



ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BOARD

FOR

HMP VERNE

COVERING THE PERIOD

May 2010 to April 2011



1 STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

The Prisons Act 1952 and the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 require every prison and IRC to be monitored by an independent Board appointed by the Home Secretary from members of the community in which the prison or centre is situated.

The Board is specifically charged to:

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 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 a right of access to every prisoner and every part of the prison and also to the prison's records.

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3 DESCRIPTION OF HMP THE VERNE

HMP The Verne is a Category C male training prison. It was a 19th century citadel fortress-overlooking Portland Harbour and was taken over as a prison in 1949 using the casemates in the citadel defences for dormitory accommodation, and workshops. The prison accommodates mainly long term, life sentence and Indeterminate Public Protection

prisoners. Approximately 50% of prisoners at HMP The Verne are foreign nationals, representing over 50 different nationalities. Operational Capacity as at 30th April 2011 was 607.

The accommodation consists of six purpose built house blocks constructed in the early 1970's known as A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2 wings. All prisoners have keys to their rooms. Each wing can accommodate approximately 90 prisoners and most occupy single cells. The 7th wing, D wing, is still in a casemate and houses the Kainos facility with dormitory accommodation, where the regime is based on the Christian ethos of do unto others as you would have done to you but is not overtly religious and does not require religious commitment. This regime has achieved full accreditation by the Correctional Services Accreditation Panel and is one of only three outside agencies so accredited by the Prison Service. Their record is of greatly reducing recidivism.

4 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND MATTERS OF CONCERN

4.1 ISSUES FOR THE MINISTER

- 4.1.1 As reported for the last two years, Parole Board hearings continue to be delayed. This has been exacerbated both by the number of cases being deferred for psychiatric reports which increases the number of time consuming oral hearings and by the slow response from shared services. (See 6.9.2)
- 4.1.2 The time it takes to carry out Vetting and Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks remains a problem. Good potential workers get other jobs while waiting for checks.
- 4.1.3 There remain in HMP The Verne, prisoners with mental health problems for whom care in the community has failed and for whom there is no adequate alternative provision. Either prisons should be equipped to care for such people or other facilities should be available.
- 4.1.4 There are good woodworking workshops at HMP The Verne and also areas where assembly work is undertaken. It is disappointing that the prison is not encouraged to increase the work available to prisoners since it is penalised in subsequent budget years when it makes money doing work for some outside bodies. (See 6.6.2)
- 4.1.5 It is also wrong that the work both in the carpentry workshops and elsewhere in Enterprises is not incentivised. Work rates are generally slow and do not prepare prisoners for productive work on their release, but could do so if work was properly rewarded. (See 6.6.3)
- 4.1.6 It is wrong that so many prisoners arrive without OASys or Sentence Plans. (See 6.9.3)

4.2 ISSUES FOR THE DDC (Previously RCM)

Introduction

This report covers a period of significant change at HMP The Verne with both Governor retiring and Deputy Governor transferring at the end of March 2011 while staff were unsettled by concerns of year on year budget reductions. This simultaneous removal of the two top posts added to the disquiet of staff. Earlier in the year, staff morale was impaired while the investigation of improper use of e-mails was undertaken and resulted in disciplinary action.

4.2.1 The establishment continues to receive on a regular, often weekly basis, prisoners who do not meet the criteria of HMP The Verne. These prisoners are taken straight to the segregation unit where they wait until they can be moved to another prison. This punishes them for mistakes not of their own making and this should not happen. (See 5.6.7)

4.2.2 During the year some prisoners were held in SEG (Segregation Unit) for over 5 weeks whilst waiting for transfers out. This is wrong. (See 5.6.8)

4.2.3 The Board are extremely frustrated at the total lack of progress with the Elderly Prisoner's Unit which was granted money by the King's Fund in 2009, and originally set for completion in the summer of 2010. (See 6.10.9)

4.2.4 Problems continue in the preparation and delivery of Canteen to prisoners, where HMP The Verne supplies the Portland YOI and HMP Dorchester as well as itself. The cramped conditions, lack of fridge & freezer space and reduced number of items available, together with inaccuracies all contribute to disquiet amongst prisoners. The fact that DHL seldom manage to attend Verne meetings to explain their problems adds to the frustration. (See 6.2.2 & 6.2.3)

4.3 ISSUES FOR THE GOVERNOR

4.3.1 The Board has concerns about the completion of ACCT (Assessment, Care in Custody & Teamwork) files. Quality checks at Safer Custody Meetings frequently show poor recording. Similarly, there are concerns over Anti Bullying procedures. (See 5.5.4)

4.3.2 Escorts for prisoners who need outside hospital visits have continued to cause disruption either because officers are taken off other duties to undertake this task or because escorts cannot be found and prisoners are late and may miss their appointments. A workable system is required. (See 5.3.5)

4.3.3 The drop, both in numbers of Listeners and confidence in those that remain, must be a risk that should be constructively countered. (See 5.5.3)

4.3.4 It is wrong that with Canteen concerns always topping the list of grievances at Amenities meetings, DHL seldom attend these meetings and equally seldom answer any queries sent to them. Tensions would be eased if DHL could be persuaded to attend regularly. (See 6.1.2)

- 4.3.5 A further regular concern at Amenities meetings and also highlighted in IMB Applications is that of inaccurate pay under P-Nomis. Whilst it has improved slightly it still causes a lot of prisoner resentment and would benefit from greater accuracy. (See 6.1.3)
- 4.3.6 The Board is disappointed to report that it has been necessary to carry forward to this report a number of observations which were mentioned in their 2009 - 2010 Annual Report and on which no progress appears to have been made. The observations falling into this category are point 5.3.2, point 6.2.1, point 6.6.1, point 6.6.2, point 6.8.1, point 6.9.1, point 6.9.3, point 6.10.4 and point 6.10.5.

5 AREAS THAT MUST BE REPORTED ON

5.1 DIVERSITY & RACE RELATIONS

- 5.1.1 The bi-monthly Diversity & Race Equality Action Team DREAT meetings are regularly attended by the IMB and are well attended by staff and wing representatives covering all aspects of Diversity and Racial Equality issues with up to date statistics presented and issues arising from those figures discussed. Faith matters, Community Engagement, Training and planned projects/events are also on the agenda at each meeting. Feedback is actively encouraged from the wing representatives. Action points are always followed up.
- 5.1.2 IMB monitors RIRF's and DIRF's (Race & Discrimination Incident Reporting Forms) regularly. RIRF's – there has been an increase in complaints around bullying issues. DIRF's continue to be low in comparison but this may be because incidents go unreported because prisoners may be reluctant to be open about their sexual orientation.
- 5.1.3 DREAT meetings cover Chaplaincy issues and for much of the year there have been no visits from either an Imam, due to a severe road traffic accident, or a Sikh minister and the latter part of the year has been without the regular Chaplain who has been off sick. The work has been picked up by volunteers which has been particularly appreciated by prisoners and the IMB.
- 5.1.4 An ambitious Equality Impact Assessment, EIA, programme was undertaken during the year, covering 11 areas which had been highlighted as requiring attention in HMCIP and IMB reports. 7 were completed and the remaining 4 were close to completion. The programme will continue.

5.2 LEARNING AND SKILLS

- 5.2.1 The Quality Improvement Group has a detailed Action Plan which identifies areas for improvement and the steps necessary to achieve this; progress is monitored regularly.

- 5.2.2 Access to computers has improved steadily in the past year. Stand-alone computers are now available on some wings for enhanced prisoners to continue their studies in their own time, though they have proved vulnerable and are frequently out of action. A clearer maintenance responsibility is needed. The prison is soon to have a “Virtual Campus” which will allow restricted access to courses and information via Broadband.
- 5.2.3 “Embedded Learning” has now been implemented in all workshops, thus combining the development of literacy, language and numeracy with vocational and other skills. The skills acquired provide learners with the confidence, competence and motivation necessary for them to progress, gain qualifications and to succeed in life and at work.
- 5.2.4 There is a problem nationally with funding of Foreign Nationals for Open University (OU) courses. This is because the OU is not supporting any students who may be deported. If they have “indefinite leave to remain”, this status will not be revoked until they are at the very end of their sentence, then it will be lifted and they will be returned to their country of origin. Students who are part way through degree courses are the most adversely affected. Courses from other providers are being used instead.
- 5.2.5 The Library helps with the publication of the Verne Newsletter which celebrated its 4th anniversary in June 2010. 200 prisoners have contributed to 17 editions and the Koestler awards recognised this with a Bronze Team Award.
- 5.2.6 Toe-by-Toe is a mentored reading project where mentor prisoners help other prisoners to improve their reading skills. The Verne runs the largest Toe-by-Toe literacy project in the whole of the prison estate, with 34 mentors. A fact to be highly commended.
- 5.2.7 There is an increased focus on Employability in vocational and pre-release courses offered. For example, those within six months of release can now take the Health and Safety test required to gain a CSCS (Construction Skills Certification Scheme) card, vital for employment in the Construction Industry. The “pre-release passport” scheme helps prisoners prepare for release with a combination of vocational and life-skill courses. Links with employers are in place and more are being developed.
- 5.2.8 The Information and Guidance Centre is a useful resource with access to much relevant information for those preparing for transfer to a D-Category prison, or for release. 14 prisoners working in the Centre achieved an NVQ in information and guidance, which should help them to use their experience in future employment.

5.3 HEALTHCARE, MENTAL HEALTH & DENTAL SERVICES

- 5.3.1 The Health Centre, which comes under the local NHS PCT, continues to work under pressure and often with staff shortages. The Doctor arrangement changed in February 2011 when the locum left and we are pleased that prisoners are now receiving healthcare from two GPs from a local practice. A slightly different approach caused concern at first, but this has now been understood by most prisoners and is much appreciated by nursing staff.

- 5.3.2 As reported last year there is a regular turnover of staff and frequently a long gap whilst new staff are recruited. This often means that a Healthcare representative is not present at regular prison meetings e.g. Public Protection or Safer Custody and at which their input would be beneficial and helpful.
- 5.3.3 Nonetheless, the Board feels that the Healthcare staff work diligently in difficult circumstances, often without a full complement of staff and at times with very demanding prisoners.
- 5.3.4 There have been particular problems of slow delivery with the central distribution of prescription drugs and whilst changed practices have now improved the speed of urgently needed drugs, the news that the system is again out for tender and change is worrying.
- 5.3.5 Prison escorts for outside appointments create a problem and officers may be taken off other duties. This has caused both internal disruption and on one occasion a delay which made the prisoner miss his appointment.
- 5.3.6 Dental services were interrupted for 3 months while the surgery was refurbished and infection control improvements were instigated. This caused a long waiting list for dental work.

5.4 INTERDEPARTMENTAL RISK MANAGEMENT MEETING, (formerly Public Protection.)

- 5.4.1 Regular monthly meetings take place, chaired by the Head or Deputy of OMU with only an occasional absence. The agenda is fixed, with new prisoners being risk assessed and review dates for these set in the first part of the meeting, followed by reviews of existing cases then Child Protection and Mail monitoring issues. The lack of a Psychologist hampers some discussion, though there are now 2 in training. The detailed discussion of each prisoner's case is recognised as a valuable risk management tool.
- 5.4.2 There was an instruction to restrict this meeting to no more than the 5 most risky cases. IMB view it as correct that this direction has not been adopted and all prisoners are assessed for risk.
- 5.4.3 Problems frequently occur when prisoners arrive with no OASYS and incomplete sentence plans. They cannot then be assessed in a timely manner, this is explained in detail in 7.9.3.

5.5 SAFER CUSTODY/ SUICIDE AWARENESS

- 5.5.1 The Safer Custody meetings are held monthly with Suicide Awareness being incorporated into the meetings quarterly. IMB members attend regularly and view it as an important meeting needing consistent focussed chairmanship.

- 5.5.2 The old PAL suite eventually closed, with the new Listeners' Room opening in 2011. There is still debate and uncertainty as to how the room should be used, and by whom.
- 5.5.3 Confidence in the Listeners system was seriously impaired after an abuse of the system by one prisoner. Several months down the line, this is still resulting in Listeners not being used as often as in the past and the number of Listeners has dropped to 8, with the likelihood that it could well be reduce to 4 or 5 over the next couple of months. Because of a shortage of Samaritans able to come in and do a Listener Training course, training that was hoped to commence in Spring will not now be delivered until the Autumn.
- 5.5.4 The quality checks of ACCT and Anti-bullying files which take place at the meetings often show poor entries under 'Observations', ineligible signatures and incomplete documentation. This is exacerbated both by the fact raised last year that staff are not completing basic or refresher ACCT training, and also a continuing shortage of ACCT Assessors, especially uniformed grades. It has been agreed that the Anti Bullying process needs reviewing as there are serious concerns as to the effectiveness of the present system used for dealing with both victims and perpetrators.

5.6 SEGREGATION UNIT

- 5.6.1 The Segregation Unit has seven cells, each with their own toilet facilities; there is a separate bathroom and an exercise yard. One cell is equipped with papier mache furniture for violent prisoners.
- 5.6.2 Board members visit the unit at least twice a week, check the paperwork, and speak to all prisoners and staff. Prisoners are asked whether they are satisfied with their treatment.
- 5.6.3 The paper work is properly kept and is rigorously reviewed at SMARG meetings and discrepancies (eg delays in signing) identified and noted.
- 5.6.4 The board is generally informed immediately of prisoners being confined in the SEG. There have been a few occasions when force has had to employed to restrain or move prisoners to SEG. When monitored by the board such events are properly organised and executed by staff using the minimum of force and are video recorded.
- 5.6.5 There were a total of 658 adjudications during the year, or almost 55 a month and significantly up from last year's average of 44 per month. This again demonstrates the greater tension currently in the prison.
- 5.6.6 For a period during the year few if any adjudications were referred to the independent adjudicator because of the leniency of awards he was imposing. This has now been changed and a firmer stance is being adopted.

There are two areas of grave concern for the Board;

- 5.6.7 There has been a substantial increase in prisoners arriving at HMP The Verne who are out of criteria for this prison. During the year 55 prisoners were located immediately in the Seg and held there until they could be moved on. Such men are effectively being punished through no fault of their own and some were held for lengthy periods. This should not happen. The criteria are well established and it should not be possible for other prisons to send prisoners who it is known will not be able to stay at HMP The Verne.
- 5.6.8 The length of time some prisoners are held in Segregation whilst transfers are being planned is inappropriate. Arrangements with other prisons have been made for regular transfers out but do not always work. Eight prisoners were segregated for over 30 days, the longest was 45 days.
- 5.6.9 There was a death in the Segregation Unit this year which is assumed to have been a suicide, though a narrative verdict was recorded with several contributory factors. (See 7.10.3)
- 5.6.10 The Board commends the staff of the Segregation Unit for their care, commitment and patience with prisoners when dealing with some very difficult situations. It is the opinion of the Board that the officers always provide a respectful, firm but fair approach to prisoners in the cells, their work is exemplary.

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

6.1 AMENITIES

- 6.1.1 It is intended that bi-monthly meetings should take place. This committee enables prisoners' wing representatives to air residential concerns or grievances on behalf of those on their wing. The Chairmanship has been changed frequently and a number of meetings were cancelled or postponed.
- 6.1.2 Canteen queries constitute the largest number of queries and it is disappointing that the DHL manager is seldom able to attend these meetings.
- 6.1.3 The Amenities meetings have highlighted the problems of pay inconsistencies on the introduction of P-Nomis. It would appear that staff have difficulty logging prisoners on for work and the result is wrong pay. Whilst this has improved over the year it is not fully resolved.

6.2 CANTEEN

- 6.2.1 The perception remains that the prices being quoted by DHL are higher than prices outside prison. Regular quarterly reviews of items are undertaken although prisoners often complain of limited choice. The level of prison wages, which are lower than at other prisons continues to be a concern, especially with increasing supplier prices.
- 6.2.2 Storage of certain items is not possible due to the cramped conditions and lack of fridge and freezer facilities, thus reducing the items available. This causes resentment in prisoners, who may have been used to obtaining certain items at a previous prison.
- 6.2.3 Another effect of cramped conditions is that one fire escape route is often obstructed by canteen goods in storage. The view of many who work there is that the premises are not fit for purpose.

6.3 DRUGS AND DRUG STRATEGY

- 6.3.1 There have been considerable problems caused by IDTS (Integrated Drug Treatment System). As reported last year, the NHS money allocated for the Verne to accommodate IDTS was used elsewhere by NHS. No IDTS nurse was provided and the August 2010 Drug Strategy meeting concluded that the Verne was not suitable, it not being possible to isolate prisoners on Methadone. However, 28 prisoners progressed through scheme in year, though with disproportionate resource use by small group. This has led to developments in service to recognition that some cannot be treated in this regime and need early transfer. Only 2 remained on maintenance regimes based on clinical need. Those involved now see scheme as developing well.
- 6.3.2 The Verne continues to work to reduce drug and substance abuse. It is with regret that the board notes the loss of the alcohol worker as part of changes to substance misuse services. We express concern that there should not be disruption to existing services by loss of individual posts whilst the fundamental review and redesign of substance misuse services is being undertaken
- 6.3.3 The Drugs Strategy multi-disciplinary Committee continues to meet quarterly. The committee monitors, evaluates and ensures good service delivery; the IMB attends these meetings. Drug test figures show 14 Mandatory Drug Test positives in year or 3.88% which is within the 4% target, CBDT (Compact Based Testing) found 3 positives in year 0.13% But the concern is that the testing pattern is too predictable for CBDT and there are not adequate staff allocated to testing to allow for targeted and suspicion testing with MDT so extra staff allocation is being sought.
- 6.3.4 Drugs, together with mobile 'phones, continue to be thrown into the prison over the wall. The Board commends those staff whose quick reactions have apprehended offenders.
- 6.3.5 The search dogs gave 1-2 indications of drugs per month at visits and 6 per month on wings but concern exists that funding has not allocated been for 2012-2013. The

pattern of dog work of dog is constantly changing to keep up with the nature of attempts to breach perimeter security. The Board is impressed with the work that the dogs and their handler do. They continue to act as a deterrent in the battle against drugs.

6.4 GYMNASIUM

- 6.4.1 In August 2010 Gym Staff supported by Verne Sports and Social club raised £2k for local charity via 'Verne World Cup Competition'.
- 6.4.2 The gym had success as HMP The Verne is the only prison where prisoners can qualify for Football Association level 2 coaching badge as reported in Dorset Echo.

6.5 HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 6.5.1 There is an anomaly where the steeper grass banks are left un-mown because of health & safety concerns if the mower is held by a rope. They then become a fire risk in late summer. Elsewhere in UK steep banks are regularly mowed using a rope and the fire risk eliminated.
- 6.5.2 There are areas not being fully utilised because of the interpretation of Health and Safety legislation. One example is the top shelf not being used in Reception storage, could it not be used for light packages? The result is many cases and parcels left on the floor where they obstruct movement and can be tripped over.

6.6 ENTERPRISES

- 6.6.1 The industry management endeavours to find work and outlets for the workshops' products. The recession has resulted in fewer contracts being obtained. Much of the current work is for the prison estate.
- 6.6.2 The board is concerned that there has not been sufficient work to keep both the prisoners and expensive machinery fully occupied and used. On visits to the workshops prisoners are often observed not having any work to carry out.
- 6.6.3 The fact that any money earned by selling some furniture or Lobster pots is removed from the next year's budget on the assumption that it will be earned again removes any incentive for both prison and prisoners to work hard and productively. This careless attitude to productivity cannot prepare prisoners for work after release.

6.7 KITCHENS

- 6.7.1 The Board is impressed with the hard work carried out by the kitchen staff 365 days a year in producing 3 wholesome meals per day with varied menus and catering for all prisoner requirements within the very limited per capita allowance.
- 6.7.2 The regular bi-monthly food meetings this year instigated by the kitchen manager are much appreciated by prisoners as is the flexibility shown by the Kitchen Manager in reaction to these meetings. It is a fact that the IMB receives almost no negative comments on the food provision. The staff are to be commended.
- 6.7.3 Prisoners have appreciated the continuing themed meal days, which won the Kitchen an award during the year. The Kitchen Manager also received a vegan society award in November 2010.

6.8 KEY PERFORMANCE TARGETS (KPTS)

- 6.8.1 IMB monitors KPT performance variances, though as pointed out last year they have a tendency to compare or measure the immeasurable and frequently appear pointless.
- 6.8.2 An example is where energy usage is recorded, but no attention is paid to the enormous areas of single glazed window around the prison. It is apparent that vast energy savings could be made if the buildings were brought up to current building regulations standards.

6.9 OFFENDER MANAGEMENT UNIT (OMU) & INTERVENTIONS

- 6.9.1 Prisoners continue to come to the Verne expecting to attend courses no longer available here, but which they need to complete as required under their Sentence Plans.
- 6.9.2 There remains a backlog of cases waiting to be heard by the Parole Board and the delay is frequently exacerbated by calls for oral hearings or psychiatric reports. These have to be organised through Shared Services who seem inundated with work and very slow to react or organise the needed report. On one occasion a report called for by OMU in October, was not arranged until the following July
- 6.9.3 For many years we have commented on the failure of other prisons to complete OASys assessments and sentence plans before sending prisoners on to the Verne. It puts increased pressure on OMU here and should not happen. In this year, 264 prisoners arrived with no OASys and 92 had their OASys, but no sentence plans. The benchmark for OASys and sentence plans is 2 months after sentence and 171 prisoners were outside this target. Two were over 80 months after sentence. As would be expected most come from London prisons, but they send the majority of

prisoners to HMP The Verne, nonetheless, the National Probation Service is not achieving its performance standard.

- 6.9.4 The CALM, (Crisis, Aggression, Limitation & Management) course is to cease which appears counterproductive as it is a course which the prison can easily fill and which benefits prisoners.

6.10 PRISONERS AND PRISON REGIME

- 6.10.1 As commented under the Segregation unit report, The Verne continues to receive prisoners who do not meet the strict prisoner criteria. This causes extra work and can fill the limited number of Segregation cells to hold these prisoners pending transfer to other establishments. There were occasions when prisoners outside criteria were moved to normal location because Seg cells were needed for prisoners on disciplinary charges.
- 6.10.2 In May 2010 Foreign National prisoners represented 56% of the population, the figure is now 48%. This reduction results in there being more British prisoners and East European prisoners who are seldom as well behaved adding further to the disciplinary problems in this relatively open prison. Applications to the Board from prisoners have approximately doubled from the previous 2-year average and internally Requests & Complaints from prisoners have gone up by about 50%, confirming the heightened tension within the prison.
- 6.10.3 The prison suffered three deaths in custody during the year. One prisoner had a heart attack; the coroner recorded it as Natural Causes. A second died in Segregation from a ligature. The Coroner recorded a narrative verdict with several contributory factors. The third was found dead in his wing at the base of the stairs and the Coroner has yet to rule on his case.
- 6.10.4 As reported in last year's report prisoners are now all paid on a flat rate basis. This has removed any incentive to work harder and continues to cause resentment, particularly amongst those prepared to work harder to earn more. At the same time it fails utterly to teach prisoners that hard work on release can bring rewards and contrasts with regimes in other prisons.
- 6.10.5 The level of pay as compared to other establishments, (especially London prisons from where many of our prisoners are transferred) is also an issue, about which the Board regularly gets applications, especially as this impacts on what they can buy through Canteen, whose prices are uniform across all establishments.
- 6.10.6 The Kainos and D wing staff won a team award in July 2010 for working with offenders at the annual Dorset Criminal Justice awards ceremony for their work with offenders. They are to be commended as is the significant reduction in recidivism achieved by prisoners who have completed this course.

- 6.10.7 The whole layout of the Verne, with offices in at least 8 separate buildings, means that staff who should talk with one another often do not do so. The daily morning inter-departmental meeting, which an IMB member often attends, assists communication but does not fully make up for the physical layout of the prison. It is not a simple problem to overcome.
- 6.10.8 In August 2009, representatives from the King's Fund visited the prison with the view to funding the establishment of an Elderly Prisoner's Unit. £30,000 was available for the project. The site was visited and deemed to be excellent, with minimal construction work needed. An expected completion date of August 2010 was set. Half of the money was passed on to the Prison. However in February 2010 concerns were raised about the lack of support from the Prison and a completion date of October 2010 anticipated by the Fund seemed highly unlikely. Since then nothing has happened and the Board feels strongly that all the hard work put in by Health Care staff is going to be wasted as the money is in danger of being lost as a result of the inactivity and apparent lack of interest shown by the prison.

6.11 SECURITY

- 6.11.1 The perennial problems of mobile phones, drugs and alcohol persist, with many packages being thrown over the wall. It seems that with the change in prison population these problems have increased together with a swing to there being heroin in the prison rather than just cannabis. The problem is mostly contained and significant finds have been made, but at the same time some prisoners find they must be located to Seg when they succumb to the availability, but cannot then pay what is asked. It is another symptom of the increased tension in the prison. The local police force has been cooperative in increasing their presence around the perimeter of the prison and apprehended a car with its occupants who had thrown a package over the wall.
- 6.11.2 Important improvements to the security of the prison are taking place in that a zone fence is about to be constructed which will control the movement of prisoners, make collection by prisoners of thrown packages more difficult and enable staff to check the whereabouts of prisoners at any given time.
- 6.11.3 Informal exit interviews conducted with prisoners being released have provided important sources of information in identifying security risks.
- 6.11.4 There has been a change in personnel in the security department. The new head of security is vastly experienced as a prison officer and highly motivated. His staff seem equally determined to improve the security in the prison. The security committee has been streamlined and will hopefully be more active.
- 6.11.5 There have been tighter controls implemented at visits without jeopardising the welcome and atmosphere at these important times

7 THE WORK OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

7.1 BOARD STATISTICS

Recommended Complement of Board Members	14
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	11
Number of members at the end of the reporting period	11
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	3
Number of members leaving within the reporting period	3
Number of attendances at meetings other than Board meetings	170
Total number of visits to the prison	257
Total number of applications received	147
Total number of segregation reviews held	
Total number of segregation reviews attended	

Code	Subject	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
A	Accommodation	1	0	4
B	Adjudications	1	2	8
C	Diversity related	5	3	5
D	Education/employment/training	5	1	25
E	Family/Visits	0	1	7
F	Food/Kitchen related	0	0	1
G	Health related	7	3	31
H	Property	13	12	21
I	Sentence related	9	10	17
J	Staff/prisoner/detainee related	18	5	2
K	Transfers	5	6	11
L	Miscellaneous	20	16	15
	Total Number of Applications	84	59	147

The breakdown of Board application statistics was only started two years ago. We therefore only have 3 years statistics.

7.2 REPORT OF BOARD DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

7.2.1 Members of the Verne IMB have undertaken various types of training throughout the year. The monthly training sessions, which take place before our Board Meetings, have been increased from one hour to two. Also they have been moved to the training centre outside the prison, which provides better training facilities. The majority of the presentations made by prison staff have been of a high standard and tailored effectively to the needs of the Board.

- 7.2.2 One of our three new members has attended the National Foundation course and the two others are booked onto a course taking place later in the year. An experienced member has attended the Experienced Members course and two members attended the Annual Conference in September.
- 7.2.3 In July all members of the Board visited HMP Isle of Wight, an amalgamation of the former HMPs Albany, Camp Hill and Parkhurst. It was very interesting to learn how the prisons were functioning under this new arrangement and it was instructive to observe the way in which the Isle of Wight IMB organised their duties, which in some respects was quite different from our own.
- 7.2.4 The Verne IMB has recently hosted a visit by members of the Shepton Mallett IMB, who were very appreciative of the presentations given by staff from Security, UKBA, Education, Electrical wiring and Kainos.

7.3 THE CLERK TO THE BOARD

- 7.3.1 Unfortunately our IMB Clerk had to take several months of sick leave during the year and this affected our work and communications with the prison. Whilst a new clerk was appointed towards the end of the year, her training, leave and getting to know the IMB Board Members is causing difficulties at present. The Head of Finance and Performance has however tried to assist us as best he could despite this section incurring staff shortages.

8 IN CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The Board would like to thank The Governor and all members of staff for the assistance and co-operation that has been received during the year. This has undoubtedly helped us in the performance of our monitoring duties.

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