

HMYOI DEERBOLT

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

1 OCTOBER 2009 – 30 SEPTEMBER 2010

HMYOI Deerbolt
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1. Description of HMYOI Deerbolt

A maximum of 513 sentenced male offenders aged 18-21 are accommodated at HMYOI Deerbolt, Barnard Castle in County Durham. The purpose-built establishment includes an administration centre, nine residential wings with exercise yards, industrial workshops and education classrooms, a gymnasium and chapel and a separate HIT building set on land partly under cultivation and partly used for dry stone walling projects.

Prisoners are received from a wide catchment area: from Hull to the southeast of Deerbolt stretching northeast and across the country to Liverpool in the northwest.

2. Executive Summary

The Board is able to report a successful year in spite of the financial exigencies imposed on the prison estate as a whole. We attribute this to the confident management of the establishment by the SMT under the leadership of Governor Mrs. Jenny Mooney.

As delineated in our previous report, the Board once again emphasise the overall steadiness of the establishment and the quiet progress maintained by prison staff through the reporting year. This, in spite of the pressure of economic cutbacks and the general expectation that there will be no improvement in staffing or resources in the short term.

In view of this successful management the Board are especially anxious to bring the following observations to the attention of the Ministry of Justice:

- The Board deplores the appalling waste of time, effort and money in setting up workplaces in the new laundry and print room – still not on line after many months – it was closed in January 2008 and refurbishment began early in 2009 – only to learn that further expense and delay will be incurred since the roof is now to undergo major repair (see 4.8).
- An upward trajectory in the number of incidents, some serious, taking place in the showers (see 6.5, 6.6, 6.7) leads the Board to request urgent attention be paid to the organisation of the showers on all wings at Deerbolt.

3. Important Issues in 2009/10

- 3.1 The continuing improvement in mental health provision has provided prisoners with a care once lacking. However, the Board is now aware of a concomitant requirement for discipline staff for supervision of disturbed prisoners in the HCC.
- 3.2 The necessity to double up roles and reduce designated hours to important functions like REAT and Safer Custody has given the Board cause for concern.
- 3.3 The regular curtailment of association because of lack of staff is carefully managed but it is a trend that the Board has noted.
- 3.4 The Board has observed a noticeable absence of middle management strength in Deerbolt with the removal of the Principle Officer grade.
- 3.5 The value of the Visitors Centre run by NEPACS is acknowledged by the Board to be a valuable asset to families who travel considerable distances. We have observed especially good cooperation between the centre and the prison.

4. Learning and Skills and Resettlement

- 4.1 The education provider Manchester College revised a number of areas of responsibility and issued new working contracts to teachers in this reporting year. This resulted in ten full time posts being lost. As a consequence of uncertainty morale has been low but the Board have faith that when the new regime is established Deerbolt's proven ability to deliver good education and training will continue as before.
- 4.2 The total number of teaching hours has not been affected by the new contract. Attendance is now in excess of 80% of the prisoner population: testament to the care of Deerbolt officers and staff in encouraging participation in potentially life-changing opportunities.
- 4.3 Industrial training has had a high success rate with completed courses. However, the Board consider it a loss to Deerbolt that a dedicated course in forklift truck training which has trained and certificated more than 100 men in the past 24 months is to be replaced with a more general Warehouse Training programme. This is surely a "dumbing down" of opportunity and is surprising when the teaching expertise is available in the establishment and the waiting list has never been empty.
- 4.4 The QCF certification replacing NVQs seems to the Board to be a promising improvement. Being closer to the old City and Guilds, the new modular training strategies should deliver results much closer to the practical skills needed by employers. The system of "earned credits, certificates and diplomas" can also be taken forward to form the basis of a choice of new learning courses outside prison.

- 4.5 The work of the Matrix Unit (previously called the High Intensity Training programme) has continued to impress the Board. In particular the STP Course (developing thinking skills) deserves special mention. It is a roll-on: roll-off programme targeting young men with poor self-discipline to work to improve behaviour and understand that actions have consequences.
- 4.6 In our last report, the Board praised the work of gym staff running the CSCS (Construction Skills Certificate Scheme) who were able to provide certificates to 80 plus lads going out to work. This year the figure has risen to 95 successfully completed courses.
- 4.7 The Board particularly wish to highlight the 30 plus volunteer tutors who come from the surrounding community and give their time to help prisoners with basic literacy and numeracy skills. The Adult Literacy class provides outstanding support to the establishment, especially with regard to Foreign National prisoners who have little English and often no written language skills at all. We note and appreciate their contribution to Deerbolt.
- 4.8 Deerbolt has made substantial progress in Resettlement with Education or Training this year more than doubling its target although, perhaps owing to the diminished job market in the Northeast of England, the Resettlement with Employment target has not been reached. However, with the Recruitment and Community Care grants, increased efforts are now made to find accommodation for young men leaving prison so that they may take up jobs (122 this year) secured through Job Centre Plus and Pertemps (a private recruitment agency). Supported by a financial guidance consultant and the de Paul Trust this is an altogether better situation than at this time last year.
- 4.9 Another improvement is ROTL (release on temporary licence) to undertake work experience, to follow up housing needs, to undertake paid employment or to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. This year 299 applications have been managed successfully (against 176 for last year).
- 4.10 The work done by the FOR (Focussing on Resettlement) team is very worthwhile giving focus to prisoners with the help of outside agencies such as drug and alcohol support and mental health issues.
- 4.11 And, in addition, the efforts of HIT/Matrix following their relaunch, are building momentum in Deerbolt with support from a dedicated officer team to manage some of the more demanding prisoners.
- 4.12 On the other hand, the Board are extremely disappointed with the protracted delay to the refurbishment of the laundry building destined to provide work and services for Deerbolt. The waste of money and resources in first equipping and decorating the building and then taking the decision to replace the roof seems to us extraordinary. In the

meantime work places for prisoners and potentially profitable business opportunities are lost.

The Board deplore the waste involved in this enterprise. At a time when the Governor and staff of Deerbolt are being exhorted to make ever-increasing efforts at economic stringency how has a such glaring inconsistency come about?

5. Healthcare

- 5.1 In the current reporting year the Healthcare Centre has served Deerbolt very well. This, in spite of varying levels of staffing owing to sickness.
- 5.2 Several outcomes have been very challenging. In the early part of the reporting year a prisoner with a terminal illness was treated with exemplary care by the HCC and, indeed, all prison staff before being granted compassionate release by the Parole Board at the (second) request of the Governor.
- 5.3 The sudden death of another prisoner from an undiagnosed heart condition was also dealt with by HCC staff and, again, by all prison staff in a profoundly sympathetic manner.
- 5.4 The IDTS clinic at Deerbolt has made outreach to the Visitor Centre this year providing extra support for partners and family of prisoners including a telephone contact in the HCC for guidance in the early vulnerable days after release.
- 5.5 Mental healthcare pivots around a Mental Health Gateway worker who assesses need. The Board has attended case reviews from time to time and observe that the HCC carries a complex case load.
- 5.6 Inpatients with mental health needs can be especially demanding and, when violent or at risk of self-harming, they can be a strain on staffing resources – both nursing staff and discipline officers.
- 5.7 The dentist has made a concerted effort to clear a backlog of prisoners on the waiting list caused by delay in replacement of equipment and in this she has been successful.

The Board consider that the efficiency of the HCC contributes in no small measure to the steadiness of Deerbolt noted in the Executive Summary.

6. Safer Custody

- 6.1 A total of 122 ACCTs were opened during the reporting year. In 2008/09 there were 136 such documents. The Board note the high peaks of 35 during Oct/Nov 2009 and 29 during July/Aug 2010.

- 6.2 The Listeners programme under the auspices of The Samaritans is working well. There will always be a need to have a rolling programme due to the rapid turnover of prisoners.
- 6.3 Reorganisation of staffing to provide economical use of professional expertise has required a change to less dedicated time allotted to the Safer Custody Officer role at Deerbolt. He now provides absence cover for the Diversity officer as well as undertaking other duties.
- 6.4 In addition Deerbolt's own system for monitoring bullying, violence, threats, all ACCT/self harm data and the forthcoming TAB scheme is being reduced and the Board is concerned that collation of this information, which is important for the welfare of prisoners, should continue.
- 6.5 Surveillance cameras have now been introduced on all wings and incident "hot spots" are given a higher tariff of punishment. However, a massive increase in incidents, some very serious, has occurred in the wing shower areas where no cameras operate: 2008 – 31; 2009 – 33; 2010 – 60 to October. These figures are of grave concern to the Board.
- 6.6 The Board has brought this issue forward on many occasions and we consider there is an urgent and pressing need to change the present organisation of all showers on all wings – viz. individual access to separate shower cubicles.
- 6.7 The Board understand that this would be a major financial undertaking and that Deerbolt, with a reduced budget, cannot find this money. Therefore, as a Board, we appeal to the Minister for Prisons to ensure that funding for this made available to Deerbolt before a life-threatening incident occurs.
- 6.8 Training of staff continues when time and staff availability permit and Governor Mooney personally oversees this training need.
- 6.9 The Safer Custody team meet monthly with staff representatives from most departments attending. However, it would benefit prisoners if Wing staff also attended the meetings regularly.
- 6.10 Safer Custody has a high profile at Deerbolt. The team and all staff strive to ensure that the welfare of all prisoners is maintained to a high standard.

Board is very concerned about the high number of incidents occurring (necessarily off-camera) in the showers. We consider that there is an urgent need to address this.

7. Diversity

- 7.1 Meetings have taken place regularly during the reporting year with full discussion of issues.

- 7.2 Another casualty of cutbacks has been the meetings with Foreign National Prisoners and their attendance at the REAT meetings.
- 7.3 Reduction of dedicated officer time now requires the REO to provide absence cover for the Safer Custody Officer as well as undertaking other duties.
- 7.4 The Chaplain Daniel Hartley has moved on having made a significant contribution to Deerbolt during his tenure and interviews are in hand to find a replacement. The Imam has also taken up a post at HMYOI Durham and again, a replacement is being sought. The Chaplaincy has, however, continued to function well with Father Patrick Cope being supported by temporary placements.

8. **Segregation and Discipline**

- 8.1 The prison population has been received mainly from the Northeast and Yorkshire this reporting year, although we have still had some receptions from the Northwest. The Board are more comfortable that we are, on the whole, receiving prisoners from our geographic area because it makes it easier for visits which, in turn, contributes to a more stable prison population.
- 8.2 All wings have been operational in this reporting year and this has meant that the opportunity for refurbishment has been considerably curtailed.
- 8.3 The implementation of the new HDC rules went smoothly. The deferral of HDC for some prisoners (a result of revised sentence calculations following the 'Noone Judgement' went smoothly.
- 8.4 The Segregation Unit is well run. Staff deal fairly and professionally with all lads brought down for adjudication and held under Rule 49. They explain all processes clearly and advise on expected standards of behaviour whilst being retained in the unit.
- 8.5 Rule 49 Reviews run on time and the IMB attend nearly all sessions which are fully documented as per the statutory requirement.
- 8.6 IMB members sit in on Governor's Adjudications periodically and also sometimes when the visiting Judge is attending Deerbolt.
- 8.7 The Special Cell has been used on occasions when lads have become particularly volatile and a danger to themselves and to staff. The IMB are kept fully informed if use of the cell is deemed necessary and visit the prisoner as soon as they are able. This cell now has natural light through a high level window as recommended by the Inspectorate.

9. Facilities

9.1 Accommodation

- The standard of prisoners' cells vary. Those who do not keep their cells clean are given good encouragement to improve although there is no daily inspection. Consequently the Board note there is an inconsistency between wings regarding the permitted levels of possessions within cells and the type of posters on the walls – some of these could be considered offensive.
- The quality of showers on wings vary: however assiduously wings clean showers, the pressure of numbers on their constant use means that if one breaks down and takes too long for repair, there is really inadequate provision. For example, E and D Wings each have a ratio of only four showers to 66 prisoners.
- General areas of the prison are of a reasonable standard; litter is often a problem particularly in the area outside Prisoner Reception.
- Exercise yards are now up and running and this has provided time out of cell which the Board consider an important improvement (although the lads seem to enjoy the socialisation more than active exercise!). However, there are no cameras directed to the new yards. Observers are reliant on main movement cameras and coverage of E and D Wings in particular is not good.

9.2 Kitchen

- The Board have observed a good year for the Deerbolt kitchen: many improvements have been made particularly in the speed with which broken equipment is repaired. This has led to the smooth running of the kitchen.
- For £2.10 per prisoner per day, the staff produce good meals. The Board are impressed that with rising world food prices and no increase in the budget a daily menu provides choice and caters for medical and cultural needs.
- The training kitchen is now firmly established providing NVQ Levels 1 and 2 certification. The lads here also provide food for special occasions at the request of the Governor.

9.3 Gym

- This building is constantly in use and very well staffed.
- The Board have noted that broken equipment frequently affects the efficiency of gym sessions. Perhaps the purchase of better quality equipment would save money in the long run?

- The Board have concern over the facilities for supervision of the gym showers: there are many blind spots.
- Courses run from the gym include Quit Smoking (currently a waiting list of 60) – there is good discipline here since if a prisoner breaks the no smoking rule, there is no second chance.
- The Green Card training reported on last year still takes place with an increase in the number of successful candidates to over 90 this year. However, the actual purchase of the card is now left to prisoners on release.
- Exercise and Fitness Level 1 is, again, an excellent course for competent prisoners and on release they are eligible for employment in the fitness industry.
- The football team have had a successful year and better paperwork has greatly improved the admission of visiting teams to Deerbolt.
- Five candidates have passed the Bronze level of the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.

The Board commend the work of the gym especially on the above listed courses. Good encouragement from management and hard work by staff has enabled prisoners to achieve personal and professional goals that augur well for the future of these young men going back into society.

9.4 Gardens

- The gardens at Deerbolt are maintained to a very high standard. All areas are kept neat and tidy with working parties supervised by talented and committed staff.
- Prisoners employed in the gardens generally enjoy their work and feel a sense of achievement. They are eligible to take NVQ Level I in general gardening and also the National Proficiency Test for Machinery at Levels I and 2.
- A particular success at Deerbolt is the NVQ for proficiency in Dry Stone Walling. The standard is high and one lad from Deerbolt on the course in particular gained the highest mark in the North of England. He has now left prison and has been “snapped up” by a local employer.

10. Community Relations

- 10.1 “Museums Libraries and Archives” helped prisoners, staff and volunteers to set up a World War II display which was available for viewing by the local community.

- 10.2 A local Luncheon Club was entertained both inside and outside the establishment by lads working the drama group. They produced art, poems, drama and music – all the work of the prisoners themselves.
- 10.3 As part of the Fathers Inside project, prisoners perform a drama for their own families and children.
- 10.4 Local residents continue to help out with basic reading and writing in the Education Department. Currently some twenty volunteers attend on a regular basis with a further fifteen as and when they can. There is a demand for more volunteers and, whilst there are many offering their services, currently neither the education nor security departments have sufficient time to carry out the vetting process.
- 10.5 Staff annually organise a convoy of vehicles – containing clothes, toys and medical supplies – to travel to, and distribute around, orphanages in Romania. All funding is by voluntary donation.
- 10.6 An annual Aviation Day is held in the grounds of the prison. This is organised by retired prison officers, includes a “fly-past” and is attended by officers from a nearby Royal Air Force base, dignitaries and the general public from the local town. There is no funding from the prison for this event.
- 10.7 A prisoner’s football team continues enthusiastically to play matches in a local league. This season’s results are – 12 home and 12 “away” = 24 matches and 23 won with one drawn. Have they got the magic formula?
- 10.8 Trainers and players from Middlesbrough Football Club again spent five days coaching football in the prison and Sunderland FC undertook a similar coaching session.
- 10.9 For security and staffing reasons, it is difficult for prisoners to be released to work in the local community. Nevertheless, two prisoners qualified under ROTL to work for a local manufacturer and another has been promised permanent employment as a result of a placement.
- 10.10 An annual Carol Service is held in the Chapel and is attended by prisoners, prison staff and invited members of the public.
- 10.11 Duke of Edinburgh Award courses are run in Deerbolt and, as part of the award, inmates are able to spend nights in camp outside the prison.
- 10.12 A competitive “Big Bake-Off” was held in the training kitchen where staff and prisoners were invited to bake muffins. Prizes were awarded and sponsorship raised over £200 for a local hospital baby unit.
- 10.13 Deerbolt contains a wealth of talent and officials continue to give talks to a number of local organisations. As a result of this, a cross-section of the local community is acquainted with the good work of the prison and, also, a wider understanding of some of the reasons why youngsters are incarcerated in the first place.

11. **The Work of the Board**

Under the Chairmanship of Mrs. Annabel Dobson and Vice Chairman David Yeadon the Board have been a successful team of eight members. A recruitment drive is currently underway and we hope to conduct interviews shortly.

The work of the Board at Deerbolt is made considerably more efficient by the support of our clerk, Mr. Anthony Coatsworth, and we gladly acknowledge his expertise and help.

(a) The Board's Monitoring Function

Weekly Rota visits are carried out and reports made at each monthly meeting in the presence of the Governor. We also receive written reports from the Governor responding to issues we have raised. The Governor shares general information with us and we are free to ask any questions we wish. Board members have free access to all members of staff. Applications are discussed so that experience can be shared. Members may choose to attend various function meetings. The most important is the Safer Custody meeting which deals with the welfare of prisoners but a high priority is also accorded to the Prisoners' Consultative Committee (which meets monthly with prisoner representatives from each wing) as this keeps us in touch with issues the prisoners themselves think important.

(b) The Board's Training Programme

The Board Development Officer, Mrs. Josephine Carroll has provided good support with speakers and reminders of in-house training at Deerbolt. She also organised a highly successful visit to HMP Hull (Deerbolt is a receiving prison for YOIs from Hull) where we gained important insights into the consequences of their policy of mixing adult and YOI prisoners (far fewer fights and an excellent local resettlement project called Minerva).

As in the previous two years the Board held a morning workshop where each member presented individual contributions to this report. As a consequence of discussion following the presentations, we have a new critical awareness of what can be improved next year when we hope to have new members in their probationary year.

Statistical Appendices 2009/2010

	2008/09	2009/10
Recommended Board Complement	14	14
Number of Board Members at start of year	10	12
Number of Board members at end of year	12	8
Number of new members joining during year	3	0
Number of members leaving with year	1	4
Number of attendances to the prison other than Board Meetings	291	280
Number of visits to the prison including all meetings	376	362
Total number of applications	48	109
Total number of Rule 49 Reviews held	53	49
Total number of Rule 49 Reviews attended.	47	32

Signed by Annabel Dobson
31st December 2010