

**HMP/YOI
NORTHALLERTON**

**ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD**

2010-2011

**1st March, 2010
to
28th February, 2011**

IMB Statement of Purpose

'In all its activities the Board will uphold the principles of fairness and humanity in the treatment of prisoners while giving full weight to the maintenance of discipline and the interests and concerns of staff.'

Section 1

STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

The Prisons Act 1952 and the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 require every prison and IRC to be monitored by an independent Board appointed by the Home Secretary from members of the community in which the prison or centre is situated.

The Board is specifically charged to:

- satisfy itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in custody within its prison and the range and adequacy of the programmes preparing them for release.
- inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority as it judges appropriate, any concern it has.
- report annually to the Secretary of State on how well the prison has met the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have on those in its custody.

To enable the Board to carry out these duties effectively its members have right of access to every prisoner and every part of the prison and also to the prison's records.

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HMP/YOI NORTHALLERTON

The prison was built in 1783 as the county gaol for the North Riding of Yorkshire. Since then it has been a military prison, a training prison for adults, a remand centre and, most recently, a young offender institution. In September 2010 its role changed again to that of a community prison for both adults and young offenders from the North Yorkshire area.

The prison's **location** is a town centre one. Its capacity is for 252 offenders in double and single cells on two wings, though since September numbers have been reduced to allow for the re-role, and for the refurbishment of accommodation. At present C Wing is the adult wing, and young offenders are on A Wing. Facilities include a small but well-equipped gym and a sports hall, but the restrictions of the site make outdoor sporting activities impossible.

In keeping with Prison Service policy to accommodate offenders as near to their homes as possible, the establishment's **reception criteria** give priority to offenders with a North Yorkshire discharge address, including:

- adults serving 6 years or less in the last 2 years of their sentence, and
- young offenders serving two years or less, or in the last 3 months of their sentence.

Offenders come from HMP Doncaster, HMP Hull, and training prisons within the Yorkshire and Humberside area.

The establishment is developing an active **ROTL** (Release on Temporary Licence) scheme, with town visits and home leaves, and an increasing number of offenders involved in community work. The establishment is exploring openings locally for paid work.

Service providers

- **Education** is provided by Manchester City College
- During the reporting year, **Healthcare** has been provided by the North Yorkshire and York Primary Care Trust. An Integrated Drug Treatment Scheme (IDTS) runs successfully, and the COVAID course (Control of Violent and Impulsive Drinkers) is a new innovation this year. CARATS (Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice and Throughcare Services) provides support and liaison with outside services.
- The **library** is provided by North Yorkshire County Council.
- **Resettlement services** are offered by Remploy, and Shelter provides help with accommodation. The resettlement department, which is part of Education, provides help with producing CVs, gives advice on jobs and training, and offers advice and training in world of work skills.

Section 4

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The reporting year has been one of change at Northallerton - changes which have been a challenge to those working with them as well as to those monitoring them - and the re-role is still a work in progress.

The Board is very greatly impressed by **successes and achievements** to date. Congratulations go to all members of staff and management, who as ever represent Northallerton's huge strength. Board members report constantly on the high quality of the relationship between offenders and staff, noting many examples of respect for the needs and dignity of all offenders of whatever age. This year staff have shown immense involvement in the changes leading to the prison's new role, as well as in the preparations for the arrival of HM Inspector of Prisons.

[1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18.1, 19, 20.1, 21, 22]

Achievements worthy of particular note include the development of **resettlement services**, with a new ethos based on ROTL requirements, and new initiatives leading to accreditation. The hospitality suite and Northallerton Business Solutions deserve special mention. One of the offenders has recently embarked on a town-based intensive driving course. The **healthcare** department has proved resourceful and adaptable in the face of the demands of the re-role, and a new personal officer scheme works effectively. All developments, including work to the **fabric** of the establishment, have been managed with great financial acumen on the proverbial shoestring.

[6, 8, 18.1, 21]

Without in any way detracting from the foregoing, the IMB's role means that it is also essential to note continuing **concerns**. These include shared cells which contain lavatories, notwithstanding the great improvements put in hand since last year. The segregation unit, both accommodation and regime, is an area of concern too. Earlier in the reporting year the Board was not entirely reassured about provision for the needs of learners who need one-to-one support or other specialist input.

[7.1, 15.1, 15.2, 15.3, 17]

During this period of change numbers have been kept low, to allow for refurbishment and for regime change. As the role increases, so too will demands on staff time and availability; the effect of inevitable **financial restrictions** on staffing and on regime are a concern. Looking to the future, the Board hopes very much that the high standards in the establishment at the present can be maintained.

[18.2]

Section 5

DIVERSITY

1. Both staff and management approach the needs and concerns of individual offenders with humanity, respect and dignity. The Board continues to value this.

2. New this year

A less rigid and less fragmented approach to diversity, with a wide-reaching policy which recognises the need to encompass more than matters of race alone. Age, religion or belief, sexual orientation and gender, and disability are now also covered by the diversity agenda:

- Diversity and Equalities Action Plan
- Diversity Issue Form
- Racial Incident Report Forms (RIRFs) continue in use for the time being.
- Staff are driving changes with pragmatism and enthusiasm: a newly appointed Diversity Manager and Racial Equality Officer are in post.

3. Consultation

Meetings monitored include:

- Diversity and Equalities Team
Healthcare now has a useful presence at these meetings.
- Offender Diversity Team
(formerly Black, Asian and Foreign National Offender Support Group)

Other developments aim to encourage outreach to:

- Offenders of other nationalities: a new successful role as liaison officers for offender managers
- Offenders with young families: special day-long visits
- Members of the travelling community
- Members of the armed forces

4. The Board is reassured over concerns that have arisen from time to time during the year:

- The prison continues to work on sensitive approaches to issues such as gender and disability.
- Consultative meetings have been held regularly, and offenders' attendance has been encouraged and enabled.
- Special attention has been given to requests from older offenders, such as amendments to canteen sheets, clothing issue, and menu choices.

Also:

- The racial equality officer reports that the hours allowed are sufficient for the work in hand, including investigating RIRFs. (Serious Incident Report forms are checked to ensure that no instability develops while investigations are in hand.)

In 2010 there were 32 RIRFs (44 in 2009). These have been monitored by the IMB, and quality assurance by an external organisation is currently being arranged.

Section 5

EDUCATION

5. Changes this year

- Educational provision has had to be adapted to the needs of adults working towards ROTL, as well as those of young offenders.
- The education provider, Manchester City College, has made many redundancies on a national basis, causing some insecurity amongst staff.

6. Courses and current provision

The department's provision now include more NVQs and higher level City and Guilds courses, and the following are running very successfully:

- A fully fitted Hospitality Suite offering:
 - Employment for 24 offenders (jointly with the kitchen)
 - Accreditation - food hygiene qualifications, and a diploma in hospitality
 - Catering for staff, Visits, training courses and meetings etc, and
 - Events such as monthly theme days - Indian, Chinese food - and liaison with Education and other departments.
- A barber's shop ('Custody Cuts')
- A new course in DIY/Kitchen fitting; the industrial cleaning course continues, and
- Business Administration now runs a small 'company' called Northallerton Business Solutions, emphasising employment and world of work skills.

7. Learning differences

The department accesses the Learning Records Service, which logs school and further education learning and achievement records dating from 2007/8. This makes it possible to place offenders in appropriate classes.

7.1 Earlier in the reporting year the Board had some concerns about the needs of those not covered by this service, as well as those needing specialist input or one-to-one support.

Section 5

HEALTHCARE AND MENTAL HEALTH

8. The high quality of the care provided by healthcare staff was reflected in several ways during the year:

- The Unit passed the Prison Health Performance Quality & Indicators inspection with flying colours.
- The absence of any serious clinical incidents or complaints about the service to the IMB.
- The continuing good work done by the mental health in-reach programme.
- The successful implementation of the in-possession medication policy.
- The successful introduction of a prisoners' forum to ensure more effective feedback on provision from offenders.
- Staff preparation for the prison re-role, which has not only brought about an increase in the number of offenders being treated under the Interim Drug Treatment Strategy (IDTS) but also given rise to a much greater variety of medical needs from a much wider age range of offenders.
- The introduction of a new alcohol programme (including the COVAID (Control of Violent and Impulsive Drinkers) course).
- The outstanding manner in which staff handled offenders involved in the protest at the prison in July once the protest had ended.

9. In addition:

- No instances of inappropriate transfers came before the Board this year.
- Some concern was caused during the year by the refusal of some out-of-hours doctors to visit the prison and attend offenders, giving rise to the disruption and cost of sending offenders with escorts to hospital. This issue was successfully resolved.
- The reorganisation of the NHS will result in the service being taken over by Harrogate Foundation Trust shortly after the reporting period for this report. The reorganisation so far has not had any detrimental impact on the level of care.

Section 5

SAFER CUSTODY

10. There have been three serious incidents during the reporting period and national teams have been involved. The Board has been impressed by the high standards with which staff have handled these incidents, and the effectiveness of measures put in place to avoid copy-cat repetitions.

11. Listeners

There is still no night cover. An additional problem since the re-role is that an adult listener cannot attend a young offender and vice versa - but usefully, some adults have already completed the training course.

12. Vulnerable offenders

The number of ACCTs (Assessment Care in Custody Teamwork) issued has fallen this year - only 43 for the year ending December 2010. The quality of reporting has continued to improve.

13. Violence reduction

The establishment has its own home-grown anti-bullying course, and so far three courses have been successfully delivered.

Section 5

SEGREGATION

14. The IMB applauds the work of the staff of the segregation unit, who show great compassion towards the offenders, and try, wherever possible, to offer individual and appropriate support.

15. However, the Board continues to be **concerned** about:

15.1 The standard of **accommodation** in the unit.

The Board understands the challenges of maintenance of the fabric of this very old area, and appreciates the effort the prison has made to achieve a reasonable level of cleanliness and decorative order.

But:

- The problem of detritus stuffed behind the Perspex windows continues.
- Lavatories are unscreened, and old and difficult to clean.
- Temperature regulation is difficult, and cells are often too hot in summer and too cold in winter.

15.2 Demands on **staffing**.

One of the unit's two officers is expected to cover Chapel Duty and to assist on C Wing when deemed necessary.

Also, computer in-putting and adjudication work considerably reduces the time available to spend with prisoners, or, for instance, to supervise exercise.

15.3 The lack of a specific **regime** on the unit.

Ad hoc regimes are developed to meet individual needs; Education provides an in-cell service for those who had been attending the main department, and the library also visits.

16. Adjudications and reviews

- These are managed very professionally by all staff.
- The adjudication process is always explained to the offender.
- Offenders are given every opportunity to present written and/or oral accounts of the alleged incident, and are always asked if they would like to call any witnesses.
- The investigations staff make are always thorough, and the result of the adjudication is always explained.
- Reviews are well conducted (a rota report notes 'informed common sense and sensitivity'), and staff from all areas of the prison are present including healthcare (the mental health nurse if appropriate) and the chaplaincy.

Section 6

OTHER AREAS FOR REPORT

17. Accommodation and cleanliness

Offenders' accommodation consists of single cells on C Wing, and double cells on the three-storey A Wing. Both contain lavatories.

There has been an ambitious and successful programme of **re-decoration and refurbishment** on both wings:

- Wall-mounted storage units ensure more space in cells.
- Poster and graffiti boards have been provided.
- Curtains have been hung to screen lavatories.

18. Finance

18.1 Northallerton is the third most cost-effective closed prison in the country - and the third most under-funded (Source: Prisons Costing Analysis, 2010). This is the seventh consecutive year the prison has faced a budget cut. These centrally imposed restrictions are handled with the greatest financial acumen, and both management and staff are very warmly commended on their constructive and conscientious approaches.

18.2 The Board's approach is equally robust, and once again members wish to draw attention to:

- **The serious dangers of staffing cuts**, and the effects these may have on regimes. (Already a reduced staff of five oversee the prison at night.)
- **The high maintenance needs - and resultant costs - of a Victorian prison.** Additional funding at the re-role has been minimal.

Also:

- Regrettably, central purchasing seems to mean poor service, higher prices, and little incentive to involve the local community. Staff cite frequent examples of the possibility of sourcing items locally more immediately and competitively.

19. Food

The establishment's food remains of a consistent high standard given the constraints under which the kitchen works:

- The menu is varied, and has options for ethnic minorities; religious requirements are observed, and so are the demands of healthy eating. Since the re-role there is also an awareness of the differing needs of older offenders.
- Kitchen management has been flexible in planning availability of meals at different times for ROTL participants.
- Several days have been held which link into the diversity campaign, and offer Chinese, Indian and other types of different food from around the world.

Occasionally recruiting reliable young offenders for work in the kitchens is a concern.

20. Incentives and Earned Privileges Scheme

A new IEP policy was introduced in September, with a custody compact setting out responsibilities and benefits, and the results of non-compliance.

Features of the new policy include:

- an updated warning system
- the abolition of minor reports
- short-term automatic down-grades as a result, for instance, of refusing to work.

20.1 The Board has noted that offenders' history sheets are completed in detail (via P-Nomis), and personal officers review IEP levels regularly - both previously matters of concern.

21. Personal Officer Scheme

Previous reports have noted the Board's anxieties about the functioning of this scheme. In September 2010, a new version was launched, and the Board commends its success.

Effective measures ensure that:

- offenders know who their personal officer is, and
- access is possible (relief officers are appointed as cover).

22. Public protection and risk management

Northallerton has maintained its high standard of monitoring offenders who pose a risk to the public.

All offenders are:

- assessed on arrival by the Probation staff
- monitored at the weekly Interdepartmental Risk Management meeting and assessed again on release if considered necessary.

This has enabled the need for the Public Protection meeting to be reduced from monthly to bi-monthly.

The difficulties identified in the 2010 report in obtaining information from other bodies have been reduced by the re-role. The need to assess adult offenders for Release on Temporary Licence has naturally increased public protection and risk management issues, but Northallerton staff are meeting the extra demands.

Section 7

WORK OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

23. Applications

The Board has received 51 applications via its newly installed and specially designated boxes over the recording period, an increase from the previous year. These are dealt with by the member on rota duty, then recorded and checked at the monthly board meeting.

The DVD produced by offenders on the role of the IMB continues to be shown as part of the induction programme, and is also to be shown on the newly-installed Life Channel system.

24. Board Development

- Visits: to HMP Wealstun, whose Board members also paid a return visit to Northallerton.
- Training sessions at the start of monthly Board meetings: given by prison staff and individual Board members.
Subjects have included:
 - family days
 - general practice work in the healthcare department
 - segregation
 - Veterans in Custody Support, and
 - updates on the re-role, and the functioning of the ROTL system.
- Two members attended the IMB Annual Conference and gave feedback at a Board meeting.

25. Relations with the Governor and Senior Management Team

- The service level agreement with the Governor is renewed annually.
- The IMB Chair and vice-chair meet the Governor privately prior to the monthly Board meeting, and part of the general meeting which follows is reserved for members' consultation with the Governor or his deputy.
- The Board appreciates the input of prison staff at training sessions which are facilitated by the Governor and Senior Management Team.

26. Regular Board commitments

- The Board's policies and annual objectives are reviewed annually.
- Rota visits: two members are on duty during any one week. They aim to visit all areas of the prison over a period, but on each visit go to segregation, healthcare, the kitchens/servery, and both wings.
- Whenever possible, Board members attend:
 - segregation and ACCT reviews, and adjudications
 - prison committee meetings, on which the designated Board member reports when appropriate.

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board Members	10
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	9
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	8
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	0
Number of members leaving within reporting period	1
Number of attendances at meetings other than Board meetings	70
Total number of visits to the prison (including all meetings)	332
Total number of applications received	51
Total number of segregation reviews held	33
Total number of segregation reviews attended	14

Applications

Code	Subject	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11
A	Accommodation	1	1	4
B	Adjudications	0	0	1
C	Diversity related	0	0	1
D	Education/employment/training	4	1	2
E	Family/visits	1	1	7
F	Food/kitchen related	1	0	1
G	Health related	1	1	1
H	Property	8	2	8
I	Sentence related	1	2	6
J	Staff/prisoner related	2	3	3
K	Transfers	2	0	3
L	Miscellaneous	29	6	14
	Total number of applications	50	17	51