



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

ANNUAL REPORT

2012

1st December 2011 – 31st December 2012

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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 Home Secretary 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 is a traditional Victorian prison (built in the 1850s) inner-city Establishment, under constant strain due to its inability to expand, receives young and male remand and sentenced prisoners from courts within the South West of England.

The 3 main wings (A, B and C) have now settled down after the considerable change (swapping D and B wings) late last year. This year has brought about the closure of Healthcare - this area is now F wing and has become a Social Care Unit. After the change last year D wing is now occupied by 'enhanced' prisoners who are on trust to use the privacy locks correctly. The lower ground floor of A wing is the Segregation Unit and the same floor in C wing is used as the First Night Centre. There is no segregation provision for Young Offender though cells are not shared with adult prisoners. Pharmacy provision is still provided by HMP Channings Wood.

The Certified Normal Accommodation is 316; the Operational Capacity is 561, thus it can be seen that there is still considerable overcrowding and an inevitable high amount of disruption as prisoners are frequently transferred in and out of the prison.

SECTION 3: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Board is of the opinion that all prisoners are provided with a safe, just and respectful environment while being treated equally and with dignity. Prisoners say that they feel safe and the IMB believes that this reflects the generally good relationship between prisoners and staff.

As a category B local prison Exeter has to cope with system demands to deal with overcrowding, plus Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) prisoners who should only be at Exeter for a limited period and prisoners who may benefit from an external specialist Training or psychiatric service. It would certainly help the prison to meet its stated purpose if sentenced prisoners were more speedily moved to an appropriate Training establishment.

The prison's senior management is making great strides in trying to reduce re-offending and tries very hard with prisoner education (within Education). However, with the very nature of the prison, holding prisoners on an average of less than 4 months makes long-term education difficult.

SECTION 3.1: ISSUES FOR THE MINISTER

3.1.1

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?

3.1.2

Major organisational change (F and S) appears to be driven to obtain substantial annual budget reduction.

3.1.3

A more efficient canteen service, currently run by DHL, is needed to ensure published prices are actually charged at the time of delivery enabling prisoners to manage their spends account.

SECTION 3.2: ISSUES FOR THE NATIONAL OFFENDER MANAGEMENT SERVICES

3.2.1

What is the timescale for the creation and implementation of Policy Guidelines & Procedures for Prisoners who are over 55 years of age? This question was asked in our last report, locally our Governor has the matter in hand.

3.2.2

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

SECTION 3.3: ISSUES FOR THE GOVERNOR

3.3.1

Since the inaugural meeting of the newly formed S.M.S. Committee new (or modified) IDTS (Independent Drug Treatment Screening) doors were proposed for C wing level 4; these will be installed early in the New Year.

3.3.2

Concerns have been expressed, with regard to the new Education provider, and they are reviewed later in this report.

SECTION 3.4: ISSUES CONCERNING THE BOARD IN CARRYING OUT ITS FUNCTION

Issues from last year's report have been resolved; the Board is now functioning with a reduced complement of members. Committees have been attended and computer training carried out with the Board. The Chair is in regular contact with the Secretariat and fellow Chairs.

Prisoners' voting rights remain very much in the public's thoughts. We, as a Board, were concerned when we became aware that the IMB National Council had written to you supporting this change. The Board wishes to make it clear that we do not feel it is within our remit to make comments on this matter. It will, however, abide by whatever is decided by Parliament.

SECTION 4: AREAS WHERE REPORTS ARE REQUIRED

4.1 Equality & Inclusion

The move last year, to relocate all VP's to B wing and make D wing the Centre for Enhanced Prisoners, has continued to work well.

It is unfortunate that young prisoners still have to mix, on a daily basis, with adults within the normal prison regime; who can tell what influence the adults have on the younger, more susceptible, youngsters. The number of Young Offenders has increased slightly this year and is currently 46 in total (8.9% of the prison total).

As reported last year, 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. Senior management seem to be making allowances within the regime to cope with these increasing numbers.

Foreign Nationals total 22 (4.3% of the prison total).

The last Wednesday of each month has become part of Exeter's training pattern; this is the day that most compulsory training sessions take place and these are now well attended by IMB Members.

4.2 Education, Learning & 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; it is, therefore, difficult to meet the needs of the large proportion of short-term prisoners.

During the year Strode College, Tribal and A4E provided the on-site education under a contract, based on the provision of an agreed number of hours for the training courses. At the time of writing this report Weston college has taken over the sole responsibility for providing the education within the prison; there have been a few 'teething problems' and the Board is closely watching the situation to see how it develops.

The change of provider is significant for the staff involved as they not only face considerable uncertainty, due to this move, but also see a significant change with regard to their new contracts. The new terms state that Weston College is paid based on outcomes (i.e. successful completion) rather than the number of training hours provided. It is hoped that this will ultimately lead to improved results and better value, however, the transition will be a challenge for all concerned.

Library facilities have settled down after last year's wing changes with very few complaints being received from the occupants. Library facilities are well used and appreciated by prisoners.

4.3 Healthcare & Mental Health

Following on from the work commenced last year, the Healthcare Unit has been greatly reduced in size and is now designated as F wing within the prison; this now provides social care for two prisoners with healthcare and disability assess social care needs.

B wing level 2 has been refurbished at a cost of £75,000 to make the Primary Care Area and Infection Control complete, resulting in larger consultation rooms and high quality bespoke furniture.

In April 2013 a new 3-year Healthcare contract will be awarded and several groups Tendered for consideration. This was awarded to Dorset NHS University Foundation Trust who entered a strong bid and already have experience working within the prison system. This new contract will not affect the existing employees as this is controlled under existing employment law (TUPE).

The Mental Health team continue to improve care and wellbeing of prisoners with this illness and treatment has, over the past year, become much more rapid. This is reflected by much quicker diagnosis and treatment particularly in the Segregation Unit where mental health symptoms are often displayed.

Many targets are being met particularly with regard to the Hep. B. vaccination programme which is now running well.

HMP Exeter has, for the second time, been awarded a grant from The King's Fund. This time the prison will be using the award to provide an End of Life Palliative Care suite. As the inmates within the prison system become older and suffer from poorer health, at the end of their lives, it is appropriate and dignified to have a care suite within the prison that appears to be NOT part of the prison. It is hoped that the new team (under the direction of Head of Safeguarding and The Works Manager) will transform a cell into a contemporary, well-designed Palliative Care suite where a prisoner, near the end of life and in custody, can spend his last days with family members in relatively dignified comfort.

Alongside this new care suite, a cell is to be transformed into a Visitors' suite. Normal doors, plus a glass block wall and softer furnishings will be added at a cost of £25,000. These changes have been approved by Security and the wing has been awarded finance from the PCT (Primary Care Trust). Thus it can be seen that the 'End of Life ' suite will be complete and should the inevitable happen the family experience will be made as comfortable as possible. The aim is for the suite to be completed by the end of December with the official opening taking place in March 2013.

4.3.1 SMS

The Board has attended several bi-monthly department meetings and is impressed with the care and concern shown by the Staff, both medical and establishment. However, we would encourage more regular attendance at these meetings by the Healthcare Team.

Other than the concerns noted above the department functions well.

4.4 Purposeful Activity (includes work)

The Workshop departments have been functioning well this year and, other than the odd day here and there, both the departments (General for all prisoners and B wing) have their own separate workshop. There was a slight delay in prisoners obtaining their Health & Safety qualification (essential before access could be granted to these departments).

4.5 Resettlement & Reducing Reoffending

The 'Reducing Reoffending Road Show' held in the chapel was a great success. Its main purpose was to enable prisoners to obtain resettlement related advice and guidance, following release, to help them with reintegration into communities. The event was organised as a joint venture with Devon Reform, aimed to provide help and guidance across the following seven pathways:

- 1) Accommodation;
- 2) Employment, Training and Education;
- 3) Mental and Physical Health;
- 4) Drugs and Alcohol;
- 5) Finance, Benefits and Debt;
- 6) Children and Families;
- 7) Attitudes, Thinking and Behaviour.

There were 34 organisations in attendance, representing the seven pathways, and all Offender Supervisors were on hand to help with advice.

160 prisoners visited the event; each had less than 6 months left to serve or had less than 6 months prior to eligibility for HDC. Feedback sheets proved extremely positive and a few of the comments included phrases such as:

"I felt it was a great idea and very useful."

"Being able to talk to different organisations that can help was great."

"I found it very informative and was personally surprised about how much help is out there upon release."

The whole establishment felt the event was very successful and it has been suggested that an 'Employment Fair' and a second 'Road Show' be held in 2013. However, due to the new Fair & Sustainable implications the events may be difficult to organise due to other staff commitments.

4.5.1 Restorative Justice

Training has continued within the establishment and all staff have been encouraged to attend the introductory session. The training is ongoing and being delivered to landing staff, and non-uniformed grades, in the hope that it can be developed within the prison environment.

4.6 Safer Custody

The introduction of GEO-AMEY as the new Prison Transfer Agency created some chaos at first (as with any changeover); this has now settled down 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 lost. This causes great distress to the prisoner and is often very difficult to resolve.

The paragraph above is a direct copy from last year's report and we are still waiting for some improvements to be carried out.

4.6.1 Safer Custody Team

The Safer Custody team is a multi-agency exercise in ensuring that HMP Exeter fulfils its primary function in holding, in secure accommodation, all those sentenced by the courts.

An interesting initiative from the team was a questionnaire issued to prisoners being discharged from the prison in April, to assess the quality of their experience of custody. Out of the 72 questionnaires returned 85% reported that they had not been bullied, although 31% stated that they had witnessed anti-social and violent behaviour.

4.6.2 Safer Custody Meetings

Meetings are held once a month and are attended by the IMB. There is excellent administrative backup supplying monthly figures and tracking violence reduction in the prison. The ACCTs that have been opened are all recorded, as is the information on the IEP system, and its effectiveness or otherwise. The impact of drugs through drug testing is also illustrated.

There was a new ACCT document released in April which requires training for all sectors of the prison, including the IMB. These can be opened by any person who has concerns about the mental fragility of any prisoner. The only problem that has arisen, to date, is ensuring that the document follows the prisoner as he goes about his daily commitments, particularly regarding education. This situation is closely monitored by the Safer Custody team and any problems are brought to the attention of the relevant staff.

4.6.3 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.

4.6.4 Training

The Training department has overall responsibility for delivering training to all staff members and this regime, within the prison, is working extremely well. The monthly sessions take place on the last Wednesday of each month; they are advertised well in advance, giving staff the opportunity to check with Line Managers on their availability to attend the various courses.

4.6.5 Listeners

Listeners are regularly recruited despite the problems faced by Exeter, as a local prison, that regularly needs to transfer prisoners to more appropriate establishments. The frequent vacancies create additional training for the Samaritans who, fortunately, give willingly of their time to the task. The presence of a Samaritans' representative at Safer Custody meetings ensures a regular flow of communication and, in turn, vacancies are filled swiftly. The main difficulty, expressed by Listeners, is that there are often attempts by Prison staff to subvert their role and engage them in other tasks such as giving advice. Occasionally an issue of confidentiality is raised.

4.7 Segregation, Care & Separation, Close Supervision

The most noticeable and beneficial change, to the Segregation Unit, has been the improvement of the physical environment which has greatly enhanced the working conditions for the Officers, who are so often required to exercise considerable restraint, compassion and discipline in dealing with Exeter's most violent prisoners.

The office space has been enlarged giving a better and more efficient working environment.

There is now a designated team of six Officers which gives consistency, improved co-ordination and communication for the management of this facility. Respite from stressful working pressure is gained from regular updating through training courses.

The IMB feel it would be helpful for all Officers to gain experience in this area; this would also be of benefit to Segregation Unit Officers by giving them a contrasting work experience on normal location. In the Segregation Unit there is greater opportunity for staff to interact with an individual in a way that is not possible within normal prison wings due to population numbers.

IMB members feel that the Unit is now being appropriately used by the prison. Certain prisoners develop an affinity with life within it but there is now a clear goal that prisoners will be moved back to normal location, as quickly as possible. This has seen the population drop dramatically and is welcome progress.

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.

4.8 Residential Services (includes accommodation, food, catering and kitchens)

4.8.1 Catering & Kitchen

The Kitchen staff have, over the past few months, provided food for numerous celebrations, catering for all ethnic groups and have won competitions in the catering field. Next year, the Catering Manager has several ideas to assist an even better celebration next year.

Several new pieces of equipment have been installed and training has continued for 9 members of staff. This has been assisted with the help of a food safety DVD, purchased through the Education department, and financed by the Prison Service. Food hygiene for potential kitchen and servery workers has been added to prison induction training.

The menu is constantly under review with bi-annual food forums and food surveys being carried out; the results are then studied and the menu is altered accordingly.

4.8.2 Visits

The Visitors' Centre has new fabric & furnishings and the Choice's staff are now planning for play equipment to enhance the family days that take place during the school holidays.

A survey, taking place this year, is focussing on visitor experience; early results are indicating that procedural consistency, communication (between the estate and visitors) and lack of signage are expected to arise.

The booking process, via telephone, email and face to face mainly. This is, however, under constant review along with the Closed Visits Policy by the administration team.

Overall the visiting experience inside this establishment is not only well run but also well thought of by all levels of management and visitors.

SECTION 5: REPORTS ON OTHER AREAS

5.1 Chaplaincy

The team continue to be well supported with voluntary help and have a well-developed plan for providing worship and appropriate activities for Christian and other faith festivals. There is concern over the possibility that the chapel facility may be altered to provide space for other activities, such as relocation of the library and other prisoner facilities. The key purpose of the chapel, as a place for worship, should be maintained in any space development plans. The Chaplain has provided many instances of individual support to prisoners, and their families, in times of illness or urgent family situations and is respected as a member of the Prison management team.

SECTION 6: WORK OF THE BOARD

The full complement of Board members is 13 but has functioned with 9 members (+ 1 member on 12 months leave of absence). One of the newest members resigned in June, however, with a member returning soon after their sabbatical the Board can still function properly with 9 members. A full Board Meeting takes place monthly; the Governor or her Deputy attends for part of every meeting. Additionally, there have been inputs from prison staff to assist in additional Board training.

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 all 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.

A member of the Board gave several talks to local organisations during the year - Probus, Rotary and WI groups were among them.

On a daily basis we observe members of staff who deal with difficult and challenging people whom society has excluded. We very much appreciate 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	9
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	0
Number of members leaving within the reporting period	1
Total number of Board meetings during the reporting period	11
Average number of attendances at Board meetings during the reporting period	8
Number of attendances at meetings other than Board meetings	12
Total number of visits to the prison (including all meetings)	192
Total number of applications received	44
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 %	2011/2012 %
	Accommodation	2	7	6	3
B	Adjudications	8	0	2	0
C	Diversity related	2	7	1	0
D	Education / Employment / Training	2	0	3	3
E	Family / Visits	8	6	6	2
F	Food / Kitchen related	3	8	3	2
G	Health related	14	22	14	9
H	Property	20	8	7	8
I	Sentence related	2	16	4	1
J	Staff / Prisoner / Detainee related	6	4	5	7
K	Transfers	12	4	2	2
L	Miscellaneous	25	22	14	7
	Total number of applications	<u>104</u>	<u>98</u>	<u>67</u>	<u>44</u>

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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 Petrocs
The Extra Mile
Toe by Toe
Tribal
Victim Support
Way4ward
Weston College
Workways
YMCA