

**Chairs of Independent Monitoring Boards  
In Prison Establishments**

**DC. 09 /04 and IMM  
09/04**

cc: Clerks to the IMB  
Governors at Establishments  
Controllers and Directors of contracted out prisons  
Area Managers  
National Council members

Dear Chair,

**ANNUAL REPORTS TO THE HOME SECRETARY FOR 2004**

Under the Prison Rules, Boards are required to make an annual report to the Secretary of State. You will, however, be aware that Sir Peter Lloyd's Working Group recommended that Boards should report to their local community rather than to the Secretary of state and that the Prison Rules should be amended accordingly. However, Ministers have decided that reports should continue to be addressed to the Secretary of State, but they should also be given a high profile in the local community. We will therefore adhere to the present arrangements for the receipt and handling of annual reports, and will shortly advise Boards on how best to maximise the impact of reports on communities.

2. I am therefore writing to ask your Board to prepare its 2004 Annual Report to the Home Secretary in accordance with the timetable set out in Annex A attached.

3. The Board's Report to the Secretary of State is a statutory duty under Prison Rule 80 (YOI Rule 84). A copy of the Rule is attached at Annex B.

**Compiling the Report**

4. As before, responsibility for compiling the report falls to the Chair in office for the year to which the report refers. If there has been a change of Chair during the reporting period the report should be compiled by the Chair in office at the end of the reporting period. However it is the whole Board's report: all members should assist with the task of compiling the report and the whole Board should approve the final draft.

### **Format and Length**

5. The National Council are currently reviewing the advice available to Boards about the format of reports and they intend to issue shortly new and comprehensive guidance which it is hoped you will find helpful. In the meantime the advice attached at Annex D, originally given in 2002, is being re-issued to assist those Boards who are required to submit their annual reports before the end of December this year.

### **Examples of annual reports**

6. Recently appointed chairs and newly appointed Boards may wish to see some examples of annual reports as a guide in preparing this year's report. Some chairs have said that they have never seen other Boards' annual reports. Please contact the Secretariat and we will send you examples selected from published reports for the last year. Alternatively, recent reports can be accessed in the 'Library' section of the IMB web site (ref: [www.homeoffice.gov.uk/imb](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/imb)).

### **Submitting the Report**

7. In response to requests from Boards, and in an effort to speed up the process of submitting reports, there are now three alternatives for submission to the Secretariat.

- a) For those Board with access to the internet, it can be sent as a file attachment (file must be in **Microsoft Word** format) to: [imb@bov-secretariat.demon.co.uk](mailto:imb@bov-secretariat.demon.co.uk)
- b) Alternatively, it can be sent as a Microsoft Word file on a floppy disc to Janet Goddard, Communications Officer.

**In both these cases, please try to ensure the report is contained in one file.**

- c) Finally, it can be sent in hard copy (two copies please) to Maria Duraes, Appointments Section.

8. We will acknowledge all reports on receipt and arrange distribution to the Secretary of State, the Director General, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, the Prisons Ombudsman and other senior officials.

9. **In all cases, at the time of submission, Boards must state the date on which the report will be published, remembering that a four week period must be given to allow the Minister to respond to the report. Once this four week period has expired, the report may be published regardless of whether the Minister's response has been received.**

## **Publication of the Report**

10. Definition: Publishing the report means making it available to anyone who wishes to read it. In practical terms, for most Boards this means sending copies of it to local newspapers, radio and television stations together with a press release, as well as placing it in local libraries. Reports submitted electronically are now also placed on the IMB website so that anyone can gain instant access to them.

11. The Secretary of State expects Boards to publish their Annual Reports, subject to certain guidelines about confidentiality and the Official Secrets Act. Publication provides an opportunity to inform the community about their establishment and the work of the Board. Boards are therefore urged to publish their annual reports unless there is good reason not to. If your Board decides not to publish its report, I would be very grateful if you could let Janet Goddard on 020 7035 2267 know your reasons for not doing so as there may be issues which we can address on your behalf.

12. Boards intending to publish should indicate this at the time of submission and include a copy of any press release. **A publication date must also be given, and should the subsequently alter; it is essential that Boards inform the Secretariat of this, giving the new date for publication.** If at the time of submission you are not sure exactly when the report will be published, please make sure you inform the Secretariat as soon as this is known, as we are required by Parliament to provide accurate statistics on the number of Boards publishing their reports. Detailed guidance on publishing is attached at Annex C.

### **IMB Website: [www.homeoffice.gov.uk/imb](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/imb)**

13. Reports submitted electronically will be placed on the IMB website after the publication date. Boards who initially submit their reports in hard copy format can still send an electronic copy at a later date for placement on the website. Please see paragraph 10 above for instructions on how to do this. If there are any difficulties with this, please contact Clare Batt on 020 7035 2265.

14. Lastly, I would like to assure Boards that their Annual Reports are given very careful scrutiny by ministers and senior officials. I know that a lot of hard work goes into the compilation of the Report. Please rest assured that your hard work is much appreciated and that Ministers value the independent insight that your Reports provide.

Yours faithfully

**Norman McLean**  
**Head of the Independent Monitoring Boards' Secretariat**

# INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARDS

## DEAR CHAIRMAN LETTER COVER SHEET

**Date:** May 2004

**DC:** 09/04 and IMM 09/04

**Title:** ANNUAL REPORTS FOR 2004

**To:** CHAIRS OF INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARDS IN PRISON AND  
IMMIGRATION SERVICE ESTABLISHMENTS

**CC:** CLERKS TO INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARDS  
THE GOVERNOR  
CONTROLLERS AND DIRECTORS OF CONTRACTED OUT PRISONS  
CENTRE MANAGERS IN IND REMOVAL CENTRES  
NATIONAL COUNCIL MEMBERS  
AREA MANAGERS

**Subject Matter and action required (if any):** FOR ACTION. CONTAINS  
INTERIM ADVICE ON THE CONTENT/ LAYOUT OF ANNUAL REPORTS.

**This DC letter supersedes:** N/A

**Related DCs:** N/A