



# **Annual Report of the Board**

**for**

**HMP THE VERNE**

**COVERING THE PERIOD**

**May 2012 to October 2013**

## **Section 1 STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB**

The Prison 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, 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 to the prison's records.

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### **Section 3 DESCRIPTION OF HMP THE VERNE**

HMP The Verne is a category C male training prison.

Certified Normal Accommodation:	572
Operational Capacity at 30 <sup>th</sup> April 2013:	610
Roll at 30 <sup>th</sup> April 2013:	593
Roll at 31 <sup>st</sup> October 2013:	0

The Verne Citadel was built with convict labour in 1847/8, to house prisoners building the breakwater for Portland harbour. The site was later used for a military barracks. HMP The Verne opened in 1949.

Vehicles must pass through a tunnel to reach the car parks and the main entrance of the prison. The tunnel was partially closed for some of the reporting period whilst essential maintenance work was carried out.

### **Section 4 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

#### **4.1 Summary**

4.1.1 This is the final Report of the Independent Monitoring Board of Her Majesty's Prison (HMP) The Verne. The Report covers the period from May 2012 until the prison's closure in October 2013.

4.1.2 No prison's future is certain today. For much of the reporting period, HMP The Verne was waiting to find out whether it might be re-roled to become an Immigration Removal Centre (IRC).

4.1.3 On 4<sup>th</sup> September 2013, the closure of the prison was announced. HMP The Verne is to be converted to an IRC, providing around 600 places to hold immigration detainees awaiting removal from the country. The transfer of prisoners to other establishments began straightaway and was completed by mid-October.

4.1.4 It is greatly to the credit of the Governor and his staff that the life of the prison carried on normally during that time, as will be seen in the Board's report.

4.1.5 The Board wishes to highlight the success of the prison's increased efforts to facilitate rehabilitation and resettlement. The Jailhouse Café is the most visible of these initiatives, but the total number of prisoners released on temporary licence to work outside the prison has never been greater. (5.5)

4.1.6 However, the Board still has concerns, which are set out below. The concerns over prisoners with mental health problems (5.3.8, 5.3.9) and prisoners without completed sentence plans (5.5.13) are not new. A new concern, the importance of planning for End of Life Care, reflects the increasing numbers of older prisoners. (5.3.7)

## **4.2 Particular issues requiring a response**

### **4.2.1 Issues for The Minister**

4.2.1.1 The Board remains seriously concerned that prisoners with mental health problems are held in the Segregation Unit until they can be transferred to a location with a secure mental health bed available. (5.3.9)

4.2.1.2 Increasing numbers of older prisoners mean that there will inevitably be more deaths in custody, and increasing numbers of older prisoners in poor health. End of Life Care will become more important. Recent experience at The Verne shows that there are many factors to consider when providing End of Life Care. Social care needs cannot be assessed in prison and a national policy is needed. (5.3.7)

4.2.1.3 The Board remains concerned that many prisoners are transferred without completed Offender Assessment System (OASys) assessments or sentence plans. The situation has worsened since the Board's last Report. (5.5.11)

### **4.2.2 Issues for the DDC**

None.

### **4.2.3 Issues for the Governor**

None.

## **4.3 Issues of Excellence not requiring a response**

4.3.1 The work of Expia, the Community Interest Company set up to reduce re-offending, in particular through the development of the Jailhouse Café. The work has been recognised through Butler Trust Awards to the team and a High Sheriff's Award for the Catering Lecturer who trained the prisoners in the café. (5.5. 3 -10)

4.3.2 The work of the Roman Catholic assistant to the Chaplaincy over a long period. She has now been awarded an MBE for her work with prisoners, and a Butler's Trust Award. (5.1.5)

4.3.3 The high standards maintained in the prison kitchens, recognised again by a Kitchen Performance Award and the gold standard for hygiene. (5.8.7)

4.3.4 The Horse Course (6.4.1)

## **4.4 Previous year's concerns.**

### **4.4.1 Prisoners with Mental Health Issues; lack of secure beds; delays in transfer.**

The Board notes the Minister's reply (Ref: ADR337212) and will be pleased to see fewer delays in transfers of prisoners between prisons and hospitals. The Board would, naturally, welcome the diversion of individuals with mental health issues into mental

healthcare provision before they go to court or enter custody. However, it will be a long time before the benefits of Liaison and Diversion filter through to Category C prisons such as The Verne. Meanwhile, delays in transfer of prisoners with mental health issues, and the long periods spent in the Segregation Unit by such prisoners, continue to cause the Board concern. (5.3.9)

#### **4.4.2 Prisoners arriving at The Verne without OASys assessments.**

The Board notes the Minister's reply (Ref: ADR337212), but the percentage of prisoners arriving without completed OASys assessments is higher than last year. This problem has often been reported in the past. (5.5.11)

#### **4.5 Overall Judgement**

4.5.1 The constant budget reductions of the past few years have placed a great strain on the prison.

4.5.2 From February to September 2013, there was acute uncertainty about The Verne's future, once it was known that the feasibility of converting it to an IRC was being considered. Throughout, the Governor was as open as he could be with prisoners and staff, keeping everyone informed as far as possible. At a difficult time, it was important for people to know that they would be given definite news as soon as possible about changes affecting their lives. The Board commends the Governor, the Senior Management Team and all the staff for the way in which they continued to give of their best and not to allow the uncertainty to affect their work.

4.5.3 The recent success of the initiatives for rehabilitation and resettlement must be highlighted. Much effort has gone into increasing opportunities for Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) in order to work outside the prison, and the great majority of the prisoners concerned benefited immensely. Those working in the Jailhouse Café gained in confidence rapidly; they learned how to relate to people and how to play a part in the everyday world outside the prison. (5.5)

4.5.4 HMP The Verne is a safe prison with dedicated staff who are good at dealing with prisoners and their problems. Relationships between staff and prisoners are generally very good, staff being accustomed to keeping order by reducing tension, talking through difficulties, and keeping the atmosphere relaxed and non-confrontational.

4.5.5 In the last two years, the prison has been invigorated by the energy of the Senior Management Team. Innovation and Development was the watchword and a "can do" culture prevailed. HMP The Verne has been important to the local community. There is sadness at its closure, but after more than sixty years, it is going out on a high note.

## **Section 5 PRINCIPAL ASPECTS OF THE PRISON AND PRISON REGIME**

### **5.1 Equality and Inclusion**

5.1.1 Respect and understanding for those with protected characteristics is considered important throughout the prison. At reception and induction, information on disability, age, nationality and ethnicity (now including Gypsy, Roma and traveller), and faith is collected. (Information on gay, bi-sexual or transgender prisoners is not currently collected).

5.1.2 Prisoners with protected characteristics are supported and reasonable adjustments made, for example with mobility aids for disabled prisoners.

5.1.3 The percentage of Foreign National prisoners continued to decrease; it was 43% in April 2013 (April 2012, 46%). UK Border Agency (UKBA) staff are available to support Foreign Nationals. Some Embassies can provide support such as newspapers for their nationals. The Dutch embassy has been particularly cooperative. Although 95% of prisoners have English as their first or second language, support for those with language difficulties is still required. Translation services, phone translation and peer interpreting are all used.

5.1.4 Almost 20% of prisoners are aged 50 and above, and the "Time Out" Community centre has been set up for them. It is a large room with a kitchenette and comfortable seating, a television, chairs and tables for jigsaw puzzles, board games or other activities. Yoga sessions were held there; outside groups came in to offer information, to run a choir and to teach Kings' cribbage. Older prisoners appreciate having the use of the centre.

5.1.5 The Board feels that the Chaplaincy team works exceptionally hard and conscientiously with all prisoner groups. There is an excellent rapport and working relationship between the different faiths. The Roman Catholic chaplain is leaving the prison after many years; she is a volunteer who was awarded an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours 2012 for her work with offenders. She won a Butler Trust award in 2013. She organised the Shannon Trust's "Toe by Toe" scheme where prisoner mentors work on a one-to-one basis with other prisoners wanting to improve their reading skills. The scheme at The Verne is the largest and most effective scheme in any prison.

5.1.6 In addition to the provision of regular services for different faiths, and the fulfilment of its obligatory duties such as daily visiting of prisoners in the Segregation Unit, the Board commends the chaplaincy team for initiating many other activities, which help prevent tension in the prison, as well as assisting prisoners, who often have stressful personal and family problems. Such activities include a wide variety of musical 'jam' sessions, guitar lessons, concerts, and several fund-raising charity events. Special events are held to mark religious festivals and to raise awareness of different faiths and cultures.

5.1.7 The Chapel is always a welcoming part of the prison, not just for prisoners, but for all who work with or are associated with the prisoners. The clergy is always prepared to take up concerns of prisoners, especially when it appears that a particular course of action does not seem correct, fair or reasonable.

5.1.8 Prisoners themselves work at equality and diversity issues, with elected Prison Council members on each wing picking up on issues and bringing them to the diversity and race equality action team (DREAT) meetings. There are other prisoner consultative meetings (focus groups), when prisoners are encouraged to contribute their views and to talk about their needs and any changes they would like to see. A prisoner representative for traveller, gypsy and Roma prisoners was appointed to ensure their inclusion in consultations.

5.1.9 Discrimination Incident Reporting - There were 88 Discrimination Incident Report Forms (DIRFs) submitted during the year (last year: 87). About 50 DIRFs were submitted at the time of Ramadan in 2012, and it was found that some of the forms had been submitted in the name of prisoners who knew nothing about them. The forms related to a small number of incidents. The DREAT team responded by setting up a planning focus group for Ramadan in 2013; this was appreciated by Muslim prisoners. Arrangements for Ramadan were then known in advance and were agreed to be satisfactory. The catering was very much appreciated. The Board notes that the normal food budget does not allow for special occasions such as the end of Ramadan, however members of the chaplaincy team succeeded in obtaining some funding from charitable sources.

## **5.2 Education, Learning and Skills**

### **Learning and Skills provision**

From August 2012: Weston College. To July 2012: Strode College

Other contractors included N-Ergy; Tribal; National Careers Service; A4E.

**Library provision:** Dorset County Council

5.2.1 In August 2012, Weston College took over the Learning and Skills contract. At the same time, the Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) 4 procurement system came into operation, with a new way of funding courses and a reduction in flexibility. Payment is now linked to attendance and outcomes rather than numbers of enrolled learners. However, over the reporting period The Verne has achieved more outcomes than were originally planned, and as a result has been able to increase the number of courses provided. This has been a difficult time of transition and those involved are to be commended.

5.2.2 Courses offered at The Verne include vocational ones such as bricklaying, painting and decorating, dry lining, horticulture and wood-machining. There are also courses in cleaning – offering good prospects of employment – customer service, environment, conservation and recycling. For prisoners with poor literacy and numeracy, Functional Skills qualifications in English, Maths and ICT are offered in order to equip them with the basic practical skills required in the workplace.

5.2.3 Many Foreign Nationals want English language courses, but English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision was reduced. However, suitable alternatives were identified and provided. The classes became “needs driven” to correspond with requirements.

5.2.4 Provision of Life Skill Qualifications has been increased. Completing courses such as Citizenship, Victim Awareness, Employability and Budgeting provides evidence that a prisoner is preparing for release and improves his chances of successful resettlement. A radio production qualification was a popular course. Work of a very high standard was produced on the Art courses.

5.2.5 The Virtual Campus at The Verne is one of the most successful in the country, with a high level of registration among prisoners. This facility is well suited to Distance Learning, and The Verne had 15 students registered with the Open University, and 13 with other providers.

5.2.6 The prisoners working in the Kitchens receive training up to City & Guilds NVQ Level 2 in Food Hygiene and Level 1 in Catering & Hospitality. Unfortunately not all are able to complete these courses because of moves to other establishments or release. Those men who gain ROTL and work in The Jailhouse Café outside the prison can study for NVQ Level 1 in Food Preparation and Cooking, and the Level 2 Diploma in Professional Cookery, plus the Royal Society of Public Health Food Safety Certificate.

### **5.3 Healthcare, Mental Health and Dental Services**

5.3.1 The Health Centre comes under the Prison Estate but is managed and staffed by personnel who work for Dorset Healthcare University NHS Foundation Trust (DHUFT). The change from the Primary Care Trust (PCT) took place in January 2012 but continues to cause problems, as management and Human Resources are remote from the prison and do not share the understanding and expertise that the PCT had gained from managing a prison health centre. There are also funding issues, as DHUFT work within a strict budget and dispute some areas of service provision.

5.3.2 There have been problems with staff recruitment, as DHUFT’s HR team does not seem to be aware that members of staff cannot be appointed until they have had full security clearance. This has caused long delays between staff leaving and a new person starting. Generally staff in the unit work well as a team, covering for each other if necessary. There is now an excellent GP service, with any absences covered by other GP’s in the practice.

5.3.3 In November 2012, all community staff were ordered to stop wearing uniform and instead wear mufti to work. The DHUFT staff in the prison wished to wear their uniform, as a uniform commands respect in the prison environment, helping to ensure that the staff/patient relationship is not compromised. DHUFT management are unwilling to acknowledge this and to allow an exception. The DHUFT staff in The Verne feel very uneasy that their concerns are not being listened to. This problem is yet to be resolved.

5.3.4 There is an ongoing issue with using staff generically, as NHS England wish to separate the general healthcare teams from the mental healthcare teams. Until recently, The Verne's healthcare staff have been working across the board, with all patients, providing cover for each other when required and in particular covering the administration of prescription drugs at weekends or during other absences. This reduces the need for agency or bank nurses. However, Mental Health teams are now no longer to be attached to one particular prison but will be peripatetic and called in only when required. More general nurses will be required as a result.

5.3.5 The Dental Service offers six-monthly inspections, treatment and cleaning and scaling by a hygienist to all prisoners. While there was a problem with faulty sterilising equipment, the Board received some complaints about waiting time for appointments. However, if the regular appointments or treatments could not be continued while equipment was out of action then other work e.g. denture fitting was pursued. Healthcare staff were able to offer pain relief for prisoners with toothache.

5.3.6 Prison escorts for hospital appointments continue to be problematic at times. Only one escort is allowed each morning and afternoon. Sometimes additional escorts can be provided by staff volunteers on "payment plus", or assistance can be obtained from another prison in the cluster. However, depending on how many prisoners have an appointment on any one day, sometimes appointments may have to be cancelled.

5.3.7 'End of Life Care' will be an issue of increasing importance in many prisons, as the prison population is aging. The problem has already arisen at The Verne. There is an unwritten protocol for care of dying prisoners but it is not the seamless process it should be. If a suitable care package cannot be arranged within the prison, then transfers to a prison with the proper facilities (Exeter within the Southwest area) should be made as easy as possible. In August 2013 this facility was used when a terminally ill prisoner who became too sick to be cared for at The Verne was transferred to Exeter. At times dying prisoners can be transferred to a local hospice, but there is not always a bed available. The prison Healthcare staff feel that DHUFT have never fully appreciated these difficulties.

5.3.8 There are approximately 10 - 14% of prisoners with serious mental health problems at any time within the prison and all Inreach services work well for them. However, the new NHS England community policies with regard to staff working generically are not entirely appropriate for the prison service and are causing conflict between DHUFT senior management and prison management which has yet to be resolved.

5.3.9 There is a continuing problem in finding a mental health bed if a prisoner is sectioned under the Mental Health Act but this is a national predicament as there are few secure mental health beds available. It is acknowledged by all staff that the Segregation unit is not a proper area in which to place the patients but usually there is little alternative. This will remain a problem until care in the community for all mental health patients is improved.

5.3.10 There are few complaints made to Healthcare although several prisoners have expressed their dissatisfaction that they cannot always obtain their preferred medication for analgesia. Several drugs that have been prescribed in other prisons have

now been excluded from the Dorset cluster policy and alternatives that are non-addictive (and non-saleable within the prison) are always offered if they are needed. If addictive drugs are prescribed there is a strict policy of administration which serves to protect the prisoner.

5.3.11 There have been a few problems this year with damp in the Healthcare offices which has been improved recently but not altogether eradicated. However, the Centre is always warm and cleanliness has not been compromised. There has never been a problem with cleaning the unit although it is understood that the contract cleaners are due to be changed soon. The staff pay particular attention to the cleanliness of the clinical areas and are very aware of the need for infection control.

5.3.12 There is provision for gay prisoners to obtain condoms and dental dams if they are required.

5.3.13 Immunisations (Hepatitis B etc.) are offered to staff and prisoners alike if they are felt to be necessary.

5.3.14 The Board is pleased to report that the Healthcare staff work well as a united and cohesive team with high-quality internal management. The Centre is always busy and staff work hard to achieve the high standard of care that is appreciated by prisoners and prison staff alike. They deal with emergency situations competently and professionally and in June 2013 successfully resuscitated a prisoner following a heart attack; he subsequently made a full recovery. Last year, the team's care of a terminally ill, long-term prisoner was given under difficult circumstances and was both admirable and commendable and specifically noted at the inquest. It allowed the prisoner a comfortable and dignified death.

## **5.4 Purposeful activity**

5.4.1 There is a variety of opportunities for working in The Verne. Wings require cleaners, servers for the dining room, and orderlies. Working outdoors in the gardens is popular and the prison looks attractive as a result. Industries include the wood mill, manufacturing items including garden furniture and furniture for other prisons. Lobster pots are produced and tea bags are packed. It remains difficult for the prison to secure contracts in the current economic climate. The Waste Management Unit has been very successful; recycling has been maximised, for example with hats and gloves being made from old clothing; chairs are re-covered with recycled material. Nevertheless, more work is still needed to ensure that every prisoner can be purposefully occupied. Wherever possible, learning opportunities have been introduced into work, so that the prisoner will gain a useful qualification as well as experience.

5.4.2 The Gym facilities have been well used by the prisoners and have led to qualifications for some. While good use was always made of the outdoor facilities – the Trim Trail and the football pitch – it has been very disappointing that the Gym was often closed towards the end of the reporting period. This was due to shortage of qualified staff locally.

## **5.5 Resettlement and Reducing Re-offending.**

5.5.1 Education, Learning and Skills and Purposeful activity are all part of the route to resettlement and ultimately, reducing re-offending.

5.5.2 The Verne has been fortunate that Expia Community Interest Company (CIC) was set up, firstly to develop the Jailhouse Café, but also to explore the possibilities of community partnerships. These initiatives were started by the Innovations and Development Team.

5.5.3 Expia is a Community Interest Company limited by guarantee, set up to manage the Jailhouse Café in conjunction with prisoner rehabilitation. The café has a world-class location overlooking Weymouth Bay and Expia was launched there in August 2012 as Ben Ainslie was winning his 5<sup>th</sup> Olympic Gold medal. At first, the café only served prison staff and volunteers, but it was subsequently opened to the public and is now open seven days a week. It is well used and has had a highly successful small business start-up.

5.5.4 Since the Café opened, approximately a hundred prisoners have worked on the scheme which is open to men with both long- and short-term sentences who have been granted ROTL. Seventeen prisoners achieved an NVQ qualification from this work environment and at least two prisoners secured a place in a Catering College following release. At least three men who worked in the Jailhouse Café have since left prison and found work in the catering industry.

5.5.5 Although in the main the scheme works well, there have been some challenging situations for the staff and about 10% of the men selected to work in the café have had their ROTL revoked.

5.5.6 The Café is run exactly as any other restaurant or café would be and its menu includes daily “specials” as well as regular items. Profits made from the sales in the café pay the employed restaurant staff; tips given to the serving staff go to charities selected by the prisoners themselves. The money also pays for packed lunches and waterproofs for the men on ROTL.

5.5.7 Another Expia enterprise was a highly successful Market Stall run fortnightly in autumn 2012 in the Old Town Hall in Weymouth. On sale were chutneys, small Christmas cakes and puddings made by the prisoners in the café kitchens, plants grown in the prison gardens and some smaller items of garden furniture made in the prison workshops. The stall was manned by two prisoners and a volunteer, giving the prisoners the experience of interacting with the public and being involved in a positive way with the local community. It was very much appreciated and enjoyed by the twelve men who took part in the project. Men from the Jailhouse Café have also supported local Portland events and the Portland Show held a reception at the café.

5.5.8 The Expia Chief Executive and staff received a Butler Trust Award in March 2013 at Buckingham Palace. The Hospitality and Catering Lecturer who set up and ran the Café until very recently, received a High Sheriff's Award for services to Education in July. Good publicity was generated on Radio 4, BBC TV's "Spotlight" and "South Today". A Website - [www.jailhousecafe.co.uk](http://www.jailhousecafe.co.uk) - and a Facebook Page were both launched in March 2013. The Café's progress can be followed on "Twitter", and there are some excellent reviews on "Trip Advisor".

5.5.9 With the closure of The Verne as a prison, the Jailhouse Café has now been handed over to HMP YOI Portland. The Board is delighted that such a successful venture is to continue. Expia has also been involved with starting another "Jailhouse" café at HMP Guys Marsh, using the experience gained at The Verne.

5.5.10 The Innovation and Development team was instrumental in establishing Expia, and has also arranged ROTL work placements at such places as a charity shop, the local Authority, the Tank Museum and local catering venues. They set up discussions with potential partners in community involvement, as well as looking for business links to develop the prison Enterprises. All these initiatives were aimed at improving outcomes for resettlement and reducing re-offending.

5.5.11 Last year, the Board reported its concern over the proportion of prisoners (40%) who arrived without completed Offender Assessment System (OASys) assessments. A correct OASys is essential to a prisoner's progress towards his eventual release and resettlement. This year, the figures are worse; of 1320 prisoners being accommodated at HMP the Verne, 562 (43%) arrived without a completed OASys. This adds to the pressure of work in the Offender Management Unit (OMU).

5.5.12 The OMU at The Verne works extremely well, and OASys assessments are completed well and within a short time frame. The OMU, Reception and other departments at The Verne worked hard before the closure to ensure that the prisoners leaving the prison were transferred with up-to-date and accurate records. The Verne received messages of thanks from other prisons commenting on the high standard of the documentation which had been sent to them.

## **5.6 Safer Custody**

5.6.1 Safer Custody encompasses Suicide Awareness, Self-Harm, Violence Reduction and Assessment Care in Custody Teamwork (ACCT), the procedure used when a prisoner expresses or shows suicidal or self-harm tendencies.

5.6.2 Since January 2013, Violence Reduction meetings have been included in the Safer Custody meetings which are now held bi-monthly, chaired by the new Head of Residence. There was a decline in the number of Listeners but there are now 20 trained prisoners. There was a problem with some staff not allowing them on to the wings but this has mostly been resolved, although it is difficult for Listeners to gain access to Segregation due to security issues. The Board is concerned that the Listener Suite remains closed and that the Mental Health training for Listeners has not been carried out.

5.6.3 An Anti-Social Monitoring book has replaced the Anti-Bullying procedures and this is proving satisfactory, while ACCTs are now processed by electronic log, so that information from the Observation books can be reviewed and statistics monitored. Most of the problems are in C2, the induction wing, and A2, which houses a large percentage of Eastern Europeans and ethnic minorities. There have also been problems on these wings with gambling and the production and drinking of hooch.

5.6.4 Healthcare sometimes has information on vulnerable prisoners which, for reasons of confidentiality, is not shared with Safer Custody. Deportation issues with UKBA and language barriers continue to cause concern and there is a high incidence of Polish prisoners self-harming as a way to manipulate and get desired results. It is important that Healthcare, the Chaplaincy, the Offender Supervisor and the IMB attend ACCT reviews. During the reporting period, there have been problems with new arrivals being allocated single rooms but then, at the end of the induction period, being required to share rooms, which causes resentment. When their appeals on medical grounds are refused, aggression can occur.

5.6.5 An Inquest at Dorchester on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2013, relating to a death in custody in February 2012, concluded that the prisoner died of natural causes and praised the medical staff at The Verne for their care. However, there was no Social Services provision to assess social needs and, with an ever-increasing elderly (classed as 55+) prisoner population, a national policy should be put in place.

## **5.7 Segregation, Care & Separation, & Close Supervision**

5.7.1 Throughout the period, the Board has visited the Segregation Unit (SEG) at least once and usually twice a week. As in previous reports, the Board is impressed by the care and concern of the SEG staff for the prisoners in their charge. Records of prisoners and visitors are punctiliously maintained and ACCT forms are properly kept. The longest incarceration during this period was for 42 days; the average stay was 3 days.

5.7.2 At Segregation, Monitoring and Review Group meetings (SMARG), the monitoring member is invited to participate in the inspection of randomly selected prisoners' records to see that they are correctly completed and maintained. Occasions when such records are incomplete or inaccurate are rare.

5.7.3 SEG staff always inform the duty IMB member of prisoners placed in the SEG for whatever cause. IMB members are always welcomed and speak to prisoners freely and privately if requested by prisoners.

5.7.4 Members attend adjudications and are satisfied that they are carried out correctly and that prisoners receive fair hearings with strict observance of the rules of evidence and of the Prison Service regulations. Segregation reviews are less well attended; notice is often short, and members are not in the prison every day. Those

reviews that have been attended have been observed to be properly conducted with the necessary staff present.

5.7.5 There have been no dirty protests during the period; the table sets out the use of force each month.

<b>MONTH</b>	<b>USE OF FORCE</b>
March 2012	0
April	2
May	0
June	0
July	0
August	1
September	2
October	1
November	0
December	0
January 2013	4
February	1
March	1
April	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12</b>

When force has been used and monitored by Board members, it has been seen to be within the parameters set by Prison Service Orders (PSOs). Whilst members have been present no prisoner has been injured (that is not to say that they have not suffered pain), and immediately the officer in charge is convinced that they are compliant with his orders, they have been released from restraint.

## **5.8 Residential Services**

### **Accommodation**

5.8.1 Prisoners are accommodated in six purpose-built blocks, plus a casemate which houses dormitory accommodation. The blocks are known as A1&2, B1&2 and C1&2 wings, each housing around 90 prisoners in a mix of single and double cells. There are shared showering/toilet facilities on each landing. The casemate, D wing, has nine dormitories, each with eight cubicles and an association area.

5.8.2 **The Kainos Project** (from the Greek for a new beginning), housed in D Wing, offered the six month "Challenge to Change" programme, where prisoners address their offending behaviour through course work, community living, team building, social interaction with volunteers and ongoing individual assessment. Prisoners wishing to participate must demonstrate that they have reached a certain level of social maturity and

undertake not to use drugs. The effectiveness of the programme has been demonstrated over time and is attested by former participants. The project ended in September 2013.

## **Kitchen & Food**

5.8.3 The Board can report that the Kitchen staff continued to produce a good varied menu within a very tight budget. There is no extra money to cover the costs of any special diets required for health or religious reasons. In addition to the everyday meals, staff have organised a number of themed days, provided lunch for Family Visits, Kainos functions, and even catered for two weddings!

5.8.4 The Kitchen staff have faced a number of difficult situations this year. The Tunnel providing the main access to the prison has been partially closed for much of the year whilst essential maintenance work was carried out. Larger delivery lorries could not come through for much of this time, meaning that very time-consuming and labour-intensive arrangements had to be made to get catering supplies from an area before the tunnel to the Kitchens.

5.8.5 Other problems have been generated as a result of equipment breakdowns. At one stage, three large pieces of equipment were out of action, necessitating some changes to the menus to accommodate the resulting restrictions in cooking techniques. Some repairs have been carried out, but by the time the last prisoner left, other repairs were still outstanding. When news of Dorchester Prison's closure was made public, the Kitchen manager immediately put in a request for equipment from Dorchester to be transferred to The Verne.

5.8.6 The national controversy over inaccurate labelling of food items, including possible additions of horsemeat to many ready prepared items, and of pork to Halal meals, resulted in the Manager having a rethink about several staple menu items. A number of dishes that were previously bought in, particularly the pasties and pies, were subsequently prepared at The Verne, and this proved very popular with the men.

5.8.7 The staff working in the Kitchen have performed to a very high level, despite being at least one member short for most of the year. A number of awards have been won, including Performance Recognition in June and December, and there were excellent reports from the Regional Catering Manager's Visits in January and June when Menu Assessments and Food Hygiene inspections were undertaken.

5.8.8 After the decision was made that The Verne would re-role to an Immigration Removal Centre (IRC), the Kitchen suffered shortages of prison workers qualified to work there, as the numbers of prisoners reduced rapidly. Latterly the men who remained were allowed to work a seven-day week to help overcome this, for which they were paid a bonus.

5.8.9 A Board Member normally attends the Bi-Monthly Food Meeting, when the Kitchen manager addresses all issues raised by reps from each wing.

## **Section 6 Other aspects of the prison and prison regime**

### **6.1 Drug Strategy and Supply & Reduction Meetings**

6.1.1 The Drug Strategy Quarterly Meeting and Supply & Reduction Monthly Meeting is made up of a diverse team of people that function within the prison to ensure that HMP The Verne remains a safe place for staff and prisoners. The agenda items for the meetings concern Mandatory Drug Testing (MDT), Compact Based Drug Testing (CBDT), Substance Misuse Report, Drug Dog Report, Integrated Drug Treatment System (IDTS), and Equal Opportunities.

6.1.2 The retirement of the drug dog and the inability to replace him has been a concern. He was reinstated on a temporary basis. The importance of the drug dog was recognised and all concerned were frustrated by the situation.

6.1.3 Healthcare and the Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice and Throughcare relating to drugs team (CARATS) appear to have had a good working relationship with regard to managing those with addiction issues. Fellowship Meetings for Alcoholics, Narcotics and Cocaine Anonymous (AA, NA and CA) were generally well attended, though numbers fluctuated.

6.1.4 There were concerns regarding the correlation between the increasing numbers of men on ROTL and the increase in drugs within The Verne.

### **6.2 Reception and Induction**

6.2.1 Reception staff make sure that the immediate needs of prisoners arriving at The Verne are met and that all essential procedures are carried out efficiently and well. The Board is pleased to record a marked reduction in prisoners complaining of problems with their property during this period; this is thought to be because of an increased allocation of staff.

6.2.2 Transport continued to arrive late, but reception staff devised procedures for dealing with the situation, so that the checking of property could be carried out the following day, if necessary.

6.2.3 A computer was installed to give Healthcare staff access to the medical information for late arrivals, so they did not have to rely on prisoners themselves informing them of significant "first night" health issues.

6.2.4 The contractor's vehicles did not have much space for carrying property as well as prisoners. However, when large numbers of prisoners were leaving The Verne before its closure, these problems were overcome either by the use of larger vehicles, or by the use of additional vehicles which only carried property.

6.2.5 The induction programme was shortened from two weeks to one. The Board notes that the change was managed smoothly by the departments concerned.

## **6.3 Security**

6.3.1 The number of adjudications reduced towards the end of the reporting period, coinciding with a significant reduction in Security Information Reports (SIRs). Together with the nil returns for MDT tests, the indicators suggested a lull in nefarious activities by prisoners.

6.3.2 The installation of a new security intelligence IT system was beneficial.

## **6.4 The Horse Course**

6.4.1 The Horse Course is an Offending Behaviour programme consisting of 7 sessions per week for two men, with one instructor using two horses. The men learned to use a halter to lead a horse around a course on the playing field. The project is designed to practise life skills (assertiveness, focus and perseverance, taking responsibility, empathy, calmness, realistic planning and analysis, communication). Prisoners are referred on the basis of their sentence plan. A video of the prisoners' work is submitted at the end of the week for assessment and they can obtain the Parelli Level 1 qualification. Working with the horses has been found effective with prisoners who find it hard to engage.

## **6.5 Visits**

6.5.1 The Board is pleased to report that the Family Visit Days, held every three months, have been very well organised and successful. The atmosphere has been relaxed and the family members have been very positive about their experience. These visits are to encourage fathers to interact with their children; the activities available have been very effective in achieving this aim, especially those which take place in the gym, where the family units compete against one another. Increasing the number of staff involved in Family Visits helped ensure their success. Volunteers from the Red Cross also organised activities during the Visits.

6.5.2 At the Family Forum which takes place on Family Visit days, relatives of prisoners are able to ask questions of a governor and other managers and make suggestions about how the visits could be improved. These meetings have been very constructive and suggestions made by family members have been acted upon, for example washing facilities have been made accessible to visitors.

6.5.3 The Board is pleased that it was possible to provide extra domestic visits on Friday afternoons, as it was noted last year that there were insufficient. However, Family Visits remained at four per year instead of the six which had been hoped for.

## **Section 7 The Work of the Independent Monitoring Board**

### **7.1 Board Training.**

7.1.1 Members of the Verne IMB have undertaken various types of training throughout the year. At the monthly two-hour training sessions, staff from Healthcare, Reception, Security and Estates have given presentations and members have been familiarised with the ACCT documents and informed of the new developments in the area of Reducing Re-offending. These presentations were all of a high standard and were tailored effectively to the needs of the IMB. Representatives from the IMB Secretariat came to The Verne to give a talk about their role to IMB members from The Verne, Guys Marsh, Dorchester and Portland.

7.1.2 During this period, members have attended the National Foundation course and the IMB National Conference. The Board made a visit to HMP Guys Marsh, which gave a valuable insight into the organisation of a different C category prison and the way the IMB organised their duties. In October 2013 the Board visited Immigration Enforcement (formerly part of the United Kingdom Borders Agency) in Croydon, for presentations on criminal casework. Immigration Enforcement is responsible for investigating immigration offences, detaining and removing individuals with no right to be in the UK, and preventing abuse of the immigration system.

### **7.2 Board Statistics.**

Recommended Complement of Board Members	14
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	9
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	10
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	4
Number of members leaving within reporting period	3
Total number of Board meetings during reporting period	18
Total number of visits to the Establishment	406
Total number of segregation reviews held	
Total number of segregation reviews attended	14
Date of Annual Team Performance Review	January 2013

### 7.3 Analysis of Applications received by the Board:

Code	Subject	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13 *
A	Accommodation	4	3	1
B	Adjudications	8	13	6
C	Equality & Diversity (inc religion)	5	12	1
D	Education/employment/training inc IEP	25	6	1
E 1	Family/visits inc mail & phone	7	5	6
E 2	Finance/pay	0	0	0
F	Food/kitchen related	1	5	1
G	Health related	31	7	19
H 1	Property in this establishment	21	35	8
H 2	Property (during transfer/in another establishment)	No data	No data	18
H 3	Canteen, facilities, Catalogue shopping, Argos	No data	No data	2
I	Sentence related (inc. HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-cat etc)	17	20	33
J	Staff/prisoner concerns inc bullying	2	6	2
K	Transfers	11	16	16
L	Miscellaneous	15	23	27
	<b>Total number of IMB applications</b>	147	151	141

\* 2012/2013 statistics are for 18 months.

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