



The Independent Monitoring Board
H. M. Prison & Remand Centre, Exeter

ANNUAL REPORT

2011

1st November 2010 – 31st December 2011

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SECTION 1: STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

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

Board is specifically charged to:

- satisfy itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in custody within its prison and the range and adequacy of the programmes preparing them for release;
- inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority as he judges appropriate, any concern it has;
- **report annually to the Secretary of State on how well the prison has met the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have on those in its custody.**

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

SECTION 2: DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON AND FACILITIES

HMP Exeter was built during the 1850s and dominates the northern sector of the city of Exeter. This busy, inner-city Establishment, constrained by its inability for expansion, receives young and adult male remand and sentenced prisoners from courts in Cornwall, Devon and West Somerset.

It has a traditional Victorian layout with three main wings (A, B & C) emanating from a central area. B wing has, during the early autumn of 2011, become the new home for all VPs (vulnerable prisoners) thus moving them away from the problems created by the lack of integral sanitation and the privacy locks introduced in 2008. The old D wing is now occupied by enhanced prisoners who, by the very fact that they are 'enhanced,' can be trusted to use the privacy locks with discretion. The lower ground floor of C wing (C1) is used as the First Night Centre. Healthcare is in the process of some considerable reorganisation following the recommendations from the latest NHS ideology. Pharmacy provision is covered by HMP Channings Wood.

HMP Exeter is one of 140 prisons in England and Wales. There is over-crowding and a concomitant high amount of disruption as prisoners are frequently transferred in and out of the prison. The Prison Reform Trust estimated that, in October 2010, HMP Exeter was the 5th most over-crowded prison in England and Wales (162%).

The Certified Normal Accommodation is 316; the Operational Capacity is 545.

Exeter has a new Governor appointed in April 2011, and together with a mostly new senior management team, has made a significant improvement in the overall performance of the Prison both in terms of staff motivation and prisoner care.

During the period of this report, the Governor had a budget of £12.7m. Due to the age of the building and the wide array of tasks undertaken to deal with the risks and needs of the population, some innovative and major works have been carried out this year. However, the Governor has to face a further 3% cut to the budget in the next Financial Year.

The Ministry of Justice provides performance ratings for all prisons, both private and public. The ratings are: 4 – exceptional performance; 3 – good performance; 2 – requires development; 1 – serious concerns. HMP Exeter has improved from Level 2 to Level 3 status.

SECTION 3: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3.1

The Board is of the opinion that, in the main, prisoners are provided with a safe, just and respectful environment whilst being treated equally and with dignity. Most prisoners say that they feel safe and the IMB believes that this reflects the generally good relationships between prisoners and staff. We mention the work undertaken in the Segregation Unit in general and, in particular, the Mental Health Team in looking after, and showing patience to one prisoner especially, where Christine Brown, the Area Consultant Psychiatrist, said how well the prisoner (with extreme mental health problems) was cared for.

3.2

As a Category B local prison, Exeter also has to cope with system demands to deal with general over-crowding, Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) prisoners who should only be at Exeter for a limited

period, Foreign Nationals who have served their sentences and other prisoners who might benefit from an external, specialist psychiatric service. It would clearly assist the prison to meet its stated purpose if these factors were not added to the mix.

3.3

We are concerned that a further 3% cut in the budget will make a sharp and significant reduction in funding and could well have a detrimental effect on the prison, particularly with regard to over-crowding, the availability of educational and other remedial activities and the staffing needed to maintain these and other interventions designed to reduce re-offending.

SECTION 3.2: ISSUES FOR THE MINISTER

3.2.1

Does the Government recognise the link between the use of mobile 'phones, illegal drug use and violence in prisons? If so, why does the situation persist? Can the Minister give reassurance that resources, such as mobile 'phone blocking; will be available to demonstrate the Government's care of prisoners and staff?

3.2.2

What are the plans and what is the timetable for the removal of all ill-considered IPP sentences?

3.2.3

In response to Lord Bradley's Report in 2009 David Hanson, Minister of Justice at the time, said the Government supported the changes needed to divert prisoners from prison into appropriate psychiatric services. Does this remain Government policy and, if so, what progress is being made?

SECTION 3.3: ISSUES FOR THE NATIONAL OFFENDER MANAGEMENT SERVICES

3.3.1

What is the timescale for the creation and implementation of Policy Guidelines & Procedures for Prisoners who are over 55 years of age?

3.3.2

At a time when recruitment of front line staff has slowed down, would the Prison Service explain the justification for having experienced, qualified officers engaged in administrative/non-prisoner contact posts?

SECTION 3.4: ISSUES FOR THE GOVERNOR

The IMB and HMCIP note that there is insufficient purposeful activity and evening association. The library is frequently difficult for prisoners to access. What plans are there to remedy these deficiencies? What is the timescale for the plans?

SECTION 3.5: ISSUES CONCERNING THE BOARD IN CARRYING OUT ITS FUNCTION

With the sudden, and completely unexpected, departure of 3 senior members from the Board at the start of 2011 plus the lack of any information, from the Secretariat, concerning the 2011/12 Budget it was decided that the 7 remaining members would carry out only essential duties i.e. primary and secondary

duties, on a weekly basis, and hold monthly Board Meetings. Attendance at monthly or bi-monthly prison meetings was put on hold and those remaining members on the Board would just receive Committee reports. However, with NO member of the Board able to receive emails on a secure system even this was very difficult.

With all the problems regarding the Annual Report it will, therefore, be considerably shorter than usual with only token, but factual, reports from essential departments.

SECTION 4: AREAS WHERE REPORTS ARE REQUIRED

4.1 Healthcare

Great changes have been made in the delivery of Healthcare in the prison. Some of these are physical and some involving a whole new way of thinking.

Devon Partnership Trust tendered and won the contract to operate the medical facilities at Exeter Prison. A strategic decision was made by the Health Partnership board in consultation with the Devon Partnership Trust and the Exeter Senior Management Team to reduce capacity in the medical wing from 21 beds to 6. The space released will function as a Social Care Unit, which will widen the remit of the care provided. This is allied to NHS policy that sees patients released from intensive medical care in hospital but, after acute need, being treated in their home environment; in this case, on normal location, the idea that there should be an equivalence of care within and without the Prison. Prisoners needing emergency or serious medical care will be dealt with in the RD&E hospital, whilst general nursing care and medication will be given on normal location. A lot more Self Harm Management is being carried out on the landings with the aid of Prison Officers.

Mental Healthcare has been reformed from a narrow and somewhat restrictive idea about mental health, to a very inclusive one. Referrals can be made to the Mental Health Team by anyone who has concerns about the behaviour or attitude of a prisoner. They will then be seen, assessed and, if needed, be referred by the team within a week; a process which was lengthy and cumbersome has now been streamlined enormously. Similarly the Consultant Psychiatrist, Dr Christine Brown, has been successful in finding beds in Secure Units and the funding to facilitate the referral. Although Dr Brown is only contracted for 1 session per week, staff report that she makes time to come in whenever required. At present there is a shortage of nurses, however, recruitment is taking place.

Although management by the Devon Partnership Trust has seen an increase in the amount of regulation, things have been moving more quickly and smoothly. There is a different ethos in the department which has embraced resolution rather than obfuscation.

There is sometimes a failure by the DPT to recognise that a prison is not a hospital; the primary duty is one of security and it works under very different constraints to a hospital. The partnership between the DPT and HMP requires communication and engagement on all levels, which has perhaps been lacking under previous management regimes. With a new Senior Management Team in place we are confident that the improved working partnership of prison and hospital will benefit prisoners' long-term health.

The Kings Fund bid for assistance in funding the 'Enhancing the Healing Environment' project was successful and the new facilities were officially opened in October. The inside space comprises a dining room, social and training area; outside a new garden area (with assistance from The Eden Project) is bright, welcoming and already well used by the patients.

4.2 Equality

The move of all the VPs from D wing to B wing has been carried out, thus D wing is now the centre for all enhanced prisoners. This has eliminated the problem of D wing being unable to cope with the increase in VPs and the ongoing problems experienced in locating them. VPs continue to share the visits room and the Social Inclusion Officer has not received any complaints.

Young prisoners number 30 at Year End; they are not accommodated in specially designated areas but share landings, not cells, with adult prisoners. They also share the normal prison regime, although this is unfortunate it does not seem to have caused any problems (to date).

The ever increasing number of prisoners over the age of 55 is causing some considerable changes to the prison regime. These prisoners are treated with consideration and are usually placed in A2 or C2 wings to avoid the use of stairs.

The whole Establishment (full-time, part-time and visiting volunteers) have, over the past few months, attended the 'Challenge It Change It' course – this has been very successful and received positive feedback. The Training Department within the prison is well run, however, some courses are cancelled at the last moment due to staff shortages.

4.3 Learning and Skills

Again, as in last year's report, by its very nature Exeter has great difficulty in providing a comprehensive education system and, as such, a larger proportion of its prisoners are either on remand or serving short sentences of less than 4 months and it is difficult to meet the needs of the large proportion of short-term prisoners.

Tribal, Strode College and A4E continue to provide the onsite education at the time of this report. NVQs meet some difficulty in both Catering and Gym by the very nature of the short-term aspect of the prisoners i.e. quite often courses are started but the prisoner is then transferred before his course is completed.

Peer mentoring now features in education programmes. The Education Department has a capacity for 50 prisoners + 50 in 'The Learning Zone.' The courses on offer are the same as last year, however, 'Anger Awareness' has changed to 'Confidence and Anger.'

It is hoped that the movement of VPs to B from D wing will enable an expansion of the educational facilities for all prisoners contained within this wing. The main Workshop is also having extensive work carried out and is soon to be doubled in size and the Workshop Managers are also actively seeking additional contracts locally in order to offer the prisoners working in this unit 40 hours work per week.

Library facilities are being reorganised to provide the prisoners on B wing with their own self-contained facilities. To date the shelving has arrived, however, at present 'works' staff is fully occupied on other duties within the prison. The new B wing library will make this facility available to all prisoners within the unit.

Health & Safety Training is a cause of some concern with a limited capacity within the class and if the Instructor is absent training cannot take place. This, obviously, causes considerable delays to spiral down the system.

4.4 Safer Custody

The introduction of GEO-AMY as the new Prison Transfer Agency created some chaos at first; this has settled down (as with any changeover) but is still causing great concern. The vehicles are poorly designed with very limited excess carrying capacity for the prisoners' personal possessions - when they arrive at their new location often personal property has either been left behind, delivered to the wrong destination or is lost. This causes great distress to the prisoner and is often very difficult to locate.

In the past week GEO-AMY has notified Exeter that they will be unable to carry out their contractual contract with regard to singleton transfers as they find they are 'over committed.' Will this be yet another expense for Exeter's already shrinking budget?

4.4.1 Safer Custody Team

The Manager has been impressive in his ability to ensure that the vital and complex work of this area has been tackled well. Much of the work is carried out in an extremely efficient and enthusiastic manner.

4.4.2 Safer Custody Meetings

With the responsibility for this area given to another member of the Senior Management Team, the meetings are now well established and generally well attended. It should be noted that, in response to current financial constraints, the IMB has not been observing these meetings but will receive the Minutes and other information presented and will submit a Report as appropriate next year.

4.4.3 Violence Reduction

The incidence of illegal drug use, and attempts to import mobile 'phones into the prison, has continued with a consequential impact on the number of violent incidents brought to our attention. We believe that the Prison Service should consider investing in modern technology such as mobile signal blocking or X-ray body search equipment to help eradicate this behaviour and significantly increase the safety of the prison population.

4.4.4 Training

The Training Department has overall responsibility for delivering training to all staff members and recognises that it is a significant task to ensure staff receive initial/ongoing training and refresher courses. This includes a three yearly refresher for completing ACCT documents.

4.4.5 Listeners

The regular transfer of prisoners from Exeter results in frequent vacancies for Listeners and the subsequent need for regular training. The IMB has been impressed by the teamwork between the Safer Custody Team and the local Samaritans, the latter frequently giving up their time to support and train new Listeners.

4.5 Segregation Unit including Adjudications

The physical resources of the Unit remain the same as last year with 9 cells, 8 of which are single occupancy and designed similarly to a normal cell on a wing; of these, 2 are anti-ligature and 1 can accommodate a prisoner on 'dirty protest' because of its special wall paint/drainage. There is also provision for special accommodation which is designed to be used for violent or refractory prisoners to prevent them from injuring themselves, others, damaging property or creating a disturbance. The prison is required to inform the IMB when a prisoner is located to such accommodation. All cells have duvets, except for 'dirty protest' prisoners for whom duvets are seen as a 'reward' when they cease such behaviour.

All staff working in the Unit are fully trained to deal with the complex, often stressful, needs of the prisoners, maintain accurate and timely paper and computer records, ensure the adjudication process is correct and fulfil the requirements of the PSOs 1600 (Use of Force) & 1700 (Segregation). On our rota visits the paperwork for GOOD are seen, read and formally signed, or comments made as appropriate.

Due to budgetary constraints only 2 visits per week by Board members is the norm. In practice, it is difficult for members to synchronise visits with Good Order or Disciple (GOOD) reviews and Segregation & Monitoring Group (SMARG) meetings, as the timing and occurrence of these is often changed at short notice

We continue to be impressed by the professional, concerned yet firm approach by staff in this Unit. They work as a team in dealing with incidents, supporting their colleagues, maintaining legal documents and promoting fairness by quickly establishing a rapport with prisoners. We record our appreciation of these Officers as they demonstrate a courteous, helpful, good humoured and knowledgeable approach.

SECTION 5: REPORTS ON OTHER AREAS

5.1 Catering and Kitchen

The weekly menu choice ordering system has finally been introduced and is now running well. This system enables the kitchen staff to produce the exact number of specific meals per day and thus reduces waste to a minimum. It also enables prisoners to order the food they actually want from the comprehensive and imaginative weekly menus. Exeter Environmental Health Office has awarded the catering establishment within the prison a 5 star rating for food hygiene.

The floor repair work has finally been carried out, in both the prisoners' rest room and the washing-up area, along with the fitting of a new washing-up facility and the blast chill capacity has been increased with the provision of a 3 phase electricity supply.

Ramadan problems have been overcome with the purchase of 20 insulated food boxes and an additional boiling table for Halal food only. A Halal only preparation and cooking area needed to be created to enable the Establishment to adhere to instructions in PS1 44/20/10.

5.2 Chaplaincy

The Chaplaincy Team, led by Reverend Bill Birdwood, provide a full range of support and interesting activities for prisoners and, where appropriate, their families. Regular faith-based services are arranged and generally well attended. The Prison Officers support the events by ensuring that staff are scheduled to do escort and security duties.

The Team are encouraged by the continuing support of many church and charity groups from around Devon who arrange events such as drama, music and study for the prisoners. An Alpha course is used to encourage a Christian faith walk to be explored and this has been a great source of strength to many prisoners. Regular visits are now made by an Imam to support Muslim prisoners.

The Chaplain ensures that, when appropriate, contact with prisoners' families in times of bereavement or serious illness is maintained; this is valuable, often unseen activity, as is the daily contact and support to prison staff who have personal issues that are made known to the Chaplaincy Team.

Statutory duties of daily visits to wings, the Segregation Unit and Healthcare Unit are undertaken and follow-up of prisoners concerns and issues are faithfully carried out.

5.3 Reducing Re-offending

The Integrated Offender Management Team have recently introduced Restorative Justice and this is now beginning to work well as is the whole of this Department after some considerable staff changes.

The independent Exeter charity 'St Petros' continues to provide the highly regarded service of helping released prisoners to find accommodation. Reception assess prisoners' accommodation requirements and those in need are referred to the charity.

5.3.1 Visits

The visitors Centre is run by Choices, a Charity organisation, in conjunction with the senior management team. This must be considered under the sub-heading of 'Reducing Re-offending' and in Exeter this is working well. As compared to some prisons booking visits are operating very smoothly by 'phone application or email and the feedback from the All Day Family Visits is excellent. In particular the feedback from 18 families received by Choices, regarding the Christmas Family Day Visit organised on 21st December, ALL had star ratings and, more importantly, 21 were from children (life's biggest critics) ALL saying how much they had enjoyed the day (the Choices Consulting Team is run by the Visitors' Centre and continue to do an excellent job in welcoming visitors to the Establishment).

5.4 Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice and Throughcare Scheme (CARATS)

This Department is in the process of being relocated into the Education Block and will thus become much more accessible within the Exeter Establishment.

CARATS joined IDTS as a joint facility early last year, however, with both Departments being of equal importance within the prison system it has been decided that the joint system will be renamed Substance Misuse Support (SMS). The first Committee Meeting under the new 'label' will take place on 9th February 2012.

As a Board, we strongly support the work carried out by the SMS and will, in future, work closely with this Department.

SECTION 6: WORK OF THE BOARD

The full complement of members is 13, however, the Board has functioned with 7 members and 3 additions were appointed in October.

A full Board Meeting takes place monthly; the Governor or her Deputy has attended for part of every meeting. Additionally, there have been inputs from IMB members and prison staff.

A weekly rota, whereby at least 2 members visit the prison, allows each member to meet staff and prisoners, respond to applications from prisoners and carefully monitor most areas of the Establishment. Individual members have designated areas of the prison regime to which they give special attention. To make best use of the IMB budget we have recommended that members seek Minutes of meetings and discuss issues with appropriate personnel instead.

A member of the Board gave several talks to local organisations during the year.

For Exeter Board, this has been a year of difficulty with a background of uncertainty of budget restrictions for the Establishment and the IMB. The austerity measures will undoubtedly impact on what can be delivered. Well-resourced IMBs can perform an invaluable service as the eyes and ears of the wider community, maintaining an independent oversight of prisoners' welfare and the proper management of the Establishment. The effects of the budgetary constraints will arguably make the role even more important in future.

We observe staff who daily deal with difficult and challenging people whom society has excluded. We appreciate very much the help and support given by them to enable members of Exeter IMB to fulfil their statutory duties.

Mr D. Dawes
IMB Chairman
HMP Exeter

Annex A: IMB EXETER STATISTICS

Recommended complement of Board members	13
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	10
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	10
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	3
Number of members leaving within the reporting period	3
Total number of Board meetings during the reporting period	12
Average number of attendances at Board meetings during the reporting period	6
Number of attendances at meetings other than Board meetings	nil
Total number of visits to the prison (including all meetings)	182
Total number of applications received	67
Total number of segregation reviews held	n/a
Total number of segregation reviews attended	n/a

Annex B: ANALYSIS OF APPLICATIONS

		2008/2009 %	2009/2010 %	2010/2011 %
	Accommodation	2	7	6
B	Adjudications	8	0	2
C	Diversity related	2	7	1
D	Education / Employment / Training	2	0	3
E	Family / Visits	8	6	6
F	Food / Kitchen related	3	8	3
G	Health related	14	22	14
H	Property	20	8	7
I	Sentence related	2	16	4
J	Staff / Prisoner / Detainee related	6	4	5
K	Transfers	12	4	2
L	Miscellaneous: Licence recall, Confidential, Other	25	22	14
	Total number of applications	<u>104</u>	<u>98</u>	<u>67</u>

Annex C: HMP EXETER – PARTNER ORGANISATIONS 2010/2011

AA
ACCOOP
Alabare Christian Care Centre
A4E
Barnardos
CAB
Choices
Crossline, Plymouth
Devon HIV Team
Exeter Homeless Action Group
Exeter Prison Fellowship
Devon County Council Library Services
IAG
IMB
MIND
Inside Out Project
Job Centre Plus
N-Ergy Group
Next Step
Official Prison Visitors
PACT
Pathways
Prince's Trust
Royal British Legion
Samaritans
Sexual Abuse Line
Shaw Trust
Shelter
SSAFA
St Loyes Foundation
St Petros
Strode College
The Extra Mile
Toe by Toe
Tribal
Victim Support
Way4ward
Workways
YMCA