

Publication date – 5th July 2010.



INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

HMP AND YOI LOW NEWTON

ANNUAL REPORT  
FOR THE PERIOD 1 MARCH 2009 – 28 FEBRUARY 2010

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## STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

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

## DESCRIPTION OF PRISON

Low Newton opened in 1965 as a Remand Centre with four Wings holding young men up to 21 years of age, and a discrete Wing for women of all ages on remand and sentenced.

The Prison was re-roled as a women's Prison in 1998, when it was refurbished and two new Wings and a Visits Room were built. Another Wing (total now 8) was added later.

CNA (cells in use at end of reporting period)	-	269
Operational Capacity	-	307

The majority of cells are single-occupancy, with a small number of double cells to cater for "at risk" women, i.e. women assessed as unsuitable for single cell accommodation.

Low Newton holds women of all ages from 18 years, on remand and sentenced; short sentences to life sentences, and also restricted status (high security) women.

Adult prisoners and young offenders are integrated. The mix is no more than 30% of YOs on each Wing, and all relevant risk assessments are carried out before it is decided on which Wing a YO should be located.

Facilities include :

**Learning and Skills Centre** : (See also p.13 Learning and Skills) - an excellent facility providing a wide range of full-time and part-time education courses and employment and training programmes. The Centre Manager is also responsible for –

The Learning Shop - “drop-in” computer-driven learning, staffed by a charitable organisation (New Bridge), and used by women in their own time, including evenings and weekends, for computer-based learning, e.g. languages. The facility is also used during weekdays by women on education courses, employment and training programmes, or direct learning courses; sometimes vulnerable women who feel more secure there than in large groups in the Learning and Skills department. The Learning Shop is a very popular educational facility.

Pitstop - initial educational needs and training assessments for all women; also vocational and creative industries courses. A team of 4 prisoners work here making up breakfast packs for Low Newton. Three women are employed machining cloth bags for Barnardos. Greetings card are manufactured to a very high standard and are available for purchase by prisoners and staff.

The contract for the Learning and Skills service is with City College Manchester.

**Library** - service provided by Durham County Council.

**Healthcare Service** - commissioned by the North East Offending Health Commission (Durham PCT) and provided by the Darlington Community Health Service. (See also p.7 Healthcare and Mental Health).

**Chaplaincy** - Diocese of Durham, and Diocese of Newcastle and Hexham. An Imam visits regularly.

**Gymnasium** - programmes available for key work skills. Part of Learning and Skills.

**Housing Advice** - office run by risk-assessed prisoners trained and in contact with outside housing agencies, supported and supervised by prison staff.

**Visits Room** - modern, spacious and pleasant.

**Visitors' Centre** - situated immediately outside the Prison – run by NEPACS (North East Prisoners After Care Service) staff and volunteers.

**Outside Agencies and Voluntary Support Services include :**

New Bridge (Learning Shop)

NEPACS (North-East Prisoners After Care Service) – register visitors on arrival and provide assistance and advice to visitors, and provide volunteers for Visits canteen and creche.

Citizens' Advice Bureau

Samaritans (train approved prisoners as Listeners)  
MIND (engage with Healthcare day services – counselling (e.g. bereavement, sexual abuse, physical abuse)  
CARATS (work with prison DIPS team on drugs intervention programmes)  
NACRO  
Open Gate (Community Chaplaincy – mentoring etc.)  
Youth for Christ  
JobCentre Plus  
Job Club  
Parentline Plus (work in Visitors Centre)  
After Adoption (work on the repercussions of adoption and liaison, e.g. if mother/child mailbox contact agreed).  
Clearspring – provide accommodation for women eligible for bail who cannot return to their own address, or women eligible for HDC but who cannot provide a suitable address.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **(a) Issues for the Minister**

Yet again, the Board must draw the Minister's attention to the continual high proportion of prisoners in the Healthcare Wing who suffer severe mental illness. As in previous years, this Board questions whether prison is the correct place for these women and, as importantly, whether special measures are taken to support them when they are released.

The Board is pleased to report that assessments and provision of an appropriate placement in a secure hospital has speeded up over past months, and now conform to the the timeframe set up by the Ministry of Justice, but the Board believes still earlier interventions are necessary, e.g. direction of prisoners from Court to health care accommodation for reports. (See also p.8, penultimate para., Healthcare and Mental Helath).

**Is further consideration being given to this perennial problem and, if so, can the Board be informed of progress, please?**

### **Issues for the Prison Service**

(1) Women tell the Board they have problems with alcohol abuse which they would like to address while in prison. The Board understands that a high percentage of women prisoners admit to drinking alcohol at a level which could cause them physical or mental harm. Surveys of new prisoners at Low Newton confirm that this is so. The Board is aware that there is currently no programme to assist prisoners who have alcohol related problems, although programmes are currently being assessed for introduction to address this issue. The Board believes that the introduction of such a programme, together with the re-establishment of links with Alcoholics Anonymous would assist those prisoners affected in achieving a more settled and productive life when released, and help reduce reoffending. The Board understands the prison's

Psychology Department are looking at providing a programme and hopes this will be achieved in the very near future. A number of prisoners have approached Board members asking whether Alcoholics Anonymous might be introduced into the prison. (See also p.14 Resettlement).

**The Board asks whether the Prison Service is being proactive in providing, and supporting programmes addressing the comparatively recently identified high level of alcohol abuse, and asks whether potentially appropriate programmes exist elsewhere in the Service.**

(2) The changeover of financial systems to the Prison-NOMIS system in September 2009 caused a significant increase in prisoner request/complaints about earnings, private moneys and spends. This resulted in more work for staff and could have adversely affected the relationship between prisoners and staff. At the end of the reporting year, 28th February 2009, the matter is being addressed by prison staff, and in an endeavour to alleviate the situation, the prison's Finance Officer attends Prisoner Council meetings to respond to the many queries raised.

**The Board recommends that prisoners should receive a regular statement of moneys earned, personal moneys received, and moneys spent, with detailed lists of all their purchases. This should be in the format of a comprehensive statement like a bank statement, which would in itself be good preparation for release into the outside world.**

(3) **The core day introduced last year reduced the number of purposeful activity hours: the Board seeks assurance that financial cuts imposed on the Governor will not be to the further detriment of the core day.**

(c) **Other matters and general overview**

The Board is confident that prisoners at Low Newton are held in a stable and safe environment. Throughout the reporting year there has been a good atmosphere within the establishment at any time a member has visited. The prison is clean and fresh and staff/prisoner relations are good. The Board receives on average 3/4 applications per week; usually issues which are resolved without difficulty.

The Board considers Low Newton an impressive establishment where prisoners receive fair and decent treatment, and the Governor and his managers do everything within their resources to meet demands and challenges arising from working with women prisoners. Staff sickness has improved, but sickness places more of a burden on those at work and it is to the credit of staff that they work to a very high standard.

The Board was very pleased to note that 6 members of staff from Low Newton were nominated recently for various levels of the North East Area Recognition Award. It is worth noting that staff, with whom the Board has a good, respectful working relationship, are always eager to talk about their areas of work to visitors. The Board sees many excellent examples of staff commitment and, indeed, passion for their work.

There were no serious incidents (i.e. Command Suite opened) during the reporting year. Incidents which could well have become serious were identified sufficiently early for the risk to be managed. There were no deaths in custody, but self-harm incidents were high, as in previous years, and credit must be given to prison and healthcare staff who on many occasions acted to avoid this possibility.

The ethos of Low Newton is to prepare women offenders, via offender management, healthcare and education, for life and work outside prison, and in all fields the Governor and his staff work in multidisciplinary teams to achieve their aims.

Staff training hours met approved standards during the year, non-unified staff numbers trained exceeding unified. All staff received P-NOMIS Training which took so much time that it was to the detriment of other training courses. The Oracle Learner Management computer training system was delivered to all line managers, and the diversity initiative Challenge It; Change It has been a priority. Mental health awareness training, although not a key target, has not been delivered as widely as the Health Care Manager would wish because the prison regime makes it difficult to collect staff together for training purposes.

The changed Core Day has continued, but the Board is aware that closing the Learning and Skills Centre, and all other prisoner work areas on Friday afternoons has reduced the number of purposeful activity hours for prisoners.

City College Manchester took over the Learning and Skills contract in August 2009, and the Board is aware there will be a restructure announced soon which will reduce the number of staff delivering programmes. The knock-on effect could well be a reduction in the number of programmes delivered, and this would be bad news for the prison and the Board.

Towards the end of 2009 work started on upgrading the heating throughout the prison. The project is expected to take 12-18 months to complete. A positive aspect of the introduction of "outside" contractors for the work is that they seem well able to cope with working in a prison, e.g. understanding security issues. The work means closure of a Wing of the prison at any one time. This, of course, results in a reduced prison population and an area less to be covered by staff, and the Board has noted that in these circumstances the prison is more settled and much calmer than is usually the case.

## **HEALTHCARE AND MENTAL HEALTH**

GP provision includes a female GP. Prisoners requesting a first medical appointment visit nurse-led clinics, e.g. nurse prescribing, triage, where the nurse judges urgency and either prescribes or refers the patient to a GP or an appropriate clinic. The majority of nurses are now qualified to prescribe.

The colposcopy clinic, opened last year, has proved advantageous. The facility has improved the scope of the health care women receive "in house", reducing the number of visits to outside hospitals - a procedure which many women find unsettling. Nurses

from a local NHS hospital visit to deliver treatments, and a consultant visits, assisted by Low Newton's nursing staff.

With effect from January 2010 a contraceptive service(CASH), a service lead by a local GP has been implemented. A high number of women have already taken advantage of the service which offers advice and implants on site in the hope of reducing unwanted pregnancies when women leave prison.

Visiting professionals from the PCT and the Acute Trust include GPs., physiotherapist, optician, dentist, midwife, chiropodist, visiting hospital specialists when necessary, psychologists, psychiatrists, community psychiatric nurses. Mental health counsellors visit from MIND to provide bereavement, sexual and physical abuse counselling. They run two relaxation therapy groups, mainly arts and crafts, in Healthcare two afternoons per week for referred prisoners (not necessarily in-patients). Learning disability workers visit to assess prisoners. Specialist nurses visit to work with women with Hepatitis C; also nurses specialising in diabetes. Clinics include Well Woman, health promotion, vaccination, GUM, prenatal, acupuncture, group therapy and relaxation therapy.

Drugs detoxification – a very large number of prisoners arrive at Low Newton with mental health problems, very often serious and usually drugs-related. The IDTS (Integrated Drug Treatment System), i.e. treatment without a ceiling methadone dosage still awaits a qualified night nurse to make the unit viable. There is accommodation for 22 prisoners on E Wing (a discrete wing) where group work, drugs counselling, etc., are available. Not all women are interested; it seems a fair number want to get back to the Wings in the hope that drugs might be available.

The dentist is in great demand – many women, particularly drugs users, clearly neglect their dental health care before coming into prison.

Prisoners make application for medical attention via written application or by contacting PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service) by free phone. They may also raise any queries,e.g. check times of medical and dental appointments through PALS.

The majority of women received at Low Newton suffer mental health problems – it is a huge issue, as is self-harm. It is not unusual for women to have to be kept under constant or frequent watch for periods for their own safety. When the Healthcare “safe” rooms are occupied, other women requiring close observation are located on identified “safe” cells on Wings.

The Healthcare Manager and his staff cope admirably for long periods with the many seriously mentally ill, and often volatile and erratic, women who pass through their care. As mentioned in the Board's report last year, the Board believes these women should not be in prison, but should be sent for assessment directly by the sentencing Courts to hospitals specialising in mental health care rather than to prison.

The Board is delighted to report that the Low Newton Primrose Programme (Dangerous and Severe Personality Disorders) won the World Health Organisation (WHO) Health in Prisons Project award for its work with female offenders who pose a risk of serious harm

as a result of severe personality disorder. The programme incorporates a range of treatments to help offenders' rehabilitation by empowering them with skills for life. These include "life minus violence" treatments to address violent behaviour, therapy to address unresolved psychological trauma, and behaviour therapy to treat personality disorders and self-harming behaviour (See also below, DSPD Unit)

The independent review of mental health services commissioned locally during the last reporting year for eight prisons including Low Newton, looking at prisoners' needs (e.g. GP and dental services) and requirements to improve offenders' mental health care in prison has been completed and published and is awaiting an implementation programme by the Commissioners (North East Offending Health Commissioning Unit).

### **DANGEROUS AND SEVERE PERSONALITY DISORDERS (DSPD)** (known as The Primrose Unit)

The project (the Primrose Unit) is a joint initiative between the Prison Service, the Department of Health and the Home Office. Its purpose is to deliver more effective interventions to dangerous women to reduce risk to themselves and others. There are spaces for 12 women.

The programme is available to the whole of the female prison estate. To be eligible for the programme which could take up to 3 years to work through, prisoners must have at least four years of their sentence remaining. Women who meet the criteria transfer to Low Newton for a 3-6 months assessment period. A woman assessed as suitable is set a programme individually tailored to meet her needs.

The Unit is a "pod" attached to F Wing and the women live on F Wing wing and attend dining, church and association as "normal location" prisoners. However, therapy and interventions are based in the Unit, where the women attend daily during work periods and some evenings.

### **SAFER CUSTODY**

The Head of Security and Safety, an Assistant Governor, takes the chair at meetings of the Safer Prisons and Violence Reduction Committees. Prisoner Listeners and Insiders attend part of the meetings to give their reports which are then fully discussed. The group produce Action Plans which they work through and update at monthly meetings.

A Senior Officer gives guidance and monitors the completion and updating of ACCT and risk assessment paperwork and reviews, and presents her report to meetings. All Senior Officers undertake Case Manager training; Governors undertake Mental Health Awareness training. As always, the number of open ACCTs has been very high, averaging 25-30 at any one time.

Self-harm incidents are invariably high – between 30 and 60 incidents per month, and there are always women who account for more than one incident in a month.

Peer support strategy - Insiders (buddies) live on the Induction Wing. They help new prisoners settle in and can remind them and reinforce what they learn on the Induction programme.

Listeners - Risk-assessed prisoners are recruited for work as Listeners – at the time of reporting there are, unfortunately, only 2 qualified Listeners and 1 awaiting training. The number of interested women clearly varies, but this figure is disappointingly low bearing in mind the importance of their function. Listeners are involved in the induction programme for new prisoners, informing women of Listener availability (24 hrs per day when sufficient Listeners are in place) and also encouraging women to apply to train as Listeners. Insiders and Listeners attend and report to the prison's Safer Custody meetings.

The Board recognises the difficulties in preventing drugs and mobile telephones from illegally entering the prison. In addition to the obvious direct impact of drugs, they can be traded and regularly are the cause of assault by prisoners on prisoners. Drug test statistics are provided to the Board on a monthly basis. Equipment exists for detecting mobile telephones, and is used on any occasion that there is suspicion of a prisoner having a mobile telephone. The Board understands these occasions are few, although there have been "finds" when staff have acted on information received.

Anti-Bullying programme – There are 3 stages – Stage 1 Monitoring; Stage 2 (hard evidence available and woman placed on basic regime for 14 days minimum); Stage 3 Exit stage.

Support for victims of bullying -

A Victim Support Plan is opened which ensures that the personal officer is aware, location reviewed, whether ACCT required, cell share risk assessment if appropriate, whether psychology referral required, etc. The support plan is reviewed within 7 days of being opened and at all stages consideration is given to the risk of self-harm or suicide.

The perpetrator is likely to be relocated elsewhere in the prison; only exceptionally will the victim be moved.

Deaths in custody. There have been no deaths in custody during the reporting year, but it should be noted that on many occasions staff have had to remove ligatures or give/seek emergency treatment for serious self-harm incidents.

## **DIVERSITY**

The prison service has a positive duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote Equality of Opportunity and good relations between people of different racial group, religion, age group, ability and sexual persuasion. This it does by reviewing its policies,

by education and investigating complaints raised by prisoners and taking action against any member of staff, prisoner or visitor who uses insulting language or behaviour. In recent years there has been a monthly meeting of the Race Equality Action Team (REAT) attended by section heads at Low Newton and chaired by a Governor. The meeting, attended also by prisoner representatives, serves to review prison policies and actions which are relevant to minority groups including Foreign Nationals.

### **Broadening of terms of reference**

The scope of the meeting has, this year, been expanded to include older prisoners, disabled prisoners and those with sexuality/gender issues to cover the wider range of diversity. (Now called DREAT)

### **Monitoring of Black, Minority, Ethnic**

In the North East, the percentage of the population falling into this group is relatively low compared to other parts of the country. The percentage in the prison population at Low Newton is in the 5 to 10% range. There is only one prison officer in this category, which reflects the low proportion in the local population and difficulties in recruiting. Data on adjudications, complaints, prisoner releases, prisoner status, segregation and use of force is collected and reviewed at the monthly meeting. Any statistically significant deviation from the proportion of prisoners from the BME category compared to the whole population is highlighted and explained where necessary.

### **Foreign Nationals**

HMP Low Newton has prepared a Foreign National Policy (March 2009 to be reviewed in 2010) to meet the particular needs of this section of the prison community. Foreign Nationals are defined as persons who are not British Citizens and include people from other countries in the European Economic Area, migrant workers, asylum seekers, refugees and immigration detainees. The proportion at Low Newton is typically 5% of the total population.

Typical of their specific needs:

*Language barriers needing more opportunities to develop English skills.*

*Cultural barriers*

*Food e.g. Afro-Caribbean, Halal*

*Maintaining family links*

*Legal advice on immigration procedures*

The Foreign Nationals Policy addresses these issues and others with specific measures which include:

*Contact with the individual's embassy or consul (with the prisoner's agreement)*

*Differential status between those who are serving a sentence and those who have completed their sentence and are awaiting deportation.*

*Access to translation services (Big Word) to ensure that prisoners understand what is being said to them as well as English courses in education*

*Training of prisoners and staff*

*Provision of airmail letters, and international telephone cards to aid family contact (Free international phone card 10 minutes/month + purchase of further time)  
Arranging accumulated visits to coincide with family visits from overseas.  
Foreign National coordinators to act as a point of contact for foreign national specific issues.*

### **Other issues**

The prison has an ongoing programme to encourage tolerance and enjoyment of cultural diversity. This includes International food evenings and poster displays on such issues as bullying and the Holocaust.

The prison is turning its attention to wider issues of diversity, for example by introducing prisoner buddies for the disabled and the needs of those in the 50 plus age range.

## **CARE AND SEPARATION UNIT AND DISCIPLINE**

### Care and Separation Unit

There are three cells in the CSU, an Adjudications Room, and an interview room. Staff in the Unit are very good at building up a rapport with prisoners and encouraging them to improve their behaviour. Comparatively few women are placed on Good Order or Discipline, rarely for as much as 14 days, and more often up to 7 days. Occasionally, a woman known to have, or suspected of having, drugs may be there a while longer.

A Board member is informed of any move to the Unit and, if possible, visits the prisoner before observing the 72 hr. GOOD review. Review panels are conducted by a governor, attended by the appropriate members of staff, the necessary information is to hand, and prisoners attend and are encouraged to make their representations. Reviews subsequent to the 72 hr. review are aligned to take place on Monday afternoons when a Board member can be available to observe, i.e. the Board member who will have taken part in the prisoner' induction programme earlier in the afternoon.

### Discipline

During the reporting year adjudications averaged 73 per month. No particular trends have been identified by the Board.

Prisoners awarded cellular confinement at adjudication are listed on a board in the CSU, but are usually located on landing cells – where possible on the landing and in the cell where they normally live. Visiting IMB members check the board and then visit anyone on cc.

Board members occasionally observe adjudications while making their rota visits.

## **LEARNING AND SKILLS**

This excellent facility is the responsibility of the Governor in charge of Regimes and the Learning and Skills Manager. Prisoners arriving at Low Newton are assessed during their first week at Low Newton on their basic literacy and numeracy skills, and any other educational needs are identified. Individual Learning Plans offer choices in accordance with a prisoner's security status.

Women can take full-time education, but it is usual for them to attend at Learning and Skills for half a day, and work for the other half. This enables and encourages more women to attend part-time courses. Courses are planned to ensure as far as possible that women can finish their courses/programmes before transfer or release.

Courses and programmes are well attended; absences are usually due to the prisoner having another commitment, e.g. healthcare or psychology appointments, or a special or family visit.

Education Courses - Literacy and Numeracy, GCSE Maths, English and GCSE English, GCSE Sociology, GCSE Learn/Life/Work, Life Skills, Budget and Finance, Adult Learner Support, Citizenship, IT, Child/Parent, Call Centre, ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages), Retail, Business Administration, Hospitality, Hairdressing (now accredited), Beauty, Art, Cookery and Creative Writing. Open University Courses can be arranged. A number of long term prisoners with good literacy and numeracy skills undertake the Peer Monitor and Adult Learning Support qualification, which enables them to work as assistant teachers helping less literate/numerate women who do not attend the Learning and Skills Centre.

Employment and Training Programmes – BICS (British Institute Cleaning Sciences), Catering/Hospitality, Community Sports Leadership Award/Key Skills, Gardens/Nursery (Horticultural Skills).

Learning Shop – a drop-in learning facility. The Shop is staffed by a charitable organisation (New Bridge) and is available to prisoners evenings and weekends when they can pursue their own learning, e.g. languages. The facility is also available to staff.

The area is shared by the well-stocked Library to which women have access twice a week.

Gymnasium - During the reporting year prisoners took up the 30 places available for achieving accredited and outcome focused programmes.

Greenhouse and Gardens area - Women who are assessed as low-risk work in these areas. The prison grounds are a credit to them and staff.

Employment Engagement Unit.

The Unit came into being last year and is managed by Manchester College.

Unit staff prepare appropriate prisoners for employment on release, developing skills and helping them prepare for interviews, etc. A limited number of external firms (Asda, Marriott Hotels, Greggs Bakeries, have expressed willingness to employ sentence served prisoners, and the Unit provides a well presented space where employer representatives – often at a senior level – come and meet prisoners during the final three months of sentence.

Women making use of the facility are positive about their prospects. The Unit is proud of its achievements, but the security status of the prison makes links with outside organisations a challenge.

The Job Club and JobCentre Plus - work within the prison to help women who are motivated to look for work on release.

Waste Management – cardboard is compacted at the Recycling Unit. Equipment is in place to deal with plastics, but this aspect of the scheme cannot yet be implemented because there are insufficient staff to supervise procedures.

Prisoners continue to tell members that their achievements raise their self-esteem and the skills they gain give them hope of finding work on release.

## **REGIME (Other areas)**

### **Reception**

The area is always clean and tidy with dedicated prisoner cleaners in attendance. The reduction in complaints to the Board regarding transfer of property, mentioned in last year's report, point towards the problems having diminished.

### **Induction**

Located on part of E Wing (the other part houses the IDTS). The rolling programme lasts a week, although benchmarking may result in a one day programme soon. Insiders (buddies) who befriend new prisoners and help them settle, live and work on the Wing. The IMB participates in the induction programme.

### **Resettlement**

Resettlement is a core function of the Prison Service, directly related to the Prison Service's objective "To reduce crime by providing constructive regimes which address offending behaviour, improve educational and work skills and promote law-abiding behaviour in custody and after release".

To help achieve the objective, the prison seeks partnership with outside agencies which have an important impact on the lives of prisoners, discharged prisoners and their families. Low Newton is actively engaged with civic, corporate and faith alliances to provide support to prisoners on release.

Key resettlement components which research have shown reduces reoffending are identified as nine pathways:

**Accommodation**

*To ensure that when women leave custody they have suitable accommodation arranged*

**Employment, enterprise, learning and skills**

*To enable women to develop readiness for learning and skills acquisition and /or employment opportunities*

**Health care**

*To ensure that primary and mental health issues are assessed and addressed. Help women to establish healthy lifestyles in the community and during time in custody*

**Drugs and Alcohol**

*Through a range of drug and alcohol interventions help women minimise, reduce or stop substance misuse*

**Financial management**

*To assist women in managing their personal finances thus reducing the motivation to gain property or finance by illegal means*

**Children and Families**

*To enable women to maintain, develop positive relationships with their families, children and home communities*

**Attitudes, Thinking and Behaviour**

*To enable women develop appropriate behaviour and the skills to lead law abiding lives*

**Domestic Violence**

*To enable women deal with the emotional and physical effects of abuse and to have access to information on how to keep safe and escape domestic violence on release*

**Prostitution**

*To enable women to build a new life away from prostitution but if their choice is to remain within sex work to have access to information on how to be safe*

These nine pathways form a key component of Low Newton's Reducing Re-offending Strategy and Action Plan which sets targets for each three month period of the year. Each of the pathways is led by the appropriate head of department in the prison who is responsible for the key links within the prison and to external agencies

The Resettlement and Policy meeting is scheduled to be attended by senior members of staff, heads of relevant departments and Prison Governors although attendance is not always full. It monitors progress against the targets set in the Plan.

It is encouraging to hear about steps being taken to build links with industry who are willing to employ prisoners during and after their sentences and to hear of inspirational

speakers who are willing to share their experience of overcoming obstacles in their lives to succeed in their chosen careers.

The well women's day, an initiative under the health care banner, was well attended providing information and advice of healthy diets, lifestyle, self-examination etc.

Although there is an established programme for helping prisoners with their drug dependency, only recently has alcohol come into sharp focus. 40% of female sentenced prisoners admit to hazardous drinking i.e. at a level that could cause physical or mental harm. Surveys of new prisoners at Low Newton confirm this level of problem and programmes are currently being assessed for introduction to tackle this issue. This is in addition to the re-establishment of links with AA. The Board welcomes this initiative and urges its implementation without undue delay.

The resettlement initiatives are broad and ambitious with laudable aims of reducing reoffending. It is unfortunate that, other than some individual feedback from successful prisoners or on return to prison after re-offending, there is no local or national measurement of outcome success.

### **Catering/Kitchen**

Comprehensive weekly menus are issued to prisoners who make their choices from four alternatives for the following week. Prisoners are offered meals which are nutritious, well-cooked and presented, and of good variety. Meals are planned and prepared to accord with religious and cultural, and medical dietary requirements, and in accordance with food and hygiene regulations.

Questionnaires are distributed every 6 months or so to assess prisoners' views on food and menus, and menus are adapted to include preferences where possible. Prisoners also have the opportunity of raising issues at the monthly Prisoners' Council meetings. Healthy eating options are available and are particularly popular.

The occasional ever-popular "Theme nights" have continued to take place, based on foods of different countries and cultures.

The kitchen and dining hall are very well maintained and are always extremely clean and tidy.

IMB members frequently sample food and talk to prisoners taking meals, when few complain.

### **Canteen**

Canteen is supplied by the private firm, DHL, and we have heard no prisoner complaints about the service.

### **Prisoners' telephone facilities**

The contract is with BT and charges are considered high. There is a telephone on every landing. Calls can be made between 7.30 and 8.00 a.m., 11.30a.m.-1.30 p.m.,

and from 4.30-7.00 p.m. Time is not restricted unless there is a queue for the telephone, in which case staff do ensure that prisoners share the time available.

For Foreign Nationals policy see p.12.

## **THE WORK OF THE IMB**

The Board at HMP and YOI Low Newton is below strength, with 7 members against a possible complement of 10. One member resigned at the time of the Triennial Review, and a new member joined the Board in January 2010. The Board manages well with 7 members and would wish no more than 8, because members feel that to make a rota visit to the prison at intervals in excess of eight weeks would prevent them keeping up to date with prison life and changes.

During the reporting year a member regularly observed REAT/DREAT meetings, but observations are now carried out on a more ad hoc basis. The Board receives the Minutes of all prison meetings for the purpose of keeping up to date, raising any queries or concerns, and would, if necessary, urge progress with Action Plans.

A member visits the Prison on a weekly rota basis. The rota member deals with applications (Requests/complaints) received via the IMB Clerk, deals with applications "on the hoof", and also attends any 72 hr. GOOD reviews. Members also visit the Prison on Monday afternoons on a rota basis to take part in the prisoners' Induction programme. Any further GOOD reviews after the initial 72 hr. review are aligned to take place on Monday afternoons so that the Induction rota member can observe. On every weekly rota visit the visiting member calls on any prisoners in the Care and Separation Unit, and also any prisoners on cellular confinement on normal location.

The Governor attends the Board's monthly meetings, and on the occasions he finds it impossible to be present he is represented by his Deputy Governor.

As part of its training plan, the Board frequently has a member of staff from the various disciplines within the establishment attend prior to the monthly Board meeting to update members on his/her area of work. This is a time when members can expect to be assembled, and has proved a simple way of keeping up to date and learning of change.

**IMB Statistics**

Recommended Board Complement	10
Number of members at beginning of reporting period	7
Number of members at end of reporting period	7
Number of new members within the reporting period	1
Number of members leaving during the reporting period	1
Total number of Board meetings (including Annual Team Performance Review) (December 2009 meeting cancelled due to inclement weather)	12
Average number of attendances at Board meetings	6
Number of attendances at meetings other than Board Meetings	15
Number of visits to the Prison (including Board meetings)	155
Number of applications (Requests/Complaints) received (86 of these were from the same prisoner)	185

**MRS. A. VASEY, JP****CHAIRMAN FOR THE REPORTING PERIOD****On behalf of HMP and YOI LOW NEWTON INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD**





## **Glossary of Prison-related Abbreviations**

ACCT	Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork
BEM	British Ethnic Minority
CARATS	Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice, Throughcare Services
Cc	Cellular confinement
CSU	Care and Separation Unit
DSPD	Dangerous and Severe Personality Disorders
DREAT	Diversity and Race Equality Action Team
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
ETS	Enhanced Thinking Skills
IDTS	Integrated Drug Treatment System
ISPP	Indeterminate Sentence for Public Protection
FOR	Focus on Resettlement
FN	Foreign National
GOOD	Good Order or Discipline
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
NACRO	National Association for the Care and Rehabilitation of Offenders
PASRO	Prisoners Addressing Substance Related Offending
PCT	Primary Care Trust
RRO	Race Relations Officer
REAT	Racial Equality Action Team