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Themes: Advocacy, Public Sector Services

Aimed at: All People

Inside every prison, immigration removal centre and some short term holding facilities at airports and docks, there is an Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) – a group of ordinary members of the public doing an extraordinary job. IMB members are independent, unpaid and work an average of 2-3 visits per month. Their role is to monitor the day-to-day life in their local prison or removal centre and ensure that proper standards of care and decency are maintained. Members have unrestricted access to their local prison or immigration detention centre at any time and can talk to any prisoner or detainee they wish to, out of sight and hearing of a members of staff if necessary. A typical monitoring visit, for example, might include time spent in the kitchens, workshops, accommodation blocks, recreation areas, healthcare centre and chaplaincy.

Board members also play an important role in dealing with problems inside the establishment. If a prisoner or detainee has an issue, he or she can put in a confidential request to see a member of the IMB. Problems might include concerns over lost property, visits from family or friends, special religious or cultural requirements, or even serious allegations such as bullying.

If something serious happens at the establishment, for example a death in custody, representatives of the board may be called in to attend and observe the way in which the situation is handled.

You can find out more about what IMB monitoring involves in the National

Monitoring Framework.

For a national overview, please see our governance section which includes links to national annual reports on IMB findings.

For direct telephone numbers to the centres - please see our contact us section on our webpage <https://www.imb.org.uk/contact-us/>

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