

HMP SHEPTON MALLET

ANNUAL REPORT

PERIOD

1st APRIL 2010 – 31st MARCH 2011

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:

- (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, any concern it has.
- (3) 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 right of access to every prisoner and every part of the prison and also to the prison's records.

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Shepton Mallet IMB is committed to an inclusive approach to diversity which encompasses and promotes greater interaction and understanding between people of different backgrounds including race, religion, gender, nationality, sexuality, marital status, disability and age. We also recognize that a fully inclusive approach to diversity must also respond to differences that cut across social and cultural categories such as mental health, literacy, drug addiction or offence.

All members of the Shepton Mallet IMB will undertake their duties in a manner that is accessible to everyone within the establishment regardless of their background or social situation. The Board monitors to establish that the experiences and interaction between staff, prisoners and visitors is fair and without prejudice. Where this is not the case the Board will alert the appropriate authorities and individuals including the governor, senior management, area manager and the prisons minister.

CONTENTS

1	DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON	3
2	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
3	TOPICS ON WHICH THE IMB MUST REPORT	6
3.1	DIVERSITY	6
3.2	LEARNING AND SKILLS	9
3.3	HEALTHCARE AND MENTAL HEALTH	10
3.4	SAFER CUSTODY	10
3.5	SEGREGATION/SEPARATION AND CARE UNITS	11
4.	ADDITIONAL TOPICS	12
4.1.	ACCOMMODATION	12
4.2.	CATERING & KITCHENS	12
4.3.	CHAPLAINCY	12
4.4.	DRUGS	13
4.5.	GYM AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION	13
4.6.	HEALTH AND SAFETY	13
4.7.	LIFERS AND THE OFFENDER MANAGEMENT UNIT	14
4.8.	OFFENDING BEHAVIOUR PROGRAMMES	14
4.9.	PREPARATION FOR RELEASE AND RESETTLEMENT	14
4.10.	SECURITY	15
4.11.	STAFFING	15
4.12.	VISITORS & VISITOR CENTRES	15
4.13.	WING REPRESENTATIVES	16
4.14.	WORKS	16
5.	THE WORK OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD	17
5.1.	BOARD ACTIVITIES AND PROFILE	17
5.2.	APPLICATIONS	17
5.3.	BOARD TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT	18
6.	GLOSSARY OF PRISON-RELATED ABBREVIATIONS USED	19

1 Description of the prison

1.1. HMP Shepton Mallet is a Category C prison dedicated to the holding of life sentenced prisoners at the second stage of release and prisoners serving indeterminate sentences for Public Protection (IPPs) who transfer in to undertake courses offered by the Offending Behaviour Unit.

1.2. Shepton Mallet is the oldest working prison in the country, having first entered service in 1610. It was closed from 1930 to 1939 before becoming a military prison (English/American) from 1939 until 1966. It re-rolled to become the first Category C lifer centre in the Prison Service in 2001.

1.3. The Certified Normal Accommodation is 165, with the operational capacity being 189 which is usually maximised.

1.4. The prisoners are organised into four residential wings in 141 single cells and 24 shared cells.

1.5. The majority of prisoners at Shepton Mallet have been convicted of serious sexual or violent offences. Over 50% are serving sentences for murder, whilst just under 40% have been convicted of a sexual offence.

1.6. Around 30% of prisoners are aged over 50 and only around 5% aged under 30 years. The average age is approximately 47 years.

1.7. There are currently 54 prisoners who are registered disabled.

1.8. The main contractor for the provision of Education, Learning and Skills is A4e. Somerset Primary Care Trust now commissions and provides healthcare.

1.9. A range of organisations visits the prison to provide assistance to prisoners including Mendip District Council, Somerset Racial Equality Council, Age Concern, Mothers' Union, Samaritans, Changing Tunes, Alcoholics Anonymous, and British Legion.

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Particular issues requiring a response.

2.1.1. It is a tribute to the management and staff that many of the budget cuts have been absorbed without even greater impact on the daily running of the establishment. However we are very concerned that further cuts in budgets will result in a reduction in the quality of service that the prison can provide. We would welcome assurance that there will be no further cuts to prison budgets.

2.1.2. Prisoners of retirement age are becoming an increasing feature of the prison population. Currently prisoners at Shepton Mallet receive £3.50 a week retirement pay out of which 50p or £1.00 is deducted for television. HMIP reported that this did not leave enough to enable prisoners to keep in touch with their family and friends or to buy basics from the canteen.

2.1.3. As in our last report, we remain concerned about the number of prisoners detained at this prison who are substantially over their tariff term. Currently, around 65% of the prisoners are over tariff. This prison continues to operate as a warehouse for prisoners, rather than as a place of preparation for the next stage of detention or release.

2.1.4. We are aware that the Ministry of Justice is required to cut its costs, but we are concerned that measures to reduce the travel expenses claimed by IMB members will reduce the socio-economic diversity of boards. Membership will only be open to those who are financially able to subsidise the Ministry in the undertaking of independent monitoring. We would welcome a reassurance from the Minister that IMB members will continue to be reimbursed for their travelling expenses at a rate which reflects the costs.

Other issues of concern or excellence not requiring a response.

2.2.1. Shepton Mallet continues to be a prison well served by dedicated staff, both uniformed and civilian, who noticeably go out of their way to assist prisoners and colleagues alike.

2.2.2. HMIP visited for an announced inspection in June 2010 and the prison received a very satisfactory report. Shepton Mallet is rated as a level four prison, the highest level. It is one of only eleven prisons in England and Wales to achieve this level, and the only one in the south west region.

2.2.3. The activity yard was transformed in Spring, 2010 with the addition of raised gardens, pond and additional seating and picnic tables. A member of staff was proactive in designing the project and a team of volunteers, both staff and prisoners undertook the work. The project was funded by donations. The project has enhanced the previously bleak activity area which now provides a more welcoming venue for prisoners to socialise.

2.2.4. At the time of writing our report last year the prison was reeling from a proposal to increase the prison population from 189 by a further 70. Staff wasted considerable time assessing what alterations would need to be made to the prison and to the regime for this to be achieved. Prisoners were disquieted by the knowledge that this would require more cell sharing; a situation which many feared might lead to an escalation of tensions in their daily living arrangements. Fortunately, good sense prevailed. The prison remains at an operational level which takes account of the restricting constraints of the building and optimises the facilities to provide an excellent environment for prisoners to progress in their sentences.

2.2.5. As we write this report, the prison, staff and prisoners, are adjusting to the recently announced proposed merger with HMP Erlestoke.

2.2.6. We are concerned that long waiting times are being experienced by prisoners awaiting transfer to open conditions. At the time of writing, there are 15 prisoners awaiting transfer with the waiting time estimated to be 12-18 months. We believe that this is an unacceptable delay and that more places should be made available for prisoners to make timely progress in their sentences.

2.2.7. On the recently raised topic of prisoners' voting rights, this board wishes to state that we do not feel that it is within our remit to make comment on this issue. We will abide by whatever decision is made by the UK Parliament.

3 Topics on which the IMB must report

This section reports on five areas, Diversity, Learning and Skills, Healthcare and Mental Health, Safer Custody, Segregation and Separation Units

3.1 DIVERSITY

3.1.1. Diversity continue to be taken seriously by senior managers of all departments of Shepton Mallet prison and attending the quarterly Diversity Meetings is considered to be a priority.

3.1.2. These meetings cover all aspects of diversity, i.e. race, ethnicity, religion, age, disability, equal opportunities etc. and aim to check for indicators of discrimination and to plan appropriate action if necessary.

3.1.3. An IMB member attends these meetings as does a prisoner who has been appointed as Diversity and Foreign National Orderly.

3.1.4. The Orderly post is a full time paid position, carries a job description, entails a formal interview and requires qualifications at Level 2 Numeracy, Level 2 Literacy and Level 2 ICT.

3.1.5. Key skills are also required for this position i.e. communication, ICT, numeracy, improving own learning & Performance, working with others and problem solving.

3.1.6. The remit for this appointment is for the Orderly to pick up any issues of diversity from other prisoners which are fed back to the appropriate Diversity Officer.

3.1.7. Any issues raised are discussed at the quarterly Diversity Sub-Committee Meeting, chaired by the Diversity Officer and attended by volunteer prisoners.

3.1.8. A report from these meetings is fed into the main Diversity Meetings.

3.1.9. Diversity training is considered to be an important factor and whilst other issues made it difficult to implement the full training courses as planned, 76% of staff has now attended diversity training.

3.1.10. When all staff have completed diversity training, it is planned to provide follow-up workshops for everyone.

3.1.11. There are now 10 Diversity Officers located on one wing. This centralization ensures that diversity issues are dealt with in a co-ordinated manner and that the service is easier to contact. A Diversity Officer, along with the Diversity Orderly, hold drop-in groups.

3.1.12. These officers are to be congratulated on their dedication to Diversity whilst still undertaking their normal duties.

3.1.1. Race Equality

3.1.1.1. The Prison Service Race Relations Policy Statement is displayed throughout the prison and prisoners are given clear information on race equality on arrival at Shepton Mallet.

3.1.1.2. Also on arrival, prisoners are met by a nominated BME (Black or Minority Ethnic) prisoner who offers support in what initially may seem to be a strange and/or hostile environment.

3.1.1.3. This post is now a paid orderly's position, carries a job description, entails an interview and requires Key skills at Level 2.

3.1.1.4. Shepton Mallet prison continues to work and consult with a representative from the Somerset Race Equality Council who is invited to the quarterly Diversity meetings.

3.1.1.5. Whole Prison Ethnic Banding indicates that the BME population has increased this year.

3.1.1.6. White British remains the highest at 79.4%, Black or Black British 8.5%, White Irish or White other 8.5%, Mixed 2.6% and Asian or Asian British 1.1%.

3.1.1.7. There are no members of staff from a BME group.

3.1.1.8. The prison is currently holding 10 foreign national prisoners.

3.1.1.9. Following a recent audit, more information is now made available to foreign nationals when they arrive at the prison and the induction booklet now covers this topic.

3.1.1.10. The Race Equality Communication Strategy has been reviewed, revised and published.

3.1.1.11. The REO receives a newsletter every month. He and another officer have attended an Islamic conference.

3.1.1.12. Information continues to be displayed in the Staff training room, Healthcare and Prisoners' information room

3.1.1.13. A Race Equality folder is placed in the Visitors' waiting area.

3.1.1.14. A Race Equality survey has recently been undertaken and, again, the main issue raised is that of the lack of products on the canteen list for BME prisoners. This issue has been taken seriously and is under review for further discussion.

3.1.2. Racist Incidents

3.1.2.1. Whilst race equality issues still remain an important area for discussion, the prison has established a good record in forestalling or dealing with racist problems and it is now accepted that racist conflict is rare at Shepton Mallet, for prisoners and for staff.

3.1.2.2. There have been no significant racist incidents over the past year. However, it is clear that when or where prejudice has arisen, the root cause seems to stem from ignorance of the culture of others and, in order to combat this, multi-cultural awareness events continue in the prison.

3.1.3 Cultural Awareness

3.1.3.1. The Race Equality Officer and other staff continue to research the history of many different faiths and festivals linked to the prison population.

3.1.3.2. National days are taken from the calendar and the Catering Manager is consistent in his co-operation by organising different, and sometimes unusual, national and international food which the prisoners can choose for their meals.

3.1.3.3. The Catering Manager is to be congratulated on his dedication to provide meals for the cultural events, particularly in view of the difficulties created by the recent increase in the cost of provisions.

3.1.3.4. The REO continues to encourage many of Shepton Mallet's prisoners to help in the cultural awareness projects who in turn supply many good ideas and materials.

3.1.3.5. The Graphic Design NVQ class in the prison Education Block also continues to support cultural awareness by encouraging student-prisoners to produce graphic designs depicting various cultural subjects which can then be displayed on the Centre Diversity Board and in the Chapel.

3.1.3.6. These designs can be submitted as part of the individual student-prisoners NVQ portfolio.

3.1.3.7. "Faces of Britain" booklets have been purchased for distribution in the prison in order to raise awareness.

3.1.3.8. We acknowledge the commitment, hard work and enthusiasm of the REO, assisted by the prison Public Protection Officer, to making the multi-cultural awareness programme so successful whilst continuing with their normal duties. Their dedication, along with the help of prisoners and staff and with invaluable advice from outside supporters, ensure that these innovative events continue to flourish.

3.1.4. Equal Opportunities

3.1.4.1. At the time of writing this report, no complaints or issues have been raised under this heading.

3.1.5. Disability

3.1.5.1. There are at present 54 men on the Disabled Prisoners Register, a rise of 10 since the last report. This represents 29% of the current population at the prison.

3.1.5.2. As the age of the prison population increases, it is to be expected that levels of disability will also increase.

3.1.5.3. The main area of concern within the prison is whether there is adequate access to the prison facilities particularly for those who have mobility problems. The age of Shepton Mallet prison and its listed status make it very difficult if not impossible to make adaptations to the building. This leads to unavoidable discrimination against elderly and/or disabled prisoners e.g. in accessing the Education Department which requires negotiating several flights of stairs.

3.1.5.4. However, to improve accessibility and lessen the possibility of perceived discrimination, seats are fitted on staircase landings to enable disabled prisoners to rest between flights when going to the education block. Some classes are now conducted on the residential wings or in individual cells.

3.1.6. Equality

3.1.6.1. The Prison Chaplain, Revd. Browne has been very pro-active in organising the regular attendance of a range of denominations at Shepton Mallet prison. Faiths represented in Shepton Mallet at the time of writing this report are Church of England, Roman Catholic, Muslim, Pagan, Buddhist and Jehovah's Witness.

3.1.6.2. Faith Awareness booklets have been distributed throughout the prison.

3.1.7. Older prisoners

3.1.7.1. Meetings are held on a quarterly basis to discuss the needs of older prisoners; around 40% of the prisoners are aged 50 years or over.

3.1.7.2. As may be expected the focus of the meeting is the welfare of older prisoners and the accessibility of facilities to which their age dictates that they require.

3.1.7.3. There are several prisoners who are terminally ill. As the prison has no hospital wing, these prisoners continue to occupy cells, but have been issued with personal alarms. As may be expected, this increases staffing requirements.

3.1.7.4. As the establishment is 400 years old it's adaption to the needs of this category of prisoner is, to say the very least, severely limited; however the IMB is satisfied that such adaptations as are needed are to a greater degree put into place.

3.1.7.5. The prison has benefited from having representatives from RECOOP (Resettlement and Care of Older ex-Offenders and Prisoners). However, the funding for this post terminated at the end of March 2011.

3.2. LEARNING AND SKILLS

3.2.1. An Ofsted inspection in 2010 assessed the unit as Grade 2 (good). The provider is A4e and the Shepton Mallet team was rated as the best in the South West region and third nationally. The prison benefits from a stable workforce, both in L&S management and teaching staff.

3.2.2. The contracted hours were delivered. The prison is fortunate that the education and skills staff have mostly been in place for some years. The prison benefits from continuity in staffing. There was one issue with staff in the last year when a member had to be dismissed for inappropriate behaviour with a prisoner. We are unsure if this resulted from a training or staff selection failure.

3.2.3. The output in the workshops is the best in the region, probably because many prisoners have been working there for some time and are keen to work.

3.2.4. The education and workshop areas of the prison are not easily accessible to prisoners with physical disability. The workshop provides in cell work for those not able to get to the manufacturing areas. There is also a classroom on one wing which offers easier access and this is used by prisoners with limited mobility.

3.2.5. The prison was inspected in 2010 and one of the criticisms was that there were not enough higher level courses available. Most prisoners at Shepton Mallet have been in the prison system for many years and have completed ample low level courses. Obtaining funding for courses of suitable level remains a difficulty, plus the lack of resources within the prison to complete sections of higher level courses.

3.3. HEALTHCARE AND MENTAL HEALTH

3.3.1. Day to day healthcare is provided by Somerset PCT, the department being staffed by a small team, including psychiatric nurses. A GP attends for surgery sessions three times a week and also provides out of hours cover. The dentist attends for one weekly session. Other specialist professionals, for example chiropodist, also make regular visits to the prison.

3.3.2. It has been a year of uncertainty as a result of the reorganisation within, and of, the NHS. Commissioning of services moved from Dorset PCT to Somerset PCT and the provider of mental health services is also in the process of change. The pharmacy contract underwent changes of supplier which resulted in some disruption of deliveries to the prison.

3.3.3. There have been several staff changes in the department during the year including the consultant psychiatrist.

3.3.4. There have been no problems accessing in-patient or out-patient care when required and all waiting times have been within NHS targets.

3.3.5. The PCT will be undertaking a Health Needs assessment as this was last conducted in 2003.

3.3.6. The department continues to address the problem of long term reliance on pain relief medication. The department has been successful in reducing the number of patients taking these medications and it is hoped that work in the coming year will further reduce this dependency on prescription medications.

3.3.7. The problem of abusive behavior by prisoners directed at health staff has been addressed in part by improving dispensing procedures within the prison.

3.3.8. Prisoner representatives attend the quarterly Reference Group meetings.

3.3.9. Information on complaints procedures is displayed within the Healthcare Centre and there have been some complaints during the year. These were responded to within the prescribed time limits by either the Prison or the Primary Care Trust.

3.3.10. The Occupational Health Advisor attends the prison each month and has initiated a drop-in session for staff.

3.3.11. ACOOP ran a successful Stepometer Olympic challenge to encourage prisoners to keep fit. Ten percent of prisoners took part, using stepometers and a log book to record their walking. Several took part in a marathon walk, from Land's End to John O'Groats whilst others set more modest targets to improve their weekly walking average. Healthcare staff took part in a 'Get Moving' course

3.3.12. The department continues to help prisoners and staff with Nicotine Replacement Therapy courses and support.

3.4. SAFER CUSTODY

3.4.1 Deaths in Custody

3.4.1.1. There have been two deaths of prisoners in this reporting year. Both deaths were from natural causes and occurred off site, one in a local hospice and the other after the prisoner had been admitted to hospital. A

compassionate release was granted only 24 hours before the death of the prisoner in the hospice, necessitating costly bedwatches to be maintained until that time.

3.4.2 Safer Custody procedures

3.4.2.1. The HMIP reported Shepton Mallet to be one of the safest category C prisons that they had inspected.

3.4.2.2. The prison remains fortunate in having a low level of ACCT activity and, in the main; those which have been opened remain so for only a short period. There have been very few cases of self-harm or bullying behaviour. Any known instances of bullying have been quickly dealt with by the staff although it should be stressed that bullying is not a problem at Shepton Mallet.

3.4.2.3. Steps are being taken to address ACCT training as 20 staff require initial training and 52 refresher training. The scheme also requires another manager to receive case management training.

3.4.2.4. Following a campaign to encourage more prisoners to volunteer, the prison currently has nine Listeners with five on the waiting list.

3.4.2.5. The Safer Custody team meets quarterly with a mainly good attendance including Samaritans, Listeners, Healthcare and IMB representatives. The Violence Reduction Team meets on a monthly basis. Both meetings produce accurate minutes with effective follow up on any action points.

3.4.2.6. The annual Violence Reduction survey was carried out in October/November 2010 concerning prisoners' views on their safety within the establishment. Although the survey was handed to all prisoners, only 23 responses out of a possible 187 were received. In the survey prisoners identified two places considered unsafe in the prison, the gym and meal queues.

3.5. SEGREGATION/SEPARATION AND CARE UNITS

3.5.1. There are relatively few adjudications at HMP Shepton Mallet. A total of 31 adjudications, less than half of the previous year, have taken place during 2010/2011, with 22 being proven, 9 dismissed and 1 being referred to the Police.

3.5.2. The segregation unit continues to be little used. Of the 22 proven adjudication cases, 10 resulted in the small segregation unit being used for cellular confinement.

3.5.3. The segregation cell converted for constant watch conditions was used on one occasion during the year.

3.5.4. The IMB are usually promptly informed when the segregation unit is in use and regular visits take place to assess prisoners' welfare.

3.5.5. An IMB member attends the quarterly meeting of the Adjudication and Segregation committee. This is chaired by the Head of Custody and the previous quarters adjudications are checked to ensure that the punishments comply with local tariff guidelines.

4. Additional topics

4.1. Accommodation

4.1.1. A total solution to the problem of providing suitable heating to the upper landings of the wings is still awaited. It is a situation which, due to the fabric of the buildings, may never be properly resolved.

4.1.2. Sharing cells remains an issue for prisoners arriving at the prison. Many have been accustomed to not sharing and the movement up the waiting list for single accommodation is very slow, currently taking between 10-14 months. The prison continues to make every effort to forewarn prisoners that they will have to share accommodation and most new receptions are fully aware of the situation when they arrive at the prison.

4.1.3. Last year we were pleased to report that easy chairs and coffee tables introduced into the open wing areas had improved the ambience and sociability of association periods. Regretfully we report that these had to be removed because they did not comply with Health and Safety specifications.

4.2. Catering & Kitchens

4.2.1. The quality of the food provided at Shepton Mallet remains at a generally high standard and there have been very few reported complaints, either to the IMB or written in the comments book provided on the Wings.

4.2.2. Catering staff continue to endeavour to cater for all national occasions by producing a menu suitable for the day.

4.2.3. The long awaited major refurbishment of the kitchen including replacement of the floor and encapsulation of asbestos, was finished on schedule. Kitchen staff worked in temporary kitchens and were able to provide a limited menu during the three months it took for the work to be completed.

4.2.4. Balancing the catering budget continues to test the ingenuity of the catering managers. As all catering supplies are required to be ordered from a single source, managers have no facility to 'shop around' for better value or better quality products; the readymade meat pies supplied to the kitchen were of such poor quality that the kitchen staff now produce homemade pies

4.3. Chaplaincy

4.3.1. The Chaplaincy provision is wide and varied with access to a range of Christian Ministers as well as representatives of most other faiths.

4.3.2. The chaplaincy arranges and hosts a number of discussion group and evening musical events and concerts. It supports Changing Tunes which regularly attends sessions. A 'Songs of Praise' service is held each month.

4.3.3. The chaplaincy supervises and trains prison visitors who make weekly or fortnightly visits.

4.3.4. It also offers a supported visits service, to permit family to see prisoners more privately than in the visitors' centre, for example after a family bereavement or when links are being established after a lengthy period of estrangement.

4.4. Drugs

4.4.1. Drug abuse in Shepton Mallet, compared with the wider prison estate, remains a relatively minor problem. The establishment's drug testing programmes identify and monitor any development of drug use very quickly.

4.4.2. The prison was allocated over £81,000 by the Department of Health to provide Integrated Drug Treatment System (IDTS) services, even though the prison currently has little demand for opiate substitute treatments. IDTS is being used to support prisoners with prescription drug dependency.

4.4.3. The funding has been used to appoint additional staff with mental health training and to increase from part time to full time the counselling, assessment, referral, advice and through care (CARAT) service, with the aim of providing a more interdisciplinary healthcare and CARAT service .

4.4.4. The CARAT worker reports regularly to the Drug Strategy Committee. A substantial part of his work involves preparing prisoners for a move to open conditions, where they may encounter greater opportunities for drug and alcohol use than in a Category C prison.

4.5. Gym and Physical Education

4.5.1. There have been continuing problems through the year with maintaining staffing levels. The department is now managed by the Head of Regimes. However, the two remaining staff continue to provide a range of classes and sessions to appeal to the wide age range of the prison.

4.5.2. The department continues to pursue a proactive role to persuade older prisoners and those with disability to engage in exercise activities and programmes. Prison staff are able to use the gym facility during the lunch period, with team games and individual support including weights training.

4.6. Health and Safety

4.6.1. During the year the KPT was met and exceeded, 28 accidents against a KPT of 34. This is a continuing the downward trend of accidents, with 33 in 2009/10 and 40 in 2008/2009. Overall, accidents have reduced by around 50% in less than five years.

4.6.2. One of the main causes of accidents was identified as "slip and trip". High risk stairs were identified and with careful use of anti-slip surfaces, accidents have been reduced. With a high proportion of older prisoners in the establishment who may be more vulnerable to balance problems, the results are impressive.

4.6.3. Currently there are no outstanding litigation cases and there was only one case during the last year.

4.6.4. There is an expectation that the H&S KPT will be removed within the next 6 months. However with the precautions that have been implemented, expectations are high that the accident rate will remain low.

4.7. Lifers and the Offender Management Unit

4.7.1. The situation with Parole Board hearings has eased over the year and there are now less delays. However these do still occur, either because of backlogs in the system or failure of external offender managers to complete dossiers on time, resulting in additional work for unit staff who are required to review and update dossiers for rescheduled hearings.

4.7.2. Over the year there have been some difficulties with finalizing preparations for hearings. The prison should receive requests resulting from directions from the judge hearing the board at least four weeks before the date of the hearing. However these directions, which include requests for further assessments, are being received at much shorter notice for example, for a hearing on the 18th February, the requests arrived on the 1st February.

4.7.3. The situation for prisoners awaiting transfer to open conditions continues to deteriorate, with longer waiting times being experienced. Because of the public protection restrictions placed on many inmates, there are only a limited number of open prisons suitable for their progression. Currently there are 15 prisoners awaiting transfer and the current waiting time is estimated to be 12-18 months.

4.8. Offending Behaviour Programmes

4.8.1. The Offending Behavior Unit continues to offer excellent quality courses. The biennial operation audit of programmes assessed the SOTP courses (core, extended and booster) as exceeding the 'higher achieved' score and the Core Skills Booster achieved a 'higher achieved' score.

4.8.2. This small Department continues to experience staffing difficulties when arrangements need to be made for maternity leave and for staff requiring flexible working arrangements. Although the CSB programme achieved its KPT for courses completed, the SOTP registered only 25 against a KPT of 34, as a direct result of staffing shortages.

4.8.3. The department underwent a protracted period of uncertainty during a regional review of psychological services. For several months, members of staff faced an uncertain future as programmes were reviewed with a view to re-siting them elsewhere.

4.9. Preparation for Release and Resettlement

4.9.1. Quarterly meetings of the Reducing Re-Offending (Resettlement) Committee are chaired by the Governor.

4.9.2. A wide range of representatives from the establishment attend the quarterly meetings to go through the seven pathways. This promotes constructive discussion and an opportunity for new ideas to be progressed with regard to inmates moving to Category D prisons or, occasionally, released directly into the community.

4.9.3. Recently a new workshop has been introduced for prisoners likely to reach Category D which is proving very popular. Topics include practical guidance in opening a bank account, pension and benefit entitlements, finding accommodation etc.

4.9.4. More specific guidance for prisoners on town visits is to be prepared to ensure the best use is made by the inmates of this opportunity. This is likely to be in the form of a questionnaire of tasks for the prisoner to complete, for example comparing prices in different shops, going into banks to make enquiries etc.

4.9.5. In view of the significant numbers of older prisoners in Shepton Mallet, further consideration is being given to activities and socialising opportunities for these inmates. An action plan has been drawn up to consider topics such as retirement pay, health matters and consultation with the older inmates to discuss what they consider to be their specific needs.

4.10. Security

4.10.1. We are pleased to report that there have been no escapes, nor confirmed attempted escapes, during this year.

4.10.2. A Governor chairs the regular monthly meetings of the Security Committee, which is always attended by a representative of the Board. This committee deals with all matters affecting security within the prison, including contingency plans and exercises.

4.10.3. Several exercises have taken place throughout the year including a very successful hostage situation and escape exercise. Again, these are all up to date and the current score of 90% in the Standards Audit was very acceptable. Personal Safety Training is, as always, a priority and is ongoing.

4.10.4. A total of 635 Security Information Reports have been received by the department during the year. These prove invaluable regarding the security and safety of the prison although they increase the workload considerably for the staff. Cell searches are also regularly carried out either on a random basis or on information received.

4.11. Staffing

4.11.1. The Governor, who had been in post for nearly six years, retired in March 2011. A senior manager was appointed as acting Governor, but plans are afoot to merge HMP Shepton Mallet with HMP Erlestoke, under one governorship. Some efficiency savings are anticipated with the merger of administrative tasks.

4.11.2. At the time of writing, the proposed merger is affecting levels of staffing, as vacant posts remain unfilled until the merger process is completed. This has resulted in some departments being short staffed and hard pressed to complete their workloads.

4.11.3 Providing staff for bed watches continues to be a regular feature at Shepton Mallet, because of its aging prison population and geographical situation. Prisoners may be hospitalized in three different locations, Bath, Taunton and Yeovil. Generally the prison has been able to manage bed watches without too many instances of evening association being curtailed due to staff detailed elsewhere.

4.12. Visitors & Visitor Centres

4.12.1. Domestic visits are held at HMP Shepton Mallet on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday afternoons. The last twelve months have seen an increase in visitors attending on these days.

4.12.2. Many prisoners at Shepton Mallet do not receive regular visits for several reasons. Some have served many years in the prison system and have either lost touch with family or have very elderly family members.

4.12.3. Prisoners come from across the country and Shepton Mallet is not easily accessible by public transport

4.12.4. Every year we have reported that there is no signage locally to indicate the location of the prison once in the town. However, we are pleased to report that disabled parking spaces are now available immediately outside the main gate.

4.12.5. The extended day visit programme continues to provide a popular facility and during the course of the last year Shepton Mallet has offered five extended visit days, including three Kids VIP days where children, grandchildren and family members can spend the day together in the prison enjoying a range of activities.

4.13. Wing Representatives

4.13.1. The Establishment holds a meeting with representatives from every wing each month, the meetings being chaired by a principal or higher grade officer.

4.13.2. Safer custody, violence reduction and diversity issues are standing agenda items at the monthly meetings

4.13.3. Each representative is encouraged to bring forward any concerns in respect of their wing, some of the topics raised in the past year have included, visits, television reception, waste of food and concerns for prisoners who are terminally ill.

4.13.4. The continuing increase in the retail price index, increase in duty on tobacco products coupled with the general rise in inflation, has had the effect of reducing prisoners buying ability.

4.13.5. The minutes of all meetings are circulated to every wing.

4.13.6. As all prisoners at Shepton Mallet are life sentenced, the IMB continues to support these meetings, as they offer a method by which prisoners can freely raise their concerns.

4.14. Works

4.14.1. Shepton Mallet has some vulnerable buildings, which being listed, carry considerable responsibilities with regard to their care and maintenance. Nevertheless, the Works Department remains on schedule with its planned and controlled series of maintenance tasks and repairs. Shepton Mallet remains one of the best maintained prisons in the region.

5. THE WORK OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

5.1. Board Activities and Profile

The Shepton Mallet Independent Monitoring Board remains small, starting this reporting period with eight members; R.C. Brown Esq. JP (Chairman), Pamela Storey (Vice-Chairman), Jean Smith (Board Development Officer), Elaine Culley JP, Mary Emsley, Charles Francis and Gervase O'Donohoe. David Franklin retired from the board in March 2011 and the board was very grateful for his work and support during his seven years of service, which included a three year term of chairmanship.

Board members were in the prison on a total of over 300 individual occasions and attended 63 meetings besides the monthly Board meetings. Board members have carried out 52 weekly rota visits around the prison, and these reports are seen by all Board members and the Governor. A board member visits each week to meet and talk to newly arrived prisoners.

Members also deal with formal and informal applications from prisoners during the year and attend the monthly committee meetings covering many areas of prison management and activity including Wing Representatives Meetings, the Race Equality Action Team, the Diversity Committee, the Resettlement Committee, the Health and Safety Committee, Safer Custody and Violence Reduction Committees and the Quality Improvement Group (QIG).

The service level agreement with the prison continues to work satisfactorily. Our IMB Clerk has continued her dedicated support throughout the year, for which the Board is very grateful.

Table 5.1 Board Statistics

Recommended Complement of Board Members	10
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	8
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	7
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	0
Number of members leaving within reporting period	1
Number of attendances at meetings other than Board meetings	63
Total number of visits to the prison/IRC (including all meetings)	316
Total number of applications received	25
Total number of segregation reviews held	?
Total number of segregation reviews attended	2?

5.2. Applications

The IMB's own statistics relate to matters (known as 'applications') brought to us by prisoners after they have exhausted the regular Prison Service R&C process. The level of applications is much lower than in other prisons, because many prisoners discuss issues face to face with staff and because the prison environment at Shepton Mallet enables prisoners to deal with issues independently.

Prisoners are encouraged to make applications to the board by completing an applications form, but board members continue to take applications 'on the hoof'. There were 24 during the reporting period (Table 5.2). For the most part, the matters were resolved very quickly upon investigation and in many cases had already been dealt with by staff, or were in the process of so being.

Table 5.2 Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
A	Accommodation			1	2	2	1
B	Adjudications and Segregation			1	1		3
C	Diversity related	2					0
D	Education/Employment/ Training	1	8	3	2	4	2
E	Family visits/ resettlement issues	1	4		3	3	0
F	Food/Kitchen related		2	1			0
G	Health related	4	7	7	1	4	3
H	Property	6	10	7	3	5	2
I	Sentence related	14	12	9	6	3	0
J	Staff/Prisoner related	9	10	1	5		2
K	Transfers	6	2	1			1
L	Miscellaneous	7	7	7	1	6	10
	Total Number of Applications	50	62	38	24	27	24

5.3. Board Training and Development

The Board had regular in-house training sessions during the year and the Board is indebted to management and staff in the prison who help the Board broaden its understanding of the prison, its processes and systems. Sessions this year have included talks from the Prison Chaplain, The ACOOP manager, the Site Manager and the induction orderly.

Members also attended staff training sessions including Drug Awareness and P-NOMIS. The Board very much appreciates the support given by the prison to IMB training. Two members attended the IMB New Members course.

During the year, the board visited HMP Erlestoke.

The Board is dedicated to offering a professional service to prisoners and staff in Shepton Mallet prison and to this effect we undertake an annual Team Performance Review. The purpose of this is to examine whether the Board has met previous perceived goals and, if necessary, to set new targets for the coming year.

6. GLOSSARY OF PRISON-RELATED ABBREVIATIONS USED

ACCT Assessment, Care in Custody & Teamwork – replacement for F2052SH

AO Administrative Officer

BME Black & Minority Ethnic

CARATS Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice &

Throughcare Scheme – drug & alcohol team

CC Cellular Confinement – a punishment

CMU Case Management Unit – work on sentence planning & progress

CNA Certified Normal Accommodation

ETS Enhanced Thinking Skills – an OBP

GOOD Good Order or Discipline – Segregation under Rule 45/49 (historically GOAD)

HCC Health Care Centre

HMCIP Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons

IEP Incentives and Earned Privileges – Prisoners can be on Basic, Standard or Enhanced

IMB Independent Monitoring Board

KPI/KPT Key Performance Indicator/Target

LSC Learning & Skills Council

MAPPA Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements

MQPL Measuring the Quality of Prison Life

NOMS National Offender Manager Service – amalgamation of the Prison & Probation Services

OASYS Offender Assessment System – computerised risk & needs assessment

OBP Offending Behaviour Programme

PCT Primary Care Trust – National Health component responsible for healthcare

PEI/O Physical Education Instructor/Officer

PO Principal Officer

PPO Prisons and Probation Ombudsman

PPP Public Protection Panel

PS Prison Service

PSI Prison Service Instruction

PSO Prison Service Order

RRLO Race Relations Liaison Officer

SCG Safer Custody Group

SED Sentence Expiry Date

SIR Security Information Report

SLA Service Level Agreement

SMARG Segregation and Monitoring Review Group

SMT Senior Management Team

SO Senior Officer

VDT Voluntary Drugs Testing