



HYDEBANK WOOD PRISON AND YOUNG OFFENDERS CENTRE
Independent Monitoring Board's Annual Report for 2007/08



An example of prisoner artwork which has been exhibited throughout Northern Ireland alongside other prisoner artwork.

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Mission Statement

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

Statement of Purpose

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

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

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

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

1 | Chairman's Introduction

As chairman of the Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) at Hydebank Wood Prison and Young Offenders Centre, I am pleased to present the IMB's report for the period 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008.

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

Prisons are part of the fabric of our society every bit as much as other institutions such as schools and hospitals. A very important element of the public scrutiny of prisons is exercised by the citizens who make up the IMB at each establishment. The members of the IMB at Hydebank Wood are individually appointed by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and they are often described as his eyes and ears. The members have a duty to report to the Secretary of State if the high standards which are demanded in our public services are not being met, regardless of the reason. Moreover, IMB members' obligations extend beyond their duty to the Secretary of State. They are appointed as members of the public and are the watchdogs of human rights in one of the most closed institutions in our society.

The IMB does not merely look out for breaches of prison rules or standards or even normally accepted prison practices, but judges events according to its own standards of what is right or acceptable. Thus, if the IMB does not like what it sees or hears, whether or not any formal or informal rule has been broken, it has a duty to express that opinion. In such cases the IMB is not simply performing the mechanical function of 'eyes and ears'; it is forming and articulating its own views on what it has seen and heard.

The IMB at Hydebank Wood has a complement of 15 but for the greater part of the reporting year it had to operate with only 13 members. I would like to thank all my IMB colleagues for their hard work and commitment during the year. Many of the members have occupational or family responsibilities, and it is a tribute to them that they are prepared to make time for what can sometimes be a difficult role. All members of the IMB are unpaid volunteers.

The IMB wishes to acknowledge with thanks the co-operation of the governor of Hydebank Wood and his managers and staff; also the co-operation of the director of the Northern Ireland Prison Service and his headquarters colleagues. In addition, the IMB wishes to place on record its thanks to the secretariat team for providing valuable support throughout the year.

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

Jimmy McClean
Chairman of Independent Monitoring Board

2 | Report Overview

- 2.1** Throughout the reporting year prisoners were frequently confined to their cells due to unscheduled lock-downs. The lock-downs were particularly prevalent during the four months period of the industrial dispute early in the year following the introduction of revised shifts. As 2007/08 unfolded, the pattern of prisoner lock-down and restricted regime seemed to become the accepted norm at Hydebank Wood, with the inmates becoming the helpless pawns in the ongoing poor working relationship between the Northern Ireland Prison Service and its front-line staff at the establishment. It seemed to the IMB at times that the humane treatment of prisoners was of secondary importance.
- 2.2** The reason given for prisoner lock-downs was 'staffing shortages'. However, Hydebank Wood appeared to have sufficient staff in post and the cost per prisoner place in Northern Ireland (£81,254) would suggest a more than adequate staffing provision. Adherence to a 'safe staffing levels' agreement triggered unscheduled lock-downs. The IMB feels that this minimum staffing levels agreement is an impediment to the flexible deployment of staff and recommends that the agreement should be discontinued. Excessive staff sickness absence was also a major negative factor that contributed to prisoner lock-downs. It is not an exaggeration to say that absenteeism was effectively crippling Hydebank Wood.
- 2.3** Industrial relations at Hydebank Wood were poor and impacting on the women and young men imprisoned there. Many staff remained disengaged. Morale was low. It has been suggested that the widespread unacceptability of the new shift pattern agreed between the Northern Ireland Prison Service and the Prison Officers Association and the ongoing investigation of alleged overtime fraud at Hydebank Wood were contributing factors. Management will need to make a determined effort to get all of the front-line staff on board.
- 2.4** During the reporting year there was too much emphasis on security and control at Hydebank Wood and there was still a need to focus much more on the rehabilitation and resettlement of prisoners. A culture change was needed. To that end, the IMB is pleased to note that some training has already taken place. Overall, the IMB detected little change in relationships between staff and prisoners year on year. Too many staff still tended to keep their distance and did not proactively engage with prisoners in their care. However, some staff did stand out as shining examples of best practice and are to be highly commended. The efforts of the prison chaplains and Opportunity Youth workers are also worthy of praise. As indicated in its report for 2006/07, the IMB considers that all prison officer jobs at Hydebank Wood need to be enriched and clearly defined, and any shortfall in the jobholder's skills remedied through training. There should be greater emphasis on team-working. These should lead to higher levels of professionalism and job satisfaction, to the point where all prison grade staff at Hydebank Wood will be proud to be associated with the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

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- 2.5** Women prisoners have had to share the Hydebank Wood campus with young male prisoners for some four years. In this report the IMB again recommends that a stand-alone, purpose built women's prison should be provided in Northern Ireland, and that the implementation of female specific policies and procedures at Hydebank Wood should be completed. The IMB understands that during the reporting year the Northern Ireland Prison Service carried out a review of the needs of women prisoners which also addressed the options for relocation. The IMB looks forward to the deployment of new female specific policies during 2008/09; it also looks forward to an early announcement by the Northern Ireland Office regarding the construction of a new women's prison. Both matters are of crucial importance and there must be no procrastination in bringing them to fruition.
- 2.6** The IMB considers that the duration and frequency of use of cellular confinement and loss of association were excessive and were indicative of a punitive regime at Hydebank Wood. For young male prisoners there was a 63% increase year on year in the use of cellular confinement as a punishment for contravention of prison rules. Many of those locked away from their peers in solitary confinement appeared to be mentally ill or personality disordered. In the IMB's view, the imposition of such punishments on persons with mental illness or personality disorder could potentially do more harm than good. A more therapeutic and humane strategy is needed at Hydebank Wood for rehabilitating those prisoners who present with challenging behaviour and do not conform.
- 2.7** The IMB has serious concerns about the processing of prisoner complaints at Hydebank Wood, particularly the widely held perception that making a complaint could have negative consequences for the prisoner concerned. This needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency. The IMB would also wish to see transparency introduced to the internal investigation of inmate allegations of assault or harassment by prison officers and, to enable it to fulfil its monitoring role in this area, has recommended that the governor should automatically copy to the IMB the written report of all such internal investigations.
- 2.8** The IMB understands that HM Chief inspector of Prisons found serious deficiencies in healthcare practices during the inspection of Hydebank Wood in October/November 2007. The transfer of lead responsibility for prisoner healthcare from the Prison Service to the National Health Service finally took place on 1 April 2008, twelve months behind schedule. Hydebank Wood's nursing staff will remain Prison Service employees rather than transfer to the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust, apparently due to Prison Officers Association pressure. The IMB has reservations about the effectiveness of such a staffing arrangement.
- 2.9** In too many instances prisoners at Hydebank Wood have opted out of the state education system at a very early age. The providers of education and vocational training therefore have a considerable challenge in preparing prisoners for a real job on their release. The IMB would wish to see a concentrated effort made to address the below-par literacy and numeracy that affects three in every four inmates. The IMB has also recommended that the Prison Service should define the labour market currently available to ex-offenders in Northern Ireland, and then tailor the education and vocational training provision at Hydebank Wood to the requirements of that market. Self-employment should also be considered for some inmates, to avoid the difficulties normally faced by ex-offenders in obtaining a job.

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- 2.10** Resettlement continued to be given a very low priority. It needs to be properly resourced and everyone in Hydebank Wood needs to be fully involved. Offending behaviour programmes and personal development programmes for prisoners are essential for proper rehabilitation and must be given greater priority. A job and somewhere to live are of crucial importance for women and young men being released from Hydebank Wood, to help reduce the risk of them re-offending. As indicated in last year's report, there is an urgent need for prison officers to become involved in the resettlement of prisoners in their care and for resettlement to become the core focus of everyone at Hydebank Wood. In this report the IMB again calls for the introduction of a personal officer scheme.
- 2.11** The IMB fully acknowledges the complexity of managing an establishment such as Hydebank Wood. The prisoner population ranges from those serving life imprisonment to fine defaulters and comprises women prisoners of all ages, young male prisoners and children, remanded and sentenced, all housed in close proximity on the same campus. Moreover, three in four prisoners have mental illness and/or personality disorder, three in four have abused alcohol and/or drugs and three in four have very basic literacy and numeracy.
- 2.12** A new governor arrived in August 2007. From the outset he advocated a more progressive regime for Hydebank Wood. However, he needs the full support of his management team and front-line staff to make his aspirations a reality. Importantly, he needs them all to sing from the same hymn sheet as there was evidence during the year to suggest totally different approaches. The new governor has much to do to bring Hydebank Wood up to an acceptable standard.

3 | Summary of Recommendations

- 3.1** The Northern Ireland Prison Service should manage absenteeism at Hydebank Wood more robustly. [paragraph 4.7]
- 3.2** The Northern Ireland Prison Service should take steps to discontinue its 'safe staffing levels' agreement with the Prison Officers Association. [paragraph 4.8]
- 3.3** The governor should seek professional approval from the environmental health officer for the consumption of any food, cooked or uncooked, in prisoners' cells. [paragraph 4.9]
- 3.4** Urgent steps should be taken to improve industrial relations at Hydebank Wood to enable the establishment to function properly in the best interests of the women and young men imprisoned there. [paragraph 4.10]
- 3.5** Consideration should be given to limited external recruitment to governor grades at Hydebank Wood. [paragraph 4.12]
- 3.6** A stand-alone, purpose built women's prison should be provided in Northern Ireland. [paragraph 4.13]
- 3.7** The implementation of female specific policies and procedures at Hydebank Wood should be completed. [paragraph 4.17]
- 3.8** The Northern Ireland Office should take steps to establish a totally separate unit at Hydebank Wood for boys under age 18, ideally a stand-alone facility, with staff recruited and trained on the same lines as juvenile justice centre personnel. [paragraph 4.20]
- 3.9** Girls under the age of 18 years should not be accommodated along with adult women prisoners at Hydebank Wood. [paragraph 4.21]
- 3.10** The practice of housing immigration detainees in Hydebank Wood should cease. [paragraph 4.22]
- 3.11** Women prisoners should always be transported separately from young male prisoners. [paragraph 5.1]
- 3.12** Prison officers at Hydebank Wood should proactively engage with the prisoners in their care at all times, and managers should 'walk the job' to ensure that proper engagement is taking place in practice. [paragraph 6.5]
- 3.13** As a matter of principle, staff at Hydebank Wood should always use first names when speaking with male or female prisoners, or when communicating about them. [paragraph 6.7]
- 3.14** An effective personal officer scheme should be introduced at Hydebank Wood, with each prisoner having a named personal officer [paragraph 6.9]

3 | Summary of Recommendations

- 3.15** All Prison Service staff at Hydebank Wood should wear an identification badge showing their name, grade and job title. Likewise, all external agency employees working with prisoners in Hydebank Wood should be required to wear badges identifying them by name, organisation and job title. [paragraph 6.10]
- 3.16** The Northern Ireland Prison Service and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety should develop a therapeutic approach as an alternative to the use of observation cells and 'safe' clothing for prisoners at Hydebank Wood deemed to be at risk of suicide or self-harm. [paragraph 7.8]
- 3.17** A permanent comprehensive equity monitoring system should be introduced, that distinguishes between male and female inmates, is able to identify areas of over and under-representation and produces transparent results that can be acted upon by management. [paragraph 7.11]
- 3.18** All prison grade staff at Hydebank Wood should receive culture awareness training in respect of the Catholic community in Northern Ireland and how it differs from the Protestant culture. [paragraph 7.12]
- 3.19** All prison grade staff at Hydebank Wood should receive culture awareness training in respect of Irish Travellers and their needs. [paragraph 7.13]
- 3.20** The Northern Ireland Prison Service should formulate a disability policy and a learning disability policy in respect of prisoners. [paragraph 7.15]
- 3.21** All prison grade staff at Hydebank Wood should receive refresher training in respect of the handling of prisoners' complaints. [paragraph 7.20]
- 3.22** The governor should automatically copy to the IMB the written report of all internal investigations of inmate allegations of assault or harassment by prison grade staff. [paragraph 7.21]
- 3.23** The advocacy service at Hydebank Wood for young prisoners under the age of 18 years should be made available to those prisoners aged 18 and above who clearly would not have the mental capacity to represent themselves at disciplinary hearings, or to submit a complaint or request. [paragraph 7.23]
- 3.24** A modest kitchen facility should be provided in the entrance area of the visitors centre, to enable NIACRO staff to offer tea/coffee and snacks to prisoners' visitors who have to travel some distance to reach Hydebank Wood. [paragraph 7.27]
- 3.25** Arrangements should be put in place at the visitors centre for acceptance of prisoners' clothing at weekends. [paragraph 7.28]
- 3.26** More meaningful child protection safeguards should be established at Hydebank Wood. [paragraph 7.33]

3 | Summary of Recommendations

- 3.27** All staff and agency workers who have contact with child prisoners at Hydebank Wood should receive child protection training. [paragraph 7.34]
- 3.28** All outstanding POCVA checks should be undertaken as a matter of urgency in respect of prison grade staff and agency workers who have contact with children and/or vulnerable adults. [paragraph 7.35]
- 3.29** Any necessary cessation or reduction of prescribed medication for newly committed prisoners should be effected on a gradual basis. [paragraph 8.4]
- 3.30** The healthcare centre at Hydebank Wood should become a daytime unit operating seven days a week. [paragraph 8.5]
- 3.31** A mental health needs assessment should be undertaken in respect of Hydebank Wood's prisoner population, and services should be reviewed to ensure that there are sufficient and appropriate resources to meet the assessed needs of the women, young men and children imprisoned there. The needs assessment and services review should encompass personality disordered prisoners. [paragraph 8.9]
- 3.32** A dedicated secure unit should be provided in Northern Ireland for treating young prisoners with severe personality disorders. [paragraph 8.10]
- 3.33** The current vacancies at Hydebank Wood for a senior forensic psychologist and a part-time support administrator should be filled. [paragraph 8.11]
- 3.34** A clinical psychologist service should be provided at Hydebank Wood. [paragraph 8.12]
- 3.35** The Northern Ireland Prison Service should give serious consideration to outsourcing all education and vocational training to a mainstream educational institution. [paragraph 9.2]
- 3.36** A concentrated effort should be made at Hydebank Wood to address below-par literacy and numeracy. [paragraph 9.3]
- 3.37** The governor should draw up a plan to remove impediments and maximise prisoner access to the library. [paragraph 9.4]
- 3.38** The vocational training needs of women prisoners should be assessed, bearing in mind that the overall numbers will always be relatively small and recognising that one-to-one tutoring might be necessary. [paragraph 9.6]
- 3.39** The Northern Ireland Prison Service should ascertain the labour market currently available to ex-offenders in Northern Ireland, and then tailor the education and training provision at Hydebank Wood to the requirements of that market. [paragraph 9.7]

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- 3.40** Self-employment should be considered as an alternative pathway for some of Hydebank Wood's inmates, to circumvent the traditional difficulties faced by ex-offenders in obtaining employment. [paragraph 9.7]
- 3.41** All vocational trainees at Hydebank Wood should take a lunch-pack with them to their place of work and should work a full day without returning to their residential accommodation in the middle of the day as at present. [paragraph 9.8]
- 3.42** Much more frequent use should be made of the playing field facilities at Hydebank Wood, by female as well as male prisoners. [paragraph 9.10]
- 3.43** The exercise of control and restraint techniques by male prison officers on women prisoners should be discontinued, and should in future be undertaken by female officers. [paragraph 10.3]
- 3.44** The Northern Ireland Prison Service should reduce its seven days maximum period of cellular confinement at Hydebank Wood to three days. [paragraph 10.7]
- 3.45** The Northern Ireland Prison Service should devise a fresh strategy for addressing prisoners' negative behaviour at Hydebank Wood, as an alternative to the current punitive measures. [paragraph 10.12]
- 3.46** Improvements should be made to the special supervision unit's current regime to turn cellular confinement and rule 32 detention into a more productive experience for the prisoners concerned. [paragraph 10.13]
- 3.47** The progressive regimes and earned privileges scheme at Hydebank Wood should be monitored at a senior level to ensure that it is being operated fairly across the whole establishment. [paragraph 10.16]
- 3.48** A proper resettlement team should be established at Hydebank Wood. [paragraph 11.2]
- 3.49** A properly designated prisoner programmes facilitator post should be created at Hydebank Wood. [paragraph 11.6]
- 3.50** Alcohol addiction treatment should be provided at Hydebank Wood, including a high level of support for the prisoners concerned. [paragraph 11.10]
- 3.51** Line responsibility for Opportunity Youth should be transferred from the deputy governor to the regimes governor [paragraph 11.14]
- 3.52** The major focus of the drugs steering committee at Hydebank Wood should be directed to drugs and alcohol counselling, therapeutic intervention, detoxification and rehabilitation, rather than to security measures. [paragraph 11.15]
- 3.53** Steps should be taken to improve the quality, quantity and suitability of prisoners' food and to ensure that it is hot when served. [paragraph 12.2]

4 | The Establishment

Residential Houses

- 4.1** Hydebank Wood was opened in 1979 as the centre for all male young prisoners in Northern Ireland, remanded and sentenced. It accommodates young men between the ages of 18 and 21, together with a small number of male juveniles aged under 18 housed separately. Hydebank Wood has five residential houses on a single campus - Ash, Beech, Cedar, Elm and Willow. All women prisoners were transferred from Maghaberry Prison (Mourne House) to Hydebank Wood in June 2004, and Ash House was designated Northern Ireland's prison for women.

Prisoner Numbers

- 4.2** The prisoner population at Hydebank Wood on 26 March 2007 stood at 225 (182 young men and 43 women) and a year later at 31 March 2008 it was 208 (175 young men and 33 women). In the summer of 2007 the population climbed and by 10 September 2007 it had reached 257 (208 young men and 49 women). Thereafter it declined gradually. The month end average for the reporting year was 232 prisoners (190 young men and 42 women).



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Staff Numbers

- 4.3** The Northern Ireland Prison Service had a total of 381 staff in post at Hydebank Wood on 31 March 2008. That level of staffing equated to 1.6 staff members for each prisoner. The staff numbers can be summarised as follows:

Grade	Number
Governors	6
Principal Officer (Discipline)	8
Senior Officer (Discipline)	26
Prison Officer (Discipline)	216
Principal Officer (Healthcare)	1
Senior Officer (Healthcare)	1
Healthcare Staff	10
Principal Officer (Catering)	1
Senior Officer (Catering)	1
Kitchen Staff	8
Officers' Mess Staff	5
Principal Officer (Trades)	1
Senior Officer (Trades)	1
Trades Officer	8
Night Custody Officer	37
Operational Support Grade	4
General Service Grades	27
Chaplain	6
Contractor Escort	2
Education Services	10
Estates Advisor	1
Psychologist	1
Total	381

Industrial Dispute

- 4.4** During the last reporting year, the Northern Ireland Prison Service and the Prison Officers Association agreed a three year pay and efficiency deal which took effect from April 2007. However, prison officers at Hydebank Wood refused to accept that they were required by the deal to attend work on 4.5 days per week (nine days per fortnight), and continued to argue for a return to four day working. Most prison officers refused to work overtime, and they could

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not be compelled to do so. To make matters worse, the level of sickness absence increased markedly from the onset of the dispute, so that it was running constantly in or around 40 officers absent each day. That represented a 100% increase in the sickness absence level at Hydebank Wood prior to the dispute, which in itself was already deemed unacceptably high. Under a long-standing agreement with the Prison Officers Association, the governor was also required to maintain 'safe staffing levels' in areas of the prison before prisoners could be released from their cells, and when available staffing fell below the 'safe staffing level', the Prison Officers Association agreement precluded him from authorising an unlock of prisoners.

4.5 IMB members were inundated with prisoner complaints about long periods of unscheduled lock-down and the impact that that was having on the day-to-day living conditions of those incarcerated in Hydebank Wood. In the IMB's view, the status quo was clearly unacceptable. Unless things changed, inmate irritation would inevitably turn to anger, and the likelihood of Hydebank Wood moving into a downward spiral increased by the day. The governor appeared to have no new strategy for managing the situation other than 'sharing the pain' of lock-down between the residential houses. The dire situation continued with prisoners complaining bitterly about being confined to their cells for 23 hours per day for sometimes four or five consecutive days. The IMB felt that if a downward spiral into violence was to be avoided, the situation at Hydebank Wood urgently needed some fresh thinking. Therefore, on 29 June 2007 the IMB called upon Northern Ireland Prison Service Headquarters to intervene urgently to resolve the dispute and restore normality. Eventually, additional prison officers were transferred to Hydebank Wood from other locations and management instigated a revision of the shift attendance pattern that would appear to have been the principal grievance of the staff. The dispute ended on 9 August 2007. It had lasted nearly four months and during that time the women and young men imprisoned in Hydebank Wood had to endure appalling living conditions. In several cases on account of enforced cell-sharing, two fully grown young men were confined to a small cell designed for one for many consecutive days, and had to consume all their meals in a very restricted space that contained a lavatory bowl. In a letter of complaint to the IMB, one young male inmate had said 'We are getting treated like dogs, locked up all day and not allowed to get washed'. That summed up the impact of the four months industrial dispute from a prisoner's perspective. The IMB is not privy to the terms of the dispute settlement.

Absenteeism

4.6 Extremely high levels of sickness absence by prison grades at Hydebank Wood had a major negative impact on prisoners' living conditions and activities throughout 2007/08. Consistently over the year in or around 40 officers were absent on account of sickness every day. In fact absenteeism peaked at 53 in early January 2008. This was a remarkably high level bearing in mind that prison grades at Hydebank Wood totalled 339. It is understood that some 56% of the workforce had no sickness absence at all during 2006/07. The Northern Ireland Prison Service has a duty to ensure that all prison officers' absence is justified, thereby maintaining the morale of the many officers whose attendance record is impeccable. The Prison Service has in place measures to minimise sickness absence but, as the continuing high levels of absenteeism testify, these have not at all been effective in the case of Hydebank Wood.

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- 4.7** One of the Northern Ireland Prison Service's key performance targets was to reduce the rate of absenteeism to 13 days per head per annum by 2007/08 and to further reduce the rate to 11 days per head per annum by 2009/10. By any standards these were high targets that could convey to staff the erroneous impression that absenteeism in or around those levels would be tolerated. The Northern Ireland Prison Service has a duty to the taxpayer to manage absenteeism at Hydebank Wood more robustly, and the IMB recommends accordingly.

'Safe Staffing Levels' Agreement

- 4.8** In its report for 2006/07, the IMB drew attention to a longstanding 'safe staffing levels' agreement between the Northern Ireland Prison Service and the Prison Officers Association, which had been a major factor in determining whether the unscheduled lock-down of prisoners should happen at Hydebank Wood. The IMB therefore recommended that the Prison Service should undertake a root and branch review of staffing at Hydebank Wood, with the aims of incorporating a higher degree of flexibility in the alignment of staff to workload and discontinuing the practice of minimum (safe) staffing levels. In its response, the Prison Service said that staffing levels at Hydebank Wood had recently been reviewed and optimised, as part of the Service-wide agreed pay and efficiency deal. However, the Prison Service made no mention of incorporating a higher degree of flexibility in the alignment of staff to workload or discontinuing the practice of minimum staffing levels. With the unscheduled lock-down of prisoners continuing at Hydebank Wood throughout 2007/08 and impacting negatively on the prisoner population's quality of life, the IMB recommends that the Northern Ireland Prison Service should take steps to discontinue its 'safe staffing levels' agreement with the Prison Officers Association. This would give front-line managers the flexibility to deploy staff to meet actual need. The members of the IMB have observed instances where the number of officers on duty in a work area actually exceeded the number of prisoners in their care. It is difficult to reconcile situations like that with 'staffing difficulties' being put forward constantly as a reason for the unscheduled lock-down of prisoners, etc. The IMB requested a copy of the 'safe staffing levels' agreement in January 2008, but the request was rejected by management at Hydebank Wood. The IMB understands that it has right of access to any documents at Hydebank Wood except prisoners' medical records and documents that would have a direct bearing on UK national security. An agreement between a trade union and an employer does not fall within the national security classification. The IMB merely wished to read the 'safe staffing levels' agreement in private and to reach its own conclusions.

4 | The Establishment

Consumption of Food in Cells

- 4.9** The unscheduled lock-downs at Hydebank Wood have meant that prisoners have frequently had to consume their main meals in their own cells which have in-cell sanitation. During the year the IMB received complaints about the matter including the blunt question ‘Would you eat in your toilet?’ These prisoner complaints prompted the IMB to ask whether Castlereagh Borough Council’s environmental health officer had given the Northern Ireland Prison Service approval for inmates at Hydebank Wood to consume cooked food in small cells with a lavatory bowl incorporated in the living area. From their lay perspective, IMB members feel that there might be a health risk. The IMB therefore recommends that the governor should seek professional approval from the environmental health officer for the consumption of any food, cooked or uncooked, in prisoners’ cells.

Industrial Relations

- 4.10** The report of the Review of the Northern Ireland Prison Service Efficiency Programme published on 23 March 2005 described the current industrial relations climate within the Prison Service as less than ideal, and referred to inflexible working practices that severely limited the ability of governing governors to operate their establishments in the best interests of the prisoners in their charge. The report drew comparison with the partnership approach in Great Britain where Prison Officers Association representatives were taken more fully into management’s confidence in the consideration of day to day management issues at establishment level. The 2005 report went on to say that without more movement in that direction in Northern Ireland, it was doubtful whether the Prison Service could succeed in working towards normalisation for staff and prisoners. The report recommended that priority should be given to establishing a better understanding between management and staff representatives. Industrial relations at Hydebank Wood during 2007/08 were no better than the review team found in 2005, and its recommendation is still valid three years on. The IMB therefore recommends that urgent steps should be taken to improve industrial relations at Hydebank Wood to enable the establishment to function properly in the best interests of the women and young men imprisoned there.

Allegations of Overtime Fraud

- 4.11** Towards the end of 2006/07, the Northern Ireland Prison Service initiated an investigation into allegations of overtime fraud at Hydebank Wood. On 19 June 2007 the governor told the IMB that some members of staff had been charged with gross misconduct and that the investigation report had been sent to the police. On 28 November 2007 the Prison Officers Association was granted leave to apply for judicial review of a decision of the Northern Ireland Prison Service on 14 June 2007 to prefer disciplinary charges against six prison officers for gross misconduct at Hydebank Wood. The Prison Officers Association’s claim was dismissed in the High Court on 31 March 2008. The judgment mentioned the investigating governor’s conclusion that there was evidence to suggest overtime payment abuses for at least two years and probably longer, and that senior management had been made aware of concerns as far back as 2005. Disciplinary hearings in respect of the prison officers concerned were due to take place in 2008/09.

4 | The Establishment

External Recruitment to Governor Grades

- 4.12** In its report for 2006/07 the IMB drew attention to the fact that Hydebank Wood was a small establishment in a relatively small prison service, and that the governors and prison officers all tended to know each other; indeed most of the governors had started their career as basic grade officers and in many cases had been basic grade colleagues of the officers they now managed. The IMB considered that it would be beneficial to inject some fresh thinking and to that end recommended that consideration be given to limited external recruitment to governor grades at Hydebank Wood. The IMB continues to feel that any organisation needs a balance of home-grown talent and fresh blood brought in from outside. However attractive internal promotion might be, external recruitment remains a key component in boosting talent. The IMB therefore repeats its recommendation.

Women Prisoners

- 4.13** In its reports for 2005/06 and 2006/07, the IMB recommended that a stand-alone, purpose built women's prison should be provided in Northern Ireland. In its response to the recommendation on both occasions the Northern Ireland Prison Service accepted that Ash House was not the appropriate long term location; the Northern Ireland Office Prisons Minister had asked the Prison Service to carry out a review of the needs of women prisoners and the study would focus on the options for relocation, either in the greater Hydebank Wood site or elsewhere. No announcement had been made by the reporting year end. The current shared site arrangement remains unsatisfactory and the IMB again repeats its recommendation.
- 4.14** The IMB notes one relevant comment of the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee in the report of its 2007 inquiry into the Northern Ireland Prison Service. The Committee said 'We are disappointed that the Prison Service did not include the women's needs in its prison estate options appraisal or appear to give serious consideration to this possibility. We regard this as a missed opportunity.' The Prison Service's response to the IMB's annual report for 2005/06 had indicated that the provision of a women's prison was being addressed in its strategic estate proposals, which were to be taken forward by Government in the context of the 2007 comprehensive spending review.

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- 4.15** Women prisoners resumed residence in the refurbished Ash House during 2007/08. The availability of an additional landing, Ash 5, that facilitates increased autonomy for a small number of longer sentenced prisoners who meet agreed criteria, is a particularly welcome feature and the IMB would be keen to see this resource utilised to its optimum potential. It is understood that the admission criteria are currently being reviewed. The number of women imprisoned averaged 42 across the year, a figure that remained within the limit that Hydebank Wood can accommodate. However, it is the disparate nature of the prisoner population that presents the very real challenge. Management and staff have to provide an appropriate environment and regime that adequately responds to the multiplicity and complexity of need created by a population encompassing life-sentenced prisoners, those on remand, fine defaulters, an increasing number of different ethnic backgrounds and including both adults and juveniles. This reporting year again saw 115 women imprisoned for fine default. These prisoners place a significant demand on the system simply in terms of processing, which when combined with the trauma associated with a period of incarceration, provide a strong argument against imprisoning fine defaulters.
- 4.16** In July 2007 the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission published its report 'The Prison Within: the Imprisonment of Women at Hydebank Wood 2004/06'.
- 4.17** In its report for 2006/07, the IMB recommended that the implementation of female specific policies and procedures at Hydebank Wood should be completed. The Northern Ireland Prison Service's response indicated that it was in the process of developing a strategy for the management of women in custody which would include specific policies for Hydebank Wood and would form part of a more holistic strategy being developed within the criminal justice sector. The IMB should point out that it received the same response to a similar recommendation in its report for 2005/06. The IMB was aware of relevant workshops for staff and women prisoners being convened at Hydebank Wood during January and February 2008 and a consultation conference being planned for April/May 2008 at Hillsborough Castle. However, the implementation of female specific policies and procedures had not been completed by the end of the reporting year and the IMB is duty bound to repeat its recommendation.

Male Juvenile Unit

- 4.18** There is a designated juvenile unit (Willow 1) for housing all Hydebank Wood's male inmates aged under 18 years. The unit can accommodate up to 19 boys in single occupancy cells. However, apart from the separate accommodation, boys imprisoned in Hydebank Wood did not appear to be treated any differently from older male inmates. The IMB was not aware of any policy for managing children.
- 4.19** Children aged under 17 years can be transferred from Woodlands juvenile justice centre (Bangor) to Hydebank Wood when they are deemed to be at risk of harming others or themselves, or when a court orders that they serve the unexpired portion of a juvenile justice order in a young offenders centre. Youth courts can commit young persons aged under 18 years direct to a young offenders centre.

4 | The Establishment

- 4.20** The IMB questions the rationale of housing boys under 18 at Hydebank Wood when there is no discernible difference in their regime and the regime of older male inmates. The IMB would wish to see a totally separate unit, ideally a stand-alone facility, with staff recruited and trained on the same lines as juvenile justice centre personnel. The IMB recommends that the Northern Ireland Office should take steps to implement the necessary changes.

Female Juveniles

- 4.21** In its reports for 2005/06 and 2006/07 the IMB recommended that girls under the age of 18 years should not be accommodated along with adult women prisoners at Hydebank Wood. In response, the Northern Ireland Prison Service agreed that it would be preferable for girls under age 18 not to be committed to Hydebank Wood and indicated that the Northern Ireland Office's criminal justice directorate was currently considering the holding of such girls in the juvenile justice centre in Bangor. However, no change had been announced by the end of the reporting year 2007/08. The IMB is disappointed about the time taken to resolve this issue and repeats its recommendation for the second time. Three girls under age 18 were held in Hydebank Wood during the reporting year.

Immigration Detainees

- 4.22** A number of immigration detainees were held at Hydebank Wood during 2007/08 - six women and two young men. The detainees were housed along with convicted and remanded prisoners and their regime was no different from that provided for the normal prisoner population. The IMB objects in principle to the holding of immigration detainees in a prison or young offender institution along with convicted prisoners and recommends that the practice of housing detainees in Hydebank Wood should cease.

5 | Arrival in Custody

Movement to and from Court

- 5.1** In its report for 2006/07 the IMB recommended that women prisoners should be transported in vehicles separate from male prisoners. In response the Northern Ireland Prison Service said that its objective was to transport female prisoners in separate vehicles from male prisoners, but that on a minority of occasions sharing a vehicle was determined by operational necessity. During 2007/08 women prisoners frequently travelled with young male prisoners including juveniles and on occasions were subjected to verbal abuse, sometimes of a sexual nature. The IMB feels that preserving human dignity is more important than operational or financial considerations and therefore reiterates its recommendation that women prisoners should always be transported separately from young male prisoners.

Reception

- 5.2** The reception area is what an inmate first sees on entering Hydebank Wood. Unfortunately, it is dilapidated and conveys a grim and unwelcoming impression to new committals. Many inmates are very vulnerable in the first hours after a court appearance, particularly if they have just been sentenced. The decrepit state of the reception area at Hydebank Wood would do nothing to allay their apprehension. The IMB has been drawing attention to the matter for some six years and understands that at last a complete refurbishment is to be undertaken during 2008/09.



6 | Environment and Relationships

Residential Accommodation

- 6.1** The refurbishment of Hydebank Wood's residential accommodation continued throughout 2007/08. Work on Ash House was completed in April 2007 and it was re-occupied by the women prisoners. The contractor then moved on to Cedar House which was the final piece of the residential refurbishment programme. This included installation of in-cell sanitation and fitting of new anti-ligature windows. The IMB had been told that this work was scheduled for completion by December 2007. In the event there was slippage of four months and Cedar House was not re-occupied until May 2008. This delay in completion meant that enforced cell-sharing by young male prisoners at Hydebank Wood had to be extended by some four months. Other works commenced during 2007/08 included the upgrading and refurbishment of the special supervision unit, the restructuring and refurbishment of the healthcare centre and the provision of a new reception unit for women prisoners alongside Ash House. None of these projects had been completed by the reporting year end. Work was also undertaken during the year to keep Hydebank Wood's water supply free from contamination, specifically Legionella bacteria. The extensive grounds were maintained to a high standard throughout the year. The IMB commends all the staff and inmates who undertook this work.
- 6.2** Prisoners at Hydebank Wood are accountable for the daily cleaning of their own cell and the cleanliness is checked once a week by a senior officer. The IMB was surprised to learn that cells are never deep-cleaned by professional cleaners.

Cell-sharing

- 6.3** With one residential block - Ash House and then Cedar House - out of use for the full twelve months, enforced cell-sharing continued for many young male inmates at Hydebank Wood for another year. Two young men, complete strangers in many cases, were required to live in small cells designed for one person. The accommodation was far too cramped and the lavatories were inadequately screened.
- 6.4** In its report for 2006/07, the IMB recommended that the Northern Ireland Prison Service should declare, in the interests of decency, its intention to eliminate enforced cell-sharing at Hydebank Wood at the earliest opportunity. The Prison Service's response indicated that in principle it did not intend cell-sharing at Hydebank Wood, but that that had been necessitated by the refurbishment of three accommodation blocks. The IMB is bound to say that overcrowding and enforced cell-sharing had their origin in the Prison Service decision to transfer all Northern Ireland's women prisoners to the Hydebank Wood campus in June 2004. The IMB looks forward to the completion of the refurbishment programme early in 2008/09 and thus the ending of cell-sharing for the foreseeable future.

6 | Environment and Relationships

Staff/Prisoner Relationships

- 6.5** In the main the IMB observed relatively little informal interaction between staff and prisoners. However, there were some notable exceptions to this general observation, and those officers are to be highly commended. The excellent work of the chaplaincy and Opportunity Youth also helped to mitigate the situation. Too many staff tended to keep their distance or remain seated at their work-station, rather than positively engage with inmates on the landing. Relationships between officers and women prisoners were marginally better than relationships between officers and young male prisoners. In last year's report the IMB recommended that prison officers proactively engage with the prisoners in their care at all times, and that managers 'walk the job' to ensure that proper engagement is taking place in practice. In response the Northern Ireland Prison Service said that the concept of engagement was being reinforced at all levels of management. The IMB has not detected any measurable improvement in relationships year on year, and repeats its recommendation.
- 6.6** Generally speaking, prisoners at Hydebank Wood did not portray their relationship with prison officers as an entirely positive one. However, they would be quick to point out that this did not apply to all officers. Many prisoners felt that staff had not always treated them with respect. Some even felt that they had been victimized by staff and did not trust them. Some prisoners felt that there was a 'closing of ranks' by staff against them. The IMB received many complaints during the year about the behaviour of night staff.
- 6.7** In its report for 2006/07 the IMB recommended that as a matter of principle staff at Hydebank Wood should always use first names when speaking with male or female prisoners, or when communicating about them. The Northern Ireland Prison Service's response omitted to address the recommendation, although the governor subsequently indicated that the matter was low in his list of priorities. During the reporting year the IMB observed that prison staff invariably addressed women prisoners by their first name. In contrast, male young offenders were still mainly addressed by their surname, and they in turn were required to use the term 'sir' or 'miss' when addressing staff. This inequality of treatment extended to written and oral communication by staff members. The IMB feels that the mode of address is an important indicator of individual respect and that use of first names would help to improve staff/prisoner relationships in Hydebank Wood. It therefore repeats its recommendation.

Personal Officers

- 6.8** The role of a personal officer (key worker) is central to the care of prisoners and their preparation for release back into the community. An attempt was made some seven years ago to introduce a personal officer scheme at Hydebank Wood but it never really got off the ground. The IMB is strongly of the view that such a scheme is an essential component of a progressive prison regime, and for several years it has been recommending that a personal officer scheme be re-introduced at Hydebank Wood.

6 | Environment and Relationships

- 6.9** In its response to the IMB's recommendation in last year's report, the Northern Ireland Prison Service stated that it had no plans to introduce a personal officer scheme, but instead was committed to developing initiatives to ensure that all staff were provided with training in the skills and attributes which personal officers should display. The IMB considers that the possession of 'skills and attributes' alone is not enough. It does not equate to a properly planned structure of personal officers, each with responsibility for the care of a small number of designated prisoners on an ongoing basis. The IMB has no hesitation in yet again recommending that each prisoner at Hydebank Wood should have a named personal officer.

Staff identification

- 6.10** Prison officers at Hydebank Wood wear civilian clothes rather than the standard Prison Service uniform. It is not therefore possible to identify officers by name, grade or job title. In its last two annual reports the IMB recommended that identification badges should be worn by all staff at Hydebank Wood. In response the Northern Ireland Prison Service confirmed that name badges had been issued to all staff and that they may wear them on a voluntary basis. Apart from the governor, the IMB has not seen any staff wearing identification badges and therefore repeats its recommendation in respect of all Prison Service employees at Hydebank Wood, not just prison officers. Likewise, the IMB repeats its recommendation that all external agency employees working with prisoners in Hydebank Wood, e.g. Probation Board, NIACRO, Opportunity Youth, National Health Service, etc should also be required to wear badges identifying them by name, organisation and job title. Obviously the Northern Ireland Prison Service saw a real need for identification badges when it decided to order them in the first instance. It now needs to demonstrate that the expenditure was really justified.

7 | Duty of Care

Bullying

- 7.1** A safer custody committee meets monthly at Hydebank Wood. It has responsibility for overseeing safer custody work including anti-bullying measures covering male and female inmates.
- 7.2** All reported incidents of bullying are investigated and, if a prima facie case of bullying is established, the alleged perpetrator is charged and in-house disciplinary procedures followed. The number of logged incidents of bullying during the reporting year 2007/08 can be summarised as follows:

Male	Female
22 allegations	5 allegations
8 substantiated	1 substantiated
13 unsubstantiated	4 unsubstantiated
1 case sent to mediation	

The above statistics indicate a year on year increase in male bullying and a decrease in female bullying.

- 7.3** An anti-bullying policy for women prisoners had still not been issued by the reporting year end. The new policy would stipulate training for staff to equip them with the skills needed to recognise bullying and to deal effectively with it. The new policy would also stipulate awareness training for the women prisoners themselves.
- 7.4** An internal safe custody survey across all those held in Hydebank Wood had been carried out in February 2008. The response rate was high with 88% of women and 59% of young men returning the questionnaire. The IMB looks forward to publication of the findings.

Self-harm and Suicide

- 7.5** During the reporting year there were 64 incidents of self-harm and five suicide attempts by women prisoners at Hydebank Wood. The levels were lower for young male prisoners with 23 incidents of self-harm and no suicide attempts. These figures represent no change year on year except for male suicide attempts that were down from two to zero.
- 7.6** The prisoner at risk (PAR-1) reporting procedure continued to operate and a total of 127 cases were raised during the year, comprising 55 cases in respect of women and 72 cases in respect of young men. In 2006/07 there had been 62 cases in respect of women and 57 cases in respect of young men.

7 | Duty of Care

- 7.7** In response to a recommendation in the IMB's report for 2005/06, the Northern Ireland Prison Service had indicated that prisoners would only be held in unfurnished cells and anti-suicide clothing in extreme and exceptional circumstances where they posed a risk to their own safety. During the reporting year 2007/08 women prisoners were required to wear a 'safe dress' on ten occasions and young male prisoners had to wear a 'safe suit' on six occasions. On 42 occasions prisoners were put in an unfurnished cell in the healthcare centre for observation purposes (22 women and 20 young men). In addition, observation cells in Ash House (women's prison) were used on 98 occasions during the year.
- 7.8** In its report for 2006/07 the IMB recommended that the Northern Ireland Prison Service should discontinue the practice at Hydebank Wood of using isolation in an unfurnished cell and the wearing of 'safe' clothing as a technique for managing prisoners identified as being at risk of suicide or liable to self-harm. The Prison Service failed to address that recommendation in its formal response. The IMB again recommends that the Prison Service, in conjunction this time with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, should develop a therapeutic approach as an alternative to the use of observation cells and 'safe' clothing for prisoners deemed to be at risk of suicide or self-harm.

Equality

- 7.9** The religious composition of prison grade staff at Hydebank Wood at 1 February 2008 was as follows:

Catholic	21 (6.2%)
Protestant	281 (82.9%)
Non-determined	37 (10.9%)

For those deemed Catholic or Protestant, the split was 7.0% Catholic and 93.0% Protestant.

- 7.10** The religious composition of the prisoner population (male and female combined) at Hydebank Wood at 31 March 2008 was as follows:

Catholic	107 (49.8%)
Protestant	77 (35.8%)
Other/none	31 (14.4%)

For those deemed Catholic or Protestant, the split was 58.2% Catholic and 41.8% Protestant.

7 | Duty of Care

- 7.11** The religious composition of the prisoner population at Hydebank Wood is at variance with the religious composition of the prison grade staff employed at Hydebank Wood, which shows a marked under-representation of Catholics. Realistically, the staff imbalance at Hydebank Wood will continue for the foreseeable future and clearly the workforce will not reflect the community that it serves. There is therefore a need for robust and auditable controls to ensure equality of treatment for each and every prisoner at Hydebank Wood. Whilst the IMB was pleased to note the establishment of an equity monitoring pilot at Hydebank Wood, it recommends the introduction of a permanent comprehensive monitoring system that distinguishes between male and female inmates, is able to identify areas of over and under-representation and produces transparent results that are acted upon by management.
- 7.12** With the marked over-representation of Protestants in the Hydebank Wood workforce and the majority of the prisoner population being Catholic, it would be beneficial for staff to receive cultural awareness training in respect of the Catholic community in Northern Ireland and how it differs from the Protestant culture. Last year the IMB recommended that such training be provided, and repeats its recommendation.
- 7.13** During the year Irish Travellers were consistently a significant minority group within the prisoner population at Hydebank Wood. For example, on 31 March 2008 there were six young men and two women. There was some evidence of Irish Travellers being at the receiving end of insulting remarks. In last year's report, the IMB recommended that all staff at Hydebank Wood should receive cultural awareness training in respect of Irish Travellers and their particular needs. The IMB repeats its recommendation.
- 7.14** In February 2008 the Northern Ireland Prison Service published for consultation a draft human resource diversity strategy document 'Make a Difference'. The IMB welcomes this important initiative and looks forward to its early implementation. Reference is made in the document to the current imbalance in the religious composition of the workforce. The IMB recalls that in the mid-1980s all employers in Northern Ireland were subjected to close scrutiny by the then Fair Employment Commission and were required to put in place affirmative measures aimed at remedying religious imbalances in their workforce. The Prison Service is now embarking on such remedial work some 25 years after all other employers in Northern Ireland were compelled to do so.
- 7.15** The IMB understands that the Northern Ireland Prison Service does not currently have a disability policy or a learning disability policy in respect of prisoners, and recommends that such policies be formulated.

Complaints

- 7.16** In July 2007 Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland published its report 'The Handling of Complaints in the Criminal Justice System'. This included a review of the Northern Ireland Prison Service's three-stage internal complaints process for prisoners at Hydebank Wood.

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- 7.17** According to the report, all of the young male inmates spoken to by the inspection team had wanted to make a complaint but had not done so. One of the reasons was that prison officers would, and sometimes did, make life harder for the inmates if they complained. The inmates also cited lack of confidentiality in that they had to ask landing staff for a complaint form or the forms were on display in full view of prison officers. Another concern was the need to hand completed forms to prison officers. Receipts were sometimes not provided and some completed complaint forms handed to officers had subsequently gone missing.
- 7.18** Women prisoners had also raised the issue of confidentiality. They had told the inspectors about completed complaint forms being left lying on officers' desks and other staff being free to read the contents. Concerns had also been raised that where the complaint was against another prisoner or a member of staff, the lack of confidentiality could have serious repercussions for the complainant. The women prisoners had also said that there were consequences for making a complaint, especially if it was against a member of staff. It was made clear to prisoners that privileges were at the discretion of staff and could be withheld. None of the women prisoners consulted by the inspection team had expressed confidence in the internal complaints system as operated.
- 7.19** On 7 December 2007 two prisoners told IMB members independently that they had asked prison officers for official Prison Service complaint forms but had been advised by the staff concerned to take up their respective complaints with the IMB instead. Such advice by prison officers is totally unacceptable. It negates the prisoner's right to raise complaints with the Northern Ireland Prison Service and ultimately to the Prisoner Ombudsman. What particularly concerned the IMB was the fact that one of the two prisoners concerned was alleging that a prison officer had punched him on the head. Fortuitously, these two totally separate cases came to light during one visit to Hydebank Wood. The IMB can only speculate on the full extent of the malpractice.
- 7.20** The IMB recommends that all prison grade staff at Hydebank Wood should receive refresher training in respect of the handling of prisoner complaints.

Allegations of Assault or Harassment

- 7.21** The IMB frequently receives inmate allegations of assault or harassment by prison officers. These allegations are passed to the governor for investigation. The IMB is not privy to the extent or nature of such internal investigations, or whether there has been police involvement. In its report for 2006/07, the IMB recommended that the governor should refer all inmate allegations of assault or harassment by staff to the Prisoner Ombudsman for investigation, instead of carrying out an in-house inquiry. The purpose of the recommendation was to inject a degree of independence to the process. However, the Northern Ireland Prison Service response indicated that any allegation of assault or harassment was taken very seriously at Hydebank Wood, and that the Prison Service had in place robust procedures for dealing with such allegations; these procedures were clearly set out in the Prison Service's code of conduct and discipline and, if during the internal investigation it came to light that a criminal offence might have been committed, the governor would report the incident to the police for

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investigation. The IMB is not aware of any inmate allegation of assault or harassment during 2007/08 being upheld by the governor, or of any such case being referred to the police. To enable it to properly fulfil its monitoring role in this area, the IMB recommends that the governor should automatically copy to the IMB the written report of all such internal investigations.

Advocacy Service

7.22 The Northern Ireland Prison Service employs the Opportunity Youth organisation to provide an advocacy service at Hydebank Wood for juvenile inmates under the age of 18. Advocacy is available, if requested, to give advice and support to a young prisoner who is charged with a disciplinary offence, and to speak for the young person concerned at the disciplinary hearing. An advocate is also available to give young prisoners advice on their rights under the complaints procedure and, if required, to provide assistance in writing the complaint. In addition, an advocate is available to give the necessary support and advice to help a young person make a request. Opportunity Youth provided an advocacy service on 46 occasions during 2007/08.

7.23 There are many prisoners in Hydebank Wood aged 18 and above, male and female, who clearly would not have the mental capacity to represent themselves at disciplinary hearings, or to submit a complaint or request. In its report for 2006/07 the IMB expressed the view that there was a strong case for extending the availability of the advocacy service at Hydebank Wood to cover such prisoners, and recommended accordingly. The Northern Ireland Prison Service response indicated that it was currently reviewing its advocacy policy and would consider the IMB's recommendation in the context of that review. The IMB is not aware of any extension of the advocacy policy and repeats its recommendation.

Visitors Centre

7.24 During the year the Northern Ireland Prison Service published a report of its visitors survey carried out in October/November 2006. Respondents' overall impressions of the facilities and services provided for visitors to Hydebank Wood were rated 35.1% very good, 42.3% good, 18.9% satisfactory and 3.6% poor. Overall, 96.3% of responses had been positive. The IMB commends the visitors centre staff for the good performance reflected in those statistics.

7.25 During 2007/08 the prison officers and NIACRO staff employed in the visitors centre remained committed to facilitating good quality links between prisoners and their partners, families and friends. The NIACRO manager and her staff continued to provide valuable support to visitors on both practical and emotional levels. The family liaison officers worked hard at making the child-centred and family visits meaningful and enjoyable events. The purpose of such visits is to enable prisoners who have children, or prisoners who are children themselves, to spend time with their family to help create and strengthen family bonds. The IMB again commends the Prison Service and NIACRO staff employed in the visitors centre.

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- 7.26** In its report for 2006/07 the IMB recommended that a valuable resource such as the visitors centre at Hydebank Wood should remain open over the lunchtime period. The IMB is therefore pleased to note that lunchtime opening has been provided since October 2007.
- 7.27** Many prisoners' visitors have to travel some distance to reach Hydebank Wood and NIACRO staff would wish to be in a position to offer them tea/coffee and snacks when they arrive at the visitors centre. Currently there is no kitchen in the entrance area to enable them to do so. The IMB recommends that a modest kitchen facility and a trolley service should be provided.
- 7.28** During the reporting year the IMB received a number of complaints about prisoners' family members bringing items of clothing to Hydebank Wood at weekends, but staff in the visitors centre refusing to accept them. The IMB recognises that this causes problems for family members who work Monday to Friday, and therefore recommends that arrangements be put in place for acceptance of prisoners' clothing at weekends.

Telephone calls

- 7.29** Throughout the year the IMB received complaints from prisoners about the high cost of making telephone calls. This was exacerbated by the fact that in many instances the calls were to a mobile number because the family member concerned did not have a land-line. The IMB recognises the importance of ongoing family contact for the success of the resettlement process and therefore urges the Northern Ireland Prison Service to explore ways of reducing the cost of prisoners' telephone calls. The IMB commends the Prison Service for providing one free telephone call per week for foreign prisoners.

Letters

- 7.30** Prisoners are allowed to send two letters each week at public expense, and to receive letters. During the reporting year the IMB received a number of prisoner complaints about delays to incoming mail. It transpired that there were delays in the handling of the mail by staff in Hydebank Wood. During the year there was also a privacy issue concerning prisoners' incoming letters being read and discussed by prison officers in one of Hydebank Wood's residential houses. This practice was condemned by management.

Child Protection

- 7.31** On 4 April 2007 the Northern Ireland Prison Service published for public consultation three inter-linking draft policies covering the various aspects of child protection that arise in a custodial setting. The three draft policies were titled:
- Child protection policy and procedures for Hydebank Wood Prison and Young Offenders Centre;
 - Child protection policy and procedures for children visiting prison establishments in Northern Ireland; and
 - Child protection policy and procedures for managing visits to, and communication with, those who present a risk to children.

7 | Duty of Care

- 7.32** The final policy document/s had not been published by the reporting year end. The IMB has been told that the public consultation exercise produced many responses and that the Prison Service has been evaluating these and been taking forward other important issues with Social Services. The IMB looks forward to publication of the final policies early in 2008/09.
- 7.33** The IMB was told that Hydebank Wood had five child protection referrals during the year. The IMB understands that Hydebank Wood was investigating its own referrals instead of asking Social Services to do so. Hydebank Wood had a child protection co-ordinator in place, but the IMB was unable to confirm the existence of a child protection committee. There is an urgent need to establish more meaningful child protection safeguards at Hydebank Wood, and the IMB recommends accordingly.
- 7.34** The IMB understands that some staff employed in the Willow 1 juvenile unit had not received training in child protection. Furthermore, the IMB understands that some staff employed in other areas of Hydebank Wood such as reception, healthcare and visits that entailed contact with child prisoners, had not received training in child protection. Some of these staff may have been involved in strip-searching children. The IMB recommends that all Hydebank Wood staff or agency workers who have contact with child prisoners should receive child protection training.
- 7.35** The IMB has reason to believe that some staff at Hydebank Wood who have contact with children and/or vulnerable adults may not have had POCVA checks carried out on them. The IMB recommends that all such outstanding checks should be undertaken as a matter of urgency. This applies equally to agency workers who have contact with children and/or vulnerable adults at Hydebank Wood.

8 | Healthcare

- 8.1** The transfer of responsibility for the commissioning and provision of prisoner healthcare from the Northern Ireland Prison Service to the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety did not take place on 1 April 2007 as originally planned. In fact the transfer had to be postponed for twelve months and took place on 1 April 2008, with the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust assuming responsibility.
- 8.2** The IMB was advised that Hydebank Wood's nursing staff, including the newly appointed healthcare manager, would all remain employees of the Northern Ireland Prison Service, and would not transfer to the National Health Service. Apparently, the Prison Officers Association had opposed such a transfer. The IMB finds it difficult to envisage how the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust will exercise normal line management responsibility in such a scenario. The IMB assumed that the Hydebank Wood nursing staff would have been subsumed automatically under the South Eastern Trust.
- 8.3** The IMB understands that the inspection of Hydebank Wood by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons in October/November 2007 revealed serious deficiencies in healthcare practices. As a consequence, a former director of nursing at Belfast City Hospital had been commissioned by the Northern Ireland Prison Service in November 2007 to review healthcare provision at Hydebank Wood and to report her findings. The IMB has requested a copy of the report, but it had not been released by the year end.
- 8.4** The IMB continued to receive some complaints from recently committed prisoners about their existing prescribed medication being discontinued or drastically reduced upon entering Hydebank Wood. The prisoners concerned were finding it extremely difficult to cope with the withdrawal or reduction of externally prescribed medication. From a lay standpoint, it appears to the IMB somewhat inhumane to suddenly withdraw the crutch of medication from newly committed prisoners, many of whom are vulnerable individuals and finding it difficult enough coping with imprisonment. In its report for 2006/07 the IMB recommended that any necessary cessation or reduction of prescribed medication should be effected on a gradual basis. It repeats the recommendation.
- 8.5** Hydebank Wood has in-patient beds with healthcare staff on duty 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The IMB has noted that the number of prisoners held overnight in the healthcare centre is extremely small. Whilst the healthcare centre has in-patient beds, it could not be regarded as a hospital facility in the normal sense. Any occasional acute case would be transferred by ambulance to an NHS hospital's accident and emergency department, in the same way any citizen would be transferred from their home. The IMB sees no good reason why the healthcare centre at Hydebank Wood should not become a daytime unit operating seven days a week, and recommends accordingly. The report of the Review of Healthcare Service Delivery in the Northern Ireland Prison Service, published in February 2005, recommended that the Prison Service should review the retention of in-patient beds in its healthcare facilities. The IMB does not know whether that recommendation was complied with.

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- 8.6** It is estimated that three in four prisoners at Hydebank Wood have a mental illness and/or a personality disorder, and of these 20% are severe cases and the remainder fall into the mild to moderate category. The IMB understands that prisoners with severe mental disorder should be referred straightaway to a mental health specialist and transferred out of prison quickly and into National Health Service care for treatment. The majority of mental health problems in prisons involve depression, neurosis and anxiety disorders, and the IMB understands that it is perfectly acceptable to have these treated in prison by primary care practitioners.
- 8.7** A consultant psychiatrist attends Hydebank Wood for two sessions each week. One session is earmarked for women prisoners and the other for young male prisoners.
- 8.8** A community mental health in-reach support service provides cognitive behavioural therapy for female and male prisoners. The therapists deliver a total of 14 sessions each week, which is equivalent to more than two full-time posts. There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that this vital service might be discontinued.
- 8.9** The IMB recommends that a mental health needs assessment should be undertaken in respect of Hydebank Wood's prisoner population, and services should be reviewed to ensure that there are sufficient and appropriate resources to meet the assessed needs of the women, young men and children imprisoned there. The review should encompass personality disordered prisoners.
- 8.10** In September 2007 a crown court judge criticised the lack of a secure in-house facility in Northern Ireland to treat young people suffering from severe personality disorders. He was speaking about a young male prisoner at Hydebank Wood. The prisoner concerned was subsequently transferred to a special unit in Doncaster for treatment at an estimated cost of £250,000 per annum. In its report for 2006/07 the IMB had recommended that a dedicated secure unit should be provided in Northern Ireland for treating young prisoners with severe personality disorders. The IMB repeats its recommendation.
- 8.11** Psychology services at Hydebank Wood are currently provided by one principal forensic psychologist working on her own. There are vacancies for a senior forensic psychologist (previous jobholder resigned during 2006/07) and a part-time admin support post (approved in February 2007). The IMB recommends that these two long-standing vacancies be filled. The key areas covered by these three posts include resettlement, prisoner programmes, sex offenders, lifers and safer custody.
- 8.12** There is no clinical psychologist employed at Hydebank Wood. Clinical psychologists apply psychology to clinical mental distress, dysfunction or disorder. The IMB considers that a clinical psychologist would bring considerable therapeutic benefit to many of the women and young men imprisoned at Hydebank Wood, and therefore recommends that such a service be introduced.

8 | Healthcare

- 8.13** The provision of a service that appropriately meets the healthcare needs of women prisoners continues to present significant challenges at Hydebank Wood. Unfilled psychology posts and a distinct lack of counselling services negatively impacts on the range of services available to the women prisoners, many of whom have complex healthcare needs. Many women enter prison having previously used a range of prescribed medication. An emphasis within Hydebank Wood on drug reduction, which in itself is positive, however presents difficulties for prisoners as they experience reduction or withdrawal. This causes particular difficulties as women adjust to the prison environment and the IMB questions the appropriateness of prescribed drug reduction especially in an initial phase of imprisonment at a time of often-heightened anxiety for the women (see paragraph 8.4). At all other times it is vitally important that the women are appropriately informed and supported during a prescribed drug reduction programme. While the transfer of prison healthcare to the National Health Service is imminent, the IMB considers it essential that women prisoners receive a service that is commensurate with their counterparts in the community in terms of both the range of expertise and worker attitude.



9 | Activities

Education, training and library provision

- 9.1** The IMB does not see the logic in education and vocational training being managed separately at Hydebank Wood. Its reports for 2004/05, 2005/06 and 2006/07 therefore recommended that one person be given responsibility for the provision of education, vocational training and library services. In response to the IMB's report for 2006/07, the Northern Ireland Prison Service indicated its intention to appoint a head of learning and skills at Hydebank Wood during 2008. This new manager would coordinate service delivery, set strategic direction and raise standards across core curriculum activities. In addition, Prison Service Headquarters had appointed its own learning and skills adviser on secondment from Belfast Metropolitan College. Hydebank Wood's new head of learning and skills had not been appointed by the reporting year end. The IMB looks forward to such an appointment before the end of 2008.
- 9.2** Teachers and vocational training instructors at Hydebank Wood are direct employees of the Northern Ireland Prison Service. Absences on sickness leave or for any other reason result in classes or workshop sessions being cancelled, and this has been known to extend to several months at Hydebank Wood. In its report for 2006/07, the IMB recommended that serious consideration be given to outsourcing Hydebank Wood's education and vocational training to a college of further education. In such a scenario, the provider college would be responsible for covering absences from its own staff or by employing substitute teachers or instructors, thus ensuring proper continuity. The Northern Ireland Prison Service response did not address the outsourcing recommendation other than say that a review of education and vocational training would be taken forward in the context of the Prison Service's wider resettlement strategy. The IMB repeats its recommendation.
- 9.3** The IMB understands that the inspection of Hydebank Wood by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons in October/November 2007 revealed a number of significant weaknesses in the provision of education and vocational training. The inspectors found that there was no strategic approach to the provision of education and training for women prisoners and young male inmates, and that there was no policy to show how their learning and skills needs were to be met. The provision of education and training was not apparently linked effectively to resettlement planning. The inspectors also found that education and training places were under-utilised. Class sizes were frequently small, attendance was generally poor and there were waiting lists for most courses. The inspectors drew attention to the fact that 80% of young male inmates had been assessed at or below entry level three in literacy and numeracy, yet only 14% were having their literacy needs addressed and only 13% their numeracy needs. The IMB recommends that a concentrated effort should be made at Hydebank Wood to address below-par literacy and numeracy.

Library

- 9.4** The library was staffed for two full days each week by a professional librarian employed by the Northern Ireland Prison Service. There was a fairly good range of books and magazines, but no daily newspapers. Access to the library was poor. There was evidence to suggest that greater

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use would be made of the facility if access could be improved. Those prisoners who attended education classes on Monday and Wednesday were able to use the library on those days, but those in work had to rely on prison officers being available to escort them. Similarly, access in the evenings depended on the availability of officers to escort the prisoners. The IMB would wish to see far more use made of this valuable resource and to that end recommends that the governor should draw up a plan to remove impediments and maximise access to the library.

Vocational Training

- 9.5** Most vocational training for young male inmates is delivered by the vocational training unit. There are morning and afternoon sessions in plumbing, carpentry and joinery, bricklaying, industrial cleaning, catering, horticulture and painting and decorating. The workshop and greenhouse facilities are of a high standard. Random visits by the IMB during the year have found below-capacity attendance at vocational training sessions and workshops closed altogether on some occasions.
- 9.6** The vocational training on offer at Hydebank Wood was based on the perceived needs of male young offenders. The arrival of women prisoners in 2004 brought no reappraisal of the subjects on offer. It is disappointing to report that in 2007/08 the only vocational training available to women was horticulture. The IMB had suggested other training subjects such as professional hairdressing, but the small number of potential trainees was put forward as the reason for saying that such training courses were not viable. Lack of interest was also mentioned. Apart from work on the landings and two or three places in cottage industries (greeting card production), employment for women prisoners was restricted to horticulture. The IMB again recommends that the vocational training needs of women prisoners should be assessed, bearing in mind that the overall numbers will always be relatively small and recognising that one-to-one tutoring might be necessary.
- 9.7** Realistically, many of those who enrol for vocational training at Hydebank Wood have little chance of obtaining the formal qualifications needed to practice the trade or occupation concerned. Some do not have the basic literacy or numeracy to undertake the necessary examinations. For example, some new trainees are unable to perform simple linear measurement or interpret an instruction leaflet. As matters stand, attendance of many vocational trainees at Hydebank Wood can only therefore be regarded as work experience or occupational therapy, rather than proper vocational training leading to a career in the chosen field. The IMB again wonders whether the tax-payer is getting value for money and whether the vocational training subjects currently on offer have produced real jobs for inmates on their release from Hydebank Wood, thereby reducing the likelihood of their re-offending. The IMB recommends that the Northern Ireland Prison Service should ascertain the labour market currently available to ex-offenders in Northern Ireland, and then tailor the education and training provision at Hydebank Wood to the requirements of that market. The aspirations, motivation and ability of inmates would also be determining factors. The IMB has visited prison establishments in Great Britain where there appeared to be a higher degree of success in finding temporary and permanent work placements for inmates. The IMB would like to see Hydebank Wood explore fresh potential areas of employment with training in mind, e.g. call

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centres, food processing, retailing, hospitality industry, hairdressing, warehousing, grounds maintenance, lorry and van driving, tree surgery and forklift truck driving. The IMB also recommends that self-employment should be considered as an alternative pathway for some of Hydebank Wood's inmates, to circumvent the traditional difficulties faced by ex-offenders in obtaining employment. Organisations such as the Prince's Trust are strong advocates of entrepreneurship and might be prepared to provide grant-aid for those wishing to set up in business and who can produce a meaningful plan.

9.8 In its report for 2006/07 the IMB recommended that all vocational trainees at Hydebank Wood should take a lunch pack with them to their place of work and that they should work a full day without returning to their residential accommodation in the middle of the day for a quick lunch and then confinement in their cells. There was no specific response from the Northern Ireland Prison Service and no change occurred during 2007/08. The IMB feels that vocational trainees would benefit from working a full day in the workshops, greenhouses, kitchen or grounds, and repeats its recommendation. This would provide a much more realistic working scenario for the prisoners concerned and at the same time significantly increase the number of out-of-cell activity hours. The IMB considers that any necessary adjustments to the staff attendance pattern would be worth the effort.

9.9 The IMB questions the need to employ a prison officer in vocational training workshops at Hydebank Wood purely to provide security cover for the instructor, and suggests that it represents a waste of scarce resources in that the officer concerned does not appear to perform a meaningful role. The governor told the IMB that he was bound by health and safety regulations to keep an officer there to oversee a civilian instructor, and thus keep the workshops open.

Physical Education

9.10 The PE department at Hydebank Wood has a well equipped complex including a sports hall incorporating a rock-climbing wall, a weight training and fitness suite and four outdoor playing fields, two with an all-weather surface and two with a grass surface. The IMB commends the PE staff for their commitment to providing meaningful activities for those inmates who attend the gym. In its report for 2006/07, the IMB said that it would wish to see much more use made of the excellent playing field facilities, by female as well as male prisoners, and recommended accordingly. The IMB has noted no discernible increase in use year on year and repeats its recommendation.

9.11 During the year the IMB drew attention to a Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) cross-community coaching scheme that had been delivered successfully at Woodlands juvenile justice centre during August 2007, and suggested that a similar initiative at Hydebank Wood might be worthwhile. The governor rejected the suggestion on the ground that there was insufficient prisoner interest in GAA sports to make it viable. Apparently, their preference was for soccer and weightlifting. The IMB felt that it would have been desirable to offer inmates at least an introduction to other sports.

9 | Activities

Out of Cell Activity Time

- 9.12** Prisoners' access to a range of educational, work and recreational activities is critical to their well-being. There were good examples of enterprise within the horticulture training sites and women's cottage industries with associated benefit to local charities that were a credit to all involved. It is vitally important that out-of-cell time is maximised and that there is a range of activities available to reduce the effect of boredom especially during evening and weekend periods. Industrial action and high levels of staff absenteeism impacted negatively on routines throughout the reporting year with a disappointing increase in prisoner lock-downs. The resultant impact on prisoner morale was concerning and led to obvious and understandable frustration that had the potential to affect the regime. It is vitally important that these problems are addressed to prevent minor irritants becoming major issues for prisoners.
- 9.13** Delays in identifying work, training and educational opportunities, especially for newly arrived prisoners, require attention. As this can be a time of particular stress, the availability of a stimulating daily routine is important and every effort needs to be made to ensure that all prisoners are actively engaged in constructive and purposeful activity as soon as possible after their arrival at Hydebank Wood.

Chaplains

- 9.14** There are five Christian chaplains at Hydebank Wood. If a member of any other faith tradition is committed, there is provision for a representative of their faith to be contacted. As well as catering for the spiritual needs of the prisoner population, the chaplaincy team at Hydebank Wood plays an important welfare role and is well respected by the inmates and staff. Chaplains carry out daily visits to all parts of the prison and have an in-depth knowledge of the personal circumstances of the prisoners. The IMB commends the vital role that the chaplains play in helping the women and young men cope with imprisonment, enhance their self-worth and preserve their human dignity.
- 9.15** A review of chaplaincy services was undertaken in 2005/06 and the report of the review was published in March 2007. It recommended that Hydebank Wood should have a chaplaincy team of three including a lead chaplain. It also recommended that chaplaincy appointments should no longer be based on a denominational headcount and that the work of the chaplaincy should be based on the total prison population. The IMB was not aware of any changes during 2007/08 on the lines recommended by the review.

10 | Good order

Security

- 10.1** The IMB has been told that there were no security incidents of note at Hydebank Wood during the reporting year. There were 41 assaults by prisoner on prisoner - 35 by young men and six by women. There were ten assaults by prisoner on staff- eight young men and two women. This level of assaults was similar to the previous year's.
- 10.2** To the lay observer, the year 2007/08 was a relatively quiet one for Hydebank Wood. However, control and restraint staff were deployed on 67 occasions in respect of young male prisoners (83% of total deployments) and on 14 occasions in respect of female prisoners (17%). The frequency of deployment showed a 12% decrease year on year in respect of young men and a 53% decrease in respect of women. The IMB welcomes this reduction. The IMB is also pleased to note that no prisoners were put under mechanical restraint (handcuffs) under prison rule 48 during the year.
- 10.3** The IMB still considers it inappropriate for male prison officers, usually in a team of three, to use control and restraint techniques on a woman prisoner. It is a recognised fact that a high proportion of women prisoners have suffered physical or sexual abuse at the hands of men. Control and restraint techniques are by definition a use of physical force. The IMB again recommends that the exercise of such techniques by male officers should be discontinued, and should in future be undertaken by female officers.
- 10.4** In October 2007 the governor indicated his intention to use therapeutic crisis intervention at Hydebank Wood in preference to the existing control and restraint techniques. He proposed to introduce therapeutic crisis intervention straightaway in the juvenile unit to bring it into line with Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre. He planned to extend it to women prisoners in January 2008 and then to all young male inmates later in the year. By the reporting year end therapeutic crisis intervention had only been deployed in the juvenile unit. The IMB looks forward to its introduction throughout Hydebank Wood during 2008/09.

Discipline

- 10.5** The governor carries out adjudications on the women and young men who contravene prison rules during their detention in Hydebank Wood. Adjudications are undertaken where the governor deems an offence to be serious, but not sufficiently serious to warrant involvement of the police and the courts. Sanctions can range from loss of earnings and prison shop privileges to loss of association or cellular confinement in the special supervision unit.

10 | Good order

- 10.6** The IMB feels that the punishments meted out at adjudication during 2007/08 were harsh and included cellular confinement on 225 occasions for young men and 17 occasions for women. This represented a 63% increase year on year for young men. The rate for women was unchanged. The cellular confinement penalties imposed during the year can be summarised as follows.

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

- 10.7** In 2007 the IMB visited a young offender institution in Scotland where the maximum period of cellular confinement permitted was three days. The IMB considers that a more appropriate maximum penalty, and recommends that the Northern Ireland Prison Service should reduce its seven day maximum at Hydebank Wood to three days.
- 10.8** Loss of all association was also awarded at adjudication. This penalty was imposed on 328 occasions in respect of young men and on 19 occasions in respect of women. In effect there is little difference between loss of all association and cellular confinement and entails prisoners being confined to their cell for long periods. For example, during the reporting year 24 young men were awarded loss of all association for a period of 28 days, 27 for a period of 21 days and 125 for a period of 14 days.
- 10.9** The IMB considers that the duration and frequency of use of cellular confinement and loss of all association were excessive and were indicative of a punitive regime at Hydebank Wood. It is understood that there was evidence to suggest that Catholic inmates were over-represented at adjudications.
- 10.10** During the reporting year the IMB encountered prisoners with apparent mental illness or personality disorder, who had been locked up in cellular confinement or had been deprived of normal association with their peers. To the lay observer, the imposition of such punishments on persons with mental illness or personality disorder potentially does more harm than good, and thus is counter-productive. A more therapeutic approach is needed to rehabilitate those prisoners who present with challenging behaviour and do not conform,
- 10.11** In 2007 a woman prisoner with mental health problems was subjected to adjudication and awarded 28 days loss of association as punishment for refusing to shower for a medical examination.

10 | Good order

- 10.12** The IMB recommends that the Northern Ireland Prison Service should devise a fresh strategy for addressing prisoners' negative behaviour at Hydebank Wood, as an alternative to the current punitive measures.

Special supervision unit

- 10.13** The special supervision unit for young male prisoners including juveniles is a stand-alone facility with eight cells located on the ground floor of Elm House. It closed for refurbishment in October 2007. Prior to its closure, the IMB had serious concerns about the unit's fitness for use, in particular cleanliness, sanitation and ventilation. During the temporary closure for refurbishment, prisoners subjected to cellular confinement were housed at one end of the committal landing, with the staff office and adjudication room located on the floor above. The mandatory one hour minimum period of exercise in the fresh air was not always provided. Cigarettes were held by staff and allocated at their discretion. Some inmates are heavy smokers and it seemed inhumane to restrict the number of cigarettes consumed. In October 2006 the governor had indicated his intention to provide one-to-one therapeutic and rehabilitative counselling for prisoners detained in the special supervision unit, but the IMB was unaware of such valuable work being performed in any structured way during the reporting year. Some staff still referred to the special supervision unit as the punishment unit. The unit was still undergoing refurbishment at the reporting year end. The IMB recommends that the re-occupation of the special supervision unit should be taken as an opportunity to improve its regime and turn cellular confinement and rule 32 detention into a more productive experience for the prisoners concerned.

- 10.14** There is no special supervision unit as such for women prisoners. A designated cell on Ash 1 landing is used for cellular confinement or detention under rule 32.

Incentives and earned privileges

- 10.15** Hydebank Wood operates a progressive regimes and earned privileges scheme which rewards inmates for good behaviour and vice versa. The scheme has three regimes: basic, standard and enhanced. All inmates start on the standard regime and can be promoted or demoted. The privileges attaching to the different regimes include differential rates of pay, periods of association etc, but having an in-cell television set is arguably the most highly valued privilege.
- 10.16** Most inmates at Hydebank Wood appear to acquire an understanding of how the incentives and earned privileges scheme works. However, the IMB received some prisoner complaints that the system was not being operated fairly by staff on the landings. The complaints usually concerned the awarding of 'zero' behaviour markings which had had an adverse impact on the complainant. Sometimes a named prison officer was blamed, and occasionally bias was alleged. It is understood that there was evidence to suggest that there might have been an over-representation of Catholics in the scheme's basic regime. The IMB recommends that the progressive regimes and earned privileges scheme at Hydebank Wood should be monitored at a senior level to ensure that it is being operated fairly across the whole establishment.

10 | Good order

10.17 It would appear that some prison officers at Hydebank Wood demand respect from young male inmates in their care, and failure to be respectful can result in the prisoner concerned receiving a zero behaviour mark under the incentives and earned privileges scheme. In the IMB's view, prison officers should earn the respect of the inmates, not demand it. Respect is a very subjective concept. The dictionary definition of 'respectful' is 'showing deference'. Young prisoners find it difficult to comprehend zero marking decisions where the prisoner concerned has been deemed to be disrespectful. Such decisions can be perceived to be unjust and could devalue the incentives and earned privileges scheme in the eyes of some prisoners, and thus prove to be counter-productive.



11 | Resettlement

Resettlement Strategy

11.1 In June 2004 the Northern Ireland Prison Service and the Probation Board for Northern Ireland jointly launched their strategy for the resettlement of prisoners. The IMB feels that it should draw attention to two prerequisites for success stated in the resettlement strategy's original implementation plan:

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

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

11.2 Resettlement should underpin the work of Hydebank Wood. In practice, only three Prison Service staff were employed on prisoner resettlement, working in partnership with other agencies. The IMB commends those three individuals and the staff of the various partner agencies for their efforts. The IMB recommends that a proper resettlement team should be established at Hydebank Wood. There is a real need for all managers and staff to have meaningful input to the resettlement of the prisoners in their care. This should be made clear in job descriptions, if not already done. Everyone employed at Hydebank Wood needs to focus on the common goals of effective rehabilitation and reintegration. The governor needs to make prisoner resettlement his number one priority.

Reconviction Rates

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

Age group	Reconviction rate
17	77%
8-20	69%
21-24	53%

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

11 | Resettlement

Importance of Finding Employment

- 11.4** Research has shown that finding employment on release from prison is one of the most significant factors in reducing re-offending. The Home Office found that released prisoners were less than half as likely to re-offend if they were helped to find and keep a job. Prisoners themselves cite finding a job, alongside a home and a stable relationship as the three most important factors in preventing them from re-offending.

Prisoner Programmes

- 11.5** The following programmes were delivered at Hydebank Wood during 2007/08:

Programme/Delivered by	Prisoners completing
Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (NIAD)	3
Alcohol Management (Probation Board & Opportunity Youth)	21
Anger Management (Probation Board & Prison Service)	8
Car Crime (Impact Team)	13
Enhanced Thinking Skills (Prison Service)	6
Gaining Opportunities & Life Skills (Prison Service)	11
Drug Awareness (Opportunity Youth)	124
Exploring Behaviours (Opportunity Youth)	31
Protective Behaviours	5
Staying in Touch (Barnardos)	19
Parenting (Barnardos)	12
Total:	253

- 11.6** The above programmes were delivered in the main by external agencies, but two prison officers were also employed on a part-time basis on such work. Two further prison officers have now been trained to deliver a limited number of programmes. However, it is worth pointing out that no designated post exists at Hydebank Wood for delivering prisoner programmes and that the prison officers concerned have to be released from their normal duties on an 'as and when required' basis. During the reporting year several programmes had to be cancelled when the delivering officers concerned could not be released due to operational requirements. Moreover, in the final weeks of the year, the officers concerned could not be released at all due to a 'failure to agree' between the Prison Officers Association and the governor. The ad hoc nature of staff provision and the obvious preference for meeting day to day operational needs were indicative of the low priority given to the delivery of prisoner programmes at Hydebank Wood during 2007/08. The IMB recommends that a properly designated prisoner programmes facilitator post should be created.

11 | Resettlement

Drugs and alcohol use

- 11.7** In July 2006 the Northern Ireland Prison Service published for public consultation its revised draft policy on alcohol and substance misuse. The underpinning principles of the draft policy were as follows:
- zero tolerance would apply to all drug (illicit and prescription) and alcohol misuse in prison;
 - prisoners would be continually encouraged, and challenged, to assume responsibility for their own alcohol/substance misuse behaviour;
 - prisoners experiencing drug and alcohol dependency would be offered therapeutic interventions; and
 - discharged prisoners would be offered ongoing rehabilitation and support on their return to the community.
- 11.8** Subsequent to the draft policy's publication for consultation, the Northern Ireland Prison Service appointed an addiction services manager with an NHS background. It is understood that the Prison Service will be incorporating revisions resulting from the work of the new addiction services manager and from the 2006 consultation exercise. The final policy document had not been published by the reporting year end.
- 11.9** The IMB understands that a high proportion of new committals at Hydebank Wood were found to be dependent on alcohol or drugs (prescribed and illicit). It was estimated that 20% had a dependence on alcohol, 15% on cannabis and 2% on prescription drugs. The IMB understands that first night symptomatic relief was not always provided to those new arrivals who had a dependence on alcohol or drugs. It was not clear whether inmates' needs were being assessed properly at Hydebank Wood as regards stabilisation, maintenance or detoxification prescribing.
- 11.10** The IMB drew attention during the year to the fact that prisoners with alcohol addiction in Hydebank Wood were 'dry' and needed a high level of support in prison, including cognitive behavioural therapy. The IMB expressed major concern about enforced 'cold turkey' for such inmates. The governor told the IMB that Alcoholics Anonymous visited Hydebank Wood twice a week and the decision to attend was left to the individual prisoner. Currently there is a gap as regards alcohol addiction treatment at Hydebank Wood and the IMB recommends that steps should be taken to remedy it.
- 11.11** The IMB also understands that some 75% of new committals to Hydebank Wood during 2007 tested positive for drugs. The quantity of drugs entering Hydebank Wood was a major security issue during the reporting year. It was suspected that some young male inmates, who had been temporarily released on bail by the courts to attend a drug rehabilitation centre in Belfast, were taking the opportunity to smuggle drugs back into Hydebank Wood. Many inmates admitted that it was easy to obtain illegal drugs.

11 | Resettlement

- 11.12** All inmates were seen by Opportunity Youth within their first week at Hydebank Wood and a committal assessment was carried out. Opportunity Youth then identified goals for each individual, including a two day course that all were encouraged to attend regardless of any previous drug or alcohol use.
- 11.13** Opportunity Youth's 'Throughcare Programme' was introduced in 2002 for the sentenced prisoner population at Hydebank Wood. It is a voluntary programme where individual prisoners are offered a key worker who works alongside them on a consistent, one-to-one basis from committal to a maximum of six months post release. Using peer mentoring methodology, key workers support individuals in reflecting on their substance misuse and how that had contributed to their offending behaviour. Through the use of short, medium and long term plans, with the support of their key worker, individual prisoners can make necessary changes for positive resettlement.
- 11.14** The latest functional management chart for Hydebank Wood shows Opportunity Youth grouped along with residential, security, estates and safer custody teams, all with reporting lines to the deputy governor. The work of Opportunity Youth comprises the assessment, peer mentoring, counselling and resettlement of prisoners with drugs and/or alcohol problems. In the light of Opportunity Youth's remit, the IMB considers that it would be more appropriate for it to be grouped along with healthcare, psychology, probation, resettlement and prisoner programmes under the regimes governor, and recommends accordingly. The IMB feels that such a transfer of line responsibility would better recognise Opportunity Youth's important role in the rehabilitation of offenders.
- 11.15** A drugs steering committee met regularly at Hydebank Wood throughout the reporting year. It was chaired by the establishment's security manager (principal officer grade) in his capacity as drugs co-ordinator. Matters discussed included drug testing, smuggling of drugs, searching of prisoners and cells and passive drugs dogs. In other words the emphasis was on security matters, even though healthcare staff and Opportunity Youth were represented on the committee. Whilst the IMB acknowledges that security measures are very important, it feels that the major focus of the committee should be directed to drugs and alcohol counselling, therapeutic intervention, detoxification and rehabilitation, and recommends accordingly. There would also appear to be a need for continuity of the committee's membership for it to be fully effective.

11 | Resettlement

- 11.16** The 2006/07 Northern Ireland Crime Survey found that in the 16-24 age group 39% of the respondents reported having used at least one type of illicit drug at some time in their lifetime, 22% in the twelve month period preceding the survey and 10% in the month preceding the survey. Cannabis was the most commonly used illicit drug; in the 16-24 age group 30% of respondents claimed to have used it at some time in their lives, 18% had used it in the last year and 7% had used it in the last month. Male respondents were significantly more likely than female respondents to report having used illicit drugs. The survey showed that 23% of females had used at least one illicit drug in their lifetime, 6% in the last year and 3% in the last month.
- 11.17** The foregoing statistics relate to the population of Northern Ireland as a whole, and are quoted to quantify the current social acceptability of illicit drug use. The prevalence rates for drug use by citizens living in private households throughout Northern Ireland would explain the illicit drugs culture that exists among those women and young men imprisoned in Hydebank Wood.



12 | Services

Catering

- 12.1** Food is prepared in a central kitchen and served on the landings in each residential house. The catering staff in the kitchen are assisted by a small number of young male inmates. During 2007/08 an average of 232 prisoners were catered for each day. The budget allocation was £17.00 per prisoner per week, or £2.43 per day.
- 12.2** Prisoners complained during the year about the quality and the quantity of the food provided; some felt that there was not enough variety, that too much of it was fried and that it was frequently cold by the time it was served. Women prisoners complained that the type of food they received was designed for young men. A small number of long-term women prisoners were permitted to prepare their own food. The IMB recommends that steps should be taken to improve the quality of prisoners' food and to ensure that it is hot when served.

Video links with courts

- 12.3** The Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 contains a number of provisions designed to consolidate the law on and increase the use of live video links. Such facilities were already in use at Hydebank Wood for remand purposes and had the benefit of providing a cost-effective and secure means for prisoners to participate in remand hearings without having to be transported to court. The new powers have expanded the use of video links in courts to include in certain circumstances: preliminary hearings, sentencing hearings, evidence of vulnerable accused, and appeals under the Criminal Appeal Act. The IMB commends the use of video links with courts, in that they avoid a great deal of inconvenience for prisoners and at the same time result in substantial savings for the Northern Ireland Prison Service in transport costs.
- 12.4** During the period when the video link suite was temporarily relocated, the IMB received a complaint about 13 or 14 young male prisoners being held in a small unventilated room for several hours while waiting for video linked court appearances. The room had seating for only three or four persons.

13 | Board business

- 13.1** The IMB continues to meet monthly and operate a rota whereby members visit the prison twice each week. The minutes of the IMB's monthly meetings are copied to the director of the Northern Ireland Prison Service and the governor of Hydebank Wood.
- 13.2** Traditionally, the governor of Hydebank Wood attends the IMB's monthly meeting. During the reporting year the governor attended six meetings, and he was represented on two occasions by the deputy governor and on four occasions by a principal officer. At these meetings IMB members have the opportunity to put questions direct to the governor or his representative, and receive an answer.
- 13.3** IMB members make two rota visits to the prison each week, usually in pairs. They check the IMB designated mailboxes that are located in the residential houses to enable prisoners to raise issues in writing. The IMB members can also receive representations from prisoners as they walk around the prison or via the IMB secretariat. The prisoner applications, i.e. requests, complaints or queries, are written up and faxed to the governor via the IMB secretariat, and a written response is obtained to enable feedback to be given to the prisoner concerned. The IMB members can also raise issues of their own from what they see and hear during the course of their rota visits, and these are included in a written report which is shared with their colleagues and the governor. Matters arising from rota visits are discussed with the governor at the IMB's next monthly meeting.
- 13.4** Each IMB member is assigned an area or areas of special responsibility and is expected to acquire a degree of expertise to enable them to take forward issues in their respective fields and to formulate recommendations where appropriate.
- 13.5** The chairman and vice-chairman of Hydebank Wood IMB are ex-officio members of the Northern Ireland Council of IMBs, and two further IMB members are nominated to Council membership by their peers. The Council meets every two months to discuss matters of mutual interest to IMB members at all three prison establishments.
- 13.6** On 4 July 2007 the IMB chairman gave oral evidence to the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee at the House of Commons. On 11 July 2007 the IMB chairman and vice-chairman met with two members of the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee at Hydebank Wood.
- 13.7** On 15 January 2008 the IMB chairman met with the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission's detention, policing and criminal justice committee.
- 13.8** The IMB does not have the resources to undertake in-depth analyses of the operational effectiveness of Hydebank Wood. Instead, it relies to an extent on the reports of professional inspections and audits carried out by various bodies for detailed information and comment. By the year end, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons had still to publish the report/s of the announced inspection of Hydebank Wood in October/November 2007.

13 | Board business

- 13.9** Some 30 months ago Hydebank Wood IMB had raised the issue of liability for personal injury or loss sustained in the course of IMB duties, but was still waiting for a definitive answer. It is disappointed by the inordinate time taken to provide clarification.
- 13.10** In February 2008 the Northern Ireland Office's devolution programme director wrote to the IMB confirming that preparations had been made to enable the devolution of policing and justice to the Northern Ireland Assembly to take place in May 2008 if that was what the Assembly requested. The letter also indicated that the IMB would transfer and become the responsibility of the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Northern Ireland Executive. That would mean that the IMB's formal relationship with the Northern Ireland Office would be replaced by an identical relationship with the future Northern Ireland Department of Justice. The IMB's functions and responsibilities would not change.
- 13.11** The IMB made a number of constructive recommendations in its report for 2006/07 and was disappointed with the response. The Northern Ireland Prison Service had lumped the IMB's recommendations together by theme and then provided a paragraph or two covering each group of recommendations. Some of the responses were broad-brush, and for half of the IMB's recommendations there was simply no response at all. In many instances the IMB was unable to deduce whether the Prison Service had accepted or rejected individual recommendations. The IMB has had to repeat in this report a number of recommendations included in its report for 2006/07.



Appendix

HYDEBANK WOOD PRISON AND YOUNG OFFENDERS CENTRE - MEMBERSHIP OF INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD 2007/08

Mr Jimmy McClean (Chairman)

Mr Stephen Dickson (Vice Chairman)

Ms Kate Airlie

Mr Reid Armstrong

Miss Eva Bashford (resigned September 2007)

Dr Lesley-Ann Black

Mrs Susan Bryson

Mr James Craig

Mr Ivan Gordon (resigned March 2008)

Mr Brian Higgins

Ms Sadie Logan

Ms Olwen McConnell

Mrs Christine McLaughlin

Mr Ronnie Orr

