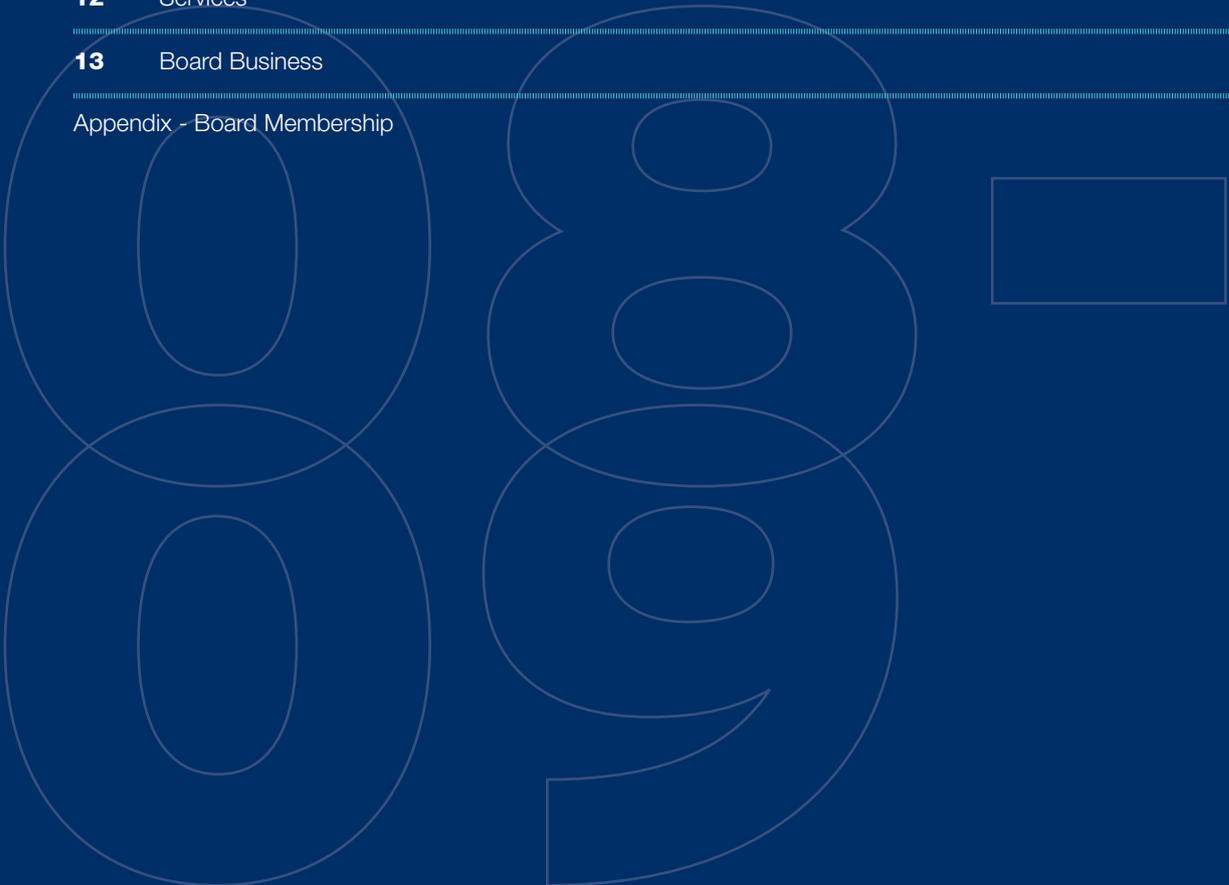




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Statement of Purpose

Members of the Independent Monitoring Board for Hydebank Wood Prison and Young Offenders Centre are appointed by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland under Section 3 of the Treatment of Offenders Act (NI) 1968 and under the Prison Act (NI) 1953. The Board is required to:

- visit Hydebank Wood regularly and report to the Secretary of State on the conditions of imprisonment and the treatment of the inmates,
- consider requests and complaints made by prisoners to the Board;
- report matters of concern to the governor or, in serious cases, to the Secretary of State; and
- exercise certain powers that are given under the Prison and Young Offender Centre Rules (NI) 2005.

The Prison Rules further require the Board to satisfy itself as to:

- the treatment of prisoners including provision for their healthcare and other welfare while in prison;
- the facilities available to prisoners to allow them to make purposeful use of their time; and
- the cleanliness and adequacy of prison premises.



1 | Chairman's Introduction

As chairman of the Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) for Hydebank Wood Prison and Young Offenders Centre, I am pleased to present the IMB's report for the period 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009. This is the third consecutive annual report that I have presented, having just completed a three year term as IMB chairman.

Hydebank Wood is one part of Northern Ireland's three-establishment prisons estate, along with Maghaberry Prison and Magilligan Prison. Hydebank Wood is a women's prison and a male young offenders centre, housing all sentenced and remanded prisoners in these two categories on a single campus. Some boys under the age of 18 years are also held at Hydebank Wood.

An important element of the public scrutiny of prisons is exercised by the citizens who make up the IMB at each establishment. The members of the IMB for Hydebank Wood are individually appointed by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and have a duty to report to him if the high standards that are demanded in our public services are not being met, regardless of the reason. Moreover, IMB members' obligations extend beyond their duty to the Secretary of State. They are appointed as members of the public and are the watchdogs of human rights in one of the most closed institutions in our society. The IMB does not merely look out for breaches of prison rules or normally accepted prison practices, but judges events according to its own standards of what is right or acceptable. Thus, if the IMB does not like what it sees or hears, it has a duty to express that opinion.

The IMB for Hydebank Wood has a complement of 15, but from December 2008 it had to operate with only eight members. There were three resignations during the year and one member was on leave of absence in the United States. At the reporting year end there were six vacancies. I would like to thank all my IMB colleagues for their hard work during the year and for coping with a significantly heavier workload due to the vacancy situation. I wish to express particular gratitude to my vice-chair for her unstinting support during the year, and I wish her well for her forthcoming term as chair. IMB members have family or occupational responsibilities, and it is a tribute to their commitment that they are prepared to make time for what can sometimes be a difficult role. All members of the IMB are unpaid volunteers.

The IMB wishes to place on record its thanks to the governor and those members of his management team and staff who co-operated with it. It also wishes to thank the director of the Northern Ireland Prison Service and his headquarters colleagues for their co-operation. In addition, the IMB wishes to acknowledge the valuable support provided by the secretariat team throughout the year.

This report contains a number of recommendations, all aimed at helping Hydebank Wood meet the criteria for a healthy prison, viz safety, respect, purposeful activity and resettlement. The IMB considers its recommendations to be constructive, and hopes that they will be accepted as such and given proper consideration.

Jimmy McClean
Chairman of Independent Monitoring Board

2 | Report Overview

- 2.1** At 31 March 2009 the Northern Ireland Prison Service had a workforce of 394 at Hydebank Wood, including 52 managers. The prisoners in their care totalled 227, comprising 47 women and 180 young men and boys. That equated to 1.7 staff members for each prisoner. The Prison Service staff were assisted by various agency workers. The average annual cost per prisoner place in Northern Ireland in 2008/09 was £81,340, which was more than twice the cost in England, Wales and Scotland. With such a relatively generous level of staffing and with such a relatively high number of managers, Hydebank Wood should theoretically be a top performing prison. However, that was not what HM Inspectorate of Prisons and Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland reported in 2008. Their findings were mainly negative and portrayed Hydebank Wood as an establishment with serious deficiencies. The IMB's experiences during 2008/09 were broadly in line with the Inspectorates' reports.
- 2.2** Internal disciplinary adjudications are carried out on the women, young men and boys who contravene prison rules during their custodial detention in Hydebank Wood. In its report for 2007/08, the IMB had expressed the view that the duration and frequency of awards of cellular confinement and loss of all association were excessive and were indicative of a punitive regime at Hydebank Wood; there had been a 63% increase year on year in the use of cellular confinement as a punishment. Instead of improving in 2008/09, the situation proved to be somewhat worse for young male inmates. To compound matters, the Northern Ireland Prison Service increased the maximum period of cellular confinement for young male prisoners during the reporting year from seven to 14 days. Significantly, adjudicating managers at Hydebank Wood immediately took full advantage of the new maximum, with 24 young men receiving cellular confinement punishments in excess of the old seven days maximum. Clearly, the current punitive approach is ineffective, with the same young men repeatedly subjected to disciplinary adjudication and having to spend long periods in solitary confinement. A more therapeutic and humane intervention strategy is needed for those prisoners at Hydebank Wood who present with challenging behaviour and do not conform.
- 2.3** The IMB continues to have serious concerns about the processing of prisoner complaints at Hydebank Wood and about the widely held perception that making a complaint could have negative consequences for the prisoner concerned. Nothing has been done to provide transparency to the internal investigation of inmate allegations of assault or harassment by prison officers. The IMB has had therefore to repeat its recommendation that the governor should automatically copy to the IMB the written report of all such internal investigations, to enable the IMB to fulfil its monitoring role in this area.
- 2.4** Throughout the reporting year and the preceding year, prisoners at Hydebank Wood were frequently confined to their cells due to unscheduled lock-downs. During the 24 months period lock-downs occurred regularly and were particularly prevalent during the industrial dispute that ran from April to August 2007 and during the staff withdrawal of goodwill from February 2009 onwards. The pattern of prisoner lock-down and restricted regime continued to be the norm at Hydebank Wood throughout 2008/09, with the inmates finding themselves to be passive pawns in the ongoing poor working relationship between the Northern Ireland Prison Service and its front-line staff. The governor did attempt to mitigate the adverse effects by spreading the pain of lock-downs between the residential houses at Hydebank Wood.

2 | Report Overview

- 2.5** The reason given for unscheduled prisoner lock-downs was 'staffing shortages'. However, Hydebank Wood appeared to have sufficient staff in post and the annual cost per prisoner place (£81,340) would suggest a more than adequate staffing provision. Unscheduled lock-downs were normally triggered by adherence to a 'safe staffing levels' agreement in force at Hydebank Wood. This minimum staffing levels agreement continued to be an impediment to the flexible deployment of staff. A high level of staff sickness absence also continued to be a major factor contributing to prisoner lock-downs.
- 2.6** There is an urgent need to improve industrial relations at Hydebank Wood to enable the establishment to function properly in the best interests of the women, young men and boys imprisoned there.
- 2.7** At Hydebank Wood there were no manifestations of the culture change that was supposed to take place in Northern Ireland's prisons. The IMB detected a marginal improvement in the level of staff engagement with prisoners. While too many staff still tended to keep their distance rather than positively engage, there were many examples of proactive engagement and those officers are to be commended. The prison chaplains and Opportunity Youth workers continued to enjoy positive relationships with the prisoners. In this report the IMB once again calls for the introduction of a personal officer scheme at Hydebank Wood, which would contribute to an improvement in relationships between staff and prisoners and would lead to greater job satisfaction for the prison officers involved.
- 2.8** In its last annual report, the IMB looked forward to an early announcement by the Northern Ireland Office on the construction of a new women's prison and to the deployment of new female specific policies during 2008/09. Neither took place during the reporting year. In February 2009 the Northern Ireland Office published for consultation its draft strategy on the management of women offenders. Significantly, the draft strategy referred to the cost of constructing a new women's prison and at the same time drew attention to current budgetary constraint. That did not augur well.
- 2.9** Lead responsibility for prisoner healthcare was transferred on 1 April 2008 from the Northern Ireland Prison Service to the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. Hydebank Wood's nursing staff all remained Prison Service employees rather than transfer to the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust, apparently due to Prison Officers Association opposition. Inspectorate reports published during 2008 drew attention to serious deficiencies in healthcare practices at Hydebank Wood, as did the Hayes Healthcare Consulting report. The IMB is unaware of the extent of remedial action taken to address the recommendations included in those reports. During the reporting year the IMB continued to receive prisoner complaints about their healthcare, including complaints regarding access to a general practitioner.
- 2.10** Recent inspection reports drew attention to significant weaknesses in the provision of education and vocational training at Hydebank Wood. This is the fifth consecutive annual report in which the IMB has recommended that one person be given responsibility for managing all prisoner education, vocational training and library services at Hydebank Wood. The IMB has also once again recommended that the Northern Ireland Prison Service should give serious consideration to outsourcing Hydebank Wood's prisoner education and vocational

2 | Report Overview

training to a college of further education. For education and training to contribute more effectively to the rehabilitation and resettlement of prisoners at Hydebank Wood, they should be far more accurately tailored to individuals' needs, capacity and aspirations, and to the labour market. The IMB would wish to see a concentrated effort made to address the below-par literacy and numeracy that affects three in four inmates, a meaningful improvement in access to the prison library and a radical review of the vocational training currently provided. Self-employment should be encouraged as an alternative resettlement pathway, with suitable training introduced.

- 2.11** Towards the end of the reporting year, plans were being made to give resettlement at Hydebank Wood a much higher priority than was previously the case. The IMB found it somewhat ironic that the important resettlement function was to be properly resourced by the Northern Ireland Prison Service from 2009/10 onwards, purely because new legislation had made it obligatory. A new multi-discipline offender management group was to be established in Hydebank Wood to meet the needs of the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2008. The IMB has concerns that those prisoners serving custodial sentences of less than twelve months at Hydebank Wood might be forgotten about in the new scenario and has recommended that such prisoners should receive the full services of the new offender management group.
- 2.12** The IMB readily acknowledges the difficulties of managing a complex establishment such as Hydebank Wood. The prisoner population ranges from fine defaulters to those serving life imprisonment and comprises women of all ages, young men and boys, remanded and sentenced, all living in close proximity on the same campus. Some 70% of prisoners at Hydebank Wood have mental illness and/or personality disorder. An unknown number have learning difficulties or learning disabilities. About three in four prisoners have very basic literacy and numeracy, and some cannot read or write. An increasing number of foreign nationals are housed in Hydebank Wood. Well over 300 new committals per year are found to have a dependency on alcohol or drugs.
- 2.13** The current governor advocates a more progressive regime for Hydebank Wood and should be commended for initiatives such as the introduction of timetabling prisoners' daily education, training, exercise, etc. However, as the IMB cautioned in its report for 2007/08, the governor needs the full support of his management team and front-line staff to make his aspirations a reality. There was evidence to suggest that some staff did not always give their wholehearted support. In practice, there are still two distinct schools of thought in Hydebank Wood. On one side there is a therapeutic and rehabilitative approach that includes proactive and positive engagement with prisoners. The other approach puts a strong emphasis on security and control, with a more distant relationship with prisoners. The governor will need to work hard to achieve a preponderance of staff in support of the therapeutic and rehabilitative approach. Those staff indicating a willingness to change will need to be affirmed in what they are doing. Whilst not at all wishing to pour cold water on innovation, the IMB respectfully cautions the governor against pushing ahead with more and more new initiatives without first successfully addressing the fundamental issues currently facing his establishment. He certainly has much to do to bring Hydebank Wood up to an acceptable standard.

3 | Summary of Recommendations

- 3.1** All Sunday evening association periods should be restored at Hydebank Wood. [paragraph 4.10]
- 3.2** The governor should seek the environmental health officer's approval for the consumption of any food, cooked or uncooked, in prisoners' cells. [paragraph 4.11]
- 3.3** Urgent steps should be taken to improve industrial relations at Hydebank Wood to enable the establishment to function properly in the best interests of the women, young men and boys imprisoned there. [paragraph 4.12]
- 3.4** A governor grade manager should be on duty in Hydebank Wood 24 hours a day, seven days a week. [paragraph 4.16]
- 3.5** The Northern Ireland Prison Service should re-arrange the physical security measures at Hydebank Wood to enable IMB members to enter the prison unannounced at literally any time of the day or night and to have unhindered access to all parts of the establishment. [paragraph 4.17]
- 3.6** The Northern Ireland Prison Service should seriously consider limited external recruitment to senior officer, principal officer and governor grades at Hydebank Wood. [Paragraph 4.18]
- 3.7** A stand-alone, purpose built women's prison should be provided in Northern Ireland. [paragraph 4.22]
- 3.8** The Northern Ireland Office should establish a totally separate unit at Hydebank Wood for boys under age 18, preferably a stand-alone facility with specially recruited staff on the juvenile justice centre model. [paragraph 4.24]
- 3.9** The current practice of housing immigration detainees in Hydebank Wood should cease. [paragraph 4.26]
- 3.10** Women prisoners should always be transported separately from young male prisoners. [paragraph 5.1]
- 3.11** The planned refurbishment of the male reception area at Hydebank Wood should be given priority during 2009/10. [paragraph 5.4]
- 3.12** The Northern Ireland Prison Service should take remedial action to regularise the ventilation in prisoners' cells at Hydebank Wood. [paragraph 6.4]
- 3.13** Prison officers should proactively engage with the prisoners in their care at all times. [paragraph 6.10]

3 | Summary of Recommendations

- 3.14** As a matter of principle, staff at Hydebank Wood should always use first names when speaking with male or female prisoners, or when communicating about them. [paragraph 6.13]
- 3.15** An effective personal officer scheme should be introduced at Hydebank Wood, with each prisoner having a named personal officer. [paragraph 6.14]
- 3.16** All Prison Service staff at Hydebank Wood should wear an identification badge showing their name, grade and job title. Likewise, all external agency employees working with prisoners in Hydebank Wood should be required to wear badges identifying them by name, job title and organisation. [paragraph 6.15]
- 3.17** The governor should include in his monthly reports to the IMB details of all reportable incidents occurring at Hydebank Wood. [paragraph 7.17]
- 3.18** The Northern Ireland Prison Service should undertake a root and branch audit of the operation of its formal complaints system for prisoners at Hydebank Wood. [paragraph 7.28]
- 3.19** The governor should automatically copy to the IMB (at time of issue) the written report of all internal investigations of inmate allegations of assault or harassment by prison grade staff. [paragraph 7.32]
- 3.20** The advocacy service at Hydebank Wood for young prisoners under the age of 18 years should be made available to those prisoners aged 18 and above who clearly would not have the mental capacity to represent themselves at disciplinary hearings, or to submit a complaint or request. [paragraph 7.38]
- 3.21** The Northern Ireland Prison Service should publish its child protection policy document/s without further delay. [paragraph 7.52]
- 3.22** All staff and agency workers who have contact with child prisoners at Hydebank Wood should receive child protection training. [paragraph 7.53]
- 3.23** All outstanding POCVA checks should be undertaken as a matter of urgency in respect of prison grade staff and agency workers who have contact with children and/or vulnerable adults at Hydebank Wood. [paragraph 7.54]
- 3.24** The Northern Ireland Prison Service should formulate a policy (or revise its existing policy) on the management of all media visits to its prison establishments, including reference to the potential impact on the prisoner population of visits involving direct access to prisoners. [paragraph 7.56]
- 3.25** The Northern Ireland Prison Service should explore the feasibility of inserting a confidentiality clause in its contracts of employment, that would refer specifically to the period beyond Prison Service employment and endure for the lifetime of the person concerned. [paragraph 7.57]

3 | Summary of Recommendations

- 3.26** A management action plan should be published addressing the recommendations included in the Hayes Healthcare Consulting report of its review of healthcare services at Hydebank Wood. [paragraph 8.5]
- 3.27** The healthcare centre at Hydebank Wood should become a daytime unit operating seven days a week. [paragraph 8.6]
- 3.28** Independent advice should be obtained on the right of a triage nurse in a prison setting to deny prisoner requests for access to a general practitioner, and on a prisoner's right to obtain on demand an appointment with a general practitioner as any citizen is able to do in the community setting. [paragraph 8.8]
- 3.29** The South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust should provide on a regular basis the services of consultant psychiatrists in paediatric and addiction specialties for the inmates of Hydebank Wood. [paragraph 8.10]
- 3.30** The South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust should introduce a clinical psychiatrist service at Hydebank Wood. [paragraph 8.11]
- 3.31** The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety should as a matter of urgency provide in Northern Ireland a dedicated secure unit for treating young prisoners with severe personality disorders. [paragraph 8.13]
- 3.32** One person should be given responsibility for the provision of education, vocational training and library services at Hydebank Wood. [paragraph 9.1]
- 3.33** The Northern Ireland Prison Service should give serious consideration to outsourcing all education and vocational training to a mainstream educational institution. [paragraph 9.2]
- 3.34** All inmates at Hydebank Wood should take a lunch-pack with them to their place of work as timetabled and should work a full day without returning to their residential accommodation in the middle of the day as at present. [paragraph 9.5]
- 3.35** A concentrated effort should continue to be made at Hydebank Wood to address below-par literacy and numeracy. [paragraph 9.8]
- 3.36** The governor should draw up a plan to remove impediments and maximise prisoner access to the library. [paragraph 9.9]
- 3.37** The Northern Ireland Prison Service should undertake a radical review of vocational training at Hydebank Wood, with specific regard to the subjects on offer, the levels of accreditation, the adequacy of training places available, inmate attendance levels and the labour market currently available to ex-offenders in Northern Ireland. [paragraph 9.11]

3 | Summary of Recommendations

- 3.38** A course should be set up at Hydebank Wood to teach inmates the nuts and bolts of self-employment and entrepreneurship. [paragraph 9.11]
- 3.39** Much more frequent use should be made of the four existing outdoor playing fields at Hydebank Wood, by female as well as male prisoners. [paragraph 9.12]
- 3.40** The Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme should be resurrected at Hydebank Wood. [paragraph 9.14]
- 3.41** The Northern Ireland Prison Service should take steps to ensure that all prisoners without exception at Hydebank Wood have at least one hour of exercise in the open air every day. [paragraph 9.17]
- 3.42** The exercise of control and restraint techniques by male prison officers on women prisoners at Hydebank Wood should be discontinued, and should be undertaken at all times by female officers. [paragraph 10.3]
- 3.43** The Northern Ireland Prison Service should review its procedures for accompanying prisoners outside prison, bearing in mind the need to preserve human dignity at all times. [paragraph 10.6]
- 3.44** Multiple disciplinary charges should all be dealt with at the same adjudication, rather than piecemeal as sometimes happens at Hydebank Wood. In circumstances where one charge has to be adjourned, all charges should be adjourned to enable simultaneous disposal. [paragraph 10.8]
- 3.45** The Northern Ireland Prison Service should limit periods of cellular confinement to three days maximum at Hydebank Wood. [paragraph 10.11]
- 3.46** As an alternative to frequently imposing long periods of cellular confinement and/or loss of all association, the Northern Ireland Prison Service should deploy a more therapeutic and humane intervention strategy for prisoners at Hydebank Wood who present with challenging behaviour and do not conform. [paragraph 10.14]
- 3.47** The formal adjudication penalty of denying prisoners telephone access should be discontinued at Hydebank Wood. [paragraph 10.15]
- 3.48** When the penalty of cellular confinement is awarded at adjudication at Hydebank Wood, no other privilege should be forfeited except in exceptional circumstances. [paragraph 10.16]
- 3.49** Improvements should be made to the special supervision unit's current regime to turn cellular confinement and rule 32 detention into a more productive experience for the prisoners concerned. [paragraph 10.18]

3 | Summary of Recommendations

- 3.50** The Northern Ireland Prison Service should expedite the issue of its revised policy on alcohol and substance misuse, which was published for public consultation in July 2006. [paragraph 11.11]
- 3.51** Line responsibility for Opportunity Youth should be transferred from the deputy governor to the resettlement governor. [paragraph 11.14]
- 3.52** The Northern Ireland Prison Service should consider introducing the latest drugs detection technology at Hydebank Wood, as an eventual replacement for passive drug dogs. [paragraph 11.16]
- 3.53** Drugs screening should be introduced in respect of all prison officers, administrative staff, agency workers, building contractor employees, etc prior to entering Hydebank Wood, albeit on a random basis. [paragraph 11.17]
- 3.54** All male and female prisoners at Hydebank Wood serving sentences of less than twelve months (excluding fine defaulters) should receive the full services of the new multi-discipline offender management group to be set up following the enactment of the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2008. [paragraph 11.19]



4 | The Establishment

Residential Houses

- 4.1** Hydebank Wood was opened in 1979 as the centre for all male young prisoners in Northern Ireland, remanded and sentenced. It accommodates young men between the ages of 18 and 21, together with a small number of male juveniles aged under 18. Hydebank Wood has five residential houses on a single campus - Ash, Beech, Cedar, Elm and Willow. All women prisoners were transferred from Maghaberry Prison (Mourne House) to Hydebank Wood in June 2004, and Ash House was designated Northern Ireland's prison for women. It currently accommodates all adult women prisoners and female young offenders between the ages of 18 and 21, remanded and sentenced, with no differentiation between adults and young offenders.

Prisoner Numbers

- 4.2** The prisoner population at Hydebank Wood on 31 March 2008 stood at 208 (175 young men and 33 women) and a year later at 30 March 2009 it was 227 (180 young men and 47 women). The 2008/09 year end figure almost replicated the 2006/07 year end population of 225 (182 young men and 43 women). During the reporting year the young male population peaked at 209 on 6 October 2008 and the female population reached 59 on 12 January 2009. From the start of the year the overall population climbed and by 6 October 2008 it had reached 263 (209 young men and 54 women). Thereafter it declined gradually. The month end average for the reporting year was 239 prisoners (189 young men and 50 women).



4 | The Establishment

Staff Numbers

4.3 The Northern Ireland Prison Service had a total of 394 staff in post at Hydebank Wood on 31 March 2009. That level of staffing equated to 1.7 staff members for each prisoner. Discounting the six chaplains who are no longer direct employees, there was an increase of 19 (5.1%) in the headcount year on year. Prison Service staff at Hydebank Wood are assisted by agency workers from the Probation Board, NIACRO, Opportunity Youth, etc. The Prison Service staff numbers can be summarised as follows:

Grade	Number
Governors	7
Principal Officer (Discipline)	10
Principal Officer (Healthcare)	2
Principal Officer (Catering)	1
Principal Officer (Trades)	2
Principal Officer (Physical Education)	1
Senior Officer (Discipline)	23
Senior Officer (Healthcare)	1
Senior Officer (Physical Education)	1
Senior Officer (Catering)	1
Senior Officer (Trades)	2
Prison Officer (Discipline)	202
Prison Officer (Trades)	7
Prison Officer (Physical Education)	5
Prison Officer (Healthcare)	11
Prison Officer (Vocational Training)	2
Dog Handler	2
Kitchen Staff	5
Night Custody Officer	30
Night Patrol Officer	2
Operational Support Grade	25
Operational Support Grade (Catering)	1
General Service Grades	35
Contractor Escort	2
Education Services	9
Psychology	4
Total	394

4 | The Establishment

Industrial Dispute

- 4.4** The Prison Officers Association initiated a Northern Ireland-wide withdrawal of staff goodwill with effect from 16 February 2009. There were two issues causing the dispute. The Prison Officers Association argued that where a member of staff who had been on long-term sickness absence for an injury sustained at work, including prisoner assault, that particular period of absence should not be taken into account for the purposes of issuing a warning under the management of absenteeism procedures. The Prison Officers Association also took issue with the Northern Ireland Prison Service's handling of the allegations of night staff sleeping on duty at Maghaberry Prison. The Prison Officers Association felt that management ought to have interviewed staff before disciplinary charges were issued. The Prison Service on the other hand considered that it had acted correctly by charging and suspending the officers concerned immediately it had prima facie evidence of significant wrong-doing, and by leaving matters to be resolved at a formal disciplinary hearing. As in all disputes between the Prison Officers Association and the Prison Service, the prisoners were once again the losers. The IMB received many bitter complaints from inmates about being locked in their cells for long periods, having to eat meals in their cells and having their visits, education, training etc affected by the Prison Officers Association's action. The inmates told the IMB that being imprisoned was punishment in itself, but that the lockdowns were a form of secondary punishment. Initially inmates had been irritated but that irritation turned to anger. Evenly sharing the pain of lockdown between the residential houses at Hydebank Wood appeared to be management's strategy, as it had been during the 2007 industrial dispute. Against the backdrop of the current economic recession with hundreds of private sector workers in Northern Ireland losing their jobs, the Prison Officers Association's withdrawal of goodwill appeared somewhat bizarre. The withdrawal of goodwill was still ongoing at the reporting year end and there was no prospect of an early cessation. The previous industrial dispute at Hydebank Wood had followed the introduction of revised shifts in April 2007, and had lasted four months.

4 | The Establishment

Absenteeism

- 4.5** A continuing high level of sickness absence by prison grades at Hydebank Wood had a major negative impact on prisoners' living conditions and activities throughout 2008/09. Consistently over the year in or around 30 officers were absent on account of sickness every day. This represented a marked reduction on the previous year when in or around 40 officers had been absent every day. Nevertheless, the absenteeism rate in 2008/09 was still a high level bearing in mind that prison grades at Hydebank Wood totalled 345. The Northern Ireland Prison Service has a duty to ensure that all prison officers' absence is justified, thereby maintaining the morale of the large proportion of officers at Hydebank Wood whose attendance record is impeccable. The Prison Service has in place measures to minimise sickness absence, and these would account for the significant reduction in absenteeism at Hydebank Wood year on year.
- 4.6** At 2 March 2009 a total of 30 prison grade staff at Hydebank Wood (8.7% of staff in post) were absent on sickness leave. That compared very unfavourably with Magilligan Prison where only eight prison grade staff were absent (1.9% of staff in post) and Maghaberry Prison where 46 prison grade staff were absent (5.2% of staff in post). The IMB has not been able to obtain an explanation for Hydebank Wood's absenteeism rate being consistently higher than the other two establishments' rates.
- 4.7** One of the Northern Ireland Prison Service's key performance targets was to reduce the rate of absenteeism to 12 days per head per annum by 2008/09 and to further reduce the rate to 11 days per head per annum by 2009/10. By any standards these were high targets that could convey to staff and their line managers the erroneous impression that absenteeism in or around those levels would be tolerated. It should also be borne in mind that some 50% of staff at Hydebank Wood have minimal or no sickness absence at all. In response to the IMB's report for 2007/08, the Northern Ireland Prison Service said that it was very mindful of the impact of high absenteeism on providing predictable regimes in its establishments. In addition to regime considerations, the Prison Service has a duty to the taxpayer to robustly manage absenteeism at Hydebank Wood. There were indications towards the end of the reporting year that management was indeed making a determined effort to tackle this problem.

4 | The Establishment

'Safe Staffing Levels' Agreement

- 4.8** In its report for 2006/07, the IMB first drew attention to a longstanding 'safe staffing levels' agreement between the Northern Ireland Prison Service and the Prison Officers Association, which had been a major factor in determining whether the unscheduled lock-down of prisoners should happen at Hydebank Wood. With the unscheduled lock-downs continuing at Hydebank Wood throughout 2007/08 and impacting negatively on the prisoner population's quality of life, the IMB recommended that the Northern Ireland Prison Service should take steps to discontinue its 'safe staffing levels' agreement with the Prison Officers Association, thereby giving front-line managers the flexibility to deploy staff to meet actual need. In response, the Northern Ireland Prison Service said that it could not unilaterally withdraw from agreements made with the Prison Officers Association. Regrettably, the pattern of unscheduled prisoner lock-down and restricted regime continued throughout the year 2008/09.
- 4.9** In January 2008 the IMB had requested a copy of the 'safe staffing levels' agreement in force at Hydebank Wood, but the request had been turned down by local management. The IMB had merely wished to read the agreement in private and reach its own conclusions. In March 2009 the IMB initiated another request, this time via Northern Ireland Prison Service headquarters. Hopefully this latest request will be more successful.

Loss of Sunday Evening Association

- 4.10** During 2008/09 revised shift patterns were negotiated with the Prison Officers Association, which had the effect of discontinuing all prisoners' Sunday evening association at Hydebank Wood. The new shift patterns were due to be introduced on 6 April 2009. The IMB questions the governor's acceptance of revised shift patterns that would in effect deliberately abolish all Sunday evening association periods at Hydebank Wood. It would appear that regime considerations were of secondary importance in this instance and that the prisoners at Hydebank Wood were the losers. The IMB recommends that all Sunday evening association periods be restored.

4 | The Establishment

Consumption of Food in Cells

- 4.11** The unscheduled lock-down of prisoners continued at Hydebank Wood during the reporting year. This meant that the prisoners frequently had to consume their main meals in their own small cell with a lavatory bowl incorporated in the living area. In its report for 2007/08, the IMB recommended that the governor should seek professional approval from the environmental health officer for the consumption of any food, cooked or uncooked, in prisoners' cells. The Northern Ireland Prison Service's formal response indicated that it had taken advice from health experts on the requirement for prisoners to eat food in their cell; air samples had been taken but the sample results did not raise concerns about the safety of eating food in a cell that contained a toilet. The Prison Service went on to say that eating in a cell was not ideal but was widely practised in establishments across other parts of the United Kingdom. The district council's environmental health officer has statutory responsibility for approving the consumption of main meals in prisoners' cells at Hydebank Wood. The IMB therefore repeats its recommendation.

Industrial Relations

- 4.12** In last year's report the IMB drew attention to the Review of the Northern Ireland Prison Service Efficiency Programme published on 23 March 2005. It had described the industrial relations climate within the Prison Service at that time as less than ideal, and had referred to inflexible working practices that severely limited the ability of governing governors in Northern Ireland to operate their establishments in the best interests of the prisoners in their charge. The report had drawn comparison with the partnership approach in Great Britain where Prison Officers Association representatives were taken more fully into management's confidence in the consideration of day to day management issues at establishment level. The 2005 report had gone on to say that without more movement in that direction in Northern Ireland, it was doubtful whether the Prison Service could succeed in working towards normalisation for staff and prisoners. The report had recommended that priority be given to establishing a better understanding between management and staff representatives. The four months long dispute

4 | The Establishment

in 2007 and the staff withdrawal of goodwill initiated during the reporting year 2008/09 would indicate that industrial relations at Hydebank Wood were no better than the review team had found in 2005, and that its recommendation was still valid. In its report for 2007/08 the IMB recommended that urgent steps should be taken to improve industrial relations at Hydebank Wood to enable the establishment to function properly in the best interests of the women and young men imprisoned there. The Northern Ireland Prison Service's response stated that significant steps had already been taken, and would continue to be taken, to promote positive employee relations. The Prison Service also said that currently relations were on a firmer footing than in 2007, and that management were keen to ensure that that would continue. Clearly the staff's withdrawal of goodwill from February 2009 contradicted the Prison Service's earlier optimism. The IMB repeats its recommendation.

Allegations of Overtime Fraud

4.13 In early 2007 the Northern Ireland Prison Service initiated an investigation into allegations of overtime fraud at Hydebank Wood. On 19 June 2007 the governor informed the IMB that some members of his staff had been charged with gross misconduct and that the investigation report had been sent to the police. On 28 November 2007 the Prison Officers Association was granted leave to apply for judicial review of a decision of the Northern Ireland Prison Service on 14 June 2007 to prefer disciplinary charges against six prison officers for gross misconduct at Hydebank Wood. The Prison Officers Association's claim was dismissed in the High Court on 31 March 2008. The judgment mentioned the investigating governor's conclusion that there was evidence to suggest overtime payment abuses for at least two years and probably longer, and that senior management had been made aware of concerns as far back as 2005. Disciplinary hearings in respect of the prison officers concerned took place in 2008/09. The IMB does not wish to comment on the outcome of those hearings. What concerns the IMB is the fact that six officers at Hydebank Wood were facing charges of gross misconduct, yet the Northern Ireland Prison Service allowed them to remain on duty in charge of prisoners, some of whom were charged with criminal offences and others convicted of criminal offences. The IMB finds it difficult to comprehend the rationale behind the decision to allow the six officers to remain on duty pending the outcome of the investigation, and the decision to promote one of them to governor grade whilst facing a charge of gross misconduct. The treatment of the six officers was different to the treatment of subsequent cases at Hydebank Wood. For example, a prison officer who was allegedly observed on closed circuit television removing a letter from an IMB mailbox, was immediately suspended from duty and subsequently dismissed. Another male officer was suspended from duty and subsequently dismissed for allegedly having an inappropriate relationship with a woman prisoner.

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Death of Colin Bell

- 4.14** In January 2009 the Prisoner Ombudsman for Northern Ireland published the report of her investigation of the circumstances surrounding the death of prisoner Colin Bell in Maghaberry Prison in 2008. The Prisoner Ombudsman made 44 recommendations, many with relevance for all three prison establishments in Northern Ireland. On 15 January 2009 Mr Paul Goggins MP, Minister of State in the Northern Ireland Office, commissioned a review in response to the Prisoner Ombudsman's report. The Minister expressed his hope that Colin Bell's death in custody would prove to be a watershed for the Northern Ireland Prison Service. The review team was to be chaired by Mr Tony Pearson, former deputy director-general of HM Prison Service England and Wales. The Minister also established a ministerial forum on safer custody to oversee implementation of the Prison Service's action plan in respect of the Colin Bell case and its corporate safer custody project. He himself would chair the forum.
- 4.15** The governor told the IMB that bedding had been found at Hydebank Wood, but no disciplinary action had been taken because the bedding could not be attributed to any officer, due to the lack of closed circuit television coverage in the area where the bedding had been discovered. However, staff at Hydebank Wood were subsequently warned of the serious disciplinary consequences of sleeping while on duty.
- 4.16** The governor rejected as inappropriate an IMB suggestion that it would be beneficial to have a governor grade manager on duty in Hydebank Wood 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Currently a senior officer is in charge during night-time hours, and theoretically that could be a substantive main grade officer acting up. The IMB considers that a 24/7 operation such as Hydebank Wood warrants a management presence at governor grade level on the ground, and recommends accordingly.
- 4.17** During 2008 some IMB members suggested carrying out night-time visits to Hydebank Wood, but heard the governor say that the security measures in place during the night made it well nigh impossible to gain admittance to the prison. In the light of the Colin Bell findings, the IMB now considers it essential to have unhindered access to all parts of the prison 24 hours a day and for seven days a week. The IMB therefore recommends that the Northern Ireland Prison Service should re-arrange the physical security measures at Hydebank Wood to enable IMB members to enter the prison unannounced at literally any time of the day or night and to have unhindered access to all parts of the establishment.

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External Recruitment to Prison Grades

- 4.18** Hydebank Wood is a small establishment in a relatively small prison service, and many governors were formerly basic grade colleagues of the officers they now manage. The IMB considers that it would be beneficial to inject some fresh thinking and in its reports for 2006/07 and 2007/08 recommended that consideration be given to limited external recruitment to governor grades. The IMB continues to feel that any organisation needs a balance of home-grown talent and fresh blood brought in from outside. This year the IMB wishes to go one step further and recommends that the Northern Ireland Prison Service should seriously consider limited external recruitment to senior officer, principal officer and governor grades.

Staff Exchanges and Secondments

- 4.19** The IMB acknowledges the efforts made during the reporting year to look outside Hydebank Wood to identify examples of good practice, and it welcomes the staff exchanges and secondments that have already taken place or are planned.

Women Prisoners

- 4.20** On 23 February 2009 the Northern Ireland Office published for consultation its draft strategy on the management of women offenders. The document acknowledged that many women offenders will have led very chaotic lifestyles and that women offenders will often have a history of having been subjected to serious and sustained sexual and other violent abuse, including domestic violence. It estimated that 50% of women prisoners in Northern Ireland had a history of alcohol abuse and 40% had misused drugs. The draft strategy recognised that many women prisoners have vulnerabilities including mental health problems, and that they can be highly dependent on staff for emotional support. Staff responsible for meeting the complex needs of women prisoners therefore needed gender-specific training. The IMB understands that two separate training sessions took place in January 2009 and a further session in March 2009. Other sessions were planned to take place during 2009/10.
- 4.21** Work to provide physical separation from young male inmates was undertaken during the reporting year. A new reception area for women prisoners was opened in August 2008 and the healthcare centre was re-opened in December 2008 after a refurbishment to provide separate facilities for women prisoners.

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4.22 In its reports for 2005/06, 2006/07 and 2007/08, the IMB recommended that a stand-alone, purpose built women's prison should be provided in Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland Office's draft strategy on the management of women offenders stated that the Prison Service had completed an options appraisal for relocating women prisoners from Ash House to more appropriate purpose-built accommodation and facilities, and that a strategic outline case had been developed. Significantly, the Northern Ireland Office's draft strategy went on to say that moving forward on this issue would require the investment of considerable resources at a time when there were budgetary constraints, and that, given the timescale involved, it anticipated that final decisions around a new build might fall to a devolved administration. No announcement had been made by the reporting year end. The current shared site arrangement remains unsatisfactory and the IMB again repeats its recommendation.

Male Juvenile Unit

4.23 There is a designated juvenile unit (Willow 1) for housing all of Hydebank Wood's male inmates aged under 18. The unit can accommodate up to 19 boys in single occupancy cells. Boys under the age of 17 can be transferred from Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre to Hydebank Wood when they are deemed at risk of harming others or themselves, or when a court orders that they serve the unexpired portion of a juvenile justice order in a young offenders centre. Youth courts can commit young persons aged under 18 direct to a young offenders centre.

4.24 Apart from the separate accommodation, boys imprisoned in Hydebank Wood did not appear to be treated any differently from older male inmates. The IMB was not aware of any policy for managing children at Hydebank Wood. The IMB questions the rationale of housing boys under 18 at Hydebank Wood when there is no discernible difference in their regime and the regime of older male inmates. The IMB would wish to see a totally separate unit, preferably a stand-alone facility, with staff recruited and trained on the same lines as juvenile justice centre personnel. In last year's report the IMB recommended that the Northern Ireland Office should take steps to implement such changes. In response the Northern Ireland Prison Service accepted that the current arrangements for the management of juveniles at Hydebank Wood were not ideal, but indicated that there was no funding available at that time to provide separate facilities. Towards the end of 2008/09, the governor initiated a refurbishment of the juvenile unit (Willow 1) and the addition of a separate craft room and kitchen for cookery classes. He also indicated his intention to provide secondment opportunities for his managers to attend Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre. A number of improvements were being considered under a juvenile implementation plan, including a proposal to introduce a 'house parent' role. Notwithstanding the changes already made or contemplated, the IMB considers that a stand-alone facility with specially recruited staff on the juvenile justice centre model, would be preferable. There is sufficient space available for locating such a unit in the greater Hydebank Wood estate. The IMB repeats last year's recommendation.

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Female Juveniles

- 4.25** In its reports for 2005/06, 2006/07 and 2007/08, the IMB recommended that girls under the age of 18 should not be accommodated along with adult women prisoners at Hydebank Wood. The IMB is therefore pleased to report that with effect from 9 June 2008 all girls under 18 years would no longer be held at Hydebank Wood, but instead would be committed to Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre in Bangor. The IMB commends the Northern Ireland Office's criminal justice directorate for that decision.

Immigration Detainees

- 4.26** The Northern Ireland Prison Service has an agreement with the UK Border Agency that immigration detainees will not ordinarily be accommodated in any of its prison establishments but will be transferred to holding centres in Great Britain. However, there is provision for exceptional cases where the UK Border Agency is unable to effect a transfer to a holding centre. In addition, foreign national prisoners who have completed prison sentences, can be held by the Prison Service on behalf of the UK Border Agency awaiting consideration of deportation. All immigration detainees are housed along with convicted and remanded prisoners and their regime is no different from that provided for the normal prisoner population. They are subject to prison rules and disciplinary adjudication. The IMB objects in principle to the holding of immigration detainees in a prison or young offender institution along with convicted prisoners, and again recommends that the practice of housing detainees in Hydebank Wood should cease. During the year 2008/09 a total of 24 immigration detainees (eleven different nationalities) were held at Hydebank Wood - 19 women and five young men.

Proposed High Supervision Unit

- 4.27** In March 2008 the governor indicated his intention to establish a high supervision unit on Elm 4 landing staffed by specially trained officers. The intention was to concentrate in one place all difficult male inmates who gave control problems. The inmates housed on the high supervision landing were to be more strictly controlled than on a normal landing. The governor confirmed that the inmates would be held in the new unit on his authority, and that the new unit would have a 'testing' regime which would include one hour's compulsory exercise each day.
- 4.28** The IMB expressed concerns about (i) the criteria to be used for admission to the unit and exit from it, (ii) whether there would be an appeal mechanism and (iii) the legal basis for placing an inmate in the new unit. The IMB was not at all clear about the purpose of the unit, apart from concentrating all difficult inmates in one place and subjecting them to stricter control. The IMB recalled that a few months earlier the governor had stated his intention to make a special effort to get to the root-cause of the challenging behaviour of certain inmates, and had talked about 'drilling down', about having meaningful conversations with the inmate's family, and so on. It appeared to the IMB that the treatment of the inmates in the proposed new Elm 4 unit would be more punitive than therapeutic. In the event, no such unit had materialised by the reporting year end.

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Inspection Reports

- 4.29** HM Chief Inspector of Prisons in partnership with the Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice in Northern Ireland carried out separate announced inspections of Hydebank Wood women's prison (Ash House) and Hydebank Wood young offenders centre in October/November 2007. The inspection reports were published on 12 June 2008 and 8 July 2008 respectively. Both units were assessed against the same criteria and by the same methodology as prisons in England and Wales, under the four tests of safety, respect, purposeful activity and resettlement. Disappointingly, there were no positive assessments for the young offenders centre and only in relation to safety was the women's prison found to be performing reasonably well.
- 4.30** The IMB understands that the Northern Ireland Prison Service does not propose to publish normal management action plans in response to the inspection reports. In the case of the women's prison, the Prison Service will respond by rolling the recommendations into the work being taken forward as part of the Northern Ireland Office's strategy for the management of women offenders. It is understood that the recommendations in respect of the male young offenders centre, due to their number, were to be grouped within broader areas of responsibility and managed that way. No action plan had been published by the reporting year end.

Investors in People

- 4.31** An Investors in People assessment of Hydebank Wood was carried out in May 2008, but re-accreditation was not granted. A re-assessment was to be carried out in twelve months time.

Staff Newsletter

- 4.32** The Hydebank Newsletter, an official publication bearing the logo of the Northern Ireland Prison Service, was introduced during the reporting year. Its second edition was published on 2 January 2009 and contained disparaging remarks about the IMB. One article referred to staff at Hydebank Wood 'being fired at with words and not bullets'. That remark was particularly offensive in that the IMB was being likened to the perpetrators of gun attacks on prison officers employed at Belfast (Crumlin Road) and Maze Prisons. This edition of the staff newsletter appeared to lack the degree of editorial oversight one would expect management to have exercised.

5 | Arrival in Custody

Movement to and from Court

- 5.1** In its reports for 2006/07 and 2007/08 the IMB recommended that women prisoners should always be transported separately from young male prisoners. The Northern Ireland Prison Service's response stated that, although agreed in principle, it was not always practical to provide separate transport. The Prison Service said that monitoring in July 2008 had shown that 92% of women prisoners had been transported in separate vehicles. The Prison Service went on to say that to despatch a separate vehicle with driver and escort to a distant court to pick up a female prisoner when a vehicle was already on site would increase costs. In May 2008 the IMB received a complaint from a woman prisoner about being subjected to racial abuse by male prisoners in the prison van when she was being returned from court. During 2007/08 women prisoners had frequently travelled with young male prisoners including juveniles and on occasions had been subjected to verbal abuse, sometimes of a sexual nature. The IMB is strongly of the view that preserving human dignity in this situation outweighs operational or financial considerations and therefore again reiterates its recommendation that women prisoners should always be transported separately from young male prisoners.
- 5.2** The IMB also received complaints during the year about prisoners returning from court being left to sit in a van for an hour because of staff shift changes at Hydebank Wood.
- 5.3** During the year the IMB highlighted an anomaly whereby women prisoners were permitted to take reading material with them to court, yet young male inmates at Hydebank Wood were not permitted. The governor expressed the opinion that there was no operational reason to prevent reading material being taken to court and gave authority for all male and female inmates to take one newspaper, magazine or book with effect from 1 February 2009. However, the prison escort group subsequently over-ruled the governor's decision. The IMB wonders how it was possible for a transport department to veto a decision of the prison governor.

5 | Arrival in Custody

Reception

- 5.4** The reception area is what an inmate first sees on entering Hydebank Wood. Unfortunately, the male reception area is dilapidated and conveys a grim impression to new committals. Many inmates are very vulnerable in the first hours after a court appearance, particularly if they have just been sentenced. The decrepit state of the male reception area at Hydebank Wood would do nothing to allay their apprehension. Staff employed in the male reception area have been long-suffering as regards their poor working environment, and deserve better from management. The IMB has been drawing attention to the matter for some seven years and was led to believe that a complete refurbishment would at last be undertaken during 2008/09. The promised refurbishment had not been started by the reporting year end, due to a lack of funding. This refurbishment is long overdue and the IMB recommends that the necessary work should be given priority during 2009/10.
- 5.5** A new reception area for women prisoners was opened in August 2008. It is located alongside Ash House.



6 | Environment and Relationships

Grounds

- 6.1** The extensive grounds were again maintained to a high standard throughout the year, with the grass regularly cut and the many flower-beds well tended. The IMB commends the staff and inmates who undertook this work and provided a pleasant environment for the prisoner population.
- 6.2** The existing four outdoor playing fields at Hydebank Wood represent a valuable piece of real estate. As indicated elsewhere in this report (paragraph 9.12), these excellent facilities are currently under-utilised. Whilst the IMB would prefer to see the playing fields used for inmate sporting or recreational purposes, consideration might need to be given to alternative uses such as the site for construction of a stand-alone women's prison or a stand-alone male juvenile unit.
- 6.3** An issue arose during 2007/08 about prison officers at Hydebank Wood smoking outdoors, in designated and undesignated locations, while prisoners were forbidden to do so while working outdoors. The prisoners and the IMB felt that a double standard existed. The governor did give consideration to providing separate outdoor smoking shelters for staff and prisoners, but in the event no such facilities materialised. The prisoners' grievance remained.

Residential Accommodation

- 6.4** Inadequate ventilation in cells was an issue that arose from time to time during 2008/09, particularly during periods of warm weather. The frequent prisoner lockdowns exacerbated matters. The governor thought that a window design defect might have contributed. The IMB recommends that the Northern Ireland Prison Service should take remedial action to regularise the ventilation in prisoners' cells at Hydebank Wood.
- 6.5** In April 2008 the IMB had to draw attention to the state of the bathroom in Elm 3. The two showers shared between 23 inmates were difficult to regulate and often ran cold. The toilets were in a very shoddy condition and the urinal overflowed.
- 6.6** Prisoner admission to the Ash 5 enhanced landing was a contentious issue throughout the reporting year. Apparently, the Prison Officers Association had raised objections to the Ash 5 admission criteria and to the housing of remand prisoners in Ash 5. The IMB considers that management has sole responsibility for formulating the admission criteria, for deciding which prisoners meet the criteria and for deciding when such prisoners should be admitted. During the year the IMB received a number of prisoner representations about admission to Ash 5. The IMB looks to the governor to assess all women prisoners strictly in accordance with the written criteria when deciding which prisoner should be admitted.
- 6.7** An enhanced landing for young male inmates (Cedar 5) was opened in October 2008. The IMB welcomes the provision of this facility which should prove to be a real incentive for the prisoners.

6 | Environment and Relationships

Cell-sharing

- 6.8** The IMB welcomed the cessation of overcrowding and enforced cell-sharing at Hydebank Wood in May 2008, after a continuous period of two years and three months. During that time two young male inmates, complete strangers in many cases, were required to live in small cells designed for one person. The accommodation was far too cramped and the lavatory was inadequately screened. The overcrowding and enforced cell-sharing had their origin in the Northern Ireland Prison Service decision to transfer all of Northern Ireland's women prisoners to the Hydebank Wood campus in June 2004, and were necessitated by the refurbishment of three residential houses in succession.

Staff/Prisoner Relationships

- 6.9** In its last two annual reports the IMB recommended that prison officers at Hydebank Wood should proactively engage with the prisoners in their care at all times, and that managers should 'walk the job' to ensure that proper engagement was taking place in practice. In its response to the 2007/08 recommendation, the Northern Ireland Prison Service fully accepted that prison staff should engage positively with prisoners, and indicated that active engagement was included in the main grade officer development programme. The Prison Service said that it did strive to provide a custodial environment delivering respect and safety for all. It also said that 'walking the job' was part and parcel of a manager's job, and that that was evidenced by managers signing landing journals.
- 6.10** The IMB highly commends those members of staff at Hydebank Wood who were seen during the reporting year to proactively engage with prisoners on a regular basis and who clearly derived satisfaction from so doing. On the other hand, the IMB observed that some staff still tended to keep their distance or remain seated at their work-station, rather than positively engage with prisoners on the landing. Overall, the IMB detected a marginal improvement in the level of engagement year on year. The IMB again recommends that prison officers should proactively engage with the prisoners in their care at all times.

6 | Environment and Relationships

- 6.11** Prisoners at Hydebank Wood did not portray their relationship with prison officers as an entirely positive one. However, almost without exception prisoners were quick to point out that that did not apply to all officers and described their relationship with some officers as 'sweet'. Many prisoners felt that staff had not always treated them with respect. Some even felt that they had been victimised by staff and did not trust them. Some felt that there was a 'closing of ranks' by staff against them. The IMB again received many complaints about the behaviour of night staff.
- 6.12** Some enhanced prisoners confided in the IMB how difficult it had been for them to progress to enhanced status. According to them, there were a number of prison officers in Hydebank Wood who seemed to derive perverted pleasure from goading prisoners and then awarding them zero behaviour markings or charging them with contravention of prison rules when they reacted. They had managed to achieve enhanced status by 'biting their lip' when provoked, but they had found it extremely difficult at times not to react. Indeed, some prisoners had been unable to maintain self-control under provocation, and found themselves in trouble.
- 6.13** In its reports for 2006/07 and 2007/08 the IMB recommended that as a matter of principle staff at Hydebank Wood should always use first names when speaking with male or female prisoners, or when communicating about them. The Northern Ireland Prison Service's response agreed that in principle staff should address inmates using their first name as part of the respect agenda, and said that there was much evidence to indicate that that was the case. The Prison Service's response also stated that it would strive to ensure that all staff treated and addressed prisoners appropriately at all times. During the reporting year the IMB observed that prison staff invariably addressed women prisoners by their first name. In contrast, young male inmates were still mainly addressed by their surname, and they in turn were required to use the term 'sir' or 'miss' when addressing staff. This inequality of treatment extended to written and oral communication by staff members. The IMB considers that the mode of address is an important indicator of individual respect and that use of first names would help to improve staff/prisoner relationships in Hydebank Wood. The IMB reiterates its recommendation.

6 | Environment and Relationships

Personal Officers

- 6.14** An attempt was made some eight years ago to introduce a personal officer scheme at Hydebank Wood but it never really got off the ground. The IMB is strongly of the view that such a scheme is an essential component of a progressive prison regime, and for several years it has been recommending that each prisoner at Hydebank Wood should have a named personal officer. In its response to the IMB's recommendation in last year's report, the Northern Ireland Prison Service stated that the introduction of a personal officer scheme had proved challenging. The Prison Service went on to say that in the context of the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2008, a new arrangement involving case managers and sentence managers would be introduced. The IMB understands that these posts would be part of the new offender management structure to be put in place at all three prison establishments in Northern Ireland during 2009/10 to meet the specific requirements of the 2008 Order. Whilst welcoming the proposed establishment of an offender management unit at Hydebank Wood, the IMB considers that such a unit would not equate to a properly planned structure of personal officers, each with responsibility for the care of a small number of designated prisoners on an ongoing basis. The IMB envisages prisoners knowing their named personal officer and being able to access him/her as an initial point of reference. Personal officers should be aware of the individual needs of their prisoners and respond to any matters they raise. Personal officers should also know the personal circumstances of their prisoners and, where appropriate, act as a point of contact for the prisoners' families. The IMB again recommends that an effective personal officer scheme should be introduced at Hydebank Wood, with each prisoner having a named personal officer.

Staff identification

- 6.15** Prison officers at Hydebank Wood wear their own clothing rather than the standard Prison Service uniform. It is not therefore possible to identify officers by name, grade or job title. In its last three annual reports the IMB recommended that identification badges should be worn by all staff at Hydebank Wood. In its last two annual reports the IMB recommended that all external agency employees working with prisoners in Hydebank Wood, e.g. Probation Board, NIACRO, Opportunity Youth, National Health Service, should also be required to wear badges identifying them by name, organisation and job title. The IMB again repeats its recommendations. The Northern Ireland Prison Service in its response to last year's IMB report, agreed that staff should be required to wear a form of identity and indeed in its response to the previous year's IMB report, confirmed that name badges had been issued to staff.

7 | Duty of Care

Bullying

- 7.1** A safer custody committee meets monthly at Hydebank Wood. It has responsibility for overseeing safer custody work including anti-bullying measures covering male and female inmates.
- 7.2** All reported incidents of bullying are investigated and, if a prima facie case of bullying is established, the alleged perpetrator is charged and in-house disciplinary procedures are followed. The system is dependent on the availability of 'facts' to be proven. The nature of bullying is often very subtle and difficult to present in a factual manner. Efforts are required to address the culture which sees bullying as an integral feature of institutional life. Foreign prisoners may be particularly vulnerable to bullying, given for example the language barriers. This necessitates a proactive rather than a reactive approach by staff.
- 7.3** In September 2008 a woman prisoner had complained about harassment by other prisoners. The IMB was somewhat concerned about a manager's assertion that prison management 'could only do so much' as regards providing a duty of care to all prisoners. The governor subsequently confirmed that he had a duty of care to all inmates, but sometimes management could be limited as to what they can do with certain forms of bullying.
- 7.4** The IMB was not aware of a gender-specific anti-bullying policy being produced for women prisoners during the reporting year.
- 7.5** The IMB understands that there were 21 substantiated cases of bullying during 2008/09 - four male and 17 female perpetrators. In 2007/08 there had been nine substantiated cases (eight male and one female).



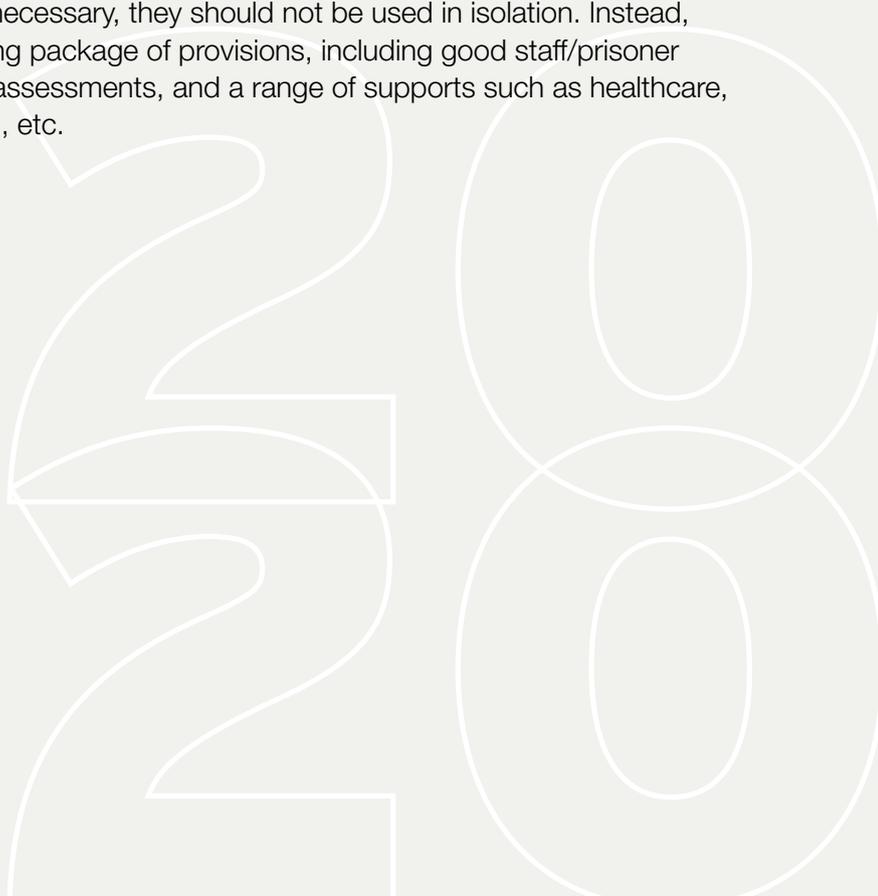
7 | Duty of Care

Self-harm and Suicide

- 7.6** During the reporting year there were 19 incidents of self-harm and three suicide attempts by young male inmates at Hydebank Wood. There were 19 incidents of self-harm and four suicide attempts by women prisoners. During 2007/08 there had been 23 incidents of self-harm and no suicide attempts by young males, and 64 incidents of self-harm and five suicide attempts by women prisoners. The IMB is loath to draw any conclusions from these statistics.
- 7.7** The prisoner-at-risk (PAR-1) reporting procedure continued to operate and a total of 138 cases were raised during the reporting year, comprising 59 cases in respect of young men and 79 in respect of women. In the previous year there had been 72 cases in respect of young men and 55 cases in respect of women. These figures represent a 18% decrease for young men and a 44% increase for women year on year.
- 7.8** At 3.20am on 13 December 2008, a woman prisoner attempted to make a ligature out of her clothing. She was unlocked, placed in anti-ligature clothing and re-locked in her cell at 3.25am. At 5.00am on 28 January 2009, a woman prisoner was found with a ligature around her neck. The ligature was removed, she was given PAR-1 status and was re-locked in her cell at 5.20am. The IMB considers that such perfunctory treatment was inappropriate and totally lacking in human compassion.
- 7.9** In June 2008 a woman prisoner overdosed on prescribed medication that she had deliberately stockpiled. As the woman had overdosed on a previous occasion, the IMB considers that as a precaution she ought to have been given her medication by means of observed absorption.
- 7.10** In response to a recommendation in the IMB's report for 2005/06, the Northern Ireland Prison Service had indicated that prisoners would only be held in observation cells and anti-ligature clothing in extreme and exceptional circumstances where they posed a risk to their own safety. During the reporting year 2008/09 women prisoners were required to wear anti-ligature clothing on seven occasions and young male prisoners on two occasions. During 2008/09 prisoners at Hydebank Wood were placed in a safer/observation cell on 222 occasions (33 women and 189 young men).

7 | Duty of Care

- 7.11** On 25 January 2009 a woman prisoner attempted to self-harm and was taken to an observation room where a control and restraint team was used to place her in anti-ligature clothing. Similarly, on 7 February 2009 a young male prisoner stated that he was going to self-harm and was forcibly dressed in anti-ligature clothing by control and restraint staff when he refused to wear the special clothing. The IMB considers that use of control and restraint techniques against vulnerable prisoners in such circumstances was totally inappropriate and lacked humanity, dignity and respect.
- 7.12** In its report for 2007/08 the IMB recommended that the Northern Ireland Prison Service, in conjunction with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, should develop a therapeutic approach as an alternative to the use of observation cells and 'safe' clothing for prisoners at Hydebank Wood deemed to be at risk of suicide or self-harm. The Prison Service's formal response stated that there were occasions when placing prisoners in 'safe' clothing in an observation cell was unavoidable. The Prison Service said that there was significant evidence of good practice in Ash House (women's prison), where so far as practicable prisoners at risk were unlocked and on the landing. That depended on whether they posed a risk to themselves or others. The formal response went on to state that the Prison Service agreed that a therapeutic approach should be adopted in all cases where a prisoner was at risk, and that that would be included in its corporate safer custody strategy.
- 7.13** The IMB finds it difficult to see how the isolation and frustration arising from being held in the low-stimulus environment of an observation cell dressed in anti-ligature clothing, would contribute positively to the management of 'at risk' prisoners. If observation/safer cells and anti-ligature clothing are deemed necessary, they should not be used in isolation. Instead, there needs to be an accompanying package of provisions, including good staff/prisoner relationships, comprehensive risk assessments, and a range of supports such as healthcare, psychology, Samaritans, 'listeners', etc.



7 | Duty of Care

- 7.14** The IMB was pleased to note the introduction in July 2008 of a 'listeners' scheme for the inmates of Ash House. The Samaritans trained four women prisoners to act as 'listeners', but subsequently one of the women had to be removed from the scheme and another was discharged time-served. The IMB was also pleased to note the introduction of a pet dog care therapy facility at Hydebank Wood for vulnerable prisoners, male and female, and commends the prison officer concerned for her initiative.
- 7.15** The IMB understands that the Northern Ireland Prison Service plans to introduce a pilot project at Hydebank Wood during 2009/10, as part of its safer custody strategy. It will be titled 'Safeguarding Prisoners at Risk'. The IMB also understands that the ministerial forum on safer custody, established as a result of the Colin Bell death in custody, will oversee the implementation of the Prison Service's corporate safer custody project during 2009/10.
- 7.16** In March 2009 a principal officer was designated as Hydebank Wood's new safer custody co-ordinator and another principal officer was designated suicide and self-harm co-ordinator. The latter officer was also designated child protection co-ordinator for Hydebank Wood. The IMB welcomes these senior appointments as an indication of the importance to be attached to these crucial aspects of prison life in future, in terms of a culture of care and accountability.
- 7.17** The IMB has seen Northern Ireland Prison Service briefing papers prepared occasionally for meetings of the Council of IMBs (Northern Ireland). These papers include lists of reportable incidents in respect of Hydebank Wood. In one such briefing paper covering an eight week period, there were reports of 15 incidents of self-harm at Hydebank Wood, including four incidents involving a ligature and one case of swallowing a razor blade. Incidents such as these were not mentioned in the governor's monthly written report to the IMB. For obvious reasons, the IMB needs to know about all reportable incidents at Hydebank Wood and to that end recommends that the governor should in future include all such details in his monthly written report to the IMB.

7 | Duty of Care

Equality

- 7.18** The religious composition of prison grade staff at Hydebank Wood at 31 March 2009 was as follows:

Catholic	27 (7.8%)
Protestant	277 (80.3%)
Non-determined	41 (11.9%)

For those deemed Catholic or Protestant, the split was 8.9% Catholic and 91.1% Protestant.

- 7.19** The gender breakdown of prison grade staff at Hydebank Wood at 31 March 2009 was 268 (77.7%) male and 77 (22.3%) female. To achieve gender parity would require 95 additional women and a similar reduction in the male workforce.

- 7.20** The religious composition of the Hydebank Wood prisoner population (male and female combined) was as follows:

Catholic	127 (53.6%)
Protestant	80 (33.8%)
Other/none	30 (12.6%)

For those prisoners deemed Catholic or Protestant, the split was 61.4% Catholic and 38.6% Protestant.

- 7.21** The religious composition of the prisoner population at Hydebank Wood is at variance with the religious composition of the prison grade staff employed at Hydebank Wood, which shows a marked under-representation of Catholics. Realistically, the staff imbalance at Hydebank Wood will continue for the foreseeable future and clearly the workforce will not reflect the community that it serves.
- 7.22** Increasingly, foreign nationals represent a significant proportion of the prisoner population at Hydebank Wood. For example, at 31 March 2009 there were 16 women and nine young men covering eleven different nationalities.
- 7.23** During the year Irish Travellers continued to represent a significant minority group within the prisoner population at Hydebank Wood. There were five young men at 31 March 2009. At least one Irish Traveller complained during the year about being subjected to insulting remarks.

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- 7.24** In its last two annual reports the IMB recommended that all prison grade staff at Hydebank Wood should receive diversity training. The IMB understands that the top management team at Hydebank Wood attended a diversity awareness seminar towards the end of 2008/09 and that diversity training would be delivered to all other staff at Hydebank Wood during 2009/10.
- 7.25** In its annual report for 2007/08, the IMB welcomed the establishment of an equity monitoring pilot at Hydebank Wood and recommended the introduction of a permanent comprehensive monitoring system that distinguished between male and female inmates, was able to identify areas of over and under-representation and produced transparent results that could be acted upon by management at Hydebank Wood. In its formal response the Northern Ireland Prison Service said that it was committed to providing equality of opportunity for all section 75 categories. The Prison Service response went on to say that a review of current equity monitoring arrangements had been completed, particularly focused on providing for equality of opportunity for both Protestant and Catholic prisoners.
- 7.26** In June 2008 the Northern Ireland Prison Service launched its diversity strategy 'Make a Difference'. The IMB commends this important initiative and looks forward to the implementation of the Prison Service's diversity action plan. The IMB notes the Prison Service's targets for external recruitment competitions of 40% women and 35% Catholic applications by 2011. The IMB considers that these targets are too low to effect any meaningful change to the current workforce composition.

Complaints

- 7.27** In its report for 2007/08 the IMB expressed serious concerns about the processing of prisoner complaints at Hydebank Wood, particularly the widely held perception that making a complaint could have negative consequences for the prisoner concerned. The IMB recommended that all prison grade staff at Hydebank Wood should receive refresher training in respect of the handling of prisoners' complaints. In its response the Northern Ireland Prison Service stated that it would wish to ensure that all staff received training on the management of the complaints procedure. However, the Prison Service went on to say that there were a number of other training priorities which had to be provided for and that the competing priorities made it difficult to ensure that all staff received such training. The Prison Service said that it would consider what other methods could be utilised to improve staff awareness of the management of the prisoner complaints system.
- 7.28** In July 2007 Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland published its report 'The Handling of Complaints in the Criminal Justice System'. This had included a review of the Northern Ireland Prison Service's internal complaints process for prisoners. According to the report, all of the young male inmates at Hydebank Wood spoken to by the inspection team had wanted to make a complaint but had not done so. One of the reasons was that prison officers would, and sometimes did, make life harder for the inmates if they complained. The inmates also cited lack of confidentiality in that they had to ask landing staff for a complaint form or the forms were on display in full view of prison officers. Another concern was the need to hand completed forms to prison officers. Receipts were sometimes not provided and some completed complaint forms handed to officers had subsequently gone missing. Women

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prisoners at Hydebank Wood had also raised the issue of confidentiality. They had told the inspectors about completed complaint forms being left lying on officers' desks and other staff being free to read the contents. Concerns had also been raised that where the complaint was against another prisoner or a member of staff, the lack of confidentiality could have serious repercussions for the complainant. The women prisoners had also said that there were consequences for making a complaint, especially if it was against a prison officer. It was made clear to prisoners that privileges were at the discretion of staff and could be withheld. None of the women prisoners consulted by the inspection team had expressed confidence in the internal complaints system as operated. At Hydebank Wood there were no indications of action taken locally to remedy the findings of Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland as published in the July 2007 report. The IMB recommends that the Northern Ireland Prison Service should undertake a root and branch audit of the operation of its formal complaints system for prisoners at Hydebank Wood.

- 7.29** In June 2008 a young male prisoner alleged that prison staff had dissuaded him from lodging an official Prison Service complaint form and advised him to take up his complaint with the IMB instead. Such advice by prison officers is totally unacceptable. It negates the prisoner's right to raise complaints with the Northern Ireland Prison Service and ultimately to the Prisoner Ombudsman. The IMB had reported two similar cases in 2007/08.
- 7.30** In July 2008 a young male inmate alleged that a formal written complaint that he had submitted against a named prison officer had been altered by prison staff.
- 7.31** With the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust assuming responsibility for prisoner healthcare from April 2008, inmates' formal complaints of a healthcare nature are now sent to the Trust if they cannot first be resolved within Hydebank Wood. During the six months commencing October 2008, a total of 16 healthcare complaints were received, of which ten were resolved at Hydebank Wood and the remaining six were referred to the Trust. During the reporting year the IMB received some healthcare complaints direct from inmates at Hydebank Wood, and will continue to do so in 2009/10. The IMB will raise such complaints with the governor on a prisoner application form, in the same way that all other complaints will be raised.

Allegations of Assault or Harassment

- 7.32** The IMB frequently receives inmate allegations of assault or harassment by prison officers. These allegations are passed on to the governor. The IMB is not privy to the extent or nature of any internal investigations, or whether there has been police involvement. To enable it to properly fulfil its monitoring role in this area, the IMB recommended in its 2007/08 report that the governor should automatically copy to the IMB the written report of all such internal investigations. The Northern Ireland Prison Service's response indicated that it would consider IMB requests for access to any internal investigation reports into prisoner allegations of assault or harassment. Consequently, to enable it to establish a monitoring framework for this area of work, the IMB asked the governor to provide a list of all inmate allegations of assault or harassment by prison grade staff submitted during the nine months period April to December 2008. Unfortunately, there was no response from the governor and the IMB was unable to initiate any monitoring during the reporting year. The IMB is not aware of any inmate allegation

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of assault or harassment during 2008/09 being upheld by the governor, or of any such case being referred to the police. Indeed, the IMB is unable to say whether any investigation has been undertaken. The IMB considers that there is a need to inject a degree of independence to the process and therefore repeats its 2007/08 recommendation that the governor should automatically copy to the IMB (at time of issue) the written report of all internal investigations of inmate allegations of assault or harassment by prison grade staff.

- 7.33** Any prisoner allegations of assault or harassment received by the IMB are conveyed on day of receipt to the governor on a prisoner application form. Prior to the introduction of the prisoner application form, the IMB normally conveyed such allegations to the governor by word of mouth. That had proved very unsatisfactory and led to the introduction of the more formal prisoner application form. The IMB assumes that all allegations conveyed to the governor by means of a prisoner application form are registered and investigated.
- 7.34** When prisoner allegations of staff assaults are referred to at IMB monthly meetings, there is a tendency on occasions for management to say that such allegations are difficult to believe, bearing in mind the identity of the officer concerned. In other words, management tends to sub-consciously dismiss the prisoner's allegation because of their positive perception of the officer concerned.
- 7.35** In May 2008 a young male inmate told the IMB that he had observed through the open flap in his cell door another male inmate being repeatedly kicked by prison officers on the floor outside his cell. He also alleged that he had observed an officer spitting on the inmate's head. The IMB passed these allegations to the governor, but does not know the outcome of the investigation.
- 7.36** In June 2008 a male inmate told the IMB about lodging a formal complaint about a named prison officer. The inmate alleged that the officer receiving the complaint form had made it clear that he would not be processing the complaint and, according to the inmate, it had not been processed.

Advocacy Service

- 7.37** The Northern Ireland Prison Service employs Opportunity Youth to provide an advocacy service at Hydebank Wood for juvenile inmates under the age of 18. Advocacy is available, if requested, to give advice and support to a boy who is charged with a disciplinary offence, and to speak for the young person concerned at the disciplinary hearing. An advocate is also available to give juvenile inmates advice on their rights under the complaints procedure and, if required, to provide assistance in writing the complaint. Opportunity Youth provided an advocacy service on 37 occasions during 2008/09.

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7.38 There are some prisoners in Hydebank Wood aged 18 and above, male and female, who clearly would not have the mental capacity to represent themselves at disciplinary hearings, or to submit a complaint or request. In its reports for 2006/07 and 2007/08 the IMB expressed the view that there was a strong case for extending the availability of the advocacy service at Hydebank Wood to cover such prisoners, and recommended accordingly. The Northern Ireland Prison Service response to the IMB's report for 2006/07 indicated that it was currently reviewing its advocacy policy and would consider the IMB's recommendation in the context of that review. The Prison Service response to the IMB's report for 2007/08 indicated that it would give consideration to covering prisoners with learning difficulties. The IMB is not aware of any extension of the advocacy policy and repeats its recommendation. The IMB should make it clear that it is an independent body and does not act as an advocate for prisoners.

Visitors Centre

- 7.39** During 2008/09 the prison officers and NIACRO staff employed in the visitors centre continued to facilitate good quality links between prisoners and their partners, families and friends. The NIACRO manager and her staff provided valuable support to prisoners' visitors on practical and emotional levels. The family liaison officers endeavoured to make the child-centred and family visits meaningful and enjoyable. The purpose of such visits is to enable prisoners who have children, or prisoners who are children themselves, to spend time with their family to help create and strengthen family bonds. It is an acknowledged fact that good family links contribute to a reduction in re-offending. This year the IMB again commends the Prison Service and NIACRO staff employed in Hydebank Wood's visitors centre for their positive contribution.
- 7.40** The governor decided that with effect from 1 September 2008 the duration of visit sessions would be not less than one hour for all prisoners. The IMB welcomed that significant improvement.
- 7.41** Many prisoners' visitors have to travel some distance to reach Hydebank Wood, so the IMB was pleased to note that NIACRO staff are now in a position to offer them tea/coffee and snacks.
- 7.42** The IMB understands that with the introduction of revised shift patterns at Hydebank Wood, prisoners' family members will now be able to deposit items of clothing on Saturdays and Sundays. The IMB recognised the problems previously experienced by family members who worked Monday to Friday, and welcomes the extended facility.
- 7.43** Women prisoners continue to share the visiting facilities with young male inmates, having three designated tables in the visits room. This is another negative feature of Hydebank Wood's shared site.
- 7.44** The governor has been instrumental in establishing a parents/visitors forum at Hydebank Wood which meets on a monthly basis. The IMB commends the governor's initiative in that it underlines the importance attached to family contact. A dvd was being developed by the forum for use in the visits room.

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- 7.45** A number of prisoners in Hydebank Wood, including a high proportion of foreign national prisoners, do not routinely receive visits. The IMB would wish to see the establishment of a visiting scheme for prisoners wishing to avail of such a service. It is anticipated that this could best be provided by a voluntary organisation experienced in utilising volunteers, such as the Quakers.
- 7.46** In September 2008 a young male prisoner had his request to visit his cousin, also an inmate in Hydebank Wood, turned down. There appeared to be two opposing schools of thought on how the visit request should be dealt with. It was rejected because the cousin was not deemed to be a close relative.
- 7.47** Many male and female prisoners are employed in cottage industries, horticulture, art, craft, etc. and produce items of marketable quality. In its report for 2006/07 the IMB expressed the view that the visitors centre should be used as a showcase for prisoners' work and recommended that a limited range of products be offered for sale to prisoners' visitors. The IMB is therefore pleased to note that this is now happening. Importantly it is a public acknowledgment of the work efforts of the inmates concerned.
- 7.48** The governor was planning to provide separate accommodation alongside Ash House to enable suitably assessed women prisoners to have extended visits from their children, including overnight stays. Such visits would commence in 2009/10.

Telephone calls

- 7.49** The IMB continued to receive complaints from prisoners about the high cost of making telephone calls. In many instances the calls were to a mobile telephone because the family member did not have a land-line. Such calls were relatively expensive. Prisoners on the 'basic' regime found telephone calls particularly difficult to fund. The IMB recognises the importance of maintaining family contact for the success of the resettlement process and again urges the Northern Ireland Prison Service to explore ways of reducing the cost of prisoners' telephone calls. The IMB commends the Prison Service for providing one free telephone call per week for foreign national prisoners.

Letters

- 7.50** Prisoners are allowed to send two letters each week at public expense, and to receive letters. For the third year in succession the IMB received prisoner complaints about in-house delays to incoming mail.

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Child Protection

- 7.51** On 4 April 2007 the Northern Ireland Prison Service published for public consultation three inter-linking draft policies covering the various aspects of child protection that arise in a custodial setting. The three draft policies were titled:
- Child protection policy and procedures for Hydebank Wood Prison and Young Offenders Centre;
 - Child protection policy and procedures for children visiting prison establishments in Northern Ireland; and
 - Child protection policy and procedures for managing visits to, and communication with, those who present a risk to children.
- 7.52** The final policy document/s had not been published by the reporting year end. The IMB understands that the public consultation exercise produced many responses and that the Prison Service has been evaluating these and been taking forward other important issues with Social Services. Nevertheless, the IMB is disappointed that two full years have elapsed since the draft policies were first issued and recommends that the Prison Service should publish its final policy document/s without further delay.
- 7.53** In its report for 2007/08 the IMB had indicated its understanding that some staff employed in the Willow 1 juvenile unit had not received training in child protection. Furthermore, it had been the IMB's understanding that some staff employed in other areas of Hydebank Wood such as reception, healthcare and visits that entailed contact with child prisoners, had not received training in child protection. The IMB had therefore recommended that all Hydebank Wood staff or agency workers who had contact with child prisoners should receive child protection training. By the end of this reporting year a total of 55 staff had received such training - three senior officers, 28 prison officers and 24 operational support staff. The IMB repeats its recommendation.
- 7.54** In last year's report the IMB had also recommended that all outstanding POCVA checks should be undertaken in respect of all prison grade staff and agency workers employed at Hydebank Wood. The IMB repeats its recommendation.
- 7.55** The IMB was told that Hydebank Wood had three child protection referrals during the year. In March 2009 a principal officer was appointed Hydebank Wood's designated officer for child protection. The IMB understands that that role was undertaken for the greater part of 2008/09 by the male and female residential governors.

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Media Coverage

7.56 In November 2008 two young male inmates, both remanded prisoners, drew the IMB's attention to articles in a newspaper featuring Hydebank Wood. Both inmates expressed serious concern about the inclusion of details of the criminal charges they were facing. One also expressed concern about the inclusion of a photograph of a piece of his prison artwork bearing his name. The newspaper articles had also included details of other Hydebank Wood prisoners' offences, together with photographs of two women prisoners and one young male inmate. One of the featured prisoners had allegedly been associated with a paramilitary organisation and the photograph and articles in the newspaper might potentially have put her at some risk of harm. Another inmate told the IMB that he was not aware that he was being interviewed by a representative of the newspaper concerned and, if he had known the identity of the newspaper, he would have refused. The Northern Ireland Prison Service facilitated the newspaper's visit to Hydebank Wood and the governor accompanied the newspaper's representative. The IMB has concerns about the potential impact on the prisoner population of media visits involving direct access to prisoners, and recommends that the Northern Ireland Prison Service formulates a policy (or revises its existing policy) on the management of all media visits to its prison establishments. It is a fact of life that the media have a particular interest in certain high profile prisoners and it is therefore incumbent on the Prison Service to put in place safeguards to ensure the absolute privacy of all prisoners in its care.

Professional Confidentiality in Respect of Prisoners

7.57 In an article in a Sunday newspaper in February 2009, a retired prison governor was reported as making allegations about a woman prisoner, who was currently serving a life sentence in Hydebank Wood. The IMB has very real concerns about the distress caused to prisoners by such divulging of information regarding their life in prison and by such sensational media reporting. The Northern Ireland Prison Service also found the reported comments of its retired governor reprehensible and wrote to him expressing its utter displeasure and concern at his actions and distancing itself from the comments attributed to him. The Prison Service does not have in place a 'gagging' mechanism to prevent its former employees disclosing information about prisoners, and is therefore unable to prevent a repetition of the 2009 case. The IMB feels that the Prison Service should explore the feasibility of inserting a confidentiality clause in its contracts of employment, that would refer specifically to the period beyond Prison Service employment and endure for the lifetime of the person concerned. The IMB recommends accordingly.

8 | Healthcare

- 8.1** Responsibility for the commissioning and provision of prisoner healthcare was transferred from the Northern Ireland Prison Service to the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety on 1 April 2008, one year later than originally planned. The South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust assumed responsibility.
- 8.2** Hydebank Wood's nursing staff all remained employees of the Northern Ireland Prison Service, and did not transfer to the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust. Apparently, the Prison Officers Association had opposed such a transfer. The healthcare manager at Hydebank Wood reports to an assistant director in the South Eastern Trust, but also has a reporting line to the resettlement governor in Hydebank Wood.
- 8.3** The announced inspection of Hydebank Wood by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons and the Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice Northern Ireland in October/November 2007 revealed serious deficiencies in healthcare practices. As a consequence, the Northern Ireland Prison Service commissioned Hayes Healthcare Consulting to review healthcare services at Hydebank Wood.
- 8.4** The Hayes Healthcare Consulting report of its review is dated January 2008 but the IMB was unable to obtain a copy until 18 November 2008. The report made a number of recommendations including the following examples:
- Management need to ensure that poor staff attitudes and behaviours are dealt with promptly and appropriately.
 - Healthcare staff should refer to prisoners by their preferred name, for example their forename. When prisoners are admitted to the healthcare centre, they should be referred to as patients. These simple actions would support a more caring and compassionate culture.
 - Nurse triage should be available seven days a week. The triage nurse is in the ideal position to identify particularly vulnerable prisoners who might benefit from a period of respite within the healthcare centre.
 - Implement a critical incident reporting system with appropriate training and support for staff alongside a just and fair culture. Consider anonymous reporting in the first instance to encourage reporting. Emphasise the importance of learning and quality improvement opportunities from incident reporting.
 - The complete range of services should be available to prisoners as identified through their health needs assessment.
 - An initial health risk assessment should be conducted at committal. This assessment should focus on the immediate healthcare needs of the prisoner and any risks which require immediate intervention. A secondary healthcare check should be conducted within 72 hours following committal. This should be a more comprehensive assessment, when the prisoner would be more likely to give an accurate account of his/her healthcare needs.

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- 8.5** The IMB is not aware of any published management action plan in response to the recommendations included in the Hayes Healthcare Consulting report. The IMB therefore recommends the early publication of such an action plan to address the serious shortcomings revealed by the report.
- 8.6** The report of the Review of Healthcare Service Delivery in the Northern Ireland Prison Service, published in February 2005, recommended that the Prison Service should review the retention of in-patient beds in its healthcare facilities. Despite that, Hydebank Wood has continued to provide in-patient beds with its healthcare staff on duty 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The number of patients held overnight in the healthcare centre is very small. For example, during the year 2008/09 there were only ten overnight in-patients involving a total of 33 nights, including 30 nights in an observation cell. The occasional acute cases are transferred to a National Health Service hospital's accident and emergency department, as would any citizen in the community. In its report for 2007/08, the IMB recommended that the healthcare centre at Hydebank Wood should become a daytime unit operating seven days a week. However, the Northern Ireland Prison Service in its response said that Hydebank Wood housed the highest risk groups, vulnerable young people and females, and that there would be a continued need to provide a small number of in-patient beds. The Prison Service confirmed that there were no plans to change the existing arrangements for delivery of healthcare at Hydebank Wood, and that the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust, who had responsibility for delivery of prisoner healthcare services, would keep the matter under review. The IMB remains unconvinced and repeats its recommendation.
- 8.7** Questions arise from time to time about the continuity of care for new prisoners whose medical condition had previously been treated in the community. Healthcare staff at Hydebank Wood only ascertain inmates' previous medical history and treatment if they are told about these by inmates on committal, or if healthcare staff are given permission by inmates to contact their general practitioner. With responsibility for prisoners' healthcare in Northern Ireland now transferred to the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, the IMB would expect a more joined-up communication system to evolve in the short term.
- 8.8** The IMB received complaints from prisoners in Hydebank Wood about difficulty they experienced in obtaining a consultation with a general practitioner. The prisoners perceived the triage nurse's role as deliberately blocking access to a general practitioner. In the community setting, a citizen can obtain on demand an appointment with a general practitioner and triage screening is normally restricted to hospital accident and emergency departments. The IMB wonders whether prisoners should not also enjoy open access to a general practitioner and questions the right of a triage nurse in a prison setting to deny prisoner requests for such access. The IMB recommends that independent advice should be obtained on these points of principle.
- 8.9** It is estimated that 70% of prisoners at Hydebank Wood have a mental illness and/or a personality disorder. The majority of mental health problems involve depression, neurosis and anxiety disorders and these are treated in prison by primary care practitioners. Prisoners with severe mental disorder are referred to a specialist for treatment.

8 | Healthcare

- 8.10** A consultant psychiatrist and a staff grade psychiatrist each provide two sessions per week for the women and young men imprisoned in Hydebank Wood. Currently there is no consultant paediatric psychiatrist provision for juvenile inmates. There is a reliance on the consultant who had been treating the child in the community setting, but the IMB understands that most of those psychiatrists are reluctant to travel to Hydebank Wood. There is also a need for a consultant addiction specialist. The IMB recommends that the services of consultant psychiatrists in paediatric and addiction specialties be provided for the inmates of Hydebank Wood on a regular basis.
- 8.11** Hydebank Wood does not have the services of a clinical psychologist to address clinical mental distress, dysfunction or disorder. The IMB considers that a clinical psychologist would bring considerable therapeutic benefit to many of the women, young men and boys imprisoned at Hydebank Wood, and therefore recommends that the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust introduces such a service.
- 8.12** Cognitive behavioural therapists are seconded to Hydebank Wood from Belfast Health and Social Care Trust. Therapy sessions equivalent to two full-time posts are provided each week for male and female inmates. This is a valuable service.
- 8.13** In its annual reports for 2006/07 and 2007/08, the IMB recommended that a dedicated secure unit should be provided in Northern Ireland for treating young prisoners with severe personality disorders. In September 2007 a crown court judge criticised the lack of such a secure facility in Northern Ireland. The IMB understands that the issue was also highlighted in the Bamford review of mental health provision in Northern Ireland. During the reporting year 2008/09, a young female prisoner had to be transferred from Hydebank Wood to a special unit in Great Britain for treatment at an estimated cost of £300,000 per annum. Similarly, in 2007/08 a young male prisoner had to be transferred from Hydebank Wood to Great Britain. The IMB again repeats its recommendation and calls upon the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to treat this matter as urgent.

9 | Activities

Education, training and library provision

- 9.1** The IMB does not see the logic in education and vocational training being managed separately at Hydebank Wood. Its reports for 2004/05, 2005/06, 2006/07 and 2007/08 therefore recommended that one person be given responsibility for the provision of education, vocational training and library services. In response to the IMB's report for 2006/07, the Northern Ireland Prison Service indicated its intention to appoint a head of learning and skills at Hydebank Wood during 2008. This new manager would coordinate service delivery, set strategic direction and raise standards across core curriculum activities. The IMB is disappointed that no such appointment had been made by 31 March 2009, and repeats its recommendation.
- 9.2** Teachers and vocational training instructors at Hydebank Wood are direct employees of the Northern Ireland Prison Service. Absences for any reason result in classes or workshop sessions being cancelled, and this has been known to extend to several months at Hydebank Wood. In its reports for 2006/07 and 2007/08 the IMB recommended that serious consideration be given to outsourcing Hydebank Wood's education and vocational training to a college of further education. In such a scenario, the provider college would be responsible for covering absences from its own staff or by employing substitute teachers or instructors, thereby ensuring proper continuity. In its response to the 2006/07 report, the Northern Ireland Prison Service said that a review of education and vocational training would be taken forward in the context of its wider resettlement strategy. In response to the 2007/08 report, the Prison Service drew attention to Hydebank Wood's increasing links with external providers of education. The IMB again repeats its outsourcing recommendation.
- 9.3** The inspection of Hydebank Wood by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons and the Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice in Northern Ireland in October/November 2007 revealed a number of significant weaknesses in the provision of education and vocational training. The inspectors found that there was no strategic approach to the provision of education and training for the inmates, and that there was no policy to show how their learning and skills needs were to be met. The inspectors also reported that the provision of education and training was not linked effectively to resettlement planning.

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9.4 A new timetabling system was introduced in January 2009. It entailed all inmates, male and female, being allocated activities in 45 minute periods - three in the morning and two in the afternoon, Monday to Friday only. A number of operating problems were being experienced. The situation was exacerbated by the ongoing withdrawal of staff goodwill. There appeared to be a lack of flexibility in the timetabling system. For example, when an activity was cancelled, no alternative was provided and the prisoners concerned had to remain on the landing with nothing to do. This appeared to be a frequent occurrence. The IMB was surprised to learn that no written operating instructions had been produced for the timetabling system by the reporting year end. Such instructions might have obviated many of the problems experienced. There was some evidence of staff resistance to the new scheme, and of staff using inmates to complain about the scheme to the IMB. The successful introduction of the scheme needed the whole-hearted support of all front-line staff.

9.5 In its last two annual reports the IMB recommended that all vocational trainees at Hydebank Wood should take a lunch pack with them to their place of work and that they should work a full day without returning to their residential accommodation in the middle of the day for a quick lunch and then confinement in their cells. This would provide a more realistic working scenario for the prisoners concerned. In its response, the Northern Ireland Prison Service said that ideally prisoners should remain at their place of work all day and confirmed that such an arrangement had been introduced at Maghaberry Prison. However, the Prison Service went on to say that currently there were no plans to introduce all-day working at Hydebank Wood for a variety of reasons. Bearing in mind the governor's aspiration to have all prisoners removed from the landings and performing meaningful activities during daytime hours, the IMB is strongly of the view that any necessary adjustments to the staff attendance pattern would be worth the effort. With creativity and staff co-operation, the recently introduced timetabling system at Hydebank Wood could be significantly enhanced by all-day working. The IMB feels that inmates would benefit from working a full day away from the landings and therefore repeats its recommendation, not just in respect of vocational trainees this time but in respect of all prisoners, irrespective of activity.

Learning Difficulties and Learning Disabilities

9.6 During the year the Prison Reform Trust published the report of its recent study of provision in Northern Ireland for prisoners with learning difficulties and learning disabilities. It was part of the Trust's UK-wide 'No One Knows' programme. The research in Northern Ireland showed that people with learning difficulties and learning disabilities were not routinely identified prior to arriving in prison and once in prison faced a number of difficulties. They were more likely to be victimised than other prisoners and were unable to access prison information routinely. They were likely to receive inadequate levels of support and, because of their impairments, would be excluded from certain activities and opportunities. Their exclusion from offending behaviour programmes in particular made it less likely that their offending behaviour would be addressed and more likely that they would return to prison again and again.

9 | Activities

Education

9.7 The education department was undergoing major change during 2008/09. There was a staff exchange scheme involving a Hydebank Wood teacher and Loughshore Resource Centre. Further classroom space was being planned. The IMB wishes to draw attention to a number of issues:

- The education being provided was not always suitable for the majority of the intake, many of whom had problems with literacy, oracy and numeracy.
- Ongoing testing against baseline scores was needed to gauge inmates' progress during their stay in Hydebank Wood.
- Greater emphasis on individual learning plans was needed.
- The current ICT provision might need to be reviewed to ensure that it is effective in meeting the needs of today's developing technological world.
- Late cancellation of classes caused considerable upset to the inmates concerned.
- A register of security-cleared substitute teachers was required.
- The courses on offer at Hydebank Wood should meet the expectations of the 'Raising Standards Inspection Framework'.

9.8 In its report for 2007/08 the IMB recommended that a concentrated effort should be made at Hydebank Wood to address below-par literacy and numeracy. With some three in four prisoners continuing to have very basic literacy and numeracy, the IMB feels duty-bound to repeat its recommendation.

Library

9.9 The library was staffed for 20 hours each week by a professional librarian employed by the Northern Ireland Prison Service. The IMB feels that that level of librarian staffing provision is inadequate. Prisoner access to the library was difficult. There was evidence to suggest that greater use would have been made of the facility if access could have been improved. Prison officer staffing shortages during the reporting year significantly affected prisoner access to the library. The IMB considers that the reading club should be developed, that one computer is totally inadequate, and that listening stations/booths could possibly be developed for improving inmates' listening and reading skills. The IMB would wish to see far more use made of this valuable resource and to that end recommends that the governor should draw up a plan to remove impediments and maximise access to the library. Following a similar recommendation in last year's report, the library opening times were extended and mobile library services were provided in Ash House and the special supervision unit.

9 | Activities

Vocational Training

- 9.10** Training for young male inmates is delivered by the vocational training unit. There are morning and afternoon sessions in plumbing, carpentry and joinery, bricklaying, industrial cleaning, horticulture and painting and decorating. Vocational training in catering, leading to recognised qualifications, has been discontinued for male inmates. The workshop and greenhouse facilities are of a high standard. Random visits by IMB members during the year found below-capacity attendance at vocational training sessions and workshops closed altogether on occasions. Apart from industrial cleaning, the vocational training offered a low level of accreditation. This limited progression for the trainees.
- 9.11** Many vocational trainees at Hydebank Wood have little chance of obtaining the formal qualifications needed to practice the trade or occupation concerned. Some do not have the literacy or numeracy levels needed. For example, some new trainees are unable to perform simple linear measurement or interpret an instruction leaflet. Attendance of many vocational trainees at Hydebank Wood can only therefore be regarded as work experience or occupational therapy, rather than proper vocational training leading to meaningful qualifications and a career in the chosen field. Once again the IMB asks whether the vocational training currently on offer at Hydebank Wood is providing real employment opportunities and in sufficient numbers, and whether indeed the taxpayer is getting value for money. The IMB recommends a radical review of vocational training at Hydebank Wood, with specific regard to the subjects on offer, the levels of accreditation, the adequacy of training places available, inmate attendance levels and the labour market currently available to ex-offenders in Northern Ireland. The IMB would encourage Hydebank Wood to explore fresh potential areas of employment with training in mind, e.g. call centres, food processing, retailing, hospitality industry, hairdressing, warehousing, grounds maintenance, lorry and van driving, tree surgery and forklift truck driving. The IMB would also wish to see Hydebank Wood actively encourage inmates to consider self-employment as an alternative pathway, to circumvent the traditional difficulties faced by ex-offenders in obtaining employment. The IMB recommends that a course be set up to teach the nuts and bolts of self-employment and entrepreneurship.

9 | Activities

Physical Education

- 9.12** The PE department at Hydebank Wood has well equipped facilities including a sports hall, a weight training and fitness suite and four outdoor playing fields, two with an all-weather surface and two with a grass surface. The IMB again commends the PE staff for their commitment to providing meaningful activities for those inmates who attend the gym. In its reports for 2006/07 and 2007/08, the IMB said that it would wish to see much more use made of the excellent playing field facilities, by female as well as male prisoners, and recommended accordingly. The IMB has noted no discernible increase in use year on year and again repeats its recommendation.
- 9.13** In August 2008 the governor indicated that he was exploring the feasibility of introducing games officers to supervise outdoor activities. No announcement had been made by the reporting year end.
- 9.14** Prisoner participation in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme was formerly a regular feature at Hydebank Wood, but appears to have fallen into abeyance in recent years. The IMB considers the scheme an excellent vehicle for the personal development of prisoners and recommends that it should be resurrected.
- 9.15** The physical education staff at Hydebank Wood are in a prime position to deliver health education programmes, eg highlighting the physical damage caused by smoking and drugs/ alcohol abuse. Such programmes could be tied in with a life skills module complementing the work of other agencies such as Opportunity Youth. The life skills module could in turn be built into an overall portfolio of work leading to a formal qualification as part of the inmate's individual learning/resettlement programme.

9 | Activities

Daily Exercise in the Open Air

- 9.16** Frequently during the year, prisoners on the landings complained to the IMB about not getting out into the fresh air, sometimes for days on end. The IMB hopes that the new timetabling of each prisoner's day, introduced in February 2009, will obviate such complaints. Likewise, the mandatory one hour minimum period of exercise in the yard was not always provided for prisoners being held in the special supervision unit.
- 9.17** One of the principles established by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment stipulated that all prisoners without exception must have at least one hour of exercise in the open air every day. The IMB recommends that the Northern Ireland Prison Service should take steps to ensure that that principle is always complied with at Hydebank Wood.
- 9.18** Prison rule 96 states that inmates shall regularly be given such physical recreation, training and exercise as is required to promote health and physical well-being. The medical officer may, on medical grounds, modify physical recreation, training or exercise, or exempt an inmate from any or all of these.

Out of Cell Activity Time

- 9.19** Time out of cell was adequate for those women, young men and boys fortunate enough to have been allocated an activity. However, the IMB observed many prisoners who had not been allocated an activity or whose scheduled activity had been cancelled for some reason. Those prisoners spent most of the day either locked in their cell or unlocked but with not much to do on their landing. There was no scheduled time for exercise in the fresh air. As indicated elsewhere in this report, unscheduled lock-downs of prisoners were also frequent occurrences due to staffing issues. The IMB hopes that the new daily timetabling system will maximise prisoners' out of cell activities when it is properly up and running.
- 9.20** Delays are still occurring in identifying work, training and educational needs and in finding placements for newly arrived prisoners. The availability of a stimulating daily routine is essential and every effort needs to be made to ensure that all prisoners are actively engaged in constructive and purposeful activity as soon as possible after their arrival at Hydebank Wood.

Chaplains

- 9.21** Hydebank Wood has five Christian chaplains. Where a member of any other faith tradition is committed, there is provision for a representative of that faith to be contacted with a view to visiting the prisoner. The IMB commends the chaplains for the vital role they play in helping the women, young men and boys cope with imprisonment, enhance their self-worth and preserve their human dignity. As well as catering for their spiritual needs, the chaplains play an important welfare role and are well respected by the prisoners.
- 9.22** During the reporting year, the chaplains ceased to be direct employees of the Northern Ireland Prison Service. It could be said that the chaplaincy was outsourced, with Prison Service payment for services made to the parent church concerned rather than to individual chaplains. Under the new arrangement, one of the Catholic chaplains was appointed lead chaplain at Hydebank Wood.

10 | Good Order

Security

- 10.1** During the reporting year there were 104 assaults by prisoner on prisoner - 79 by young men and 25 by women. This number of assaults represented a year on year increase of 154%. There were 15 assaults by prisoner on staff - six young men and nine women. This level of assaults was 50% higher than the previous year's.
- 10.2** Control and restraint staff were deployed during the year 2008/09 on 25 occasions in respect of young male prisoners (66% of total deployments) and on 13 occasions in respect of female prisoners (34%). The frequency of deployment showed a 63% decrease year on year in respect of young men and a 7% decrease in respect of women. The IMB welcomes the continued downward trend in the use of control and restraint staff at Hydebank Wood, and looks forward to a further reduction with the planned introduction of therapeutic crisis intervention as an alternative to control and restraint techniques.
- 10.3** The IMB still considers it inappropriate for male prison officers, usually in a team of three, to use control and restraint techniques on a woman prisoner. It is a recognised fact that a high proportion of women prisoners have suffered physical or sexual abuse at the hands of men. Control and restraint techniques are by definition a use of physical force. In its last two annual reports, the IMB recommended that the exercise of such techniques by male officers on women should be discontinued, and should in future be undertaken by female officers. In its response to last year's IMB report, the Northern Ireland Prison Service said that ideally male officers should not be involved in using control and restraint techniques on women prisoners; however, there would be occasions when this might be unavoidable, particularly if a woman prisoner was being extremely violent and threatening to staff. The IMB considers that the practice is wrong in principle and reiterates its recommendation.
- 10.4** In October 2007 the governor indicated his intention to use therapeutic crisis intervention at Hydebank Wood in preference to the existing control and restraint techniques. He proposed to introduce therapeutic crisis intervention straightaway in the juvenile unit to bring it into line with the practice at Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre. He planned to extend it to women prisoners in January 2008 and then to all young male inmates later in 2008. By 31 March 2009 therapeutic crisis intervention had only been deployed in the juvenile unit. Its use was limited to de-escalation. The IMB was surprised to learn that juvenile inmates held in Hydebank Wood were subject to prison rules and therefore normal control and restraint techniques.
- 10.5** Where it is necessary to prevent a prisoner from injuring himself/herself or others, damaging property, or creating a disturbance, the governor may order him/her to be put under restraint under prison rule 48. During the reporting year there were 119 instances of prisoners being put under restraint under rule 48-79 involving young men and 40 involving women.
- 10.6** In January 2009 a woman prisoner had to be taken to Belfast City Hospital following a self-harming incident. She informed the IMB that she had been accompanied by four prison staff and had been double-handcuffed throughout, even in public areas of the hospital. She had also been put on a long chain when she had to go to the lavatory. The IMB enquired whether all of those measures were really necessary in the case

10 | Good Order

of a woman prisoner who had self-harmed and was in a distressed state. A governor told the IMB that for security reasons use of the handcuffs and long chain was standard procedure for a prisoner leaving the prison at night, and that he was satisfied that the security measures had been at an acceptable level. The IMB considers that being handcuffed and chained in a hospital, a public place, must have been humiliating for the woman concerned. The IMB therefore recommends that the Northern Ireland Prison Service should review its procedures for accompanying prisoners outside prison, bearing in mind the need to preserve human dignity at all times.

Discipline

- 10.7** Disciplinary adjudications are carried out on the women, young men and boys who contravene prison rules during their custodial detention in Hydebank Wood. Adjudications are undertaken where the governor deems an offence to be serious, but not sufficiently serious to warrant involvement of the police and the courts. Sanctions can range from loss of earnings and prison shop privileges to loss of association with peers or cellular confinement in the special supervision unit.
- 10.8** At Hydebank Wood the governor or deputy governor or other governor grade manager presides at adjudications. The conduct of adjudications can be overly formal and prisoners are sometimes rebuked for sitting down before permission is given to do so. Prisoners are not normally addressed by their first name. The IMB wonders whether it is really necessary to have the defendant's chair bolted to the floor. Even though prisoners indicate that they understand the adjudication procedures, the IMB is not convinced that all prisoners comprehend what is going on. Occasionally prisoners facing more than one charge have a penalty imposed for one offence and then have the other charge adjourned for some legitimate reason. The IMB considers that multiple charges should all be dealt with at the same adjudication, rather than piecemeal as sometimes happens at Hydebank Wood. The IMB therefore recommends that in such circumstances all charges should be adjourned to enable simultaneous disposal.

10 | Good Order

10.9 The punishments meted out at adjudication during 2008/09 included cellular confinement on 250 occasions for young men and on eight occasions for women. The cellular confinement penalties imposed during the year can be summarised as follows:

18 days	1 young man (awards of 10 days and 8 days imposed on same date)
12 days	1 young man
10 days	18 young men
9 days	1 young man
8 days	3 young men
7 days	29 young men and 1 woman
6 days	4 young men and 1 woman
5 days	51 young men and 1 woman
4 days	13 young men
3 days	72 young men and 4 women
2 days	49 young men and 1 woman
1 day	8 young men

10.10 For comparison purposes, the cellular confinement penalties imposed during the year 2007/08 were:

7 days	20 young men and 1 woman
6 days	1 young man
5 days	33 young men and 5 women
4 days	18 young men
3 days	81 young men and 8 women
2 days	51 young men and 2 women
1 day	21 young men and 1 woman

10.11 In 2007 the IMB visited a young offender institution in Scotland where the maximum permitted period of cellular confinement was three days. The IMB considered that to be a more appropriate maximum penalty, and in its report for 2007/08 recommended that the Northern Ireland Prison Service should reduce its seven days maximum at Hydebank Wood to three days. In light of its recommendation, the IMB was somewhat surprised to discover in August 2008 that the maximum period of cellular confinement for young male prisoners (excluding juveniles) had in fact been raised from seven days to 14 days, on direction from Prison Service headquarters. As evidenced by the foregoing statistics, adjudicating managers took full advantage of the increased maximum, with 24 young men receiving penalties in excess of the old seven days maximum. The IMB repeats its original recommendation that the Prison Service should limit periods of cellular confinement to three days at Hydebank Wood.

10 | Good Order

- 10.12** Loss of all association was also awarded at adjudications, frequently added to periods of cellular confinement. The penalty was imposed on 372 occasions for young men and on 33 occasions for women. In effect there is little difference between loss of all association and cellular confinement. They both entail prisoners being confined to a cell. During the reporting year, loss of all association was awarded as follows:

56 days	3 young men
42 days	4 young men
28 days	54 young men and 1 woman
21 days	10 young men
15 days	1 young man
14 days	161 young men and 10 women
12 days	1 young man
10 days	4 young men
7 days	126 young men and 18 women

- 10.13** There was a 6.6% year on year increase in the awarding of cellular confinement and a 16.7% increase in the awarding of loss of all association. Moreover, the periods of confinement imposed were markedly longer in respect of both penalties.
- 10.14** In its report for 2007/08, the IMB stated that the duration and frequency of awards of cellular confinement and loss of all association were excessive and were indicative of a punitive regime at Hydebank Wood. As the foregoing statistics testify, the situation in 2008/09 was somewhat worse. Clearly, the current punitive approach is ineffective, with the same prisoners repeatedly subjected to disciplinary adjudication. The IMB recommends that the Northern Ireland Prison Service should deploy a more therapeutic and humane intervention strategy for prisoners at Hydebank Wood who present with challenging behaviour and do not conform.
- 10.15** Ongoing family contact is recognised as an important factor in the successful resettlement of prisoners. The IMB was therefore surprised to find that loss of telephone access was imposed as a penalty by adjudicating governors at Hydebank Wood on 64 separate occasions during the reporting year - for a 28 day period on 14 occasions, for a 14 day period on 31 occasions and for a seven day period on 19 occasions. With the exception of one woman prisoner who was denied telephone access for seven days, all of the foregoing penalties were imposed on young men. The IMB considers that prisoners' contact with their family members should be actively encouraged in the interests of resettlement and that punishing prisoners by denying them telephone access runs contrary to the resettlement ethos. The IMB recommends that that particular adjudication penalty should be discontinued at Hydebank Wood.

10 | Good Order

- 10.16** It was the IMB's understanding that when the penalty of cellular confinement was awarded at adjudication, then the assumption should be that no other privilege would be forfeited except in exceptional circumstances. Invariably this was not happening in practice at Hydebank Wood. The IMB recommends that action be taken to remedy this.
- 10.17** In October 2008 the governor indicated his intention to introduce a 'minor reporting' system at Hydebank Wood for dealing with less serious acts of indiscipline, as an alternative to adjudication. Initially, use of the new system would be restricted to male juvenile inmates. There was a need to train staff and to amend the prison rules. The 'minor reporting' system had not been introduced by the reporting year end. The IMB welcomed the governor's proposal and looks forward to its implementation in 2009/10.

Special Supervision Unit

- 10.18** The special supervision unit for young male prisoners including juveniles is a stand-alone facility with eight cells located on the ground floor of Elm House. It was refurbished at a cost of £0.5 million and re-opened in June 2008. The special supervision unit is used to accommodate prisoners subjected to cellular confinement as a disciplinary award or prisoners segregated from their peers under prison rule 32. The mandatory one hour minimum period of exercise in the fresh air was not always provided for prisoners held in the special supervision unit, although in some instances the offer of such fresh air exercise was in fact declined. Fresh air exercise was sometimes not provided during periods of inclement weather. Cigarettes and tobacco were held by staff and allocated at their discretion. Some inmates are heavy smokers and it seemed inhumane to deliberately ration the number of cigarettes consumed. In October 2006 the then governor indicated his intention to provide one-to-one therapeutic and rehabilitative counselling for prisoners detained in the special supervision unit, but the IMB was unaware of such interventions taking place in any structured way during the reporting year. Some staff still referred to the special supervision unit as the punishment unit. That is also the prisoners' perception, and the IMB does not have grounds for disagreeing with such a description. In its response to a recommendation in the IMB's last report, the Northern Ireland Prison Service stated that 'implicit within the regime of the special supervision unit is that prisoners will serve time in isolation from others...'. The IMB again recommends that improvements should be made to the special supervision unit's current regime to turn cellular confinement and rule 32 detention into a more productive experience for the prisoners concerned.
- 10.19** There is no special supervision unit as such for women prisoners. A designated cell on Ash 1 landing is used for cellular confinement or detention under prison rule 32.

10 | Good Order

Incentives and Earned Privileges

- 10.20** Hydebank Wood operates a progressive regimes and earned privileges scheme which was designed to reward good behaviour. The scheme has three regimes: basic, standard and enhanced. All inmates start on the standard regime and can be promoted or demoted. The privileges attaching to the three regimes include differential rates of pay, periods of association etc, but having one's own in-cell television is arguably the most highly prized privilege.
- 10.21** During the reporting year the IMB continued to receive inmate complaints that the scheme was not being operated fairly by staff on the landings. The complaints usually concerned the awarding of 'zero' behaviour markings which had an adverse impact on the inmate concerned. Surprisingly, many complaints received by the IMB during the reporting year were raised by enhanced inmates. They felt that they had worked hard to achieve enhanced status and were disappointed to find that, due to the staffing situation at Hydebank Wood, they were subjected to their fair share of lock-downs and restricted regime. They felt that their efforts had been a waste of time.
- 10.22** A revised scheme is to be introduced at Hydebank Wood in April 2009. The existing scheme's requirement to achieve four consecutive weeks of impeccable behaviour proved difficult for many of the young inmates. The existing scheme was deemed to have degenerated into a secondary form of punishment for prisoners, and the new scheme was intended to reduce the need for landing staff discretion. Interestingly, the IMB had recommended in its annual report for 2006/07 that the wording of the existing scheme be tightened up to minimise the need for staff discretion. The IMB welcomes the revised scheme and hopes that its implementation will result in fewer prisoner complaints of unjust treatment.



11 | Resettlement

Resettlement Strategy

11.1 In June 2004 the Northern Ireland Prison Service and the Probation Board for Northern Ireland jointly launched their strategy for the resettlement of prisoners. Two prerequisites for success stated in the resettlement strategy's original implementation plan were:

- a distinct change in prison culture, particularly in the way staff engage with prisoners; and
- the key role that personal officers would play in prisoner resettlement.

11.2 As indicated in other parts of this report, at Hydebank Wood there is no personal officer scheme and proactive interaction between staff and prisoners is still lacking in many cases.

11.3 Hydebank Wood will be judged on how effective it is in helping prisoners to address their offending behaviour. The role of the prison officer in such work is fundamental. As prison officers are required to interact with prisoners every day, they have the potential to inspire change. More than anyone else, prison officers have the potential to positively influence prisoners in Hydebank Wood. The citizens of Northern Ireland expect the Prison Service to give every prisoner every opportunity to turn his/her life around.

Reconviction Rates

11.4 The latest reconviction rates available were those published by the Northern Ireland Office in September 2007. Young male prisoners discharged from prison or the young offenders centre into the community in 2003 and who were reconvicted within two years can be summarised as follows:

Age group	Reconviction rate
17	77%
18-20	69%
21-24	53%

Fifty percent of women prisoners discharged from prison into the community in 2003 were reconvicted within two years.

11 | Resettlement

Importance of Finding Employment

- 11.5** Finding employment on release from prison is one of the most significant factors in reducing re-offending. Research has shown that released prisoners are less than half as likely to re-offend if they are helped to find and keep a job. Prisoners themselves cite having a job, somewhere to live and a stable relationship as the three most important factors in preventing them from re-offending.

Prisoner Programmes

- 11.6** The following offending behaviour and personal development programmes were delivered at Hydebank Wood during 2008/09:

Programme/Delivered by	Times Delivered	Inmates Attended
Goals UK [Prison Service]	14	97
Alcohol Awareness [Probation & Prison Services]	3	20
Car Crime [Impact Team]	3	22
Exploring Behaviour [Opportunity Youth]	4	31
Drugs/Alcohol Awareness [Opportunity Youth]	12	109
Fire Cadets [Fire/Rescue Service & Prison Service]	3	30
Motivational Enhancement [NIPS Psychology]	1	6
Parenting [Barnardos]	4	20
Making the Most of Yourself [Barnardos]	1	6
Personal Development [Barnardos]	1	6
ADHD [NI- ADD]	3	16
Job track [NIACRO]	22	64
Total:	71	427

- 11.7** The above programmes were delivered in the main by external agencies, but four prison officers were also employed on a part-time basis on such work. The governor participated in delivering the Goals UK programme. The IMB would wish to see more prison officers involved in the delivery of prisoner programmes at Hydebank Wood. Such meaningful work would enrich the job of the prison officer and help to establish a stronger relationship between staff and inmates.
- 11.8** The three separate fire cadet days, jointly delivered during the year by the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service and the staff at Hydebank Wood, were very successful in terms of the enthusiasm and motivation displayed by the ten young male prisoners participating in each. The governor hoped to expand the programme to include life skills training, and to run it on a weekly basis.

11 | Resettlement

Psychology Services

11.9 Hydebank Wood has one principal forensic psychologist. During the reporting year three psychology assistants were recruited to support her. The key areas covered by this team include resettlement, prisoner programmes, sex offenders, lifers and safer custody.

Drugs and alcohol use

11.10 In July 2006 the Northern Ireland Prison Service published for public consultation a draft revised policy on alcohol and substance misuse. The underpinning principles of the draft policy were as follows:

- zero tolerance would apply to all drug (illicit and prescription) and alcohol misuse in prison;
- prisoners would be continually encouraged, and challenged, to assume responsibility for their own alcohol/substance misuse behaviour;
- prisoners experiencing drug and alcohol dependency would be offered therapeutic interventions; and
- discharged prisoners would be offered ongoing rehabilitation and support on their return to the community.

11.11 Subsequent to issuing the draft policy for consultation, the Northern Ireland Prison Service appointed an addiction services manager with a National Health Service background. The IMB understands that the Prison Service will be incorporating revisions resulting from the work of the new addiction services manager and from the 2006 consultation exercise. The final policy document had not been published by the reporting year end, ie two years and nine months after publication of the draft revised policy. The IMB recommends that issue of the revised policy be expedited.

11.12 The IMB understands that responsibility and funding for prisoner addiction services was transferred on 1 October 2008 from the Northern Ireland Prison Service to the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. The IMB also understands that the future delivery of addiction intervention at each of the three prison establishments in Northern Ireland has been put out to tender. The specification included comprehensive assessment and treatment planning which would identify the necessary level of support to the prisoners concerned, including individual interventions and group programme work. The outcome of the tender process had not been announced by the reporting year end.

11.13 During 2008/09 all inmates were seen by Opportunity Youth within their first week at Hydebank Wood and a committal assessment was carried out. Opportunity Youth continued to provide a voluntary programme whereby individual prisoners are offered a key worker who works alongside them on a consistent, one-to-one basis from committal to a maximum of six months post release. The key workers use peer mentoring to support individual prisoners in reflecting on their substance misuse and how that contributed to their offending behaviour. With the support of their key worker, prisoners can make the necessary changes for positive resettlement.

11 | Resettlement

- 11.14** In its report for 2007/08 the IMB recommended that line responsibility for Opportunity Youth should be transferred from the deputy governor to the regimes governor. The Northern Ireland Prison Service accepted the recommendation, but a revised functional management chart for Hydebank Wood published in March 2009 still showed Opportunity Youth with a reporting line to the deputy governor. The work of Opportunity Youth comprises the assessment, peer mentoring, counselling and resettlement of prisoners with drugs and/or alcohol problems. In the light of Opportunity Youth's important role in the rehabilitation of offenders, the IMB considers that it would be more appropriate for the resettlement governor to line manage it, and recommends accordingly.
- 11.15** The IMB understands that during the reporting year a total of 231 new committals to Hydebank Wood (104 women and 127 young men) were found to be dependent on alcohol. A total of 100 new committals (42 women and 58 young men) were found to be dependent on drugs.
- 11.16** The quantity of drugs entering Hydebank Wood continued to be a major security issue throughout 2008/09. Despite the measures taken by the Northern Ireland Prison Service to prevent illicit drugs entering Hydebank Wood, drugs did get in. Passive drug dogs are deployed to screen prisoners' visitors prior to entering the visits area, and during the reporting year there were 53 positive indications by the dogs, ie an average of one per week. Four prisoners' visitors were reported to the Police Service for Northern Ireland for attempting to smuggle in drugs or alcohol. The IMB feels that the Prison Service should now consider introducing the latest drugs detection technology at Hydebank Wood, as an eventual replacement for passive drug dogs, and recommends accordingly.
- 11.17** At Hydebank Wood, prison officers, administrative staff, agency workers, building contractor employees, etc are not screened prior to entering the establishment. The IMB recommends that the screening of all such personnel should be introduced, albeit on a random basis.
- 11.18** Alcohol and drugs misuse is a major problem for Northern Ireland society in that it is a causal factor in much anti-social and criminal behaviour. Consequently, many of those people who misuse alcohol or drugs, end up in prison. The determined efforts of inmates and their family members and friends to smuggle drugs into Hydebank Wood are a depressing reflection of the current social acceptability of illicit drug use in Northern Ireland.

11 | Resettlement

New Offender Management Group

11.19 In light of the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2008, certain prisoners will have the services of a multi-discipline offender management group which is to be set up in Hydebank Wood in 2009/10. The new group will address issues such as offending behaviour, addictions, learning and skills, employment and family links. The offender management group will help to prepare prisoners for release on licence or to be seen by the Parole Commissioners, who will consider the prisoners' fitness for release. Each sentenced prisoner will be allocated a sentence plan manager (a prison officer) and a case manager (a probation officer), who will work together to regularly review and case-manage the prisoner during the period of custody. The new offender management group will be responsible for those prisoners serving an extended custodial sentence, an indeterminate custodial sentence and a determinate custodial sentence of twelve months or more. The IMB understands that scarce resources will be directed at prisoners serving the three foregoing sentence types. This prompts the IMB to ask who will deal with those prisoners who are serving custodial sentences of less than twelve months, many of whom are multiple repeat offenders. Hydebank Wood is a relatively small establishment that holds many severely damaged young people who are serving custodial sentences of less than twelve months and who are in dire need of the services that will be provided by the new offender management group, and who up to this point in time have not always had their offending behaviour addressed in a structured or co-ordinated way. The IMB therefore recommends that all male and female prisoners at Hydebank Wood serving sentences of less than twelve months (excluding fine defaulters) should receive the full services of the new offender management group.



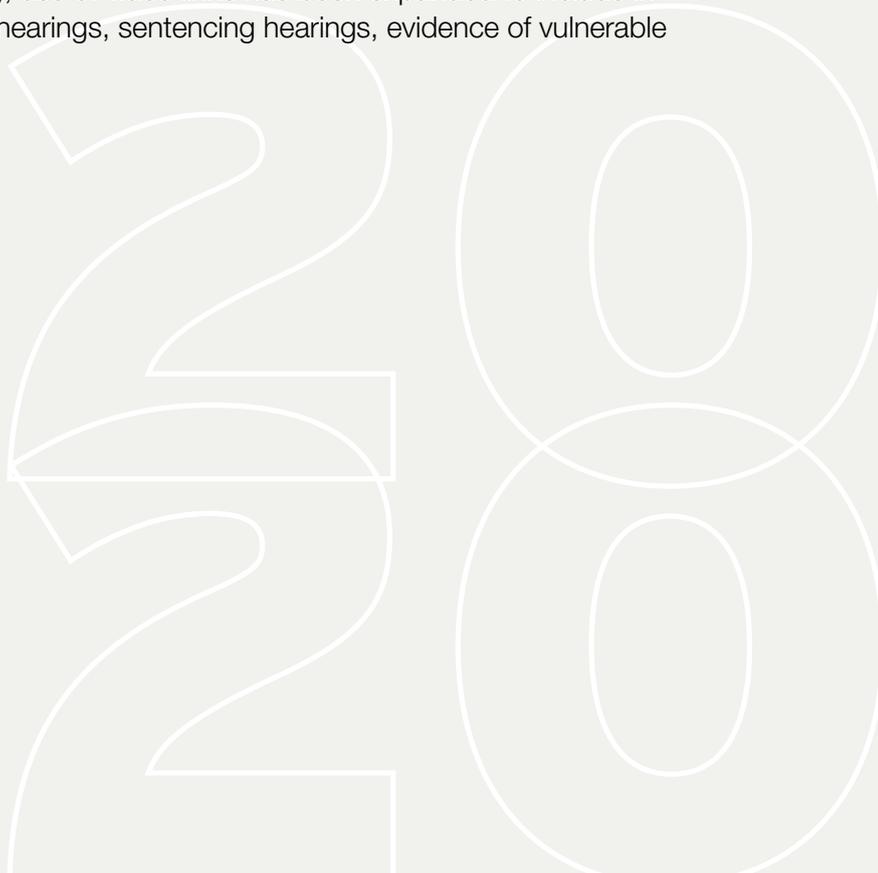
12 | Services

Catering

- 12.1** Prison rule 82 stipulates that every prisoner shall be provided with sufficient food which is wholesome, nutritious, palatable, adequately presented and well prepared, and which takes into account age, health and work and, as far as practicable, religious or cultural requirements.
- 12.2** For the vast majority of prisoners in Hydebank Wood, food is prepared in a central kitchen and served on the landings in each residential house. The exceptions are 'enhanced' women prisoners housed in Ash 5, who are permitted to cook their own meals on the landing. The catering staff in the central kitchen are assisted by a small number of women prisoners.
- 12.3** In July 2008 the IMB found understaffing and low morale in the kitchen. A restricted menu was being provided with only one hot or cold meal for lunch and dinner, and no vegetarian option. Apparently, an insufficient number of young male prisoners were willing to work in the kitchen and arrangements then had to be made to employ women prisoners instead.

Video Links with Courts

- 12.4** The IMB commends the use of live video links between Hydebank Wood and courts throughout Northern Ireland, in that they avoid a great deal of inconvenience for prisoners and at the same time result in substantial savings for the Northern Ireland Prison Service in transport and staff costs. Initially, the courts used video link facilities as a cost-effective and secure means for prisoners to participate in remand hearings without having to be transported to court. More recently, use of video links has been expanded to include in certain circumstances preliminary hearings, sentencing hearings, evidence of vulnerable accused, and appeals.



13 | Board Business

- 13.1** The IMB meets monthly and operates a rota whereby its members visit the prison twice each week. The minutes of the IMB's monthly meetings are copied to the director of the Northern Ireland Prison Service and to the governor of Hydebank Wood.
- 13.2** IMB members make two rota visits to the prison each week, usually in pairs. They check the IMB designated mailboxes that are located in the residential houses to enable prisoners to raise issues in writing. The IMB members can also receive representations from prisoners as they walk around the prison or via the IMB secretariat. The prisoner applications, ie requests, complaints or queries, are written up and faxed to the governor via the IMB secretariat, and a written response is obtained to enable feedback to be given to the prisoner concerned. The IMB members can also raise issues of their own based on what they see and hear during their rota visits, and these are included in a written report which is shared with their colleagues and the governor. Matters arising from rota visits are discussed with the governor at the IMB's next monthly meeting.
- 13.3** In June 2008 the governor took issue with the IMB about raising with him unsubstantiated prisoner allegations. He indicated that he needed evidence to back up such allegations. The IMB considered itself duty-bound to bring prisoner complaints made to it to the governor's attention through the prisoner application process, by fax on the day the complaints were received. The IMB pointed out that it was not in a position to investigate prisoner allegations, and that that was the governor's responsibility.
- 13.4** Each IMB member is assigned an area or areas of special responsibility and is expected to acquire a degree of expertise to enable them to take forward issues in their respective fields and to formulate recommendations where appropriate.
- 13.5** The chair and vice-chair of Hydebank Wood IMB are ex-officio members of the Council of IMBs (Northern Ireland), and two further IMB members are nominated to Council membership by their peers. The Council meets every two or three months to discuss matters of mutual interest to IMB members at all three prison establishments in Northern Ireland.
- 13.6** The IMB does not have the resources to undertake in-depth analyses of the operational effectiveness and efficiency of Hydebank Wood. Instead, it relies to an extent on the reports of professional inspections and audits carried out by various bodies for detailed information and comment. The Prison Service itself meets the IMB's requests for some factual information.
- 13.7** Some 42 months ago Hydebank Wood IMB raised the issue of indemnity for personal injury or loss sustained by members in the course of IMB duties, but by the reporting year end was still waiting for a definitive answer. It is disappointed by the inordinate time taken to provide clarification. All that IMB members in Northern Ireland are seeking is identical indemnity to that provided by the Home Office for IMB members in England and Wales.

13 | Board Business

- 13.8** As matters stand, IMB members in Northern Ireland are appointed for a maximum of four terms of three years, subject to the triennial review of their performance and provided of course that the person concerned wishes to be considered for re-appointment. During the reporting year there was a proposal by the Northern Ireland Office to halve the maximum period that IMB members can serve, from twelve to six years. Turnover is high. Hydebank Wood IMB has a complement of 15, but at 31 March 2009 it had six vacancies and one member on leave of absence overseas. That left eight members endeavouring to undertake the workload of 15. On 17 December 2008 the IMB chairman wrote to the Minister of State at the Northern Ireland Office asking him to seriously reconsider the proposal to reduce the maximum period of IMB service from twelve to six years, and pointing out inter alia that IMB members are unpaid volunteers and that IMB members in England and Wales had absolutely no upper limit to the period they could serve. No decision had been made by the reporting year end.
- 13.9** The Government's devolution of policing and justice to the Northern Ireland Assembly did not take place during 2008/09. The IMB's formal relationship with the Northern Ireland Office was therefore still in place at the reporting year end.
- 13.10** The Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention Against Torture (OPCAT) was ratified by the United Kingdom in December 2003. It requires party states to establish a 'national preventative mechanism' to carry out a system of regular visits to places of detention in order to prevent torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. On 31 March 2009 the Government designated the three IMBs in Northern Ireland as bodies that would form the United Kingdom's national preventative mechanism. Hydebank Wood IMB looks forward to undertaking this important role.
- 13.11** Hydebank Wood IMB endeavours at all times to exercise independence in carrying out its monitoring role. On occasions this appears to have been misunderstood. For example, Northern Ireland Prison Service representatives seemed to find it difficult to comprehend IMB decisions not to accept invitations to attend management events aimed at formulating policy. Likewise, the IMB should make it clear that it does not act as an advocate for prisoners.
- 13.12** IMB members carrying out routine rota visits at Hydebank Wood in the period following publication of the IMB's annual report for 2007/08 had to face a barrage of verbal complaints from angry prison staff who felt that the report had accused them of being sectarian. The staff seemed particularly upset by the IMB's recommendation that diversity training be provided. The report had not accused any staff of being sectarian. IMB members are unpaid volunteers who perform a difficult role, and in no circumstances should they have to run the gauntlet of angry prison staff.
- 13.13** In December 2008 a principal officer at Hydebank Wood e-mailed the IMB chairman requesting the religious composition of Hydebank Wood IMB. The IMB chairman was not of course privy to the religious/community background of his IMB colleagues, nor did he have any control over the religious composition of Hydebank Wood IMB. He responded accordingly.

Appendix

HYDEBANK WOOD PRISON AND YOUNG OFFENDERS CENTRE - MEMBERSHIP OF INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD 2008/09

Mr Jimmy McClean (Chairman)

Mrs Christine McLaughlin (Vice-Chair)

Ms Kate Airlie (resigned October 2008)

Mr Reid Armstrong

Dr Lesley-Ann Black (resigned December 2008)

Mrs Susan Bryson

Mr James Craig

Mr Stephen Dickson (resigned April 2008)

Mr Brian Higgins

Ms Sadie Logan

Ms Olwen McConnell

Mr Ronnie Orr

