

**The Right Honourable the Secretary of State
For the Ministry of Justice**

Sir

I have the honour to submit;

THE ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE INDEPENDENT BOARD

YOI/HMP ASKHAM GRANGE, YORK

1st JULY 2009 to 30th JUNE 2010

Members of the Board

Mr. J Pearson – Chairman

Mr. M Barrie

Mr. S Beyer

Cllr. Mrs S Crisp (resigned 28 January 2010)

Mrs. H Gilbertson JP

Mr. R Hubbard

Mrs R King

Mr. C Saunders JP

Mrs. D Smith

J. Pearson

Chairman 17 September 2010

Section 1

STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

The Prisons Act 1952 and the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 require every prison and IRC (Immigration Removal/Reception Centre) 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;

- (1) 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.
- (2) Inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority as the Board judges appropriate, any concern it has.
- (3) 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 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.

Section 2

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Section 3

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON AND ITS FUNCTION

YOI/HMP Askham Grange is an open prison for women situated in the centre of the rural village of Askham Richard, south of York.

The house, built in 1886 as a country family mansion, became the first open prison for women in 1947. The splendid building, parts of which are Listed for conservation purposes, poses challenges for senior management particularly in regard to residents and staff with physical disabilities.

The population, all convicted, ranges in age from Young Offenders to residents of mature years. They predominantly live in dormitory accommodation but those on Stage Two resettlement (on paid outside work) and lifer prisoners have priority for the comparatively small number of single rooms and are placed on a waiting list as appropriate to ensure fairness of allocation.

Askham Grange is an open prison in which the overriding ethos is for resettlement and preparation of the residents (as they are known) for their return to the community via its Pathways regime which encompasses all aspects of the needs of the residents. There is separate purpose-built accommodation for up to ten mothers and their babies, enabling them to maintain full time care of their child up to eighteen months of age whilst in prison and it is complemented by high quality nursery premises which also takes in children of staff and from the local community.

The regime is focussed on reducing re-offending and returning former offenders to the community as responsible and useful citizens. The physical environment of Askham Grange in some measure assists these aims as does the apparent relaxed atmosphere but it is still a prison with uniformed officers and strict rules of conduct that are vigorously applied when necessary.

The baseline CNA IS 150. The in-use CNA is 128. The operational capacity is 128.

Section 4

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The past year to June 30 2010, has been one of unprecedented change at YOI/HMP Askham Grange.

In our Annual Report for the previous year to June 30 2009, we stated that Askham Grange had been ‘clustered’ with YOI/HMP New Hall, a ‘closed’ prison for women some 40 miles away. This was described as a “necessary efficiency”, i.e. a cost saving exercise utilising Senior Management across both establishments. Consequently Governor Sands of New Hall was given responsibility for both sites. We further commented that the establishment had settled in well to the new arrangement and residents had not been disadvantaged as a result of the ‘clustering’. In the Board’s opinion, this was due to the manner in which Mr. Sands assisted by Mr Davies the Deputy Governor (now known as Head of Open Site of Askham Grange) had managed the process of change. Equally, the initial doubts and uncertainties of staff had been assuaged by the dynamic leadership of the new management.

However, we added the caveat, “the Board remains concerned that successors to the posts of Governor of both establishments and Head of Open Site, may not have the background knowledge to readily continue the unique ethos of Askham Grange” Two months after the publication of the Annual Report, Governor Sands left the Prison Service, followed soon afterwards by the transfer of Bob Davies to HMP Lindholme.

A new Governor and Deputy Governor for both establishments were subsequently appointed dividing their time between Askham Grange and New Hall. In addition an Open Site Governor, full time at Askham Grange was installed. It is noted that all three of these Governors are new to the posts they now occupy. Other members of the Senior Management Team have been given dual roles in both prisons. It has therefore been a period of learning for all concerned but determination and good management skills were exercised in ensuring the residents were not disadvantaged.

At the same time that a complete churn of Senior Management was in progress, severe financial cuts were being imposed, necessitating a comprehensive review of all staff functions and cost centres. This resulted in a full staff re-profiling exercise and changes to long established practices in order to meet a much reduced budget. The Open Site Governor has informed the Board that as a result, the establishment has lost 2 officers and 2 OSG’s. which equates to 128.4 hours at the operational level. We have been assured that whilst there has been re-allocation of management functions, the establishment has maintained the level of service delivery to the residents of Askham Grange. We will continue to monitor this in the coming year.

The Board congratulates the Governors for their strength and resoluteness in what must have been an exhausting, difficult and challenging initiation process and we offer them our continued support in the future.

Section 5

KEY ISSUES

Question to the Minister

YOI/HMP Askham Grange has an unrivalled history of achievement and resettlement success resulting in a re-offending rate of less than 13%. Whilst the Board accepts that cost savings have had to be made, the impact on relatively small staff numbers can have a disproportionate effect on the services the establishment offers. As a Board we are concerned that any further reduction of budget will result in a decrease of these vital services, inevitably increasing the risk that ex-offenders who otherwise would have made a useful contribution to society, returning to criminal activities.

Will the Minister give consideration to the exceptional function of the establishment and assist NOMS to ensure that Senior Management have sufficient financial resources to continue the outstanding resettlement service that Askham Grange provides? It is not necessary to mention the benefits, monetary, humanely and socially that low levels of re-offending produces.

Question to the Prison Service

In last year's Annual Report we raised the matter, (7.6 Short term transfers), of a significant number of prisoners being transferred from closed conditions to Askham Grange with only a few weeks, or in some cases, days before their release date. We added that an already stretched workforce have to go through the processes required for new receptions, soon to be followed by the processes prior to discharge. The Board considered this to be an unnecessary waste of money and resources, as well as being unsettling for the resident and their connections.

This practice has not improved over the reporting year, therefore the very efficient and caring Offender Management Unit are being subjected to excessive and avoidable pressures at a time when greater efficiencies are being sought.

The transfer from a closed prison to open conditions can be a difficult experience and frequently requires a period of adjustment in order to cope. To add the turmoil of being moved shortly before release, is in the Board's view an unfair additional burden to impose. During the reporting year 2 residents arrived 3 days after their HDC date and 3, one day after. In addition, others who arrived with only a short period to their HDC date are analysed thus:-

10 days or less	14 days or less	28 days or less	42 days or less
5	5	13	10

Whilst these numbers may appear small, they show that out of a total intake of 220 residents from other prisons, 17% arrived with less than 42 days to serve, 13% with less than 28 days.

Can the Prison Service use its best endeavours to ensure that prisoners arriving at Askham Grange have sufficient time left to serve, so as to benefit from the excellent services the establishment has to offer?

Section 6

AREAS THAT THE BOARD MUST REPORT ON

6.1 Diversity – Equal Opportunities, Disability and Foreign Nationals

The past year has seen a succession of three Racial Equality Officers, (REO) all originally staff members at HMP New Hall, our ‘clustered’ establishment, each bringing their own interpretation of the role as well as the mandatory presentation of statistics. The frequency of meetings has been changed from monthly to bi-monthly and the venue now alternates between Askham Grange and New Hall, consequently our resident representatives only have an opportunity to attend once every four months. Likewise the availability of staff from Askham Grange able to travel to New Hall is limited. The IMB dedicated Diversity member does attend all meetings.

The Board remains satisfied that there are no issues affecting the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) population of about 10% at Askham Grange, evidenced by the very low number of Racial Incident Report Form’s generated in the past and the harmonious manner in which residents of all cultures live together.

The previously successful Diversity Events Planning Group has not been active this year, consequently there are no events to report on. The most recently appointed REO has stated her intention to resume the Planning Group and we look forward to the outcome.

Askham Grange is still without an appropriate Multi-Faith room although the provision of suitable space has been promised by successive Governors in the past. It is hoped that the present Governor will ensure this is made available shortly. Staff and in particular the catering team, work exceptionally hard to make sure all the needs of Muslim residents are fully met during the festival of Ramadan.

The establishment meets it’s target for staff Equal Opportunities.

The logistics of the building presents difficulties for residents with disabilities but excellent work has been done to improve access at entrances. There is a shortage of suitable accommodation and it is disappointing that planned work to create additional ground floor rooms has had to be cancelled. A proposed and much needed bathroom at ground floor level has also unfortunately been cancelled, although the funding for it had been previously agreed.

Re-profiling has resulted in the former Disability Liaison Officer, (who is herself disabled), no longer being able to continue fulfilling the role. Probation has presently been charged with taking over this function, although well intentioned, have no real affinity with the needs of disabled residents. As a Board, we would like to see the previous DLO re-instated if possible.

Education provision is located on the first and second floors but staff make every effort to ensure that residents with disabilities are not disadvantaged by this.

Askham Grange had one foreign national resident this year, a rare event indeed. Her language was exclusively French on arrival but she settled in well and staff assisted her progress with learning English. Her arrival highlighted areas for improvement in the system which are since being addressed.

6.2 Learning and Skills

6.21 Education

This Department continues to provide excellent educational opportunities for residents. The workforce is now secure, following successful negotiations by the Head of Learning and Skills and The Manchester College, the partner education provider, to avoid potential redundancies. This was achieved by staff agreeing to work more hours and the Education Manager increasing her classroom hours. The future impact of the latter will be monitored by the Head of Learning and Skills and the Board.

The new academic year will see two residents commencing University as day students, reading for a BSc in Applied Social Science and a BSc in Nutrition Science. A Lifer resident will commence a distance learning course leading to an MSc degree in Information Studies. Five residents are continuing Open University Courses leading to degrees in Law, Business Studies and Engineering. In addition, one resident is continuing a Level 4 AAT, (Association of Accounting Technicians) Diploma Course and another at Level 3, both at York College.

Others are engaged in distance learning and home study courses provided by Stonebridge College leading to Diploma qualifications in subjects as diverse as Hotel Management, Business Management, Advanced Counselling, Beauty Salon Management, Life Skills Coaching, Criminology, Drug, Solvent & Alcohol Abuse Counselling and Reflexology. Funding is the responsibility of the residents to obtain and is sourced from a number of organisations and charities.

At any given time there is likely to be about 30 residents (25% of the population) engaged in or applying for such courses. The Board congratulates these residents, many of whom have not previously aspired to further education, on seizing the opportunity through study and hard work, to make a new life for themselves in the future. Likewise, we as a Board applaud Askham Grange for providing the necessary resources, support and encouragement and hope the establishment will be able to continue so to do.

The more usual curriculum subjects of literacy, numeracy, business studies and IT continue to be a feature of life at Askham Grange and this year updated courses of Personal and Social Development have been introduced, all focused to enhance the future employability prospects for residents.

Education also provides uniformed receptionists to meet and greet visitors attending meetings or conferences, thus enhancing appropriate behavioural and customer relationship skills. Most visitors are surprised to learn that the receptionists are in fact, serving prisoners. An Information Point Pack and a Prospectus of Learning and Skills opportunities have been created for and by residents.

The fully equipped in house hairdressing salon provides residents with NVQ opportunities to which 'Nails', an accredited training course has been added.

The Head of Learning and Skills has been pivotal to the development and success of these innovations and to the fully committed Education staff. Her skills and inspiration are recognised and appreciated by the Board, staff and residents alike.

6.22 Purposeful Activity.

In addition to the activities mentioned above, residents are engaged in features of the whole establishment, in accordance with their risk, abilities and needs. These include housekeeping, work in the library, the gardens, the gym and catering. Non-curriculum IT courses, such as digital audio editing are available and well attended.

Mothers located on the Mother and Baby Unit are given evening educational facilities in addition to their attendance at regular daytime classes. Askham Grange is a busy, productive, creative yet peaceful place to be. The only improvement we would like to see is the introduction of an Arts Group.

6.3 Healthcare

The further extension work to the stand alone building is now complete, during which the staff coped admirably with the disruption and continued providing high quality care as usual.

An outbreak of Cryptosporidium and Clostridium Diff affected a number of residents over a period of two weeks. Healthcare staff responded very well in isolating and treating affected residents and preventing further infection. A thorough and detailed investigation by the Health Protection Agency carried out testing over a length of time and cleared the establishment of all responsibility for being the cause of the infection.

Since last year's Annual Report, the problem of residents arriving from sending prisons without medication has improved but remains a continuing difficulty and puts unnecessary stress on staff and residents alike. Attempts to liaise with Healthcare units of sending prisons to stop this happening has been only partly successful.

Open Healthcare Forums are held on a regular basis and are much appreciated by residents. These Forums allow the Healthcare Team to address minor issues in a open and constructive manner. Patient Exit Surveys show broad satisfaction with the service provided by Healthcare. The most recent survey for the quarter to May 2010 shows;

	Excellent	Good/excellent	Good	Good/average	Average	Poor
Residents	28	8	6	4	2	4

As a monitoring Board, we find the Healthcare staff, communicative, helpful and dedicated to the resident's wellbeing.

6.4 Safer Custody

There is no Segregation Unit at Askham Grange, any resident needing to be kept from others long term, would be transferred to a closed establishment. The former Unit has been converted into accommodation with full facilities, known as 'the bedsit' and provides a short term haven for residents in distress or needing quite time or space.

The Board is satisfied that staff provide appropriate support to residents on ACCT's and monitoring is carried out diligently and with compassion. There were 7 ACCT's opened and closed in the past reporting year, a low number that reflects the success of the establishment in creating wellbeing. It would be helpful if the IMB was informed as a matter of routine when ACCT's are opened, rather than members learning of them on Rota or other visits.

Section 7

OTHER AREAS ON WHICH THE BOARD HAS MATTERS TO REPORT

7.1 Resettlement.

Askham Grange is totally focussed on the resettlement of offenders and their successful return to the community, their families and connections. The Pathways Centre is at the heart of this function of the establishment.

The process has been developed over recent years wherein every resident is provided with an overall plan, customised to their individual needs, personal and family circumstances. Preparation for release is monitored and adapted throughout the residents stay with a key worker gaining a thorough knowledge of the resident's situation from numerous one-to-one sessions. The Centre provides essential Preparation for Work courses and is instrumental in assisting residents to seek unpaid work in the community, followed by paid work with organisations that frequently lead to continuation of employment after release. The success of this process is evidenced by the low re-offending rate by residents who have passed through Askham Grange.

The structure of The Pathways Centre however has become very complex in the reporting year. There were six Partner Employers functioning together in The Pathways Centre, employing seven staff on a full or part time basis, namely, HMPS, Remploy, Working Links, SOVA, Job Centre Plus and Next Step Guidance Services. Each of these organisations provide employees with specialist skills, they also raise a Management Charge in addition to their costs of employment.

The Head of Learning and Skill has secured input into the Service Level Agreements with these Partners, therefore adding flexibility into the Nationally or Regionally agreed Contracts of Employment. Without this flexibility, the specific resettlement needs of residents of an open prison may not necessarily have been catered for.

Many feedback letters are received from former residents setting out their post Askham Grange achievements and expressing gratitude for the support and opportunities provided by the education staff and members of The Pathways Centre team

The Board recognises the hard work, conscientiousness and commitment of the staff contributing to the effectiveness of The Pathways Centre.

7.2 Offender Management Unit

The merger of all the staff, both HMPS and Probation, connected with offender management into a single refurbished space has been one of the successes of the past year. From arrival to release via various License processes and Probation input, this unit works efficiently with cover readily available to cope with absences and leave. Communication between the various parties is much improved, particularly in the preparation of documents in connection with Lifer and IPP Boards, Oral Parole Board Hearings and monthly Sentence Planning & Review Boards.

The Board has raised concerns in the past over the delay in convening Oral Parole Board Hearings for Lifers and IPP's and the difficulty in obtaining the relevant information from outside agencies.

Whilst there remains a few residents past their Tariff Date, the process generally has been speeded up and the backlog is being dealt with.

It is indeed a pleasure for the Independent Monitoring Board to report on such positive progress for the benefit of the residents, particularly at a time of financial and re-organisational pressures on the Senior Management Team.

7.3 The Enterprise and Catering Unit.

Catering continues to provide a selection of good quality food for residents and a healthy salad buffet, much of which is grown on site, is available at mealtimes throughout the year. The kitchen is able to cater for all dietary needs and intolerances.

The vacant post of Catering Manager has not been filled, instead the Enterprise Manager now has the responsibilities for supervising the kitchen, training residents and mentoring NVQ candidates, added to his function of maintaining the Conference facilities and attracting new business to the splendid amenities that Askham Grange has to offer. This has worked well since its inception but like many other areas of the establishment, staff are being stretched almost to the limit and there is no cover for unexpected consequences.

We applaud the Enterprise Manager for the way he has embraced his increased work load and the new Catering Manager who was appointed in the reporting year, for consistently providing good and substantial meals

7.4 Transportation of women prisoners.

The Board has been concerned for some time about women being transported in cellular vans and we generally concur with Dame Ann Owers, who as HMCIP stated that this should not happen.

We are particularly unhappy about the lack of toilet facilities for women travelling long distances en route to Askham Grange. As monitors, we saw that on some occasions women were being allowed off the G4S cellular vans to use the toilet before the usual reception processes had been completed. It became clear from our IMB induction of new arrivals, that this was not always the case.

There seemed to be uncertainty over the G4S rules and in order to clarify their position the Operations Director of G4S Care and Justice Services kindly attended an IMB Board meeting and stated that “it is up to the discretion of the van staff if they allow women off to use the toilet after their arrival at Askham Grange whilst awaiting processing of their property and paperwork”. We have since written to request G4S include an appropriate statement in instructions to van staff but have not had a response to date.

As a cost saving opportunity, G4S understandably will use their cellular vans to make multiple inter-prison collections and drop-offs of prisoners, thus adding additional delays to the transportation process.

Board members in their IMB Induction process will continue to monitor new arrivals on their experiences of being transported, in order to ensure that these meet 21st century standards of decency and care.

7.5 Reception

This is a busy area of the establishment and staff cope admirably with many movements of residents on outside community and paid work and those released on temporary Licenses. Reception staff have responded positively to allowing new arrivals off the van with the minimum of delay.

A 'buddy' system is in place to meet and assist new arrivals although residents are not always available to provide this important function.

7.6 The Family Team

7.61 The Mother and Baby Unit

This excellent quality stand alone facility remains quite an exceptional place for mothers with young babies to serve their prison sentences. Maximum capacity is 10 mothers and babies and occupancy rates have been on or near this figure throughout the year but will continue to fluctuate depending on the availability of suitable prisoners.

7.62 The Nursery

The staffing by qualified and trainee nursery nurses is by necessity outsourced and the management of this superbly equipped building changed during the reporting year from Leeds City Council to Barnardo's. Martin Narey the Chief Executive of that organisation and a former head of the Prison Service, performed the official 'opening ceremony'. The previous staff remain in place and maintain a high standard of safety and care for resident's babies and the youngsters of staff and from the neighbouring community.

7.63 Acorn House

This unique facility provides overnight maisonette accommodation for residents and their children in a secluded location within the establishment grounds. It is an innovation to be praised as it adds a positive and practical dimension to the resettlement of mothers back into normal family life. It requires mothers to carry out usual domestic duties of cooking, cleaning and bath time etc. and re-establishes lost contact, in some cases creates relationships that have lapsed or not previously existed.

Approval by a number of relevant internal departments has to be sought and obtained but there is always a waiting list for Acorn House, an experience that many residents describe as "quite wonderful to be a mother again".

This provision could be seen as an obvious target for closure in times of huge financial pressures and staff reductions. The cost benefits to society in terms of re-uniting families and discouraging re-offending is incalculable. Long may Acorn House be allowed to continue with this valuable work.

7.64 The Family Worker

This function is central to all aspects of establishing and maintaining family bonds between residents, their children and family members from the time they arrive at Askham Grange, through to preparation for release and the eventual return to a family unit. The role includes one-to-one counselling, family support work, supervised children's visits, referrals to Home Start and other relevant agencies, evaluations for suitability for Acorn House (see 7.63), extended family visits evaluations, pre-release evaluations. The outcomes make an exceptional contribution to keeping families together, thus impacting on the wellbeing of both present and future generations.

As a Board, we believe this essential service should be immune from budget cuts and allowed to continue doing vital work.

7.7 Activities, Events and Initiatives.

Residents and staff participate in a number of entertainments and charity fund raising events with much enthusiasm and success.

In last year's Annual Report we highlighted the support Askham Grange give to "Prison Me!! No Way", (PMNW) the innovative scheme designed to make an impact on the lives of young people, so as to reduce or remove the possibility of offending behaviour and turn them away from crime and its consequences.

This past year a dedicated Prison Officer and groups of four residents have continued to visit schools and provide a powerful demonstration of the causes of their criminal offending and the effects on themselves, their families and the community in which they lived. It clearly has an impact on the residents as well; of the 196 Askham Grange residents who have participated since the scheme started, only one has been known to re-offend.

As is the case with many other aspects of life at the establishment, this activity faces an uncertain future. PMNW requires officers to undertake this work as volunteers. Askham Grange has supported a Prison Officer with work time to deliver this service on a regular basis to local schools and venues outside the Yorkshire & Humber Region. This facility has never been a profiled task and the Open Site Governor is currently in discussions with the Chief Executive of PMNW to look at options for allowing this work to continue in recognition of the establishment's wider community responsibilities. As a Board, we look forward to the outcome with much interest.

7.8 Substance Misuse

A robust detection policy exists at Askham Grange but it is inevitable that there are times when drugs and alcohol is present in the establishment. The Board is satisfied that sources are swiftly and effectively located and dealt with and those caught using prohibited substances are considered on an individual basis but repeat offenders are invariably returned to closed conditions.

A strong and well structured support programme is in place for residents to help them to come off drugs and alcohol dependence and most importantly, to stay off when released. Askham Grange residents perceive what the establishment has to offer as their best chance of staying 'clean' and is recognised as such by staff and management

7.9 Visits

Visits occur on Saturday and Sunday afternoons; standard residents are allowed visits on either day, enhanced residents on both days. There is no limit to their frequency. Visitors are treated with courtesy and respect and subjected to the minimum of intervention. This is appreciated by the residents who feel it marks their progress back to rehabilitation to be able to greet family and friends in such agreeable surroundings. Often it is the first time they have seen their children since being imprisoned, “I wouldn’t want them to see me in the place I came from” is a frequent comment.

7.10 The Library

Askham Grange has a large well stocked dedicated library accommodation supervised by City of York Library Service but managed on a day to day basis by the residents. A full selection of reading matter, CD’s and DVD’s covering a wide range of subjects are available. There were 8,310 library visits recorded in the reporting year and 5,891 issues, which for a population of between 100 to 120 residents represents a high number of individual usage.

The Story Book Mums initiative is much used, a valuable link in providing audio voice recordings of mothers separated from their children

Daily newspapers are provided, keeping residents informed of local, national and world events, thus reducing the likelihood of any sense of isolation.

Limited access computers provide an opportunity for private study in quiet comfortable surroundings.

An Author in Residence has inspired a group of residents, now known as “The Askham Poets” to publish a book of their original and highly acclaimed work.

7.11 The Chaplaincy

The spiritual needs of residents are well catered for both by the regular availability of Anglican, Catholic, Methodist, Quaker and Muslim Chaplains and the opportunity provided for residents who have their local Risk Assessments to visit outside places of worship appropriate to their particular faith.

A letter writing service is available for those who don’t receive many personal letters.

7.12 The Central Business Unit.

This unit provides the establishment with all the administrative and financial functions and controls and seems to us to be an efficient and professional department. The staff are always welcoming and helpful to Board members seeking assistance.

The IMB Clerk is based in the unit and we are appreciative of the well organised and competent support we receive.

Section 8

THE WORK OF THE BOARD

8.1 Board Membership

There are presently eight members, Cllr. Mrs Sonja Crisp having retired in January 2010; the Board appreciates the service Sonja gave to IMB Askham Grange and wish her well.

8.2 Applications to the Board.

26 formal written applications were received compared with 27 the previous year and 31 in 2008/9. The content of these 26 Applications covered 19 subjects, all of which were dealt with appropriately by members in the course of their Rota duties. There were 32 Verbal Applications in the reporting year.

We have excellent relationships with staff at all levels which enables Board members to quickly deal with most issues before they become formal written Applications. All Written or Verbal Applications are recorded and followed through until the matter is concluded.

8.3 Matters of concern arising from Rota visits.

Again this reporting year there have been no major matters of serious concern to the Board. There are always housekeeping and individual problems for residents but in the main, we have been able to resolve them. Issues regarding management policy or decisions are clearly outside of our remit; nevertheless we discuss these at our meetings and have generally concluded that they have been made for valid reasons, although not always to our liking.

In general terms and it is worth repeating again, the effects of stringent cuts to the income of Askham Grange does cause us to have concerns about the ability of the establishment to maintain essential resettlement services to residents.

8.4 Establishment Statistics

Relevant numbers are collated and reported on monthly, comparisons are made and trends, if any, are identified, discussed and monitored. We prefer to look at actual numbers, with such a comparatively low population, percentages can distort and mislead.

8.5 Access to residents and staff

The open nature of Askham Grange enables IMB members easy access to residents on an almost immediate basis, even those on outside work can be seen without any material delay. Members have a highly visible presence and we believe that residents feel they have easy access to us.

Staff are readily available to assist with issues and queries we raise, as a Board we appreciate their commitment to fair, decent and humane treatment of residents. We are grateful for the time they make available to us, often when their time is at a premium.

8.6 Special Interests

In addition to the usual Rota visit processes, Board members take special responsibility for monitoring and reporting on functions of the establishment which are of particular interest to the Board; Healthcare, Mother and Baby Unit, Lifer and IPP Boards, Pathways, Resident Forums, Catering etc. These necessitate regular attendance to meetings, relevant matters of which are reported on as a monthly Agenda item.

8.7 Personal Officer Review 2009.

The Board carries out reviews of existing protocols and procedures from time to time, with the full knowledge of Governors and staff, so as to satisfy ourselves that these are efficient and working in the best interest of residents.

This reporting year we completed a review on the effectiveness of the Askham Grange Personal Officer Scheme and was undertaken by three Board members. Fifteen residents (about 12.5% of the population) were selected on the basis of ethnicity, age, length of time at the establishment and category in order to represent a true sample of the population. The residents were known only to the interviewers and were not further identified. Three members of staff were included in the review on a similar basis.

The conclusions are summarised below;

- Of the 15 residents interviewed, only one was less than satisfied with their Personal Officer, over half scored their Personal Officer as Excellent, having solved issues and problems for them. The remaining six scored either Satisfied or Very Satisfied.
- This satisfaction was consistent through all categories, ages and ethnicities of the residents interviewed.
- Resident's comments are overwhelmingly enthusiastic about the Scheme and value their Personal Officer's support. "Comforting to know that someone (at Askham Grange) is there for me" perhaps sums up the majority of sentiments expressed.
- **On the basis of the sample interviewed, there is no evidence to suggest that the Personal Officer Scheme at Askham Grange is anything other than supportive of the residents and works in their best interests.**
- **The staff interviews produced some interesting and unexpected comments and the fact that they carry out Personal Officer's duties in their own individual style seems to us to add to their underlying care and concern for the residents.**

The Board considered the review worth undertaking and the results were made known to Senior Management, as was our opinion that the method of allocation of Personal Officers could be improved.

We will continue to initiate reviews as and when considered appropriate.

Section 9

THE GENERAL REGIME

In addition to the areas we have reported on, the following departments make an equal contribution to the care, safety and advancement of residents. They are an integral part of the achievements of Askham Grange and provide important support to the establishment, residents and to the IMB board.

- The Centre
- Works
- Health and Safety
- Security
- The gym
- Gardens
- CARAT's

Section 10

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 the reporting period	1
Total number of Board meetings during the reporting period	12
Average number of attendances at Board meetings during reporting period	83%
Total number of attendances at meetings other than Board meetings	270
Total number of visits to the prison (including all meetings)	360

	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10
Total number of written applications received	31	27	29
Total number of verbal applications received		9	26
Total number of receptions	206	261	220
Total number of Adjudications	136	90	69
Total number of ACCT's opened	7	6	7
Total number of request complaints	78	85	102