

# Strategy

2009 – 2012



**AMIMB**

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**We do make a difference.**



**AMIMB**

## Introduction

**AMIMB's vision** is simply stated:

*AMIMB will be a credible, professional and independent movement for IMB members, and an influential voice on issues concerning those in custody and the wider criminal justice system*

AMIMB is uniquely placed to inform government and the public about people held in custody and to identify and promote improvement where it is needed to achieve our vision. Like all IMBs, AMIMB members have unrestricted access to people held in custody; in addition AMIMB is completely independent of government. AMIMB was formed 30 years ago and is still here because individual IMB members make the decision that there is a real reason for its independent existence.

Our strategy sets out the background to our organisation, and what we plan to do over the next three years in order to move closer to achieving our vision. It presents an overview of our vision, the principles that underpin our independence and our work, and a summary of our charitable purposes. It also defines why we are unique, and how we relate to and work with other charitable organisations, and central and local government bodies.

Later sections present a review of our strengths and weaknesses as we see them today, and our 3-year objectives. The steps we need to take in order to achieve our 3-year objectives are then outlined. Finally, the document sets out our position on funding and fundraising.





## Principles and beliefs

### Principles

AMIMB operates in accord with the following principles.

- We are and will remain independent of the government, the civil service and the prison service.
- We reflect and act upon the views and concerns of our members.
- Our members' views and concerns are informed by the unique and objective evidence they gather in the course of their regular monitoring duties.
- We are committed to fairness and justice for all.
- We will work in partnership with other like-minded organisations where this will further our objectives.
- Offenders with mental illness should increasingly be diverted to community programmes or to secure psychiatric units.
- Sufficient drug and alcohol rehabilitation places should be provided inside and outside the prison system.
- Prison should be used as a last resort to protect the public from the truly dangerous people in society.
- Prisons and the probation service should be provided with enough resources to fulfil their aim of rehabilitating offenders to lead lawful lives (through providing more purposeful activity, maintaining and increasing family ties and investing in the staff and management of prisons).

### Beliefs

AMIMB believes that achieving the following will help to reduce offending and re-offending and realise our vision.

- Young people likely to offend should be identified and intervention made at an early stage.
- IRCs should take proper account of the special needs of the families and individuals who are held there.
- The general public should be informed and aware of the conditions in which people are held in custody, and the programmes and support that are offered to them.

## Background

By law, every prison and immigration removal centre (IRC) must have an Independent Monitoring Board (IMB). IMB members are appointed by the Secretary of State and have a duty, established by acts of parliament, to:

- satisfy themselves as to the humane and just treatment of those held in custody and (in prisons) the range and adequacy of the programmes preparing them for release
- inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority, any concern it has
- report annually to the Secretary of State on how well the prison or IRC has met the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have on those in its custody.

AMIMB was founded in 1980 (as the Association of Members of Boards of Visitors) when a group of BoV members came together to reform the BoV system, to introduce consistent standards and to reinforce the independent nature of the role.

AMIMB works to maximise the effectiveness of its members by providing:

- encouragement in the robust and efficient performance of their duties
- training support
- best practice advice on the treatment of people in custody and on the administration of prisons, IRCs and short-term holding rooms
- information on relevant development



in penal affairs

- support for members who seek advice in times of difficulty
- a public face based on our member's unique and objective observations.

AMIMB also helps to advance public awareness of issues of custody and the work of IMBs.

These activities, including publication of a definitive monitoring guide and a respected journal, is funded entirely by membership income and charitable funds. One purpose of this strategy document is to chart ways that this work might be extended.

### Charitable objectives

AMIMB seeks to educate and inform the public concerning the treatment of offenders and the role played by members of IMBs in prisons and IRCs in England and Wales.

We will educate, inform, advise and support IMB members in the law, the treatment of those in custody and all other matters relating to their role. This will help them to perform their duties in

the most competent and efficient manner. To those ends we will issue publications, arrange training events, promote conferences and maintain an awareness of developments in the law, custody rules and associated subjects.

AMIMB will reflect members' views on improvements needed to policy relating to people held in custody, to funding, to physical conditions and to rehabilitation programmes.

We will bring members' views to the attention of central government, government agencies and other organisations, and the public.



# Review of AMIMB

AMIMB is administered by an executive committee of 12 members, elected at the annual general meeting. The chair is also an elected position. The editor of the *Independent Monitor*, an appointed position, also sits on this committee. The annual conference is held immediately after the agm.

This analysis of AMIMB now and over the next three years is set out according to SWOT principles.



<b>Strengths</b>
370 subscribing members
High-level support from our president Baroness Vivien Stern, our patron Lord Phillips and others including Sir Louis Blom-Cooper, Lord Woolf and Lord Ramsbotham
Affiliated membership with our equivalents in Scotland and N Ireland
Independence from Ministry of Justice and Prison Service, accountable only to its members
Support for individual members
Input into consultations and parliamentary questions
Free to campaign and lobby on key issues
Regular regional networking meetings
<b>Weaknesses</b>
Only about 20% of IMB members belong to AMIMB
Confusion with IMB National Council and the IMB Secretariat
Reliant on volunteer time only
<b>Opportunities</b>
A voice to be listened to given our unique position
Inform and educate the public based on real evidence we see and hear
Use our membership to provide up to date and informed information about life inside prisons and IRCs
Work with other like-minded organisations to make changes
Work with other independent monitors to share best practice and ways of doing things
Gain support from well-known supporters
Undertake research into areas of the penal system and publish the results
Use our members' knowledge of issues to ask questions in parliament
Improve the capacity of AMIMB by employing a dedicated member of staff
Join forces with penal academics
<b>Threats</b>
Limited funds

## Positioning

In order for AMIMB to be successful we must be clear how we relate to and work with other organisations, both governmental and voluntary, that are concerned with the interests of people in custody.

The IMB National Council (NC) shares many of AMIMB's aims but is different in important respects. Whilst the NC is an elected body of representatives for prison boards and the immigration detention estate, its president is currently appointed by the Secretary of State. The NC operates to a constitution that aims to ensure that boards work in accordance with laid down policies and in some administrative areas it works closely with the MoJ's IMB secretariat.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) reports on the conditions and treatment of those in custody. The Chief Inspector is appointed by the Secretary of State for a term of five years. HMIP reports to the government, but retains a considerable degree of independence.

The Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) investigates complaints from prisoners, those on probation and those held in immigration removal centres. The PPO also investigates all deaths in those sectors. The PPO is appointed by the Secretary of State, but retains a considerable degree of independence.

There are many voluntary organisations involved with those in custody. Some, like Nacro, are substantial and have contracts with the Prison Service and

others to provide services. The Prison Reform Trust and the Howard League are long-established and effective both directly with prisoners and interms of lobbying. There are dozens of other organisations of various sizes providing a wide variety of support to those in custody.

The Criminal Justice Alliance (CJA) is a coalition of 47 such organisations. The CJA provides the focal point of a network for its members. It disseminates

information, organises meetings, and supports its members to work together. The CJA is also leading a campaign to end prison overcrowding and prison overuse.

AMIMB has useful contact with all these organisations listed.



## AMIMB objectives 2009 – 2012

Raise awareness of life in custody by publishing at least six articles/letters/ interviews in the mass media annually, and having at least six questions raised in Parliament.

Inform and educate targeted sectors of the general public regarding life in custody

Increase AMIMB membership to 55% of IMB members

Double annual income by the year 2012

Increase support to our members, facilitating four training events a year and other events as appropriate

Extend AMIMB's involvement in, and improve understanding of, the immigration detention estate

Facilitate a network of the independent monitors working in other areas of the criminal justice system

Publish a revised edition of the *AMIMB Practical Guide to Monitoring Prisons*, to include the immigration detention estate

Improve the effectiveness of AMIMB by appointing an employee.

### Training and support for members

The aims of AMIMB's training are:

- to create the opportunity for members to visit various categories of prisons and related establishments
- to create a forum to which members bring experiences specific to their establishment and share examples of good practice
- to broaden members' knowledge and understanding of the regimes and programmes offered within the prison and immigration estates.

The objectives for our training are:

- to provide at least four visits a year to different categories of prison and immigration removal centre across the country. Members should each have the opportunity to attend at least one visit
- over a two-year cycle to cover each category of establishment
- to vest responsibility for arranging training visits with two member of the executive committee who have experience in assessment, vocational training and performance management.

AMIMB operates a **helpline**, which provides direct access to specialist advice on problems and issues related to their IMB activities. Support is given to colleagues who are experiencing personal difficulties in their role. Clarification has been given on issues like access to security information. The **annual general meeting** and conference attracts high profile speakers on topical issues.

making a  
difference.



## Advocacy

In the pursuit of AMIMB's lobbying role, we will follow a considered approach.

- Implement a biannual consultation process to establish the views and concerns of our members.
- Develop regular contact with MPs and Peers with responsibility for or an interest in the treatment and rehabilitation of those in prison and IRCs.
- Establish regular contact with the media.
- Engage in consultation with the government and opposition over legislation or regulation having an impact on those in custody.
- Develop regular meetings with other like-minded organisations to share information, express the views and concerns of our members, and agree joint efforts to lobby or campaign for change.
- Set up an annual review of custody to raise public awareness.
- Establish an AMIMB research capability: inform members of developments, summarise and report to members relevant research carried out by academic, charitable and other organisations, and carry out primary research.





AMIMB

## Communications

AMIMB's communications with its members and others is based on a number of strategies, and is still evolving.

The website, [www.amimb.org.uk](http://www.amimb.org.uk), was established in 2001. It has been a fairly modest affair, mainly describing our work, with a members-only section accessed by individual password. The latter has been used, albeit infrequently, as a forum for airing problems etc. The website was re-designed in 2009 and can now be used to canvass members' views on issues that AMIMB is involved in researching or lobbying.

An email newsletter is sent quarterly to those AMIMB members for whom we have email addresses. This contains very brief summaries of penal news, with links to where the full story can be found.

AMBoV started a magazine in 1981, the year after the organisation was founded. *AMBoV Quarterly* was published under a series of editors until 2003, when it became the *Independent Monitor*. Published three times a year (as was the *Quarterly*, latterly), its 28–36 pages contain a mixture of news stories and features covering a wide range of criminal justice issues – not all directly to do with

prison and monitoring. It is distributed to AMIMB's 400 or so members and associate members, and to about 40 other organisations and individuals in criminal justice.

The IMB Presentation Pack was first produced by AMIMB and endorsed by the IMB National Council as a guide for IMB members making presentations to interested groups. The National Council has taken over responsibility for the updated and newly titled Speaker Presentation Pack, which is now used by the IMB Network of Speakers.

AMIMB's ***Practical Guide to Monitoring Prisons*** was first published in 1997 with advice from HM Chief Inspector of Prisons and Prisons Ombudsman. The AMIMB Guide provides an invaluable support by setting out under each key element of life in custody, the questions that should be addressed. The 2010 edition will include more guidance on monitoring the Immigration Detention Estate.

It is AMIMB's intention to increase its communications with the wide world, both to raise the profile of independent monitoring and to increase AMIMB's influence.



## Funding and fundraising

Since AMBoV was formed in 1980 the majority of its income has been from individual membership subscriptions. This has been supported by income from charitable trusts, for general funds or

to support specific projects. The challenge for AMIMB in fundraising is that it devolves to individual volunteer executive committee members to go out and seek new funds to finance additional work.

	Year ending 31st July 2008		Year ending 31st July 2007	
<b>Incoming resources</b>				
Subscriptions	7,336	68%	6,899	46%
Noel Buxton Trust	2,000	19%		
Awards for All			6,500	43%
General Donations	138	1%	93	1%
Monitoring Guide Income			6	0%
Bank Interest	336	3%	350	2%
Training & Annual General Meeting Receipts	938	9%	1,268	8%
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	<b>10,748</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>15,115</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Direct charitable expenditure</b>				
<b>Executive meetings</b>	<b>2,572</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>1,425</b>	<b>11%</b>
The Monitor	7,256	64%	10,220	80%
Administrative expenses	314	3%	402	3%
Web site	163	1%	75	1%
Membership Information	736	6%		
Training & Annual General Meeting expenses	355	3%	666	5%
<b>Total direct charitable expenditure</b>	<b>11,396</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>12,787</b>	<b>100%</b>

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**AMIMB**

## Future resourcing



AMIMB aims to build strength and stability over the coming three years by building on the support provided by its members and exploring new funding streams, especially for core fundraising. AMIMB will strive to communicate our achievements effectively, thus enabling us to convince other potential funders (individuals and organizations) that our work is necessary and that we are able to achieve our objectives.

AMIMB will ensure that financial processes are in place to analyse and monitor income and expenditure regularly and rigorously. Alongside this, AMIMB has put in place a membership database, held in one central location, with the appropriate processes and privacy policy .

The membership of AMIMB is a major area of fundraising for core work through

subscriptions and members can be asked for additional income and time. It is our aim to increase recruitment to have over half of IMB members. We will start to monitor retention rates and aim to improve these. Members receive a personal copy of the *Independent Monitor*; they are invited to training events; and they have access to the AMIMB Helpline, dedicated member's pages on the AMIMB website, email bulletins and newsletters. Membership is open only to current IMB members, but an associate membership is available to those who are interested in our work. Associate members receive the benefits of full membership, except for voting rights.

In 1981 the membership stood at 100 and today is 370. We aim to increase membership by:

- increased awareness of our work
- improving and updating the website
- arranging for people to join AMIMB on line
- effective administration and good customer service
- the ongoing development of the newsletter

- identifying IMB boards with no AMIMB members and going to talk to them
- successful identification of new IMB members, working with the Secretariat
- reviewing and if feasible introducing specific fundraising events (eg 30–year concert)
- maximising the value of donations and membership subscriptions using gift aid.

So that AMIMB fundraising targets are met AMIMB will:

- review and obtain a mix of funding from trusts, foundations and lottery sources
- build upon existing sources of funding
- seek out both core and project funding
- take a full cost recovery approach to project funding applications.

For further information contact:

**AMIMB**

c/o Natural Numbers, Syms Yard,  
Chippenham, Wiltshire SN14 6LH

**Email:** [info@amimb.org.uk](mailto:info@amimb.org.uk)

Design: [wareanthonyrust.com](http://wareanthonyrust.com)  
All images © [PrisonImage.org](http://PrisonImage.org)

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