

**CHAIRS OF INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARDS  
IN PRISONS AND IMMIGRATION REMOVAL CENTRES**

**DC 10/04 and  
IMM 10/04**

cc. The Governor  
Directors and Controllers of contracted out Prisons  
Centre Managers in immigration removal centres  
Clerks to the IMB  
National Council Members

4 June 2004

Dear Chair,

**INTRODUCTION OF THE INDEPENDENT PANEL MEMBER SCHEME**

This letter announces the introduction of an independent panel member scheme from 30 June this year to assist IMBs in their role of assessing the suitability of candidates for appointment to IMBs. The National Council and Ministers have approved the scheme and its procedures which are set out in the attached note for guidance at Annex A.

2. Whilst Ministers have acknowledged the hard work undertaken by IMBs in the recruitment and interviewing of candidates for appointment as IMB members, they have not always agreed with the recommendations made by the interview panels. To meet that concern, an element of independence has been introduced into the arrangements so as to establish procedures which are clearly fair, can be readily audited and can stand up to scrutiny, if challenged. The independent panel member, who will come from a different IMB, will be the third member of the interview panel.

3. A pool of about 60 IMB members, throughout the country, have been selected for this role because of their interviewing skills. They have also received training in selection procedures and best practice, which should have the additional benefit of raising the standard of interviewing in general.

4. The introduction of matrices when assessing a candidate's suitability will also ensure that the interview panels concentrate their questions and scoring on the candidate's strengths and weaknesses and how the criteria for appointment had or had not been met.

5. The new procedure will take effect from 30 June 2004. Where interviews of applicants have been scheduled for dates shortly after then, and no independent interviewers are available, guidance should be sought from the Secretariat. The scheme will be kept under review to monitor its effectiveness and will be fully reviewed in January 2005. It is hoped that, once the scheme is established and Ministers are satisfied that it is working effectively, they will be content to appoint the applicants the interview panel and the Secretariat recommend without the need to second guess the recommendations.

6. Guidance on recruitment matters generally will be issued in due course.

7. To obtain an independent panel member, please contact Rodney Bowles or David Hawes on 020 7035 2257 or 020 7035 2258, respectively. Please also feel free to contact Mike Paice the Appointments Officer on 020 7035 2260, Rowan Moys on 020 7035 2259, Georgina Bird on 020 7035 2264 or Paul Blake on 020 7035 2263 if you have any queries or need further advice.

Yours faithfully

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

# INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARDS

## DEAR CHAIRMAN LETTER COVER SHEET

Date:  
**2 June 2004**

DC: **10/04 and IMM 10/04**

Title: **INTRODUCTION OF THE INDEPENDENT PANEL MEMBER SCHEME**

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

CC: **CLERKS TO INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARDS  
NATIONAL COUNCIL MEMBERS  
GOVERNORS AT ESTABLISHMENTS  
CONTROLLERS AND DIRECTORS OF CONTRACTED OUT PRISONS  
CENTRE MANAGERS OF IMMIGRATION REMOVAL CENTRES**

Subject Matter and action required (if any): **FOR ACTION. THE NOTICE SHOULD BE  
DRAWN TO THE ATTENTION OF ALL MEMBERS, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO  
ARE CALLED UPON TO UNDERTAKE THE INTERVIEWING OF CANDIDATES.**

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

Related DCs: **N/A**