other forms of leave had led to frequent closure of this important facility for detainees.</p>	<p>Since September 2010 there has been some improvement following the appointment of a second part-time librarian (see Section 17).</p>	<p>Slight improvement</p>
<p>Visits The two-hour visiting periods meant that visitors who have often travelled long distances often had little time left for the visit.</p>	<p>No significant change. Visiting arrangements are subject to a national review (see Section 14).</p>	<p>No change</p>
<p>IMB Appointments The length of time taken by the Secretariat/Home Office to process applications for the IMB had been unacceptable.</p>	<p>Having been at full strength this issue has not affected the Board in the past year.</p>	<p>N/a</p>



4. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The main event of 2010 was the inspection by HMCIP (Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons) which took place during the week commencing 24 May. The criteria on which reports are based fall into four categories, namely respect, safety, purposeful activity and preparation for release with a top mark of 4 for each. The Centre was given ratings of 3 for the first three of these categories, receiving 2 for the last – exactly the same as the scores achieved following the inspection of three years ago. However various members of staff together with the IMB felt, considering the many improvements that have taken place during the intervening years, the ratings were perhaps somewhat disappointing. The Chief Inspector did, however, acknowledge a number of improvements, particularly relating to the Centre's environment and commented that she 'no longer felt that Dover was at risk of reverting to a prison type culture'.

The newly appointed Prison Minister visited the Centre in August, anxious to gain an insight into life and conditions experienced by those detained in an Immigration Removal Centre – as opposed to a prison. After briefly touring the establishment he was impressed and commented that his visit was 'full and informative'.

Following the opening of three new facilities in 2009, ie, the dining hall, weights room and communication room, the long awaited on-site dental suite was eventually opened at the end of November 2010 and immediately made a major impact on reducing the treatment waiting list.

The year 2010 witnessed reductions in both the number of detainees who needed to be separated for various acts of indiscipline and also those who resorted to self harm. Yet again it is pleasing to report that there were no fatalities and, following the tightening of security, no escapes occurred during the year.

The number of ex-foreign national prisoners held at the Centre during 2010 continued to fall and at the end of December represented 51% (75% in 2009) of the population. At the same time, however, the average stay of this group, having risen throughout the year, had reached 195 days. At the end of the year 53 different nationalities were being held at the Centre.

Following the closure in the summer of the Port of Dover Short Term Holding Facility, asylum seekers were being accommodated at the Centre although within hours of arrival they needed to be returned to the port for interviews. UKBA staff at the port were unable to conduct interviews at the Centre due to Health & Safety issues, creating much inconvenience and extra work for the Centre's staff and additional stress for detainees. This situation is ongoing but is expected to be resolved.

Although there were few changes to Centre Management personnel, the UKBA Department experienced several changes of staff including the departure of the manager in November.

Detainees continued to derive benefit from a wide range of occupational facilities and, with 158 work places available, many chose to take advantage of the paid employment opportunities which, apart from the financial reward, also served to relieve the tension caused by the stressful situation in which they found themselves.

5. HEALTHCARE

Healthcare is still provided by Eastern and Coastal Kent NHS Trust but the service is going out to tender and a new provider should be in place some time during the 2011/12 financial year. Staffing shortages have been an issue all year and the Healthcare Department still has one full time nursing vacancy.

In spite of staffing shortages, the Department is open 24 hours a day 365 days a year with a doctor attending every day for a two-hour session. Well-attended specialist clinics are held, covering issues such as smoking cessation, diabetes, asthma, hypertension and a talk clinic. The mental health in-reach team from Oxleas has been of benefit to detainees as have the visits when necessary by a psychiatrist to assess and review patients. Since the commissioning of healthcare services, the Centre also benefits from access to the community learning disabilities team.

The dental suite finally opened on 30 November and has been positively welcomed by both detainees and staff. Unfortunately, the dental service is still limited to emergency treatment but it has dramatically shortened the waiting list and has almost eliminated the need for escorted journeys for dental treatment.

Between 12 April (when SystmOne, the Healthcare computerised management system, went live) and December 2010, appointments were made for 9741 detainees, an average of 37 every day (compared with 29 per day in 2009). Waiting times are not excessive. These figures do not include detainees screened on reception or after bail hearings. Better security when medication is being issued would be desirable but a permanent presence of officers is not possible due to limited staffing availability.

The HMCIP report this year noted the improvement in healthcare provision compared with the previous inspection. Primary care services and support for life-long conditions were described as 'good' but there was no systematic health promotion. Clinical governance arrangements were appropriate.



6. KITCHEN AND DINING HALL

The dining hall opened in late 2009 and during the past year it has proved to be a great success, increasing detainees' free association time and enabling them to eat in more pleasant surroundings, without the food deteriorating during transportation to the accommodation units. In April 2010 a covered walkway between the kitchen and the dining hall was completed to improve food safety and quality.

The kitchen now provides a five-week menu cycle, implemented in November 2010. Many of the dishes have been the result of caterers attending cultural awareness courses at a local college. Efforts are made to secure detainee input into the menu choices through the Catering Manager attending the detainee consultative meetings, food comment books and surveys; and seasonal adjustments are made to provide appropriate menus for summer and winter. The complaints procedure, readily available in the dining room, is now written in 21 languages. Four complaints about

food were received by the Department in 2010, a very low number considering the diverse needs of over 50 different nationalities. The Catering Manager's achievements resulted in first place in the diversity category of the South East Region prison officer of the year awards.

The Department is increasingly reliant on the employment of detainees to assist the catering staff. There are now 30 places available and, during the past year, 93 detainees were trained for this work (many staying only a few months). A package is now being prepared to simplify and improve food safety training for detainee employees.

The kitchen continues to provide meals for the many cultural and religious festivals, the main events in 2010 being the Chinese New Year, Ramadan and Christmas; many other events were catered for. Ramadan in 2010 gave rise to additional concern as the time between evening meal and sunset was considerably longer than in previous years. Funding was approved for meal boxes to ensure that practising Muslims' food was not compromised in quality or food safety. Ramadan 2010 was probably the most efficient since the Centre opened.

IMB members visited the dining hall and sampled the food at least weekly. Considering the financial resources available, the Board is of the view that the meals are of good quality, reasonable variety and well presented.



7. HYTHE – SEPARATION UNIT

For the second year in succession the number of occasions on which it was considered necessary to commit detainees to the Separation Unit fell significantly. The 280 uses of separation compare with 364 in 2009 and 419 in 2008. Much of the credit for this vast improvement must go to the staff, especially those on accommodation units, who consistently displayed tolerance, patience and understanding, thereby avoiding the need for separation. Every effort was made to minimise the length of time detainees were separated, although the average time rose slightly in 2010 to 53 hours, from 48 hours in 2009.

During the year three detainees sought age clarification, claiming to be under 18, and were moved to the Separation Unit, probably the safest place for them. Following agreement with Kent County Council Social Services, the time taken to assess ages was considerably reduced and all three were interviewed within 36 hours of requests being made. None of them proved to be under age.

The IMB Chair continued to be informed promptly of every case. The Board attaches much importance to monitoring the welfare of those subject to separation and at least three visits were made to the unit weekly throughout the year.

In the past year the unit was completely refurbished, which helped to reduce the risk of detainees harming themselves. Unlike the regular unavoidable movement of staff around other units, Centre Management rightly endeavoured to maintain staffing stability on this unit, enabling experienced staff to deal with the everyday challenges

that arose during the year. Every effort was made to satisfy the permitted needs and ensure the general welfare of the detainees who found themselves subject to separation.

Reasons for Separation			
		2009	2010
Age dispute		11	3
Arson		1	0
Assault on detainee		13	6
Assault on staff		7	6
Att. abscond/escape		9	8
Bullying		2	5
Dirty protest		0	0
Disruptive		21	13
Drugs		28	17
Fights		31	53
Good order or discipline		5	22
Incitement		5	7
Investigation		66	27
Lodged/medical		19	11
Non-compliant		11	8
Not suitable for DIRC		5	1
Own protection		11	5
Refused to locate		35	34
Refused TX/deportation		28	11
Serving prisoner		3	0
Theft		2	2
Threat to others		10	7
Threats to staff & inappropriate behaviour		38	26
Unauthorised article/weapon		3	8
Totals:	Admissions	364	280
	Special Room	14	10
	Use of Force	53	37

Major Changes in Reasons for Separation

Of the 24 categories only five saw an increase compared with the previous year, notably fights (+22) and good order or discipline (+17). In the majority of cases, following a short cooling off period, detainees were returned to their units, often within a few hours.

The reduction in 'under investigation' cases (-39) reflects the efforts made by staff on the residential units to obtain evidence and establish the facts before committing detainees to separation. It is also pleasing to note modest decreases in use of separation in connection with drugs misuse (-11) and threats to staff (-12).



8. UK BORDER AGENCY (UKBA)

The percentage of ex-FN prisoners held at the Centre during 2010 decreased to an average for the year of 71% of the population, peaking at 82% in April, with a low of 51% in December. This is a welcome reduction from the 2009 average of 75% and the 2008 average of 82%.

There was a slight reduction in the length of stay of non-CCD cases (detainees other than ex-FN prisoners) from 37 days in 2009 to 32 days in 2010. The average length of stay for Ex-FNPs, however, continued to increase, with an average 152 days in 2010. This was a significant increase on the average for previous years: 2009 (119 days); 2008 (99 days); and 2007 (111 days). The increase was particularly pronounced in the last four months of 2010, peaking at 195 days in December, the highest monthly average recorded at Dover

to date. At the end of December 2010, 24 detainees had been held at Dover for over a year, three for over two years. The detainee with the single longest stay had been at Dover for 1032 days at the end of December 2010. The Board continues to try to obtain information about those detained for the longest amount of time in the detention estate as a whole, but with limited success.

There has regrettably been little progress in resolving the problems contributing to the delay in the deportation of Ex-FNPs. This continues to be a matter of deep concern to the IMB, having been identified as such in each IMB annual report since the introduction in 2008 of the policy of automatic deportation for those sentenced to a minimum of 12 months imprisonment.

A number of complex cases proved extremely difficult to resolve, contributing to the further increase in the average length of detention. The main reasons for delays were:

1. Difficult working relationships with a number of countries with whom it is difficult to arrange emergency travel documents;
2. Generic legal barriers, usually for human rights reasons, to removal to certain countries;
3. Lengthy appeals processes; and
4. Non-cooperation in the removal process on the part of detainees.

In an average month, detainees of 58 different nationalities were held within the Centre in 2010. The average monthly totals for the top three nationalities were Chinese (10%), Nigerian (7%) and Indian and Algerian (both 6%). There were more Chinese detainees than any other nationality on eight occasions. Since opening as an Immigration Removal Centre in 2002 until the end of December 2010 approaching 24,000 detainees have been accommodated at Dover.

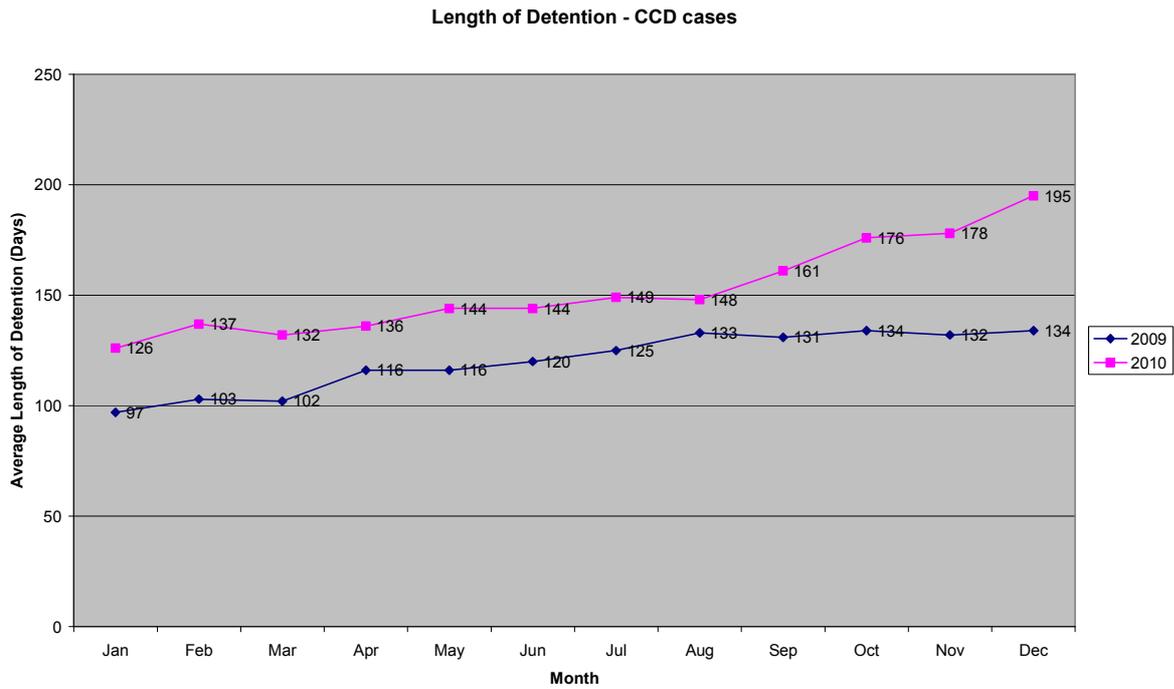
There were approximately three charter flights per month, departing detainees from a number of Centres across the Estate. Some disruption to flights was caused by the volcanic ash cloud covering much of European air space in April and May, and by the heavy snow in November and December. Of those detainees departing from the Centre each month, an average of 42% were transferred to other Centres, 32% were removed and 12% were temporarily admitted. Most of the remainder were granted bail, with a small number being released unconditionally.

The UKBA Department at Dover dealt with approximately 11 applications from detainees per day, the majority of whom were seeking explanations for their continued detention. Other common queries related to delays in documentation and to requests for transfers to Centres closer to family members. Approximately three-quarters of detainee queries to the UKBA received a response in person.

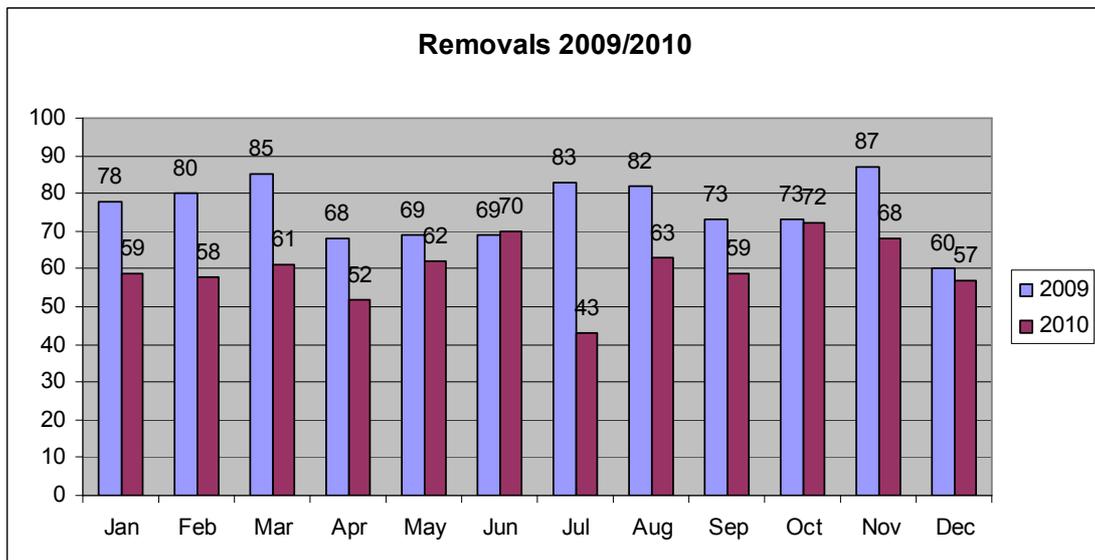
The IMB continued to work closely with the staff of the UKBA at Dover in progressing detainee queries. The Board appreciates the assistance given by the UKBA Manager and her staff, despite staffing shortages in the latter part of 2010. November 2010 saw the departure of the UKBA Manager, her replacement joining the team at Dover in January 2011.

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Average length of detention at Dover IRC from Jan 2010 – Dec 2010 for CCD cases

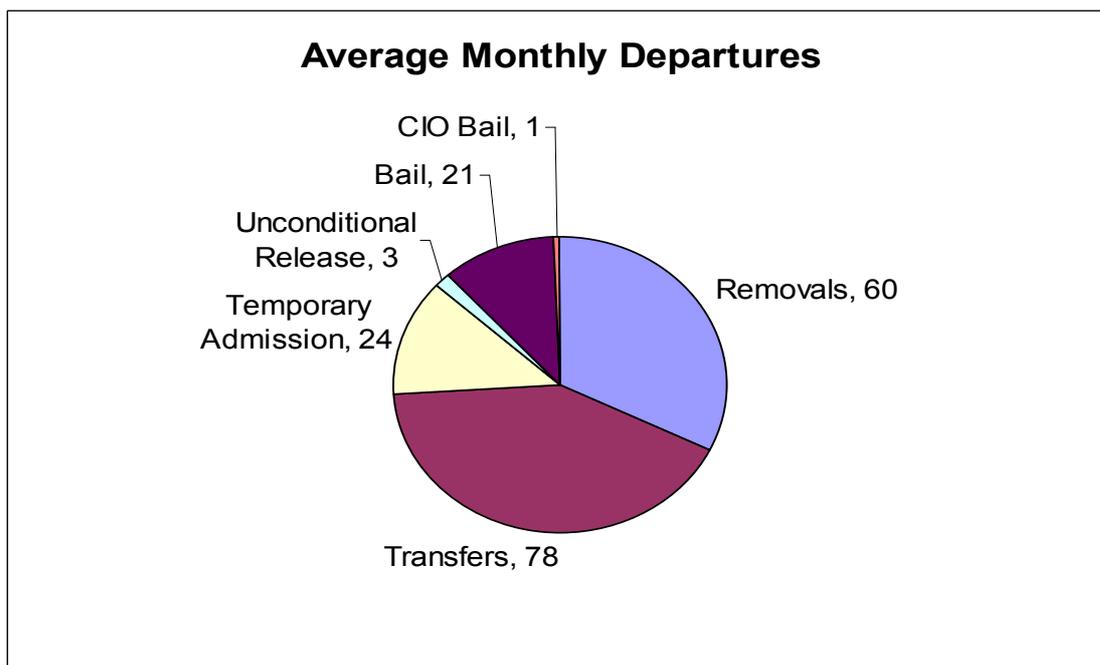


Average monthly removals from Dover IRC from Jan 2010 – Dec 2010



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Average monthly departures from Dover IRC from Jan 2010 – Dec 2010



9. DIVERSITY

The small Diversity Team has integrated the requirements of the new Single Equality Scheme into existing work on Diversity within the Centre with the aim that all detainees should have equal access to all the facilities and services at Dover. The team has monitored Race, Nationality, Disability, Sexual Orientation, Age, and Religious Belief, to enable it to take action to encourage tolerance and well-being within the Centre.

The 'Challenge It, Change It' course has been attended by over 60% of staff, with the aim of ensuring that they can recognise, challenge and change inappropriate attitudes and/or behaviour amongst detainees and staff. Three IMB members have attended this course.

The Peer Support /Helping Hands Group is now well established and is recognised as a vehicle for suggestions to management, building better relationships between detainees and helping to maintain a culture of tolerance. A Drop-In-Centre, open in the dining hall in lunch times, gives detainees access to Diversity, Safer Detention and Violence Reduction departments. The IMB has received few applications relating to racial or violence matters. There were various cultural events in the year, notably a whole Centre cultural celebration in July.

Reorganisation at the end of 2010 has resulted in the Department reporting to the Head of Faith (and Diversity) instead of the Deputy Centre Manager, the loss of four hours per week of staff time and the replacement of the Diversity Advisor. In spite of the loss of staff time in the Department, the IMB recognises the Centre's achievements in respecting and supporting the diverse cultures represented by detainees.



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10. SAFER DETENTION

A total of 64 detainee ACDT (Assessment Care in Detention and Teamwork) files were opened in 2010, a continuation of a downward trend experienced in 2008 (130) and 2009 (98). Included in this year's total were 14 detainees received at Dover from other centres on open ACDT files. The reasons for opening files showed no real change from preceding years, ie, actual self harm (27), staff concerns (19) and threats to self harm or commit suicide (18). During the year covered by this report there were 38 (70) cases of actual self harm committed by 21 (33) detainees although only 5 (7) needed hospital treatment. The use of force was required on 37 occasions in 2010 down from 53 recorded in 2009 - all these figures reflecting a considerable improvement on 2009.

Board members continued to monitor all aspects of Safer Detention, paying particular attention to visiting and checking the files of detainees on open ACDTs as well as attending case reviews. A designated member attended the Centre's monthly meetings, reporting to the Board any important issues raised.

The Centre is fortunate to possess an experienced and dedicated officer filling the post of Safer Detention Co-ordinator who was in constant contact with a supportive healthcare department. Much of the credit for the improvements indicated above must go to the various members of staff who during the year were responsible for the special monitoring and care of those detainees considered to be the most vulnerable and at risk.



11. SECURITY

Dover is one of the most secure removal centres in the country. Occupying the site of former Napoleonic fortifications it is surrounded by a deep dry moat on the inside of which is high fencing. Following two successful and one attempted escape in 2009, fencing, surveillance cameras and lighting have been improved. Almost certainly as a result of these and other security improvements and watchful monitoring by communications room staff, there were no escapes in 2010.

Within the confines of the Centre, detainees have enjoyed nearly 11 hours freedom of movement each day and during the summer evenings, allowing constant access to the Centre's occupational facilities.

Visitors and trade vehicles continued to be searched/scrutinised entering and leaving the establishment with the use of dogs to aid drug detection. These procedures are generally conducted thoroughly but respectfully. Steps are being taken to reduce the transfer of drugs, especially during visiting times. Although remaining under reasonable control (there were fewer drugs incidents in 2010), management and staff recognise that drugs still present a problem within the Centre.



12. RECEPTION - ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE OF DETAINEES

Detainees arriving and departing from the Centre continued to be treated efficiently and respectfully, creating what is generally a good atmosphere for what is one of the most stressful parts of the detention process. The HMCIP report described staff as 'polite and friendly' but made several recommendations to improve the reception area and the processes, most of which have been addressed.

Instances of apparently unnecessary transfers continued to occur, often during the night having been arranged at short notice and often involving multiple stops for some detainees. These transfers, usually described on the movement orders as being for 'operational reasons' or 'transfer to an appropriate centre', are an additional cause of stress for detainees. Better arrangements for refreshment during transfers should be in place after May 2011 when a new transportation contract begins.

Arrangements for meeting the welfare needs of those being released, transferred or removed are somewhat haphazard. For example, for those released, referral to the DDVG's project to assist ex-detainees should be made routinely and assistance offered with travel and clothing. Improvements have recently been made to the arrangements for a health check on impending departures to ensure necessary provision of medication, etc.

Since the closure in August 2010 of the short term holding facility at the Port of Dover, many detainees have been conveyed to and from the Port for interview and other reasons, a process that has been inefficient and disruptive. At the time of writing Centre Management and UKBA state that the matter will be resolved soon but it has taken an unacceptably long time.

Videolink bail hearings, introduced in 2008, continued to work effectively from a suite adjoining the reception office, not only saving detainees many hours of travel but also reducing the workload of reception staff in relation to the processing of detainee movements.

New arrivals at Dover are invited to an interview with one of two firms contracted by the Legal Services Commission to provide a limited range of publicly funded legal services. The Board is concerned that the number of interviews available does not meet the needs of detainees at what is a very stressful time and that one of the firms has, on occasions, not attended appointments. This service will be monitored closely over the coming year.



13. WORKS

The Works Department has experienced another busy year, and a change of both the Site Manager and the Estates Manager. Several significant projects have finally come to completion, including the fire hydrant and new fire alarm systems and, after long delay, the dental suite. A state of the art server room has been completed in the gate lodge, and the Deal residential unit has been re-roofed.

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Ongoing projects include the long awaited and much needed shower refurbishments and the installation of additional power sockets in the dormitories. The estate-wide painting programme continues, making good use of working parties from Standford Hill open prison. Small repairs are currently running at 94.9% completion and planned maintenance at 98.8% completion. Staffing levels remain challenging, but it is hoped that an additional electrician will be employed in the very near future.

Bids are currently being put together for funding both as a result of the HMCIP report and priority works identified through internal systems. A major injection of funds will enable the health care unit to be refurbished in the very near future. Despite being short of three members of staff due to retirement, the Works Department hopes to build on these successes and deliver a high level of service throughout the coming year.



14. VISITS

Social visits by friends and families took place for sessions over two hours every afternoon and additional 90 minute periods on Monday and Wednesday evenings. Morning sessions were for official visitors only. Weekends obviously proved more popular than weekdays and on occasions some 40 or more visitors can be present at any one time.

The current two-hour visiting periods mean that visitors who may have travelled long distances sometimes have a disappointingly short stay. Delays in gaining entry due to the security procedures, and contacting detainees in the Centre to inform them they have a visitor, sometimes increase that disappointment. Plans to introduce some longer visiting periods, some family visits, and other changes to improve the visiting experience have not been implemented because there are insufficient staff and, it is claimed, little demand. The IMB continues to take the view that the current arrangements should be improved but note that, on occasions, special steps have been taken to cater for visitors whose long journeys have been delayed through no fault of their own. A national review of visiting arrangements is currently underway; the Board is strongly of the view that it should not result in any further restrictions on visiting.

The prevention of excessive physical contact by fixing seats to the floor has not been entirely successful as a deterrent to the passing of prohibited articles. Officers, always two, although now aided by CCTV, have sometimes experienced difficulty maintaining security control due to distractions and the requirement to operate a generally relaxed regime. The transfer of drugs remains a management concern. Interview rooms accommodate legal visits and there is a vending machine available for light refreshments as well as a television for children.

Befriending visits by members of the Dover Detainee Visitors Group continued throughout the year and members of the IMB frequently made observation visits during weekdays as well as random weekend monitoring. Visitors were treated with respect and understanding, searches before and after visits being executed politely.



15. SHOP

The shop is an important facility for detainees, open for two periods every day except for closure on Monday mornings for deliveries. It was moved to a new site and operates well except for the fact that detainees have to queue in the open air and thus are unprotected when the weather is inclement.

Although tied into a national contract, a wide range of food, drinks and toiletries is available, together with international phone cards and top-ups for mobile phones. The freshness and variety of fruit, one of the more popular items, was improved in 2010 by using a local supplier. A cashless system, introduced in April 2009, has worked effectively with all purchases being deducted from detainee accounts on production of their identity cards. Detainees can also make purchases through a well known catalogue store and other approved suppliers.



16. EDUCATION

The Education Department delivered the following programme at the beginning of the year:

ESOL tuition	50 hours
IT	40.5 hours
Craft	34.5 hours
Music	17 hours
Relaxation	3 hours
Induction and Basic Skills	15 hours
Total:	160 hours per week

In August, however, after it was discovered that the Department as a whole was working too many hours, they were reduced slightly and the opportunity was taken to make adjustments as follows:

ESOL tuition	37.5 hours
IT	29.5 hours
Short courses	7.5 hours
ESOL/IT	12.5 hours
Art	18 hours
Woodwork	15 hours
Music	17 hours
Relaxation	3 hours
Basic skills	15 hours
Total:	155 hours per week

Plus five hours per month for music workshops; currently 200 detainees are registered by the Department.

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Much of the year has been taken up by the Inspection which took place in May 2010, and responding to the recommendations made in the subsequent report. The Inspectors found much to commend within the Department from the effectiveness of its management, the bright and well-decorated environment, and the thoroughness of its induction course to the expertise and management skills of the staff who had developed a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere. Overall, the Inspectors found 'the quality of education was generally good' and that detainees with differing skills and aptitude were catered for well.

The Inspectors made a number of recommendations, some of which have already been implemented while others are subject to ongoing development.

Implemented recommendations:

- Music classes have been relocated to a larger room.
- Internal signage has been significantly improved and there is a commitment to improving the exterior of the building to make it more welcoming.
- Although the Woodwork teacher is on long-term sick leave and no replacement has been found, his hours have been reallocated to provide extra evening Music and English conversation classes.

The Education Department has almost completed a central database which will:

- enable it to check that all nationalities are being catered for;
- monitor students' progress (accessible to all Education staff); and
- improve the analysis of detainees' participation in education on a monthly basis.

External exams and accreditation awarded to detainee students are being reviewed to include speaking skills. It is also planned to give detainee students more feedback and direction from induction onwards so that they are encouraged to make more positive use of their time.

Manchester College, the service provider, oversees only two IRCs and its contract comes up for renewal in the next eighteen months. There is concern, therefore, about how well it understands how an IRC runs, together with the continuing impermanence in its relationship with the Education Department of the Dover IRC.

Despite this, the morale of the Department is much improved when compared to the beginning of the year. This is particularly the case with the Education Manager who has a clear vision of future direction. She and her staff are committed to enabling student detainees to make productive use of their time so that they are as prepared as possible for whatever the future might hold for them.

17. LIBRARY

Staffed by the Kent County Council Library Service, the library provides a large amount of material for detainees to access Monday - Friday. There is a broad range of daily newspapers and foreign titles, both dailies and periodicals, all widely used by the ethnically diverse population. In addition, there are both fiction and non-fiction books for reference and for loan in many different languages, including law books and

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dictionaries. Legal forms are supplied. DVDs and CDs (including many popular TV series) are available for loan, both to detainees and prison staff.

Visits to the library average around 70-80 a day and, since September, closures have been kept to a minimum with a new member of staff bringing the staffing level back to two part-time posts. Sickness and annual leave, however, still cause difficulty. The Inspection in May 2010 highlighted the staffing issue and although there is now a second member of staff, keeping the Library open depends a great deal on the commitment and dedication of the two staff; and there is no evening opening. The Library management systems are KCC based and appear to be efficient and easy for staff and borrowers to use. Links with KCC enable the Librarians to obtain books and help from the Ethnic Minorities Department in Maidstone. Currently, the system allows registered detainees to take out four items each.

The Inspection in May 2010 recommended that the 'Library facilities should provide sufficient seating and study space with improved facilities including audio playback.' The DIRC Action Plan states that active consideration is being given to moving the Library to a more spacious venue which would allow the Inspection recommendations to be implemented. This may take place in March or April 2011 and would be very welcome. This move may be linked to the long awaited introduction of internet access for detainees which is available in most IRCs.

There is a good working relationship between the Education Department and the library, with a useful information flow and the library works well alongside the prison service.



18. RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS

Access to practice faith is everyone's right and at Dover IRC faith and belief play an important part in the lives of many detainees. The World Faith Team of 12 chaplains, working either full-time, seasonally or voluntarily, are led by an Imam who is Head of Faith and Diversity at the Centre. Throughout the year they endeavoured to meet the varied spiritual and pastoral needs of detainees and staff.

During free movement time (nearly 11 hours per day) detainees can access places of worship such as the Chapel, multi-faith room and the Mosque at any time. They are also able to share a multi-faith room on each accommodation unit. Members of the Religious-affairs Team have continued to visit all new arrivals, those who are the subjects of ACDT plans (at risk plans), refusing food, or have been detained in the separation or healthcare units. In conjunction with the Education Department, duty chaplains have started a new induction programme for arrivals which takes place three times a week. Detainees also receive a leaflet describing the meaning of faith/no faith in chaplaincy.

A monthly report is produced showing the population breakdown by religious denomination and nationality, as well as the daily attendance at religious services. In 2010 approximately 25% of the population attended services.

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A calendar of religious festivals is available for all to see and detainees are invited to inform the Religious-affairs Team about any other festivals. All major festivals were celebrated, with management, staff and members of the IMB often joining in and sharing food and happy moments with detainees.

Religious Denominations December 2010	
Buddhist	26
Christian	50
C of E	11
Hindu	9
Muslim	149
No religion	19
Rastafarian	4
Roman Catholic	7
Sikh	21
Other	14
Total	310

Nationalities December 2010	
Afghan	26
Algerian	24
Bangladeshi	13
Chinese	36
Indian`	23
Iraqi	10
Jamaican	9
Nigerian	15
Pakistani	18
Somali	8
Sri Lankan	8
Vietnamese	9
Other	111
Total	310



19. SPORTING FACILITIES – GYM

The PE Department had a busy year in 2010 with the gym (especially the weights room) and the Astro turf pitch being essential centres of activity for many detainees. Some 55 hours of staff time were lost because they were required for operational duties, but this was an improvement on recent years. The Department was, nevertheless, able to provide activities seven days a week. Following the May 2010 HMCIP inspection, PE provision was described as good: ‘staff were well qualified, enthusiastic and adopted a flexible approach to their roles’.

The number of detainees completing the gym induction course continued to be high, with 982 attending in 2010, averaging 82 per month. Although hampered by bad weather, various outside competitions took place, including football, cricket, strongman and a ‘mini-olympics’ and indoor activities included table tennis, basketball and bingo. As in previous years, a series of competitions were organised over the Christmas period.

On their visits to the Centre, Board members constantly witnessed the enthusiasm displayed by the gym manager and his staff when supervising games on the Astro turf. The Department’s glowing HMCIP report was surely fully justified.



20. DETAINEE EMPLOYMENT/WORKSHOPS

The range of paid work and the application process improved considerably in 2010, helped by the creation of an applications panel. At the end of 2010 there were 158 workplaces available for detainees, compared with 148 the previous year. Other improvements included the introduction of a weekly workforce report indicating the number of vacancies available. Detainees no longer have to wait until they have been at the Centre for four weeks before applying and employment decisions are made within seven days following applications. The Board is concerned, however, that UKBA vetoes applications from detainees considered not to be cooperating with the removal process. This national UKBA policy runs counter to the Agency's stated aim of occupying detainees purposefully.

Work Opportunities			
Hastings Unit	14	Bicycle workshop	12
Romney Unit	14	BICS workshop	12
Sandwich Unit	8	Environmental	12
Rye Unit	15	Library	2
Rye Laundry	2	Helping hands	14
Deal Unit	10	Laundry	2
Gym	6	Education	3
Religious services	2	Catering	30

Hours are flexible and are agreed in advance, the norm being two sessions daily except in the kitchen and dining hall (four and three sessions respectively) where higher rates of pay attract considerable interest. £12.85 per day can be earned for four daily sessions in the kitchen.

The vast majority of detainees who are admitted to the Separation Unit have not been employed in the Centre, an indication of the importance of encouraging employment as a way of enabling detainees to make good use of their time and reducing indiscipline.

Bicycle Workshop

An average of 10 detainees attended morning and afternoon bicycle workshop sessions in 2010, each being paid £6 per day. By cannibalising 850 abandoned or badly damaged cycles, received from bodies including the County Council, the Police and the Canterbury Rotary Club, some 500 reconditioned machines were produced; a shipment of 400 was sent to Gambia in the Spring.

British Institute of Cleaning Sciences (BICSc) Workshop

Training in the BICSc workshop took place once a week but was normally only attended by between two and five detainees which was very disappointing. Most of those who apply are considered unsuitable and have their applications turned down by Centre Management. There is also a problem with remuneration, a cleaner earning

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less than those who work in facilities such as the kitchen or the dining hall. The building housing the workshop was completely refurbished in 2009; regrettably, it has not been fully utilised.

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21. WORK OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

Following a recruitment campaign in July 2009, from an initial interest shown by 18 members of the public four of the six applicants interviewed were successful and joined the Board at the beginning of the year. They have all proved to be welcome additions and are nearing completion of their probationary year. The Board now numbers 14 and is at its strongest and most diverse for many years with three members having served more than 13 years and five others more than four years.

On average 10 members attended monthly Board meetings, during the first parts of which the Centre and UKBA managers presented their reports, answered questions and discussed matters of concern raised by members. On occasions guest speakers were invited to outline their work and responsibilities, these sessions generally proving to be enlightening and helpful.

Designated members continued to attend several regular meetings at the Centre, including those on Diversity, Safer Detention, Violence Reduction, Use of Force, the PCT, Clinical Governance and the Peer Support Group. A member maintained links with the Dover Detainee Visitors Group and the Chair attended IRC Forum meetings, providing quarterly reports on each occasion.

Board Statistics (2009 figures in Brackets)

Recommended complement of Board members	12	(12)
Number of Board members as at January 2010	10	(11)
Number of Board members as at December 2010	14	(10)
New members joining in 2010	4	(0)
Members leaving during 2010	0	(1)
Board meetings during the year	12	(12)
Average number of attendees at Board meetings	10	(8)
Visits to IRC by one or more members (incl. meetings)	171	(161)
Number of written applications received	131	(86)

The monitoring of detainee accommodation, healthcare and food remained top priorities. Special attention was given to inspecting the condition of the showers/toilets which in the past have caused concern. The Board constantly pressed for completion of the dental suite, finally opened in November and food was checked weekly with emphasis on quality, portions and choice. ACDTs were strictly monitored and concerns raised by detainees in written or verbal applications were always investigated, when necessary replies being sent within 36 hours. The Board received 131 written applications from detainees, an increase from 2009 (86) although a large part of the increase was due to one detainee submitting 28 applications.

The Separation Unit was visited at least three times a week and one or more members were present at the Centre on 171 days in the year, nearly every other day. This

strong presence was maintained without exceeding the Board's budget due to some members waiving their travelling expenses.

Throughout the year Board members received the helpful cooperation of Centre and UKBA Management and members of staff without which effective monitoring would undoubtedly have proved more difficult. The working relationship between the Chair and the Centre Manager, an important factor in the success of any board, was one of friendly mutual respect. Finally, an efficient and supportive Clerk and a full and experienced membership contributed to another successful year for the IMB at Dover.



22. MATTERS OF CONCERN (In order of priority)

- 1. REMOVAL DELAYS (repeat):** The time taken to arrange the deportation of ex-FN prisoners has lengthened in the past year. At the end of December 2010 it was 195 days compared with 131 days in the latter half of 2009 (see Section 8).
- 2. TRANSPORTATION OF DETAINEES (repeat):** The apparently unnecessary transfer of detainees continued, often at short notice or during the night and often without adequate refreshment (see Section 12).
- 3. WORKING ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN THE IRC AND UKBA AT THE PORT OF DOVER:** Since the closure in August 2010 of the short term holding facility at the Port of Dover, many detainees have been conveyed to and from the Port for interview, a process that has been inefficient and disruptive (see Section 12).



23. CONCLUSION

Improvements continued to take place at Dover IRC during 2010 and several recommendations made following the HMCIP inspection have already been implemented. The quality and selection of food, good healthcare, the special monitoring of detainees under stress, helpful, understanding and tolerant staff, and a host of employment opportunities and purposeful activities have proved to be the key elements in maintaining a generally relaxed regime.

Four determining factors serve as a good general guide when seeking to establish the social climate that exists within a removal centre, namely, the number of actual self harm incidents that have occurred during a specific period, the amount of times the use of force was required, the total number of ACDT files opened and the occasions when it was deemed necessary to commit a detainee to the separation unit. For the second successive year Dover IRC witnessed significant reductions in all four areas, testament to the care and dedication of the various members of staff directly involved.

At the end of December the number of ex-FN prisoners was at its lowest level for several years at 51% (75%) although conversely the average length of stay of this group had risen to 195 days with several detainees having spent well over two years in

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the Centre. This has been the IMB's major concern and every opportunity has been taken to express our disquiet to those in authority at UKBA who fully recognise the unacceptable situation. However, it should be stated that the average length of stay figure of 152 days for 2010 was increased due to a relatively small group of detainees whose cases have proved, for reasons set out in section 8 above, extremely difficult to resolve.

With the Centre Manager facing a reduced financial budget, the Board hopes that any savings will not incur a reduction in staffing levels, occasionally stretched at times on some locations, which could lead to the safety, care and welfare of detainees being at risk.

The Board is confident that the Centre management and staff will not be complacent but will endeavour to build on the many positive improvements reflected in this report that can only benefit those who find themselves detained at Dover IRC in the future.

FOR AND ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD

John Roper
Chairman
Independent Monitoring Board

24. GLOSSARY

ACDT	Assessment, Care-in-Detention and Teamwork (the care plans for detainees at special risk)
BICSc	The British Institute of Cleaning Sciences
CCD	Criminal Casework Directorate
CIO	Chief Immigration Officer
DDVG	Dover Detainee Visitors Group
ESOL	English for speakers of other languages
Ex-FNP	Former foreign national prisoners
HMCIP	Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons
IMB	Independent Monitoring Board
IRC	Immigration Removal Centre
KCC	Kent County Council
PCT	Primary Care Trust
TX	Transfer
UKBA	United Kingdom Border Agency