

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

ANNUAL REPORT

2013

1st January 2013 – 31st December 2013

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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.

The 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 inner-city prison/establishment (built in the 1850s) which is under constant strain due to its limited ability to expand. It receives both young male and older remand and sentenced prisoners from courts within the South West of England.

The 3 main wings A, B and C are supplemented with D wing that is used solely by ‘enhanced’ prisoners. Healthcare (closed last year) has now become a residential Unit for men with residential needs and is referred to as F wing. Funded by a 50% grant from the Kings Fund, a national charity, an ‘End of Life’ Suite has been built; this new unit has already been of benefit in prisoner end of life care. 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 separate provision for Young Offenders though cells are not shared with adult prisoners. Pharmacy provision is based at HMP Channings Wood.

The Certified Normal Accommodation is 326 and the Operational Capacity is 561. Overcrowding is, therefore, considerable which leads to inevitably high amounts 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.

The prison's senior management is making great strides in Education and we, as a Board, are pleased with the progress shown and co-operation experienced with Weston College. Over the past twelve months Ofsted have given a very good report. However, with an unannounced inspection by HM Inspectorate of Prisons from 29th July – 9th August a fairly favourable report was submitted but, unfortunately, although The Inspectorate commented about the age of the prison it was felt they failed to take this fact into account in their summarisation.

SECTION 3.1: ISSUES FOR THE MINISTER

3.1.1

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? This was a question raised in last year's report. To date we are pleased to see that Exeter now has 2 phone blocks.

3.1.2

GeoAmey are still causing concern with the use of smaller vehicles to carry prisoners. Their personal property was often left behind on their transfer and this problem has been resolved at the prison's initial OWN EXPENSE. A taxi is hired to take personal property to the prisoner's new accommodation, paid for by Exeter prison. This invoice is then passed on to GeoAmey for reimbursement. This concern was highlighted in the inspection carried out mid-summer by HM Inspectorate of Prisons. Alternatively the number of Prisoners scheduled for transfer could be reduced and a cellular compartment used to transport property.

SECTION 3.2: ISSUES FOR THE NATIONAL OFFENDER MANAGEMENT SERVICES

3.2.1

The Management Services of HM Prisons should work closer together with HM Prison Inspectorate, for after the inspection mid-summer numerous recommendations were received but, owing to the policy of staff reductions, a large proportion of some very worthwhile recommendations would be difficult to implement.

SECTION 3.3: ISSUES FOR THE GOVERNOR

3.3.1

Assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) documentation needs to be improved by closer management of the offender.

3.3.2

More contracts should be sought for the workshops which, in turn, will lead to a greater number of prisoners in employment.

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

With the loss of two Board members this year (and one last year) the Board is working hard to maintain the high standards expected of it and with the new 15 year rule we will lose three further members in December. To maintain our standards certain duties will have to be checked on a much less rigorous rota. However, areas such as Segregation, Healthcare, Education, Kitchens and Prisoners' Applications will still be rigorously maintained. We currently have just 4 Board members.

The smoking ban within the prison (due to be implemented in the spring of 2014) is causing us some concern, not so much from the health point of view but the lack of the present prison internal and unofficial currency i.e. tobacco.

The whole operation will need great care and strong supervision.

SECTION 4: AREAS WHERE REPORTS ARE REQUIRED

4.1 Equality & Inclusion

The team responsible for Equality issues aim to have the following regular monthly meetings/forums: BME (Black and Minority Ethnic), Over 50s, Disability and Prisoner Consultation. In practice, staff redeployment seems to have adversely affected the regularity of these meetings which sometimes have to be postponed and rescheduled at short notice. However, when this occurs the Safer Custody & Equalities Manager tries to ensure that prisoners who have issues are promptly dealt with on a personal basis, thus minimising any frustrations over postponed meetings. Of the groups that meet the Over 50s Forum is the best attended.

The system of Equality Prisoner Representatives supporting prisoners in the early days, after induction, is well established. A new initiative has resulted in the recruitment of BME, Over 50s and Disability Representatives from among the prisoners on each wing; this being an additional link between prisoners and the Equality staff. In addition, there is a Violence Reduction Representative on each wing to help fellow prisoners with applications and other administrative functions.

Some of the Recommendations/Housekeeping points raised in the inspection by HM Inspectorate in mid-summer will be considered by the Board during this year.

4.2 Education, Learning & Skills

Over the past 12 months Weston College have built a good relationship within the Exeter prison facility. The Ofsted report was very encouraging and highlighted no on-going problems. A system has been introduced by senior management to compensate and take into account the needs of Weston college, in order to keep their classes at maximum capacity, and also the nature of Exeter's population i.e. remand prisoners, court appearances, solicitors' visits and sickness.

Library facilities are going from strength to strength. Funding for this project has been obtained and the old library space will be returned back to its original use as prisoner accommodation.

4.3 Healthcare & Mental Health

Dorset Healthcare's contract commenced on 1st April 2013 in order to provide all aspects of health and a streamlined service. Nevertheless, new contracts can be unsettling for staff and take time to 'bed in.' It was obvious the infrastructure was not sufficient for this contract thus causing problems on its commencement such as late payments. It is a pity this procedure has to be repeated three years hence when this contract is concluded. GP cover has been problematic with insufficient numbers and little continuity which are obviously very important for a prison environment.

There have been two recent successful inspections by the Care Quality Commission and HMP Inspectors. Healthcare continues to provide a good service to some of the most challenging and vulnerable people by a very caring and professional team.

F wing (formerly the hospital department) has been refurbished and is now operated by prison personnel. This provides care for terminally ill prisoners or individuals requiring extra care. The End of Life Palliative Care Suite, built at the start of this year with the aid of a sizeable grant from the King's Fund, was officially opened by HRH Princess Anne and has already been used on two occasions.

The Mental Health team within the prison are now working well and continue to strive with some very demanding patients.

4.3.1 Drug Dependency Unit

At the start of the year CARATS was renamed and reorganised to become the 'Substance Misuse Service' (SMS). This is an integrated service also embracing Clinical and Psychosocial intervention. All drug and alcohol dependence services are now carried out under the SMS umbrella and in close co-operation with the Primary Care and Mental Health teams and, of course, the Prison designated staff. The new teams are working well together as was highlighted in the mid-summer report by HM Inspectorate.

On 1st December 2013 the SMS team commenced the duty of dispensing the majority of drugs from the Pharmacy and they will take over completely in early 2014 from the present Primary Care Dispensers.

4.4 Purposeful Activity (includes work)

The work departments have been functioning well this year – there are 2 main workshops. There was a delay in prisoners obtaining their Health & Safety qualification (essential before access could be granted to these departments).

4.5 Resettlement and Reducing Reoffending

We recognise that a key component in the work of the Prison is to equip those in their care with appropriate skills for making a successful life in the community when their custodial sentence is served. A structured approach has been developed to cover the seven elements in the pathway to reducing re-offending and these are:

- 1 Accommodation and Support** - maintaining contact with charity groups, and others, to give a range of options in the locality where prisoners will wish to live.
- 2 Education, Training and Employment** - prisoners are encouraged to engage with the Education programme covering the core subjects. Work is organised where possible – Catering, for example, leads to a formal qualification. Employment has always been a difficult area in connecting with external opportunities; however, particular effort has been made to engage with larger businesses initially in Cornwall with Devon being planned. This has resulted in job offers being made to prisoners' pre-release.
- 3 Health** - it is recognised that general health issues, often related to drug mis-use, present themselves for many prisoners. A GP style approach is helpful to identify those who need a more tailor-made Healthcare and Repair Plan.
- 4 Drug and Alcohol** - lifestyle issues are often difficult to address in such a way that ensures a lasting change can be made but working together with appropriate charity groups has been of benefit.
- 5 Finance, Benefits and Debt** - this continues to be a challenging area of work for the prison team. Efforts are being made to encourage local Bank branches to consider prisoners for basic banking facilities. It is disappointing to learn that the MOJ do not ensure this happens via a single structured national approach with the Banking sector, instead individual prisons have to spend time trying to make things happen locally. The issue of benefits to prisoners and their families,

and management of debt, is again addressed by some of the charity support workers in the prison who can link up with Government agencies.

- 6 Children and Families** - good efforts are made to encourage parenting skills and contact with families is encouraged with specific family visit days. The 'Storybook Dads' project is promoted and prisoners are keen to take part.
- 7 Attitudes, Thinking and Behaviour** - encouraging a good citizen approach in prison hopefully equips prisoners to be more responsible for their actions when in their local community. Appropriate courses are run to explore how they can work on changing their individual approach to living and working in their home community.

The prison gives high priority to equipping prisoners with life skills and works with those who want to change their way of life (together with those who do not wish to engage in these programmes) so that they do not continue with a lifestyle that may see them returning to prison. This is of benefit to them as individuals and the wider community.

4.6 Safer Custody

4.6.1 Safer Custody Team

The Safer Custody team meetings cover all aspects of maintenance of prisoners in a safe and secure environment. It is not only the primary duty of the prison service to keep in custody those sentenced by the courts, but to provide a stable and thoughtful regime which offers prisoners pathways that will lead to re-habilitation. The Safer Custody team provides a monthly audit of the indicators of harmful behaviour. An interesting initiative from the Team has been the questionnaire issued to prisoners that asked for a response to the experience of prison life in terms of safety. Over a three month period 184 were returned with 93% reporting that they had not experienced any anti-social, bullying or violent behaviour.

Bullying is tackled with determination by HMP Exeter, although it can still be a problem to separate the victim from the perpetrator. A problem also arises when a disproportionate number of prisoners arrive from an area that is geographically distant from Exeter and band together in order to be disruptive.

The IMB continue to be impressed with the dedication, efficiency and professionalism of this team and their commitment to on-going improvement of procedures.

4.6.2 Safer Custody Meetings

Over the year there has been some difficulty in adjusting the levels of the Incentives & Earned Privileges scheme with very few prisoners being put on the Basic regime despite evidence of offences committed. This has now been adjusted and the number of prisoners on Basic is at a more realistic level. This reflects a more robust approach to violent offenders and has resulted in an overall reduction in violent incidents; it also demonstrates the behaviour that is expected in order to progress through the three levels.

4.6.3 Self Harm

Incidents of self-harm sadly remain high with a few individuals for whom this behaviour is habitual. The relevant statistics need to be seen in context of the prison population which contains many of the most vulnerable members of society and includes a stubborn minority for whom prison is a part of their life. ACCT documents, which can be opened by all professionals in the prison (including IMB members) for

those prisoners deemed to be at risk of suicide or self-harm, now successfully follow the prisoner through his movements in the prison.

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 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

The listeners, who are prisoners trained by the Samaritans, are a well-integrated part of the system in place to entice better behaviour. The Samaritans give freely of their time to train and support prisoners to work as Listeners. Their work is much appreciated by prisoners as they have first-hand experience which is so valuable when 'listening.' As HMP Exeter is a local prison it is sometimes difficult to recruit and train listeners but, despite a high turnover, the numbers required are usually maintained due to excellent relations between the Safer Custody team and the Samaritans.

4.7 Segregation, Care & Separation and 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 giving consistency, improved co-ordination and communication for the management of this facility. Respite from stressful working pressure is gained from regular updating via 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.

The IMB 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 of safer custody specification 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 an incentive to cease such behaviour.

We note that HM Inspectorate of Prisons in their inspection mid-summer reported that, in their opinion, Segregation Unit staff should be trained in mental health awareness. Although in an ideal world this is

favourable, with the necessity to 'run a tight ship' not all recommendations are practical, for staff working within the SEG unit are part of the Annual Staff Rotation Policy..

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

Accommodation within the prison is being increased with the planned move of the Library into the Chapel area (although this is causing some consternation within the Chaplaincy). This move will release several cells to be used for their proper function. The problems that occurred last year on C wing 4th landing, concerning the observation doors of drug dependant new prisoners, has been overcome. The previous Healthcare Unit has been successfully transformed into F wing and is now housing older prisoners being challenged with medical and physical problems.

4.8.1 Catering & Kitchen

This has been a very productive year in conjunction with both training and the supplying of food to the prisoners incarcerated within Exeter prison. Six kitchen workers have received NVQ training through training provider N-ergy; the same organisation has provided training for NVQ Team Leader qualifications.

Family day buffets were provided twice this year in connection with the days in August; again this year after Ramadan the Feast of Eid was celebrated on 8th August.

The Catering department, in conjunction with the Gym, supplied offenders with dietary advice both verbally and via leaflets. With the completion of the now regular food surveys several changes have been made and a new menu cycle has been introduced. There is now considerable improvement in standards on all wings with the introduction of regular random checks by Catering staff. Breakfast packs were introduced early December.

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 that took place this year focused on visitor experience; early results are indicating that procedural consistency, communication (between the establishment and visitors) and lack of signage are expected to arise.

The booking process, via telephone mainly, causes some frustration. 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.

SECTION 5: REPORTS ON OTHER AREAS

5.1 Chaplaincy

The Chaplain and his team continue to give a high quality service to prisoners and staff. They have provided appropriate facilities for faith celebrating days and events, ensuring appropriate dietary restrictions are met.

Proposals to change the layout of the Chapel, in order to incorporate the Multi Faith room and the prison Library has caused some concern. Although the chapel is seen as a large space there is a view that the reduced space may limit the availability for those wishing to take part in the Christian worship activities.

The continuing involvement of many church and charity groups is much appreciated and ensures a variety of events apart from normal regular worship services.

The Chaplain has been involved in many Special Need situations for distressed prisoners. The support for staff in stressful situations is also much appreciated.

SECTION 6: WORK OF THE BOARD

At the start of the year the Board was reduced by The Secretariat to a full complement of 11 Board members at our request. However, this year two members resigned.

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 Board's time we have recommended that members seek Minutes of Meetings and discuss issues with appropriate personnel rather than trying to attend all meetings.

It is difficult for the Board to read the mid-summer inspection report without feeling some sympathy for the hard working staff in HMP Exeter. Although the team highlighted the age and construction of the prison it was felt this, at no stage, was taken into consideration neither was the geographical position of the establishment (the South West of England has a very low number of ethnically diverse people within the population). We, as the Board, think that the staff who work under extreme pressure deserve more appreciation.

The Board are in the process of carrying out a recruitment drive because, at the end of December, it will have lost a further 3 members due to the 15 year rule.

A member of the Board gave several talks to local organisations during the year - Probus, Rotary, WI and Christian 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	11
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	9
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	4
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	0
Number of members leaving within the reporting period	5
Total number of Board meetings during the reporting period	11
Total number of visits to the Establishment	202
Total number of segregation reviews held	n/a
Total number of segregation reviews attended	32
Date of Annual Team Performance Review	15.1.13
Of total: number of IMB Confidential Access was	32

Annex B: ANALYSIS OF APPLICATIONS

		2009/2010 %	2010/2011 %	2011/2012 %	2012/2013 %
A	Accommodation	7	6	3	1
B	Adjudications	0	2	0	0
C	Diversity related	7	1	0	0
D	Education / Employment / Training	0	3	3	1
E1	Family / Visits	6	6	2	5
E2	Finance / Pay				3
F	Food / Kitchen related	8	3	2	1
G	Health related	22	14	9	18
H1	Property (within current establishment)	8	7	8	4
H2	Property (during transfer / in another establishment)				9
H3	Canteen, Facilities, Catalogue Shopping, Argos				2
I	Sentence related	16	4	1	12
J	Staff / Prisoner / Detainee related	4	5	7	3
K	Transfers	4	2	2	0

L	Miscellaneous	22	14	7	8
	Total number of applications	<u>98</u>	<u>67</u>	<u>44</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
The Extra Mile
Toe by Toe
Tribal
Victim Support
Way4ward
Weston College
Workways
YMCA