

HMP Latchmere House

Independent Monitoring Board  
(IMB)

Annual Report

1<sup>st</sup> February 2010 – 31<sup>st</sup> January 2011



## **Section 1**

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

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

## **Section 2**

<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
The statutory role of the IMB	2
Contents	3
The description of the Prison and its role	4
Executive summary	6
Areas on which the board must report	8
Other areas of the Prison on which the Board has issues to report	13
The work of the IMB at Latchmere House	17

## **Section 3**

### **DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON AND ITS ROLE**

#### **3.1**

HMP Latchmere House was acquired by the Prison Department of the Home Office in 1948. It was a junior and senior detention centre, a young offenders' institution and an immigration centre for detainees before being designated as a resettlement prison in 1991. It is situated off Ham Common between Richmond and Kingston in Surrey. There are two accommodation wings (A and B), four workshops, only one of which is in use, a kitchen and a dining room, a gym and a small outdoor tarmac sports area occasionally used for short tennis. There is also an aviary. The original 19<sup>th</sup> century house which gives the Prison its name houses prison office accommodation and NOMS Training Unit South. There is a conglomeration of elderly single storey buildings inside the perimeter fence which house among other necessities the Chaplaincy and the Health Care Centre. The Works compound includes the remains of the stables of the "big house". The Prison looks unprepossessing and shabby: accretions of buildings thrown up over the years. The standard of accommodation is poor because of its age and the lack of refurbishment. Fortunately looks are not important: this is a sought-after adult male resettlement prison, one of only three in the country. It is semi-open because it has a perimeter fence, another relic of its past.

#### **3.2**

Since 2006 the Prison has been "clustered" with HMP Wormwood Scrubs. The management team, one On Site in Charge Governor Grade E and two Governor F grades, reports to the Governor of that Prison.

#### **3.3**

Latchmere House receives adult male prisoners approaching the end of their sentences who are resettling within the M25 area. All have to have Cat D status. The role of the Prison is to use the seven resettlement pathways to prepare prisoners for release and to prevent them from re-offending. The pathways aim to address the following issues: Drugs; Attitude, thinking and behaviour; Financial debt and benefits; Health and alcohol; Children and families; Education, training and employment; and Accommodation.

#### **3.4**

Prisoners are encouraged to be self-reliant and self-motivating. They are released on temporary licence for a number of hours each weekend so that they can visit and rebuild ties with their families, and after an initial period they are allowed to go to work daily. All of these are essential components of the resettlement process and crucial factors in reducing re-offending. Support for prisoners is available from Probation, Learning and Skills, a counsellor, the Carats drug service (Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice and Throughcare), Healthcare and Chaplaincy. St. Mungo's offers an accommodation advice service.

### **3.5**

There is an active multi-faith Chaplaincy and opportunities are available to attend nominated places of worship near the prison.

### **3.6**

The prison's Certified Normal Accommodation (CNA) is 207, with occupancy averaging 197 over the year under review. In the latter part of the year the prison roll regularly reached 200. Most prisoners have their own room and their own key, and have freedom of movement within their own wing and communal areas of the Prison during the day. At 8.30pm the wings are locked. A small number of prisoners share rooms, usually when they first arrive and if they are from the same sending prison. Latchmere takes Lifers and both MAPPA and IPP prisoners. No sex offenders or arsonists are accepted.

### **3.7**

A survey, Measuring the Quality of Prison Life (MQPL), carried out at the end of the previous year, reported that nearly 90% of Latchmere prisoners scored the Prison highly in terms of "overall quality of prison life". Latchmere was the top scorer for three areas: relationships, respect and fairness. It is particularly gratifying to report that in the last part of the year Latchmere House reached NOMS Performance Level 4 (on a scale 1-4 with 4 being the highest).

## Section 4

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### 4.1 Main issues raised

##### a. Refurbishment of the estate

Although the Board is aware of the serious financial situation facing the Prison Service, essential improvements to the A2 showers are still outstanding. The A1 lavatories and washroom need major work, as do the prisoners' lavatories in Resettlement. B Wing showers need the drainage improved, and there is urgent work required to the outside of B Wing to halt the entry of damp. Increasing the size of the Works department or encouraging more borrowing of Works staff from Wormwood Scrubs would help. (See **6.1.**)

##### b. Cleanliness

Management needs to supervise more closely those prisoners who clean and to make basic supplies more easily available. (See **6.2.**)

##### c. Extra spaces for prisoners requiring re-settlement in the London area.

Latchmere performs well and delivers what it is expected to do, which is the resettlement of prisoners back into society, thereby reducing the prison population, which is what the Government is pledged to do. (See **5.2h.**) Unused space at Latchmere could be used for an extra accommodation block. This would bring added benefits in the form of extra staff and economies of scale. (See **6.3.**)

##### d. Personal officer scheme

The Board is aware that the Governor has taken steps to address the hitherto unsatisfactory working of this scheme but it still needs further work. (See **5.2j.**)

#### 4.2 Policy issues requiring a response from the Minister

More prisoners need to be given the chance to benefit from what Latchmere does. (See **4.1c** above.)

#### 4.3 Operational issues requiring a response from the Prison Service

Items 4.1a and 4.1c above.

#### 4.4 Overall judgement

Latchmere House is a safe and secure resettlement prison whose resettlement work is most effective when prisoners arrive with some time left to serve. Relations between staff and prisoners are in the main excellent. The Personal Officer scheme has not worked satisfactorily and the Board continues to hope that there will be an improvement. There are still areas of the Prison requiring refurbishment although the long awaited installation of in-cell electricity has gone a long way to improve prisoners' living conditions. The Works department could do with more staff to enable it to cope with regular maintenance of old

buildings. The Board is greatly encouraged by some new training initiatives started over the year, although the garden project failed to meet expectations.

The rise in the standard of performance is due to constant hard work by governors and staff alike to improve in the areas that required improvement and they should be congratulated.

## **Section 5**

### **AREAS ON WHICH THE BOARD MUST REPORT**

#### **5.1 Diversity**

- a. Race Equality Action Team meetings have been held regularly with a representative from the IMB attending most of them.
- b. Last year the Board reported that for various reasons it had proved impossible to appoint a Race Equality Officer and unfortunately this state of affairs continues. The basic work has been covered by the Diversity manager from Wormwood Scrubs who has attended REAT meetings at Latchmere and presented statistical information which indicate that there are no major concerns.
- c. There have been a small number of Racial Incident Reports, all of which have come to a successful conclusion after investigations.
- d. After the last visit of HMCIP in 2009 when it was recommended that a new diversity policy covering among other topics the needs of the elderly and disabled be drawn up, there is still no action plan.

#### **5.2 Resettlement**

- a. During the year a member of the Board attended as an observer all the meetings of what was then known as the Resettlement Policy Committee. Unfortunately, out of a possible twelve meetings during the year, only six actually took place, the same as the previous year. In its previous report the Board commented: "Since resettlement is the "raison d'être" of Latchmere House, it is unfortunate that so many meetings were cancelled for different reasons and usually at short notice". It is alarming that the same situation has been allowed to recur. However, Resettlement Policy meetings have now been renamed Reducing Re-offending Pathways, a new chair for the meetings has been appointed, a new action plan and strategy document is being produced, and it is hoped that this will presage a new beginning. In addition it is now policy that those unable to attend will submit written reports.
- b. Some paperwork from sending establishments is still not being completed correctly. All admissions are being done on paper and the Board believes that face to face interviews should be reintroduced for the benefit of all concerned. The Prison receives a large number of MAPPA and IPP prisoners, who usually make up about one-third of the population. These prisoners require closer supervision than others.
- c. Induction for new arrivals lasts two weeks, starting with an Icebreaker session. A Board member attends this and outlines the work of the Board at Latchmere. Prisoners sign a compact with the Prison and meet a governor, a member of the Chaplaincy team and representatives from Carats and Probation. The three "rules" of Latchmere, no drugs, no alcohol and no violence, are spelled out at this session. Prisoners are risk assessed and look at education possibilities during this early time. The Probation department carries out

its own risk assessment on every new arrival even if he has undergone such a procedure at the sending prison for town visits. Every work and community placement is risk assessed. About 800 such assessments are carried out during the year by the department.

d. A Family Information Day for new prisoners is held after two weeks, and a Board member attends whenever possible. Representatives from Carats and Probation, a Counsellor, and sometimes Listeners, introduce the opportunities available in Latchmere House. These days are a great success because they involve prisoners' families and friends in their sentence planning, as well as explaining the valuable role the family plays in supporting and encouraging the prisoner. As an inducement to attend, families can then accompany their family member on a town visit in the afternoon.

e. Prisoners progress to 20 days community work in the prison, for example in the kitchen or in the grounds. Having completed their induction and community work, prisoners can choose from a vast number of trade and education options, some of which are paid. Up to 20 external employers can be working with the Prison at any one time, for example Tesco employs a driver from Latchmere House and Wagamama started to recruit during the year. St.Giles Trust among other charities continues to help prisoners with voluntary work experience leading to paid work. Prisoners who train successfully with Wates are guaranteed work. Some local charities provide funds for training, e.g. Heavy Goods Vehicles driver training. The prison's own Birds of Prey project is the basis for a course on all aspects of falconry under the auspices of Lantra. This last year prisoners worked in a variety of jobs, e.g. finance, the gas industry, sales, IT, the media, construction, painting and decorating. Once again the Board is pleased to record that even in these increasingly difficult times for everybody seeking work, the Prison achieved or surpassed its target figures for education, training and employment on discharge each month of the year. The latest figures are full time employment 64% (target 60%), and education or training 34% (target 14%). These figures are excellent. If prisoners leave Latchmere with paid employment or go on to further education and training, the chances of their not re-offending remain high. The present government believes in rehabilitation rather than imprisonment. A prison that succeeds in turning prisoners' lives around, as Latchmere does, contributes to the rehabilitation process in no small way.

f. The Prison is not however simply a job agency. Prisoners do have to make an effort themselves to find work. They are given access to recruitment publicity and encouraged to apply for training and work with guidance from staff. Sadly, for reasons of security and public perception no prisoner can access the internet from prison premises even though this would be for work, although they are free to do so when on home leave or at work.

g. An Employers' Day took place at the end of the reporting year when a number of employers and representatives from charities offering training funding visited the prison. The day was deemed a great success. Many employers attended, heard prisoners speak about their experiences seeking and finding work, and then met a large number of prisoners keen to take up opportunities on offer. The intention is to hold more such events. Their organisation demands extra work from the staff, who are to be congratulated on the success of the most recent.

h. Once again, there have been complaints from prisoners that vetting of prisoners and prospective employers takes too long. Several agencies are involved in this, not just the Prison, so it is difficult to solve. Risk assessment is vital if Latchmere's excellent re-offending record is to be preserved. The latest figure for re-offending available for Latchmere House, based on 2010 statistics, is 5.3% against an average of 15% in open resettlement prisons and 45%-55% nationally.

i. Sadly the organic garden project at the Prison has not been a success, mainly due to a lack of qualified staff to supervise the work.

j. There are still problems with the Personal Officer scheme. The Board realises that this is very difficult to introduce with such a small staff, but does feel it is worth the effort. Although under the new profile time has been allowed for all staff to carry out Personal Officer work, the work is not being done. Further fine tuning is needed. Engagement with Lifers is particularly important.

k. Lifer meetings are held every other month and a Board member attends as an observer. There is no maximum number set at the Prison for Lifers; the Prison can take as many who apply and are suitable. At the end of the year, Latchmere held 17 Lifers of whom 3 were IPP prisoners. Lifers and IPP prisoners create a large amount of extra work, but the Lifers are usually a calming influence on the prison. For both, the Personal Officer scheme is most important. History sheets have now been computerised and the Lifers Committee goes through each prisoner's record individually at each meeting. There are still some Lifer History sheets which are not regularly updated by the Lifer Officers concerned. There is as usual a shortage of suitable trained Lifer Officers.

### **5.3 Education**

a. Kensington and Chelsea College is contracted to provide 202 hours of education a month. There are two full time KCC staff including the Manager, one who works three days at Latchmere and two at Wormwood Scrubs, and one sessional tutor who comes in four days a week. They work in conjunction with the Training and London Advice Partnership Adviser and Employment Administrator who find training opportunities and seek funding for various courses prisoners want to attend. A new KCC manager arrived in May but unfortunately left at the end of the year. A new manager was however appointed at Christmas.

b. The Education Centre is open 37 hours a week, staying open until 7pm on two days for prisoners who are out at work during the day. Courses cover preparation for employment, which includes CV writing, letters to employers and interview techniques, IT courses such as CLAIT and ECDL, budgeting and money management, literacy and numeracy up to level 2 and the CSCS Construction Health and Safety card.

c. Men also do distance learning courses. Four or five are following Open University courses and several go out to local colleges. They can also study driving theory on computer.

- d. There are currently 50 men in various forms of education.
- e. The prison is in touch with the Toe by Toe reading scheme organization, and although there are currently no prisoners using it there are one or two mentors who are encouraged to use their skills in the community when they are released.
- f. The IT system Polaris has been replaced by Virtual Campus. Theoretically this new system should enable men to view all the jobs available throughout London at Job Centre Plus, send CVs to employers and apply for jobs on line. However there are teething problems.
- g. Despite being well received, the prison magazine, *The Latch*, has not been continued because of lack of contributors.

#### **5.4 Health care and mental health**

- a. Currently the Richmond and Twickenham Primary Health Care Trust continues to oversee healthcare at Latchmere which is essentially provided by a local GP surgery. A nurse from the practice attends the Prison on three mornings per week and appointments with the practice GPs are made through her. Licences for these appointments, along with dental and optician appointments made by the prisoners themselves, are applied for in the usual way. There is an arrangement with a local pharmacy for dispensing prescriptions. Kingston Hospital A & E Department covers emergencies.
- b. Meetings to discuss all aspects of medical and healthcare at Latchmere have been held every two months and are well attended by a wide range of prison and healthcare staff. This ensures excellent communication between departments. A Board member usually attends these meetings. However the Government's changes to the provision of primary health care mean that the meetings will no longer be arranged by the PCT and there is some uncertainty over whether the new GP consortium will continue to arrange similar meetings.
- c. Because of continuing concerns over prisoners arriving without their medical records or these not arriving for a considerable time after the prisoner, sending prisons now have to stick to a strict protocol when prisoners apply to come to Latchmere. Prisoners usually see a nurse the day after their arrival so that health problems can be picked up as soon as possible.
- d. Prisoners with known mental health problems are not accepted at Latchmere, and should one be identified, he would be transferred to closed conditions for treatment.
- e. The idea that prisoners on IDTS should be accepted at Latchmere where there is inadequate daily regular health supervision for such prisoners' needs was viewed with concern by the Board and staff. It is with relief that the Board learned that money set aside for this project can be spent on programmes relating to drugs and alcohol. However if such prisoners were to be accepted at Latchmere their needs would have to be met.

## **5.5 Health and Safety**

In spite of last year's good intentions, only one health and safety meeting has taken place this year. However a new Health and Safety Officer was appointed.

In an attempt to ensure that all scheduled meetings do take place the governor has issued a full meetings timetable for the year. This should allow staff to spot any conflict in good time and ensure that meetings not only happen but that they have the correct attendance. The Board will monitor closely the outcome of this new practice and will continue to press for regular meetings.

## **5.6 Safer Custody**

a. There were no deaths in custody or incidents of self-harm reported during the period under review.

b. Latchmere Prison continues to provide a safe environment for both prisoners and staff. Two ACCT (Assessment Care in Custody Teamwork) documents were opened during this period and both were closed shortly afterwards. Also there were three TAB (Tackling anti-social behaviour) forms opened, which were closed following a short period of monitoring.

c. The Safer Custody Committee meets once a month and officially has 16 members including a Listener and a Samaritan representative. A member of the IMB also attends regularly. However some of the people who are members of the committee fail to attend and do not send a deputy or a report. Some members have not attended for the whole year. Attendance should be tightened up.

d. The Monthly Anti-Social Behaviour Key Indicators Report is discussed at each meeting. There has been a noticeable increase in anti-social behaviour incidents. The possible reasons for this are a more rigorous reporting procedure, a change in the type of prisoner now accepted into Latchmere (prisoners with shorter sentences and younger offenders), and attempts by prisoners to circumvent the prohibition of the use of mobile phones.

e. Throughout the period the Samaritan representatives have been facing some difficulties in communications with the prisoners and have been trying to enhance the profile of the Listener Scheme at the prison. These problems appear to have been resolved.

f. There were 74 adjudications during the year and of these 69% were for breach of licence.

## **5.7 Segregation**

Latchmere House has no segregation unit. Any prisoner whose behaviour is judged to be unsuitable for the Prison's regime is subject to a case review and a possible return to closed conditions.

## Section 6

### OTHER AREAS OF THE PRISON ON WHICH THE BOARD HAS ISSUES TO REPORT

#### 6.1. Refurbishment of the estate

- a. The most important development this year has been the successful installation of in-cell electricity, which was achieved while the Prison continued to function as a working prison with the minimum of disorganisation and of complaints, although prisoners were moved from pillar to post. It was also completed slightly ahead of schedule. All involved deserve congratulations.
- b. Two out of four workshops are unused and the third is only partly occupied. The buildings are not unattractive but do detract from the purposefulness of other buildings on the site as well as requiring maintenance. The Board asked last year whether there are any ideas to re-use these buildings. Currently there is a possibility that Railtrack might occupy one building for training.
- c. The showers on A2 are still closed after more than a year. The Board has been told that there are no plans to refurbish these or indeed for a re-use of the room because of the financial situation. B Wing showers refurbished on 1 and 2 last year are continually complained about because prisoners say the cubicles are too small. They say that the two disabled showers are the only ones regularly used because they are slightly larger. They ask perpetually for Works to knock three cubicles into two. More seriously there are perpetual pools of water on the floors caused by water not draining away. Nothing appears to solve this problem about which there are continual complaints.
- d. A new wing kitchen containing new fridges and microwaves (for prisoners returning late after work and missing the meal laid on in the Dining Room) was installed on B Wing during the year. The work took weeks, indeed months, to complete. Prisoners tolerated the disruption less well than they did the disruption caused by the ICE project. Part of the delay was caused by the Works department being so short staffed. There are three members of staff and a Works Governor. There is no carpenter. Urgent carpentry work requires the borrowing of a carpenter from Wormwood Scrubs. The Board suggests that the Works department be increased in size despite the financial situation so that basic work can be carried out more speedily. The Prison is old and the premises require constant maintenance.
- e. One room occupied by a prisoner in B Wing has mould growing inside. It is in the words of the Works department “damp as a result of the poor condition of the outside render allowing moisture to pass through to inside walls. It could be rectified but is a major project”. There is no money available at the moment to carry out any rectification and until there is “the internal condition will need to be monitored”. The Board would like to be assured that monitoring will take place. Mould can be a health hazard for asthmatics. The situation has been flagged up to the new Health and Safety Officer. The Board is aware of the dire financial situation in which the Prison Service finds itself. However staff and prisoners need to be housed in reasonably healthy conditions.
- f. The washroom housing communal lavatories and hand basins on A1 contains areas of rotting wood under the basins which the Board has frequently remarked upon. Ideally this

area should be refurbished. The prisoners' lavatories on the ground floor of the Resettlement building are in a poor state and actually smell bad. Cleaning on its own will not solve the problem. This facility too needs money spent on it.

g. Plans to turn the Chapel into a multi-faith space have been shelved because of lack of funds and also because of opposition from some prisoners. Plans to create a central laundry in the Prison to obviate the need for what sometimes seems like constant callouts for expensive repairs to the machines in the laundry rooms have also been shelved on cost grounds.

## **6.2. Cleanliness of the prison**

a. Sadly for a second year running, a constant theme throughout the Board's monitoring has been the poor standard of cleanliness around the Prison, particularly on the wings: grubby floors, overflowing fridges, shower floors awash, smelly microwaves, rubbish scattered around dustbins. New recycling bins introduced on the wings have not proved popular. Wing managers need to supervise cleaners more closely.

b. Rooms on B Wing were all repainted after the ICE project finished but A Wing rooms were not, and the Board is glad to report that this is about to be put right.

c. There has been a problem with inadequate cleaning in the gym used by staff and prisoners alike, and this too should be dealt with.

d. The Board frequently has had to report that on both wings there are no paper towels, lavatory rolls or soap available. This is sometimes because supplies have been locked in wing offices and there are no wing staff available to release them, or because there are no Stores staff on duty, or because there are none in stock at all because no member of the Stores staff has ordered them. Many prisoners do supply their own toiletries, and of course there is some pilfering of what is centrally supplied, which is only to be expected in any sort of communal living, but the prison should ensure that necessities for basic hygiene are always easily available. The PCT wrote to the Governor during the year to stress the importance of adequate hand washing in order to combat outbreaks of flu and norovirus.

e. The civilian cleaner who cleaned offices and staff areas left halfway through the year after her hours were cut for economy reasons. She was not replaced until the end of the year, and her replacement is still not in post as security procedures grind on. Staff have had to clean their own offices and spaces during this time with varying degrees of success.

## **6.3. Extra spaces**

a. The Governor submitted plans to take an extra 20 prisoners a year ago. This appears to have been shelved in view of the financial situation and the fact that the Government would prefer to reduce numbers in prison rather than increase them. However more prisoners at Latchmere being successfully reintegrated into family, work and society would in the long term reduce prison numbers.

b. There is considerable waste space in the Works compound which could be used as new accommodation. With more prisoners the number of officers would increase. Most officers at Latchmere do more than one job, and because there are so few members of staff, the absence of any, whether on leave, sick, suspended or training, imposes a greater burden on the remaining staff. Indeed the absence of a small number of staff on long term sick leave this year has been a difficult hurdle and one that prevented the prison reaching performance level 4 for some time.

#### **6.4. Clustering**

a. Latchmere House is “clustered” with Wormwood Scrubs according to NOMS Model One, the lowest form of clustering: management functions are merged but the prisons operate as separate entities and performance is monitored separately.

b. The Board has heard or seen no evidence that clustering puts Latchmere prisoners at a disadvantage. It has noted that the Head of Pathways (previously Learning and Skills) and the Finance Officer now divide their time between Wormwood Scrubs and Latchmere House. Two of the three governors at Latchmere are able to carry out duty governor roles at Wormwood Scrubs. On several occasions during the year a member of staff at Wormwood Scrubs was able to cover some of the work not being done by Latchmere staff on long sick leave or not in post.

c. HMCIP drew attention in 2009 to the danger of Latchmere House becoming a mere department of Wormwood Scrubs rather than a stand-alone prison with a specialist role. The Board has been exercised this year by that very danger. The lack of direction for the foundering Resettlement Policy Committee and the apparent lack of engagement with Latchmere’s resettlement work by an overseeing manager from Wormwood Scrubs gave the Board the impression that Latchmere’s work was of secondary importance. After a meeting with the Governor of Wormwood Scrubs the Board was reassured that new initiatives for the renamed Pathways to Resettlement Committee were being taken and that Latchmere House would continue in the vanguard of such successful and specialist work.

#### **6.5. Prison population**

a. In spite of the Board’s comments last year, the Prison has still frequently been under pressure from the central Population Management Unit to increase the roll to 98%, if not to 100%. Latchmere, as a Cat. D prison, is actually required to maintain its roll at 95%, which it tries to do. “Latchmere is not required or expected to take category C prisoners” was good news from NOMS in its response to the Board’s last report.

b. The selection process is handled by one officer for whom there has been no cover for absences. Such cover is long overdue. Selection is solely on paper. Two applications are handled per place. There is always a waiting list often as high as 60. Latterly certain sending prisons appear to have delayed men’s applications because they have taken anything

between four and nine months to arrive at Latchmere after the initial application. In addition there are applicants who withdraw quite late in the process for various reasons, for example when they discover they might have to share a cell. "Ten were expected and 15 arrived", "only three out of ten actually arrived" have been heard from management this year. This year an increasing number of prisoners have been returned to closed conditions unexpectedly when it turned out that confiscation orders had been made. This makes maintaining the roll more difficult.

c. The Board reported last year that with the introduction in 2008 of the new rule on auto-release, prisoners can now apply to come to Latchmere with as little as three months left to serve. They are therefore not there long enough to take advantage of the resettlement facilities that the Prison provides. In 2007-8 9% of prisoners arriving had between six and 12 months left to serve. Now the figure hovers around 28%. These prisoners come to maintain the roll even though they are not ideally suited to the Prison's regime. In addition the average age of prisoners is decreasing and is now 25-29 years old, which makes for a slightly more volatile age group. During the reporting year at one time there were 18 prisoners under 25, with one aged only 21 and two only 22. It has been noticed that as the younger element near their release date their behaviour deteriorates. At the same time there were four men over 60 and two over 70. Older prisoners who have worked their way through the prison system to come to Latchmere have complained to the Board about "the wrong kind of prisoners" being accepted.

## **6.6. Staff relationships**

Staff relationships are in the main excellent, with prisoners having access every weekday morning to a governor for applications. It is planned to extend this to the weekends as a result of requests from prisoners who are out at work all day. Currently a governor is available in the dining room at weekend lunch times for chats on a more informal basis. Good relationships with wing staff and the availability of governors are reasons why there are so few applications to the Board. In addition prisoners are encouraged to try to sort out problems themselves as preparation for life outside. Such is the value placed by prisoners on the relaxed atmosphere at Latchmere and the fresh opportunities it provides that there is a culture of not complaining in case one gets sent back to closed conditions. All the Board can do in such cases is to repeat that criticism is treated constructively and if there is anything going wrong, the management would like to know so that it can be put right.

## Section 7

### THE WORK OF THE IMB AT LATCHMERE HOUSE

#### 7.1. General

a. The Board ended the previous year with only five out of the ten members which is its full complement, and was awaiting the appointment of a possible five new members after a lengthy recruitment campaign. This reduced membership placed extra work and pressure on the group. Fortunately the five recommended for appointment were successful and four joined the Board immediately. The fifth asked for a postponement and then dropped out without explanation. An experienced member from another prison who asked to join the Board during this time was welcomed. After three months one of the newly appointed members resigned for reasons of increased domestic responsibility. The Board currently has nine members out of a possible 10, which is a considerably healthier position than it was in 12 months previously.

b. The Board was deprived of its new office at the beginning of the year because it was needed for the ICE team, and had to decamp to the unoccupied REO's office. This office, although nominally unused, was sometimes occupied by the visiting Diversity Manager for Wormwood Scrubs who came about once a week, the Respect representative, and other members of staff seeking a spare terminal. The arrangement was far from ideal, for example the Board had no space to unpack two boxes of belongings although it did have a lockable filing cabinet. Not every staff member subscribed to the unwritten agreement that if a Board member was using the office that staff member would leave. After continuing discussions, the Board was moved towards the end of the year to another office which had become vacant. Although this is small it is more than adequate, and the Board is grateful to have a small space to call its own. The Works department is so overworked that it has still not managed to erect the notice board, a small job that has been waiting for three months.

c. Given the size of the Prison and its informal environment, it is only necessary for one board member to carry out a rota visit to the Prison each week. 52 rota visits have been carried out in the reporting year. Additional visits have been made by members who have a special interest in a particular area of the Prison's work. A Board member attends the Icebreaker session every Monday morning to welcome new arrivals. Board members sometimes attend the fortnightly Family Days.

d. Board members also attend as observers committee meetings within the Prison including the Safer Custody Committee, the Prisoners' Consultative Committee (now renamed Council), the Lifer Committee, the Pathways to Resettlement Committee, the Health and Safety Committee when it meets, meetings organised by the PCT and the Race Equality Action Team. Unfortunately cancellation of meetings at short notice without informing IMB members continues to be a problem.

e. The Board shares its clerk with Resettlement and there were some instances of her not being given time to carry out her IMB work in spite of what was set out in her contract. This was caused both by the On-Site Governor's absence on sick leave and by there being new, inexperienced staff in Resettlement. The Board hopes that these difficulties are at an end but continues to monitor the situation. With the frustrating situation over the IMB office

and having to take a stand in order to guarantee the clerk's time, it has been a more difficult year than usual.

## 7.2. Training

a. The reporting year has been busy: three new Board members have been trained internally by existing members and externally by attending new members' courses. A fourth new Board member, who transferred from another prison, has been supported while she settled in.

b. A member from the Latchmere Board attended the AMIMB AGM. Another member attended the IMB national Conference.

c. The Board's Development Officer arranged a visit to Wormwood Scrubs with which Latchmere House is clustered. Several Board members attended a prison training session on personal protection. In addition the Board continues to invite staff from different departments to give brief presentations about their work before Board meetings. This year topics covered have included a showing of the Latchmere DVD, the implementation of P-Nomis and the work of the Chaplaincy. The Board was pleased to welcome to one of its monthly meetings the Director of Offender Management for London. An informal training session was held on the recording of rota visits and applications.

## Board statistics

	2010-11	2009-10	2008-09
Recommended complement of Board members	10	10	10
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	5	8	7
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	9	5	8
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	5	0	4
Number of members leaving within the reporting period	1	3	3
Number of attendances at meetings other than Board meetings	96	88	107
Total number of visits to the prison (including all meetings)	246	123	172

Total number of applications received	19	21	26
Total number of segregation reviews held	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total number of segregation reviews attended	N/A	N/A	N/A

### 7.3. Applications

a. The work of the Board at Latchmere is different from that in traditional closed establishments. The atmosphere is more informal, most prisoners are on first name terms with staff and Governors' applications are heard on weekdays. Most prisoners' queries and problems are raised directly with and solved by staff. Prisoners are in an environment where they are encouraged to try to deal with issues themselves and they are enabled to do so. For this reason they bring few issues to the Board.

b. In the course of the reporting year there have been four written applications and 15 informal applications taken by Board members on rota visits and recorded in the rota book.

#### Analysis of prisoners' applications to the IMB at HMP Latchmere House

Subject	2010-11	2009-10	2008-09
Accommodation	2	1	0
Adjudications/disciplinary	2	4	1
Diversity related	0	0	0
Education/employment/training	6	9	4
Family/visits	4	0	4
Food/kitchen	0	0	0
Health	2	1	6
Property	1	2	2
Sentence related	0	3	4
Staff/prisoner/detainee related	0	0	1
Transfers	0	0	1
Miscellaneous	2	1	2
<b>Total number of applications</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>25</b>

#### **7.4.**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank members of the Board and the Board's Clerk for their hard work and support during the year.

Ann Sandall

IMB Chair 2010-11,

Latchmere House.