

2009 - 2010



HMP ACKLINGTON

INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

ANNUAL REPORT

01 JULY 2009 – 30 JUNE 2010

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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 is centred or 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 concerns it has.
- Report annually to the Secretary of State on how well the prison has met the standards and requirements placed upon 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.*

*IMB Chairman's Resource Book 2007

2.1 Rota Visits

Owing to the size of the prison estate at HMP Acklington the weekly visits by the Board members are split into 3 different areas; thus allowing the 3 members on rota duty that week to have the time to visit that particular area designated for that visit

Stat One - visit covers D, E, F, G and K wings, plus Kitchen, Health Care centre and Segregation Unit.

Stat 2 - visit covers A, B, C, H, J and L (VP units) wings, Kitchen plus Segregation reviews in the Unit.

Stat 3 - this visit covers everywhere within the prison, Workshops, Healthcare, Gym's Education, in fact any area apart from accommodation wings. The Segregation Unit is a major part of this visit, each prisoner is seen and spoken to, and their Segregation history sheet is filled in making any comments, and signed. This visit also covers adjudications as well as any reviews.

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

HMP Acklington is the most northerly prison in England; it is built upon a former RAF war time air base which, after hostilities ended, became a training base for jet fighters, and it subsequently became a Search and Rescue base flying helicopters.

In 1974 it became a Category C prison (training) and gradually grew in size until its present role of 946 prisoners. The population is split into 2 separate sites within the compound, wings A, B, C, H, J and L, comprising 460 prisoners are designated as the VP unit (Vulnerable Prisoner) these prisoners, because of the nature of their offences, are kept apart from the other population.

D, E, F, G and K are designated as the Main side prison. The wings hold (04 April 2010):

VP CNA	=	460
Main CNA	=	<u>486</u>
TOTAL	=	<u>946</u>

The Health Care Department is run by Northumberland PCT and provides Dentistry, General Health provision, Mental Health Care. Unfortunately the prison cannot provide a hospital centre; therefore all medical emergencies which cannot be coped with in the prison have to be taken to Wansbeck District Hospital (a 10 mile journey). For long-term health observation prisoners are usually transferred out to other local prisons that have a hospital facility.

Education is provided by prison instructors or Manchester College Outreach Department. The Education facility is fairly new and provides for basic literacy and numeracy; it also contains a number of computer rooms where prisoners learn about IT and how to use it. Another course for more advanced computer operators is called the PICTA class where prisoners learn about computers, how they work and basic fault finding and repair. They can also be taught how to construct web sites, and other facilities available with IT. This workshop has moved from the Education block to another area near Gym 2. There are now 2 Education centres; L Wing has a dedicated Education pod for VP prisoners.

Training Workshops are provided throughout the prison. The main hangar area has 2 main work areas, and Contract Services, plus a number of smaller training shops. The 2 main hangar workshops are Tailors shop, manned by the VP section of the prison where prisoners are taught various skills regarding tailoring, cutting, sewing etc. The second workshop for Main location prisoners is a dedicated Engineering shop which employs about 18 men engaged in metal machining, welding and fitting together gates and barriers for the Prison Service (cf 6.3.3 below). Other workshops in the building are bricklaying and painting, as well as Contract Services where cables are fitted with industrial sockets.

- A separate workshop area comprises a woodwork area making outdoor seating and other contract work when available. Attached to these shops is the prison Laundry which provides services not only for Acklington but also Castington prison. The final workshop in this area is the Clothing Exchange Store (CES) which, as the name suggests, provides the whole prison establishment with clean clothing and bedding for all the wings in Acklington.

The establishment had been undergoing a PIP (Performance Improvement Plan) for the last 3/4 years and improvement is visible. The PIP process officially ended in April 2009, with the prison restored to Performance Level 3 from Performance Level 2.

4

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**4.1 Issues Requiring a Response****4.1.1 G3 Landing**

We are sorry to have to report that what we said about the G3 Landing last year still applies. We repeat it here:

The specialised regime of G3 was created over 12 years ago as a place where prisoners who were unable to cope with the regime elsewhere in the prison were located. One of the reasons for this was to take pressure off the Segregation Unit where many of these individuals sought refuge for their 'own protection'. The necessary compacts were in place and for a while it seemed to fulfil its purpose. We now question the purpose, effectiveness and viability of G3.

Over the last 3 years the Board have become increasingly concerned that G3 is not working as planned and that prisoners are placed there within a much restricted regime for too long a period. Some individuals have been there for up to 2 years whereas it was originally designed for a maximum time of 6 months. The restricted regime means that currently there is no access to work and only limited association time. Education, other than 'in cell learning', is very limited.

This problem is still with us, despite promises from different members of the SMT, it still exists, in fact at present there is a waiting list for G3 wing; prisoners at risk have only a few options available to them now:

- Placement on the VP side (that has it's own problems);
- Stay behind their door, 24/7;
- Create a big enough disturbance on the wing and be sent down to the Segregation Unit, then continually refuse to go back to normal location and remain in the Segregation Unit (usually transferred out as a last resort).

4.1.2 Wings D, E F and G

Moving on to the Main side of the estate, we would repeat that wings D, E, F and G are also showing their age and major work is required to bring these up to modern standards. Despite the current financial constraints within the Prison Service and the agreed funding of replacement blocks for A, B and C wings, we would hope that the work to replace [preferred] or modernise [short-term expedient] wings D, E, F and G could maintain their priority in the build programme.

We would be grateful for a response from the Minister to these concerns

4.1.3 Education and Training Facilities

The Board is concerned that, as last year, there is not enough employment for prisoners. This remains particularly true for prisoners who lack literacy and numeracy skills. The Education Department is undergoing changes, about which we have much concern, (see below 5.2), and does not appear to be able to meet with the full needs of basic literacy / numeracy training. Current employment statistics show:

Main location: Work places available - 411 (Actually employed - 289)

VP location: Work places available - 447 (Actually employed – 369)

We would be grateful for a response from the Area Manager to these matters.

4.2 Issues Not Requiring a Response

4.2.1 Establishment Accommodation

We are very glad to report that the new M Wing, which will replace the old A, B & C wings, is under construction, and should be commissioned in the late spring. A, B & C will then be demolished. The Board has been asking for action to replace this most unsuitable accommodation for year on year, and it is good to see that action has been taken at last.

4.2.2 Senior Management

The Board finds the Senior Management helpful and responsive to our concerns, and we know that the team is thoroughly focused on its work. Part of the result is that, on the whole, the applications that we receive from prisoners are sorted without too much difficulty.

4.2.3 Staff Morale

On the whole this is good, despite the pressures of the current economic situation and the questions about the future of the establishment.

5 **REPORTABLE AREAS**

5.1 **Diversity**

Acklington Prison has a number of sub-groups which have an overall responsibility for Diversity. At present there is one group to cover both race Equality and Disability and Diversity issues:

READ - Race Equality Action and Diversity Team.

The current Board Chair attends the meetings as an observer. At the meetings a representative from the BME group within the prison attends to give feedback from the prisoners, recently there have been representatives from the older prisoners as well as foreign national representation (Eastern European), visitors from outside agencies, including religious ministers (Imam), Victim Support.

This group covers all issues relating to race, disability, religion, equal opportunities, sexual orientation; the meetings examine all the RIRF's in current investigation, or investigated, and the results. In line with other prisons within England and Wales all the relevant policies, Race Relations, Diversity, DDA, are vigorously maintained. Over the past 12 months there have been 39 RIRF's submitted, averaging only 3 per month; as far as the Board have been informed all have been investigated correctly and if required action taken. After instructions from the Home Office regarding foreign national prisoners, all from the main side (7) have been transferred out to a holding prison; with regard to the VP's, unfortunately as yet there is no identified location to send the foreign national prisoners.

There are 2 Officers within the prison with responsibility for Race Equality and Diversity Management and a Disability Liaison Officer

5.2 **Learning and Skills**

5.2.1 **The Contract**

Education is now contracted out to Manchester College; the contract will last until 2012. It is public knowledge that the college have indicated there will be a number of redundancies within the prison Education departments across the prison estate in the whole of the North East area. Acklington Education Department has been going through the restructuring, or resettlement process. It is expected there will be at least

10 redundancies amongst full-time staff. Whilst there will be the same amount of education hours provided by the prison, more of the work will be provided by sessional staff. The Educational Managers are confident that there will be no negative impact on learners as a result of these changes. They are currently recruiting new sessional staff via Manchester College Blue octopus website. However despite the manager's optimism the staff are less positive and are currently working to rule and report high levels of stress and low morale.

5.2.2 The Curriculum

There have been alterations to the curriculum on offer as the prison moves towards implementing the regional framework for Qualifications and Curriculum. The emphasis is totally on employability skills, whilst the curriculum is modularised which should improve progression for prisoners moving between prisons. Starting in November 2009 MIAP (Monitoring Information across Partners) has also been established to support this process. Managers' report that MIAP is in an embryonic stage but should become increasingly useful as more prisoners are entered on to the system. Certain courses have been off-loaded back to the prison to deliver. These include 'Fathers Inside' and 'Alcohol and Drugs Awareness'. Personal development and social development is now being delivered via a cross curriculum rather than discrete approach.

5.2.3 Impact on staff

The impact of staff absences on the Industries area was discussed and it was made clear to the managers that they are obliged to maintain certain staff/prisoner ratios. The last Ofsted report made it clear that contingency arrangements must be in place to cope more effectively with staff absences

5.2.4 Gateway process and Careers Guidance

When prisoners join Acklington they go through a gateway process as part of the prison induction scheme. Literacy and numeracy are assessed, during which prisoners also carry out a self-assessment; this information is then processed by the Allocation Board who allocate prisoners to courses/Industries.

Careers Information and Guidance is delivered by a contract with A4E.

5.2.5 Board action

Over the next year the Board should:

- Monitor the impact of the resettlement on the quality of learning in the Education Department. In particular, looking at staff morale and sessional working;
- Monitor the impact of changes to the curriculum and take-up of programmes including the cross-curriculum delivery of PSD;
- Be aware that Managers believe an Ofsted inspection is likely and that the number of 'unemployed' prisoners will be a key issue.

5.2.6 The Union Learning Centre

This centre, situated outside of the main prison complex, is an education facility for prison staff and their families, funded by the POA, Prison Service and the TUC. It offers a wide range of courses, not all related to employability, from Literacy and ICT, creative writing and Bag Pipe Playing! It is staffed by 2 enthusiasts who promote their free, or very cheap, courses across the prison. Sadly national changes to funding of Adult Education may threaten the future of this resource.

5.3 Health Care and Mental Health

The provision of an effective Healthcare and Mental Health care service is a key requirement of any good performing prison. The service must meet the twin criteria of 'looking after all prisoners with humanity' and encouraging a good level of morale amongst both the staff and prisoners.

The Board is encouraged by the recent improvements and future developments planned for the prison and acknowledge the good work being carried out by all elements of the Health Care and Mental Health staff. The Board is appreciative of the half hour training talks from all sections of the greater Healthcare community given before many monthly meetings and the high quality of the monthly data reporting.

As some of the service contracts are in the process of being renewed, the Board is fully supportive of the target of delivering improved work processes and innovative initiatives which provide an improved quality of service at lower costs.

The following topics have been identified as areas of specific importance by the staff and the Board.

5.3.1 Learning Disabilities

In previous Annual Board Reports, the Board has regretted that, the support given to prisoners with learning disabilities is less than ideal, and has noted that there are no adequate referral pathways in place to ensure that appropriate support is readily available to prisoners who are encountering major problems with the prison regime.

Whilst there are many, often unreported, examples of proactive and caring support given to prisoners with personal hygiene and Mental Health issues by Officers and total Health Care staff, the Board would hope that this issue is addressed in the forthcoming re-commissioning process.

5.3.2 Structure of Healthcare

The Board is acutely aware that there is a problem, due to advancing age, of the health of prisoners on the Vulnerable Prisoner Unit. With an average age of 55 years and the oldest prisoner being nearly 80 years old the problem will only increase in future years. The Board note that there are no hospital type beds at Acklington and the requirement to carry out 'hospital watches' at outside hospitals is both costly in terms of manpower and thence costs. The Board believe that an innovative solution, which is prison estate based, would be a more effective solution to the provision of palliative care.

As reported last year, the Board is still concerned that there are inadequate classroom type facilities for courses such as stress counselling where numbers are restricted to 10 maximum. This type of course performs better if there are a greater number of participants who engage in the group sessions.

The staff report that total consultation space is at a premium and could restrict any future additional staff functioning at their ideal efficiency level.

5.3.3 ACCT (Assessment/Care/Custody/Teamwork)

The Board has noted that the Mental Health team has no available resources to develop innovative support packages for the ACCT team. The Mental Health team continues to support the ACCT team ably lead by Senior Officer David Gray. The provision of additional resources would allow the team to carry out development work with the ACCT team and to develop innovative support packages for the self-harmers.

5.3.4 Hospital Escorts and Telemedicine

During the year under review the Board has noted that each month the prison has had to provide for some 65 to 70 hospital escorts per month. Whilst the costs are borne by the PCT, the effect on the available prison manpower system is excessive. The Board was delighted to receive the news that a telemedicine system will be introduced in September 2010. This new facility will allow Acklington based staff to carry out tests such as ECGs, X Rays and MRI scans within the prison; the tests would be evaluated/diagnosed by consultants at a location in Skipton. This highly innovative initiative should greatly reduce the number of hospital escorts whilst improving the prisoner health care experience. The Board looks forward to receiving early reports on the success of the initiative.

5.3.5 Drug Treatment Services

The IDTS system was introduced in 2008 and can now handle some 68 participants. The Board were recently updated on the success of the scheme and learned how the prison interacts with community based drug treatment agencies when a prisoner is released into the community. The success of the scheme is vitally important if the prison system is to divert prisoners from the use of illicit drugs.

Current numbers on the IDTS scheme represent 7% of the Acklington prison population; it should be noted that all participants are willing volunteers who wish to address their drug addiction issues. If one was to exclude the current financial restrictions, it would be interesting to note how many of the existing 30 to 40% of the Acklington prison population who use illicit drugs could usefully avail themselves productively of the scheme.

5.3.6 Drugs

The use of illicit drugs within the total prison estate is a major national issue.

The Board acknowledges the excellent work by all parties in the battle to prevent drugs (and mobile phones) becoming available to addicts at a much inflated price versus the outside community. Drugs equal dealers and debt and consequent challenges to good order within the prison.

5.3.7 Dental Health

The prison Dental Service, under the dedicated care of Mrs J Duggan, is regarded by the Board as one of the 'jewels' in the overall Health Care system. A recent upgrade in the appointment software has further improved the time to first appointment which now sits at one week.

5.3.8 Gym

The Board acknowledges the excellent work by the Gym team in promoting both staff and prisoner health and was pleased to observe the success of the recent Health and Fitness day. The initiative was delivered by current Gym staff and was much appreciated by the large number of participants. Unfortunately, whilst the provision of equipment is good the washing and changing facilities in Gym 2 are antiquated and totally unacceptable in modern day. It is hoped that they could be brought up to date ASAP (See also 6.3.7).

5.3.9 Complaints

The Board now receive a monthly update on Healthcare Complaints. Given that many of the 160 per year complaints are based on the refusal of the staff to prescribe inappropriate drugs, the staff and Board judged that the current number of complaints is not excessive and that the complaint system and feedback scheme is fit for purpose and robust in its execution. There are significantly less mental health complaints.

5.3.10 Future Challenges

At the time of writing no decision has been announced on the future plans for HMPYOI Castington. The Board recognises that if Castington is to be converted into a Category C training prison it will be a massive change to the previous prison regime. Proactively it also presents many synergistic opportunities to the total Health Care business as well as the total prison regime.

5.4 Safer Custody

The situation remains much the same as last year, so some of this section is repeated from our last report.

Safer Custody Programmes are run for the benefit of those prisoners vulnerable to bullying and those at risk of self-harm. The programmes are well ordered and administered. These are divided into Violence Reduction programmes (usually Main block prisoners) and Safer Custody/Self-harming programmes. Assessment Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) reports, (or Orange Books), are held on prisoners liable to self-harm.

Violence Reduction Information Reports (VRIR) are also made up on individuals where necessary. Already this year about 300 have been completed from January to July. The reports cover both perpetrators and victims of bullying, and include trends analysis of bullying in wings and areas within wings, as well as likely times of day where bullying may be more prevalent than others. Monthly staff meetings are held to discuss progress.

Bullying comes in many guises and is almost impossible to eradicate, however it seems to me that the Safer Custody Unit are doing their best in this area, and that there is real enthusiasm to reduce incidences of violence in prison. We hope that getting rid of G3 is not a retrogressive step.

5.5 Segregation/Separation and Care Units

All IMB members visit the Segregation Unit on a rota visit to see if there are any applications.

On a Stat 3 visit the members see all prisoners in Segregation. If a prisoner is placed in the camera cell, the IMB member on a Stat 3 duty that week expects a telephone call to inform them and, on the information provided, make an informed decision whether the prisoner should be seen. Although it appears that the Board member is not always notified, we are working to improve the system.

If possible on a Stat 3 visit we attend any adjudications and reviews taking place. The Board still has difficulty finding out and attending the reviews as they are meant to be on set days, but have of late been irregular and the Board have not been notified when they are taking place. This situation remains as last year and is unsatisfactory because the Board are volunteers cannot always fit in with the prison regime.

There are still some occasions when prisoners spend longer in Segregation than the Board expects, due to certain circumstances, and this continues to be a worrying feature.

The Board visits the Segregation Unit on every rota, to check on the situation and newly located prisoners. It is always busy but the staff are very welcoming and find time to answer all questions. The Governor of the Segregation Unit is professional and very interested in the Board's opinion, and, as with all the Governors within the prison, has an ever 'open door' to his office to discuss any problems the Board have with the Segregation Unit. Hopefully the Board will be able to sort out any of the above problems in the near future.

The Board feel that those prisoners held in the Segregation Unit are treated in an appropriate manner by staff and very rarely put in an application to the IMB.

6 OTHER AREAS OF CONCERN OR MERITING PRAISE

6.1 Lifers

Over the year there has been an average of 35 lifers in the prison.

There are 18 Lifer Officers who deal with low key issues on a day to day basis. Officers are allocated to specific prisoners.

Offence focused work and Lifer walkabouts, where individual prisoners can experience life on the outside, in the company of either Prison Officers or Probation staff, before their parole dates are important parts of sentence management.

Throughout the year 'Lifers' Days are held in the Visits Room, to which parents and partners are invited. The format is an address by the Governor, followed by the Lifer Governor and Offender Supervisors. The theme is risk management. Offenders are left in no doubt as to their status and rights in society on release, as well as the rights of their victims in the decision making processes that would circumscribe their lives in the future. The Offence Analysis System (OASys) is explained to them and hand-outs of the grading system are available to both prisoners and visitors alike. That prisoners and their next of kin could receive the same information at the same time seems invaluable to both parties.

It seems that most of those who were dealing with Lifers, both directly or indirectly, are focused and committed, but the system is still under-funded and under-manned. Getting specific prisoners on to meaningful courses is sometimes impossible, either because of a scarcity of instructors or because an appropriate course is not provided at Acklington, or is not large enough to accommodate those requiring help.

6.2 IPP Prisoners

There average number of prisoners held on Indeterminate Public Protection sentences over the last year was 108, a considerable increase on last year (78). The Board has expressed concern over the difficulties prisoners have in coping with this form of detention, and we understand that it is a worry shared by staff.

6.3 Resettlement

6.3.1 Reducing Offending

Reducing Re-Offending Strategy, a document produced by HMP Acklington, sets down 7 strategic pathways that prepare a prisoner for his release date. They include:

1. Accommodation;
2. Education, Training and Employment;
3. Drugs and Alcohol;
4. Children and Families;
5. Attitudes, Thinking and Behaviour;
6. Health;
7. Finance, Benefit and Debt.

The document is available on the North East Prison Website: www.neprisons.org.uk

6.3.2 Accommodation on release

Some prisoners are transferred to Category 'D' prisons from Acklington, but the majority are released from here, and a worrying number (some 12+ %) have no homes to go to. Last year the Board was informed that there was no Housing Officer, but that one was shortly to be appointed; this is not the case and the prison is still without dedicated help for housing.

6.3.3 Employment on release

It is a sad reflection on the Service that out of every 10 prisoners released only one will find employment.

On a more positive note, the prison continues to be involved with an Employers' Forum and an Employers' Coalition Enterprise, whereby organisations such as the Marriott Hotel Chain will give employment to ex prisoners; this is commendable.

The Industries section of education trains prisoners in a variety of skills, not all of which can be transferred into the marketplace – there are not many opportunities for tailoring these days, for example. The Engineering Shop, however, is only a couple of years old, and well used. More space is required to accommodate new machinery. The downside is that there are no outlets for this work except within the prison network. On visiting the Workshops the Board observed prisoners were welding up bars for their own prison. You could say that it does not matter what they do, it is the learning of skills that is required, and in part the Board agree, but it must be demoralising for some, if not all of them.

6.3.4 Pre Release Courses

- ⇒ Drugs and alcohol. (see sections 5.3.5 and 5.3.6 above)
- ⇒ Healthy Relationships (HR) This programme ended in January 2010. The Board is sorry about this.
- ⇒ Children and Families. The Board very much regrets that the Family Education Centre which was proposed over 2 years ago has not been set up. It feels that it was a very valuable initiative, sponsored both by the prison and NEPACS (a Durham based charity, which runs the Visitors' Centre). If it is possible to set it up, we feel it would play a very important part in the resettlement process.

6.4 Offender Management Unit

There are 4 Probation Officers, including 2 in the Public Protection Unit, who are all supervised by a Senior Probation Officer. Their office accommodation is seen as satisfactory, although they do carry very high caseloads (in the high 80's). Many reports are required to be prepared covering parole applications, MAPPA requests and recalls to prison. One Officer deals with contact issues which can include outside agencies.

The Board finds the OMU staff unfailingly helpful.

6.5 OASys

Two Probation Officers are responsible for this with the assessment being prepared by outside staff and the report should come with the prisoner. The report addresses the reason for re-offending, the risk levels to the community and the risk of re-offending. This is an area about which prisoners often seem uncertain, but, again, the Board finds the staff most helpful.

6.6 Kitchen

The Kitchen is visited weekly by IMB members on all statutory visits. Menus are examined, food often sampled and any staff or prisoner issues highlighted. Prisoner Food Consultative meetings involving VP and Mains estate prisoner representatives are held at regular intervals where prisoners from different ethnic backgrounds are given the opportunity to voice feedback. Twenty five to 30 Mains prisoners are employed and have the opportunity to follow a variety of qualifications including NVQ's (level one and 2). Choice of meals, quality of food, cleanliness and hygiene are all of a high order reflected in the fact that few complaints are received. The provision of food during Ramadan is always of the highest quality.

6.7 Gym One and 2

The Gymnasium and PE Department offer a significant and valued service within the prison where favourable and very complimentary comments are a regular feature of many IMB members' monthly reports. Changes have been made this year to the PE programme to make it more efficient and the department is averaging 2000-2300 prisoners per week with 44% of the prison population accessing the facilities. Health and wellbeing continues to be a strong feature of their work with a number of very successful new initiatives currently ongoing. A staff Health Day promotion was held last year with very positive feedback.

Prisoner opportunities are many and varied and include a football skills course that commenced in July 2010 from which players are selected to compete in the local North Northumberland League. Selection is linked to the IEP system and prisoners will be required to maintain good unit reports to be considered for selection. A variety of qualifications are offered to prisoners and plans are also in place to forge links with 'Sports University North East England Project' which seeks to nurture and promote community links.

Facilities in Gym 2 continue to present Health and Safety problems in terms of changing and showering and staff are currently awaiting confirmation of plans already submitted for its refurbishment. (See also 5.3.8).

6.8 Incentive and Earned Privileges System

Since last year's report a new Policy Document has been circulated describing the scheme (IEP), it was agreed in December 2009 and implemented in January 2010. This details all key earnable privileges. There has been a continual complaint brought to the Board regarding enhanced status. The policy document states clearly that:

'Prisoners who accept guilt and show willingness to address their offending behaviour may be granted an enhanced status'.

'Those who deny their offence, but who are appealing and are a REGISTERED APPELLANT, may be also considered for enhanced status'.

'Those who deny guilt, but are not appealing, will not be considered for enhanced status, any prisoner must prove their appellant status and if this appeal subsequently fails they will no longer be eligible for enhanced status'.

6.9 Gate House

The Staff here are always helpful, polite and efficient, and the Board expresses gratitude to them.

6.10 Visits Room

There is now a computer based booking system for visitors, which has cut down waiting times. The Visits Room allows every opportunity for offenders and their next of kin to have the chance to maintain a relationship and bond with their children, albeit in a very public arena. It is also the Board's experience that some children are left out and end up in the crèche for the duration of the visit, as father and partner want to talk with one another without the children being in the way.

6.11 Visitors Centre

This building is outside of the prison perimeter but close enough for prisoner visitors for both Acklington and Castington to be within walking distance of the main Gate Lodge. This continues as a truly excellent project, run by NEPACS (North East Prisoners' Aftercare Society), a charity based in Durham. The centre is staffed by both paid and volunteer workers and combines the care of visitors for HMP Acklington and the adjacent HMPYOI Castington. It serves over 41,000 visitors a year, with staff who make them welcome in a comfortable building, sorting out their visiting times and explaining procedures to new visitors. They also have a crèche for the children, both while they are waiting and in the prison Visits room itself; tea and refreshment bars are provided in both places. A member from the IMB's of both prisons attends NEPACS' quarterly management meetings.

6.12 Chaplaincy

The Chaplaincy continues to give effective pastoral care to prisoners of all faiths, and is very proactive in addressing issues of diversity and cultural awareness.

6.13 Samaritans and Listeners

The existing group of Samaritans and Listeners continues to give a good service to prisoners, though, as always, there is a need for more to take on this role.

6.14 Wing Application Boxes

The new boxes are now being used more satisfactorily than before, though IMB members still find that they have to sort out a good many forms which have been put into our boxes in error.

This report was compiled by the current Board Chairman, with contributions from all of the Board members, and the Board Clerk. To them all I express my thanks.

Keith E Knox BSC Hon's, PGcert

IMB Chairman, HMP Acklington

7. APPENDICES

Recommended complement of Board members	20
Number of Board members at start of reporting period	11
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	12
Number of members joining within the reporting period	1
Number of members leaving within reporting period	1
Number of attendances at meetings other than Board meetings	30
Total number of visits to the prison (including all meetings)	179
Applications	241
Total number of Segregation reviews held	*
Total number of Segregation reviews attended	**

* Unknown, figures not available

** Unknown, figures not available

CODE	SUBJECT	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
A	Accommodation		9	12	16
B	Adjudications		6	8	9
C	Diversity Related		20	18	4
D	Education/Employment Training		20	20	25
E	Family/Visits		7	2	4
F	Food/Kitchen related		2	3	2
G	Health Related		43	46	40
H	Property		21	15	25
I	Sentence Related		45	48	35
J	Staff/Prisoner/related		16	12	11
K	Transfers		33	45	40
L	Miscellaneous		49	43	30
	TOTAL NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS		271	287	241