



**INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD**

**ANNUAL REPORT 2014 – 15**

**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 and Hydebank Wood Prison (YOC & HBW) 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 to the Prison and Young Offenders 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, with the exception of medical records.

## **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).

## YOC & HBW - LIST OF CONTENTS

	Page
Chairperson's Introduction	4
Overview of Establishment	5
Summary of Recommendations	7
1. Accommodation	10
2. Alcohol and Substance Abuse	13
3. Catering and Kitchens	14
4. Chaplaincy	15
5. Education and Training	16
6. Equality and Diversity	16
7. Healthcare and Mental Health	17
8. Library	19
9. Reception and Induction	19
10. Resettlement	20
11. Safer Custody	21
12. Segregation – Care and Supervision Unit (CSU)	24
13. Sport and Recreation	25
14. Tuck Shop	25
15. Visits	26
Board Members 2014-15	28

## **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 2014 - 31 March 2015.

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.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "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 and Hydebank Wood Prison (HBW) is in itself a unique establishment in that it is effectively two separate prisons on one site. It accommodates young male offenders (aged 17 - 21 years) both remand and sentenced and serving four years or less. On occasion some males may remain there to serve out his sentence 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 prisoners.

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 housed in this unit. The long awaited highly held view is that a designated, stand-alone prison will be made available in the future. There is no doubt that the women lose out on activities and have more restricted movement, because they are sharing a site with young offenders. Presently, there is work under way building a new unit for females. This will house females that are nearing the end of their sentence, incorporated with those who are working out.

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. Healthcare has lost quite a lot of its space, as part of it is now designated to accommodate separated female prisoners. IMB have an excellent relationship with Healthcare Unit staff, who will gladly advise us on any issue regarding prisoners' well-being.

4. Healthcare for all prisoners is provided by the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (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).

5. Education and training is provided by local services, although Belfast Metropolitan College (BMC) has begun to deliver teaching services to Hydebank Wood. As of April 2015, HBW will be known as Hydebank Secure College. There is a lot of excitement around this evolving development.

6. Various charitable and voluntary organisations maintain a visible presence on the site.

- NIACRO provide excellent guidance through the Jobtrack scheme for prisoners trying to access employment upon release from prison. NIACRO also run the visitor's centre where they provide refreshments to visitors and prisoners alike. They also provide an excellent play area for children visiting which is supervised by NIACRO staff. This service is invaluable and NIACRO staff and volunteers are a very dedicated team.
- CRUSE Bereavement Care provides support in dealing with bereavement issues.
- Barnardo's support prisoners with family issues.
- Housing Rights Services staff brief prisoners on the complexities of obtaining housing, housing benefits and associated grants.

7. Spiritual and religious matters are the remit of the prison Chaplaincy Team who work very hard to facilitate the practice of all faiths within the prison community, and provide excellent and never-ending support to prisoners and their families alike. This is a very important service which is highly praised by all, i.e.: prison staff, voluntary services, IMB and prisoners alike.

## **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Board recommends that:**

### **1. ACCOMMODATION**

- a) Prisoners should continue to be encouraged to take advantage of the HBW grounds, either in the form of physical outdoor activities or to relax during periods of down time. (Paragraph 1.5)
- b) Doubling up in cells should continue to be used only when necessary. (Paragraph 1.6)
- c) The setting up of a semi-vulnerable unit is considered. (Paragraph 1.7)
- d) A stand-alone, purpose built women's prison should proceed as a matter of urgency. (Paragraph 1.10)
- e) The level and quality of ventilation should be kept under close review to ensure that it is of an acceptable standard. (Paragraph 1.11)
- f) The quality and level of maintenance of the communal bathrooms should be reviewed to take account of the above matters. (Paragraph 1.12)
- g) All toilets within individual cells should be fitted with lids. (Paragraph 1.13)
- h) The use of the ground floor by female prisoners of Ash Houses should continue to be maximized and every effort made to maintain the splendid standard of presentation. (Paragraph 1.14)

### **2. ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

- a) Consideration is given to creating a 'drug-free' landing, similar to the landing in Quoile House in Maghaberry Prison. (Paragraph 2.2)

### **3. CATERING AND KITCHEN**

- a) Healthy eating is encouraged in its totality throughout the centre. (Paragraph 3.1)
- b) An industrial dishwasher is purchased and installed in the kitchen for the use of catering staff. (Paragraph 3.7)

### **4. CHAPLAINCY**

No recommendations.

## **5. EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

- a) Consideration is given to the IMB's concern at the reduction of teaching hours for lecturers. (Paragraph 5.1)
- b) Education classes continue leaving landings empty, thus freeing up prison staff. (Paragraph 5.3)

## **6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

No recommendations.

## **7. HEALTHCARE AND MENTAL HELATH**

- a) Steps are taken to make nursing in the prison environment more attractive to aid staff retention. (Paragraph 7.2)
- b) A purpose built Healthcare Unit is commissioned and provided. (Paragraph 7.6)

## **8. LIBRARY**

No recommendations

## **9. RECEPTION AND INDUCTION**

- a) Induction staff receive regular up-to-date training, to enable them to spot issues or signs that may give them concern, i.e. mental health awareness and other health problems. (Paragraph 9.3)
- b) Induction staff should be available in sufficient numbers and equipped with appropriate training especially in mental health issues to deliver the induction process to female prisoners within an acceptable time frame. (Paragraph 9.6)

## **10. RESETTLEMENT**

- a) Regular meetings between inmates and landing staff which are most advantageous for prisoners. (Paragraph 10.3)
- b) The re-introduction of the Personal Officer Scheme. (Paragraph 10.3)

## **11. SAFER CUSTODY**

- a) Lockdowns are kept to a minimum. (Paragraph 11.2)
- b) The role of Suicide/Self-Harm Co-coordinator is made a full-time position and not part-time. (Paragraph 11.3)
- c) Weekly safer custody meetings continue to take place and where possible, staff with

an interest are able to attend. (Paragraph 11.4)

- d) All relevant staff - whilst aware of operational constraints - should receive updated ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training and if required, suitable training in NIPS recording practices are given to these staff. (Paragraph 11.5)
- e) Where required, suitable training in NIPS practices is given to those supervising prisoners during constructive activity hours. (Paragraph 11.6)
- f) Enhanced training is offered to new recruits and existing staff on dealing with life prisoners, female prisoners and young males. (Paragraph 11.7)
- g) Reinvigorate the number of staff trained on Restorative Justice Practices. (Paragraph 11.9)
- h) The implementation of a prisoner peer support listening scheme. (Paragraph 11.10)

## **12. SEGREGATION - CARE AND SUPERVISION UNIT (CSU)**

- a) That minor incidents be settled on the landings (minor reporting) therefore resulting in less lock-downs. (Paragraph 12.1)

## **13. SPORT AND RECREATION**

No recommendations.

## **14. TUCK SHOP**

- a) Prices are kept as competitive as possible and continued efforts are made to cater for the requirements of a diverse male and female population. (Paragraph 14.2)

## **15. VISITS**

- a) Every effort is made to ensure that prisoners arrive at the Visitors Centre at the required time, thus ensuring they can avail of the maximum visiting period allocated to them. (Paragraph 15.2 )
- b) Modern, fit for purpose new fixed table and chairs are installed throughout the Visitors Centre. (Paragraph 15.3)

## Section 1 – ACCOMMODATION

### Young Offenders Centre (Male)

*At the outset, it should be noted that during the course of this reporting period, capital work is on-going at HBW to lessen the former "security" emphasis of previous years and to make the overall environment less austere and more welcoming. This was a recommendation of the Prison Review Team in 2011. For example there is work continuing in re-designing the main front staff/visitor entrance to the College.*

1.1 The design of the individual cells themselves within HBW for the YOC (now renamed as a Secure College from April 2015) is of the standard Home Office type and as such provides as functional an environment as possible in the circumstances. There are 4 residential blocks potentially utilised by the younger males, namely Beech, Cedar, Elm and Willow and these are then subdivided up into wings e.g. Beech has four wings, Cedar has five wings, Elm has four wings and Willow has three wings. The operational capacity is 201. (Over the course of the year refurbishment work took place in Elm and Willow blocks which included freshly painted cells and landings and upgrading of ablutions etc.)

1.2 Each wing has an association room for recreational purposes comprising a small kitchen/servery area, a small multi-gym with basic exercise equipment, a pool table and a small wall mounted TV. In addition there are facilities for inmates to use the two or three showers available.

1.3 A newer innovation took place in W2 wing in February 2015 which opened specifically to accommodate those who were considered disruptive and not engaging in activities. Again, the decor was refurbished and brightened up to include a newly refurbished association room, newer seating arrangements and paintings on the main corridor walls. Also individual cells were repainted and rewired. The landing was opened to assist those who were struggling to achieve their full potential.

1.4 The communal areas in the wings - throughout the establishment - encountered by Board members on rota visits are generally clean. Inmates are often seen using cleaning materials around their wings. This is usually at the behest of staff to give inmates an activity to undertake.

1.5 The semi-rural location of the grounds is attractive and well maintained and the Board again commends both staff and inmates alike in maintaining them. The Board, whilst fully aware of manning levels and other operational requirements, recommends that prisoners are allowed to make as much use of these grounds as possible. These grounds should be available for prisoners to enjoy to the optimum benefit and use for physical outdoor activities such as playing football or jogging etc. Again, weather permitting, the grounds could be used for simply relaxing during periods of down time. All behaviours of this kind can result in tangible benefits to someone's mental well-being. The Board notes that the Director General herself has acknowledged the importance of utilising the grounds as an asset, even more so when considering the age group in question.

**Recommendation: Prisoners should be encouraged to take advantage of the HBW grounds, either in the form of physical activities or to relax during periods of down time.**

1.6 The average male population in HBW has over the course of this reporting period decreased by 26%; in March 2014 the population was 164 whereas in March 2015, it had dropped to 120. Essentially then the YOC has a surplus of accommodation overall and the Board welcomes the fact that currently there is no operational requirement for doubling up in cells.

**Recommendation: Doubling up in cells should be avoided except in extreme circumstances.**

1.7 The Board understands that the C2 vulnerable accommodation wing can often be oversubscribed and pressure put onto its capacity of 20 cells. This is due to high levels of inmates in this age group showing signs of mental health issues, ADHD, learning difficulties and/or because of the nature of their offence, they consequently require separation from the mainstream population. The Board understands that there have been suggestions to create - for want of a better description - a 'semi vulnerable' unit to deal with such individuals. Whilst aware of the practical difficulties involved, specifically the issue of suitable location, the Board recommends that such an undertaking is proactively further investigated. Bearing in mind the current surplus of capacity, tangible benefits could include a reduction in bullying and of suicide or self-harming attempts amongst these vulnerable individuals. Any additional accommodation created could enable them to more fully engage in the range of positive activities being created within the new College ethos at HBW.

**Recommendation: The setting up of a ‘semi vulnerable’ unit is considered.**

1.8 Since the last report, the committal/induction wing has been relocated to C1 wing. The Board understands that the former exercise room within this new location is being redecorated to facilitate a revamped introduction to the committal/induction process for inmates and intentionally making it more user friendly than before. Additionally, it can be used for more general recreational purposes for such new arrivals into HBW. The Board welcomes this innovation and indeed the commitment of the staff based there in suggesting it.

1.9 A seemingly recurrent issue facing Board members whilst on rota visits, especially in the warmer months, is the problem of sufficient ventilation in the cells. The result is that they are very stuffy and uncomfortable at night which can result in a lack of sleep and dehydration and the resulting short temper and irritability of individuals is carried over into the next day. Whilst not offering any obvious solutions as such, the Board hopes that some sort of remedial action is undertaken to regularise the ventilation of cells. Alternatively, simple wing-based solutions are encouraged; for example a supply of battery operated fans from the tuck shop or flasks of ice cold water for keeping in cells overnight.

#### **Ash House - Female Accommodation**

1.10 The Board note that plans are in place for the construction of a stand-alone woman’s prison. The Board remain firmly of the view that this development should proceed as a matter of urgency. In the interim, every effort should be made to eradicate present deficiencies within the female accommodation in view of the significant lapse of time before a new facility will be available.

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

1.11 In particular the Board note that the level of ventilation remains an issue within the female accommodation. Although the number of lock-downs may have declined in 2014/2015 together with more freedom of movement for prisoners there are still times when female prisoners are confined to their cells for significant periods.

**Recommendation: The level and quality of ventilation should be kept under close review to ensure that it is of an acceptable standard.**

1.12 Overall shower and bathroom facilities appeared to be clean and adequate within Ash House. Nevertheless, the Board note that a protective side of bath has been missing from the facilities in Ash 1 for a considerable time. There are different levels of flooring within the communal bathrooms, and it would be helpful if the edges were highlighted with painted lines to minimize the risk of trips and falls. In addition mops and buckets used by prisoners are stored within the communal bathroom areas. It may be more appropriate that these should be stored elsewhere.

**Recommendation: The quality and level of maintenance of the communal bathrooms should be reviewed to take account of the above matters.**

1.13 The Board note that within individual cells the prisoner experience would be enhanced by ensuring that all toilets are fitted with lids. Although this is an entitlement for each prisoner, female prisoners generally appear to be unaware that each can request this basic addition.

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

1.14 The Board is delighted with the refurbishment work which has been completed on the ground floor of Ash House. It has transformed the area to a welcoming, cheerful and useful space for female prisoners where skills and education may be enhanced.

**Recommendation: Use of the ground floor by female prisoners of Ash Houses should continue to be maximized and every effort made to maintain the splendid standard of presentation.**

## **Section 2 – ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

2.1 Substance abuse is a key factor when crime is committed and sadly continues to be a problem during a prisoner's incarceration. HBW recognises this, and has in conjunction with the Trust developed a new policy and action plan for the Management of Substance Misuse. The purpose of the plan is as follows:

- Hydebank Wood Mission Statement;
- Vision;
- Purpose;
- Local Aims; and
- Guiding Principles.

2.2 A new Drugs Strategy Committee has been formed, involving members from all Northern Ireland Prisons; the key objectives are as follows:

- To identify those prisoners who have drug and alcohol problems at the earliest opportunity;
- To offer care, support and appropriate treatment to prisoners suffering from addictions; and
- To prevent further misuse of prescription medication.

The Board recommends that consideration is given to a 'drug-free' landing, similar to the landing in Quoile house in Maghaberry Prison.

**Recommendation: Consideration is given to creating a 'drug-free' landing, similar to the landing in Quoile House in Maghaberry Prison.**

2.3 The presence of drugs in the prison undermines the authority of staff and disrupts prison regime. The objectives in maintaining control are:

- Prevent drugs entering the prison;
- To find and confiscate those drugs that avoid detection;
- To discipline those prisoners found in possession of drugs; and
- Address drug-seeking behaviour and offer appropriate support.

2.4 Overall, the prison has a duty of care to offer access to a standard of healthcare, which is comparable to that provided by healthcare to the outside population. The Board feels that HBW is fulfilling this obligation.

### **Section 3 - CATERING AND KITCHENS**

3.1. As this report is being written, Hydebank Catering Team is working on renewing menus to introduce fresh produce and a more varied healthy menu choice.

**Recommendation: Healthy eating is promoted and encouraged throughout HBW.**

3.2 The Catering Team continue to assess inmates and put them through NVQ Level I in Food Preparation. One member of Hydebank staff has started to put a Maghaberry kitchen porter through to complete her NVQ so that Maghaberry can use her skills as a cook. Catering staff continue to put inmates through Food Hygiene Course; this course has been updated to a more advanced level.

3.3 Inmates are now timetabled to attend kitchen through the activities manager and timetable. At present this seems to be working well with an average of 5 inmates per day attending the kitchen.

3.4 Staffing levels for the kitchen are at present one Senior Officer, six Catering Officers and two kitchen porters.

3.5 Since last year's report was written, a new blast chiller for the kitchen has been purchased and is operational. Work continues on the new rest staff rooms and changing facilities and is due for completion in the near future.

3.6 Catering staff have made a total success of 'Sip & Go' coffee house and have held various functions there. These include the senior citizens' pension lunch club, inmates and family Sunday dinner day, other prison service visits, charity days and staff lunches. Sip & Go is also open every Friday morning for staff breakfasts serviced by inmates under the supervision of Catering Staff. The catering staff in HBW also provided a hot finger buffet for 700 people in November 2014 at PSC Millisle for the Prison Service Remembrance Day Parade. This was the first time another station has completed this and it was considered a success for all involved.

3.7 Catering staff have approached the IMB and catering Senior Officer about the purchase of an industrial dishwasher for the kitchen; at present all pots, pans dishes etc., are washed manually. The board recommends this request be granted as it would save time and effort and also, dishes getting washed at a higher temperature would be more beneficial for Health and Safety reasons.

**Recommendation: That an industrial dishwasher is purchased for the use of catering staff.**

#### **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. Although the team is made up of a number of Christian denominations, when needed, they call on representatives of any other faith 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 paramount.

4.2 It is commendable that Chaplains continue to give 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 is concerned at the reduction of teaching hours for lecturers, and the likely impact on their personal financial situation. A few of these have been in 'situ' long before Belfast Met took over the education programme.

**Recommendation: Consideration is given to the IMB's concern at the reduction of teaching hours for lecturers.**

5.2 The Board will be interested to see how the recently introduced College environment develops over the next few months. A lot of time has been spent in drawing up timetables, both for classes and individually for students. At time of writing this report, it is good to see and report 'empty landings'. Hopefully by this time next year students will be achieving qualifications in Essential Skills - Literacy, Numeracy and IT, also practical skills such as Hairdressing, Cookery, Building, Carpentry, etc. leading to NVQ qualifications.

**Recommendation: Education classes continue leaving landings empty thus freeing up prison staff.**

5.3 In the Board's view the importance of education cannot be underestimated. Time spent constructively away from the landings can only be beneficial to students, staff, discipline and morale.

## **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 and 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 meets on a monthly basis. This meeting has representatives from most departments in HBW. There are also a few prisoner representatives who attend e.g. Irish Travellers, Foreign National Prisoners (FNP's), young male and female prisoners who inform the Board of any issues on the landings and if the Board is getting it right or not. This Committee is attended by a member of the IMB and a representative from the Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJINI). Our main policy is to help staff/prisoners 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 service providers alike. Prisoner representatives are comfortable with relaying messages from their perspective landings from prisoners to this Committee. Any problems raised are looked into and resolved in the best possible way. It is seen as a gateway for prisoners, and their views are treated with respect and confidentiality.

## **Section 7 - HEALTHCARE AND MENTAL HEALTH**

7.1 Over the last three 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.

7.2. The Trust provides a range of healthcare services, of which primary care services are the most prominent. It is recognised that providing a healthcare service is a complex agenda and the utilisation of all available resources are monitored and reviewed. 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 at times limited. This was due to

resignations, staff sickness and other factors which often did not allow for any proactive work, such as health improvement initiatives to be undertaken. The healthcare managers have described their situation as 'fire-fighting'. Gradually the posts were strengthened but with others resigning, the healthcare staff still found it difficult to carry out the full range of services. It is obvious that staff retention is an ongoing problem and the Board is disappointed with the continuous difficulties in maintaining the appropriate nursing staff levels.

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

7.3 In attempting to provide a contribution to safer prisons, a decision was made by the Trust to prioritise supervised swallows; however, this is proving to be a most resource-consuming exercise with the inappropriate placement of healthcare personnel, and impacts on the ability to develop the health initiatives.

7.4 In the past, the largest number of issues raised by prisoners in relation to healthcare, related 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.

7.5 The Board fully supports the principle that medication should only be given when needed, and that dependency or the phenomenon of hoarding or bullying other inmates to use or trade their medication, is quite rightly being addressed by healthcare staff.

7.6 Having two mental health nurses has been a welcome 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 Board are well aware that there is a provision to transfer prisoners with acute mental illness to external hospitals if the needs of the prisoner cannot be met in the prison. Unfortunately, there is often an unacceptable time delay in the prisoner transferring to such a unit. The absence of specific facilities for prisoners with serious personality disorders not embraced by the Mental Health Act,

leaves the courts with no alternative but to lock them in a prison, manned by prison staff who have not been trained and are therefore not qualified to look after them.

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

## **Section 8 – LIBRARY**

8.1 As reported last year the Librarian continues to do sterling work and plans to take reading onto the landings.

## **Section 9 - RECEPTION AND INDUCTION**

9.1 The reception area is where the prisoners get their first impressions of the prison. The reception area itself is spacious and holding cells are bright, clean and well-maintained. Those who are arriving in prison for the first time may be nervous or apprehensive and the Board commends the staff for the professional manner in which they handle new committals. On average, 30 new male committals enter HBW per month.

9.2 Induction now takes place in Cedar 1 and prisoners are given information about prison life, prison rules, education, pastoral care, visits, home leave, tuck shop etc. There are an increasing number of foreign inmates for whom English is a foreign language, they are catered for by various methods, including interpreters and language line. Overall, the Board commends the good work and commitment of the Induction Unit Staff.

9.3 As anxiety is common feature amongst new committals, the Board recommends that the induction staff receive up-to-date training on a regular basis, to enable them to spot signs or issues that may give them concern, i.e. mental health awareness and other health issues.

**Recommendation: Induction staff receive up-to-date training on a regular basis, to enable them to spot issues that may give them concern.**

### **Reception and induction**

#### **Ash House**

9.4 The female prisoner receives her first impression and experience of prison life within the reception area. The Board is pleased that this area 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 the reception procedure is delivered.

9.5 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. Anxiety is a common feature suffered by new prisoners, and the induction staff should continue to receive training in mental health awareness issues especially pertinent to the induction of new female prisoners, who may have major issues relating to the welfare of their children and other dependents.

9.6 Since the rationalisation of some staff numbers available on the landings during 2014/2015 the Board note that at times there may be a shortage of staff to deliver the induction process in a timely fashion.

**Recommendation: Induction staff should be available in sufficient numbers and equipped with appropriate training especially in mental health issues to deliver the induction process to female prisoners within an acceptable time frame.**

## **Section 10 – RESETTLEMENT**

10.1 Re-offending amongst young offenders is particularly high. Within the prison there are specialised staff who are trained in this area, and who are tasked with the job of resettling offenders. These staff do an excellent job with a lot of offenders with many complex issues, and those convicted of Public Protection Offences.

10.2 It is a known fact that if prisoners have employment to go to at the end of their prison sentence, they can go on to lead a life of crime-free existence. Prisoners that have taken part in re-developing skills can eventually earn the privilege of working outside the confines of the prison at various venues. This excellent work is continuing and being promoted as a realistic aspiration. This may then prompt prisoners to evaluate their behaviour and attitudes accordingly.

10.3 The Board supports the emphasis on Personal Development. Prisoners are all given the opportunity to avail of this. The Board has recommended for years that regular meetings between staff and prisoners are vital, but to date this is not been happening on the landings. This of course, could be due to the reduction of staff. The Board has also

recommended the re-introduction of the Personal Officer Scheme, but to date, this has not happened. The Board recommends the return of both these initiatives.

**Recommendation: Regular meetings between inmates and landing staff.**

**Recommendation: The reintroduction of the Personal Officer Scheme.**

## **Section 11 - SAFER CUSTODY**

*From the outset, the Board is aware of countless occasions when the professional actions of staff (often in a quiet and unobtrusive manner) have undoubtedly saved the lives of individuals engaged in a self-harm or suicide attempt. The Board wishes that due credit is recorded to thank those staff members.*

11.1 During this reporting period, the Board welcomed the fact that there was a decrease in the number of SPAR's (Supporting Prisoners at Risk) booklets opened on individuals for both the females and young males. The main reasons for opening a SPAR on someone is by them exhibiting signs of low mood, and any thoughts of self-harm or suicidal behaviour. Some reasons offered for this latter 'upsurge' in young male SPARs reported, was the fact that there was an increase in legal highs circulating, later medical times for prescription drugs and the removal of televisions from those on a basic regime.

11.2 The Board understands that overall the number of lockdowns has reduced over this reporting period, although staff availability and sickness levels can impact on this. The volume of lockdowns is now a Key Performance Indicator for the NIPS estate. Depending on the situation and the vulnerability of an individual, lockdowns only increase the sense of isolation, and limit the opportunity to interact with others during association periods thus potentially fostering self-harm or suicidal moods. Whilst welcoming the current improvement the Board recommends that where possible, the requirement to initiate a lockdown is kept to the minimum and only when all other contingencies have been exhausted.

**Recommendation: Where possible, lockdowns are kept to a minimum.**

11.3 With the area of Safer Custody being intrinsic to Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights, the Board suggested last year that the role of the Suicide/Self-harm Co-ordinator (currently a Senior Officer grade) be made a full time role to permit sufficient time to carry out this role. However, due to affordability issues in the

current climate, this is unlikely, although the Board understands that another officer can assist when required. The role of offering administrative support to the safer custody function is undertaken full-time by an experienced officer. The Board would like to take the opportunity of thanking these staff members for their assistance to the IMB over the course of the year and to recognise their commitment to this important role.

**Recommendation: The role of the Suicide/Self-harm Co-ordinator is made a full time role.**

11.4 Each month there is a monthly safer custody meeting involving a whole range of members which the IMB are invited to attend. Essentially the subject matter covers recent statistical reports, SPAR audit reports, bullying and drugs etc. Additionally there are weekly meetings which centre on updates on individuals currently giving cause for concern and remedial action if appropriate. Unfortunately due to staff shortages, Healthcare often has difficulty in attending these meetings however at a local level, working relationships are good. The Board would again like to commend the Hydebank safer custody team for instigating and overseeing these meetings as they are an extremely valuable means to exchange ideas on a multi-disciplinary level.

**Recommendation: Weekly safer custody meetings continue to take place and where possible, staff with an interest are able to attend.**

11.5 Another point worth noting is the potential for refresher training for staff. The Board recommends that all relevant staff, whilst aware of operational constraints should receive updated Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST). Some staff have not had an update for a few years now. It would also be beneficial if there was the possibility of staff training in Autism Awareness. The Board understands that the Department of Justice has in partnership with the National Autism Society, brought forward a guide for criminal justice practitioners. This could aid staff awareness in explaining the actions of someone diagnosed with this condition, within the unique characteristics of the two custodial groupings at Hydebank. Again, where feasible the Board recommends that such an opportunity is pursued.

11.6 Linked to this point on training, the Board understands there is potential for conversational checks being missed on those on a SPAR, due to more time being spent off landings with non-HBW staff. This raises the possibility of Belfast Met personnel and learning and skills staff (for example) generally having more responsibility for the safety

of prisoners for the duration of their activities. (It is understood this appears to be less of an issue with the females as the gardening and crafts staff are more familiar with them.) The Board recommends that where required, suitable training in NIPS recording practices are given to these staff bearing in mind the possibility of a regular turnover of such staff.

**Recommendation: Where required, suitable training in NIPS practices is given to those supervising prisoners during constructive activity hours.**

11.7 Whilst not specifically relating to Hydebank, the Board understands that the Prison Training and Development Unit are planning to offer enhanced training to new recruits and existing staff on dealing with life prisoners, female prisoners and young males. Currently training is limited on these groups; rather a broader type of training is offered dealing with prisoners in general. From a safer custody perspective this can only but expand staffs awareness of specific issues impacting on young males and females and so therefore recommends that such a training package is carried forward.

**Recommendation: Enhanced training is offered to new recruits and existing staff on dealing with life prisoners, female prisoners and young males.**

11.8 The Board understands that it is hoped to see the start of a new anti-bullying process in HBW around March time, again bearing in mind the two categories of prisoner kept here. Essentially the new process sees a prisoner on prisoner fight or assault being treated as a case of bullying and unlike the previous policy, the victim does not have to name anyone, staff can carry it forward if there is suspicion of bullying taking place. If deemed necessary, anyone suspected of bullying or being bullied may be placed on a monitoring booklet. The alleged perpetrator will be informed if they are being placed on a monitoring process which may last for up to 28 days. Unlike the SPAR booklet the anti-bullying booklet will be kept away from view.

11.9 Linked to the above initiative, the Board is aware of the plan to reinvigorate the number of staff trained on Restorative Justice Practices. At this point it is still unclear as to what training is required or what funding is available. The Board recommends such training is carried forward as a contribution to such individuals having the consequences of their actions/reactions explained to them in a rational manner. Also the possible reduced requirement to instigate a more formal adjudications process thus reduces the number of such hearings.

**Recommendation: Reinvigorate the number of staff trained on Restorative Justice Practices.**

11.10 There is much academic research suggesting that an effective method for reducing incidents of suicide or self-harming is the implementation of a peer support/listener scheme. As fellow inmates, they are often the first to recognise signs of distress and the fact that those in custodial settings confide more readily amongst themselves, could alleviate any isolation they may feel. Such an initiative across Hydebank has largely stalled for a while now not least due to a lack of interest and unsuitability of those who did show an interest, but the Governor informs the Board that it is planned to reintroduce such a scheme. The Board recommends that such a scheme should be encouraged and hopes it can become more embedded at Hydebank.

**Recommendation: The implementation of a peer support/listener scheme.**

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

12.1 The Care and Supervision Unit (CSU) houses a number of categories of inmates:

- those who are detained under Rule 32 who have offended against good order and discipline;
- those undergoing cellular confinement;
- those awaiting adjudication;
- inmates who have violent tendencies; and
- inmates who are accommodated there either for their own protection and/or the protection of other inmates.

The Board had hoped that in the future, minor offences could be dealt with on the landings as opposed to CSU. This would certainly free up escort staff who bring the inmates to the CSU. When these staff have to leave the landings and if there are only one staff member, the rest of the inmates have to be locked-down.

**Recommendation: The Board recommends that minor incidents be settled on the landings (minor reporting) therefore there would be less lock-downs.**

12.2 Board members monitor and review Rule 32's and the subsequent paperwork to ensure that proper procedures have been followed and that the Rule applied 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. It is important that whenever possible, IMB should attend case conferences and extensions to Rule 32.

The prisoner can request that an IMB member is in attendance that is his /her right.

12.3 Many inmates in the CSU have behavioral difficulties and can be quite difficult to manage. The Board feels that the Unit is well managed and they highly commend the staff for their care and patience, in sometimes very difficult circumstances.

12.4 Adjudications are held in CSU and are regularly monitored. The Board has to satisfy itself that due process is observed. To date, it is our opinion that inmates are treated fairly and records are up-to-date. The CSU is one area of the prison that Board members have to visit on a regular basis.

### **Section 13 – SPORT AND RECREATION**

13.1 Board members are encouraged to see more use being made of the outdoor sports and recreation facilities, including gardening and care of the animals. Hopefully this will help get rid of some of the tensions which can exist on the landings.

13.2 Sports facilities at HBW are very good, however Board members observe little use being made of the outside football pitches. With the pitches now in situ for a period it would be a welcome sight if inter-house matches were played, but the Board acknowledges that there are traditional difficulties involved.

13.3 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. Many prisoners make regular use of all the facilities available in the gymnasium and the Board recognises the encouragement offered to all participants.

### **Section 14 - TUCK SHOP**

14.1 After a successful trial, 'Face to Face' shopping was introduced to all areas. There is a timetable in place which allows all landings 45 minutes to visit the tuck-shop. Prisoners attend according to their landing and place their orders. This practice gives the tuck shop staff and orderlies time to process and collate orders. The Board welcomes the Face to Face shopping and the positive feedback from inmates

14.2 Several new product lines have been introduced throughout the year and have proved to be very popular. The level of local purchases has increased which offers an even wider range of products available to inmates. Two new contracts have commenced throughout the year; one being for toiletries and the other for fruit. All inmates avail of both with the fruit contract showing a steady growth in sales.

**Recommendation: That prices are kept as competitive as possible and continued efforts are made to cater for the requirements of a diverse male and female population.**

## **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 Board notes that the introduction of a revised programme for visitors - each afternoon, Monday to Friday and all day on Saturday and Sunday - is most welcome and reflects the visitors' noted requirements. The system for booking visits works efficiently and visits are generally well organised, but the Board occasionally 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. Although it is recognised that if there is flexibility in the overall visiting programme at that time, an adjustment can be made to extend the visiting period.

**Recommendation: The Board again 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, and more user friendly to the visitors and prisoners. The Board are well aware that a more 'relaxed' style of furniture in situ, could lead to noted problems with visitors.

**Recommendation: The Board again continues to recommend that modern fit for purpose new fixed table and chairs are installed throughout the visitors 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 In the past year, a 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. In addition, the mobile home (caravan) has been re-instated behind Ash House and is yet another facility for the women prisoners to have a private visit with their children.

**HYDEBANK WOOD & YOUNG OFFENDERS CENTRE  
BOARD MEMBERS 2014-15**

			<b>Appointed</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Ms Sadie Logan</b>	<b>Chair</b>	<b>08/03/05</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Mr Brian Doherty</b>	<b>No change</b>	<b>29/06/10</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Mr Clive Smyth</b>	<b>No change</b>	<b>20/05/13</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Mr Dennis Constable</b>	<b>Vice Chair</b>	<b>18/12/06</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Mr Gary Lyons</b>	<b>No change</b>	<b>25/09/13</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Ms Hazel Patton</b>	<b>No change</b>	<b>31/07/13</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>Mrs Ann Adams</b>	<b>No change</b>	<b>10/06/13</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Mr Ben Mallon</b>	<b>Resigned Jan 2015</b>	
<b>9.</b>	<b>Mrs Laura Brennen</b>	<b>Resigned Jan 2015</b>	