

ANNUAL REPORT

2009

INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

IMMIGRATION REMOVAL CENTRE

HASLAR

Rôle of the Independent Monitoring Board

The Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 requires every Immigration Removal Centre (IRC) to be monitored by an Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) appointed by the Home Secretary from members of the community in which the centre is situated. The Prisons Act 1952 applies similarly to prisons.

The IMB is specifically charged to:

- (1) satisfy itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in custody within its Centre.
- (2) Inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any other official to whom he/she has delegated authority as it judges appropriate, any concern that it has.
- (3) Report annually to the Secretary of State on how well the Centre has met the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have on those in custody.

To enable the IMB to carry out these duties effectively, its members have right of access to every detainee and to every part of the Centre and the Centre's records.

The IRC Haslar IMB is composed of volunteer members, who are not paid, and are independent of Her Majesty's Prison Service (HMPS) and the UK Borders Agency (UKBA).

We are the only independent presence in the Centre on a day-to-day basis.

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1. Immigration Removal Centre, Haslar

1.1 *An Introduction to IRC Haslar*

The Victorian buildings at IRC Haslar were originally used as a RN barracks, then as an RN prison and later as a Young Offenders Institution (YOI), until it was taken on by the Immigration Services (now the UK Borders Agency (UKBA)) as an Immigration Removal Centre (IRC) in 1989.

All external physical security measures comply with a Category “C” closed establishment; however, the accommodation and educational facilities do not. The Centre has a capacity for 160 males over the age of 18. During the reporting period (1st December 2008 – 30th November 2009), the number of ex-foreign national prisoners (ex-FNPs) within IRC Haslar varied from a high of 72% in January to 47% of the total population in October. The Board is glad to see that there has been a gradual decline in recent months, which it accepts may be due to the opening of IRC Brook House near Gatwick Airport in mid-2009.

Detainee accommodation consists of six dormitories, linked by a main corridor and divided into small, single rooms, or rooms for two or three detainees. In all dormitories, there are shared WCs, showers, washrooms and communal areas with Free View television. Internal extension and payphones are installed, although detainees may use basic mobile telephones – many of them provided by the Haslar Visitors’ Group (HVG). A limited fax service is also available. There has been some essential refurbishment of the roofs of two dormitories and the main corridor this year, all of which has progressed smoothly.

Meals are freshly prepared within the Centre and served in the Dining Room, which can accommodate 132 at one sitting. Catering services are provided by HM Prison Service (HMPS) at a cost of £1.92/day (up from £1.86/day) for each detainee. A shop in the main corridor supplies telephone cards, toiletries, snacks and sweets. The Centre’s administrative staff also operate a limited mail order service. Hot water dispensers in the dormitories enable detainees to prepare instant snacks or drinks at all times.

On-site laundry services are operated by Centre staff. Between Mondays and Wednesdays, weekly sheet changes are handled (two dormitories each day) and detainees are able to hand in their personal laundry.

Detainees have access to educational courses, run by Highbury College. Library facilities are provided by the Hampshire County Council.

A sports hall, multi-gym and extensive playing fields allow for a varied programme of sporting activities, supervised by Centre staff. There is also a Games Room which was opened in April this year and an outdoor recreation area; sadly the Games Room is currently out of use due to short-term staff sickness levels. Soccer teams from outside the Centre play detainees on the playing fields and the Football Association (FA) has conducted an Equality Workshop at the Centre. The buildings are maintained by the on-site HMPS Works Department.

A Christian Chaplain leads a team of religious leaders including regular visits by a local Imam; the newly appointed Imam will be available to Muslims for up to 16 hours per

week from December 2009. Acts of worship take place in the Multi-faith Centre or elsewhere. Strenuous efforts are made to support all the major religious faiths and their respective festivals.

In addition to her conduct of Christian worship, the Board commends the Chaplain, Imam, management and staff for the planning and conduct of Ramadan and the festival of Eid-ul-Adha this year. In addition, it commends the work of the Sikh and Hindu Chaplains in the celebration of the festivals of Dussehra and Divali, and the Chaplain for her efforts in helping the Chinese and Vietnamese detainees celebrate the Moon Festival.

Primary medical care is provided by the Centre's Healthcare staff during normal day working patterns; secondary care is provided under new arrangements by the local Primary Care Trust (PCT). The Medical Officer and his practice cover the daily surgeries. Emergency cover is provided by other GPs and paramedics through the PCT. A dental surgeon attends twice monthly. A local hospital deals with emergency dental treatment.

Families, friends and legal advisers are able to meet detainees in the Visitors' Hall, which has interview rooms for legal consultations, a room set aside for a video link which is used for Court appearances and a play area for children. **The Board welcomes the changes that have been made in 2009 to increase visiting times on Thursdays and to introduce visits by families on Saturday mornings.**

UKBA administrative grade staff operate on-site, but the nearest immigration officer grades are located in UKBA's Portsmouth offices, and some case managers are also located in Croydon.

The Centre's Welfare Officer, provided by HMPS, is a great asset in dealing with and advising detainees with their problems. **The newly-appointed officer has assimilated his role in a truly professional manner.**

Cleaning services are contracted out to Quality Assured Services.

Voluntary organisations which visit the Centre include The Salvation Army, the Citizens' Advice Bureau, The Samaritans, Music-in-Detention and finally the HVG, which has a special interest in immigration detainees.

1.2 Introduction to the IRC Haslar IMB Annual Report

This annual report is required by the Ministry of Justice to cover the period from 1st December 2008 to 30th November 2009, and so it overlaps slightly with the Board's previous report which was based on the 2008 calendar year. The format of the report is mandated by the IMB Secretariat for administrative convenience and photographs are no longer permitted, which the Board considers to be detrimental to its overall appearance.

The IMB Annual Report 2009 is not intended, nor does it seek, to document a year at IRC Haslar. Its purpose is to report on matters which have come to the Board's attention as being worthy of note. Enquiries about this report should be addressed to: The Chair, IMB, IRC Haslar, 2 Dolphin Way, Gosport, Hants PO12 2AW.

2. Executive Summary

This reporting period has generally been a very successful one for IRC Haslar, and the Board commends the management and staff for their excellent results in both the 2009 HM Inspector of Prisons (HMCIP) report and the health and safety audit. IRC Haslar continues to lead the IRC estate in several areas, especially the Education Department with its creative skills, and in diversity and racial equality. Haslar's HMPS staff are very adept at providing a safe and humane environment for detainees, and this has been reflected in the lack of actual or potential attempts to escape, and the sound relationship between most staff and the detainee population; this is particularly notable in light of the higher than usual turnover of detainees this year.

The Board receives oral and written applications from detainees throughout the year, and it is noticeable from the statistics (Para 5.2) that there has only been one formal complaint by a detainee about a member of Haslar's staff, and there has been a reduction in applications by comparison with 2008 concerning both accommodation and immigration matters. Whilst the highest numbers of applications are still about immigration issues, IRC Haslar UKBA staff should take some credit for reducing the number of queries to the Board this year. There has, however, been an increase in issues raised about welfare matters, most of which are caused by issues outside the control of Haslar's staff.

The Board has raised particular concerns about several issues, and extracts of some of the most important of these are detailed below:

- Rule 35 – Reporting Cases of Torture (Para 3.1) The Board came across a case where there had been inadequate reporting of a case of torture. This highlighted several issues relating to interoperability of IT systems between HMPS and UKBA and the sharing of confidential medical information between agencies that need to be addressed;
- Unnecessary Transport of Detainees around the Estate (Para 3.2) It has been apparent to the Board for some time that there is considerable evidence that detainees are being moved unnecessarily. Apart from the cost to the taxpayer, this is disruptive for the individual and his family, makes legal representation more difficult and leads to an increasing number of lost property claims;
- Transfer of Detainee Records (Para 3.3) The Board shares the concern of Haslar's management that too often detainees are arriving at Haslar with either missing and/or incomplete records. This is potentially hazardous for both detainees and staff in an IRC with dormitory accommodation. Furthermore, the Board expresses its concerns about the suitability of P-NOMIS for IRCs, and the current shortfalls in functionality, particularly relating to transfer of documentation between contractor-managed IRCs and IRC Haslar;
- Transport of Detainees to Hospital (Para 3.4) The Board raised its concerns last year about the number of cancellations of hospital appointments due to the lack of transport, and the situation has hardly improved this year. This problem may be exacerbated by the excessive number of other movements and also the

reduction of available crews in the nearby Portsmouth Group 4 Security Services (G4S) depot;

- Staff Levels and the HMCIP Report (Para 3.5) The Board continues to have concerns about the numbers of staff on duty at night and on weekends. It raised this matter particularly with HMCIP in April and was disappointed that she chose not to include the Board's concern in her report;
- Recovering the Cost of Vandalism (Para 3.6) There have been 124 incidents of vandalism to public property at IRC Haslar during this year, and yet there is no mechanism for recovering the cost from detainees, some of whom are capable of paying;
- Works Services (Para 4.1) The Board has commended the IRC Haslar Works Services Manager and his staff for their efforts, but is concerned that approved funding for essential works is being compressed into the winter months making it difficult to complete works by the end of the financial year;
- Healthcare & Mental Health (Para 4.6) Responsibility for healthcare provision at IRC Haslar has transferred to the Portsmouth City PCT during this year. Whilst the Board accepts that there will be teething problems with any new contractual relationship, it is concerned that out-of-hours emergency and contingency cover is not adequately accommodated in the contract(s), and too much reliance has been placed on Haslar's in-house PCT staff to react voluntarily in an emergency. It does not accept that an IRC can operate under the same level of cover as for a member of the general public, and it notes that detainee applications to the Board about healthcare have increased by comparison with last year (Para 5.2).

The Board attributes much of the credit for IRC Haslar's good performance to the stability of the management team and a reduction in staff sickness for most of the year. The Board has itself been stable and has benefitted from a professional working relationship with the Manager and her staff this year, as in previous years. The Board hopes that the loss of some key individuals towards the end of 2009 will not lead to a drop in the Centre's performance over the coming year.

3. Matters on which the Board requires a Response

3.1 Rule 35 – Reporting Cases of Torture

The Board became aware of a case where there appeared to be an omission in the reporting of medical evidence of torture, and some confusion within UKBA about the extent to which this was promptly registered with the detainee's caseworker. A Board member met with the Regional Manager of the UKBA to express the Board's concerns about how information on allegations of torture is handled within IRCs and how it should be shared between UKBA and HMPS, whilst still respecting the confidentiality of medical records.

Given the importance of dealing consistently and effectively with such evidence the Board considers that the case identified by the IMB at IRC Haslar indicates the need for the Minister to reinforce the guidelines for handling Rule 35 cases within IRCs, and to ensure that initial medical examinations which reveal evidence of torture (at each of the different IRCs through which a detainee may pass) prompt the immediate submission of the appropriate report to UKBA.

3.2 Unnecessary Transport of Detainees around the Detention Estate

The Board sees detainees who submit either oral or written applications and on many occasions it becomes clear that individual detainees have been to several IRCs before being transferred to Haslar. One detainee interviewed by a member of the IMB had been located at seven IRCs over an eleven month period, and another had been in seven IRCs in five months, including the same one twice; when he arrived at Haslar he was clearly not a suitable individual for dormitory accommodation and was quickly moved to an eighth IRC. On many occasions there appears to be no logical explanation for the high number of moves, particularly as Haslar is neither near to an airport nor near to London where many detainees' families are based. On occasions, groups of detainees have been moved from another IRC to Haslar and then back to the same IRC the following day. The Board has no means of tracking the statistics on this matter, but is now convinced that it has sufficient evidence to bring this issue to the attention of the Minister. If this is the case, then it is disruptive to detainees, makes legal representation more difficult and is wasteful of public funds. The only acceptable explanation provided by UKBA to date has been the need to move troublesome detainees for "security reasons".

The Board requests that the Head of Detention Services UKBA conduct a study of inter-IRC detainee movements with the aim of establishing whether there have been abnormal or unnecessary movements. The Board specifically requests that it be provided with information over a representative period relating to detainees that have been at IRC Haslar and have subsequently left the immigration estate.

3.3 *Transfer of Detainee Records*

Some detainees arrive at IRC Haslar without the relevant information; both electronic and/or paper files are slow to be transferred and/or are incomplete on arrival. This endangers both detainees and staff if security and medical details are unknown at the time of reception. The Board is aware of recent representations that have been made to the UKBA by Haslar's HMPS management concerning this issue, and it has also drawn UKBA's attention to the matter.

This year saw the introduction of the P-NOMIS detainee information management system within HMPS. Whilst Board members will not need to use P-NOMIS on a regular basis themselves, two members did complete the familiarisation training course and another two were unable to complete it due to technical failures. The introduction of this system has been a considerable challenge for the staff and they deserve praise for their adaptability over recent months. It is clear that the system has been designed mainly for prisons and not for IRCs. Consequently, some of the functionality does not fit well with establishments where, as at IRC Haslar, there is a high turnover of detainees.

The system also does not appear to have been scaled adequately and has been subject to an occasional loss of service, especially when new establishments are brought on line. Sharing of information between P-NOMIS and the UKBA CID system and between IRC Haslar and contractor-managed IRCs is not possible because they do not have P-NOMIS, but where former prisoners are transferred from HMPs to IRC Haslar the system provides useful benefits in transferring information electronically. That said, generally most staff are positive about the improvements that P-NOMIS has brought over previous systems. The workload involved with training staff has been so intense that almost all other staff training has had to be curtailed for 6-7 months, which has had a detrimental effect on IRC Haslar's normal training programme, although the total training hours target has been exceeded by including P-NOMIS training. Of most concern is that some HMPS staff are, at the time of writing this report, out of currency in, for example, first aid training although minimum cover is available.

The Board brings this issue to the attention of the Minister and requests that the Head of Detention Services UKBA take immediate steps to improve the quality and reliability of the information transfer between establishments and between the UKBA and HMPS.

3.4 *Transport of Detainees to Hospital*

The Board reported its concerns last year, and has continued to be concerned throughout this year, about the unreliability of transport for detainees' hospital appointments. During the past twelve months, 68 out-patient medical consultations were missed by detainees, 21 of which were when transport arrangements were cancelled at short notice; six of these were in November alone. It understands that the number of crews available from G4S in the Portsmouth area has been reduced from four to two, and that these crews do not now cover weekend duties as before. Furthermore, with the closure of A&E facilities at the nearby Haslar Hospital and the preference for using the new Queen Alexandra (QA) Hospital in Portsmouth, it is understood that, on occasions, staff have had to escort detainees to hospital by taxi.

The shortage of transport may also be one of the consequences of unnecessary movements of detainees around the estate (see Para 3.2 above).

The Board requests that the Head of Detention Services UKBA reviews the UKBA's contract with G4S to ensure that adequate resources are available to transport detainees to and from hospital in Portsmouth, and that HMPS staff resources are not unnecessarily diverted from the Centre.

3.5 Staff Levels and the 2009 HMCIP Inspection Report

In last year's Annual Report the Board expressed its concerns about the lack of staff at night and on the weekends, and the potential for a major crisis developing when staff levels are low and detainees are not fully occupied. The Centre's managers have explained to the Board the profiling exercises that are performed to set staff numbers for various tasks, but the Board still has its reservations in this respect. It made this point to HMCIP during the inspection in April, and was disappointed that HMCIP chose not to report our concern in her report. Furthermore, despite the fact that batons had to be drawn during two evening duty period incidents this year, HMCIP still recommends that Prison Officers at Haslar should not carry batons despite the apparent evidence of need.

The Board is concerned that, whilst management has set night staff levels at what is to be considered the correct manning in accordance with the risk assessment, the levels might be lower than that required during a major crisis (serious indiscipline or fire). It is to be hoped that HMPS night staff levels will remain under review, and that HMCIP will in future report the Board's concern over this matter and reconsider her reservations about the need for staff to carry batons for their own safety and the safety of detainees.

3.6 Recovering the Cost of Vandalism from Detainees

Detainees have vandalised public property at IRC Haslar 124 times from December 2008 to November 2009, and have not been charged for the cost of its repair or replacement. One notable incident was when a new flat screen TV was smashed within a few hours of it being installed in a dormitory. The Board has made enquiries through the Manager and has been told that there is no mechanism for recovery of costs and that the burden falls locally on IRC Haslar as an unbudgeted expenditure; this prevents expenditure on other, budgeted, items which is ultimately detrimental to the care of detainees. Furthermore, whilst the Works Department records the number of incidents of vandalism it is currently not required to identify the total cost. The Board considers that it is not unreasonable to expect there to be a recovery process, however difficult it may be to enforce.

The Board requests that the Manager take steps to reduce the overall number of incidents and to record the cost of vandalism at the Centre.

3.7 Harm Index Ratings

A detainee attending a video conference bail hearing at the Centre was shocked to find a UKBA "Harm Index Rating" on his bail hearing form, especially as he could find

nobody able to explain its meaning and any implications that this might have for his bail hearing. When questioned, IRC Haslar HMPS managers were also unaware of these ratings and whether they might be significant to them in terms of the safe custody of the detainee in their care. A UKBA manager has subsequently explained to the Board that this rating should not have been made available to the detainee.

The Board requests that the UKBA should explain what the Harm Index Rating means and whether it should be made available to HMPS staff for individual detainees. (See also comments at 3.3 on P-NOMIS and interoperability of UKBA and HMPS information systems).

3.8 Access for Detainees to the Internet and Fax

Although the possibility of allowing detainees internet access has been under consideration for the past five years there has been no visible progress on this issue in 2009. Detainees transferred from contractor-managed IRCs comment that internet access is permitted at these establishments and wonder why IRC Haslar has still not installed this service.

It is also necessary for detainees to be able to communicate with their legal representatives by fax. This year has seen the existing fax facilities over-loaded and the existing machine fail during one of the postal strikes. Contractor-managed IRCs are known to provide detainees with direct access to fax machines, thereby avoiding staff from being diverted from their primary duties to send faxes.

The Board would like the Head of Detention Services UKBA to explain what action UKBA will be taking to fund additional, reliable, fax facilities at Haslar, and what steps the Manager will be taking to make internet and fax facilities more readily available to detainees.

3.9 Activities for Detainees

The Board is aware of the extensive range of purposeful and gainful activities which detainees are permitted to undertake and commends the management and staff for filling the allocation of hours for up to 29 detainees to perform paid work at IRC Haslar. The Board believes that detainees volunteering for activities gain a degree of self-esteem and, in some cases are awarded qualification certificates. The establishment of a bicycle repair shop has been an aim since 2007, but local management cannot introduce this facility within present staffing levels.

The Board would like to draw the Minister's attention to the fact that the bicycle repair workshop has still not been established although this was announced as an Immigration Services target for 2007.

3.10 IRC Haslar's UKBA Office

The Board is pleased that its recommendations last year for the publication of information on long-term detainees were accepted, and that the information that it has received on a monthly basis has been much improved in 2009. However, this improvement did not come into effect until the current UKBA IRC Haslar office manager was appointed in October, and the Board was disappointed that it took so long to appoint this individual. Whilst the numbers have improved, the majority of the

complaints made to the Centre's Welfare Officer and the applications to the IMB by detainees still concern immigration issues, and the lack of UKBA resources was a cause for concern up to October.

The Board is critical, as last year, of the Haslar UKBA's consequential lack of representation at Safer Community, Detainee Consultative Committee and the IMB monthly Board Meetings.

3.11 The Shop

The contract for the Shop was included as part of a national HMPS tendering process in 2009 and was awarded to new provider. Goods continue to be expensive by comparison with supermarket prices, but roughly comparable with those of small local shops. This leads to regular complaints from detainees at consultative meetings. One cause for complaint was the price of the new telephone cards supplied through HMPS suppliers, and the "single card fits all" approach was unsuccessful, as some card providers are better value for calls to certain countries; IRCs have different needs from HMPs.

The Board continues to be concerned at the inadequate range of stock held in the shop at certain times. It would like to know what action is being taken by HMPS contract managers to offer better value for money to detainees in IRCs, and in particular telephone cards.

4. Other Matters

4.1 Works Services

Whilst it is appreciated that the accommodation is within an ageing Victorian building and a redecoration programme was completed in 2008, it is to be hoped that efforts will continue to address the noise levels in rooms within dormitories (the walls of these do not reach the ceiling). The Board was pleased to hear that B Dormitory would be refurbished by April 2010, and that work on the sea wall has now been funded. However, as with many areas of the public estate, funding approval is only received in the second half of the financial year and works have then to be completed in the winter months and paid for by the end of the financial year. This artificial compression of works activity is inefficient and may lead to money being wasted in the rush to complete projects in poor weather.

The Board commends the Works Manager and his staff for their diligence throughout 2009, and encourages those controlling HMPS budgets to provide a smoother funding profile to Haslar throughout the financial year.

4.2 Staff Relations and Restructuring Plans

The Board continues to have a sound working relationship with management and staff whilst still retaining its independence. Senior management take a proactive role in ensuring that relations with staff, detainees and outsiders remain cordial, and IRC Haslar's management and staff deserved their positive HMCIP report in 2009 and the award of an excellent score of 94% in its 2009 Health & Safety at Work audit.

The Board is grateful to the Centre Manager and her deputy for keeping it fully briefed on the Work Force Modernisation (WFM) proposals that were put to the public sector unions by the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) Agency earlier this year, and the proposals for cost-savings and restructuring at IRC Haslar currently in train.

4.3 Family Days

IRC Haslar is quite isolated and this makes it difficult for some family members to visit detainees on a regular basis. The Board is pleased that Thursdays have now been made into an all day visitors' day, as this makes the distance travelled worthwhile for many families. Furthermore, the addition of Saturday as a visits day has made it possible for families to visit their relative more easily. Special 'Family Days' were also arranged throughout the year at quarterly intervals. These were generally well received by detainees with staff taking care to ensure that families (especially children) were well catered for. Credit must be given to Haslar's security staff for making visits both secure for the visitor and for the establishment.

4.4 Diversity and Racial Equality

Diversity and racial equality is an essential part of life at Haslar, where there may be as many as 40 different nationalities speaking about 30 different languages and practising

anything up to 10 different faiths at any one time. Haslar management and staff can be rightly proud of their achievements in this area as the Centre is regarded as one of the best, most diverse and culturally aware IRCs in the immigration estate. In the latter part of 2009 it was decided to pull together the elements of diversity and racial equality into a single Diversity and Equality Action Plan (DEAP) which will be monitored by the renamed Diversity and Equality Action Team (DEAT).

There are two major highlights to report in 2009, namely the recruitment of a Mandarin-speaking volunteer in the Education Department, and increased interaction with the local Black Minority Ethnic (BME) Community Development Officer. The former has done much to improve relations with Chinese detainees who generally do not speak English. The latter has helped the establishment to have better relations with the local community. One praiseworthy initiative by this individual has been to collect second-hand men's suits from the local community for detainees to wear in Court and during video links to Court, thereby, in particular, improving the image of the detainee during bail hearings. The major call on the Big Word translation service in 2009 was again for the Mandarin, Pashtu, Arabic and Vietnamese languages; the Board's experience with this service has been that it can be of extremely variable quality.

4.5 Learning and Skills

Courses are offered in English, Mathematics, Information Technology, Art and Music. Standards remain high, with certificate presentation ceremonies taking place weekly. Detainees achieved 287 accredited qualifications and 895 certificates were awarded by Highbury College in the period. This was slightly less than in 2008, the cause of which has been attributed to a higher turn-over of detainees. Monthly statistics are collected on detainee participation in education services, and an impressive average of ~80% is normal. The department is rightly considered a beacon of excellence in the IRC estate and the staff received a positive report from their inspection in April.

Of the many works of art created by detainees, one was submitted to the Koestler Awards Scheme (an annual competition and exhibition which promotes art and design across the criminal justice system); this book of poetry was awarded a commendation. This year, because four art exhibitions were held locally at the Gosport Discovery Centre, Portsmouth Central Library, Portsmouth University Library and the Highbury College Campus, detainee artwork was retained locally in preference to the Koestler competition which retains work offsite for a year. Many letters of appreciation were received from the general public following these exhibitions.

Finally, Music-in-Detention (MID) has conducted monthly workshops at IRC Haslar this year and has assisted detainees to celebrate their respective religious festivals with appropriate music.

4.6 Healthcare and Mental Health

During 2009 the contractual arrangements for the provision of healthcare changed, and more responsibility was vested in Portsmouth City PCT for weekend and out-of-hours cover. In the past a local doctor, familiar with the IRC and appropriately security cleared, would respond, but now it is any doctor chosen by the PCT under out-of-hours contractual arrangements – which in theory could be a doctor from overseas. Whilst statistics indicate a slight reduction in workload in normal working hours, at times the

IRC Haslar-based Healthcare staff came under considerable pressure and there were, on occasion, shortages of nursing staff. There was also an increase in detainee complaints to the Board about healthcare issues in the year.

Medical Services 2009 (2008 figures in brackets)

New receptions	1369 (1389)
Appointments with the nurse	2271 (2605)
Appointments with the doctor	789 (855)
Appointments with the dentist	166 (164)
Appointments with the optician	28 (N/A)
Hospital appointments 100 (8 in-patients; 4 emergency)	108 (187)
Cancelled hospital appointments	68 (84)
<i>Cancelled hospital appointments due to no transport being available</i>	<i>21 (24)</i>

The Board is concerned that the contractual arrangements with the PCT applying to out-of-hours contingencies appear to rely on the good will of in-house IRC Haslar Healthcare staff to respond voluntarily, as opposed to there being proper arrangements in place. Also, PCT-contracted doctors are now required to attend the Centre out-of-hours and on the weekends instead of local doctors familiar with the Centre. Since the new arrangements have been in place there has been an example of a PCT doctor refusing to attend the Centre, and instances of detainees calling for an ambulance from their own mobile phones because the necessary out-of-hours care was not available. The Board does not consider that comparisons with the healthcare offered to members of the public are appropriate in the case where detainees are held in an IRC and there is an associated duty of care.

4.7 Safer Community

The Centre has continued to improve its monitoring procedures for detainees at risk of self-harm. During the reporting period a total of 47 reports were raised on detainees considered to be at risk. A training programme for staff and IMB members ensures that the monitoring and management of any detainee considered to be at risk is correctly carried out. IMB members attend review meetings. The Board is delighted that funding has been found to create a Care Suite with the aim of avoiding the use of the Special Accommodation Unit (SAU) for this purpose and that work is now in hand to complete this facility by the end of March 2010. **The Board commends the work of IRC Haslar staff in dealing with those detainees who may be at risk of self-harm.**

4.8 The Special Accommodation Unit

Detainees were placed in the SAU on 60 occasions, a similar figure to last calendar year at 62. Some of these incidents may be attributed to disturbances caused by detainees smoking in the non-smoking areas where friction with non-smoking detainees resulted in detainees being placed in the SAU for their own protection. Board members on Rota Duty were informed and, as required by procedure, visited detainees placed in the SAU on all occasions unless the detainee's stay in SAU was under 24 hours.

5. The Work of the Independent Monitoring Board

5.1 Activity in the Period 1st Dec 2008 – 30th Nov 2009

Recommended complement of the Board	12
Board members at the beginning of the reporting period	8
Board members at the end of the reporting period	9
New members joining within the reporting period	2
Members leaving within the reporting period	1
Average attendance at monthly Board Meetings	7
Average number of visits to the Centre, monthly (including meetings)	21
Total number of notifications/visits to the Special Accommodation Unit	60 (62)*

**Some visits were to more than one detainee; some detainees were released or moved before the duty IMB member could visit him within the 24 hour notice period.*

5.2 Applications (written and oral) Submitted to the Board

Detainees may submit written or oral applications to the Board. The total number of applications submitted to the Board from Dec 08 to Nov 09 was 117, as compared to 126 in the previous calendar year. A breakdown of these is as follows:

Subject	Number from Dec 08 - Nov 09	Number in 2008	Change
Immigration/Bail	35	53	- 18
Accommodation	2	12	- 10
Welfare	17	7	+10
Staff – Detainee Relations	4	12	- 8
Healthcare	13	6	+7
Catering	10	4	+6
Unspecified/general	1	7	- 6
Lost Property (inc. money)	20	15	+5
Shop (new category)	3	N/A	+3
Employment	0	3	-3
Transfers	10	8	+2
Diversity/Race	1	2	- 1

Explanatory Notes:

Initially, it is often difficult to establish the true reason for the application. Members must gain the detainee's confidence to establish this with any degree of confidence. More often than not, language can be the problem. Members have to ensure that they give the detainee the correct information/advice. Use of the translation service and sometimes other detainees who speak the same language does help within the bounds of confidentiality. Members always seek the detainee's permission before discussing their problem with management or staff.

5.3 IMB Training

During 2009 the Board maintained a significant members' training programme, including sessions offered by the Centre and essential IMB courses at national level. One member attended the IMB New Chairs' Course and five members attended the IMB Experienced Members' Course. Contributions from Centre staff on serious incident emergency planning, control and restraint procedures, safer community, security, police intelligence, diversity and anti-bullying continued to be given throughout the year.

Members of the Board visited the UKBA Criminal Case Directorate (CCD), IRC Brook House, HMP Erlestoke and HMP Winchester. The Board thanks members of the IMB at HMP Winchester for their assistance during the year. The Board hosted visitors from IRC Dover; the Centre Manager's willing assistance in welcoming them is gratefully acknowledged.

5.4 Attendance at Centre Meetings

A member of the IMB attends the weekly Detainee Consultative Committee (DCC) Meeting at which detainees may bring their concerns about accommodation to the notice of management. In addition, nominated members attend regular non-English DCC, Safer Community, DEAT, Performance, Security and Healthcare meetings as a secondary duty.

5.5 Criminal Justice Secure Mail (CJSM)

The introduction of CJSM has proven to be very beneficial for most Board members (only 2 out of 9 members do not have access), as it has enabled rapid dissemination of protected information in Rota Reports, and it has enabled information to be exchanged between Centre managers and the Board at much lower cost and with less reliance on the IMB Clerk. With the normal postal service being less reliable than before, access to CJSM has proven to be a worthwhile investment for the IMB; the IRC Haslar IMB was the first Board to be registered for CJSM in the UK.

5.6 Interaction with other Organisations

With a view to promoting the work of the IMBs and attracting applicants, the Board has continued to liaise with the local networking organisation which represents minority groups. A member of the Board attended the Community Engagement Day in October and met with various groups. Members of the Board attended the Kurumbidza

multicultural event in the Gosport Discovery Centre later that month, and the Board had a stand at the Community Development Event at Ferneham Hall, Fareham, in November which attracted interest from members of the general public in the work of the IMB. In addition, talks have been given to local community groups. Seven members of the Board attended the Annual Conference of the IRCs IMBs which was held in Bournemouth in March and the Haslar IMB Chair was also the Chair of the IRC IMB's Chair's Forum.



Tony Cudlip
Chair
Independent Monitoring Board
Immigration Removal Centre Haslar