



Dover Immigration Removal Centre

Annual Report 2011

**Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring
Board for the period:
1ST January – 31ST December 2011**

CONTENTS

Item No.		Page No.
1	INTRODUCTION	2
2	DOVER IMMIGRATION REMOVAL CENTRE & ITS PURPOSE	2
3	DIVERSITY STATEMENT	3
4	PROGRESS ON CONCERNS RAISED IN 2010	3
5	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
Review of areas contributing to detainees' general welfare		
6	HEALTHCARE	5
7	KITCHEN AND DINING HALL	6 - 7
8	HYTHE – SEPARATION UNIT	7 - 9
9	UK BORDER AGENCY (UKBA)	9 - 10
10	LEGAL ADVICE FOR DETAINEES	10 - 11
11	DIVERSITY	11 - 12
12	SAFER DETENTION	12
13	SECURITY	12
14	RECEPTION - ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE OF DETAINEES	13 - 14
15	WORKS	14 - 15
16	VISITS	15
17	SHOP	15 - 16
Review of occupational facilities provided		
18	EDUCATION	16 - 17
19	LIBRARY	17
20	INTERNET SUITE	17
21	RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS	17 - 18
22	SPORTING FACILITIES - GYM	18
23	DETAINEE EMPLOYMENT/WORKSHOPS	19 - 20
24	WORK OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD	20 - 21
25	MATTERS OF CONCERN	21
26	CONCLUSION	22
27	GLOSSARY	23

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 1 January to 31 December 2011. 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 adult male appellant or failed asylum seekers and ex-foreign national offenders 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. DIVERSITY STATEMENT

The Dover IMB is committed to promoting greater interaction and understanding between people of different backgrounds including race, religion, gender, nationality, sexuality, marital status, disability and age. We also recognise that our approach to diversity must respond to differences that cut across social and cultural categories such as mental health, literacy and drug addiction.

The Board strives to adopt this approach in its recruitment and development practices in order to increase the range of skills and awareness of members with regard to the diverse needs and perspectives of detainees within Dover IRC.

All Board members will undertake their duties in a manner that makes them accessible to everyone within the establishment regardless of their background or social situation. The Board will monitor to establish whether the experiences and interaction between staff, detainees and visitors are fair and without prejudice. When this is not the case we will alert the appropriate authorities including the Centre Manager, senior management, the Area Manager and the Minister.

4. PROGRESS ON CONCERNS RAISED IN 2010

Matter reported	Progress in 2011	Current status
1. REMOVAL DELAYS (repeat): The time taken to arrange the deportation of ex-FN Offenders lengthened in 2010. At the end of December 2010 it was 195 days compared with 131 days in the latter half of 2009.	The average during the year was 177 days, a small improvement on the position at the end of 2010 but still well above the average in recent years (see Section 9).	No significant improvement
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.	Although recognised as a problem by UKBA, night transfers to and from Dover continued routinely, there often being more arrivals at night than during the day (see Section 14).	No improvement
3. WORKING ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN THE IRC AND UKBA AT THE PORT OF DOVER: After the closure in August 2010 of the short term holding facility at the Port of Dover, many detainees were conveyed to and from the Port for interview, a process that was inefficient and disruptive.	This issue was eventually resolved in May 2011 (see Section 14).	Resolved

5. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Reductions in the number of ex-foreign national offenders (ex-FNOs) in detention together with a marked downward trend in the number of detainees committed to the Separation Unit, continued trends reported last year. The average time ex-FNOs were detained in the Centre remained high compared with recent years but fell slightly towards the end of the year.

In common with other Centres, Dover witnessed a reduction in the total number of detainees being held. With accommodation for 316, at the end of December, for example, only 227 detainees were in residence. Although falling still further at the beginning of January 2012, at the end of the month numbers had reverted to the average complement of 280. Extra detention capacity with the opening of Morton Hall, general restructuring within UKBA and arrest teams/intelligence staff away over the Christmas period are reasons given to explain the shortfall in numbers.

The number of ACDT files opened and the occasions 'Use of Force' was deemed necessary were both little changed from 2010 although actual self harm incidents showed a modest increase. All three figures, however, were well below those recorded in 2009. The total number of applications submitted by detainees to the Independent Monitoring Board was also at the same level as last year. Again it is pleasing to report that no fatalities occurred during the year although, regrettably, due to a breach in security, there was one escape.

An unacceptable number of detainee movements, especially between Centres at night, continued to occur throughout the year – a concern also raised in last year's IMB report. As a result strong representations were made by the Centre Manager and the IMB Chair to UKBA who in turn referred their concern to DEPMU, the department responsible for the transportation of detainees in the detention estate. To date, in spite of promises, there has been no significant improvement (see Section 14).

In July an internet suite was opened, the lack of which has been a major criticism in the last two HMCIP inspection reports. At the beginning of November the medical centre was finally re-opened following a protracted refurbishment lasting much of the year due to contractual problems. Life Channel screens displaying information were installed in December on suitable locations throughout the Centre and are expected to be operational in January. Due to the stressful situation in which detainees find themselves the Centre Management rightly continues to place considerable importance on providing a wide range of occupational facilities as well as a host of employment opportunities for the detainees. Throughout 2011 all areas offering such options operated both successfully and efficiently.

Several changes within the Centre and UKBA management occurred during the year. Having been appointed in the latter part of 2010 the new UKBA manager took up her post in January. The Education Manager retired in November after ten years at the Centre, her replacement commencing work in the same month. A new Centre Manager arrived just before Christmas replacing the previous incumbent who had been at the helm for three years and was moving over to the Prison estate to govern Maidstone Prison. The

Head of Religious Affairs, who is not being replaced, also departed at the end of December.

Sadly, the death of an experienced and respected Senior Officer suddenly occurred in November with prison staff providing an impressive guard of honour prior to his funeral service.

A strong monitoring presence was maintained at the Centre by the IMB in 2011 (see Section 24).

6. 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 sometime in the 2012 financial year. Staffing shortages have been an issue all year but the employment of health care assistants should help to cope with demand.

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

The dental suite, opened in November 2010, is working well and generally detainees have to wait for seven days at most to be seen. At present the service is limited to emergency work. A wider range of treatment and preventative information would be a significant improvement and the Board suggests this should be sought as part of the next contract.

During 2011 healthcare staff made 16805 detainee appointments, of which approximately 9.8% were not kept by detainees. This equates to approximately 41.5 detainees seen every day by healthcare staff (compared with 29 per day in 2009). These figures do not include detainees screened on reception or after bail hearings.

A refurbishment of the healthcare department began in April 2011, one of the main aims being the welcome provision of facilities for a substance misuse service to detainees. Planned to be finished in three months, the work took most of the rest of the year to complete. The Board commends healthcare staff for providing the same level of service for detainees even though they had to work in several different places in the centre for many months. By the end of the year work to complete the refurbishment was still outstanding, including making the 'safer room', where a detainee can be constantly observed, fit for purpose.

7. KITCHEN AND DINING HALL

The catering department has continued to improve services to detainees. The five-week menu is reviewed continuously, working practices are reviewed regularly and meetings with detainees are held to ensure their needs are being met.

Detainee employment has assisted the development of multicultural menus. Detainees' input in preparing and cooking dishes has enabled these menus to be authenticated, although there are constraints: the dishes of some nationalities cannot be produced, mainly because of the limited budget and mandatory contracts which do not offer the varied ingredients required.

In addition to talking to detainees working in the kitchen, the Catering Manager attends detainee consultative meetings and encourages detainees to discuss catering needs. Food comment books and surveys are used in assessing the quality of service and use has been made of the 68 responses received from the 620 surveys distributed. The catering department also encourages detainees to forward menu ideas and invites them to attend the kitchen to work with chefs in preparing their meals, although the take up of this offer has been very low.

The catering complaints procedure, now written in 21 languages, is available to detainees in the dining room. Two formal complaints about food were received in 2011, a very small number given the diverse needs of such a large clientele. These were also the only occasions on which detainees raised concerns about food in applications to the IMB.

The dining room, opened in late 2009, continues to be a huge success and detainees seem to enjoy the interaction with their friends during meal times. This facility is especially important in the delivery of festival meals that previously would have been held in the mosque or multi-faith room. Food quality and safety can be maintained much more easily.

The kitchen has continued to provide meals for the many cultural and religious festivals, the main events in 2011 having been the Chinese New Year, Ramadan and Baisakhi, the Hindu festival Rakhee and Christmas. Many other lower key events have also been catered for. Ramadan in 2011 posed additional concern as the time between the evening meal and sunset was considerably longer than in previous years. The catering department with support from officers ensured that practising Muslims' food was not compromised in quality or food safety. From comments received from detainees, the Board considers that Ramadan 2011 was the most efficient and successful in meeting the needs of those fasting, since the opening of the IRC.

During the year four catering staff were lost to the department, two of them due to 'efficiency' improvements but two of the gaps were covered by agency staff. Improvements to the detainee work structure helped to alleviate some of the problems caused by these losses. The kitchen continues to be reliant on the detainee voluntary work parties. A decline in detainee voluntary work, however, in the latter part of 2011 is causing some concern. There should be a work party of 30 detainees, 15 for the kitchen and 15 for the dining room, a number that allows cover for visits, healthcare appointments and rest days. At the end of the year there were only 17. 117 voluntary detainees have

been inducted for work and 95 have left. For a variety of reasons, it was necessary to dispense with the services of 18 detainees in 2011.

This year saw the first four detainees gain their basic food hygiene certificate based on training delivered by the catering department. The IMB congratulates all concerned on this achievement, a positive step in being able to offer the more dependable workers an opportunity to take something tangible away with them. It also shows that food hygiene training is being completed and that food safety is not compromised despite language barriers.

The catering manager had concerns regarding the refrigeration contract in 2011. As a result of the current contract not being fully met there have been long periods when the department has had to manage with limited freezer capacity. The Board considers this position to be unacceptable and urges that action to resolve the problem should be a priority for 2012.

The kitchen and dining room require vital works to be carried out to ensure compliance with food safety regulations. This work, due to start in January 2012, will not resolve all issues but will be a positive step forward in compliance, after which further improvements will be sought.

The kitchen continues to offer a good service to detainees and quality of food continues to improve. A stronger and more productive detainee workforce is essential if this is to be sustained.

8. HYTHE – SEPARATION UNIT

For the third consecutive year there was a significant drop in the number of detainees committed to the Separation Unit. The total fell in 2011 to 185 (280) – even less when other factors are taken into consideration – in marked contrast to the high number of 419 recorded in 2008. During the last quarter of the year only 36 detainees were taken to the unit. Early indications confirm that the downward trend has continued into 2012 with an all time low of only ten detainees committed to the unit in January. Several reasons have been put forward for this welcome reduction. The nationality mix within the Centre has changed in recent months and the detainee population has been lower, especially during December. Perhaps the overriding factors, however, are the sympathetic and efficient manner in which the staff respond to detainee applications and not least the patience, tolerance and understanding shown by staff on the accommodation units when daily confronted by a barrage of questions, demands and requests from detainees.

In 2011 13 detainees claimed to be under 18 of whom four, having been assessed as being children, were removed from the Centre by Kent Social Services who on every occasion responded promptly to management assessment requests. During their short stays on the unit, usually little more than 48 hours, these detainees were given access to a comfortable recreation room and generally occupied themselves watching television. Following a recent change of practice, detainees have their age assessed immediately they come under UKBA's control, thus avoiding the necessity for both Kent Social Services to visit the Centre except on rare occasions, and suspected underage detainees to be confined to the unit.

REASONS FOR SEPARATION 2011

Reasons for Separation			
		2010	2011
Age dispute		3 (0)	13 (4 under the age of 18)
Arson		0	0
Assault on detainee		6	3
Assault on staff		6	7
Att. abscond/escape		8	1
Bullying		5	0
Dirty protest		0	0
Disruptive		13	4
Drugs*		17	13
Fights		53	34
Good order or discipline		22	27
Incitement		7	1
Investigation		27	3
Lodged/medical		11	6
Non-compliant		8	10
Not suitable for DIRC		1	0
Own protection		5	4
Refused to locate		34	15
Refused transfer/deportation**		11	20
Serving prisoner		0	2
Theft		2	0
Threat to others		7	2
Threats to staff & inappropriate behaviour		26	3
Unauthorised article/weapon		8	4
Self harm/constant supervision***		N/K	13
Total	Admissions	280	185
	Special Accommodation	10	8
	Use of Force	37	36
	Constant Supervision	0	13

Notes:

* Drugs - 13

It is pleasing to record that in two years the number of drug offences has more than halved (2009 – 28).

** Refused transfer/deportation - 20

Included in this figure are detainees who are moved to the unit as a precautionary measure prior to deportation at the request of the Centre's UKBA manager.

*** Self harm/constant supervision – 13

The figure of 13 refers to the number of detainees who were housed in the Separation Unit because the Safer Detention suite situated in the medical centre was closed for most of the year due to the refurbishment of the entire building. As most of these detainees would not have been admitted to the Separation Unit it can safely be assumed that the actual number committed to separation would have fallen below 180 rather than 185 as stated.

Every effort is made by Centre Management to restrict the length of time detainees remain separated and during the year there were many occasions when it was less

Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody

than 24 hours. 2011 saw the average time come down to 41.9 hours, a considerable improvement from the 53 hours average of 2010.

The IMB was informed on every occasion of separation, together with the reason, and the unit was visited by a Board member on at least three days a week during the year. The Board gives equal priority to monitoring the Separation Unit to that which it gives to the manner and speed in which members respond to ACDTs and detainee applications. During the year Board members regularly witnessed the experienced unit staff treating detainees under their care with respect, helpful friendly understanding, and considerable patience.

9. UK BORDER AGENCY (UKBA)

On average during 2011, 45% of detainees were ex-foreign national offenders (ex-FNOs), a considerable reduction from the 2010 average of 71%, continuing the welcome downward trend in recent years, from 82% in 2008 and 75% in 2009.

There was a general increase in the length of stay of detainees within the Centre in 2011. The average length of stay for non-CCD cases (detainees other than ex-FNOs) increased from 32 days in 2010 to 38 days in 2011. The average length of stay for ex-FNOs increased for the third successive year to an average of 177 days, having stood at 152 days in 2010, 119 days in 2009 and 99 days in 2008. In December 2011 the average length of stay for ex FNOs fell to 149 days, but this was due mainly to the transfer of some of the longest-stayers to other centres (see below).

The delays that can be experienced in the process of deporting ex-FNOs continue to be a matter of deep concern to the IMB. As in 2010, a number of complex cases have proved difficult to resolve, with the main reasons provided for delays once again identified as:

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

At the end of December 2011, 13 detainees had been held in the Centre for more than 12 months. This represents a significant reduction on the December 2010 figure of 24 and was partly achieved by some of the longest-staying detainees being transferred to other Centres. This should not be taken as an indication, however, that time spent in detention overall is decreasing. Whilst the IMB welcomes the reduction in the length of time spent by detainees in a single Centre, it is keen not to lose sight of the fact that it is a detainee's overall length of time spent in detention that is pertinent. The longest-staying detainees in Dover in December 2011, detained here for 524, 496 and 443 days, had been in detention in one Centre or another for 1317, 1167 and 1049 days respectively.

During 2011 an average of 52 different nationalities were held in the Centre each month. The average monthly totals for the top three nationalities were Indian (11%), Pakistani (9.5%) and Chinese (8%), with other significant nationalities being Bangladeshi, Algerian and Nigerian.

The UKBA office in Dover dealt with an average of 13 applications per day from detainees, all of which were responded to, approximately three quarters in person. The main reasons for applications were to request updates on cases. Of those leaving the Centre in 2011, an average of 36% were removed from the UK, 32% were transferred to other Centres, and 24% were granted temporary admission. Most of the remainder were granted bail. There were approximately three deportation charter flights per month.

The IMB has continued to work closely with the UKBA staff in dealing with detainee queries and welcomes the efforts of the UKBA Manager to supply the Board with greater details of the reasons for the continued detention of the longest-staying detainees and their overall length of time in detention.

10. LEGAL ADVICE FOR DETAINEES

New arrivals at Dover have the opportunity for an interview with one of the three legal firms contracted by the Legal Services Commission to provide a limited range of legal services under the Detention Duty Advice Scheme (DDA). Recent research by the DDVG has shown that the current arrangements do not provide anything like an adequate service to meet detainees' needs. A survey of detainees by the DDVG in 2011 found they gave the following reasons for dissatisfaction:

- not knowing if the solicitor was representing them for immigration matters or just bail;
- being kept in the dark about what the solicitor plans to do;
- legal firms not discussing and/or not applying for bail;
- not being given contact details of the firm meeting them during the DDA surgeries;
- solicitors being slow to transfer former clients' files to the detainee's new legal representatives;
- meeting a caseworker/solicitor at a DDA surgery and no further contact after that;
- not being told that the firm is not representing them any more;
- not issuing the form stating why a bail application is not being supported;
- being turned down purely for capacity issues, irrespective of the merits of the case;
- solicitors telling detainees that they were in touch with the Home Office when that was not the case;
- closing a client's files a few days before an important court hearing, even though there were no changes in the detainee's circumstances.

The Board is concerned that the experience of attending these interviews often does nothing to help detainees and only serves to increase anxiety at what is a very stressful time.

Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody

11. DIVERSITY

In a month there could be a maximum of 60 different nationalities in the Centre with many different cultural and social backgrounds. While a small Diversity and Equality Team (DET) coordinates and promotes action to ensure all detainees are treated fairly and with respect, the IMB is pleased to report that all departments of the IRC have consistently displayed commitment to these principles.

The Equality Act of 2010 brought new requirements which the DET has integrated into existing Dover IRC practices. Detainees aged over 55 years and those declaring a disability or sexual orientation other than heterosexual are now individually interviewed by a member of the Team as soon as possible after arrival at Dover. This enables any necessary support to be offered and action to be taken to avoid discrimination. All 'Protected Characteristics' of detainees (as detailed in the Act) are monitored to promote and ensure understanding and tolerance.

The 'Challenge it Change it' training course, designed to help staff recognise, challenge and change inappropriate behaviour amongst staff and detainees has been attended by 86% of staff. Several IMB members also attended, reporting back positively on the quality of the training. Board members have on occasions witnessed staff making special arrangements to help and protect detainees who might be vulnerable to bullying or discrimination.

The Helping Hands/Peer Support Group has supplied a valuable service. They frequently help as informal interpreters and assist staff at inductions of new detainees. They attend monthly meetings as a group with the Team, and also the Centre's Consultative meetings, as well as directly helping individual detainees. The Head of Education is preparing a certificate which may be awarded to members of the group when they leave Dover, acknowledging their contribution.

Other actions to promote tolerance and respect, and recognise cultural diversity include:

- Special events to celebrate religious and cultural festivals such as the Chinese New Year, Christmas, Diwali and Eid;
- Special meals for such festivals, often prepared with the help of detainees;
- Music and dance workshops (although somewhat reduced in the past year due to funding reductions);
- A drop-in centre open in the dining hall some lunch times (soon to be moved to make it more accessible), staffed by various departments including the DET; and
- A 'Cultural Day' in August with a wide range of activities supported by several community contact groups.

The Racist Incident and Report Form has been replaced by the Discrimination Incident Report Form. Although its scope is much wider, only three complaints have been received this year. The Board considers this to be a very small number, given the size and composition of the detainee population. Very few applications involving allegations of discrimination or other diversity related matters have been made to the Board.

Following some staffing changes to the DET, slightly fewer specialist staff hours are dedicated to this function. The Board stresses the importance of maintaining the high profile of the team so that the commitment to diversity throughout the Centre is sustained.

12. SAFER DETENTION

A total of 62 detainee ACDT (Assessment Care in Detention and Teamwork) files were opened in 2011, a continuation of a downward trend dating from 2008 (130), 2009 (98) and 2010 (64). Included in this year's total were 12 detainees received at Dover from other centres on open ACDT files. There was a slight increase in the number of self harm incidents, 47 compared with 38 recorded in 2010, and the number of detainees involved in those incidents rose slightly from 21 to 24. Both these figures were, however, well below those in 2009, 70 and 33 respectively. On 12 occasions emergency hospital treatment was needed, compared with five in 2010 and seven in 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 some case reviews. A designated member attended the Centre's monthly meetings, reporting to the Board any important issues raised.

The Centre has been 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. He has recently moved to other work and it is important that he should be replaced as a licensed Safer Custody trainer and that additional ACDT assessors are trained. 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.

13. SECURITY

The Dover IRC has strong physical security, occupying the site of former early 19th century fortifications and being surrounded by a deep dry moat on the inside of which is high fencing. Following an escape in November, a thorough independent review made a series of recommendations which have been implemented.

Within the confines of the Centre, detainees have enjoyed nearly 11 hours freedom of movement each day and during the summer evenings, allowing good 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 with respect. 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 2011), management and staff recognise that drugs can still present a problem within the Centre.

14. RECEPTION - ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE OF DETAINEES

Detainees arriving and departing from the Centre continued to be treated efficiently and respectfully by the IRC reception staff, creating what is generally a good atmosphere for what is one of the most stressful parts of the detention process. They achieve this in spite of having to work in a reception area that is dingy and old fashioned – not at all welcoming for new arrivals.

Following many years of adverse comment by this and other Boards, the way detainees are moved around the national detention estate has become even more stressful for many of those arriving at Dover in the past year, with no improvement following the start of a contract with a new transport company in May.

Those organising the movement of detainees around the country, the Border Agency's DEPMU and the transporting company Reliance, appear to take advantage of the fact that the reception unit at Dover operates 24 hours a day, and to have little regard to the humane treatment of detainees, the time needed to process each new arrival, and security issues when large numbers arrive at night when fewer officers are on duty. On one recent occasion there were 42 arrivals in one 24 hour period. Each arrival takes 15-20 minutes to process, not including a medical assessment (only one nurse can be employed on night duty). It is impossible to plan precisely to cope with arrivals because reception staff are only notified of the date of travel; exact arrival time relies on van crews phoning ahead, which they sometimes fail to do. For security reasons, on occasions detainees have to wait in vans, often outside the IRC, sometimes for several hours. Detention Centre rules prevent more than eight detainees being in reception at any one time at night, because of the small number of staff. This delay is often after long journeys with multiple stops. Frequently, new arrivals are moved on to another IRC within one or two days.

In the month of September 2011, there were 257 arrivals. In spite of the commitment to avoid night moves if at all possible, 164 of these arrivals were between 21.00 and 07.30. Furthermore, of the 86 routine transfers from other centres, 47 arrived during the night.

The Board and Centre Management have repeatedly been told by UKBA that they recognise this practice is unacceptable; but nothing changes and it remains a major concern of the IMB.

Arrangements for meeting the welfare needs of those being released, transferred or removed can still be 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 been made to the arrangements for a health check on impending departures to ensure necessary provision of medication, etc. Staff do their best to help, with rail warrants and food packs for the journey; but detainees, sometimes with little grasp of English, often leave with little money and little idea of where they are going.

Following the closure in August 2010 of the short term holding facility at the Port of Dover, many detainees were conveyed to and from the Port for interview and other reasons, a

process that was inefficient and disruptive. This problem took an unacceptably long time to resolve, continuing until May 2011 when arrangements for interviews to take place in the IRC were finally implemented.

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.

15. WORKS DEPARTMENT

2011 was a year of restructuring within the Works Department; there were two separate Site Managers, along with a new post of Contract/Project Manager. The department lost two Industrial Grade 1 Managers, one of them also being a plumber. It managed to gain an electrician, however, and at the year-end took on an agency plumber to cover for the shortfall within that section.

Several projects were started last year, including the Healthcare upgrade, commencement of the Catering Department refurbishment, and the deforestation of the Moat area. Unfortunately, a NOMS-led project for the total upgrade of the Cell Call System was withdrawn at the business case stage but it will be resubmitted in the next financial year. The department is also awaiting new closed visits booths made by Prison Industries to replace the existing booths.

Refurbishment of the showers on Deal House commenced in the latter part of the year with new partitions erected to enable privacy, and an overhaul of some of the windows in the Education building was completed before winter to prevent any further water ingress. A new catering storeroom is being installed and in the near future there will be power and water fed to the kennels at the rear of administration building.

At the time of writing, small repairs around the Establishment are running at 99% completed for the last year to date (86% completion on time) with approximately 2600 tasks issued. Planned maintenance is running at 98% completed (92% on time) with around 4300 tasks issued. A drop of a little over 10% in issued planned maintenance was due to several factors, including manpower, tasks that had been continually issued for equipment that was no longer on site, and an Estates agreement to forgo some of the less important tasks such as checking toilets. Any faults found are now reported directly to the Works Department by members of staff.

In spite of the apparently impressive statistics quoted above, the Board has often heard from staff that projects have been poorly managed and that routine requests for repairs and maintenance have not been responded to promptly or effectively. This has no doubt in part been due to changes in management and staff shortages. The Board urges Centre Management to give priority to ensuring that better service is provided to staff and detainees in the difficult task of maintaining the fabric of the aging IRC estate.

16. VISITS

Social visits by friends and families took place for sessions of over two hours every afternoon and additional two hour 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 notes that, on occasions, special steps have been taken to cater for visitors whose long journeys have been delayed through no fault of their own.

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 (DDVG) continued throughout the year. The Board welcomes the facilities given by Centre Management to the DDVG whose volunteers provide valuable support to detainees. Following the abscond in November, security provisions relating to visiting have been strengthened and it is planned to select a group of officers to specialise in this area of work. In spite of this tightening of security around visiting, visitors continue to be treated with respect and understanding, searches before and after visits being executed politely.

17. SHOP

The shop, open every day, stocks 250-275 items, ranging from biscuits and cereals to tins of fish and toiletries. Most of the items offer a brand name which is more expensive and an economy alternative; prices and range of goods are reviewed quarterly. The National Product List is sent to residential units and detainees are invited to suggest other items. The prices are set centrally for every Prison and Removal Centre in the country; goods cannot be purchased other than through central contracts.

Average takings in the shop vary from £250.00 to £480.00 per day, not including mobile phone top-ups which detainees can purchase at the shop for phone credit on any network they require. 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.

The shop staff usually have a good rapport with their customers, although some detainees do not like queuing in the open air and this can cause problems once they reach the counter.

A new system is being introduced which should identify detainees more correctly by their fingerprints and avoid any fraudulent spends. The system will also give detainees an official receipt and provide a more detailed stock record, thereby reducing losses and waste.

18. EDUCATION

Currently the Education Department delivers an average of 149 hours of classes to detainees per week across five days, including evenings. It offers a strong, broad curriculum which includes ESOL, IT, Art and Music, Study Skills and Carpentry, a curriculum strengthened by DIRC's integration with its OLASS partners in the South East region. This has provided a sense of continuity of learning while ensuring the maintenance of high standards. The Student Support worker delivers an 'Introduction to Education' to all new detainees. The Department is fortunate to be given strong support from the staff on the residential units.

2011 was a year of change for the Education Department. Early in the year the IMB wrote to Manchester College, the service provider, about a number of serious concerns with regard to the College's relationship with the Department, in particular the lack of communication and problems with staff contracts which it was felt would have a detrimental effect on the standard of service provided for detainees. As a consequence, the Vice Principal of Manchester College and the Area Manager for the South East met the DIRC Education Manager and an IMB member in May 2011.

After wide-ranging discussions covering all the major issues and a face to face meeting with Education staff, the College committed itself to better and less complex communications pathways and a review of contracts and salaries. This positive step forward was followed by a review meeting in June with the Area Manager which confirmed that much, particularly with regard to communications, had been put in place. The issue of contracts and salaries proved to be more problematic and has not been fully resolved but at least the process could be seen to be ongoing.

In the Autumn a new Education Manager took over at Dover who has impressed every member of the IMB at Dover who has met her. She has drive and a committed vision for the future. This includes the Education Department working towards recognised UKBA expectations and undertaking an educational needs analysis over the next six months so that what it offers will meet the needs of detainees. The Department will hold a 'Development Day' with Centre Management in the new year to develop a strategic plan. Furthermore, internal accredited courses with an international feel are to be developed.

The outward signs of the new approach are evident throughout the Centre with bright, up to date notice boards to be seen in the residential units. The commitment of the

Education Department under its new manager remains undiminished in its desire to provide a high quality service for DIRC detainees.

19. LIBRARY

The library is staffed by two part-time library assistants employed by Kent County Council who provide morning and afternoon sessions five days a week. A good variety of books, periodicals and newspapers is available in many languages. A wide range of CDs, DVDs and the BBC audio series can also be borrowed. Detainees have access to any publicly available items held on the KCC Libraries and Archive system. Good use is made of legal reference books and relevant legal forms are also stocked.

The number of detainees visiting the library averaged around 60 a day, a small reduction from the previous year, probably due mainly to internet access now being available (see below). Closures have been kept to a minimum although some have been inevitable due to sickness and annual leave. There are no arrangements for replacement staff and keeping the Library open depends a great deal on the commitment and dedication of the two library assistants; there is no evening opening.

20. INTERNET SUITE

July 2011 saw a major improvement to the range of activities for detainees with the opening of an internet suite with 14 terminals. This was a long-awaited development as similar facilities have been available in most IRCs for some time. Access to websites and use of email is strictly controlled by specially trained staff. Early teething problems have been resolved and by the end of the year the suite was one of the most popular facilities in the Centre, open for three sessions daily with very few closures (necessary for operational reasons or staff shortages).

21. RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS

Dover IRC chaplaincy team contains employed, sessional, and voluntary chaplains, reflecting the faith/denominational make up of the Centre. Each day one of the team is assigned as duty chaplain, responsible for carrying out key duties, including:

- Visiting all new arrivals to explain the religious facilities available;
- Visiting daily all detainees who are the subject of ACDT files;
- Daily visits to all those in the separation unit;
- Visits within 24 hours to any detainee requesting to see his minister of religion.

One of the most difficult but important duties is passing on to detainees sad news such as the death of a relative. Chaplains liaise with unit staff and the detainee concerned to find out what support and practical help is needed. They then arrange for the appropriate faith chaplain to visit later in the day.

There is a good access to faith provision and the Religious Affairs Team. Facilities include a Chapel, a Mosque, a Multi-faith room and small prayer rooms set aside on

residential units for prayers and contemplation. Various services, classes and prayer sessions take place mornings, afternoons and evenings. A calendar of religious festivals/observances is published so that such events can be celebrated appropriately.

The Board recognises the contribution made by the faith team to life within the Centre, not only in the provision of facilities and resources to allow all detainees to practice their faiths, but also in providing pastoral care and welfare. With the recent departure of the Head of Religious Affairs, whose post is not being filled, and two part-time chaplaincy vacancies, the remaining members of the team are working even harder to maintain the full range of services.

22. SPORTING FACILITIES – GYM

The year has been a busy one for the PE department, the weights room being the most used activity for detainees, open seven days and seven evenings a week throughout the year with very few exceptions. The Board welcomes the commitment to the provision of this important facility for detainees.

On many occasions over 40 detainees were using the weights room during a session and other activities including football, basketball, badminton, table tennis, and volleyball were well supported. Cricket on the Astroturf also became particularly popular in 2011. The willingness of the gym staff to make special efforts for the detainees was demonstrated at Christmas when a wide range of games and competitions were organised.

Numbers attending gym induction reached an all time high of 123 for the month of March with the total number completing induction for the year reaching 1198 (982), a significant increase on 2010 bearing in mind the lower total population towards the end of the year.

The gym currently employs six detainees to assist with organising equipment for activity, cleaning and peer tutoring during induction. This has been a great success, with those employed gaining confidence and developing new skills.

23. DETAINEE EMPLOYMENT/WORKSHOPS

Compared with other IRCs, there is a good range of paid work. At the end of 2011 there were 160 workplaces available for detainees, although a recent review will result in six fewer cleaning jobs. A weekly workforce report indicates the number of vacancies available, and the percentage of applications approved. 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. In the last two months of the year 161 out of 219 (73%) applications were approved. Some of the refusals were for perfectly sound reasons such as security or health risks. The Board is concerned, however, that UKBA vetoes an average of three to four applications each week from detainees considered not to be cooperating with the removal process. Most members of the Board consider that 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
Internet suite	2		

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 are used to attract interest. Up to £74.28 per week can be earned in the kitchen at £1.25 per hour, while most cleaning jobs pay £1.00 per hour.

Some 90% 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

Up to 12 detainees attended morning and afternoon bicycle workshop sessions in 2011, each being paid £6 per day. By cannibalising abandoned or badly damaged cycles received from bodies including the County Council, the Police and the Canterbury Rotary Club, reconditioned machines are produced and shipped to Gambia. In February 2012 a shipment is planned which will include the 3000th cycle from Dover IRC.

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, although they put their skills into practice by going out as a party to clean areas across the establishment. 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 less than those who work in facilities such as the kitchen or the dining hall. The building housing the workshop, completely refurbished in 2009, has not been fully utilised.

24. WORK OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

A record number of visits 174 (171) were made to the Centre by one or more members during the year, serving to confirm that the Board's keen monitoring, firmly established in 2010, continued throughout 2011.

Detainee accommodation, the provision of healthcare, the standard of food, promptly responding to applications, constant checking of detainees on open ACDTs as well as those admitted to the Separation Unit remained the top monitoring priorities. Assigned members continued to attend the Centre's regular committee meetings, reporting back at

Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody

the monthly Board meetings. A good attendance at Board meetings was maintained during the year with, as usual, the Centre and UKBA managers attending the first part during which they presented their reports and answered questions and dealt with concerns raised by members. Out of the 106 applications, the subject raised most often by detainees was the progress of their cases (32). The next two most frequent issues were healthcare (11) and detainee employment (11).

Board Statistics (2010 figures in brackets)

Recommended complement of Board members	12	(12)
Number of Board members as at January 2011	14	(10)
Number of Board members as at December 2011	11	(14)
New members joining in 2011	0	(4)
Members leaving during 2011	3	(0)
Average number of attendees at Board meetings	10	(10)
Visits to IRC by one or more members (incl. meetings)	174	(171)
Numbers of written applications received	106	(131)*

* This figure included 28 applications by one detainee

In February the Board hosted a fact-finding visit by IMB members from the women's prison at Morton Hall which was shortly to be re-designated to serve as an IRC. In August the IMB representative on the National Council visited the Centre and attended the monthly Board meeting followed in October by a similar visit by the Head of the IMB Secretariat accompanied by the Head of Communications. In June the Board hosted a visit by some members of the IMB at Canterbury Prison and in September a small group of members visited Canterbury Prison.

For valid reasons three resignations took place during the year leaving the Board with eleven members. In anticipation of further possible resignations due mainly to retirements, a recruitment campaign was launched in October with advertisements in two local newspapers. The Secretariat now employs consultants to place advertisements and, although the outcome can be regarded as a success, the Board recommends that in future it should select the local newspapers and that advertisements should not be placed on the 'employment opportunities' page. A closing date would also be beneficial thus avoiding applications being received long after interviews have been completed.

Statistics of Recruitment Campaign

Initial declarations of interest	27
Written applications received	11
Applicants given tour of Centre	11
Applicants agreeing to interview	11
Applicants attending interview	9
Applicants recommended by panel	6

Another important contribution to the national scene was made by the Vice Chair who took part in trial monitoring of a charter flight returning detainees to Pakistan.

The Independent Monitoring Board experienced another successful year at Dover with its endeavours aided by the helpful cooperation of the Centre's management and staff.

The Chair stands down after six years in office during which time he has had the constant support of both the Board and a thoroughly efficient and helpful clerk. He is comforted by the knowledge that his successor will inherit a strong and united Board.

25. MATTERS OF CONCERN (In order of priority)

For the attention of UKBA

1. TRANSPORTATION OF DETAINEES (repeat):

The apparently unnecessary transfer of detainees continued, often at short notice, during the night, without adequate refreshment and too often followed by transfer to another IRC within one or two days (see Section 14).

2. REMOVAL DELAYS (repeat):

The length of time taken to arrange the deportation of ex-FN offenders. The average length of stay during the year rose from 152 to 177 days (see Section 9).

3. LEGAL ADVICE

The twice weekly surgeries held by firms with exclusive contracts under the Legal Services Commission's Detention Duty Advice Scheme do not meet the needs of most detainees (see Section 10).

For the attention of Centre Management

4. CONDITION OF ESTATE

The Board considers that many projects have been poorly managed and routine requests for repairs and maintenance have often not been responded to promptly or effectively. This has no doubt in part been due to changes in management and staff shortages (see Section 15).

26. CONCLUSION

Since Dover was re-designated to serve as an Immigration Removal Centre in April 2002, up until the end of 2011 over 26,000 detainees have been housed at the Centre. At one time 88% of the population were ex-foreign national offenders and their average length of stay rose to 190 days. On occasions during 2011 the former was down to 36% and the latter to 149 days, both representing improvements, although the IMB considers the length of stay average figure (177 days) is still unacceptable. The Board also continues to have concern, highlighted in this report, regarding the unnecessary movement of detainees during the night especially between Centres.

During the last nine years only one incident has required outside assistance and that was efficiently and promptly resolved with no loss of life or injuries. No fatalities have occurred during this entire period. Although every effort will be made by management and staff to maintain this excellent record, regrettably it cannot be totally guaranteed.

The continuing decrease in the number of detainees being committed to the separation unit for various reasons, now for the third year in succession, again served to

demonstrate that in 2011 the general social climate within the establishment remained healthy. Supporting this view, visitors to the Centre frequently commented on the relaxed atmosphere that prevailed, the friendly rapport that existed between staff and detainees, and the variety of occupational facilities available.

The majority of detainees understandably harbour personal problems, not least the resentment of being placed in detention, in many instances for several months, a situation that may well foster extreme emotions such as anxiety, stress, volatility and thoughts of self-harm. Under these circumstances, the fact that virtually all forms of disruptive behaviour fell to their lowest annual totals in 2011 (see Section 8) surely reflects the sterling work performed by members of staff in creating, but more importantly, maintaining the safe and stable environment in which fellow human beings are being detained at Dover IRC.

The Independent Monitoring Board is confident that all personnel employed at the Centre will not rest on their laurels by becoming complacent, being fully aware that the slightest lowering of standards could so easily lead to a state of unrest.

Dover Immigration Removal Centre is fortunate in that it possesses a host of experienced staff and with a new Centre Manager in post working in conjunction with a capable UKBA Manager, and a new IMB Chairman, there is every reason to believe that the hitherto efficient managing and monitoring of the Centre will continue in 2012.

FOR AND ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD

John Roper
Chairman
Independent Monitoring Board

27. 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 (the UKBA directorate managing the cases of ex FNOs)
DDA	Detention Duty Advice Scheme
DDVG	Dover Detainee Visitors Group
DEPMU	Detainee Escorting and Population Management Unit
DET	Diversity and Equality Team

ESOL	English for speakers of other languages
Ex-FNO	Ex-Foreign National Offenders
HMCIP	Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons
IMB	Independent Monitoring Board
IRC	Immigration Removal Centre
KCC	Kent County Council
NOMS	National Offender Management Service
OLASS	Offenders Learning and Skills Service
PCT	Primary Care Trust
TX	Transfer
UKBA	United Kingdom Border Agency