
STATES OF JERSEY



PRISON BOARD OF VISITORS: ANNUAL REPORT 2014

Presented to the States on 2nd June 2015
by the Minister for Home Affairs

STATES GREFFE

REPORT

In accordance with Article 6 of the Prison (Jersey) Law 1957, the following Jurats were appointed by the Superior Number of the Royal Court on 12th December 2013 to constitute the Prison Board of Visitors for the year 2014.

Jurat R.J. Kerley	(Chairman)
Jurat S.E. Marett-Crosby	(Vice-Chairman)
Jurat J.M. Clapham	(Lieutenant Bailiff)
Jurat S.M. Milner	
Jurat A.J. Olsen	
Jurat M.J. Liston	
Jurat P. Morgan	(retired in August 2014 and was replaced by Jurat C. Blampied)

Role of the Board

The Board of Visitors provides a necessary outside perspective on the life and work of the Prison. The principal duty of the Board is to satisfy itself as to the operation of the Prison and, in particular, the treatment of prisoners. The work of the Board can therefore be both complex and sensitive. Where there are matters of concern to the Board, it is its duty to follow up on these concerns by the procedures set out in the Prison Regulations.

The independence of the Board is central to its function. It is not part of the management structure of the Prison. The operational and managerial responsibility of the Prison is vested in the Prison Governor. To be fully effective, the Board maintains a good working relationship with the Governor and by its regular monthly visits, the Board is able to keep abreast of the day-to-day workings of the Prison and, in particular, the welfare and treatment of the prisoners.

Requests to see the Board

During the year, there were 33 applications to see the Board during its monthly visits to La Moye, and a further 33 applications were made to see individual members of the Board during their individual unscheduled visits between the Board's monthly visits. Requests to see the Board covered a wide range of topics, from problems with locating personal possessions, legal concerns and family matters, to health and medical problems. Although some requests were beyond the remit of the Board, it will always listen to and where necessary look into, and if possible assist in resolving the problem.

Prisoners are made aware of the Board of Visitors and that the Board visits the Prison once a month, and that a member of the Board makes a further unscheduled visit between the Board's regular monthly meetings. There is a box on each Wing into which prisoners can place their requests to see the Board.

Staff

The Board was pleased to note that at the recruiting exercise held in February, there were 123 applications for 7 posts of Prison Officer. A shortlist of 40 sat the psychometric and fitness tests, from which the final 7 were interviewed and selected. In June, members of the Board attended a passing out parade for these new Prison

Officers, following their successful completion of an intensive period of training to qualify as Prison Officers.

At the end of December, Mr. C. Bertram, Deputy Prison Governor, retired after 35 years of service. Throughout his long career, Mr. Bertram made an outstanding contribution to the Prison Service and also made an invaluable contribution to the current successful regime at La Moye. Board members past and present marked their appreciation of the assistance that Mr. Bertram gave to the Board over the years by taking him out to lunch.

Operational matters

The Board has been pleased to note that the Prison population continued to fall throughout the year. This encouraging trend has released pressure on staff and enabled other overstretched resources to be deployed more constructively.

At the start of the year, the authorities in England and Wales imposed an embargo on the transfer of prisoners to serve their sentences on the mainland. Fortunately, the embargo was lifted during the year and a number of prisoners were able to transfer to prisons in the U.K. where they were closer to their families. Unfortunately, the embargo was re-introduced at the end of the year.

It is encouraging that full advantage is being taken of the many training facilities and educational programmes offered at La Moye. The sports hall and astro-turf football pitch are particularly well used, as are the library and the arts room. The horticultural compound and the kitchens are popular for employment and training, where useful qualifications can be achieved.

Liaison with Home Affairs

The Board continues to hold regular meetings with the Minister for Home Affairs. Three meetings were held during the year. They were attended by the Minister, the Assistant Minister, the Chief Officer and the Prison Governor. These meetings continue to be a useful forum for discussing the Board's concerns, as well as for raising broader issues and some individual cases that the Board considers should be brought to the Minister's attention.

Remand times

Throughout the year the Board has continued to monitor the periods of time that individuals are held on remand. The Board has been satisfied that where remand times have exceeded 90 days, there have been acceptable reasons for the delay in bringing the case to court. The Board is satisfied that remand times are now being properly monitored and that the relevant authorities are making every effort to ensure that cases are brought before the courts at the earliest possible opportunity.

Art exhibition

In March, the annual 'Inside Out' exhibition of prisoners' art work was held at the Harbour Gallery, St. Aubin. The exhibition again proved popular with family members and the Public. The exhibition was attended by His Excellency The Lieutenant Governor and Lady McColl, who opened it. As in previous years, the quality of the artwork was of a very high standard.

Juveniles and Young Offenders

The detention of juveniles and young offenders at La Moye remains an ongoing concern of the Board. As a result of past concerns, changes have been made to the facilities for holding these young persons. When such persons are being held, the Board makes a point of visiting them, and pays particular attention to the circumstances of those young people. The Board continues to monitor the situation. It is aware of the unique situation that the Island finds itself in and that, without considerable cost to the public purse, holding these categories of prisoner at La Moye is the best solution available. The Board notes with pleasure that the numbers of juveniles and young offenders held in 2014 was less than in previous years.

Repatriation of prisoners

The Unrestricted Transfer and Repatriation of Prisoners scheme can now be said to be up and running. While some difficulties still exist in regard to response from the Portuguese authorities, prisoners have been successfully transferred to Portugal (for onward transfer to Madeira), as well as to Poland and Holland to serve their sentences in their homeland.

Offenders suffering from mental health issues

The Board continues to be of the view that La Moye is not the appropriate place to hold those prisoners who are suffering from mental health problems, particularly Borderline Personality Disorder. As a follow-up to the Board's meeting with the Minister for Health and Social Services and her senior advisers, held in January 2013, the Board met with Chris Dunne, Director of Adult Services, who explained the current steps being taken to provide more suitable accommodation for those prisoners who cause the Board particular concern. The Board again stressed its view that La Moye is not the place for such prisoners to be held.

Concluding remarks

The Board would like to record its thanks to the Prison Governor and all the staff at La Moye for their assistance and co-operation during the year. The excellent working relationship that the staff have with prisoners goes a long way towards the success of the current regime at La Moye. The Board would like to commend them for their professionalism and dedication.

The Board would like to recommend that those States Members who have not yet visited La Moye should make the effort to do so. Apart from seeing for themselves the excellent results the Governor and his staff have achieved at La Moye, it will help them put matters in perspective when they come to debate the future budget for the Prison.

R.J. Kerley,
Jurat of the Royal Court,
Chairman of the Prison Board of Visitors.