



**Annual Report**  
of the  
**Independent Monitoring Board**  
at  
**Immigration Removal Centre**  
**The Verne**  
for reporting year  
1 January to 31 December 2016

Published  
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*Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody*

## **MESSAGE FROM MINISTERS TO IMB MEMBERS**

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**The IMB should “look with clear and fresh eyes at the prisoner’s or detainee’s total experience of custody or detention and express, where it judges necessary or desirable, its commonsense opinion on the humanity and utility of the policies the establishment is obliged to follow.”**

**Explanatory statement issued by the Lloyd Review**

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## **A: Introductory Sections**

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

The Prisons Act 1952 and the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 require every establishment and IRC to be monitored by an independent Board appointed by the Secretary of State from members of the community in which the establishment 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 establishment 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; and
- (3) report annually to the Secretary of State on how well the establishment 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 detainee and every part of the establishment and also to the establishment's records.

## **2. Executive Summary**

### **2.1 Introduction**

**2.1.1** This report is presented by the members of the Independent Monitoring Board for Immigration Removal Centre (IRC) The Verne and covers the year 1 January to 31 December 2016.

**2.1.2** The Board at The Verne acts as a 'watchdog' for the Home Secretary and the public by providing an independent oversight of the IRC. The Board monitors the treatment of detainees and the conditions in which they are held to ensure they are treated with dignity, respect and fairness. All Board members are volunteers.

### **2.2 Main Judgements**

**2.2.1** The Board considers the IRC at The Verne to be a well-run establishment where, in the main, detainees are treated with decency, fairness and respect. We would like to highlight however that for those detainees with mental health issues, or with suspected tuberculosis, while the care given them by the staff is exemplary, they are inappropriately held in unsuitable accommodation (sections 6.3 - 6.5 and 8.6).

**2.2.2** The Board feels that there is a positive emphasis on humane treatment and every effort has been made by all departments to acknowledge the diversity of the establishment's population in work, education, variety of food provided and in the celebration of as many special days and cultural events throughout the year as possible (sections 5.1.2 - 5.1.3).

**2.2.3** During this reporting year considerable efforts have been made to prepare detainees for removal although the Board is of the opinion that the establishment of 'virtual visits' for relatives abroad would also do much to enhance this hard work (section 5.2).

### **2.3 Recommendations to the Minister**

**2.3.1** The Board would like clarification on its role with regard to monitoring Rule 35 applications (section 8.4)

**2.3.2** The Board wishes to see amendments to the escorting services contract to exclude all inter-centre night moves other than in the most exceptional circumstances (section 4.3)

**2.3.3** The Board wishes to see an improvement in the conditions for detainees with serious mental health and infection control issues who currently must be held in 'cell' accommodation (sections 6.3 to 6.5).

## **2.4 Recommendation to the Contractor**

**2.4.1** Induction procedures need to be reviewed to ensure this is an informative and user friendly experience (section 4).

## **2.5 Recommendation to the Provider of Escorting Services**

**2.5.1.** Inhumane inter-centre night moves must cease (section 4.3).

## **2.6 Recommendation to the Provider of Maintenance Services**

**2.6.1.** A small maintenance team should be continually on-site at The Verne to ensure repair work is executed without delay (section 7.4).

## **2.7 Major Outstanding Issues from Previous Report**

**2.7.1** Poor quality of accommodation in the Care and Separation Unit is an ongoing concern since The Verne opened as an IRC (sections 6.3 to 6.5 and 8.6).

**2.7.2** There is still no provision of a cultural kitchen. This too is an ongoing concern since The Verne opened as an IRC (section 7.2.2).

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### 3. Description of Establishment

**3.1** IRC The Verne is situated in a remote rural location on the Isle of Portland in Dorset. The Verne Citadel was built using convict labour in the 1840's to house prisoners building the breakwater for Portland Harbour. Many of the original buildings are still in use today and have a protected status being Grade 2 listed by Heritage England. The buildings require constant upkeep and attention and cannot be altered without permission.

**3.2** The Verne operated as a prison from 1949 until October 2013 and opened as an adult male Immigration Removal Centre in March 2014. Its maximum operating capacity is 580 and it is managed by the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) under contract to the Home Office. Other main contract providers are as follows:

Healthcare and Dental services –Dorset Healthcare University Foundation Trust (DHUFT)  
Education and Arts Department – Weston College  
Maintenance – Carillion  
Transport – Tascor  
Welfare Services – in-house  
Library services– Dorset County Council

**3.3** Accommodation for the detainees is in single rooms on six main two-storey wings with two spurs on each landing. Each spur has its own toilet and shower facilities which the detainees have access to during the night. Further accommodation is provided in eight-bed dormitories in the older case-mates part of the building where newly arrived detainees are housed temporarily prior to induction and being given a room of their own on a wing. There is a wing specifically dedicated to the more vulnerable detainees and during the latter part of the year one wing was designated as a non-smoking area.

**3.4** Facilities at The Verne are numerous and include:

- a shop which stocks a wide range of items including fresh fruit and cultural food;
- a computer suite with restricted internet access;
- a multi-use games area (MUGA) and a large playing field for football and cricket;
- a well-equipped gymnasium and other outside exercise equipment;
- a video link to courts in Newport and Birmingham for bail hearings.

Several voluntary organisations visit the Centre regularly. These include: Bail in Detention; Verne Visitors Group; Red Cross; Music in Detention; Detention Action; Samaritans and Alcoholics Anonymous.

## **B: Evidence Sections**

### **4. 1. Safety of the Establishment**

**4.1.1** At IRC The Verne, the monitoring of Safer Detention is formalised in weekly multi-disciplinary Complex Detainee Case and monthly in Safer Detention meetings. These are chaired at Governor level and held consistently. Harm minimisation plans and Room Sharing Risk Assessments (RSRAs) are discussed and a weekly log is sent to the Detainee Escorting and Population Management Unit (DEPMU).

**4.1.2** The Assessment, Care in Detention and Teamwork (ACDT) files have been improved, staff trained and the entries in these documents are now generally written with greater clarity. ACDT reviews are held frequently. Files are prominent in wing offices and follow detainees around the Centre.

**4.1.3** Security, behaviour and bullying now all come under the umbrella of Enhanced Behaviour Management (EBM). All EBM reviews are now required to be multi-disciplinary, with input from at least 3 staff. Detainees' use of Psychoactive Substances (usually spice) is a prominent factor in EBM reviews (section 4.5). The Violence Reduction Policy was updated during December and is awaiting final approval.

**4.1.4** The Samaritans are now holding surgeries fortnightly. They have been seeing all detainees who are on an ACDT as well as self-referrals. The number of Intelligence Reports submitted has increased during this reporting period. Those referring to violence have increased latterly. There have also been a number of reports from the internet suite regarding extremism. There have been several assaults on staff during this period including a very serious assault on an officer in May.

**4.1.5** The Safer Detention Department conducted a Safety and Violence Survey among all detainees during November (appendix 4) and 47 responses were received. Key responses were: 72.3% respondents felt safe at the Centre; 83.3% thought that staff managed the Centre well; though only 40.4% thought staff supported the detainees who self-harm as a priority. In future a survey will be completed every quarter

### **4.2. Reception**

**4.2.1** The reception process is thorough and careful. Records accompanying the detainee are checked and property logged and all new arrivals are then assessed by a nurse, particularly for mental health or addiction problems. A large proportion of the detainees arriving at The Verne will have come straight from a reporting centre or having been arrested by Immigration Enforcement and many will arrive with few possessions and often without any medication they have been prescribed. This often requires urgent attention especially if the detainee is an alcoholic or other substance abuser. Once this initial process is completed the new arrivals are housed in the Dormitory wing for approximately 48 hours until a full induction takes place and a room on a suitable wing is allocated.

**4.2.2** It can be observed from the numbers of detainees both entering and leaving The Verne that reception is a very busy place, often with more detainees arriving during the night than during the day (Appendix1). The turnover of detainees is relentless and continuous. However,

action taken last year, which rostered more staff to night duty, has worked well and there are now usually sufficient staff in the department. The Board does have concerns about Reception. There is a single waiting room and at busy times this quickly becomes full. There is only one WC. There have been occasions when detainees have had to wait in the Tascor vans until space inside became available.

### **4.3. Night Moves**

**4.3.1** The Board became increasingly concerned throughout the year that the numbers of night-time arrivals were very high. In October the Verne joined other IMBs in a National Council project investigating late evening and night moves across both the prison and IRC estate. It was agreed that all IRC's should retrospectively record all inter-centre night time arrivals and departures for the month of September 2016 (223 arrivals and 44 leavers between 20.00hrs and 06.00hrs) but the Verne Board felt that, because of the problems encountered by the collection method used, the Board should continue to monitor and highlight all inter-centre night-time arrivals and departures until we were satisfied that all is being done by Tascor and DEPMU to reduce the need for this inhumane and unfair practice unless, of course, there are extenuating circumstances. (The findings and methods used in the collection of statistics are evidenced in appendix 2).

**4.3.2** The serious concerns of the Board at the frequency and numbers of inter-centre night moves have been discussed with both Home Office, Centre staff and DEPMU, who have all been supportive in trying to encourage Tascor to reduce these moves in all but exceptional circumstances (for example, detainees who have received removal directions and must be taken to an airport for an early morning or charter flight). So far this has not been very successful and the night time moves continue. Our detailed data collection has been commended by the Deputy Director for Custody (DDC) at the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) for the Southwest who has endorsed and encouraged the continued collection of this data.

### **4.4 Induction**

**4.4.1** Throughout the year, large groups of men have been arriving, at all times of the day and night. We estimate an average of about 20 per day but double that number has not been uncommon. The IMB wished to ensure that the induction process was a positive experience for the detainees. Observations by the Board showed that large amounts of information were being given to the men on arrival. Although this was in accordance with the relevant Detention Service Order (DSO), it is not a satisfactory way of delivering this important information (section 2.4).

**4.4.2** The information booklet/handout was completely inadequate, being of very poor quality in terms of layout, with vital areas of information missing, and largely incomprehensible to those with little English. The daily induction meetings are conducted with good humour and a welcoming attitude. But few of the new arrivals will understand the colloquial English and prison jargon being used.

**4.4.3** Towards the end of the reporting year, a deputy governor was assigned to review the induction process and make improvements. As a start the information booklet was reorganized to be more user friendly. Other changes included locating a Home Office official at the induction process so that the men can make an appointment for further discussion; the length of time men

stayed in the induction wing was extended from 24 to 48 hours to allow for a more thorough assessment of their needs.

**4.4.4** The improvement of the induction process is a work-in-progress and closely monitored by the IMB.

## **4.5 Drug and Psychoactive Substances Use**

**4.5.1** The Board remains concerned that there is still a substantial use of illegal substances within The Verne with all its ensuing problems. However, this reporting year has seen fewer serious incidences of drug overdose as well as a lower production of alcohol ('hooch'). We are fortunate to retain the drug detection dog and his handler. They have made several large finds of substances that could have caused numerous problems had they been circulated within the establishment. A newly trained dog was deployed part way through the year when the previous dog was retired. The Board acknowledges and commends the excellent work of both dogs and of their handler.

**4.5.2** The Board also commends the important role of the Substance Misuse Team whose work in the early recognition of detainees with a substance abuse problem is invaluable. It is felt this has played an active part in reducing the number of serious incidents this year. There is also a 'prevention of substance abuse' poster campaign and sessions on harm minimisation which, the Board feels, are particularly useful in keeping substance misuse in The Verne at a manageable level.

## **5.1 Equality and Fairness**

**5.1.1** Centre management and staff are strongly committed to the fair and humane treatment of all detainees regardless of race, colour, ethnicity or any protected characteristic. Detainees are made aware that racist behaviour is not tolerated. This policy is widely proclaimed in leaflets and posters displayed in the Centre with translations into many languages. It is also stressed when information is given verbally. Forums are held regularly for separate ethnic groups and others with protected characteristics. Detainees are asked about their perceptions of how they are treated. They are generally happy to acknowledge that the staff are helpful

**5.1.2** Colourful display boards are used to celebrate diversity, different cultures, heritages and nationalities. A cultural calendar highlights festivals and celebrations from many faiths and cultures. Celebrations are arranged, often with visiting musicians or dancers, and special meals are provided by the kitchens. At times a 'cultural kitchen' has been temporarily arranged, when Sikhs have cooked for their religious celebrations, although space and cost limit this (section 7.2.2).

**5.1.3** The observance of Ramadan is important in the Centre where Muslims are the largest single faith group. The provision of food for those who wish to fast is carefully planned and organised. In 2016, 175 detainees observed the fast which required considerable preparation and organisation as it was during the summer with sunrise at its earliest and sunset at its latest. At the end of Ramadan, the celebratory meal at Eid provided by the kitchens was much appreciated.

**5.1.4** Some Muslim detainees wished to pray on the wing landings during Ramadan but this was not possible for safety reasons. Any tension this refusal might have caused was carefully and tactfully handled and diffused by the Chaplaincy and the senior management team.

**5.1.5** Detainees with disabilities are identified at induction and are provided with a personal escape evacuation plan (PEEP) if necessary. Appropriate aids or adaptations are considered on an individual basis, e.g. ground floor accommodation if necessary. Following discussions with older detainees about their needs handrails and non-slip floors have been fitted in some showers.

## **5.2 Use of Skype for Virtual Visits**

**5.2.1** The Board are concerned once again that in this reporting year The Verne is still not able to offer the use of Skype as a 'virtual visit' for detainees wishing to contact their families who live in the UK but far from The Verne, or are resident abroad (section 2.2.3).

**5.2.2** For many detainees the geographical location of the IRC limits the opportunities for families to visit because of cost and distance. The Board feel that family ties, both at home and abroad, should be encouraged, particularly if there are children involved especially if removal orders are imminent. It is recognised that the detainees do have unlimited access to telephone calls on personal mobile phones but talking alone does not offer quite the same satisfaction as seeing someone as they could do if Skype, or something similar, were to be used. We have been assured by various technicians and security personnel that it would be possible to set systems in place in the visiting area to allow the use of Skype without any security risk. Any such calls made would be monitored by the IRC officers and stopped immediately if any risks or subversive conversation became apparent. The Board would ask that this could be further explored in the forthcoming year.

### **5.3 Chaplaincy**

The Verne is fortunate to have an active, committed chaplaincy team who work well together for the benefit of all detainees. Providing religious services is just part of their work; they offer support to any detainee in crisis or low mood. They are closely involved with the Care and Separation Unit, where their listening and communication skills are vital. With their experience of people in crisis, they can sometimes offer practical help or simply support by listening and being there. The events they organise can offer detainees a respite from their troubles.

In 2016, between 45 – 50% of detainees declared themselves to be of the Muslim faith; the Christian faiths together accounted for approximately 30%, and Sikhs and Hindus, each less than 10%. As the Centre's operating capacity is 580, the number of Muslim detainees is greater than the Mosque can accommodate. There is not always room for those who wish to attend prayers and it is necessary, with the aid of a microphone, to use the Multi-faith centre as well. This solution has been accepted by the detainees so far, but it remains a concern and a potential problem, particularly at Ramadan. However, thanks are due to the Imam and the chaplaincy team, and the Centre staff, for their cooperation and determination to make the arrangements work.

### **5.4 Complaints**

**5.4.1** Detainees have access to the complaints mechanism forms which are available on each wing. The replies are, wherever possible, sent within a reasonable time frame and information is given in the reply as to how the complaint can be taken further if the detainee remains dissatisfied. The IMB receives a copy of all complaints and the responses as well as a quarterly summary of the numbers of complainants.

**5.4.2** Investigations into the complaints appear to be sufficient but the Board feels that the responses are often very poor and totally inadequate, especially if the complainant does not have English as his primary language. This is due to the use of a standard response template that contains words and phrases a poor English speaker is unlikely to understand and allows the responder little latitude to describe the often extensive investigation conducted into the complaint.

**5.4.3** The Board feels strongly that this template, if its use is to continue, should be redesigned using plain and easily understood English and that staff should be encouraged to offer a more detailed explanation of the investigation and its possible consequences or outcomes.

**5.4.4** The Welfare Department receives numerous complaints about property either being lost or not arriving from prison or police stations with the detainee. Despite considerable efforts on the department's behalf still much of this 'lost' property remains untraceable, largely due to the very poor communication and responses the welfare office staff invariably experience when trying to contact other prisons or IRC's. Very frustratingly, although strenuous efforts have been made to establish a designated telephone or e-mail link for the 'recovery of property' purpose, to date this has not happened. The IMB would like to see more co-operation between NOMS and private establishments in improving the rate of recovery of lost property. This would result in less dissatisfaction expressed from the detainees and reduce the amount of compensation that must eventually be paid.

## **5.5 Legal Visits**

**5.5.1** Four firms of solicitors are contracted to offer legal advice to detainees. The first 30 minute session is free; the cost of any subsequent sessions varies. There are no concessions to allow the 'free' time to be extended if the detainee requires an interpreter. The service operates from Monday to Thursday with ten appointments per day with two reserves. Legal aid surgeries can be accommodated on a Friday if the lawyer has been unable to attend on a previous day that week. Normal legal visits can be held on Fridays.

**5.5.2** The librarian organises the bookings on a first come, first served basis. There is anecdotal evidence of solicitors not turning up when expected, which causes resentment among those detainees affected which is mainly directed at the librarian. The Board is not however able to substantiate these allegations.

## **6. Removal from Association/ Temporary Confinement**

**6.1** Detainees at The Verne who are temporarily removed from association are placed in the Care and Separation Unit (CSU). This unit has eight rooms (cells) two of which have been adapted to cater for self-harming or vulnerable detainees. The unit is also used to for detainees with serious mental health issues or those with a preliminary diagnosis of Tuberculosis (TB).

**6.2** Detainees whose circumstances warranted temporary removal are usually held for 24 hours or less before returning to a residential wing. Whilst in CSU detainees are seen by the Duty Manager, a member of the Chaplaincy team, a doctor or nurse and an IMB member when they are on rota duty. The Board continues to be impressed by the quality and care given by the staff in the CSU in the context of difficult physical conditions, and challenging behaviour with which they are often presented. The staff handle these with professionalism, patience and good humour and frequently act more as carers than as IRC officers.

**6.3** The Board remains concerned about the numbers of detainees with serious mental health problems, many of whom are admitted with open ACDT books. It can take some time (often weeks) before these men can be assessed and relocated to more suitable accommodation.

**6.4** Currently the CSU is the only area in which detainees with suspected TB may be housed until their preliminary diagnostic tests are completed. Healthcare staff have worked hard to establish a good working relationship with the local hospital. TB tests results are now usually received within 5 days, limiting the time these unfortunate men must spend in isolation (section 2.2 and 8.6).

**6.5** Strenuous efforts have been made to establish a care suite in a residential wing to address the issues mentioned in the paragraphs above but, progress has been depressingly slow, partially due to lack of finance (section 2.2 and 8.7).

**6.6.** It is pleasing to report that the number of Control and Restraint (C and R) cases has fallen this year (appendix 4).

**6.7** The Board is not aware of any current plans to substantially extend or alter the CSU in the near future or to improve its prison-like appearance. However the Custodial Manager (CM) and Residential Manager are endeavouring to improve the facilities.

## **7. Accommodation** (including communication)

### **7.1 Consultation Meetings**

**7.1.1** Monthly detainee consultation meetings are held to provide Peer Supporters with an opportunity to air their views. The topics most regularly discussed are the shop, problems of cleanliness and equipment failures on the wings.

**7.1.2** Peer Supporters continue to raise a number of issues relating to the shop. Most frequently discussed are the long queues and suggestions for new items. Although a second till has been purchased it is not yet operational. The shop has a small floor area and only ten detainees are allowed inside at any one time. Detainees in the queue outside are not protected from bad weather, a complaint frequently heard by all IMB members.

**7.1.3** Given the transient population of the Centre, few Peer Supporters are able to attend more than one or two meetings. There is little continuity, with similar questions being raised and similar responses being given at each meeting. It is difficult to assess the extent to which a Supporter is able to feedback the outcomes of the meetings to all the different ethnic groups on his particular wing.

### **7.2 Food and Kitchens**

**7.2.1** The staff report that there are rarely sufficient numbers of detainees choosing to work in the kitchens. All detainees working in the kitchens now take a food hygiene course Level One and receive a certificate on successful completion.

**7.2.2** Detainees occasionally comment that there is too little ethnic diversity in the food provided and there is no provision of a cultural kitchen in which they could prepare their own ethnic food. The Board is satisfied however that catering staff make strenuous efforts to provide food for more than 65 nationalities with a wide range of dietary requirements. All the major religious and cultural festivals are celebrated, with positive feedback from detainees on the food provided. During the year the Sikh community was given opportunities to prepare food as part of their religious tradition (section 5.1.2).

**7.2.3** Board members regularly taste the food and are impressed with the standard achieved. Fresh fruit and vegetables are served with every meal.

**7.2.4** The delay in getting repairs to ovens and other catering equipment, due to issues with the maintenance contract (Carillion), continues to cause problems for catering staff (section 7.4.2).

**7.2.5** A monthly meeting is held to give Peer Supporters an opportunity to air views on catering. Catering staff repeatedly emphasise the cost constraints under which they operate and that all food is supplied by a single contractor. Supporters are urged at each meeting to come forward with their favourite recipes. Progress in meeting dietary diversity might be possible if more detainees were prepared to routinely work in the kitchens. The issue of preferential rates of pay for kitchen workers might need to be revisited.

### **7.3 Living accommodation**

Many of the rooms have been unavailable for use for lengthy periods because the door closures were not fit for purpose. There have also been recurring problems with showers not working, shower trays leaking and washing machines breaking down. The timescale for repairs to all of these has been subject to unnecessary delays because of ongoing issues with the Carillion contract and the lack of an on-site maintenance team.

### **7.4 Onsite Maintenance**

**7.4.1** During this reporting year all repair work for the IRC was contracted to Carillion who took on the original Verne maintenance team. Initially progress in setting up the contract was very slow. It would appear that in the early stages the contract was not fit for purpose. Equipment/plant items had been omitted and this led to pricing disputes between NOMS and Carillion which continued until additional resources were obtained.

**7.4.2** One of the biggest issues was that the existing sub-contractors, who had worked at The Verne for some years, did not get a renewal of their contracts. This led to a dramatic slowdown in essential offsite support as Carillion did not offer an immediate response to any call out. During the reporting period the IMB noted gutter and down pipe leaks, drains backing up and the poor state of maintenance in general e.g. delays and ineffective repairs to essential kitchen equipment, showers and washing machines (section 7.2.4).

**7.4.3** For several months last year the Board was unable to arrange a meeting with the NOMS representative or the area manager for Carillion. After raising this difficulty with the Centre Manager it was arranged for an IMB member to meet with the Carillion progress team. There has been noted improvement since cluster managers for NOMS and Carillion now cover the same sites and are working better together. This has proved to be effective with several projects moving to completion, e.g. the Care Suite.

**7.4.4** Latterly the Board has noted a definite improvement in onsite service delivery.

**7.4.5** The IMB have requested an updated copy each month of key performance indicator targets (KPI's) missed and have also asked to see the information on the routine maintenance programme including that for standby electrical generation, kitchen equipment, refrigeration and air conditioning.

## **8. Healthcare (including mental health and social care)**

**8.1** Healthcare services offering 24hour, 7day week, medical and nurse care cover have been, throughout the year, contracted to Dorset Healthcare University NHS Foundation Trust (DHUFT). However, part way through 2016 DHUFT announced they would be withdrawing from their contract prematurely as its financial terms were not sustainable. This has caused a great deal of anxiety among the Health Centre staff for most of the year as there has been uncertainty around future working conditions. In November healthcare staff were invited to attend a presentation given by Care UK, the company awarded the new contract. The meeting however, did little to reassure many of the staff as in the future they will not be under the umbrella of the NHS. The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE) has been explained in detail but the Board still detect an undercurrent of anxiety among the staff, particularly among the mental healthcare staff, as poor performance reports and disquieting rumours appear frequently in the news and in the press with regard to private healthcare companies. The IMB will be watching this closely in the forthcoming year.

**8.2** In addition to a full 24 hour healthcare service DHUFT also provided an excellent Substance Abuse Service and a pro-active Mental Healthcare Service. Most detainees can be offered a general appointment within 48 hours, comparing favourably with services offered in the community. Early identification of detainees with mental health problems has been a major and welcome development during the reception interview with all new arrivals.

**8.3** Recruitment of nursing staff has been ongoing throughout the year and several appointments have been made. Currently the service is no longer reliant on agency staff as they were at the beginning of the year. A new nursing manager commenced in January and her presence made a considerable difference to the efficient running of the centre and to the morale of the staff.

**8.4** During the reporting year there have been 135 'Rule 35' applications made by detainees at The Verne (appendix 5). The Board remains concerned that it is still unable to do even rudimentary monitoring of these despite the recommendations of HMIP (Oct. 2015 IRC Study Day) and the failure of so many of these as reported in the Shaw Report (January 2016). The Board hopes that there will be clarification and progress on this issue very soon (section 2.3.1).

**8.5** The Board remains concerned that although as much medication as possible is given 'in possession' (IP) there is still a need for a late afternoon or early evening dispensing so that medication to assist depression and sleeping can be taken at a reasonable hour. Discussion on how to manage this is ongoing and not yet decided.

**8.6** The Board is concerned about the use of the CSU as an isolation unit for medical purposes. During the 2016, 42 men were isolated in prison-like cells for 5 or more days while tests for TB were carried out. Of these, only one man had a confirmed diagnosis of the disease. One man with chicken pox was isolated in CSU for several days without access to a shower as staff were advised they were not equipped to deal with the perceived infection risk (sections 2.2, 6.3 to 6.5).

**8.7** The CSU cells do not meet any of the usual standards for isolation and infection control nursing e.g. separate showers, staff hand washing, linen and room cleaning and are all unsuitable for this purpose. A member of the Board witnessed the shocked reaction of the Infection Control Nurse from DHUFT, when assessing the premises. Work has begun on a care

suite comprising comfortable en-suite accommodation, but progress is slow, and it will only accommodate one or two men. If required, it may also be used for men with mental health problems if it is not in use for those with suspected TB.

## **9. Education, Work and Purposeful Activity**

9.1 Education services at the IRC continue to be very successfully contracted out to Weston College, but on a month-by-month basis although a substantive contract would be more desirable. An average of 12% of detainees avail themselves of the courses offered but as the average length of stay is 62 days, it is challenging to provide meaningful courses and certification of value to the detainees. However, course qualifications are now available in most areas and are designed to take an average of two weeks to complete. This innovation provides detainees with transferrable and accredited skills to assist them in the resettlement process (see 10.3).

9.2 ESOL courses are consistently oversubscribed. Other courses include: Information Technology (I.T), Bricklaying, Tiling, Cleaning, English and Mathematics, Music, Art, Personal Social Development, Barbering and Media (which produces "The Verne", the official newsletter)

9.3 Weston College has achieved many awards; they were runners up for the Beacon Award (this has never before been achieved by an IRC). The judges were impressed by the partnership between The Verne and Weston College. The College also achieved 'outstanding' for the Pearson Award and The Verne team was awarded 'team of the year' by Weston College.

9.4 There is a need to obtain a Service Level Agreement, which is the last step before the new initiative 'Bikes for Africa' can commence.

9.5 The gardens are looking better as a result of the efforts of the Paid Work team. In the colder weather, they have assisted the wing cleaners to pick up litter (a perennial problem for the windy Verne). The Waste Management, Contract Services and Sundry Work tend to be well attended. The Woodmill produces a high standard of work but it, together with the Kitchen, has difficulty in filling the positions available.

9.6 The fork-lift driving department closed at the end of 2016 and this has had an impact on unloading lorries and stocking the shop. Industrial cleaning is taking up the space it vacated.

9.7 Those detainees wishing to participate in cleaning the wings can now gain a certificate in Industrial Cleaning.

9.8 A large area was cleared for a cricket pitch this year, which was very popular and was later also used for football. A yoga class also commenced. Over 30% of the centre roll consistently attends PE activities (appendix 6). The gym floor is worn in places causing safety concerns.

9.9 An average daily take-up of activities over a typical week (commencing 16 May 2016) is shown in Appendix 6.

## **10. Preparation for removal and/or Release**

**10.1** The Board is satisfied that following changes to procedure detainees are no longer released from this remote part of Dorset without suitable arrangements for their onward journey. Provision has been made by the Red Cross to allow an overnight stay in Bed and Breakfast accommodation in nearby Weymouth if the detainee's release is too late in the afternoon or evening for the onward journey.

**10.2** The Board is pleased to report that during the reporting year the Welfare Department has developed its support for those detainees who have been issued with removal directions. Voluntary Return Schemes are encouraged and promoted and those departing are now given comprehensive information about their destination country and how to access other sources of support.

**10.3** Short, meaningful certificated courses are provided by the Education and Work Departments to equip detainees with transferable and accredited skills which could assist them in finding employment after removal (see 9.1 to 9.2)

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## Section C – Work of Board

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### THE WORK OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

<b>BOARD STATISTICS</b>	
Recommended Complement of Board Members	14
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	11
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	12
Total number of visits to the Establishment	319
NB. Three members resigned at the end of December 16 although two delayed official resignation so that they could have an input to the annual Report.	

## Section D – Applications

### APPLICATIONS RECEIVED

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Number</b>
Home Office Complaints system	2
Healthcare	18
Discrimination	4
Lost Property	9
Home Office re immigration case	15
Accommodation/ food	5
Safety/ custody	1
Transfer requests	1
Staff behaviour or attitude	8
Access to Money	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>

## Appendix 1: Monthly movement of detainees for 2016

Month	Day Out	Night out	Day In	Night In
January	195	66	128	207
February	350	65	234	282
March	412	101	225	234
April	424	93	213	340
May	447	58	139	292
June	366	79	184	283
July	444	76	217	338
August	381	93	223	252
September	446	44	331	223
October	456	58	235	235
November	430	67	202	301
December	407	63	219	166
Total	4758	863	2550	3153

Night shift is from 20.00hours until 06.00 hours

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## **Appendix 2: Rationale for data collection of night moves**

1. IMB members became increasingly aware during the year that the night time arrivals were often as high, or higher, than those during the day (see appendix 1). The Board had also received several comments from detainees that their journeys were long and convoluted (see appendix 3). A typical example of this might be a detainee being picked up from a London prison, being taken to several police stations and reporting centres to pick up other detainees and then several hours later starting on the road to Dorset which can be a journey of up to 4 to 5 hours or longer. Although the Tascor crews and vans change at the required intervals and the detainees are offered food (sandwiches) and comfort stops, there are times when a suitable stop cannot be made and gel-bags are offered to the detainee to pass urine (inside the transport where little privacy is available). The IMB consider this an unacceptable practice unless there are exceptional circumstances.

2. It was also brought to the attention of the Board that inappropriate, short notice removals were occurring during the night and that detainees who were refusing to leave were being penalized as non-compliant when they reached other centres e.g. not offered the opportunity to work. The IMB do not consider this to be either fair, or humane; these detainees were removed to other centres after being woken during the night with little notice and then obliged to gather together their belongings in haste. This practice is generally for the convenience of the Tascor Crews and rarely because the detainee had received removal directions and was required to fit in with an early airline departure. Tascor have since been asked by the Home Office on-site Manager to limit these night time inter-centre moves other than in extenuating circumstances but they still continue with far too much frequency.

### **Method of data collection used.**

All information gathered of journeys, arrival and departure times of detainees was taken from the Prisoner Escort Record (PER) or the daily arrival and departure diary sheets maintained by Reception. This was retrospective data with September figures being examined in detail at the end of October. The high turnover of detainees at The Verne meant that the Board were only able to collect full details of journeys of 10.48% of the detainees arriving in September as many of those who had arrived during the night hours had already had already left the establishment, the PER going with them. The remaining information (showing less detail) was gathered from daily diary sheets (see 4.3.1).

### **Analysis of Night Moves**

1. Appendix 1 tabulates day and night moves during the twelve months of the reporting period. The large number of night-time arrivals is immediately apparent. Appendix 2 attempts a more detailed analysis. Table 1 below relates to arrivals during the month of September. The data were first divided into three areas of origin, viz. A: Heathrow and other locations around west London; B: Gatwick, police stations and HM prisons around east London; C: Bristol and South Wales. Arrival times were then divided into six 4-hourly slots. The original data set was not totally reliable; for that reason, percentages are offered. (We believe that the shape of the distribution would not appear significantly different if a more accurate data set had been available.) The numbers arriving in the early hours, particularly from destinations around Gatwick, are quite evident. (Equivalent data on departures are not offered here since far fewer appear to have occurred at night: in September, 97% of departures to A (Harmondsworth) and 94% of departures to B (Gatwick) occurred between 0600-1600 hrs.)

## Appendix 2 (cont.)

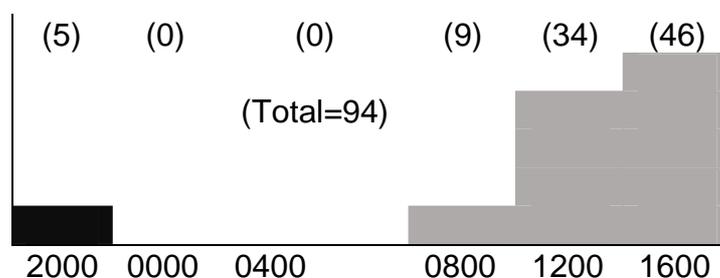
2. The figures in Table 2 are derived from a more reliable data set, so actual numbers rather than percentages are presented. Here the time frame is more detailed and the destinations are more specific, viz. Harmondsworth, Brook House and London Prisons. November continued to see inter-centre movements (both in and out of The Verne) in the early hours. The practice would appear to be a matter of policy rather than an unfortunate necessity to be used only in exceptional circumstances.

**Table 1: Arrivals in September 2016**

### ORIGIN: A

(Colnbrook,  
Harmondsworth  
Heathrow,  
HMP W'Scrubs)

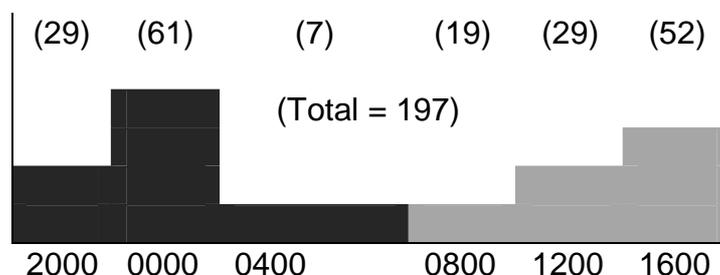
%  
40.0-49.9  
30.0-39.9  
20.0-29.9  
10.0-19.9  
0.0-9.9



### ORIGIN: B

(Lunar House,  
Brook House,  
Tinsley House,  
Croydon)

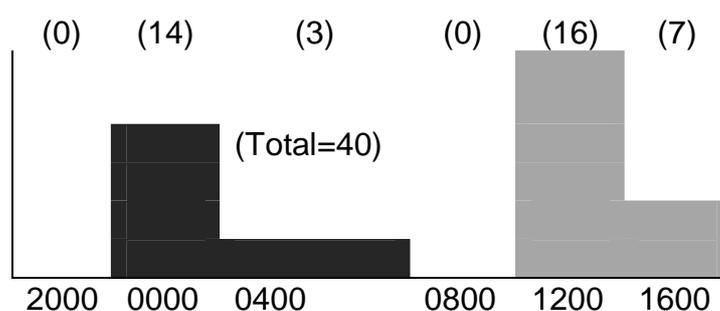
%  
40.0-49.9  
30.0-39.9  
20.0-29.9  
10.0-19.9  
0.0-9.9



### ORIGIN: C

(Bridgend,  
Merthyr,  
Newport  
Bristol P'way,  
Cardiff)

%  
40.0-49.9  
30.0-39.9  
20.0-29.9  
10.0-19.9  
0.0-9.9



**Appendix 2 (cont.)**

**Table 2: Night movements 15-29 November 2016**

<b>Arrivals from</b>				
Harmondsworth	7			2
Brook House	8	1	1	
London prisons	6			
<b>Departures to</b>				
Harmondsworth	8	5		
Brook House	5			
London prisons				
<b>Time (am)</b>	<i>0-2</i>	<i>2-4</i>	<i>4-6</i>	<i>6-8</i>

**Extract from a Detainee complaint form about an 8.5 hour journey to the Verne IRC**

On 12/11/16 at 4pm I was picked up from London Bridge by Tascor to go to The Verne (Dorset). I was told that that we would stop in Gatwick to drop 1 guy who was in the van. When we got there the driver said we needed to go to Croydon collecting a guy and drop him in Gatwick. After, they needed to swap with another crew/ other staff and we left Gatwick at 9.30pm. On the way (the DCO) was rude. I asked him for the toilet. He said "I will give you a urine bag", and I was lying in the seat, and I said "No", I was hoping for a break. Another guy asked for the toilet, he was given a urine bag, and he used it in the van which is not nice. I am not happy with my journey which was from 4pm to 12.30 am (8.5 hours) inside the van. I now have a bad back and problems with my health.

## Appendix 4: Safety questionnaire

Question	% Yes	%Don't know	% No
Do you feel safe here at The Verne?	72.3	10.6	17.0
Is there an atmosphere of violence within the centre?	12.8	27.7	59.6
Have you been the victim of violence?	12.8	2.1	85.1
Have you witnessed bullying within the centre?	14.9	4.3	80.9
Have you been the victim of bullying within the centre?	11.1	4.4	84.4
Do you feel comfortable and relaxed at The Verne?	54.2	6.3	39.6
Have you witnessed illicit alcohol being consumed within the centre?	12.8	14.9	72.3
Do you think the level of illicit alcohol within the centre is high?	10.6	34.0	55.3
Have you witnessed drug use in the centre?	21.3	8.5	70.2
Do you think staff support these detainees who self-harm as a priority?	40.4	29.8	29.8
Do you think the levels of bullying and intimidation by other detainees is high within the centre?	10.6	27.7	61.7
Do you feel safe making purchases in the shop?	74.5	14.9	10.6
Do you think staff manage the centre well?	83.3	6.3	10.4
Do you think staff challenge those detainees who display disruptive behaviour in the centre?	57.4	27.7	14.9
Do you think the level of supervision and support offered by staff is adequate?	68.1	12.8	19.1
Do you think staff challenge poor behaviour within the centre?	52.0	18.0	30.0
Do you think there is a lot of tension between different groups of detainee's within the centre?	19.1	29.8	51.1

These figures are based on 47 responses.

## Appendix 5: The Verne Annual Detainee Population Statistics

Subject	Number	Percentage Average of the Roll	
Detainees staying less than 1 week	1,119	19.21%	
Detainees staying more than 1 Week but less than 1 month	1,929	33.61%	
Detainees staying more than 12 months	524	1.08%	
New ACDT's opened in 2016	301	5.34%	
Percentage of ex Foreign National Offenders on the roll each month		38.6%	
Rule 35 Applications made in 2016	158		
Number of times planned Control and Restraint was used	20		
Number of times spontaneous control and restrain was used.	125		
Occupancy Nationality	Highest -Indian	Second - Bangladeshi	Third - Pakistani

## Appendix 6: Average daily take-up of activities over the week commencing 16 May 2016

ACTIVITY	AM %	PM%
NEL*	46.8	44.3
Orderly	5.7	6.3
Cleaner	10.6	10.5
Servery	7.2	7.1
Wing Rep	2.3	2.2
Education	6.9	9.2
Ed (vocational)	2.8	3.1
Ed (work)	2.6	2.5
Industries	2.9	2.3
Contract Services	6.8	7.3
Waste Management	1.9	1.9
Kitchen	2.2	2.1
Gardens	1.4	1.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>476</b>

\* = Not Engaged in Learning

### Physical Activity (Oct 2016)

Detention centre population (roll on survey data)	505	
Total detainees registered for PE activities (Detainees who have attended induction class and completed PARQ)	271	54% (roll)
Total Detainees attending PE activities (Attended at least one PE class during reporting month)	164	32.5% (roll) 60.5% (registered)