



Independent Monitoring Board
Annual Report 2011-12
HMP & YOC HYDEBANK WOOD

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

The Board is required to:

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

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

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

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

UK NATIONAL PREVENTATIVE MECHANISM

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

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CHAIRPERSON'S INTRODUCTION

I am pleased to present the report of the Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) for Hydebank Wood Prison and Young Offenders Centre (YOC) for the period 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012.

IMB members are volunteers who visit the prison and prisoners every week to monitor prisoners' treatment, the conditions in which they are held and the facilities available to prisoners that can enable them to make purposeful use of their time. IMB Members also keep an account of the cleanliness and adequacy of the prison premises.

I am most grateful to my colleagues on the Board for their unstinting work and commitment to this role; it is time-consuming but rewarding. I am also grateful to them for their support of me in the role of Chair over the past year. I thank them.

Thank you to the very many staff members in the prison and the YOC for their co-operation and willingness to inform, explain and spend time with Board members as they carried out their duties.

We also acknowledge and thank the Governors for their unfailing courtesy and co-operation both with their presence at our monthly meetings and when members are carrying out their duties within the prison.

Finally, we are indebted to the staff in the IMB Secretariat for their constant support. They are always willing to help and to give us everything we need in the way of assistance and expertise. I would wish to thank the Head of the Secretariat in particular; without her, the role of the Chair would be a very difficult one to fulfil.

Frances R Symington
Chairperson

OVERVIEW OF ESTABLISHMENT

HMP & YOC Hydebank Wood is a unique establishment in that it is effectively three different detention centres on one site. It accommodates all young male offenders, both sentenced and remand, between the age of 17 and 21 years serving a period of 4 years or less. In some cases an inmate may remain there until the day before his 24th birthday. Boys under 17 years, who are deemed unsuitable for the Juvenile Justice Centre either by virtue of the nature of their crime or by their behaviour, are also held at the centre. Since 2004 Ash House in Hydebank Wood has also been the women's prison for Northern Ireland. All women prisoners, both sentence and remand, serving a full range of sentence up to and including life, are held in the unit. Female immigration detainees are also held in the female facility.

The majority of prisoners are accommodated in five residential houses. Beech, Cedar and Elm house young offenders, Willow houses juveniles and Ash houses the women prisoners. There is a separate Special Supervision Unit (SSU) and a Healthcare Centre incorporating the prison hospital.

Healthcare for all prisoners is provided through the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (SEHSCT). The drug and alcohol service for prisoners who are in need of consultation is provided by AD:ept (alcohol & drugs: empowering people through therapy) in partnership with SEHSCT and NIPS. Education and training is provided by local services.

Various charitable and voluntary organizations maintain a presence on the site - NIACRO provide guidance through the Jobtrack scheme for prisoners trying to obtain a job on discharge; CRUSE provides invaluable support in dealing with bereavement issues; Barnardo's support prisoners over family issues; and Housing Rights staff brief prisoners on the complexities of obtaining housing, housing benefits and associated grants. NIACRO also run the visitors' centre where volunteers provide tea, coffee and sandwiches to the visitors and there is also a children's play area.

Spiritual and religious matters are the remit of the prison Chaplaincy Team which aims to facilitate the practice of all faiths within the prison community. Additional spiritual help is provided by Prison Fellowship.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board recommends that –

1 ACCOMMODATION

- a) action should be taken to regularise the ventilation in all cells (paragraph 1.2)

2 ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

- a) greater priority should be given to attendance at meetings of the Alcohol and Substance Abuse Committee (paragraph 2.3)

3 CATERING AND KITCHEN

- a) the training programmes for food hygiene and National Vocational Qualifications in catering should be reinstated as soon as possible (paragraph 3.1)
- b) both the kitchen and the staff rest area and toilet facilities should be refurbished and upgraded as soon as possible (paragraph 3.2)

4 CHAPLAINCY - No recommendations

5 EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- a) priority should be given to improving literacy by providing adequate education and essential skills classes (paragraph 5.1)
- b) greater use should be made of the Toe by Toe method of teaching / learning to read (paragraph 5.1)
- c) learning and skills should be out-sourced to professional bodies (paragraph 5.2)
- d) inmates on remand should be provided with access to education and training (paragraph 5.3)
- e) increased emphasis should be placed on the provision of formally accredited training courses (paragraph 5.4)
- f) the number of prisoners in the category eligible to carry out work experience in community settings should be extended (paragraph 5.4)
- g) the Prince's Trust scheme should be further developed (paragraph 5.5)

- h) prisoners should not miss out on education / training because of staff changes under the SEE programme (paragraph 5.6)

6 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

- a) an impact assessment of the Equality and Diversity Policy should be implemented (paragraph 6.3)

7 HEALTHCARE AND MENTAL HEALTH

- a) nursing staff numbers should be urgently increased to full complement (paragraph 7.3)
- b) a personality disorder service should be introduced for prisoners (paragraph 7.5)
- c) the range of therapies should be increased to meet the differing needs of prisoners (paragraph 7.7)
- d) a purpose-built safe and secure facility should be set up outside of prison for prisoners with severe personality disorder (paragraph 7.8)

8 JUVENILES

- a) the practice of housing all juveniles on one landing should be stopped (paragraph 8.1)
- b) male juveniles should not be held in Hydebank Wood (paragraph 8.3)

9 LIBRARY – no recommendations

10 RECEPTION AND INDUCTION

- a) the sharing of the male reception by both young men and juveniles should be discontinued (paragraph 10.1)
- b) induction staff should receive mental health awareness training (paragraph 10.4)

11 RESETTLEMENT

- a) landing staff and inmates should meet weekly to discuss training and skills development (paragraph 11.2)
- b) the Personal Officer Scheme should be reinstated (paragraph 11.2)

- c) the Inspire Project should be expanded to provide accommodation for women prisoners who are released with no home to go to (paragraph 11.3)

12 SAFER CUSTODY

- a) the Prisoner Forum's remit should be expanded to incorporate "health focus" groups (paragraph 12.3)
- b) greater use should be made of the Befrienders Scheme (paragraph 12.4)
- c) the range of self-help and awareness programmes should be expanded (paragraph 12.5)
- d) the maximum phone allowance should be relaxed (paragraph 12.7)

13 SEGREGATION – CARE AND SUPERVISION UNIT (CSU)

- a) CSU staff should receive training in coping with difficult prisoners (paragraph 13.2)
- b) the CSU exercise yard should be better staffed and utilised (paragraph 13.3)

14 SPORT AND RECREATION

- a) steps should be taken to increase the women prisoners' access to outdoor sport and recreation (paragraph 14.3)

15 TUCK SHOP

- a) prices should be kept as competitive as possible (paragraph 15.2)

16 VISITS

- a) inmates should always be brought over in time for the start of visits (paragraph 16.1)

17 WOMEN'S PRISON

- a) staff shortages should not be allowed to curtail participation in the cottage industry activities (paragraph 17.2)
- b) adequate supervision should be provided to maintain the garden workforce (paragraph 17.3)

c) a separate site women's prison should be provided (paragraph 17.4)

Section 1 – ACCOMODATION

1.1 The standard of the accommodation varies across the establishment but most provide a good quality of living arrangements. An ongoing refurbishment programme ensures this standard is maintained.

1.2 While the inadequate cell ventilation highlighted by the Board last year is no longer a problem in most areas, the cells in Ash House still do not have efficient ventilation. Those cells that get the sun can become uncomfortably hot in warm weather with no means of cooling them. For this reason the Board again **recommends** that action is taken to regularise the ventilation in all cells.

1.3 Hydebank Wood has attractive grounds that are very well laid out, well maintained and always immaculate. The Board commends the staff and prisoners who do this work to provide what is a very impressive and pleasant environment for prisoners and staff alike.

Section 2 - ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

2.1 Many of those admitted to prison have alcohol and / or drug addictions and time in prison can provide a valuable opportunity to address their dependencies. For this reason the Board is disheartened that the misuse of drugs is still a major problem within Hydebank Wood. In spite of the efforts invested in prevention, drugs are still being brought in illicitly and the availability of prescribed and proscribed drugs does not seem to diminish. Inmates and prisoners put their lives at risk taking drugs in quantities and combinations which, but for the quick actions and efforts of staff, could prove fatal much more frequently than is the case. The Board commends the staff for their vigilance.

2.2 Addiction services in Hydebank Wood are provided by the internal Clinical Addiction Team and ad:ept and the Board commends their work. However the Board believes that a more dynamic and focussed approach to the problem is required to tackle the problem effectively. Closer working partnerships of these teams with discipline staff and Offender Management Unit (OMU) staff could have beneficial effects.

2.3 A Board member attends the regular meetings of the Alcohol and Substance Abuse Committee but it is disappointing to note that the meetings are, in general, poorly attended. The Board **recommends** that this is rectified and greater priority is attached to the meetings.

Section 3 - CATERING AND KITCHENS

3.1 It is with regret the Board notes the training programme for food hygiene and National

Vocational Qualifications in catering, glowingly praised in last year's report, appears to have ground almost to a halt and **recommends** their reinstatement as soon as possible.

3.2 The Board notes that no action at all has been taken to improve the staff rest area - indeed it is in worse condition this year than last. In addition, the kitchen is urgently in need of painting as the ceiling is flaking badly, and undercoating has not been finished in three years. The Board repeats the **recommendation** that both these areas be refurbished and upgraded.

3.3 The Board is concerned that convenience foods are making more of an appearance this year than last. There is too much reliance on tinned and frozen food. This is not a good use of staff skills or financial resources and it leads to menu fatigue in the population. While not making any recommendations on this at the moment the Board will continue to closely monitor the situation.

3.4 On a more positive note, the Board is pleased to report that complaints about food in general remain low, and that the grievances noted last year from the ethnic minorities have mostly been taken care of, albeit via the tuck shop rather than mainstream catering.

Section 4 - CHAPLAINCY

4.1 The prison chaplains continue to enjoy a positive relationship with both prisoners and staff. They are involved in all aspects of prison life and provide spiritual help and support in any way they can. Although the team is made up of a number of Christian denominations they are able to call in representatives of other faiths to meet the spiritual needs of prisoners of other religions. The Board commends the chaplains for the vital role they play in helping those committed to Hydebank Wood cope with their imprisonment.

Section 5 - EDUCATION AND TRAINING

5.1 The Board remains concerned by the high number of prisoners who have very poor levels of literacy and numeracy so **recommends** that priority should be given to addressing this by providing adequate sessions of education and essential skills. The Toe-by-Toe method of teaching / learning to read by other prisoners has been successful so the Board **recommends** that more use of this method should be facilitated through the estate as a readily available and inexpensive asset.

5.2 The Board believes that rehabilitation and reduction in reoffending should be at the core of prison policy, activity and experience. Prisoners should be more employable on release from prison than they were on committal. To this end, the Board **recommends** that

learning and skills should be out-sourced to professional bodies who deliver programmes in the community, and that work and training should be directed to equipping prisoners for employment on release.

5.3 It remains a concern that remand prisoners cannot be made to partake of education or employment. Meaningful, regular and purposeful activity should be available to all so the Board again **recommends** that they should be encouraged to be involved in some form of meaningful activity be it education, employment, orderly duties or even a hobby or sport.

5.4 The Board reported last year that while workshops provide a range of work and vocational training not all of it enables prisoners to gain formal accreditation. This has not changed so the Board again **recommends** that prisoners are given more opportunity to gain both formal accreditation and to have non-accredited skills recorded. Also repeated is the **recommendation** that more inmates be given Category D status to enable them to carry out work experience in community and voluntary settings.

5.5 The further development of the Prince's Trust scheme within Hydebank continues to be **recommended** as it is beneficial to many aspects of offender rehabilitation. It provides valuable incentives and the effect of its success is evident in the pride of the inmates receiving awards. The Board has also noted that a small number of inmates are currently involved in the Duke of Edinburgh scheme. This scheme is excellent for personal and social development and fostering a sense of achievement so it is **recommended** that participation in it is extended where possible.

5.6 With the major staff changes that will occur under the SEE programme, the Board considers it imperative prisoners do not miss out on education and training because of staff shortages so **recommends** that steps are taken to ensure this.

5.7 It is extremely disappointing to note that none of the Board's recommendations made last year in respect of education and training were implemented so have had to be repeated this year.

Section 6 - EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

6.1 The foreign national population continues to grow, both in number and in the diversity of ethnic groups represented. While this is not without its challenges the Board is content that this population's needs are being addressed. As mentioned earlier in this report, even the dietary issues commented on in last year's report largely seem to have been resolved. The Board acknowledges and commends this improvement.

6.2 The small number of inmates from the Irish traveller community continues to make allegations that they are subjected to insults from other prisoners. Without witnessing incidents the Board has no way of knowing whether this is true but staff should continue to be vigilant to the possibility of such behaviour.

6.3 As in previous years the Board continues to have concerns that prisoners from a Catholic background are disproportionately the subject of adjudications. The independent research project into this issue mentioned in last year's report has now been completed. The NIPS has been in possession of its findings since May 2012 but it is unclear if any action has actually been taken to address the findings. So far it appears not to have had any impact on the disparity. For this reason the Board **recommends** a vigorous assessment of the impact, or lack of it, of the Equality and Diversity Policy.

Section 7 - HEALTHCARE AND MENTAL HEALTH

7.1 In general the prison population come from circumstances where there is significant evidence of health inequalities and social exclusion. Prisoners tend to have poorer physical, mental and social health than the wider population, with drug and alcohol misuse and communicable diseases prevalent amongst prisoners.

7.2 Since April 2012 the day to day running of health provision within the prisons is the responsibility of the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (the Trust) but the employee / employer relationship (eg disciplinary issues) remains the responsibility of the NIPS. Over the coming years the Board will monitor how this works in practice. While healthcare complaints are dealt with through the Trust and are not the remit of the IMB, members do listen to complaints and attempt to resolve them before the need for escalation.

7.3 In terms of meeting need, prisoners receive a full range of healthcare services, of which most are primary care services, but the service is working at its limits. Staff losses under the Prison Review caused a deficit of seven healthcare staff by the end of the reporting year. The Board considers this unreasonable and **recommends** the urgent recruitment of nursing staff to bring the Centre back to full complement. The General Practitioner (GP) service has also been reduced so the Board will monitor the effect of this change during the coming year.

7.4 The Board supports the recent adoption of the healthcare needs assessment model which distinguishes between "health needs" and "health demands". This will be instrumental in counteracting the problem of demand often outstripping the service capacity available.

7.5 The prison population also has a much larger percentage of mental health problems

than the general population. As over half of prisoners display behaviour which suggests that they have personality disorders the Board **recommends** that a personality disorder service is introduced including input from community personality disorder services.

7.6 Last year the Board one of the mental health trained nurses was “ring fenced” with the specific purpose of clearing the backlog of prisoners requiring mental health assessments. This has had the desired effect and all assessments are now carried out within the three week target. The Board commends this innovative approach. In last year’s report the Board recommended an extension to the availability of clinical psychological services so is pleased to note that there is now also a full time Consultant Forensic Psychiatrist within the prison service who will attend on request.

7.7 The Board welcomes the introduction of the Occupational Therapy (OT) service but **recommends** an increase the range of therapies such as Speech and Language Therapy to meet the differing needs of prisoners and to address the high incidence of learning deficits and disability within the population.

7.8 The Board remains strongly of the opinion that prison is not appropriate for prisoners with severe and enduring mental health issues since prison staff are expected to deal with situations for which they are just not qualified. This again raises the ongoing issue of the lack of specialised facilities for prisoners with personality disorders - highlighted in many previous Board reports but still not progressed – so the Board again **recommends** that a purpose-built safe and secure facility is set up outside of prison for prisoners with severe personality disorder.

Section 8 – JUVENILES

8.1 The designated juvenile unit in Hydebank Wood is Willow 1 and 2. During the year the number of boys held there varied from two to eleven. At times Willow 2 was closed and all juveniles were housed on one landing. The Board considers this to be unsatisfactory and **recommends** the practice is stopped. Being divided between the two landings is far more beneficial to the boys as it enables staff to interact with them more on an individual level and allows for much more productive contact.

8.2 Improvements to the physical environment of Willow were completed during the reporting year with cells being refurbished and a new kitchen, craft room and multi gym being installed. The Board is pleased to note these welcome changes.

8.3 The Board has consistently maintained that juveniles should not be held in Hydebank Wood and continues to be concerned about the establishment’s ability to provide a

purposeful, daily regime which meets the educational, personal and social development needs of young boys. Placing particularly challenging children in Hydebank Wood it is not in line with “child safeguarding” policy so the Board is pleased to note the closer liaison with Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre (JJC) which has resulted in some transfers. Recent reviews of both prisons and youth justice recommended that adaptations should be made to the JJC so that all juveniles can be placed there - even those who would otherwise be moved because of their level of risk and danger. The Board echoes this and once again **recommends** that male juvenile offenders should be afforded the same treatment as female juveniles who are always held in the JJC.

Section 9 – LIBRARY

9.1 The Hydebank library provides a pleasant environment where inmates can choose from an excellent range of reading material. A good selection of foreign magazines and newspapers is also available. A mobile library is provided for Ash House and the CSU. The “message to you” facility which allows inmates to pick up computer messages from family and friends continues to be popular.

9.2 The Board is pleased to note that a large number of inmates continue to use the library. Not only does reading help alleviate the inevitable boredom of incarceration but mixing with other inmates means it also has the potential to help those who are experiencing a degree of social exclusion. This makes it a very valuable resource and the Board commends the Librarian and staff who provide this facility.

Section 10 - RECEPTION AND INDUCTION

10.1 The reception area is where prisoners get their first impressions of the establishment to which they have been committed so its importance should not be underestimated. The women’s reception has long provided an appropriately welcoming environment being clean, bright and cheerfully decorated and the Board notes that the male reception is now equally welcoming.

10.2 Given the importance of prisoners’ initial experiences it is vital that reception staff deal sensitively with this stage of the prison process. The Board is content that this is the case, even at the busiest periods. However the Board maintains that the sharing of the male reception by both young men and juveniles is not suitable and **recommends** this practice is discontinued.

10.3 Prisoner induction continues to be a comprehensive, structured and well-run process in which prisoners are given all the information pertaining to their time in Hydebank Wood.

The Board is pleased to note that an interpreter service is now routinely provided when necessary for prisoners for whom English is a foreign language.

10.4 Anxiety is a common feature of the first stages of imprisonment and many prisoners have very troubled backgrounds so the Board **recommends** that induction staff receive training in mental health awareness to enable them to spot the signs and be able to respond appropriately in there are any concerns.

Section 11 – RESETTLEMENT

11.1 Resettlement services are vital for preparing the prisoner for release and reducing the prospect of reoffending. The OMU in Hydebank Wood is well established and resourced and the outcomes achieved have improved over the years and continue to do so. The Board is pleased to note that the SEE Programme has made resettlement central to the “Back to Basics” approach.

11.2 In last year’s report the Board recommended weekly meetings between prison landing staff and inmates to discuss opportunities for training and skills development and generally to encourage individual and collective responsibility. It also recommended the reintroduction of the Personal Officer scheme. As neither has happened the Board again **recommends** the implementation of both.

11.3 The Board also recommended that the Inspire Project should be expanded to provide accommodation for women prisoners who are released with no home to go to. It is disappointing that this idea has not been taken up so the Board **recommends** it be given consideration this year.

Section 12 - SAFER CUSTODY

12.1 Tragically this reporting year saw two deaths in Hydebank Wood - one male young offender and one female prisoner who both died on the same night. Both deaths are subject to investigation by the Prisoner Ombudsman. These deaths reinforce the fact that safer custody is an area of vital importance and is the responsibility of everyone in the prison.

12.2 Following the deaths, the instances of SPARs (Supporting Prisoners At Risk) increased dramatically - possibly as a precautionary measure by over-anxious staff - but this has levelled out as the year progressed. SPAR reviews take place regularly with all relevant agencies in attendance. Board members also attend when practicable and the Board is satisfied that these reviews are well-run and organised and that all possible steps are taken to safeguard the prisoner and alleviate any concerns they might raise.

12.3 The Board considers the Prisoner Forum to be a welcome initiative in identifying potential problems. It is a good means of communication between prisoners and staff - providing of course cognisance is taken of the points raised. One positive development is that prisoners who have been identified as displaying good attitudes are "promoted" to act as mentors for weaker and / or more vulnerable prisoners. The Board **recommends** that the Forum's remit should be expanded to incorporate "health focus" groups to enable prisoners to be involved in the design, delivery and evaluation of health services available to them.

12.4 The range of self-help and awareness programmes available includes Goals, Enhanced Thinking Skills, Barnardo's Parenting Skills and adept also provides programmes to help with drugs misuse. This is commendable but the Board feels more needs to be done so **recommends** the number and variety of courses provided should be significantly extended. On a similar note the Board **recommends** that the 'Befrienders' scheme which has become somewhat sporadic should be regularised and better utilised.

12.5 The Board is of the view that prisoners should not be locked up for long periods but rather should be subject to structured purposeful activity and / or education so is pleased that the Governor intends to introduce a new outside agency tasked with reforming this area. The Board hopes his initiative receives maximum support and is implemented as a matter of urgency.

12.6 Finally the Board recognises that family support is very important and should be encouraged. To facilitate this, it **recommends** that maximum phone allowance should be relaxed.

Section 13 – SEGREGATION – CARE AND SUPERVISION UNIT (CSU)

13.1 The Care and Supervision Unit (CSU) for male prisoners is situated on the ground floor in Elm House. There is no CSU for females but there is a dedicated cell in Ash 1 which is used for cellular confinement or Rule 32.

13.2 Many prisoners in the CSU can be difficult and many have personality disorders and behavioural difficulties. The Board feels that it requires training to handle such individuals properly, so **recommends** that staff should receive specialised training in coping with and understanding these prisoners' needs. Despite this the unit is well run and the Board commends the staff officers for their care and patience.

13.3 The CSU exercise yard is very under-used as no games can take place without the supervision of an instructor. The Board **recommends** that steps are taken to better staff and utilise this facility.

13.4 Adjudications are held in the CSU and are regularly monitored by Board members. The Board is content that due process is observed, prisoners are treated fairly and transparently and the records are kept diligently.

13.5 The Board has a statutory duty to attend all Rule 32 case conferences if practicable and to apply critical scrutiny to all the relevant paper work as soon as possible thereafter if it is not. This is to ensure that due process has been followed and that the rule has been fairly and reasonably applied. The Board is more than satisfied with the fair and equitable manner in which the reviews are carried out.

Section 14 - SPORT AND RECREATION

14.1 The PE department at Hydebank Wood is a well-equipped facility with a dedicated staff that the Board commends for their commitment. Inmates who attend the gym always comment positively on it. However the Board would wish to see greater use of exercise yards and football pitches to alleviate the impact on inmates of spending long periods of time in their cell.

14.2 In the past year the staff have approached and engaged the support of teams from the “outside” to play football and rugby against inmates. The Board is impressed with this initiative and commends it. Such outward thinking helps build team spirit and communication skills while fostering constructive engagement with the wider community.

14.3 Regrettably it still appears that the women prisoners lose out in this area as their scope for outdoor games etc is very limited and the Board **recommends** that steps are taken to redress the balance.

Section 15 – TUCK SHOP

15.1 The tuck shop is a valuable resource which provides a wide range of products and caters for the needs of the whole prison population. It is now a much larger facility following the building work and it has increased the range of goods on offer accordingly. The Board welcomes this improvement.

15.2 The Board **recommends** that prices are kept as competitive as possible and that continued efforts are made to cater for the requirements of a diverse male and female population. This is especially important as the increasing number of Foreign Nationals in Hydebank Wood makes it essential that their needs are met when they order from the Tuck Shop.

Section 16 – VISITS

16.1 The visits booking arrangements work well and visits are organised in a sensitive manner. Inmates are generally satisfied with the way the visits system works but sometimes complain that they are shorter than they should be because inmates are late being brought over. The Board **recommends** that this is rectified.

16.2 Northern Ireland Association for Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO) run the Visitors' Centre which provides refreshments and offers a point of contact for relatives and friends of prisoners. Until recently, visitors were able to purchase sandwiches for the prisoner but following the discovery of drugs in a sandwich, this facility has been discontinued. The Board regrets this for two reasons - it has led to the increase in the purchase and consumption of snacks like crisps etc; and the loss of the social interaction which eating together affords inmates and their visitors. It is hoped that a way round this may be found.

Section 17 – WOMEN'S PRISON

17.1 Ash House is the women's prison and in general the Board is content that the facility is run well within the limitation under which it operates. In addition to the general accommodation there is an enhanced regime within Ash 5 in which the women have more freedom, privileges and privacy. At the back of Ash House there is a facility where mothers and children can have private family visits. The Board continues to commend this initiative.

17.2 Within Ash House the women have their own cottage industry where they can knit, sew and do various crafts. These activities are very important to the well-being of the women, as is the quiet reflection time it affords them which they see as being therapeutic. Unfortunately the facility continues to be under-used because of staff shortages so the Board **recommends** that steps are taken to rectify this.

17.3 Several women work in the Ash gardens. They take ownership of their produce and their knowledge of growing flowers and vegetables should serve them well when released. However if the tutor is on leave there is often nobody to replace him so the activity is withdrawn. This leaves the women feeling frustrated and bored so the Board **recommends** that alternative supervisory cover is made available at such times.

17.4 The Board continues to stress the need for a stand-alone women's prison as the women prisoners miss out on so much as a result of the shared site. Their movement within the centre is very restricted and they do not get outside activities, except to walk around an exercise yard or work in the gardens. The Board again **recommends** the provision of a

separate site purpose built women's prison - but given the present economic climate realises the possibility of this happening is further away than ever.

APPENDIX 1

HYDEBANK WOOD BOARD MEMBERS 2011-2012

| | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Mrs Frances Symington | Chair |
| Ms Sadie Logan | Vice Chair |
| Dr Michael Boyle | Resigned in January 2012 |
| Mrs Natasha Francis | Resigned in May 2011 |
| Mr Joe Irvine | |
| Mr Michael Love | |
| Ms Judy O'Loan | |
| Mr Ronnie Orr | |
| Ms Christine Stoll | On sabbatical from February 2012 |
| Mr Francis Walsh | |
| Mrs Linda Williamson | Resigned in April 2011 |