



INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

HMP/YOI DOWNVIEW

ANNUAL REPORT 2010

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1 STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

The Prisons Act 1952 and the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 require every prison and IRC to be monitored by an independent Board appointed by the Secretary of State for Justice from volunteer 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 designed to prepare them for release.

(2) Inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority as it 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 had 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.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

Downview is a closed prison for adult women. Within the prison boundaries, there is also a 17 bed juvenile unit (The Josephine Butler Unit) for female offenders aged 15-17 (both remand and convicted).

The adult prison's Operational Capacity is 350, of which approximately 60 are Foreign National prisoners. Towards the end of the year capacity was reduced by some 70 beds due to the closure of the 4th floor of C wing as the roof is being replaced.

Most of the accommodation is Victorian, built in 1872, (the prison used to be the nurses' accommodation for Banstead Hospital), but all blocks have been upgraded and accommodation is almost exclusively one prisoner per cell. One block, D, is dedicated to Enhanced prisoners who work in the community.

Two years ago Downview was "twinned" with HMP Send - a female prison some 25 miles away.

3 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We are satisfied that HMP/YOI Downview has treated its prisoners humanely and justly during 2010. However, despite sustained efforts by governors and staff, we feel that the programmes designed to reduce re-offending are not yet sufficiently integrated. We recommend that statistics on re-offending (which we have not seen, but believe are collected) should be published and used as one of a few key measures to assess the prison's performance.

The basic tool used in sentence management is the "Nine Pathways to the Reduction of Re-offending". This system demands that prisoners' needs are identified on arrival in the prison so they may be referred to specialists best placed to satisfy them.

Unfortunately, much staff time is currently channelled towards centrally requested returns on evaluations, audits and 'targets' rather than being focused on the core role. The Governor's stated vision "*for change, enabling all to realise their potential in a caring and safe environment*" is thus impeded. She also has little or no control over contracts, employment practices and IT systems, and is working in an operational environment in which staff shortages inhibit employee training and development.

As experienced and objective observers, Board members believe that, if more practical advances towards reducing reoffending are to be made, the Governor should be given much more control over what goes on in her prison. If she requires business or technical advice beyond her competence, that should be made available to her on application to HMPS or Area HQ. The existing top down management process, laden with Key Performance Targets (KPTs) inhibits effectiveness.

Over the past year, the IMB has made the following positive observations:

- Downview is living up to its vision as "a caring and safe environment".
- For the seventh year running, there have been no deaths in custody in 2010 and there have been relatively few instances of self-harm.
- The Josephine Butler juvenile unit had a very successful HMIP inspection in February: in our view well deserved.
- Until the latter part of the year, the prison maintained a full employment programme and was successfully increasing the number of outside working opportunities for prisoners. Regrettably, local retailers – including Sainsbury's and Asda - have recently withdrawn opportunities for suitable offenders and replacing these will not be easy.
- The development of the Women Awareness Staff Programme (WASP) and Sex Workers in Custody and the Community (SWICC) courses has done much to improve prison staff understanding of prisoners' needs.
- In the autumn, the reception procedure and induction programme, had a much needed overhaul. As soon as profiles have been agreed with the POA, a "First Night Officer" will be appointed with the remit to be the first contact point in the Nine Pathways referral process. This will be welcomed.
- The closer relationship that now exists between the UKBA and Downview's dedicated Foreign National Officer means that FN issues are now conducted much more effectively and efficiently.
- In May, a serious incident involving two Young Offenders was commendably handled by prison staff assisted by an external Tornado team.

However, the Board is concerned about:

- The number of offenders with mental health problems still being held in prison.
- The continued apparent ease of drugs being imported into the prison.
- The failure to adjust substance abuse strategy even though it is now abundantly clear that alcohol is one of the most harmful substances available, both to its users and to others.

- Prisoners arriving at Downview having been sent long distances away from their homes and families, sometimes at short notice.
- The marked deterioration in education provision for both adult and juvenile prisoners
- The continued failure to integrate communication systems between private and public prisons. This wastes much time (and therefore money), causes transcription errors, and reduces the potential for sharing good practices between the sectors.

It is deeply regrettable that a number of serious cases of alleged inappropriate relationships between staff and prisoners came to light in 2010. These cases are under judicial consideration and therefore cannot be commented on.

Overall, the IMB believes that Downview is performing well. The Governor has made a point of eliciting the views of staff and has created a positive and inclusive atmosphere in the prison despite the restrictions placed on her operational scope by outside contracts and employment practices. As a resettlement establishment, Downview is well placed to develop reducing reoffending programmes in partnership with outside agencies. All that is required is the political will to enable it to do so.

Mental health issues

The Board notes with concern that Downview still has to accommodate prisoners suffering from serious mental health problems. They pose a threat both to their own safety and to that of other prisoners and staff. They also disrupt the regime, causing unacceptable extra work to staff and annoyance to other prisoners.

For the best part of the year one particular prisoner has been housed in the Care & Separation Unit (CSU) as she is totally unsuitable to be accommodated on the wings. Her disruptiveness which includes frequent dirty protests, ringing her cell bell at all hours of the day and screaming incomprehensibly at the top of her voice disturbs not only other occupants of the CSU but also the adjoining A and B wings. It is our view that this woman should not be in prison, but her local PCT seems not to want to pay for her removal to a secure unit. It appears that she will remain in Downview's CSU until she is released, meaning that her stay in custody has been of little benefit to anyone. We consider this a disgrace and a waste of scarce resources.

Prisoners' distance from home

During the year, the number of prisoners arriving at Downview from South Wales and the West Country increased dramatically. This has caused distress for families who find it difficult to visit and have extremely long journeys for just one hour's visiting time. It is also unsettling for the prisoners concerned. We appreciate that HMP Eastwood Park is currently the only local woman's prison in the south west but we urge HMPS to review the location of prisoners within the female estate.

Induction Programme

Last year IMB observed that the Induction programme for new prisoners to Downview was not working effectively. Since the C wing roof repairs started in

October fewer new prisoners have arrived at Downview and the Governor has used the period to design a new induction programme which is more targeted and streamlined. She is also appointing a 'First Night' officer. We look forward to seeing this programme put into action once normal receptions resume.

Juvenile Unit

The Josephine Butler Unit (JBU) continues to make progress and the Board is impressed by the commitment and dedication of the unit governor and her staff.

In February the unit had a full HMIP inspection and received an excellent endorsement from the Chief Inspector. The inspector concluded that *"the unit is a good example of what can be achieved with some challenging and needy young women, in those few cases where custody is deemed necessary"*.

The Inspector also praised the resettlement work being undertaken by the YMCA with its *Through the Gate* project which we highlighted and commended to the Minister in our 2009 Annual Report. Last year we stated our disappointment that the YJB had yet to evaluate the project's effectiveness. In the ministerial reply we were told that *"there has been no evaluation of this project as it is still in its pilot stage and it is too early to make any meaningful assessment"*. Introduced two years ago, we are wondering how long a pilot lasts and when a meaningful evaluation will take place. The project is due to end in December so decisions need to be taken soon.

After some four years a "safe cell/calm room" was opened, but then declared unsuitable as such. It is now known as the intensive supervision cell and is used as a tool in the unit's behavioural management approach.

In 2009, the cutback in hours and reduction in the flow of juvenile offenders forced the education provider to replace its fulltime teaching staff with part timers. The JBU management reacted well by using prison and attached staff to fill the programme with non-academic activities. This has been such a success that we suggest that this integrated approach should be assessed as a template for *Through the Gate* developmental training of juvenile offenders over the age of 16.

With regard to the national strategy for units such as the JBU, we note that some of them have been closed and that the flow of young offenders through the JBU's doors has fluctuated greatly. These small units offer a good and safe environment, but we are concerned at what seems to be an inconsistent placing policy and one which routinely confines vulnerable adolescent girls far from their family homes. We would therefore ask what progress is being made in the provision of local facilities as recommended in the Corston Report.

Alcohol abuse

Although alcohol is a legal substance, we note that its abuse is often behind juvenile/young offender's offences, yet there are no formal programmes to address this national problem. Ministers talk of stopping supermarkets from selling cheap alcohol and banning drinking in city centres, yet little is being done to rehabilitate prisoners who have committed serious offences under its influence. Recent reliable research has indicated that the overall harm caused by alcohol outstrips the impacts

of controlled drugs. At Downview, as in other prisons, all efforts and programmes are aimed at illegal drugs abuse - why isn't alcohol given the priority it clearly merits?

3.1 ISSUES FOR THE MINISTER

- Has the YMCA 'Through the Gate' project for juveniles been evaluated yet? If so, are the lessons learned being put into practice? *(see page 6 and HMIP's Report on the JBU February 2010)*
- What are the future plans for female juvenile units in the Prison Service? Are they to continue or close? In the meantime what is to be the strategy for the provision of education to juveniles over 16 years of age?*(see page 6)*
- Why isn't alcohol abuse given more recognition as a cause of crime and why are programmes not available to help prisoners overcome their addiction? *(see page 6)*
- How and when will the Government take action to remove the mentally ill from prisons? *(see page 5)*
- Will the Government rectify the SFA/OLASS requirements for prisoner education to ensure they fill the wide-ranging needs of prisoners more realistically? *(see page 9)*
- Is the Government going to publish reoffending statistics? If not, why not? *(see page 3)*

3.2 ISSUES FOR THE PRISON SERVICE

- When will the Prison Service introduce fewer, more relevant, high level KPTs and give the Governor the autonomy to run the prison in a way that better reflects the needs of Downview's prisoners? *(see page 4)*
- When will the Prison Service give contracted prisons access to P/NOMIS? The time and effort wasted by Downview staff having to transcribe information or provide money advances to prisoners is wasteful and inefficient. We are told that the Prison Service want to be paid for the use of "their" (surely the taxpayers?) systems. If true, this is very blinkered thinking. *(see pages 5 and 12)*
- When will the Prison Service seek creative alternatives to its practice of housing female prisoners long distances from their homes? *(see page 5)*

3.3 ISSUES FOR HMP/YOI DOWNVIEW

- When will the prison ensure that short, understandable explanations are provided to prisoners whose requests for Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) and Home Detention Curfew (HDC) have been denied? *(see page 12)*
- What action is to be taken to ensure relevant attendance at DREAT meetings? *(see page 8)*

4 DIVERSITY & EQUALITY

Overall Downview is meeting its equality and diversity objectives including undertaking equality impact assessments for significant policy and risk assessments. The prison has also produced a useful guide to the new Equality Act for staff.

Downview's commitment to equality and diversity was also strengthened by the No 1 Governor who now chairs the bi-monthly DREAT meetings. This sends a positive message about the importance of the diversity agenda. However work needs to be done to ensure that these meetings are well attended by Downview staff.

The Board will not detail every equality strand but would like to highlight some achievements this year including an excellent programme for Black History Month in October, the work of the kitchen during Ramadan, and the newly formed older offenders group. There remain a few issues which the Board will continue to monitor closely.

The most pressing outstanding issues are the appointment of a Muslim Chaplain and occurrence and attendance at the dedicated disability group meetings.

5 FOREIGN NATIONALS

Downview has some 60 Foreign National prisoners; a significantly lower number than in previous years. Prison staff should rightly be praised for the caring and competent way in which these women are managed. A framework is now in place that provides essential clarity and certainty. This includes a dedicated FN officer who is rarely cross-deployed (something that used to happen all too regularly) and is available to provide advice and practical support. It is testament to the excellent job he is doing that the IMB now rarely receives applications concerning FN issues. The Board also welcomes the closer working relationship Downview has with UKBA including a regular Friday "surgery" along with immigration officers as necessary.

The Board's main concern is that there should be no further reduction in the hours of the UKBA representative as this would be counter-productive and only provide short term savings.

In 2011, the Board will be paying increased attention to ROTL. Given that Downview is a training prison, FN women need to experience community involvement and be able to improve their employment prospects by working outside. Initial decisions on prisoners' ROTL applications are made by an internal prison board. The cases of FN prisoners who satisfy this board are then forwarded to UKBA for approval. Frequently, UKBA rejects the Governor of Downview's carefully considered recommendations, but without proper explanations. We think this is wrong. Except in cases where a FN prisoner's risk assessments are questionable, we believe that the Governor, being best placed to do so, should be free to make ROTL decisions without recourse to UKBA.

6 LEARNING & SKILLS

Prisoner Development

In August 2009, the contract to provide adult prisoner education at Downview was awarded to Manchester College (MC) and the administration of induction procedures

to the Tribal Group. The administrative minutiae of Distance Learning were added to the duties of the already overcommitted Head of Learning and Skills. The changeover from the previously unified regime provided by a local college (NESCOL) was marred by staff disaffection, the resignation of the College Head, and the imposition of MC's rigid focus on data collection and targets.

Offenders' Learning & Skills Service (OLASS) guidance states that prisoners *"according to need, should have access to learning and skills which enable them to gain the skills and qualifications they need to hold down a job and **have a positive role in society**"* (IMB's emphasis). However, many of the prisoners at Downview are in prison not for the want of qualifications, but because they have little self-confidence, self-esteem or basic life skills.

The Skills Funding Agency (SFA) has set performance targets "as nearly comparable to those in a normal community as possible". We believe this approach to be misguided and that prisoners' education should be treated as a 'special need' and not as a business enterprise linked to the SFA's Qualification Curriculum Framework. This implies that Downview's Governor should be directly empowered to 'buy in' the provision of basic skills and should employ outside agencies as partners to provide social and employability skills according to need. By doing this, flexibility would be restored and education would fit better into the overall rehabilitation process, the "Nine Pathways to the Reduction of Reoffending".

To support this contention, we point to the Media Studies department which has developed its courses so well that the MFD manager's performance has been recognised with a Butler Trust award. This is an excellent example of what can be achieved when dynamic, work-related courses are included in offender learning programmes.

The College's provision of employability training is limited in scope but of a high standard, and the literacy and numeracy instruction to Level 2 has been successfully developed, often as follow-on from the Shannon Trust's excellent "Toe by Toe" programme. This work is supported by a thriving library which, in addition to its conventional duties, frequently runs promotions aimed at improving prisoners' reading ability. In stark contrast, changes in the Distance Learning application process have led to a sharp reduction in activity. This has been de-motivating to prisoners who have reached Level 2 and have then been denied access to further education because the responsibility for DL has been separated from the core education contract and HMPS has not profiled clerical staff to administer it. Thus, DL applications have reduced and the support available from such excellent charities as the Prisoners' Education Trust has not been properly tapped.

However, despite the obstacles to progress caused by divisions in administrative responsibilities and short sentencing, the college manager and her teachers still achieve wonders with people who want to learn. Prisoners cannot be compelled to enter a world in which they have always failed in the past. However, once they have gained the will to learn, the scope and standard of the subjects they either need or want to learn should not be restricted. The prime tasks for college staff are to enthuse prisoners with the desire to learn and to link their pastoral care with educational needs in a positive atmosphere. The present regime, which separates and numerates every aspect of the educational process, is unlikely to achieve that outcome and, if the true goal is rehabilitation, we strongly recommend a change.

Staff training

Last year, the Board reported that officers' training was almost exclusively focused on fulfilling KPTs and was not adequately addressing their vital role of preparing prisoners for release. In 2010, though there was a big improvement in the scope of training, shortages and cross-deployments of staff continued to affect the overall attendance on locally-delivered courses. That said, we particularly applaud the Introduction of Women Awareness Staff Programme (WASP) and Sex Workers in Custody and the Community (SWICC) courses, which we believe are pivotal to officers' understanding of the complex needs of women prisoners.

7 HEALTHCARE & MENTAL HEALTH

The Healthcare Trust is providing a good all-round medical service to Downview's prisoners. The continued deployment of nurses on the wings is both stable and successful and the continuity of care has improved prisoner confidence in the service.

We were particularly impressed by the way in which a terminally ill prisoner's palliative care was handled, including her eventual release on compassionate grounds. This has included thinking 'out of the box' e.g. nurses making jellies and other food at home and bringing them into the prison with the Governor's permission. Hospice care and MacMillan nursing support was also arranged to support both the patient and the prison staff involved in her case.

The Patient/Prisoner Satisfaction Survey in September emphasised good communication and a good skills mix in the Healthcare Department. Another positive innovation is the recently introduced evening surgery available every two weeks on D Wing for the ROTL workers.

The only complaints we get as a Board relate to the waiting list to see the dentist but, as we state on page 12 prisoner expectations are sometimes unrealistic.

8 DISCIPLINE, CARE & SEPARATION UNIT

The CSU has been regularly used throughout the year. In addition to Downview prisoners in the CSU, the unit also takes women from HMP Send which has no separation unit.

As stated on page 5 the unit has been home to one particular disruptive and disturbed prisoner for much of the year. During this prisoner's stay at Downview she has received no effective treatment nor specialised care for her condition. Downview has no facilities to treat such prisoners and is no place for this woman - the staff are neither trained nor equipped to provide appropriate treatment. However the Board have been greatly impressed with the way the CSU staff, the Governors and the landing nurses have dealt with her, treating her with patience and compassion.

9 WORK OF DOWNVIEW'S INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

The Board at HMP Downview, like all Boards up and down the country, consists of unpaid volunteers with, collectively, a vast amount of operational, commercial and

administrative experience. Most of our members work full time, others either work part-time or are retired.

We started the year with 11 of our designated 14 membership. We lost one member and recruited four new ones so at the end of 2010 we are at full strength. Never easy, it is becoming harder to recruit new members with time to give. We are living at a time when it is increasingly difficult for people to take or be allowed time off for voluntary work. Some employers (***including in the public sector***) expect members to use their annual leave to undertake Board duties. This distorts the demographics, shifting the make-up of Boards towards older members who are usually retired.

The workload placed on chairmen has also grown to such an extent that it is difficult (for four years at Downview, impossible) to find members, especially those in full time employment, prepared to take on the role.

BOARD STATISTICS	
Recommended Complement of Board Members	14
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	11
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	14
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	4
Number of members leaving within reporting period	1
Number of attendances at meetings other than Board meetings	334
Total number of visits to the prison/IRC (including all meetings)	416
Total number of applications received	359
Total number of Segregation reviews attended	6
Total number of Segregation reviews held	N/A

Applications to see the Board

The Board holds a formal 'surgery' each Tuesday when prisoners can apply to see us on issues that they have been unable to resolve using the normal prison processes. In addition we are often stopped while performing our duties with 'on the hoof applications'. You will see from the following table that the topics vary little year on year.

The high number of **sentence related issues** is due to prisoners' belief that the IMB is able to influence requests for ROTL/HDC or can overturn denied applications. Insufficient information is given to prisoners when the ROTL/HDC boards deny their applications.

Complaints regarding **property and monies** tend to increase when there are staff shortages. This causes backlogs with property exchanges. Unlike some prisons, Downview operates a sensible volumetric control system and prisoners often arrive with too many possessions. These must be sorted and the excess put into storage either locally or at Branston. Understandably, some prisoners find this hard to accept and the situation is not helped by there being inconsistent rules for in-cell property within the women's estate.

Prisoners transferring from private prisons do not have their money transferred with them automatically. It arrives some time (often much) later by cheque. HMP Bronzefield is a major feeder prison to Downview and this causes unnecessary paperwork (and therefore added cost) for Downview staff as they have to issue prisoners with money advances to enable them to purchase telephone credit, Prisoners' Shop items, TV rental, etc then recoup these advances at a later date. The continued failure to enable contracted prisons to integrate with HMPS IT systems is inexcusable and if this is due to some bureaucratic mind set, it needs to be changed.

Complaints regarding the provision of **healthcare** are mainly down to the waiting lists to see the dentist. In many cases prisoners who have probably never visited a dentist on the outside take the opportunity to have long delayed dental work done in prison. Quite rightly in our opinion, the dentist only treats those with pressing dental issues and not those requesting 'cosmetic' dentistry.

The rise in the number of **transfer requests** is mainly due to the influx of prisoners to Downview from the West Country and Wales who understandably want to be nearer their families and homes. While we appreciate there are few female prisons in England and Wales we still feel that the distance from home for these prisoners is unacceptable. Elsewhere in this report we have urged HMPS to review its practice on this matter – it was after all one of the key recommendations in the Corston Report.

The rise in the number of **food/kitchen** related issues was due to a change in the protocol for requesting and receiving special diets. During the year, the PCT reviewed the diets which had been authorised in the kitchen and, correctly in our view, removed those which were not required on health or religious grounds.

APPLICATIONS TO SEE THE BOARD

**As many applications have more than one topic, the table doesn't necessarily add up*

Code	Subject	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
A	Accommodation	7	1	5	4	5
B	Adjudications	5	7	15	6	9
C	Diversity related	12	8	4	3	3
D	Education/employment/training	7	15	12	13	15
E	Family/visits	9	14	14	13	13
F	Food/kitchen related	13	8	11	4	12
G	Health related	74	38	35	47	33
H	Property/Monies	208	156	72	89	62
I	Sentence related	57	107	97	106	111
J	Staff/prisoner related	-	7	18	14	12
K	Transfers	1	3	7	16	29
L	Others	103	67	58	62	96
	Total number of applications*	494	431	330	396	359

2006 others: Repatriation (28), Deportation (16), Prisoners' shop (9), Passports (5), SERCO (5), Housing on release (3), Bullying (3), Overseas phone call costs (3), Thank you IMB (2), Argos catalogue (2), Hairdressing (2), Foreign Nationals' Meetings (2), Access to typewriters (2), PIN credits (2), Postal delays (2), Child care benefits, Noise, Search dogs on beds, Magazine order, Exercise in Seg unit, Work on release, Breast feeding on visits, CAB, Suggestions Box, Confiscation Order, Parole Board, Certificates, Legal Aid, Samaritan phone call costs, Herbal medicines, DVD players, Building Society accounts.

2007 others: Bullying (13), Housing on release (5), Repatriation (3), Prisoners' shop (3), Telephone call costs (3), Deportation issues (3), Lost passports (2), UKBA (2), JP signature (2), Thank you IMB (2), IPTC (2), IPV (2), PIN numbers (2), Confiscation orders (2), Licence recall (2), TV costs when cell sharing (2), FN overstayer (2), Argos catalogue, Litter, Laminate paper costs, Legal appeal, Claim against PS, Job seekers allowance, Property confiscation, Stolen car, Vegan washing powder, Delay in Complaint response, Legal visits, Bankruptcy, Picture published without permission, Mattress, Sentenced abroad, Court hearing.

2008 others: Deportation/Asylum (5), Legal letters (5), Missing passport (4), Bullying (3), Prison shop (3), Accident compensation (3), IPTC (2), Mistaken Identity (2), Revolving Doors (2), Arrest Warrant, Illegal photocopying, Handcuffed by SERCO, Legal Aid, Citizenship, Unauthorised use of photo, File for Bankruptcy, Old Age Pension, Escort to railway station, Mail delays, Telephone call costs, PIN number delays, Opening of Legal letters, Council Tax, Records, Housing on release, Disability stool, IPV, Nationality, Help to dress, Childcare allowance, Access to Listeners, State Benefits on release, Heating on D wing, Assault by another prisoner, Help to write letter.

2009 others: Postal delays (9), Wages (7), Bullying (6), Deportation (6), IPV (3), Delays by Area answering Requests & Complaints (3), Prisoners' shop (3), Location of prisoner (3), Missing passports (3), Reception packs (2), Clothing on release (2), Family photos (2), Child benefits, Housing benefits, Housing on release, Request to cell share, Complaint about a solicitor, Request to call a solicitor, IPC, Red writing entries, Divorce advice, Postage due charge, Change of personnel officer, Quality of prison issue clothing, Argos delays.

2010 other: Access to Ombudsman (3), Postal delays (3), Parole Papers (3), Deportation (2), Bullying (2), Compassionate visit (2), Delay in PIN number registration (2), Induction programme (2), Arts & Craft materials, Media graduation ceremony, Noise from radios, Prisoners' shop prices, Use of a typewriter, Dirty protest clean up, Stop TV programme being broadcast, Lost legal documentation, Missing daughter, Getting to see IMB, CARATS, Detergents.

PRESS RELEASE

Highlights of the IMB's Annual Report for HMP/YOI Downview for the Period January
– December 2010

HMP Downview, like every other prison, has an Independent Monitoring Board (IMB). Members of the public appointed by the Minister of Justice, they check on the buildings, the administration of the prison, the regime and the treatment of prisoners. Unpaid volunteers, they act as watchdogs on behalf of Ministers and the public. It is highly responsible work of enormous interest and new recruits are always needed (anyone interested in joining the Board should ring the IMB Secretariat on 020 7035 2260).

***Agreed at January Board Meeting to review the need/value of a Press Release
once the response from the Minister has been received***