



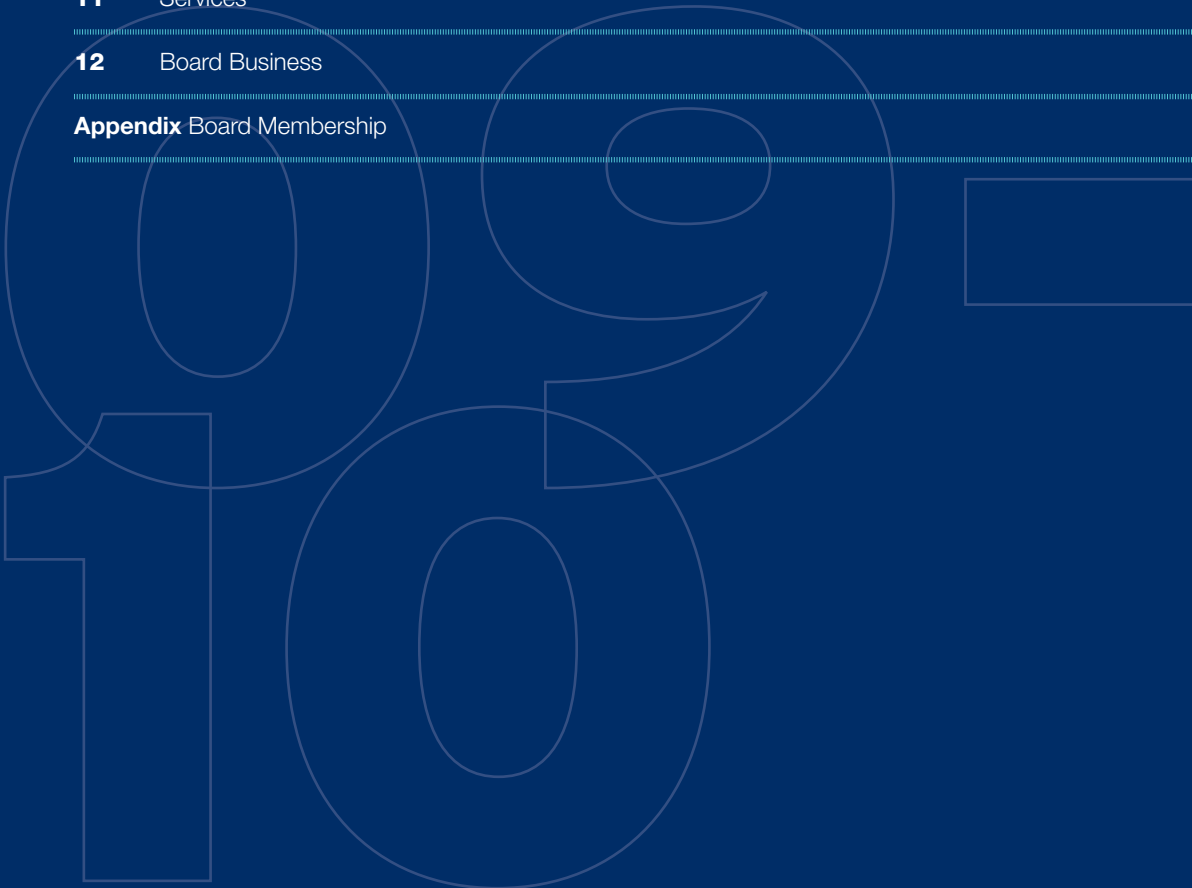
HYDEBANK WOOD PRISON AND YOUNG OFFENDERS CENTRE  
Independent Monitoring Board's Annual Report for 2009/10





# Contents

Mission Statement and Statement of Purpose	1
Chairman's Introduction	2
<b>1</b> Report Overview	3
<b>2</b> Summary of Recommendations	6
<b>3</b> The Establishment	11
<b>4</b> Arrival in Custody	18
<b>5</b> Environment and Relationships	20
<b>6</b> Duty of Care	22
<b>7</b> Healthcare	29
<b>8</b> Activities	31
<b>9</b> Good Order	37
<b>10</b> Resettlement	42
<b>11</b> Services	44
<b>12</b> Board Business	45
<b>Appendix</b> Board Membership	47



## Mission Statement

To enhance the quality of prison life, by working to ensure fairness and accountability in prison

## Statement of Purpose

Members of the Independent Monitoring Board for Hydebank Wood Prison and Young Offenders Centre are appointed by the Secretary of State<sup>1</sup> under Section 3 of the Treatment of Offenders Act (NI) 1968 and under the Prison Act (NI) 1953.

- visit Hydebank Wood regularly and report to the Justice Minister on the conditions of imprisonment and the treatment of offenders;
- consider requests and complaints made by prisoners to the Board;
- report matters of concern to the Governor or, in serious cases, the Justice Minister; 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.

To enable the Board to carry out these duties effectively its members have free access at any time to all prisoners and to all parts of the prison to which they are appointed. The Board shall also have reasonable access to any of the records of the prison.

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1. Following devolution on 12 April 2010 members will be appointed by the Justice Minister

## 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 2009 to 31 March 2010.

Hydebank Wood, situated on the outskirts of Belfast is a quite unique establishment insofar as it operates as a women's prison and a male young offenders centre, accommodating all sentenced and remanded prisoners in these two categories on a single campus. In addition some boys under the age of 18 years are also held at Hydebank Wood.

The IMB for Hydebank Wood is made up of members of the public, representative of a cross-section of the community who bring a variety of skills and experiences to this important volunteering role. Members perform an important role in monitoring the extent to which the proper standards of care and decency are maintained for people in custody in a prison establishment largely closed to the general public. Individually appointed by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, members 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. IMB members' reporting duties will transfer from the Secretary of State to the Justice Minister following devolution of justice and policing.

Since 31 March 2009, IMBs have also been a UK designated body for the National Preventative Mechanism (NPM) of OPCAT - the Operational Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and as such members are required to undertake a system of regular visits in order to prevent torture and other cruel, inhumane and / or degrading treatment or punishment.

The IMB for Hydebank Wood has a complement of 15 members, but during this reporting year had to operate with only eight members, further reduced to seven in the latter stages. There were two resignations during the year and one member returned from a period of leave of absence. Ongoing delays in the recruitment of new members created a heavy workload for members and I would like to thank and pay tribute to all my IMB colleagues for their hard work and commitment during the year. Despite having a variety of family and occupational responsibilities, it is an indication of members' enthusiasm and dedication that as unpaid volunteers, they made the time to make a full contribution to the work of the Board.

The IMB wishes to thank members of the staff at Hydebank Wood who were facilitative throughout the reporting year. In addition, the IMB wishes to acknowledge the support provided by the Secretariat team.

In keeping with standing procedure a formal request was made on 31st March 2010 to the management at Hydebank Wood for factual information for inclusion in this Annual Report. As a result of the information not being provided by the end of July 2010, this Annual Report lacks the detail and specificity normally associated with reports presented by the IMB for Hydebank Wood. While that is regrettable, in keeping with previous Annual Reports, this Report too contains a number of recommendations, based on members' observations. The recommendations are all aimed at helping Hydebank Wood operate as a "healthy" prison within which prisoners feel safe, are treated with respect, are constructively occupied and provided with opportunities to improve themselves, are enabled to maintain links with their families and are prepared for release. The IMB considers its recommendations to be constructive, and hopes that they will be accepted as such and given proper consideration.

Christine McLaughlin  
Chairman of Independent Monitoring Board

## 1 | Report Overview

- 1.1** The effects of crime are far-reaching - for victims, their families, neighbourhoods and offenders and their families- indeed for society as a whole. It is important therefore that all measures are taken which seek to reduce the incidence of crime. Significant sums of public money are spent on imprisonment. In the case of Northern Ireland prisons, the cost per prisoner place is not provided in relation to each individual establishment but at a figure of at least £77,831 per prisoner. Hydebank Wood costs are high, representing approximately twice the cost of imprisonment in England. It is imperative therefore that custody is used in a way which has an effect on reducing re-offending.
- 1.2** At the end of the reporting year the number of prisoners located at Hydebank Wood totalled 204 (38 women and 166 young men and boys) - a figure which is marginally lower than previous years. The make-up of the prisoner population at Hydebank Wood is particularly complex as one site accommodates the needs of all women prisoners over the age of 18 years, young men who are between the ages of 18 and 21 years on conviction, together with a small number of male juveniles aged under 18 years. Young men may remain at Hydebank Wood to the day before their 24th birthday. The prisoners are both remand and sentenced and include a sentencing range from those who are in default of fines to those who have received life sentences. Clearly this mix of prisoner need presents many management challenges.
- 1.3** From an IMB perspective, the year saw the introduction of important initiatives and developments. These included the continued drive to establish timetabling as a meaningful way of structuring prisoner activity levels. The introduction of performance management meetings indicate a management drive for increased accountability and have the potential to significantly change the daily experience of prisoners held at Hydebank Wood.
- 1.4** Revisions to the management of vulnerable / at risk prisoners through the introduction of new Supporting Prisoners at Risk (SPAR) procedures have the prospective of increasing responsibility for prisoner safety across all staff levels at Hydebank Wood and are predicated on the use of more humane responses.
- 1.5** Offender Management which was formally launched is an approach which is designed to provide case management from the prison through to the community for certain categories of prisoners. It has an important emphasis on partnership-working and has considerable value in terms of providing a coherent and consistent approach to the management of offenders.
- 1.6** Staff at different grades had the opportunity to avail of a range of training activity including Women Awareness Staff Programme (WASP), Juveniles Awareness Staff Programme (JASP), Child Protection, Mental Health Awareness and Diversity training. Training is crucial in ensuring staff has the appropriate skills and knowledge to undertake their work in a confident and competent manner and it is encouraging that some of the specialist training takes account of the particular needs of distinct groups of prisoners currently located at Hydebank Wood.
- 1.7** The Governor has also advised IMB members of his plans to introduce a more humane regime, suggesting that Hydebank Wood will be a dynamic establishment subject to ongoing change and development. While members do not doubt his personal enthusiasm and it is clear that he has imaginative plans, implementation into reality is a more challenging process.

The IMB consider a continuing dissonance exists between the aspirations of the Governor and the reality of prisoner experiences. Procedural improvements whilst important, do not necessarily translate into meaningful outcomes for prisoners and the IMB have remaining concerns about many aspects of service and regime provision at Hydebank Wood.

**1.8** While punishment in terms of deprivation of liberty is one function of imprisonment, equally as important is the emphasis on rehabilitation and reintegration with a need to ensure that the prisoner's sentence is delivered in a decent and humane manner.

**1.9** Internal disciplinary adjudications are carried out on the young men, boys and women who breach prison rules during their period of detention in Hydebank Wood. In previous annual reports, the IMB had expressed concern about the frequent use of cellular confinement and loss of all association as adjudication outcomes. This year again the IMB remain concerned at the use of an adjudications process, sometimes for fairly minor misdemeanours, which retains an overriding emphasis on withdrawal of privileges rather than working with prisoners on their behaviours which lead to the breach of rules in the first instance. The IMB feel that in the continued absence of targeted interventions from a multi-disciplinary team aimed at working with prisoners on their challenging / difficult behaviours, periods of cellular confinement and loss of association can be actually counter productive.

**1.10** During the reporting year changes to the internal complaints system have resulted in the introduction of a two, rather than three stage complaints procedure which is welcome. However in the IMB's experience there remains staff defensiveness about complaints and a continued lack of prisoner confidence in the internal complaints system. This lack of confidence extends to the separate arrangements for the localised resolution of healthcare complaints. Indeed the IMB have met prisoners, who when raising concerns have asked not to be identified in the event that their complaint would have negative consequences for their progress at Hydebank Wood. As previously reported in Annual Reports, the IMB remain concerned about the process of internal investigation of prisoner allegations of assault or harassment by staff. There is a need for comprehensive and timely investigation of such allegations and an increased emphasis on transparency which in the view of the IMB includes members having access to a copy of the written report of all such internal investigations, to enable the IMB to fulfil its monitoring role in this area.

**1.11** During this reporting year the delivery of a normal regime for prisoners was considerably disrupted by two distinct periods of industrial dispute - one period lasting from mid-February 2009 to the end of July 2009 and one which commenced on 15 March 2010, being ongoing at the reporting year end. Despite assurances from management at Hydebank Wood that industrial relations are considerably improved, it is difficult for IMB members to share that view, when a reporting year begins and ends with periods of withdrawal of good will. The main impact of such actions is that prisoners are frequently confined to their cells during periods of scheduled association, including meal times as well as a general slowing down of all prisoner-related activity. Management attempts to reduce the effects of such restrictions on prisoners, including rotating lockdowns and the provision of televisions to all prisoners, while well-meaning, do little to dissipate the frustration that naturally arises when regime limitations are imposed.

- 1.12** A further factor impacting negatively on the provision of normal regime has been the continuing high levels of staff sick absence at Hydebank Wood this year. This was particularly pronounced from October 2009 to January 2010, when only the closure of four residential landings appeared to offer any easement in the situation. The closure of landings was not in itself an ideal solution. This was particularly so in the case of the closure of one of the two juveniles landings, which was considerably at odds with a cited commitment in a Juvenile Implementation Plan to significant investment in working with the juvenile boys. Industrial relations, levels of sick absence and working practices which fail to take account of the current service needs continue to impede the work of senior management and remain pressing issues that need to be addressed.
- 1.13** Frequent reference is made to the need for a change in ethos and culture of Northern Ireland's prisons which moves the prison experience on to one wherein prisoners are encouraged to face up to the offences which lead to their imprisonment and have the opportunity to develop their personal, social and work skills, enhancing their overall ability to live law-abiding lives following release.
- 1.14** In the view of the IMB it is the relationship between staff and prisoners which determines the nature of the environment at Hydebank Wood. While having witnessed staff engage with prisoners in ways that were helpful and caring, members also witnessed examples of staff interaction with prisoners which were disrespectful and based on cynicism. During the reporting year, IMB members noted instances of staff discretion with a tendency towards the negative rather than positive consequences for prisoners. There is an ongoing need for a change in the way staff approach their work and in the way they relate to prisoners. There are staff who are currently responding positively to the challenge of change; other staff are finding the potential of their changing role a difficult prospect but acknowledge the place of change; another group of staff appear to resist change, at times directly and indirectly appearing obstructive to new initiatives. From a management perspective there is a need to motivate and inspire staff as well as set out clearly the parameters about what kind of behaviour / staff approach is acceptable.
- 1.15** Based on their belief in the value of the role of residential staff in motivating and engaging prisoners, the IMB again call for the introduction of a personal officer scheme at Hydebank Wood. The importance of the quality of the relationship between staff and prisoners also has considerable relevance in relation to healthcare provision with patient centeredness being at the core of quality healthcare. The IMB consider a need for a response from healthcare staff which recognises the difficulties for prisoners associated with adjusting to prison life and is in a position to provide a range of appropriate supports for those who find it difficult to cope. During the reporting year the IMB have noted clear evidence of aspects of healthcare which are being "fitted in" with established prison practices, necessitating a need for change in routine practices, such as how appointments are arranged.
- 1.16** Despite genuine attempts to put in place special measures including supervision arrangements, it is the view of the IMB that there are fundamental flaws in the shared site at Hydebank Wood that make it very difficult to sufficiently focus on the distinct and varied



needs of young men, boys and women. Consequently in this annual report, the IMB again recommend that distinct stand-alone facilities for women and for juvenile boys are made available as a priority to enable dedicated focus on the needs of these two groups.

**1.17** The continued absence of having one person with responsibility for co-coordinating education and vocational training provision at Hydebank Wood has been a distinct gap resulting in the lack of a cohesive management system. Positively the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) plans are at a developed stage regarding that appointment which is essential if educational and training needs are to become an integral part of rehabilitative measures. There is a need for a comprehensive range of learning / training activities which is appropriately linked to prisoner interest and experiences, reflects existing needs and gaps in the labour market and which makes good use of accredited qualifications. Residual problems with a system of managing attendance, punctuality which is vulnerable to the pace of movement in the prison and patterns of attendance which match residential staff shift patterns, need to be addressed if work / training opportunities are to bear any resemblance to the reality of actual work experience.

**1.18** The aforementioned Offender Management, while an important development in its own right, highlights continuing gaps in the provision of similarly coherent custody planning for short-term prisoners. There is a fundamental question over whether or not a short period of imprisonment as opposed to a community based disposal is most productive but it remains the case that Hydebank Wood has a significant proportion of their population from within this category. While recognizing the challenges of effective working with shorter term prisoners on account of time-scales, it is frequently from within this grouping of prisoner that recidivism rates are highest. The IMB recommend a system of coherent planning tailored to reduce the risk of reoffending which will have a necessary emphasis on partnership working and collaboration with other providers in establishing links for post release.

**1.19** There is reasonable clarity within the NIPS on the areas of change necessary to deliver real and improved outcomes for prisoners at a time of increasing expectation that new initiatives will be put in place without additional resources - indeed with reduced funding. While progress has been made, there are many continuing challenges at Hydebank Wood in putting the principles into practice. This will require explicit lines of accountability from senior managers communicating clearly the organisational expectations to middle managers who can convey and implement the new requirements with front line staff enabled and required to deliver on a significantly changed approach to engagement with prisoners.

## 2 | Summary of Recommendations

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**2.1** Concerted efforts should be made to improve industrial relations at Hydebank Wood in order to ensure consistent availability of a purposeful, rehabilitative regime for all the young men and women held there. [Paragraph 3.5]

- 2.2** The NIPS need to find a way to facilitate staff annual leave entitlements that prevents disruption to regime delivery. [Paragraph 3.9]
- 2.3** The NIPS should ensure that there is an immediate revision of all workforce patterns / arrangements to maximize effectiveness and efficiency. [Paragraph 3.10]
- 2.4** Prisoners should be routinely given the opportunity to take their meals in association with other prisoners. [Paragraph 3.12]
- 2.5** A Governor grade manager should be on duty in Hydebank Wood 24 hours a day, seven days a week. [Paragraph 3.14]
- 2.6** IMB members should have unimpeded admittance to all parts of the establishment at any time. [Paragraph 3.15]
- 2.7** The NIPS should consider limited external recruitment to all senior grade positions to extend and enhance the skill base. [Paragraph 3.16]
- 2.8** A stand-alone, purpose built women's prison should be provided in Northern Ireland. [Paragraph 3.21]
- 2.9** The NIPS should establish an entirely separate unit for boys under age 18 years, which is not subject to the restrictions of a shared site or vulnerable to operational pressures in other parts of the Prison estate. [Paragraph 3.25]
- 2.10** The current practice of housing immigration detainees in Hydebank Wood should cease. [Paragraph 3.27]
- 2.11** Women, young men and juvenile boys should be transported separately to and from Hydebank Wood. [Paragraph 4.1]
- 2.12** Appropriate staffing arrangements need to be put in place in reception at Hydebank Wood to prevent delay in processing prisoners. [Paragraph 4.2]
- 2.13** Full body searching of juvenile boys should cease as a routine practice. [Paragraph 4.5]
- 2.14** Schemes should be put in place which enable appropriately supported prisoners to assist newly arrived prisoners settle into life at Hydebank Wood. [Paragraph 4.9]
- 2.15** The NIPS should take remedial action to regularise the ventilation in prisoners' cells at Hydebank Wood. [Paragraph 5.4]
- 2.16** At all times prisoners should be referred to and addressed by their preferred names. [Paragraph 5.8]

- 2.17** The prisoner forum should meet on an agreed date on a monthly basis. [Paragraph 5.9]
- 2.18** An effective personal officer scheme should be introduced at Hydebank Wood, with each prisoner having a named personal officer. [Paragraph 5.10]
- 2.19** All staff at Hydebank Wood including Prison Service staff should routinely wear an identification badge. [Paragraph 5.11]
- 2.20** A range of interventions which formally address bullying behaviours including procedures for use of conflict resolution or restorative justice practices and provision for those who are victims of bullying should be introduced. [Paragraph 6.3]
- 2.21** The practice of locating prisoners with recognised mental health difficulties in the Special Supervision Unit (SSU) should cease. [Paragraph 6.7]
- 2.22** A rolling schedule of training connected to equality and diversity concerned with changing the values and culture in the workplace should be delivered to all staff grades. [Paragraph 6.12]
- 2.23** A system of analysis of trends and patterns of complaints should be used to inform practice at Hydebank Wood. [Paragraph 6.14]
- 2.24** An analysis of healthcare related complaints identifying areas of good practice and areas requiring development should be used to inform healthcare practices. [Paragraph 6.16]
- 2.25** The Governor should automatically copy to the IMB (at time of issue) the written report of all internal investigations of prisoner allegations of assault or harassment by prison grade staff. [Paragraph 6.17]
- 2.26** The advocacy service available at Hydebank Wood for young prisoners under the age of 18 years should be made available to adult prisoners who, on account of a particular vulnerability or intellectual challenge are less able to represent themselves within the complaints or adjudication process. [Paragraph 6.18]
- 2.27** Separate visiting facilities should be provided for women prisoners. [Paragraph 6. 21]
- 2.28** A visiting / befriending scheme utilising appropriately recruited and supported volunteers should be available to prisoners who have limited supports / do not routinely have domestic visits. [Paragraph 6.22]
- 2.29** The extended visits facility currently operating as a pilot scheme for women should be evaluated and considered for use by male prisoners. [Paragraph 6.23]
- 2.30** All staff and agency workers at Hydebank Wood should receive child protection training. [Paragraph 6.28]

- 2.31** All outstanding vetting checks should be undertaken as a matter of urgency in respect of prison grade staff and agency workers employed at Hydebank Wood. [Paragraph 6.29]
- 2.32** Arrangements should be put in place that enable nursery places be accessed for children residing with their mothers at Hydebank Wood, to meet both the child's developmental needs and ensure adequate safeguarding arrangements during periods of the mother's absence e.g. while attending court. [Paragraph 6.30]
- 2.33** A system of prisoner self-referral to healthcare should be put in place such as the use of a dedicated telephone line. [Paragraph 7.2]
- 2.34** A health forum enabling direct discussion between prisoners and healthcare staff should be established. [Paragraph 7.3]
- 2.35** Altering of medication should not take place without negotiation with the prisoner concerned and provision of supports that take account of the effects of imprisonment. [Paragraph 7.4]
- 2.36** Healthcare provision should be delivered on the basis of the most efficient use of resources to meet assessed need. [Paragraph 7.5]
- 2.37** Protocols should be developed that enable the sharing of "need -to-know" health related information to facilitate a joined up approach to prisoner care / treatment. [Paragraph 7.7]
- 2.38** The South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust should provide extended access to consultant psychiatrists for adult prisoners and access to child and adolescent provision for juveniles. [Paragraph 7.8]
- 2.39** The South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust should provide the services of clinical psychology as part of the range of available facilities. [Paragraph 7.9]
- 2.40** The range of training / work provision should be extended to include a menu of opportunities linked to current labour market needs including support for self-employment and entrepreneurship. [Paragraph 8.6]
- 2.41** The range of work and training opportunities which are formally accredited should be extended and a system for recording non-accredited skills should be introduced. [Paragraph 8.7]
- 2.42** The arrangements for prisoner daily attendance at training and work opportunities should be operated on the same basis as community-based work routines. [Paragraph 8.8]
- 2.43** The current provision of education to juvenile boys at Hydebank Wood should be reviewed to maximize educational potential in view of the fact that some boys remain of compulsory school attendance age. [Paragraph 8.15]

- 2.44** All impediments which restrict the contact between prisoners and tutors in the distance learning context should be removed. [Paragraph 8.16]
- 2.45** More frequent use should be made of all outdoor sport facilities and a wider range of activities which attracts the interest of young men, boys and women should be offered. [Paragraph 8.19]
- 2.46** Prisoner involvement in personal and social development schemes such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award should be extended at Hydebank Wood. [Paragraph 8.21]
- 2.47** All prisoners at Hydebank Wood should have at least one hour of exercise in the fresh air every day. [Paragraph 8.23]
- 2.48** Facilities in exercise yards should be extended to include some health promotion equipment. [Paragraph 8.25]
- 2.49** Staff should adhere to the lock and unlock timings as well as all other specified requirements of the core day. [Paragraph 8.29]
- 2.50** Regular reviews of the physical security of the Hydebank Wood estate should be undertaken. [Paragraph 9.1]
- 2.51** A proactive approach to violence reduction, necessitating training in how to recognise the signs and signals of anxiety or tension, should be assumed by staff thereby reducing the need to use physical restraint. [Paragraph 9.3]
- 2.52** A system should be put in place that avoids the need for an alarm going off in the male estate impacting on the regime for women and vice-versa. [Paragraph 9.4]
- 2.53** All visiting restrictions imposed should be subject to strict monitoring arrangements to ensure proportionality and appropriateness with facilities in place for review to enable revisions be made in the light of changes to the risk assessment. [Paragraph 9.5]
- 2.54** As an alternative to frequently imposing long periods of cellular confinement and / or loss of association, the NIPS should develop an approach in dealing with prisoners who present with challenging and non-conforming behaviours which addresses the issues resulting in the necessity to use the adjudication process in the first instance. [Paragraph 9.8]
- 2.55** There should be a swift and proportionate response in situations involving a minor violation of rules without recourse to the formal adjudication system [Paragraph 9.9]
- 2.56** Loss of access to telephone as an adjudication outcome should be discontinued at Hydebank Wood. [Paragraph 9.10]
- 2.57** Minor reporting, with adequate governance arrangements in place should be introduced across the Hydebank estate. [Paragraph 9.11]

- 2.58** IMB members need to be given adequate advance notice of meetings in respect of prisoners held on Rule 32. [Paragraph 9.16]
- 2.59** Prisoners should not be held in the SSU without the necessary documentation having been prepared and being available for examination. [Paragraph 9.17]
- 2.60** A dedicated staff team who are appropriately trained and supported should be available for work in the SSU. [Paragraph 9.18]
- 2.61** A range of supports should be available to short-term prisoners which promotes connections with external agencies for support post release. [Paragraph 10.2]
- 2.62** Main grade prison officers should make increased contribution to programme delivery and to prisoner resettlement plans. [Paragraph 10.3]
- 2.63** Individual and group work opportunities which are age appropriate and client group specific should be available to address drugs / alcohol issues. [Paragraph 10.7]
- 2.64** The NIPS should use the most advanced technology to combat the availability of drugs in Hydebank Wood. [Paragraph 10.8]
- 2.65** Random screening for drugs of all personnel entering Hydebank Wood should be introduced. [Paragraph 10.9]
- 2.66** All male and female prisoners at Hydebank Wood, irrespective of the length of sentence (excluding fine defaulters) should be able to avail of structured sentence planning. [Paragraph 10.10]

## 3 | The Establishment

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### Residential Houses

- 3.1** Hydebank Wood is a site performing a multiplicity of roles. Originally opened in 1979 as the centre for all male young prisoners in Northern Ireland, remanded and sentenced, it continues to accommodate 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. In 2004 following the transfer of all women prisoners from Maghaberry Prison (Mourne House), 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. This mix of prisoner groupings on a "split site" inevitably produces significant challenges in managing and responding appropriately to the distinct and different needs of this diverse population.

## Prisoner Numbers

**3.2** The prisoner population at Hydebank Wood at the start of the reporting year April 2009 was 223 (177 young men and 46 women). The population at the end of March 2010 was 204 (166 young men and 38 women). The yearly average for the young male population was 178, having reached a peak of 203 and a low of 147. Incorporated in these figures are the numbers of juveniles present throughout the year, with a maximum of 23 and a low of 10 recorded, giving an annual average of 16 young boys. The female population reached a high of 57 and a low of 30, the yearly average being 44 women. The recorded population figures reflect similar patterns to those in recent years.

## Industrial Dispute and Industrial Relations

**3.3** As referred to in the Annual Report 2008-09, the Prison Officers Association initiated a Northern Ireland-wide “withdrawal of staff goodwill” with effect from 16 February 2009. The situation continued until 29 July 2009 with the issues seemingly connected to the management of Sick Absence procedures and disciplinary actions instigated against some staff from Maghaberry Prison following the sad death of Colin Bell.

**3.4** A further period of “withdrawal of good will” commenced 15 March 2010 which continued at the end of the reporting period, and again that was related to Prison Management’s application of the Code of Conduct and Discipline procedures in relation to staff from Maghaberry Prison. Unfortunately as has been the case during previous episodes of “withdrawal of goodwill” there was an inevitable disruption to the regime for all the prisoners at Hydebank Wood. Late starts as staff waited outside the gates in advance of reporting for duty, one-to-one escorting of prisoners which had the effect of slowing down all activity, and additional lockdowns became the norm. While senior management indicated that disruption at Hydebank Wood was minimal, IMB members received complaints from all landings about prisoner experiences which included being locked in their cells for long periods, having to eat meals in their cells and having their visits, education, training etc negatively affected by the Prison Officers’ Association’s action.

**3.5** The Governor did allow all prisoners have access to in-cell television during these periods which was a humane gesture. However that discretion and management efforts to evenly sharing the unscheduled lockdowns between the residential houses at Hydebank Wood had minimal effect in dissipating the young men and women’s growing frustrations at being caught in the middle of events entirely outside of their control. The recurring experience of periods of “withdrawal of goodwill” again in this reporting year cause IMB members continued concern about the state of industrial relations within the NIPS. We repeat the recommendation that concerted efforts be made to improve industrial relations at Hydebank Wood in order to ensure consistent availability of a purposeful, rehabilitative regime for all the young men and women held there.



## Absenteeism

- 3.6** The NIPS has set as one of the key performance targets to reduce the rate of absenteeism to 11 days per head per annum in 2009-10. This target was not met as the average absenteeism for each member of staff was 12.64 days. However as this figure represents the level of absence of staff members across the entire Northern Ireland prison estate, it is misrepresentative of the actuality of the situation at Hydebank Wood. There was a continuation of high levels of sickness absence by prison grades at Hydebank Wood during the reporting period which again had a bearing on prisoners' living conditions and activities. During the year approximately 25 to 30 officers were absent due to sickness every day.
- 3.7** The level of sickness absence at Hydebank Wood compares unfavourably with the other two Prison Establishments. While advised by senior management that the profile of the absences is different and that 61% of staff do not have any sick absences, it remains difficult for IMB members to understand how the absenteeism rate has remained consistently higher at Hydebank Wood for a number of years.
- 3.8** The direct effects of the high levels of absenteeism on the availability of a predictable regime were particularly apparent during the period October 2009 to January 2010. During this period IMB members received many complaints and personally witnessed excessive use of unscheduled lockdowns. In fact some prisoners described conditions during this time as worse than anything experienced during periods of "withdrawal of good will". The timing of these difficulties was particularly unfortunate, coinciding with the recent introduction of the revised PREPs scheme which was negatively affected insofar as "earned" extra privileges were lost. Again the only apparent management strategy was the rotation of unscheduled lockdowns across landings which have minimal effect. Given the impact of sickness absence on productivity at Hydebank Wood, absence management must remain a key function both at a local and strategic level.

## Annual leave

- 3.9** During the reporting year IMB members became aware of seeming difficulties in the management of staff annual leave entitlements which became particularly pronounced in late 2009 / early 2010 period as the annual leave year drew to an end. Prison officers can apply to "carry over" nine annual leave days and IMB members were advised by the Governor that "not many" officers apply to do so, most utilizing their leave entitlements in the given year. Hence members were somewhat perturbed to discover that in fact 78 staff members were carrying in excess of 20 leave days, representing 37 % of discipline staff. The effects of this when considered alongside high levels of sick leave and shift patterns apparently arranged more than one year in advance, which don't necessarily reflect the actual work needs, seriously inhibit an ability to react flexibly and responsively to service need. Staff members' ability to take annual leave entitlements is an indicator of management's view of staff's professional work and appreciation of their role. The IMB recommend that a way is found that facilitates staff leave entitlements without causing disruption to regime delivery.



### 'Safe Staffing Levels' Agreement

**3.10** In the Annual Reports for 2006-07 and 2008-09, reference was made to the 'safe staffing levels' agreement between the NIPS and the Prison Officers Association and members interest in having sight of the document. While that request has not been facilitated, it remains the view of the Board that such agreements are well past their usefulness and indeed result in a degree of inflexibility which frequently inhibits managers from deploying staff in a way that creatively responds to need. The existence of historic agreements which specify how many staff must be available to work in each specific location fails to take account of the changing needs and in particular the importance of local managers making decisions about the required staffing levels in response to a dynamic risk assessment process. It surely is the case that the staffing levels on landings where prisoners are actively engaged in co-operating with the prison regime or when prisoners are off landings should be reduced accordingly. Consequently we recommend that there is an immediate revision of all workforce patterns / arrangements to maximize effectiveness and efficiency.

### Loss of Sunday Evening Association

**3.11** As referred to in the Annual Report 2008-09, revised shift patterns which had the effect of discontinuing all prisoners' Sunday evening association at Hydebank Wood were introduced on 6 April 2009. Management argue that the conditions at Hydebank Wood are more favourable than the core day applied in England and Wales which has no formal activity from Friday lunchtime to Monday morning. However the IMB do not consider the situations as measuring like with like and view such developments as an indicator that it is staff needs rather than regime considerations which frequently take priority.

### Consumption of Food in Cells

**3.12** Sadly as unscheduled lock-down of prisoners continued at Hydebank Wood during the reporting year this had a resultant effect on the dining arrangements for prisoners. Frequently main meals were consumed in cell, a practice which this Board has previously expressed concern. While the NIPS's formal response to the Annual Report 2008-09 has indicated that cell environment checks conform to acceptable hygiene standards for the purposes of consuming food, the IMB continue to view the practice as less than satisfactory. In promoting the concept of normalisation, communal dining provides an opportunity for valuable interaction and the development of social skills. The IMB recommend that prisoners should be routinely given the opportunity to take their meals in association with other prisoners.

### Allegations of Overtime Fraud

**3.13** As reported in the Annual Report 2008-09, disciplinary procedures were ongoing in relation to alleged gross misconduct at Hydebank Wood relating to six prison officers. IMB members are unaware of the current position relating to the matter other than to have been informed in November 2009 that the Governor at Hydebank Wood would assume a co-chairing role in hearings connected to the case. Members were of the view that staff members unconnected with Hydebank Wood may have more appropriately assumed such roles.

### 24 Hour Duty System.

**3.14** The IMB for Hydebank Wood continue to hold the view that given the complex nature of the Hydebank site a Governor grade manager should be on duty 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This recommendation has been resisted by the NIPS on the basis that it is impossible to achieve given the small management team. We consider the physical presence of a Governor grade at all times on the estate to be crucial to the delivery of an effective service and as evidence of visible management, that we repeat the recommendation.

### IMB Members' Access

**3.15** Given the small number of IMB members available during 2009-10, we did not seek to undertake night-time visits to Hydebank Wood but consider the opportunity to do so as entirely in keeping with IMB members' right of access. The need to make prior arrangements to gain access at night is unacceptable insofar as it defeats the purpose of the unannounced nature of IMB visits. During the year members found that they have limited windows of opportunity to speak to prisoners, which can generally only occur during periods of scheduled unlock. Given the legislative basis of IMB members' access to the prison, members seek to have unimpeded admittance to all parts of the establishment at any time.

### External Recruitment to Prison Grades

**3.16** The IMB have previously recommended that consideration be given to limited external recruitment to all staff grades, in order to extend and enhance the skill base. While in the Action Plan developed in response to the Annual Report 2008-09, this recommendation was accepted in respect of Governor grades, we are not aware of such developments having taken place. The recommendation is repeated.

### Staff Exchanges and Secondments

**3.17** During the reporting year the IMB were made aware of ongoing staff exchanges and short secondments which we welcome as an indicator of management interest in identifying examples of good practice relevant to the Hydebank Wood context.

### Business Performance Team

**3.18** In February 2010, IMB members were informed of the pending establishment of a Business Performance Team to be operational from 1 March 2010. Staffed from within existing resources at Hydebank Wood, the team headed by a Governor 5 was intended to focus on lifting performance standards ahead of an anticipated unannounced inspection. The IMB welcome the emphasis on raising standards which should be incorporated into the system as part of ongoing and routine activity as distinct from time-limited events.

### Women Prisoners

**3.19** In year there have been a number of commendable developments relating to Ash House. As a follow on from the publication of the draft strategy on the management of women offenders issued in February 2009 for consultation, gender specific standards were published for consultation in July 2009. This coincided with the introduction of new guidance for staff working in Ash House, which when considered alongside the recent development of a dedicated reception, separate healthcare and drug testing facilities and the introduction of

less intrusive search procedures, all indicate a commitment to provide a better focus on the distinct and complex needs of the female population. Staff working in Ash House have been given the opportunity to participate in a Women Awareness Staff Programme (WASP), with IMB members noting and having been advised by prisoners of improvements in staff / prisoner relationships and increasing levels of interaction.

**3.20** Continued work to provide physical separation from young male prisoners has continued which has resulted in unescorted movement being introduced for women within the confines of Ash House, including the gardens and exercise yard as well as to education. However while all these measures are welcome in enhancing the quality of the experiences available to the women, it is the view of the IMB that the site is fundamentally flawed and such developments, while well-intentioned, are only “square pegging round holes”.

**3.21** In the annual reports for the four preceding years, the IMB recommended that a stand-alone, purpose built women’s prison should be provided in Northern Ireland. We again repeat that recommendation. We understand that the initial business case for an establishment specifically designed to meet the needs of women has been drawn up but has not been progressed pending devolution of policing and justice powers. In our view this project should be prioritized and developed in a manner which takes account of more general developments in the management of women offenders, such as the recently opened INSPIRE project, and is not constrained by practices of the past.

#### Male Juvenile Unit

**3.22** During the reporting year the number of juveniles held at the designated juvenile unit (Willow 1&2) Hydebank Wood had varied from a low of 10 to a high of 23 young boys. A Juvenile Implementation Plan officially endorsed in 2008 set out procedures to enhance the general conditions and the regime available to the juveniles. The IMB viewed this development as a positive step in recognising the distinct and different needs of these young boys.

**3.23** Staff working on Willow have had the opportunity to participate in the Juvenile Awareness Staff Programme (JASP), a short specialised training course for working with adolescents. Work to improve the physical environment at Willow was ongoing during the year and included the refurbishment of cells, changes to the windows, a newly equipped kitchen and craft room, a multi gym and the development of a designated garden area. As part of the overall revision of PREPS a specifically adapted scheme was introduced for juveniles that introduced a progressive five tier system-bronze, silver, gold, platinum and platinum plus, each regime offering a different level of earnings and privileges. During the year we noticed some evidence of pro-social modelling and all efforts by staff to more meaningfully engage with the boys are to be commended. The introduction of a revised timetable of activities in February 2010 is valuable in extending out of cell opportunities; however the IMB have highlighted the limited weekly access to education including numeracy and literacy skills development. In September 2009, the Governor indicated his intention to appoint a social worker dedicated to working with the young boys which has yet to be implemented by the end of the reporting year. This is a development that the IMB would strongly support, not least because a number of the boys do have previous statutory childcare involvement.

**3.24** More generally however in the view of the IMB members an ongoing tension pertains with regard to the management of the young people's behaviours and the balance to be struck between care and control. This is particularly evident in practices such as the use of Control and Restraint (C&R) and the use of routine strip-searching on arrival and as part of other routine procedures, processes used in the adult estate. During the year IMB members had regular contact with young boys held in Willow, and notwithstanding the aforementioned developments, we have continuing concerns about the ability of Hydebank Wood to provide a purposeful, daily regime which in an age-appropriate way meets the educational, personal and social development needs of the young people, and which most importantly addresses their offending behaviour. Our feedback from the young boys frequently mirrored that presented in a report prepared by Include Youth, November 2009, arising from the Young Voices project at Hydebank Wood with issues raised about lockdowns, the availability of exercise and fresh air and the quality of staff interactions. Our concerns were further contributed to by a management decision to temporarily close Willow 2 from 26 November 2009 to 8 February 2010, as part of a strategy to increase the staffing resource available to combat the high levels of sick leave across the Centre. IMB members who were on a Rota visit on that day witnessed at firsthand the distress caused to the young boys by their imminent move to Willow 1 as well as the disappointment experienced by staff on the landing who questioned the perceived value of their efforts to operate a more care orientated approach. While acknowledging that the number of young boys held at Hydebank Wood was at a reduced level at the time, it is nevertheless the view of IMB members that if management are serious in their desire to effect change, the facilities and staffing at the juvenile unit should be ring-fenced regardless of other operational pressures.

**3.25** A Minister driven multi-agency working group concentrating on the improvement of outcomes for juveniles in the criminal justice system is welcome. However the IMB remain of the view that an entirely separate unit which is not subject to the restrictions of the shared site or vulnerable to operational pressures within the Young Offender estate is required and is recommended accordingly. Such a facility would require staff be recruited and trained to operate a more child-centered approach, within which offending behaviour and lifestyle choices are challenged.

#### Mentoring Scheme

**3.26** During the reporting year the Governor advised that a donation had been made by the Barrow Cadbury Trust for a one to one mentoring scheme which was to be piloted with the juvenile boys during the autumn of 2009. The plan was that appropriately recruited and trained ex-offenders would perform the mentoring role. In the event the mentoring scheme was not operational by the end of the reporting period. The IMB would support the philosophy of a mentoring scheme obviously subject to the necessary vetting and training arrangements that take account of the young boys' potential vulnerability.

#### Immigration Detainees

**3.27** The agreement between the NIPS and the UK Border Agency that immigration detainees will not ordinarily be accommodated in any of its prison establishments remained in place during this reporting period. However there remained situations during the reporting year when immigration detainees were held at Hydebank Wood, in circumstances entirely similar to prisoners. Of particular concern to the IMB are the situations when detainees are held under immigration

powers after a period of custodial sentence has expired. As recorded in the Annual Report 2008-09, the IMB objects in principle to the holding of immigration detainees in a prison or young offender centre and again recommends that the practice of housing detainees in Hydebank Wood should cease.

### Investors in People

**3.28** An Investors in People assessment of Hydebank Wood was carried out in July 2009 when the establishment's status as an investor in people organisation was reaffirmed. This is an important achievement.

## 4 | Arrival in Custody

### Movement to and from Court

**4.1** Previous Annual Reports have recommended that women, young men and juveniles should always be transported separately to and from Hydebank Wood. The NIPS, while agreeing in principle says it is not always practical to provide separate transport. The IMB however remain strongly of the view that the distinct needs of each of these groups and the importance of promoting human dignity cannot be preserved in situations of shared transport. Therefore the recommendation that women, young men and juveniles are transported to and from Hydebank Wood separately is repeated.

**4.2** IMB members also noted during the year some prisoners returning from court being left to sit in a van / police car outside reception over the lunch time period. This delay has implications for the arriving prisoners as well as the staff providing transport. The IMB recommend that staffing arrangements are in place to provide appropriate reception cover that prevents delay.

**4.3** During the announced inspection of Hydebank Wood Young Offender Centre 5-9 November 2007, Inspectors recommended that "young people should not routinely be handcuffed in vans or to and from reception without the need for this being determined through individual security risk assessment". In November 2009, the IMB were advised that a pilot scheme lasting six months was commencing during which juveniles going to Laganside Court would travel uncuffed in cellular vans, subject to individual risk assessment. Members are pleased at this development and look forward to the continuing roll-out of the scheme to all courts in Northern Ireland.

### Reception

**4.4** The importance of the reception area in conveying the first impressions of the facility cannot be underestimated. In the case of Hydebank Wood the standards in the reception areas vary considerably between the male and the female estate. The newly opened in August 2008 reception for women prisoners provided an appropriately welcoming environment whereas the male reception area, requiring refurbishment for several years conveyed a much grimmer impression. However the IMB are pleased that the long awaited refurbishment of the male reception commenced in November 2009 with a scheduled completion date of March 2010. In the interim the male reception was relocated to Beech House, which whilst less than ideal in terms of available space, was sufficient as an interim measure.

**4.5** The reception areas have regular staff assigned to those locations and whilst there are benefits to staff experience, on the other-hand the approach to dealing with prisoners can become routinised. While recognising that reception can be busy particularly at peak periods, given the importance of prisoners' initial experiences it is vitally important that staff deal sensitively with this stage of the prison process. The continued sharing of the male reception by both young men and juveniles is less than ideal, indicating one of the deficits of the shared site. Routine full-body searching of the juveniles continues despite this having been identified as an area of concern in the Inspection of Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre, 5-9 November 2007, a practice which the IMB also recommend should stop.

#### Induction

**4.6** The production of First Night DVD's for both the young men and the women is a helpful development, incorporating information on a range of practices and facilities available at the Centre in an accessible format for those who speak English. The needs of prisoners for whom English is not the first language still need to be considered.

**4.7** Changes to the Induction process have included the introduction of a 2-stage health screening process which again is welcome and hopefully can assist with a more developed understanding of health related needs.

**4.8** During the year we were advised that Induction for young men was now taking place in a dining room as opposed to a dedicated location and was in fact only lasting half a day. The Governor was not in a position to confirm whether this was the case but indicated his intention to introduce a more developed induction process which would give information to newly arrived prisoners in phases. While the IMB would support the development of Induction to prevent information overload and to ensure it occurs at a time when prisoners are fit to take on board new information, by the end of the reporting period no such changes had been introduced.

**4.9** Staff need to be alert to the signs of anxieties and pressures associated with the early phase of imprisonment with their response tailored to these prisoner potential needs. It is also important to recognise that male prisoners in particular may not disclose the actual level of their distress. This places an important emphasis on the quality of the relationship between the staff and prisoners as well as the need for staff training in mental health awareness. Prisoners who are carefully selected and supported have also a valuable contribution to make the induction process. We recommend that such schemes are put in place which enable fellow prisoners assume a role in assisting newly-arrived peers settle into the life of Hydebank Wood.



## 5 | Environment and Relationships

### Grounds

- 5.1** The appearance of the grounds of the prison is good and always impresses the frequent visitors to Hydebank Wood. The IMB commends the staff and prisoners who engage in this work thereby ensuring a pleasant environment for the prisoner population and staff.
- 5.2** As reported in previous annual reports, the availability of four outdoor playing fields is a very valuable but frequently underutilised resource. During this reporting year a new astro-turf pitch was developed, providing another brilliant resource for outdoor activity. It is important that these excellent resources are utilised to maximum effect.

### Residential Accommodation

- 5.3** The standard of the residential accommodation varies across the establishment with the more recently refurbished areas -Ash, Beech, Cedar and Willow 1 and 2 - providing a good standard of shared living arrangements. A programme of refurbishment is on-going and we understand that the quality of living accommodation in Elm and Willow will be similarly improved. During the year there was no required incidence of cell-sharing.
- 5.4** An ongoing problem of inadequate ventilation in cells remains an issue, perhaps indicative of a problem with the window design. The IMB recommends that the NIPS should take remedial action to regularise the ventilation in prisoners' cells at Hydebank Wood.
- 5.5** Hydebank Wood has two landings - Ash 5 (for women) and Cedar 5 (for young men) - which are used by enhanced prisoners subject to admissions criteria, the benefits of which include increased personal responsibility, improved recreational facilities and additional unlocks. During the reporting year there were ongoing delays in agreeing revisions to the eligibility criteria for Ash 5 which involved discussions between management and the Prisoner Officers' Association. While revised admission criteria to Ash 5 were introduced in January 2010, the associated delay had the result of a very valuable resource being under-utilised for a significant proportion of the year and appears to the IMB as an example of how the POA impedes the work of senior management.

### Staff/Prisoner Relationships

- 5.6** Contact with prisoners, and IMB members own observations, suggest that the quality of staff / prisoner relationships is mixed. During the year we witnessed examples of practice where staff were actively engaging with prisoners, including responding in ways which were helpful and caring. Situations such as where a staff member sat with a prisoner during the lunchtime meal to encourage him to eat and where the "runner" escorting a prisoner back from visits relayed his observations that the prisoner had been tearful on return to the landing suggesting to colleagues to monitor the situation are indicative of an increasing caring approach. However similarly we witnessed instances of very little engagement and occasions when staff were cynical and dismissive. There remains a tendency for staff to sit at their work stations, at times reading newspapers or talking to other staff colleagues who discourages interaction, and during periods of association, some staff has been noted to remain disengaged. While recently introduced working practices connected to SPAR, Offender Management and PREPS place greater emphasis on the quality of staff interaction with prisoners there is a need for ongoing commitment to support and strong leadership from management in motivating and encouraging staff deliver a culture of meaningful engagement with prisoners.

**5.7** Issues raised by a number of prisoners suggest that there are instances when some staff members behave in a manner which is perceived to be provocative or demeaning and in such situations the power differential favours the staff member. During the year complaints have again been received about the approach of some members of staff on duty at night. It is important that all complaints are investigated rigorously in terms of reinforcing to prisoners that their concerns are being taken seriously and that staff are clear about the expectation to proactively engage with prisoners in a professional and supportive manner.

**5.8** In the view of the IMB an important mark of the level of respect afforded to prisoners is how staff refer to and address the young men and women. Almost without exception the juveniles and young men are referred to by their surname only and frequently it is only a surname and prison number which appears on cell cards. By contrast predominantly the women are referred to by their preferred names. As was suggested in the three preceding Annual Reports, the IMB recommend that all prisoners are referred to and addressed by their preferred names.

#### Prisoner Forum

**5.9** The introduction of a prisoner forum in June 2009 is an important development in providing a means of facilitating discussion about issues of mutual interest to prisoners and staff and has potential to develop a model of citizenship. Representatives from all residential houses were invited to attend with good level of prisoner interest expressed. However if the forum is to provide a realistic mechanism for engagement and consultation, its importance must be marked by meetings which occur regularly and where feedback on issues raised is prompt. The IMB are aware of feedback on issues raised at a forum meeting in July 2009 being provided in December 2009, which would do little to encourage prisoner confidence in the process. It is vitally important that such projects are not dependent on the availability on one staff member, the effect of which may be the project becoming unsustainable if that staff member becomes unavailable. The IMB recommend that the prisoner forum meet on an agreed date on a monthly basis with clarity about responsibilities and regular updates on actions taken.

#### Personal Officers

**5.10** The continued absence of a personal officer scheme remains a point of concern to the IMB. In response to the Annual Report 2008-09, the NIPS accepted the recommendation that a Personal Officer Scheme be introduced but indicated a deadline of 2013 before full implementation could be achieved. In the view of IMB members the suggested timeframe is unacceptably protracted. The existence of an effective Personal Officer scheme, supported by an explicit policy directive and appropriate staff training underpins the establishment of meaningful staff-prisoner relationships. A Personal Officer by virtue of his / her engagement with and knowledge of designated prisoners would assume a pivotal role in motivating the boys, young men and women in working towards the objectives set out under the resettlement / offender management plan as well as acting as a link in situations where issues connected to the individual prisoner's personal circumstances arise. In our view the establishment of a Personal Officer scheme is pivotal to the "culture change" frequently alluded to and we recommend that the implementation is expedited.



### Staff Identification

**5.11** In the previous four Annual Reports, the IMB have recommended that staff wear identification badges, which is particularly important given that fact that officers do not wear uniform. While the recommendation has been accepted in principle in the NIPS's formal response to previous Annual Reports, as yet there has been no progress in terms of the routine wearing of staff identification badges. The recommendation is repeated.

## 6 | Duty of Care

### Anti- Bullying / Violence Reduction

**6.1** Anti-bullying and violence reduction procedures are incorporated within the safer custody strategy and fall within the remit of the Safer Custody team established at Hydebank Wood in February 2009 which consider matters relating to the young men, adolescents and women without distinction. However the findings of an inspection relating to vulnerable prisoners across the three prison establishments in Northern Ireland, conducted by the Criminal Justice Inspectorate in December 2009 noted that the emphasis of the work of the safer custody teams had been predominantly on self harm / suicide prevention rather than anti-bullying / violence reduction.

**6.2** Specifically in relation to Hydebank Wood it is the view of the IMB that the reliance on the availability of 'facts' in relation to bullying means that many cases remain unsubstantiated which in turn has the potential to influence reporting rates and prisoners overall confidence in the system. Given the often subtle nature of bullying and the fear of reprisal, evidence is difficult to obtain with greater emphasis needed to address the culture which sees bullying as an integral feature of institutional life. Prisoners from minority groups may be particularly vulnerable to bullying and overall there is a need for a proactive rather than a reactive approach by staff.

**6.3** The IMB understands that a bullying survey was to be undertaken at Hydebank Wood during the reporting year, the results of which could perhaps be used to reinvigorate commitment to a prison culture based on non-violence, respect for difference and equality. The present system of relocating those prisoners suspected of / identified as engaging in bullying appears too simplistic and we recommend the development of interventions which formally address bullying behaviours including procedures for conflict resolution or restorative justice practices and a range of provision for those who are victims of bullying.

### Self-Harm and Suicide Prevention

**6.4** Ongoing developments during the reporting year relating to self harm / suicide prevention and predominantly arising from the sad death of Colin Bell at Maghaberry Prison have been the Ministerial Forum on Safer Custody, chaired by the Minister and involving a range of representatives from criminal justice, healthcare and the voluntary sector giving an indication of the importance placed on implementing new approaches to the management of prisoners deemed at risk. As referenced in relation to bullying, a Safer Custody team was established at Hydebank Wood in February 2009 which has the dual role of dealing with self harm /

suicide prevention and violence reduction / anti-bullying. The newly appointed safer custody personnel have been instrumental in increasing the profile of self-harm/ suicide prevention and assumed important roles in implementing the safer custody strategy at local level. Their roles encompassed work with the young men, adolescents and women. The introduction of a pilot project connected to 'Supporting Prisoners at Risk' as a replacement for the Prison-at-Risk (PAR-1) system begun at Hydebank Wood before eventual roll-out across the Northern Ireland Prison estate. In the aforementioned inspection "Vulnerable Prisoners" December 2009, the SPAR procedures were recognized as being superior to the previously used PAR(1) system. While it is hoped that the introduction of SPAR procedures will increase ownership by staff and provide an increased sense of responsibility for safer custody issues, IMB members retain concerns about the quality of the experience for vulnerable prisoners in the continued absence of a fully embedded culture of engagement.

- 6.5** In particular the IMB considers that use of control and restraint techniques in dealing with vulnerable prisoners as inappropriate and lacking in humanity, dignity and respect. Prisoners with mental health needs may be unable to conform to the rules and regulations associated with the prison regime highlighting a need for staff training on the healthcare needs of such prisoners as opposed to a reliance on Control and Restraint. Similarly the use of a low-stimulus environment in the form of an observation cell or a vulnerable person dressed in anti-ligature clothing, in the absence of therapeutic supports, appears in-effective. There were also instances when prisoners identified as vulnerable appeared to have limited opportunity to engage in purposeful activity despite evidence that activity is important to mental health well-being. There have been important procedural developments during the reporting year but the IMB continue to recommend the need for the embedding of a therapeutic approach which hinges on more active engagement and support to identified vulnerable prisoners by all staff.
- 6.6** Services currently available at Hydebank Wood such as the 'listeners' scheme and pet dog care therapy have much potential in terms of being part of a range of provision available to vulnerable prisoners. The former, while being reasonably established in Ash House appears not to have realized its potential within the male estate and requires ongoing development and commitment to reach a situation of sustainability.
- 6.7** During the year the SSU was on occasions used as a location to place prisoners with recognised mental health challenges. The IMB view this location as unsuitable to the needs of such prisoners and recommend that this practice cease. Any regime available in the SSU does little to address the mental health needs of prisoners whose presence can be both disruptive and upsetting to other prisoners placed there for reasons associated with the adjudication process. The IMB view as inappropriate the requirement that staff in the SSU, who have no specialised training in dealing with complex mental health needs, are being expected to deal with prisoners whose acute and challenging mental health needs make prison an inappropriate environment.

**6.8** The IMB were disappointed to learn in February 2010 that both principal officers involved in the safer custody team were being moved to new areas of responsibilities. While the posts were continuing with two new staff members assuming responsibilities for the vacated posts, it is the view of the IMB that this important service development would have benefited from consistency of personnel for a period beyond one year to allow continuation of the work in having safer custody embedded holistically in all aspects of prison life.

### Equality and Diversity

**6.9** The NIPS has as one of its corporate objectives to “work towards creating a workforce which is reflective of the community it serves” and in support of that endeavour a diversity strategy, “Make a Difference” which was awarded in an external public and private sector assessment, is in place. At a local level data is being monitored by the Equality and Diversity Committee within Hydebank Wood. However as noted in a Criminal Justice Inspectorate report on the impact of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 on the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland, May 2009, prison service staff are predominantly male and protestant. This is in contrast to the profile of the prisoner population at Hydebank Wood which has a greater representation from the Catholic community than the percentage of Catholics in the general population of Northern Ireland. It is recognised that the NIPS have not had the benefit of an acceleration scheme such as 50:50 recruitment operated within the Police Service for Northern Ireland.

**6.10** While specific figures have not been made available, IMB members believe that there is a continued over-representation of prisoners from a Catholic background on the basic and standard levels of PREPS and in adjudications. Management also indicated during the reporting year, that while striving to maintain a 70:30 ratio in relation to female staff in Ash House, this was difficult to consistently arrange. The increasing presence of foreign national prisoners presents particular challenges where cultural and language barriers can arise. During the year IMB members continued to receive complaints from a small number of prisoners from an Irish traveller background who considered they had been subjected to insulting comments. This culmination of challenging issues indicates the need for an ongoing equality and diversity agenda.

### Staff Recruitment

**6.11** The NIPS has targets for external recruitment competitions of 40% women and 35% Catholic applications by 2011. The targets while welcome insofar as indicating the NIPS commitment to affirmative actions are low in terms of their potential to effect any meaningful change to the current workforce composition. Specifically in relation to applicants from a Catholic background, the target is neither representative of the situation in the general Northern Ireland population nor specifically in Hydebank Wood. Recruitment levels remain low, with main grade officers having not been recruited in 16 years and no current plans to do so. The more recent recruitment campaigns for support grade staff, while being more successful in terms of attracting previously underrepresented groups, have less contact with prisoners.

**6.12** Given the limited change to be affected by recruitment, there is a particular onus on the NIPS to deliver staff training which addresses equality and diversity issues, moving beyond an awareness level to dealing with practical issues that help staff engage with particular groups and individuals. While a training schedule has begun, there is a distinct need for ongoing training to address how perhaps instinctively staff respond in a manner which is prejudiced and based on stereotype. Events such as that held in Hydebank Wood on 19 October 2009 during Anti-Racism Workplace Week which reinforced the NIPS Anti-racism position and celebrated diversity and the delivery of a diversity programme adapted for service users in Ash House are commendable and should be organised on a recurring basis. The IMB recommend a rolling training schedule connected to equality and diversity for all staff grades which changes the values and culture in the workplace.

### Complaints

**6.13** The IMB have continued to experience a generally negative perception by prisoners about how internal complaints are dealt with. In particular there appears to be a lack of prisoner confidence in how complaints are investigated and the overall level of fairness associated with the system. We met prisoners i.e. juveniles, young men and women who appeared fearful of engaging the complaints process in the event that their actions would have longer-term consequences in relation to staff attitudes towards them. Indeed we similarly dealt with prisoners who raised legitimate concerns with the IMB but who asked that their identity not be disclosed to staff to prevent repercussions. This situation of prisoner lack of faith in the internal complaints system is longstanding indicating a need for further work on improving both the prisoner experience and perception.

**6.14** On 1 February 2010, as part of the Amendments to Prison Rules a new two-tier system on internal complaints was introduced across the entire Northern Ireland Prison Estate. This is a welcome development in terms of having fewer stages to the complaints process and more ready access to the Prisoner Ombudsman. Coinciding with this new development, posters outlining the internal complaints system and complaints boxes were located in residential houses. It will also be important to ensure that explanations are made available in age-appropriate language to suit the needs of the Hydebank Wood prisoner audience, including those individuals who have limited reading skills and for whom English is not a first language. In terms of assuring confidentiality it is essential that proper consideration is given to the selection of the person designated to remove the mail from the Complaint's boxes. While it is too early to comment on the positives or otherwise arising from the introduction of the new complaints system, the IMB recommend that a proper analysis of trends and patterns of complaints is in place, information from which is used to inform practice across the Hydebank Wood estate.

**6.15** During the year the Governor has facilitated visits by the Prisoner Ombudsman to explain her role and to explore ways of ensuring accessibility to that complaints process. We are pleased at such endeavours and commend all efforts in lateral thinking in relation to both increasing prisoner awareness of and maximizing access to complaint procedures.

### Healthcare Complaints

**6.16** Since the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust assuming responsibility for prisoner healthcare from April 2008, prisoner complaints of a healthcare nature are now sent to the Trust if they cannot be resolved at local level. From April 2009 to April 2010, 21 complaints were made relating to healthcare only three of which were able to be resolved at a local level. IMB members have noted that prisoners who had issues with healthcare portrayed a similar lack of confidence in the complaints process to that connected with the Internal Complaints system. In paperwork received from the Healthcare staff at Hydebank Wood relating to health matters raised by prisoners, the IMB noted some responses which were curt and somewhat defensive. As suggested in relation to the internal complaints system, the IMB recommend that an analysis of all healthcare related complaints is used to highlight areas of good practice and those requiring development, thereby increasing overall confidence in the complaints system.

### Allegations of Assault or Harassment

**6.17** IMB members have continued to receive complaints from prisoners relating to allegations of assault or harassment by prison officers. The allegations are passed on to the Governor on the day received by an IMB member. In order to fulfil the monitoring role, IMB members have asked to be copied in to the written report of all such internal investigations. In its formal response to the Annual Report 2007-08, the NIPS indicated that it would consider IMB requests for access to any internal investigation reports into prisoner allegations of assault or harassment. In effect that has not happened and the formal response to the Annual Report 2008-09 referred to the "passing of reports which contain information on individuals to a third party could breach Data Protection". The investigation of all allegations of assault and harassment by staff on prisoners remains an area of concern for the IMB members. The need for transparency and timeliness in the investigative process is crucial and therefore to appropriately perform their monitoring role, the IMB again recommend that the Governor should automatically copy to the IMB (at time of issue) the written report of all internal investigations of prisoner allegations of assault or harassment by prison grade staff.

### Advocacy Service

**6.18** Opportunity Youth continues to provide a valuable advocacy service at Hydebank Wood for the boys aged under 18 years which can include advice and support in relation to the adjudication process associated with a young person being charged with a disciplinary offence; offering advice regarding the complaints procedure and, if required, to provide assistance in writing the complaint. The IMB have previously raised the value in this service being extended to young men and women who on account of a particular vulnerability or intellectual challenge are less able to represent themselves within the complaints or adjudication process. While having been accepted in principle in the formal NIPS Action Plan to the Annual Report 2008-09, members are not aware of any extension of the scheme and repeat the recommendation.



## Visitors Centre

**6.19** The case for maintaining family ties in terms of the support it offers to prisoners reintegrating into society has been well made. The NIPS launch of the Draft Family Strategy and Action Plan, 2009-2014 in July 2009 provides a context for family oriented provisions. The services provided by both prison officers and NIACRO staff employed in the visitors centre at Hydebank Wood promote such positive links which is highly commendable. NIACRO staff offer support to prisoners' visitors which can be practical and / or emotional while the family liaison officers endeavour to make the child-centered and family visits meaningful and enjoyable. The decision by the Governor in 2008 to ensure that the duration of visit sessions would be not less than one hour for all prisoners reinforces the value placed on family contact and the approach to families promoted at Hydebank which contains many elements of good practice.

**6.20** The continued availability of tea / coffee and a range of snacks offered by NIACRO staff during visits is a useful development particularly to prisoners' visitors who have to travel some distance and by increasing the social aspect of the visit. Similarly the staffed play area in the visits room is a useful form of support. In addition the parents / visitors forum which the Governor was instrumental in establishing and remains personally involved in, has continued to meet on a monthly basis which again reinforces the commitment to maintaining family ties. That group has produced a very insightful DVD which is played in visits.

**6.21** Women prisoners continue to share the visiting facilities with young men, having a small number of designated tables in the visits room which is predominantly used by men. This is another negative feature of Hydebank Wood's shared site and the IMB recommend that separate visiting arrangements are provided.

**6.22** A number of prisoners in Hydebank Wood, including a high proportion of foreign national prisoners have limited supports and do not routinely receive visits. The IMB recommend that visiting patterns are tracked to facilitate identification of prisoners not receiving social visits. A visiting / befriending scheme for such prisoners, ideally provided by appropriately recruited and supported volunteers should be made available.

## Extended Visits

**6.23** At the end of December 2009 as an addition to normal domestic and family centered visits, an extended visits facility which is a separate building adjacent to Ash House became operational. Initially run as a pilot scheme, this enables suitably assessed women to have unsupervised extended visits from their children for up to a period of 6 hours. Initial feedback has been very positive and clearly this innovative scheme is important in helping maintain mother / child relationships. Given the importance of child contact, the IMB recommend that this scheme be considered for roll-out to other prisoners who are suitably assessed.

## Telephone Calls

**6.24** Telephones which have a privacy hood are available on landings in the residential houses for use by prisoners. On some landings however the telephones are located in areas of high traffic which impacts on both the noise levels and privacy of calls. We understand that during the reporting year, the NIPS negotiated a new rate of cost of calls with the service provider which was downwards but IMB members have continued to receive complaints from prisoners about

the high cost of making telephone calls, particularly to mobile phones. It is the case that the cost of calls remains higher than public rates and prisoners do not have the benefit of any schemes available to domestic users such as Friends and Family or access to incoming calls.

#### Letters

**6.25** Prisoners can send two letters each week at public expense, and may also receive incoming post. During the year IMB members received some complaints about delays in receiving incoming mail. It remains to be seen whether a revision to the security policy of reading a percentage of incoming post (lowered to 5% of incoming mail) will assist the situation.

#### Email

**6.26** In July 2009 the Governor advised IMB members of his intention to pilot the introduction of emailed correspondence from family members to prisoners in Cedar House. It was anticipated that the correspondence would be delivered in the form of printed messages but at the end of the reporting period, the scheme is still not operational. The IMB look forward to the introduction of this development and welcome all schemes which seek to promote family contact.

#### Child Protection

**6.27** Having noted in previous Annual Reports the delay in introducing policy documents connected to child protection and the absence of a protocol with statutory social services in managing child protection investigations, the IMB are pleased that plans are in place for the introduction of procedures to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in a custodial setting, whether detained at Hydebank Wood or attending as visitors at the other prison establishments on 1st April 2010.

**6.28** In preparation for the introduction of the Safeguarding Children Framework and Guidance has been a training schedule of awareness raising about child protection and the IMB recommend that all staff have access to this training. This is particularly important given incidence of cross-deployment of staff across locations.

**6.29** The IMB further recommends that all outstanding vetting checks should be undertaken as a matter of urgency in respect of all prison grade staff and agency workers employed at Hydebank Wood.

**6.30** During the year IMB members became aware that a young child residing with its mother at Hydebank Wood was being cared for by other prisoners while the parent attended court hearings. The IMB view this as an entirely unacceptable arrangement which was undertaken in the absence of any formal risk assessment. The IMB recommend that arrangements are put in place that enable nursery places be accessed in order to meet the dual purposes of alleviating safeguarding concerns during e.g. periods of the mother's attendance at court and to maximize the baby's development.

## 7 | Healthcare

- 7.1** Responsibility for provision of prisoner healthcare has remained with the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (SEHSCT) following the transfer of responsibilities on 1 April 2008. The refurbishment of the healthcare centre used by the male population has been important in improving the physical environment in which healthcare is provided and it is positive that facilities are in place to respond to the healthcare needs of the men and women separately.
- 7.2** The existence of the Partnership Board, including representatives from the SEHSCT, Regional Health and Social Care Authority and the NIPS is an important development and has the potential to add considerable value in terms of determining an appropriate strategic direction. However the extent to which improvements are embedded in arrangements at Hydebank Wood appears varied with a continuation of some historically established practices which are prison oriented. The need for prisoners to make application to landing staff when appointments with healthcare are required is inappropriate and we recommend that a system such as a dedicated telephone line is made available which enables prisoners to self-refer. In keeping with community based practice it would also be helpful if timed appointments were offered as we have noted instances when contact with healthcare was requested and neither the prisoner nor landing staff were aware when, or if an appointment would be offered.
- 7.3** There are ongoing challenges in the provision of a range and quality of services to prisoners which is equivalent to that provided to the general public with a difficult balance to be achieved in terms of providing a suitably supportive healthcare environment within facilities which have an emphasis on discipline and control. During the reporting year we were aware of a small number of very entrenched healthcare related issues which had resulted in the individual prisoners concerned feeling there was little point in speaking to healthcare staff as their requests for treatment were ignored. While undoubtedly there many positive experiences, there are also instances where relationships between healthcare staff and prisoners appears distant and the provision of care seemed influenced by the cultural emphasis on security. It is difficult to determine whether this is impacted by the fact that healthcare remains predominantly delivered by NIPS employed staff. We recommend as a confidence building exercise, the establishment of a health forum which would enable direct discussion about issues and contribute to a better understanding of different perspectives.
- 7.4** A contentious area noted by IMB members relates to the changes in medication that can occur on arrival in prison. This has been a particular problem for some of the women who have come to prison with ongoing dependence on prescribed medication, at times used as a “prop” to cope with challenging personal experiences. We have been aware of situations where changes to medication have contributed to poor relationships with healthcare staff and has affected in a negative way the well-being of prisoners at a particularly vulnerable stage. While the IMB are supportive of drug reduction initiatives including reducing levels of prescribed medication we recommend that the altering of medication does not occur without negotiation and the availability of supports that take account of the effects of imprisonment.
- 7.5** As recommended in previous IMB annual reports we continue to question the need for in-patient beds in the healthcare facilities as actual usage tends to be very low. On occasions when in-patient facilities are used there are limited activities available e.g. during the reporting



year a young man who spent a period as an in-patient in healthcare was to have regular access to dog-therapy as an integral part of his care package which in the event did not materialise. We understand the SEHSCT are reviewing the provision of in-bed provision with a discussion paper to be presented to the Partnership Board in May 2010. We recommend that service delivery is based on the most efficient use of resources to meet the assessed needs of the prisoner population.

### Health Promotion

**7.6** Given the variation in the prisoner groupings residing at Hydebank Wood, there is a need for a concentration on promoting health. Towards this end a range of clinics are provided which are concerned with education and prevention. It is important that these clinics are well publicised and that young men and women are proactively encouraged to improve their health. The frequency with which these services were available was not always clear and appeared subject to other staff demands as in the instance of smoking cessation classes which in December 2009 we were advised were not being delivered due to the inadequate staffing levels.

**7.7** Links between healthcare and landing staff are important in ensuring joined up provision for prisoners. Staff have on occasions referred to their difficulties in knowing how best to respond to particular prisoners especially in situations involving mental health or addiction, where healthcare provision has been arranged. Residential staff have a key role in influencing the mental state of prisoners and there remains essential flaws in the provision of supports to these staff members. While recognising there are aspects of client confidentiality to be considered, the more general issue of sharing health-related information needs to be considered and we recommend that suitable protocols are put in place to enable this happen.

### Mental Health

**7.8** Mental health services are an area of specific need for the prisoner population at Hydebank Wood with the CJI report, "Not a Marginal Issue: Mental Health and the Criminal Justice System in Northern Ireland" (2010) having stressed the need for significant investment in mental health services. The unique and varied needs of each prisoner grouping, i.e. women, young men and adolescents require specifically tailored service provision. In particular we recommend an extension to the availability of sessions from psychiatry for work with the young men and women and there is a specific need for child and adolescent provision.

**7.9** While valuable work is undertaken by cognitive behavioural therapists, the absence of clinical psychological services is a distinct gap and we recommend that such a service is developed to add to the multi-disciplinary team.

**7.10** It is the view of the IMB that prison is an inappropriate location for prisoners with severe and enduring mental health issues with continued evidence of prison being used as a default position for individuals for whom community based resources had failed. Consequently staff are being expected to deal with situations that they are simply not qualified to meet. This raises the ongoing issue of the lack of specialised facilities for prisoners with personality disorders, which has been regularly referred to in IMB annual reports and which has not been progressed.

## 8 | Activities

### Education, training and library provision

**8.1** The IMB are aware that predominantly prisoners will have few formal qualifications with proficiency levels in literacy and numeracy being low and many having had negative experiences at school. Indeed many prisoners are operating at literacy level one, which is a reading level at or below that expected of an eleven year old. This places an important emphasis on the role of education and training in prison as a means of broadening the horizons of prisoners and creating a focus for a more positive life on release. However in view of the needs of the target group it will be important to employ approaches which are flexible and creative in identifying and overcoming prisoner obstacles to learning.

**8.2** The continued absence of a strategic approach to education and training is manifested in the fact that education and vocational training have continued to be managed separately at Hydebank Wood for another year. Having initially identified in response to the IMB's report for 2006/07 an intention to appoint a head of learning and skills at Hydebank Wood during 2008, we understand that plans are now in place to confirm that appointment. It is hoped that this appointment in conjunction with a Learning and Skills Strategy to be published for consultation by NIPS will make important inroads in alleviating the seeming disconnect between key aspects of provision and in particular between prisoners employability and resettlement needs.

### Timetabling

**8.3** The timetabling system introduced in January 2009, has continued during the reporting year and is a commendable initiative which seeks to manage prisoner involvement in constructive activity. To support this development progress has been made in the introduction of limited free movement for some of the young men with staff positioned at strategic points outside Beech and Cedar House in an observing role. However there appears to be some continued difficulties in having the timetabling initiative fully embedded within Hydebank Wood regime with continued challenges in the flexibility of timetabling to be responsive to change at short notice, e.g. activities being cancelled and in evidence of staff resistance to the new approach. The continued absence of written procedures to underpin the timetabling arrangements is a gap deflecting from the value of this initiative, which clearly has much potential to positively change how daily activity is organized and associated staffing provisions arranged.

### Performance Monitoring

**8.4** The introduction of performance monitoring meetings each morning is a commendable approach in nurturing an accountability ethos. It is an important statement of visible management and should be used to inspire and motivate staff at all levels to engage wholeheartedly with the demand for effectiveness and efficiency. This approach has the potential to be a valuable management tool to monitor and improve prisoner experiences at Hydebank Wood.

### Vocational Training

**8.5** There are a range of work / industries and vocational training activities available including horticulture, plumbing, joinery, catering, bricklaying, cleaning, painting and decorating. The vocational areas are well equipped and the focus of work is almost exclusively on internal production. IMB members noted during the year that the level of prisoner attendance was

sometimes low and there appears to be a continued inability to infill from those currently on waiting lists for work / training opportunities. In addition the IMB consider that prisoners would benefit from the opportunity to have integrated core skills training in literacy, numeracy and Information Technology (IT) as part of all workshop activity with motivation to complete this work assisted by having tasks which are closely aligned with the vocational aspects of the training.

**8.6** It is important that work placement and training opportunities available are regularly updated to take account of existing gaps in the labour market. This also necessitates fostering good links with local communities. During the year a small number of prisoners nearing the end of their sentence had the opportunity to work off-site and a short-term project whereby prisoners from a workshop undertook a community based assignment is commended. Such opportunities should be maximized in extending the work / training opportunities available to prisoners. The IMB considers that there is a number of currently untapped training areas and recommend that the range is extended to include a more comprehensive menu of work opportunities linked to current labour market needs including support for self employment and entrepreneurship.

**8.7** The work / training opportunities available need to provide prospects to gain accreditation at a range of levels both in relation to enhancing employability and in preventing work become repetitive and lacking in challenge. With a couple of notable exceptions this is not the case and we recommend that there is an increased emphasis on formally accredited provision and the introduction of a system for recording non-accredited skills gained to enhance the progression opportunities for prisoners to employment. The latter is particularly important in meeting the needs of prisoners who are serving short sentences.

#### Working Conditions

**8.8** The current day-time working hours and conditions whereby prisoners return to the residential accommodation in the middle of the day does little to instil a good work ethic nor adequately prepare them for actual work opportunities. Indeed the work undertaken in prison is not treated as work is in society outside. It is not properly paid and not recognized as employment. There would be tremendous benefits to a more radical approach whereby prisoners earned an actual wage and were in a position to contribute to the care of their families and to restorative justice schemes. The situation regarding work opportunities for prisoners in Hydebank Wood is compounded by the fact that the shift patterns of the Prison Service staff who are employed in this area of work exactly mirror that of their colleagues working on the residential houses i.e. from 07.30hrs to 16.15hrs. From an IMB perspective this appears to be another illustration of work practices which do not best match current service need. The IMB again recommend that arrangements are put in place whereby the training and work opportunities available to prisoners are operated in a manner which replicates the working day.

### Charitable Activity

**8.9** Positively staff and prisoners at Hydebank Wood have been involved in a range of projects which have enabled direct contributions to charities and local voluntary organisations. The IMB commend all involved in such efforts in facilitating a positive contribution to the community.

### Learning Difficulties and Learning Disabilities

**8.10** The IMB consider that prisoners with learning difficulties / learning disabilities are a particularly vulnerable group with little in the way of specialised provision to support their needs. Prisoners with learning disabilities / difficulties will be challenged in their ability to cope with the requirements of imprisonment. Some have unidentified needs and the lack of supports will significantly impede their ability to benefit from programmes which has potential to impact on reoffending rates.

### Education

**8.11** The education department needs to respond positively to the negative experiences that many prisoners will have had of formal education. This is evidenced in some of the classes where there is a mix of activities used which reflect prisoners' needs and abilities thereby encouraging their contribution.

**8.12** A range of personal / social development courses are on offer which we commend as providing the potential for increasing prisoners levels of motivation, skills and providing a new outlook. This is well represented in the art and pottery work undertaken at the Centre which as well as extending the skill base of the prisoners involved has been used to improve the physical environment. The official opening of an art gallery in Ash House in September 2009 is an important outcome of such course provision, indicating the success of efforts which seek to develop prisoners' creativity.

**8.13** The extent to which education is influenced by the prison regime remains a point of concern. During the year we noted late starts and early finishes and attendance rates had room for improvement. We were also advised by staff in education that they were continually competing with other elements of regime provision. In the view of the IMB education needs to more fully permeate all aspects of regime provision which requires a significant change in approach in terms of delivery.

**8.14** The below-par levels of literacy and numeracy experienced by a high percentage of the prisoner population must remain a targeted area. Attention to literacy and numeracy needs should be integrated into all aspects of education and training provision and specifically in relation to the more reluctant learners, small group and one-to-one provision should be available.

### Juvenile Provision

**8.15** During the reporting year a timetable of provision for juvenile boys was introduced. While pleased that the distinct needs of these boys are being formally recognised and while accepting that the methods of engagement will need to be varied, the IMB view the package of education and training as weak. In particular a weekly period of just over two hours dedicated to literacy and numeracy provision seems very limited. We recommend that provision is revised to maximize the educational potential of these boys some of whom are still within the age range of compulsory school attendance.

### Distance Learning

**8.16** Distance learning provides a valuable medium in the prison context with a small number of prisoners availing of this option. During the year we became aware of some problems being experienced in the process for prisoner contact with their individual tutors which is predominantly facilitated by telephone. We recommend that all impediments are removed which restrict the progression of student / tutor contact.

**8.17** The IMB have previously advocated the outsourcing of education and vocational training to a local education provider. This was accepted in principle by NIPS in the formal response to the IMB Annual Report 2008-09 insofar as a review of models of provision would be part of the Learning and Skills Strategic Plan 2010-13. We continue to view outsourcing as an opportunity to secure the best provision and to ensure continuity on prisoner's learning journeys beyond release.

### Library

**8.18** The IMB are pleased that during the reporting year prisoner access to the library which is situated in the education area and is available for the whole establishment was extended through increased availability of the professional librarian. The IMB are keen that usage of this very valuable resource is maximized given the potential to address social exclusion issues. The additional availability of mobile library provision in Ash House and in the Special Supervision Unit has been welcome increasing potential for social reading with scope to be extended to other locations. The range of reading resources appears reasonable but additional study desks and laptops for use in support of education is an area requiring development.

### Physical Education

**8.19** The PE department at Hydebank Wood is a well equipped facility having a sports hall, a weight training and fitness suite and five outdoor playing fields, two with an all-weather surface and two with a grass surface and a most recently acquired astro turf pitch. The IMB again commends the PE staff for their commitment to providing meaningful activities which is an area that is commented on positively by prisoners who attend the gym. During the reporting year a 3-day sports event that the GAA Sports Development Officer delivered was organised and such events are to be commended in extending the opportunities available to prisoners. The IMB recommend increased usage of all the outdoor facilities. We also recommend a need for an emphasis on activities which attract wider participation and in particular that meet the needs of the 3 distinct prisoner groups residing at Hydebank Wood.

**8.20** In August 2008 the Governor indicated that he was exploring the feasibility of introducing games officers to supervise outdoor activities. The IMB understand that negotiations are ongoing with the POA regarding the utilization of landing staff when, with the successful implementation of time-tabling, prisoners would be off the landings for substantial periods of the day. The IMB support the proposed versatile usage of staff in a manner that is responsive to current need. However by the end of the reporting year the scheme had not been introduced.

#### Personal / Social Development Schemes

**8.21** The IMB have always advocated prisoner involvement in schemes such as the Duke of Edinburgh which provide an excellent vehicle for personal and social development. We understand that a small number of prisoners are currently involved in the Scheme. While we acknowledge that involvement in the Award raised issues connected to risk, we recommend that usage should be extended more widely given the Award's value in fostering a sense of achievement.

**8.22** The physical education staff at Hydebank Wood are in a prime position to deliver health education programmes, e.g. highlighting the physical damage caused by dietary patterns, smoking and drugs / alcohol abuse. Such programmes would provide excellent opportunity for "joined up" working between different staff groups such as healthcare ultimately be connected 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 a prisoner's individual learning / resettlement programme.

#### Daily Exercise in the Fresh Air

**8.23** The requirement for a minimum of one hour's daily exercise in the fresh air is established by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. During the reporting year IMB members received regular complaints about prisoners' lack of access to fresh air on a daily basis. As previously acknowledged Hydebank Wood has good outdoor facilities which had the addition during the year of a newly acquired astro turf pitch and an extension to the exercise yard at Beech House, but the extent to which these are utilised consistently for exercise purposes has varied.

**8.24** Ash House has a dedicated and appropriately designed outdoor area which is easily assessable during periods of prisoner unlock and appears to be used regularly. There are no existing comparable arrangements for the boys and young men. The IMB hopes that timetabling of each prisoner's day will ensure access to daily fresh air and exercise. It appears to be the case that considerable work is required with both staff and prisoners to reinforce the value of daily exercise. Similarly the mandatory one hour minimum period of exercise in the yard was not always provided for prisoners being held in the special supervision unit. While it is acknowledged that on occasions time in the yard was offered but declined by prisoners, there tends to be a mixed approach from staff as to whether or not they encourage prisoner activity.



**8.25** The incentive to avail of fresh air is perhaps diminished by the sparse nature of exercise yards which offer prisoners nothing to do but stand around. While we appreciate that equipment will be subject to Health and Safety considerations, we recommend greater creativity in the resources available in the dedicated fresh air areas, including in the SSU.

#### Out of Cell Activity Time

**8.26** Time out of cell is crucial to the health and well-being of prisoners. It has particular importance for prisoners who have limited ability to distract themselves when locked in cell, including prisoners who have poor coping skills, are withdrawing from alcohol / drugs and who have limited reading or writing skills. Time out of cell has varied significantly at Hydebank Wood throughout the year, having e.g. been negatively affected during periods of staff “ withdrawal of good will” and when regime was affected by high levels of sick leave. It also appeared that the actual time spent out of cell depended on a number of variables. In particular the experience of prisoners varies considerably depending on whether or not they have an identified work placement. While time-tabling should address this issue in terms of having all prisoners consistently involved in activities during the core day, there were frequent examples during the year when prisoners not attending work or education were locked in their cells for considerable periods during the day. We acknowledge that landing staff do their best to ensure unemployed prisoners do not spend all day in their cells but the extent to which this happens varies between different staff members.

**8.27** While there is some variation in arrangements for young men and women, access to time out of cell is also influenced by the prisoner’s position on PREPS. Prisoners who have not reached “enhanced” status have less out of cell time and while we commend a system which encourages prisoners to engage with the regime it is important that the identified “privileges” associated with each level of PREPS are applied consistently. During the reporting year when evening association was disrupted due to high levels of staff absence, periods of association” earned” by prisoners were lost due to the excessive lockdowns.

**8.28** We understand that a 20 working day period is required to prepare a resettlement plan. This appears to have the effect of causing delays in the identification of work, training and educational opportunities resulting in a lack of activity in the early phase of imprisonment. The availability of a stimulating daily routine is essential to health and well-being 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.

**8.29** During the reporting year senior management issued a reminder to staff regarding the detail of the core day. This was an indication that regular slippage to the regime was a factor. We commend this approach by management and recommend that staff should conform to the lock and unlock timings and the other specified requirements of the core day.

## Chaplains

**8.30** Hydebank Wood continues to have the services of an excellent team of ministers representing five Christian denominations. Other faith traditions are catered for as individual needs arise. As well as responding to the spiritual needs of the women and young men, the team provides a valuable level of care and support, frequenting Hydebank Wood regularly at times not coinciding with services. In December 2009, the annually held carol services was revised to allow the attendance of family members, which was a particularly welcome gesture in advance of Christmas which can be a difficult time for both the prisoner and their family. The chaplaincy team, by virtue of their perceived “neutral” position are valued and respected by all prisoners.

## 9 | Good Order

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### Security

**9.1** During the reporting year there were 2 incidents (12 and 17 July 2009) when young men got on to a roof at Hydebank Wood. In a further incident on 27 July 2009, a young man managed to leave the precincts of the Hydebank Wood estate before being located in the local area. These incidents resulted in a review of the perimeter security and roof top access with remedial actions taken. While the IMB recognize that it can be difficult to legislate for every potential security breach, we recommend that regular reviews of the physical security of the estate are organized.

### Unescorted Movement

**9.2** Progress has been made in year regarding unescorted movement. As previously mentioned women have unescorted movement within Ash House including the gardens and exercise yard as well as to education. In addition supervised prisoner movement of young men from Beech and Cedar Houses at the beginning and end of planned activities has been introduced with staff placed at strategic points on the route. These developments are very welcome and are in keeping with the security category of the Establishment. However there will always be limitations to unescorted movement by virtue of a site which is shared by young men, juvenile boys and women.

### Control and Restraint

**9.3** Control and Restraint continues to be the NIPS approved method of dealing with prisoners in situations of indiscipline and is used in situations involving young men, boys and women. As previously noted in this Report the method is also on occasions used in dealing with situations connected to self-harm. IMB members continue to have particular difficulty with the use of force in dealing with challenging behaviours related to self-harm. The Governor has indicated an intention to introduce therapeutic crisis intervention as a behaviour management technique but usage appears to have been predominantly limited to dealing with juveniles with whom Control and Restraint is also used. We understand that a committee is in place to monitor usage of Control and Restraint which hopefully as well as addressing governance issues, will identify trends and patterns associated with usage, including points of learning in terms of how situations could have been dealt with differently. The IMB recommend that there is a proactive



approach to reducing violence in Hydebank Wood thereby reducing the need to resort to physical restraint of prisoners in the first place. Moreover we recommend that staff are trained in learning to recognize the signs and signals of anxiety or tension that may precede violent outbursts and in the use of de-escalation techniques.

- 9.4** During the year IMB members noted that the sounding of an alarm in any area of the estate results in lockdown of the entire establishment. This causes considerable disruption and is an obvious hindrance of the shared site. The IMB recommend that a system is put in place whereby an alarm going off in the male estate does not impact on the regime for the women and vice-versa.

#### Visit Restrictions

- 9.5** During the year changes to prison rules have transferred decision making on visit restrictions to a local level. While generally any curbing of visits are imposed in connection with attempts to traffic items, there were occasions in year when the restrictions were made in respect of the behaviour of the individual prisoner e.g. in the visits area. Such is the value of family contact to resettlement, the IMB recommend that any visit restrictions is subject to strict monitoring arrangements to ensure proportionality and appropriateness. Furthermore all such restrictions should be regularly reviewed to enable revisions be made in light of changing circumstances / reduced risk.

#### Discipline

- 9.6** At Hydebank Wood adjudications, presided over by a Governor grade staff member are carried out on the women, young men and boys who are considered to have broken prison rules and where the offence is considered to not be sufficiently serious to merit involvement of the police and the courts. A range of sanctions can be imposed with guidance on outcomes contained in a NIPS adjudication manual. Adjudications for the young men and boys take place in a room in the SSU and tend to be formal with the prisoner infrequently referred to by their preferred name. Adjudications for the women occur within Ash House.
- 9.7** As previously acknowledged there is a helpful advocacy service provided to the juvenile boys Hydebank Wood but that service does not extend to any other prisoners. Given their formal and legalistic nature it is difficult to determine how well some adults actually understand proceedings.
- 9.8** While specific data has not been made available, from observations during the reporting year, IMB members noted continued regular use of cellular confinement as an adjudication outcome with frequent instances of the imposition of lengthy periods of loss of association which in real terms is effectively cellular confinement on landings. Frequently both outcomes are imposed simultaneously. The IMB question how productive the disciplinary system is as a number of the same prisoners repeatedly reappear. There remains an absence of planning about how prisoners are reintegrated into normal locations or target setting for addressing challenging behaviour. The IMB recommends that the NIPS should develop an approach in dealing with prisoners at Hydebank Wood who present with challenging and non-conforming behaviours which addresses the issues that result in the necessity of segregation in the first instance.

**9.9** During the reporting year IMB members have questioned the instigation of the adjudication process particularly in situations where the actions under consideration appeared at the less serious end of the scale including e.g. charges arising from a prisoner throwing a piece of tomato and when medication positioned on a prisoner's bed went through the wash with his bed-linen. In response to the IMB the Governor has outlined the "right" of an officer to instigate a charge. The IMB are of the view that a high level of staff discretion presents opportunity for potential bias and prejudice. However the IMB note in the guidance issued to staff in the NIPS Adjudication Manual reference to "the Reporting Officer may consult a more senior officer who may offer guidance on whether to lay a charge and what charge is appropriate." We are not aware of how regularly such guidance is sought or the extent to which the monitoring of the adjudication process involves identification of "charging" patterns including the names of staff regularly instigating the adjudication process. Ideally this would happen with associated feedback to staff about the need for change in individual practice. The IMB recommend that there should be a swift and proportionate response to minor violations which do not require recourse to the formal system.

#### Telephone Contact

**9.10** Telephone contact provides a valuable means of sustaining family connections. The IMB noted that loss of telephone continued to be given as an outcome from adjudications which we view as contrary to the resettlement ethos. The IMB recommends that loss of telephone is discontinued as an adjudication outcome at Hydebank Wood.

#### Minor Reporting

**9.11** 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. This necessitated staff training and a change to Prison Rules. Prison Rules have been amended and minor reporting is an option for dealing with juveniles at Hydebank Wood since 1 February 2010. The IMB are disappointed that by the end of the reporting year the necessary staff training remained outstanding despite a cited commitment to introduce minor reporting having been discussed with members some 18 months previously. The IMB welcome the introduction of minor reporting and recommend that subject to appropriate governance arrangements which provide the safeguard of a formal system, that minor reporting be introduced across the Hydebank estate.

**9.12** The IMB are aware of some instances when staff on specific residential landings introduced localised or collective punishments, e.g. a notice which warned that any prisoner attempting to leave the landing to go to work whilst not having shaved would be "zeroed"; the removal of a microwave because it had not been cleaned properly. The subjective nature of such requirements has the potential to be confusing for prisoners.

#### Special Supervision Unit

**9.13** Special supervision units (SSU) are used to accommodate prisoners subjected to cellular confinement as a disciplinary award or prisoners segregated from their peers under Prison Rule 32. Ash House has ceased to use a designated special supervision unit and women subject to cellular confinement remain in their individual cell. However there is a special

supervision unit for young male prisoners including juveniles which is a stand-alone facility located on the ground floor of Elm House. A recent refurbishment has improved the physical conditions within the SSU but in the view of IMB members it remains a difficult environment for prisoners to spend time in.

- 9.14** The regime in the SSU remains very basic. With the exception of continuing to receive visits, prisoners do not attend any communal activities and the input from e.g. education tends to be exceptional rather than the norm. As previously noted access to the mandatory one hour minimum period of exercise in the fresh air is not always provided for prisoners held in the special supervision unit, sometimes as a result of the individual prisoner having declined the offer. However the lack of any resources in the yard and at times inclement weather do little to increase the attractiveness of this option. As exercise is important to prisoners who are locked up for 23 hours each day, a range of exercise facilities located in the SSU is important.
- 9.15** Since February 2010 prisoners held in the SSU are allowed to have their tobacco in possession subject to risk assessment. As this was a recommendation of the HM Inspectorate of Prisons and Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland during their inspection 5-9 November 2007 and has been advocated by the IMB over several years, we are pleased at this change in routine.

#### Rule 32

- 9.16** During the reporting year in a break from the practice of recent years, there were 4 occasions when prisoners were held on Rule 32. The IMB who have a distinct statutory role in relation to the Rule 32 process experienced difficulty in receiving accurate information on the timing of planned reviews and when advised of meetings, found that the times remained subject to considerable variation. Members also questioned the independence of the review system undertaken on behalf of the Secretary of State, a role which in effect is assumed by a member of NIPS staff located at Headquarters. It is important in view of the seriousness of removing any prisoner from the general prisoner population, that this role is more than perfunctory. The IMB recommend that sufficiently advance notice of Rule 32 reviews is provided to the Secretariat for IMB to facilitate individual IMB member's attendance.

- 9.17** During a routine Rota visit, IMB members found a prisoner held in the SSU, allegedly under Rule 35 but where no paperwork had been instigated to support this process. The IMB recommend that no prisoner is held in the SSU without the necessary supporting documentation being prepared which should be available for examination in the SSU office.

- 9.18** The regular staff who work in the SSU have been noted to employ an approach suggesting their suitability for this role and where their relationship with prisoners is good. It is recognised that this can be a challenging area of work and we recommend that a dedicated staff group is identified and appropriately trained for dealing with prisoners who may be less conforming including some who may present with significant prevailing issues connected to mental ill-health, learning disability and behavioural disorders.

**9.19** In June 2009 the Governor indicated his aspiration that in conjunction with the successful implementation of minor reporting, the SSU be replaced by a high supervision unit operated on increased levels of therapeutic engagement. In the event neither proposals materialised during the reporting year. Given that it is only a small group of prisoners who repeatedly spend time in the SSU, the IMB feel there is considerable scope within current arrangements to make the experience more care than segregation focused. Rather than extending periods of detention in the SSU, the IMB recommends the introduction of a system which enables prisoners to address the issues that contributed to their breach of prison rules in the first instance (Paragraph 10.8). Ideally, a motivational system would be put in place which permits a review of punishments by the adjudicating Governor in response to evidence of change.

#### Incentives and Earned Privileges

**9.20** A service wide revision of the PREPs scheme resulted in the introduction of a PREPs Corporate Framework on 8 July 2009 which had effect in Hydebank Wood and specifically adapted schemes for women and juveniles were subsequently introduced. There is 3 stage system for adult prisoners- basic, standard and enhanced- and a 5-stage system for juveniles, all of which are aimed at encouraging good behaviour through the use of a set of consistent standards of acceptable behaviour.

**9.21** As previously noted, the introduction of the revised PREP's scheme coincided with a time of high levels of staff sick absence resulting in restricted regime, particularly in relation to evening association. This had the effect that some elements of the scheme were not able to be implemented. Regular interruptions to evening association had the unfortunate effect that prisoners who were committed and responsible in their engagement with the requirements of the PREPs system felt unrewarded for their efforts. While the IMB received complaints from all landings, prisoners on enhanced status particularly questioned the value of their efforts when they were regularly locked in their cells for entire evenings.

**9.22** There was evidence of staff rigidity in implementing the revised scheme in the male estate including localised interpretation and implementation of aspects of the scheme e.g. in relation to the periods of association connected with the different regimes. Staff determined specific nights that "earned" association was to be offered and in the event that association was cancelled due to staff shortages, the prisoners lost out. In December 2009 the attention of the IMB was brought to a situation in one of the landings in Beech house where all bar one prisoner were on enhanced status. The remaining prisoner was on basic regime, yet staff chose to operate a basic regime for all the prisoners. This type of staff rigidity is disappointing and is suggestive of an absence of fairness. It highlights the need for staff having a good knowledge of the purpose and extent of all new policies and procedures, the implementation of which must be overseen by managers.

## 10 | Resettlement

### Resettlement Strategy

**10.1** In the view of the IMB sentence and custody planning should drive the prison regime, a point that is implicitly recognised in the NIPS strategy for the resettlement of prisoners. At Hydebank Wood resettlement plans are drawn up based on a needs analysis of the prisoner at the point of entry to prison. However the extent to which there is an explicit connectedness between the different elements of the plan or sequencing of particular interventions is not always clear to IMB members and in particular there is a distinct absence of residential staff's awareness of prisoners resettlement needs. Similarly the IMB have noted instances when prisoners appeared to have little understanding of their resettlement plan or active engagement with the process. As indicated in other parts of this report, given the ongoing absence of a personal officer scheme and consistently proactive interaction between staff and prisoners there are limits to what will be achieved.

**10.2** While recognising that there are challenges with the cluster of needs presented by the varied population at Hydebank Wood, a particular group which the IMB feel should be a greater focus in terms of resettlement are prisoners serving short sentences. It is acknowledged that the timeframes available for working with short term prisoners are challenging but in the view of the IMB there is a need to improve the opportunities to address the offending related needs of this distinct group of prisoners. There is a need for individually targeted plans to encourage prisoners address their behaviours and to make connections with community services to support their development of the skills and abilities to live as law abiding young men, boys and women on release. From their observations the IMB noted many young people return to Hydebank Wood, sometimes very shortly after release and on occasions, with an escalation in offending patterns. The IMB recommends the provision of a range of appropriate assistance to short term prisoners which promotes connections with external agencies for support post release.

### Prisoner Programmes

**10.3** During the year a range of offending behaviour and personal development programmes were delivered including, Goals UK, Drug / Alcohol Awareness, Enhanced Thinking Skills, Parenting, Anger Management, Fire Cadets, Job Track. A small number of women also had the opportunity to link directly with the provisions available within the Inspire project. All interventions, either on an individual or group basis which seek to engage the young men, boys and women in work associated with change and personal development are to be commended. Predominantly programmes are delivered by external agencies with only limited involvement from prison officers. The IMB continue to recommend an increased contribution by main grade officers to both direct programme delivery and in promoting resettlement through active interest in prisoners' individual plans.

**10.4** It is important that investment in programmes is maintained. In the Annual Report 2008-09, reference was made to the success of a newly introduced fire cadet programme which was very popular with the prisoners participating in it. The Governor indicated an intention to extend both the content of the course, including having prison officers trained to deliver, and the frequency with which it took place. During this year the course ran on only one occasion.

### Psychology Services

**10.5** Hydebank Wood has one principal forensic psychologist who is supported by psychology assistants. The key areas covered by this team include resettlement, prisoner programmes, sex offenders, lifers and safer custody.

### Drugs and Alcohol Use

**10.6** As previously reported, transfer of health care provision to the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust includes a contract for the delivery of addiction services. Following a tendering process which was secured by Opportunity Youth, the provision of drug and alcohol programmes is now provided through its ADEPT project. Opportunity Youth have a history of involvement in Hydebank Wood, having developed a relevant skill base in engaging with the range of prisoner groups.

**10.7** Many young men, boys and women entering prison are experiencing challenges in managing their alcohol / drug usage to be within safe levels, with the links between addictions and offending behaviour having been well established. Prison can provide a valuable time for prisoners to begin to address dependency issues. Consequently the IMB recommend the availability of a range of provision including one-to-one and group work opportunities which incorporate age appropriate materials and adequately address the distinct needs of young men, boys and women.

**10.8** Avoiding the entry of drugs into prison is an important feature of security at Hydebank Wood. Passive drug dogs are the main method used to detect visitors bringing drugs into prisons. Such is the effects of drugs in prison that it is important that the most up-to-date screening methods are used to detect drug smuggling. The IMB continue to recommend the use of the most advanced drug detection technology to combat the availability of drugs in prison.

**10.9** The IMB have previously recommended that the random screening for drugs of all personnel entering the prison should be introduced. While the NIPS have indicated that a pilot scheme is to be introduced at Magilligan prison prior to any roll out across the prison estate, the IMB continue to recommend a localised random screening arrangement.

### Offender Management

**10.10** A new integrated Offender Management Unit was officially opened at Hydebank Wood on 22 September 2009 which was followed in November 2009 by the launch of a consultation on the NIPS Offender Management policies. These services are being introduced to meet the requirements of the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2008. 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 sharing of facilities is an arrangement which the IMB view as positive, and is one which should contribute to a "joined up" working approach. This is represented in the fact that each sentenced prisoner coming under the terms of Offender Management, 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. Clearly Offender Management provides good opportunities to challenge



the outlook and behaviours of offenders including dealing with issues connected to risk management, but it touches only a small proportion of the Hydebank Wood population. While numbers will increase, in the reporting year, the number of prisoners fitting the relevant categories was in single figures. It remains the view of the IMB that all sentenced prisoners should have the benefit of similar engagement opportunities in the form of structured sentence planning and we recommend accordingly.

## 11 | Services

### Catering

**11.1** Prisoners require a varied and adequate diet with a need for availability of meals, prepared to relevant food safety and hygiene standards that take account of religious / medical/cultural requirements. During the year we did receive some complaints about the quality, portion size and temperature at which the food is served. However the mechanism in existence whereby prisoners are asked from time-to-time for their views about food preferences is helpful in reducing complaints. Indeed we feel there is further work that could be done by the catering staff to improve the perception of food, including a planned schedule of visits to landings, during e.g. association periods to engage prisoners in discussions about food.

**11.2** For the vast majority of prisoners in Hydebank Wood, food is prepared in a central kitchen and transported on trolleys to the landings in each residential house, where it is served by prisoners who are assigned work in the serveries. The women prisoners who reside in Ash 5 cook their own meals on the landing, using ingredients obtained from the central kitchen. Similarly during the year, the young men who reside in Cedar 5 had some opportunity to engage in meal preparation including the purchase of ingredients, over weekend periods. These are important developments in terms of encouraging normalization and the advancement of self care skills and the IMB would look to see further roll-out of these developments to other landings.

**11.3** A small number of women prisoners assist the catering staff with the food preparation, and generally feedback is positive about this particular work opportunity. Ideally we would like to see these work opportunities also made available to the young men although we are given to understand there are difficulties in having interest from sufficient numbers to make this a reality. The value of the training and work opportunities in the kitchen could be significantly enhanced by the re-establishment of formal assessment to enable prisoner access to nationally recognised qualifications, which previously was a feature.

### Video Links with Courts

**11.4** Good use continues to be made of live video links between Hydebank Wood and courts throughout Northern Ireland. This makes an important contribution to reducing the need for transportation, thereby ensuring cost effectiveness as well as reducing the stress and frustration for defendants that can be a feature of journeys to and from court.

## Tuck Shop

**11.5** The young men and women make regular use of the tuck shop facilities, with a reasonable range of products being available including some that cater for the personal care needs of the foreign national prisoner population. Work has begun on building a new tuck shop facility, which we have been given to understand will hold a wider range of stock as well as providing new opportunities for how purchases are made by prisoners. During the year we received complaints that the price of some items was more expensive than supermarket prices and in particular that the administrative charge associated with purchasing items not held in stock was considerable. While we appreciate that the nature of the purchasing contract will influence prices and does not have the benefit of economies of scale, we consider it important that every effort is made to ensure that prices are reasonable.

## 12 | Board Business

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- 12.1** The IMB meets monthly and operates a rota whereby its members visit the prison on two occasions each week. The minutes of the IMB's monthly meetings are copied to the Director of the NIPS and to the Governor of Hydebank Wood.
- 12.2** 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 are also frequently approached by young men and women as they walk around the prison when issues of concern or more general observations are made. In addition a small number of prisoners make contact via the IMB secretariat. The prisoner applications, i.e. requests, complaints or queries, are written up and faxed on the day received by IMB members to the Governor via the IMB secretariat. A written response is obtained to enable feedback to be given to the prisoner concerned. This was an approach which was introduced in 2006, and which provides a useful tracking mechanism on issues raised. During the reporting period there were some delays experienced in the time taken to receive responses. Additionally at times responses received were not considered to fully address the presenting issues and were defensive in nature.
- 12.3** 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. While recognising the demands on the Governor's time, his attendance at the monthly meetings is particularly valuable. On some occasions during the reporting period, the unavailability of the Governor resulted in the absence of a prompt and timely response / follow-up to issues raised.
- 12.4** Each IMB member is assigned an area or areas of special responsibility and is expected to acquire a degree of in depth knowledge to enable them to take forward issues in their respective fields and to formulate recommendations where appropriate.

- 12.5** The reduced membership of the IMB for Hydebank Wood resulted in members prioritising the use of their time to attendance for Rota visits and monthly meetings. Consequently invitations to Prison related meetings were generally declined. However, in view of the need to retain independence, attendance at such meetings needs to be selective and purely in a monitoring capacity.
- 12.6** 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.
- 12.7** The issue of indemnity for personal injury or loss sustained by members in the course of IMB duties, first raised by the IMB for Hydebank Wood in July 2005 has still not been satisfactorily clarified. Our disappointment at the inordinate time taken to resolve this matter in a manner in keeping with the indemnity afforded to IMB members in England and Wales continues to grow.
- 12.8** As reported in the Annual Report 2008-09, there was a proposal by the Northern Ireland Office to reduce the maximum period that IMB members can serve. A decision has now been taken that members will serve a maximum of nine years, consisting of renewable three years terms. Existing members of the IMB for Hydebank Wood have been on holding extensions to their term of appointments for some years while work was ongoing in developing a Code of Conduct for IMB members. On 16 March 2010 members received letters relating to their tenure from Minister Goggins. In the case of this Board, all bar one member, were either relocated or had not been reappointed. In view of the commitment given to this volunteering role and the patience shown during the excessive delays in recruiting new members, Board members were to say the least, disappointed by their treatment.
- 12.9** With plans in place for the devolution of policing and justice powers to the Northern Ireland Assembly on 12 April 2010, it is anticipated that the IMBs will then report to the Minister for Justice in the devolved justice department.

## Appendix

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### Hydebank Wood Prison And Young Offenders Centre - Membership Of Independent Monitoring Board 2009-10

Mrs Christine McLaughlin	(Chair)
Mr Ronnie Orr	(Vice Chair)
Mr Reid Armstrong	(resigned July 2009)
Mrs Susan Bryson	
Mr James Craig	
Mr Brian Higgins	
Ms Sadie Logan	
Mr Jimmy Mc Clean	
Ms Olwen McConnell	(resigned October 2009)





