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|  | Independent Monitoring Board Annual Report 2013 – 14 Young Offenders Centre & Hydebank Wood Prison |

**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 (IMB) Young Offenders Centre & Hydebank Wood Prison (YOC & HBW) and were appointed by the Justice Minister under Section 3 of the Treatment of Offenders Act (NI) 1968 and under the Prison Act (NI) 1953.

**The Board is required to:**

* Visit HBW 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;
* Exercise certain powers that are given under the Prison and Young Offender 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;
* 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.

**UK NATIONAL PREVENTATIVE MECHANISM**

The Independent Monitoring Board is part of the United Kingdom National Preventative Mechanism (UK NPM) as required by the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT).

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**CHAIRPERSON’S INTRODUCTION**

I am pleased to present the annual report of the Independent Monitoring Board (The Board/IMB) for the Young Offenders Centre (YOC) and Hydebank Wood Prison (HBW) for the period 1 April 2013 - 31 March 2014.

The Board is made up from volunteers from all walks of life, who visit the prison and prisoners on a regular basis, to monitor the treatment and well-being of prisoners and the conditions in which they are being held. The Board also keeps a close eye on the cleanliness and adequacy of the prison premises. We also try to ensure that prisoners are encouraged to make purposeful use of their time i.e. attending education classes, have use of the library, look after the gardens, work in the kitchen – any area of work which can lead to accreditation, and various other activities.

I am most grateful to my colleagues on the Board for their unwavering support and their unstinting work and commitment to the IMB. It is very time-consuming but is also very rewarding. I am very grateful to them all for the support they have shown me in my role as Chair over the past year. Thank you one and all.

I would like to take this opportunity to offer a big thank you to the many HBW staff members for their co-operation and willingness to assist, and spend time with the Board members as they carry out their duties.

I wish to thank the Governors for their courtesy and co-operation, both with their presence at our monthly Board meetings and when we carry out our duties around the prison.

Finally, we are as always, very grateful to the staff in the IMB Secretariat for their never-ending support. They are always more than willing to help and give us as much assistance and expertise as they can. Without their support, the role of Chair would be a very difficult one to fulfil.

**Sadie Logan**

**Chairperson**

**OVERVIEW OF ESTABLISHMENT**

*(Note for the reader: male young offenders are housed in the YOC and all females are housed in Ash House however, the whole complex is usually referred to as Hydebank Wood and abbreviated to HBW.)*

1. Young Offenders Centre & Hydebank Wood Prison (HBW) is a unique establishment in that it is effectively two different detention centres on one site. It accommodates young male offenders (17-21 years) both sentenced and remand, and serving four years or less. It is possible that some males may remain there until the day before his 24th birthday. The YOC stopped housing juveniles in 2012. They are now housed at Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre, which is more suited and appropriate environment for younger inmates.
2. Since 2004, Ash House in HBW has also been the women’s prison for Northern Ireland. All female prisoners - remand and sentenced - serving a wide range of sentences of up to and including life, are held in this unit. The widely held view is that a designated women’s prison will be made available in the future. There is absolutely no doubt that the women lose out on activities and have more restricted movement, because they are sharing a site with the young offenders.
3. The majority of prisoners are accommodated in five residential houses; Beech, Cedar, Elm, Willow and Ash. There is a separate Care and Supervision Unit (CSU) and a Healthcare Centre incorporating the prison hospital. To date, the Healthcare Unit has lost some of its space, as it is now designated to accommodate separated female prisoners. IMB have an excellent working relationship with the Healthcare Unit staff, who will advise us on any issue regarding prisoners.
4. Healthcare for all prisoners is provided through the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (SEHSCT/ The Trust). The drug and alcohol service for prisoners, who are in need of consultation, is provided by Ad:ept (Alcohol and Drugs, Empowering People through Therapy) in partnership with the Trust and the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS). Education and training is provided by local services. It is the intention that Belfast Metropolitan College (BMC) will come into HBW to deliver education. HBW have great aspirations that it will become a secure college. There is a lot of excitement around this development.
5. Various charitable and voluntary organisations maintain a visible presence on the site. Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO) provide excellent guidance through the Jobtrack scheme for prisoners trying to get employment upon discharge from prison. CRUSE Bereavement Care provide invaluable support in dealing with bereavement issues. Barnados support prisoners with family issues. Housing Rights Services staff brief prisoners on the complexities of obtaining housing, housing benefits and associated grants. NIACRO also run the visitor’s centre where they provide tea, coffee and sandwiches to the visitors. They also provide a fantastic children’s play area, under the supervision of NIACRO staff. This service is invaluable and the staff show fantastic dedication to this.
6. Spiritual and religious matters are the remit of the prison Chaplaincy Team who try to facilitate the practice of all faiths within the prison community and provide support to prisoners and their families.

**SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Board recommends that:

**1. ACCOMMODATION**

1. A stand-alone women’s prison should be treated as a matter of urgency. (Paragraph 1.6)
2. The level and quality of ventilation remains an issue and should be improved. (Paragraph 1.7)
3. Prisoners should make as much use as possible of the HBW grounds either in the form of physical outdoor activities or to relax during periods of down time. (Paragraph 1.4 & 1.7)
4. The number and condition of available dryers should be reviewed in line with estimated usage. (Paragraph 1.10)
5. All toilets within individual cells should be fitted with lids. (Paragraph 1.12)
6. Doubling up in cells should be avoided when possible. (Paragraph 1.13)
7. Proposals to construct a new Category D Unit suitable for females are followed up. (Paragraph 1.14)

**2. ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

1. A similar scheme to the ‘drug-free’ landing in Quoile House in Maghaberry is proposed in HBW. (Paragraph 2.2)

**3. CATERING AND KITCHEN**

1. A chiller be provided for the kitchen. (Paragraph 3.7)
2. The staff rest room and toilet facilities should be refurbished and upgraded as soon as possible. (Paragraph 3.8)

**4. CHAPLAINCY**

No recommendations.

**5. EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

1. More classes should be offered to prisoners and the delivery of classes from the BMC be expedited. (Paragraph 5.1 and 5.2)

**6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

No recommendations

**7. HEALTHCARE AND MENTAL HEALTH**

1. Steps are taken to make nursing conditions within the prison environment more attractive to aid staff retention. (Paragraph 7.2)
2. A purpose built unit is commissioned and provided for inmates with serious personality disorders and severe mental health issues. (Paragraph 7.5)

**8. LIBRARY**

No recommendations.

**9. RECEPTION AND INDUCTION**

1. Induction staff should receive mental health training to assist them to deal with female inmates suffering from a mental health condition. (Paragraph 9.2)

**10. RESETTLEMENT**

1. Weekly staff and prisoner meetings resume in order to discuss training options (Paragraph 10.3)
2. The Personal Officer Scheme be reinstated and made available to all inmates. (Paragraph 10.3)

**11. SAFER CUSTODY**

1. The volume of lockdowns should be kept to a minimum. (11.3)
2. The staff of the proposed secure college are offered maximum support. (11.4)
3. The role of Suicide/Self Harm Awareness Coordinator is made a full time position. (11.5)
4. Weekly safer custody meetings take place and more consideration is given to releasing staff in order to attend said meetings. (11.6)
5. Additional staff are trained to deal with bullying and anti-social behavior. (11.7)
6. Staff should have updated training in Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) and Autism Awareness. (11.9)
7. Steps are taken to implement a prisoner peer support/buddy scheme. (11.10)
8. Ad:ept and Psychology Services continue in their role and provide programmes in an attempt to provide alternatives to persistent drug use by way of intervention and support. (11.11)

**12.**  **SEGREGRATION - CARE AND SUPERVISION UNIT (CSU)**

1. That minor incidents are settled on the landing and fewer awards of cellular confinement are handed out. (12.1)

**13. SPORT AND RECREATION**

No recommendations

**14. TUCK SHOP**

No recommendations

**15. VISITS**

1. Every effort is made to ensure that prisoners arrive at the Visitors Centre at the required time thus ensuring they have the whole visiting period allocated to them. (Paragraph 15.2)
2. Modern fit for purpose new fixed tables and chairs are installed throughout visits area of HBW. (Paragraph 15.3)

**Section 1 – ACCOMMODATION**

**Young Offenders Centre (Male)**

* 1. The design of the accommodation cells in HBW is of the standard Home Office type and as such, provides as functional an environment as is realistically possible in the circumstances. Each landing has a common room for inmate association purposes, comprising of a small kitchen area, small multi gym, a pool table and wall mounted TV. In addition, there are facilities for inmates to use the two or three showers available in each wing.
	2. All communal areas in the wings encountered by the Board members on rota visits are generally clean. Inmates are often seen using cleaning materials around their wings usually at the behest of staff to give inmates an activity to undertake.

1.3 Refurbishment work had just started in Elm and Willow blocks near the end of this reporting period. This includes freshly painted cells, landings and upgrading of ablutions etc. The semi-rural location of the grounds themselves are attractive and well maintained and the

Board again commends both staff and inmates alike in maintaining them.

1.4 In relation to the above, the Board whilst fully aware of manning levels and other operational requirements, recommend that as much optimum benefit and use as is possible is available to inmates to enjoy/utilise these grounds. This should be in the form of physical outdoor activities or - weather permitting - simply relaxing during periods of down time. This can result in tangible benefits to someone's mental well-being.

***Recommendation: Prisoners should be encouraged to take advantage of the prison grounds as much as possible whether in the form of physical outdoor activities or relaxing during periods of down time.***

1.5 A new innovation introduced towards the end of this reporting period has been the opening of the grill separating the committal and induction accommodation wings in HBW. Inmates of both wings now sit together for meals and are grouped together in the same area for association purposes. Any concept which has the potential to reduce inmate tensions and encourage more interaction between prisoners is to be welcomed and the Board commends the staff and prisoners for embracing this concept so positively. During future visits, Board members will be listening to feedback as to the success of this process.

**Hydebank Wood (Female)**

* 1. The Board remain firmly of the view that a stand-alone woman’s prison is required as a matter of urgency. It is inappropriate that women should be located within a prison originally designed for male young offenders. The Board note that plans are in place to provide a purpose built facility for female prisoners in the future. In the interim, every effort should be made to eradicate present deficiencies within the female accommodation in view of the significant time lapse before a new facility will be available.

***Recommendation: A stand-alone, purpose built women’s prison should be considered as a matter of urgency.***

1.7 The Board notes that the level of ventilation remains an issue within the main female accommodation. Frequent unpredictable lock-downs - often arising from staffing issues - exacerbate the situation when female prisoners are forced to spend long periods within cells. A two pronged solution is recommended; action should be taken to improve the ventilation within Ash House and more access should be provided for female prisoners to outside exercise and meaningful activities. This would be in addition to the gardening work within the prison site to which the female prisoners currently contribute hugely. The separated female dissident inmates - at time of writing, there are three - have their own accommodation, broadly similar to the mainstream facilities.

***Recommendations: The level and quality of ventilation should be improved upon as quickly as possible.***

***Female prisoners should be encouraged to take advantage of the prison grounds as much as possible whether in the form of physical outdoor activities or relaxing during periods of down time.***

1.8 During the course of this reporting period, the enhanced female inmates in Ash 5 had ‘lobbied’ the IMB to try to gain support to allow access to an enclosed grass area at the end of their wing corridor, again for recreational purposes. This wing could become particularly claustrophobic and very hot on warm days. Thanks to the efforts of one of our colleagues in particular, the Board is glad to report that this has now been implemented and wishes to put on record its thanks to the Governor and staff involved in this. The Board is delighted with the continuing facilities within Ash 5 in which enhanced female prisoners have more freedom, privileges and privacy.

1.9 The Board note that mother and baby facilities are available on the A4 landing. From visiting this unit, members of the Board are aware that access is strictly monitored in compliance with good practice within safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults requirements. The Board notes that the mother and baby located within the unit during the year appeared to be content and thriving and in receipt of sympathetic care from officers and healthcare staff. The Board emphasises the need to keep conditions within this unit under review - in particular ensuring that staff engaged within the unit are appropriately trained in emergency infant resuscitation and safeguarding policy and procedure. The Board strongly supports the maintenance of facilities where mothers and children can have private family visits.

1.10 In regard to any housekeeping matters, the Board note that there were ongoing problems in the provision and maintenance of tumble dryers available for use by the female prisoners during the year. This resulted in damp clothes being placed on radiators to dry which was not conducive to assisting the prisoners to remain in clean dry clothes.

***Recommendation: The number and condition of available tumble dryers should be reviewed in line with estimated usage.***

1.11 The Board appreciates the current efforts to refurbish communal facilities within Ash House nevertheless the structural work to date has been disruptive and noisy to many living and working within this location. Should future work be envisaged then the Board would hope that plans should be in put place to keep disruption within acceptable limits. This is especially relevant given the fragile mental health of a number of female prisoners.

1.12 Overall, shower and bathroom facilities appeared to be clean and adequate within Ash House although privacy conditions might be improved even within the ongoing constraints relating to prisoner safety. Within individual cells the prisoner experience would be enhanced simply by ensuring that all toilets are fitted with lids.

***Recommendation: All toilets within individual cells should be fitted with lids.***

1.13 Given the rising female population in particular, accommodation can be at a premium but the Board recommends that any doubling up in cells should be avoided unless it is risk assessed to be suitable, or agreed to voluntarily.

***Recommendation: Doubling up in cells should be avoided when possible.***

1.14 On a strategic level, the Board understands there are proposals to construct a Category D, six-bed unit for suitable female inmates on the edge of the grounds within the HBW estate. This will be to facilitate ‘out for work’ arrangements prior to their release. This concept is to be welcomed as it can only but enhance successful resettlement plans and free up even if only some extra capacity in the female prison which has seen an increase in the female inmate population. The Board therefore recommends such a concept is expedited as soon as possible.

***Recommendation: Proposals to construct a new Category D unit for suitable females are taken forward.***

**Section 2 – ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

2.1 Substance abuse is a key factor when a crime is committed and sadly continues to be a problem during a prisoner’s incarceration. The work of Ad:ept and the Addictions Team is essential, productive and valued, but it is a challenge and requires a resolute multi-disciplinary response. There is a lot of time spent focusing on dealing with the consequences of substance abuse and not necessarily enough on prevention. The Board is aware that because of staffing and budgetary constraints the agencies are struggling to cope with reactive work, at the cost of preventative work.

2.2 The HBW Board notes the constructive work being done in Quoile House in Maghaberry Prison and would recommend a similar scheme be trialled in HBW. The aspiration of prisons having drug-free landings has sometimes been regarded as ingenuous but it does appear to have its positive consequences. It can give prisoners an opportunity to experience a life without drugs whilst inside prison and consequently can offer them an insight into the kind of enhanced family life possible following release if they remain ‘clean’. Any initiatives where avoidance of substance misuse is achievable and offers a prisoner an opportunity to tackle offending and reoffending behaviour must be encouraged.

***Recommendation: A similar scheme to the ‘drug-free’ landing in Quoile House in Maghaberry is proposed in HBW.***

**Section 3 - CATERING AND KITCHENS**

3.1. The kitchen supplies a multi-choice three week menu, which contains three choices at lunchtime and four at tea-time.  All meals contain a vegetarian and healthy option.  After a recent project by the Trust on HBW’s menus, it was discovered that on average each daily menu contains four of the five recommended fruit and veg a day.  Menus have since been changed to contain the five a day fruit and vegetable recommendations provided the correct option is chosen by the inmate.

* 1. Over the last nine months, catering staff have put ten inmates through National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 1 food preparation and cookery.  All passed and left HBW with recognised qualifications.  Catering staff have also trained approximately twenty inmates, both male and female through a basic food hygiene course.  This course is aimed at the servery and kitchen orderlies.  This course is also available to staff.  At present, the catering team have four NVQ assessors trained to put inmates through to NVQ level 2.

3.3 Until a year ago, the attendance by inmates was poor due to the lack of interest. This has now changed and the kitchen seems to be a popular place to work and the catering team have on average 7 inmates a day out-of-cell and taking part in catering activities.  This change has come about due to the fact that inmates are offered more varied work and complete at NVQ level.

* 1. Each inmate is interviewed by the catering senior officer for employment and takes into consideration personal, daily reports, self-harm, history and past catering experience.  All inmates at present working in the kitchen are female and remain in the kitchen over the ‘noon lock-up’ and cook their own food.

3.5 At the time of writing this report, staffing levels for the kitchen are two senior officers, six catering officers and two kitchen porters.

3.6   Over the last number of months, the catering team have started to produce their own pies etc.  The result is more vegetable intake and fresher produce.  The kitchen would use approximately 50% frozen veg and 50% fresh vegetables. At present the food budget is £19 pounds per week per inmate (£2.75 per day) for three meals per day. The Board feels the kitchen staff offer varied, well-balanced menus and would note that there are very few complaints regarding the quality of food.

* 1. The kitchen catering senior officer has requested a new blast chiller.  The present one is not operational and any visit by Environmental Health could have an adverse report.

***Recommendation: A chiller should be provided for the kitchen in line with standard Health & Safety requirements.***

* 1. Catering male and female staff are still sharing changing rooms and toilets, showers etc.  The Board feels these needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.  Also, furniture for staff and in inmate’s rest room is very shabby and the Board feel these needs to be replaced.

***Recommendation: The staff restroom and toilet facilities should be refurbished and upgraded as soon as possible.***

**Section 4 - CHAPLAINCY**

4.1 The prison Chaplains continue to enjoy a positive relationship with staff and prisoners alike. They are involved in all aspects of prison life and provide spiritual help and support in any way they can. They do this without a second thought and in a very unselfish manner. Although the team is made up of a number of Christian denominations, they do call on representatives of other faiths to meet the spiritual needs of prisoners of other religions. The Board commends the Chaplains for the vital role they play in ministering to prisoners and the commitment they give to all those detained in HBW. The assistance they give them in coping with their confinement is second to none.

4.2 It is commendable that Chaplains are giving assistance to inmates with the transition from imprisonment to becoming resettled in the community. This helps to enhance the family and community ties which the prisoner will become involved and the area in which they will hopefully resettle.

**Section 5 – EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

5.1 The Board continues to be concerned at the low number of classes being offered to prisoners at the moment. We understand recommendations for a secure college have been discussed with representatives of the BMC during the last year but there seems little prospect of early delivery.

5.2 The Board recognises the careful thought which needs to be given to the type of class offered, but considers these should include the essential skills of literacy, numeracy and IT. These could operate alongside practical skills such as hairdressing, cookery, building, and carpentry etc., all leading to NVQ qualifications which are regarded as essential by many employers.

***Recommendation: More classes should be offered to prisoners and the delivery of classes for prisoners from the BMC should be expedited.***

5.3 A high number of prisoners lack literacy and/or numeracy skills and the Board would welcome hearing how such prisoners might be encouraged to participate in education. The success or otherwise of this type of initiative in other prisons would be worth exploring. It is the Board’s view that the importance of education cannot be underestimated. Time spent constructively away from the landings can only be beneficial to prisoners, staff, discipline and morale.

5.4 The Board has been impressed by the librarian’s work encouraging prisoners not only to engage in the activity of reading, but to think about content and characters and discuss these with others.

**Section 6 - EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

6.1 HBW has an Equality and Diversity policy which requires that all prisoners are treated equally. HBW prides itself in equality of opportunity and preventing and eliminating discrimination on the grounds of sex, marital status, age, disability, religious belief, political opinion, dependents, race and sexual orientation. This policy sets out what we are required to do by law under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act. Section 75 means that we need to promote equality of opportunity between:

* Persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial groups, age, marital status and sexual orientation;
* Men and women generally;
* Persons with a disability and persons without; and
* Persons with dependents and persons without.

6.2 The Equality and Diversity Action Plan is overseen by the Equality and Diversity Committee, which meet on a monthly basis. This meeting has representatives from most departments in HBW. There are also a few inmate representatives who attend on a regular basis e.g. Irish Travelers, Foreign National Prisoners (FNPs), young males and female inmates, who let the Board know if there are indeed issues on the landings and if the Board is getting it right or not. This Committee is overseen by the Chairperson of IMB HBW and a representative from The Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJINI). Our main policy is to help inmates/staff and various other people we work with, comply with the law, and follow the same guidance to make sure equal treatment and opportunities are afforded to all, regardless of differences. We promote and value different cultures and backgrounds. This policy also applies to NIPS Staff and our Service Providers

**Section 7 - HEALTHCARE AND MENTAL HEALTH**

7.1 Over the last two years, the day to day running of health provision within the prisons has been the responsibility of the Trust and over this period the Board has monitored how this has worked. There has been an undoubted improvement of working relationships at a senior level due to the formation of the Prison Healthcare Operational Forum and the relationship at landing level has gradually improved. The ‘patient confidentiality’ restriction on information sharing was initially used to both the prison staff and occasionally Board members, but it is indeed good to report that greater openness has been established and is very welcome.

7.2 The Trust provides a range of healthcare services of which primary care services are the most prominent. However, the service operates on an emergency or crisis referral basis and for most of the year; it is the Board’s opinion that staffing levels were too low to allow any proactive work such as health improvement initiatives. Healthcare managers described their situation as ‘fire-fighting’. Gradually the posts were filled but with others resigning, the healthcare staff were still unable to carry out the full range of services. It is obvious that staff retention is a problem and the Board is disappointed with the continuing shortage of staff.

***Recommendation: The Board recommends that steps are taken to make nursing in the prison environment more attractive to aid staff retention.***

7.3 In the past, by far the largest number of issues raised by prisoners in relation to healthcare, relate to medication – the primary issue being the unacceptable length of time taken to access prescribed medication when they are initially committed to prison. It now does appear that positive steps have been taken to ensure that a system is put in place and the problem has been resolved. The Board notes and welcomes the initiative used to overcome this problem.

7.4 Despite the above, the Board fully support the principle that medication should only be given when needed and that dependency or the phenomenon of hoarding or bullying other inmate to use or trade their medication is quite rightly being tackled by healthcare staff.

7.5 Having two mental health nurses has been an improvement but the balance of mental health demand requires more investment. The Board remains convinced that prison is not appropriate for certain inmates, particularly those who display persistent and severe mental health issues. The absence of specific facilities for prisoners with serious personality disorders leaves the courts with no alternative but to lock them in an institution with staff that is not sufficiently qualified to look after them.

***Recommendation: The Board once again recommends that a purpose built Healthcare Unit is commissioned and provided.***

**It should be noted that the Trust has seen this report and challenged some of the content however, the Board is content that for the year being reported on, its findings are accurate.**

**Section 8 – LIBRARY**

8.1 Once again, the Board is pleased to report that the library continues to be well used. It contains an excellent selection of books, newspapers and magazines and they are available in a variety of languages that cater for all HBW prisoners. The environment is pleasant and the prisoners appear to enjoy their time there. Again, the Board commends the librarian and the staff who provide this valuable resource. The mobile library regularly visits Ash House and the CSU and is well used. During the reporting year, both the Lord Mayor of Belfast and the current Poet Laureate visited HBW Library – the Poet Laureate presented the inmates with a book containing some of her poems which was gratefully accepted. Both visitors were very well received.

**Section 9 - RECEPTION AND INDUCTION**

9.1 The reception area is where prisoners get their first impression of the prison. It is spacious, bright, clean and well maintained. Those arriving in prison for the first time may be nervous and apprehensive and the Board commends the staff for the calm and professional manner in which they handle new arrivals.

9.2 Induction continues to be a comprehensive structured and well-organised process in which prisoners are given information relating to work, education, remedial care, courses and programmes. As anxiety is a common feature of new inmates, the induction staff should receive further training in mental health awareness issues, to enable them to spot the signs and be able to respond appropriately if they have concerns.

***Recommendation: Induction staff should receive mental health training to assist them to deal with inmates suffering from such conditions.***

9.3 The Board would encourage work to continue regarding implementing an improved formal structure around the elements of induction already available to each female prisoner.

**Section 10 – RESETTLEMENT**

10.1 Repeat offending - particularly among young offenders - is persistently high and the job of preparing these offenders for resettlement - offender management - lies with those members of staff who specialise in that area. Those who are tasked to the job of resettlement do very good work, particularly with so many complex cases and those convicted of Public Protection offences. It is the view of the Board that the latter take up the majority of the focus and time, and as a result, the level of welfare work/tackling offending with many inmates is comparatively light.

10.2 It is logical that if inmates have employment on release from prison, there is less chance of them re-offending and therefore leading a more crime-free life. There is a shortage of training in this area, so this prospect is weakened. Prisoners taking part in learning and redeveloping skills can eventually earn the privilege of working outside the prison. If this opportunity was promoted as a realistic aspiration, it could prompt inmates to improve their behaviour and attitudes accordingly.

10.3 The Board supports the emphasis on offender management and the plan for some of this to be partly based on the landings. Participation in learning and developing skills can eventually lead prisoners to earn the privilege of working outside the prison. The Board is disappointed that, despite being recommended in previous years, regular meetings between landing staff and inmates to discuss opportunities for training and skills still has not happened. It has also often recommended the reintroduction of the Personal Officer scheme but this has not happened either. The Board again recommends the implementation of both these initiative.

***Recommendations: The Board again recommends the resumption of weekly staff and prisoner meetings to discuss training options the reintroduction of the Personal Officer Scheme.***

**Section 11 - SAFER CUSTODY**

11.1 The reporting period for this Annual Report covers the first full year of the implementation of the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Manslaughter Act 2007 to ‘custody providers’ (into force September 2012). The purpose of this legislation was to act as a permanent incentive to improve the manner in which custody providers manage and care for the many vulnerable inmates placed into their care. It should therefore reinforce the fact that Safer Custody is an area of vital importance and is the responsibility of everyone in the prison.

11.2 The Board is aware of countless occasions when the professional actions of staff - often in a quiet unobtrusive manner - have undoubtedly saved the lives of inmates engaged in a self-harm or suicide attempt. The Board wishes that due credit is recorded to thank those staff members.

11.3 Over this reporting period, there was an increase in the number of Supporting Prisoners at Risk (SPARs) booklets opened compared to the previous reporting period – for both males and females. In reality, there could be many reasons for this - for example, an increase in vulnerable prisoners sent to HBW; certain inmates ‘playing the game’ in an expectation of additional attention, and newer staff members erring on the side of caution in reporting concerns. That being said, it should incentivise the prison to minimise where possible in areas under its direct control, the opportunities whereby staff have to open a SPAR. The NIPS should be cognisant of the number of lockdowns which - depending on the inmate - can only limit their opportunity to interact with others during the daytime and potentially foster self-harm or suicidal thoughts.

***Recommendation: The Board recommends that where possible the volume of lockdowns be kept to the minimum.***

11.4 Additionally the Board welcomes the proposed concept of a secure college at HBW, the purpose of which is to create a more relevant and contemporary range of useful activities to inmates in addition to those already carried out. In the area of safer custody, this could contribute to a more positive mental outlook on their individual circumstances. This will be in partnership with a number of educational providers. The Board is aware that many staff feel remote in practice from this concept, and accordingly recommend that staff in the safer custody area are facilitated and offered maximum support for this initiative thus ensuring enhanced awareness of future developments and proper staff participation.

***Recommendation: Staff in the safer custody area are facilitated and offered maximum support for this initiative.***

11.5 With the safer custody area being intrinsic to the legislation mentioned at the outset, the Board takes the opportunity to recommend that the role of the Suicide/Self Harm Awareness Coordinator is made a full time position. This would ensure that the position receives appropriate administrative support and - more importantly - allow this role to be carried out effectively and efficiently.

***Recommendation: The role of the Suicide/Self Harm Awareness Coordinator is made a full time position.***

11.6 Linked to the above point and again, due to operational constraints, it is not always possible to facilitate a weekly safer custody meeting. These meetings prove to be an ideal platform for direct and immediate information sharing amongst service providers with the IMB attending in an observer capacity. This is an ideal forum within a multi-disciplinary approach to discuss an inmate giving specific contemporary cause for concern.

***Recommendation: The Board recommends that positive assistance is given to facilitate releasing relevant staff members in order that the weekly safer custody meetings can continue.***

11.7 As a consequence of the two categories of inmate held at HBW, the potential for bullying is high. The Board is aware that a small group of staff are trained in Restorative Justice Practices and when possible, they provide a brief explanation of this process during induction. The number of staff so trained has declined - for various reasons - and the Board agree more staff should be offered this training. The potential tangible benefits of an informal conference approach could prove useful in lessening tensions in the areas of bullying/anti-social behaviour. It could also result in less need to instigate formal adjudications thus reducing the number of such hearings. With regards to the anti-bullying strategy at HBW, there is currently one for the males and one for the females. The Board understands that suggestions about having a single strategy are currently being examined. This might reinforce a more standard approach similar to the one currently in operation at Maghaberry. This involves a two stage process where initially an individual’s behaviour is monitored without disclosure of an allegation and if this raises concerns, the individual is challenged about their observed behaviours. Any process which could reduce bullying and gain the trust of inmates so affected is to be welcomed.

***Recommendation: The Board recommends that more staff are trained in Restorative Justice Practices which could help reduce bullying-type behaviours.***

11.8 SPAR reviews on the current status of an inmate displaying signs of suicidal behaviour take place regularly, with representatives of a range of relevant agencies in attendance. When Board members are on a rota visit, they can attend in an observer role. From the experience of Board members, these reviews are well run and there is evidence that steps are taken to safeguard an inmate. Board members can submit comments to these SPAR booklets. It has been proposed that the SPAR booklet itself could be improved in so far as its lay out could include a brief history of an inmate’s previous SPAR history, if applicable. Any innovation which enhances information sharing is welcomed. It had been highlighted previously that the standard of the entries in the SPAR booklets could be improved, however the Board understands that the general standard has improved with an ongoing audit process on completed books.

11.9 With the reported increase in SPARs opened over this reporting period, the Board would suggest that staff are offered refresher training. Some staff have not had any training updates for some time now. It would also be beneficial if there was an opportunity for staff to be trained in Autism Awareness. The Board understands that the Department of Justice - in partnership with the National Autistic Society - has brought forward a guide for criminal justice practitioners. This could aid staff awareness in explaining the reaction of an inmate to a situation for example self-harming.

***Recommendation: The Board recommends that all relevant staff, whilst aware of operational constraints, should receive relevant training for job-specific situations i.e. Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) and Autism Awareness.***

11.10 There has been much academic research suggesting that an effective method for reducing incidents of suicide or self-harming is the implementation of an inmate peer support/buddy scheme. As fellow inmates they are often the first to recognise signs of distress and the fact inmates may confide more readily amongst themselves could improve the prison experience for them. The Board understands that such an initiative at HBW is under review at present. The Board recognises that ‘volunteers’ engaged in such a role could be pressurised to deliver drugs etc., however the Board recommends that further work between relevant agencies is undertaken in order that a scheme in some form could be created.

***Recommendation: The Board recommends that steps are taken to establish the implementation of an inmate peer support/buddy scheme.***

11.11 The Board is only too aware of the ongoing issue of drugs at Hydebank, a situation that is occurring in many other prisons. The Board is aware of an evaluation of the recent Drugs Awareness Programme at Maghaberry Prison (October to December 2013) involving the PSNI. Within the auspices of the safer custody sphere and given any future positive feedback on this, the Board would be interested to see if a similar initiative, if warranted, was feasible at this location. Running alongside this, the Board welcomes the revised programme of self-help/cognitive awareness programmes currently available for example through NIPS Psychology Services and Ad:ept and advocates their continuation in an attempt to provide alternatives to persistent drug use by way of intervention and support.

***Recommendation: Ad:ept and Psychology Services continue in their role and provide programmes in an attempt to provide alternatives to persistent drug use by way of intervention and support.***

**Section 12 - SEGREGATION - CARE AND SUPERVISION UNIT (CSU)**

12.1 The CSU houses a number of categories of inmates:

* those detained under Rule 32 who have offended against good order and discipline;
* those undergoing cellular confinement;
* those awaiting adjudication;
* violent inmates and inmates who are accommodated there for their own protection.

The Board is encouraged to note that the unit is used less for punishment and more for safeguarding. It is hoped that in the future, minor offences could be dealt with on the landings, rather than in CSU. This will free up staff escorting prisoners to and from the CSU. (When these members of staff leave the landings, it can leave a colleague on their own; this subsequently results in a lock-up being enforced.)The Board would favour alternative restrictions being awarded to prisoners rather than cellular confinement.

***Recommendation: The Board recommends that minor incidents are settled on the landings and that fewer awards of cellular confinement are handed out.***

12.2 Board members monitor and sign off all Rule 32s and the subsequent paperwork to ensure that procedures have been followed and that the application of the rule has been reasonable in the prevailing circumstances. The Board has been impressed with the care and respect shown by officers to inmates faced with Rule 32 charges. Adjudications are also held in CSU and are regularly monitored by the IMB. The Board is satisfied that due process is observed. It is our opinion that inmates are treated fairly and records are up-to-date.

12.3 Many inmates in the CSU have personality disorders and behavioural difficulties and can be quite difficult to manage. The unit is well run and the Board commends the staff for their care and patience.

**Section 13 – SPORT AND RECREATION**

13.1 Sports facilities at Hydebank are excellent however Board members seldom observe use being made of the outside football pitches.

Prisoners should be given every encouragement to participate in sport both as an outlet for energy and, if linked to appropriate educational qualifications, as a springboard to employment in the fast growing leisure sector.

**Section 14 - TUCK SHOP**

14.1 The tuck shop continues to be a valuable resource used by all prisoners. It provides a wide range of products and caters for the needs of all the population.

14.2 The price of some items can still give cause for complaint. The Board understands that purchasing contracts can influence the cost of items and encourages every effort to be made to ensure that prices remain competitive.

**Section 15 - VISITS**

15.1 The case for maintaining family ties in terms of the support it offers to prisoners reintegrating into society has been well made. The services provided by both prison staff and NIACRO in the Visitors Centre promote these positive links is highly commended by the Board.

15.2 The system for booking visits works efficiently and visits are generally well organised but the Board still hears complaints that prisoners are sometimes late for visits. In the past this was because of the lack of staff to escort them to the Visitors Centre. The introduction of the unescorted/free flow for the majority of the prisoners has certainly improved the punctuality of prisoners arriving at the required time. There are still times when because of difficulties in house that a prisoner is delayed leaving and therefore arrives late. As visits are such an important aspect of life for prisoners, it is crucial that they can take full advantage of the allocated time. When a prisoner does not get a full visit, it can cause resentment and frustration and aggressive feelings towards the staff. While the Board recognises that there have been staffing issues, an ongoing review and restructuring of prison staff has not helped the situation.

***Recommendation: The Board continues to recommend that every effort is made to ensure that prisoners arrive at the Visitors Centre at the required time to ensure that they have the whole period allocated to them.***

15.3 The Visits area does provide a pleasant environment and visits are conducted in as relaxed manner as is possible in a secure setting. The fixed table and chairs which are sited throughout the Visitors Centre where the prisoners sit with their relatives are outdated. A request was made during this last year reporting period for the fixed table and chairs to be replaced by ones of a modern concept design, more user friendly to the visitors and prisoners.

***Recommendation: The Board continues to recommend that modern fit for purpose new fixed table and chairs are installed throughout the centre.***

15.4 The separated women prisoners have the use of the Visitors Centre boardroom for their visits. The arrangement works well and the Board recognises that a delicate and difficult situation is handled in a manner to ensure that harmony is maintained in the Visitors Centre.

15.5 Last year the Board was disappointed to report that instead of widening the scheme to include suitable young offenders to have private visits with their children in the onsite mobile home that presently enabled women to have time with their children on private visits, the scheme was cancelled by the NIPS. Fortunately, a new scheme has now been introduced and a specific room has been allocated which enables suitable inmates, young offenders and women prisoners, to have time with their children on a private visit. The room is well equipped and ideally situated away from the sight line of the main visitors’ room. The Board acknowledges the initiative and hard work that has gone into the scheme to make it a success.

**HYDEBANK WOOD & YOUNG OFFENDERS CENTRE**

**BOARD MEMBERS 2013-2014**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Ms Sadie Logan** | **Chair – No change** |
|  | **Mr Brian Doherty** | **Transferred from Magilligan: January 2014** |
|  | **Mr Clive Smyth** | **Appointed: May 2013** |
|  | **Mr Dennis Constable** | **Transferred from Maghaberry: April 2013** |
|  | **Mr Gary Lyons** | **Appointed: September 2013** |
|  | **Ms Hazel Patton** | **Appointed: July 2013** |
|  | **Mrs Ann Adams** | **Appointed: June 2013** |
|  | *Mrs Frances Symington* | *Vice Chair - Tenure completed March 2014* |
|  | *Ms Christine Stoll* | *Re-appointed from Sabbatical but transferred to Magilligan April 2013* |
|  | *Mr Ronnie Orr* | *Passed away: June 2013* |
|  | *Mr Michael Love* | *Resigned: May 2013* |
|  | *Mr Ben Mallon*  | *Appointed: June 2013**Sabbatical: February – December 2014*  |
|  | *Mrs Laura Brennen* | *Appointed: July 2013**Sabbatical January – December 2014* |