



H M PRISON LOWDHAM GRANGE

ANNUAL REPORT

1ST FEBRUARY 2009 – 31ST JANUARY 2010

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1. INTRODUCTION

This is the 12th Annual Report from the IMB on HMP Lowdham Grange, a Category B male training establishment operated by Serco, where respect, decency and zero tolerance work together to provide a positive regime for all involved within the prison.

At 31st January 2010 the Certified Normal Accommodation was 628 with an overcrowding figure of 62.

Healthcare is provided in house by Serco Health, Education is provided by Serco with strong links to new partners CJA, Deloitte, Stock College, The Training Partnership and HMP Dovegate sharing best practices in offender education.

Gareth Sands, the new Contract Director was appointed in December 2009, having moved from the Public Sector Prison Service to join Serco at HMP Lowdham Grange.

The majority of the year operated under John Biggin who has moved to HMP Doncaster, and Martin Oates who acted up as Contract Director for 3 months prior to Gareth's arrival. We wish John all the very best in his new role.

2. 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 (and lately the Secretary of State for Justice) 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.

3. DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Lowdham Grange IMB is committed to an inclusive approach to diversity which encompasses and promotes greater interaction and understanding between people of different backgrounds including race, religion, gender, nationality, sexuality, marital status and age.

The Board values this approach to diversity within its own recruitment and board development practices.

All members of Lowdham Grange IMB will undertake their duties in a manner which ensures that it is accessible to everyone within the establishment regardless of their background or social situation. The Board will monitor to see that the experiences and interaction between staff, prisoners (or detainees) and visitors are fair and without prejudice.

4. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The IMB is satisfied that HMP Lowdham Grange has been managed and operated well during the year and that prisoners have been treated with appropriate respect.

During the course of the year there have been highlights and concerns worthy of mention below.

4.1 Level 4 Rating

The Board was particularly pleased to learn that the prison was awarded level 4 rating by NOMS during the first quarter of 2009. This indicates the level of dedication and hard work of management and staff throughout the prison. The retention of level 4 is increasingly challenging, not because of any slippage in performance, but as a result of a new measuring tool in the form of Performance Ratings System (PRS) which means that comparisons to other prisons over or underperformance determines the level of the prison in the measurings league table process.

4.2 In cell Telephones

The decision to keep in cell phones was welcomed by prisoners, management and the Board. This has had such a significant impact on the ethos, atmosphere and performance at Lowdham Grange that it is difficult to imagine the prison without the facility.

4.3 Zero Tolerance

The prison continues to operate a zero tolerance policy in relation to drugs; mobile phones, hooch and assaults, which is aimed at all who enter the prison. The net result of this has been a significant reduction in drug misuse, mobile phone finds and assaults.

4.4 New Build

There has been no disruption to the prison regime whilst building of additional accommodation has been in progress.

There will be capacity for a further 260 Category B prisoners housed in 2 houseblocks along with extra amenities. These have been completed to provide both high standards of living and working environment.

4.5 Healthcare

The Board had concerns with certain areas of healthcare. However, these are being addressed and the Board will continue to monitor progress.

4.6 Incident

An incident at height occurred on June 14th 2009. This was contained and resolved in a professional manner within a few hours.

5. REPORTS

5.1 New Build

Throughout the year building contractors have completed construction of the new build within the prison and outside its perimeter. This work has been completed to its deadline. In fact, the new build was populated earlier than originally planned.

The recruitment and training of PCO staff is complete and the recruitment of specialist staff is ongoing.

Due to the high standard of management there were no serious security issues during the building period.

5.2 Diversity

The Race Equality Action Group (REAG) is run by the Prison Service and its activities include impact assessments to ensure that there is no discrimination towards any prisoner or staff member. As a privately run prison, Lowdham Grange has to adhere to REAG policies but sometimes the communication from the Public Sector, though improving, leaves a little to be desired, thus making it difficult for the prison to meet its required expectations. During the reporting period these differences have been resolved.

There is an internal Diversity & Race Equality Action Team which meets on a bi-monthly basis. Senior managers and prisoner representatives attend these meetings and any issues raised are generally dealt with effectively.

A Disability Liaison Officer has been appointed to develop care plans for those prisoners with any type of disability and to ensure that staff dealing with any prisoner with a disability will be aware of their individual needs.

5.3 Amenities – Learning and Skills

Amenities cover a wide range of facilities including education classrooms, workshops, the gymnasium, the library and the multi-faith centre. At present the most significant problem is a lack of space, most noticeable in the gymnasium and the library. This will be overcome with the commissioning of the new build in which most of these areas will be extended.

Of particular note is the wide range of at least 80 educational and vocational courses which have been offered during the year. Furthermore, the Education Department has attracted a large number of important visitors and it has also received a major award from the Butler Trust.

5.4 Healthcare

Over the year there has been a high level of staff turnover which has resulted in staff levels being under strength from time to time, in particular the mental health nursing provision.

Waiting times for appointments with the Doctor and Dentist have been high resulting in prisoner complaints about Healthcare being the second highest subject of complaints over the year at 15.3%.

A new service level agreement is being agreed with Serco Health to improve the service and to bring it into line to cover the increase in prisoner population in 2010.

5.5 Safer Custody/Self Harm

The Safer Custody Group is made up of representatives from all areas in the prison and meets monthly. A prisoner representative from the Buddies group attends at the start of the meeting and is able to give an input from his team. The membership of the group is well balanced and it is effectively managed. At each meeting a picture of the safe custody level in the prison is built up by using available resources, collating information and statistics which is then used as an indicator of trends. The number of self harm incidents remains low with a total of 12 during the year. None of these were serious.

5.6 Reintegration Unit

Dedicated staff deal with all challenges in a professional and caring manner.

Segregation Monitoring and Review Group (SMARG) meetings are held quarterly and review boards convene 3 times weekly at a set time with additional meetings to fall within prescribed time limits. The Board have monitored in excess of 90% of all reviews.

5.7 Business Enterprises

Lowdham Grange Business enterprises boasts an extensive, capable and diverse workforce, encompassing a range of people from a variety of backgrounds with differing social and work skills and this is evident in the range of companies for which the prison produces quality products.

5.8. Foreign Nationals

Within HMP Lowdham Grange foreign nationals have accounted for about 15% of the prisoner population during the year and they are dealt with by a dedicated Race Equality Officer (REO). There are no longer any detainees held and all go to HMP Nottingham on completion of their sentence.

Immigration officials have visited on a quarterly basis to deal with queried applications, mainly about prisoners' current situations made to them and have seen an average of 30 prisoners at each visit.

The Early Release Scheme and the Facilitated Return Scheme have operated successfully.

5.9 IEP/Regime

The IEP scheme has continued to work well with as many prisoners as possible being actively encouraged to achieve Enhanced status. At the end of the reporting year there were 80% who were on Enhanced 14.3 % on Standard and 5.7% on Basic status, with a prison population of 684.

The level of Purposeful Activity has continued to remain high as a result of the wide range of industrial, vocational and educational activities on offer to prisoners described elsewhere in this report. Staff continue to strive to increase the employment opportunities for prisoners by seeking additional industrial contracts, both to benefit those prisoners who remain unemployed and to take into account the future requirements for work to meet the needs of the increase in the prison population in the Spring of 2010.

5.10 IPP'S and OMU

The Offender Management Unit (OMU), which, among other things, deals with Indeterminate Public Protection (IPP) sentenced prisoners, has not especially come to our attention during the past year. Moreover, IPP prisoners have not proved to present the special challenges which were anticipated when the sentence was first introduced. However, the IPP regime consumes considerable resources, particularly within the OMU, though routines for the preparation of dossiers for the End of Tariff Review and Midway Review are now well established.

5.11. Residential and Personal Officer Scheme

During the year Houseblock Residential managers have been based in the residential areas of the prison. This has been a successful change and members of the IMB will have noticed a general improvement in the standards of cleanliness and general ambiance on the wings. Staff at Lowdham Grange have introduced a more rigorous and therefore more effective approach to the Personal Officer Scheme. The role of the Personal Officer is to meet weekly with allocated prisoners to discuss any personal problems or worries the prisoner has. The officer is expected to file a quality written report entry each week which is inspected by a residential Manager on a monthly basis. Since the introduction of this methodology, there has been a clear improvement in the quality of the scheme and what it is able to deliver, though managers admit there is still room for improvement.

6. QUESTIONS

There are no questions for either the Minister or Serco this year.

7(a) BOARD STATISTICS

BOARD STATISTICS	
Recommended Complement of Board Members	15
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	12
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	15
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 and Reviews	193
Total number of visits to the prison/IRC (including all meetings)	704
Total number of applications received	259

7 (b) APPLICATIONS

Code	Subject	2009/2010
A	Accommodation	0
B	Adjudications	6
C	Diversity related	1
D	Education/employment/training	21
E	Family/visits	14
F	Food/kitchen related	3
G	Health related	46
H	Property	30
I	Sentence related	22
J	Staff/prisoner/detainee related	6
K	Transfers	9
L	Miscellaneous	83
M	Confidential Access	18
	Total number of applications	259

7. (c) MONTHLY STATISTICS REPORT

DESCRIPTION	Feb-09	Mar-09	Apr-09	May-09	Jun-09	Jul-09	Aug-09	Sep-09	Oct-09	Nov-09	Dec-09	Jan-10	MONTHLY AVERAGE FOR THE LAST 12 MONTHS
AVERAGE POPULATION FOR EACH MONTH	690	689	690	690	690	686	678	679	690	690	682	683	686
No. OF PRISONERS ON BASIC	25	19	19	24	24	4	13	20	24	22	23	39	21
No. OF PRISONERS ON STANDARD	121	128	124	114	114	131	113	114	97	106	105	98	112
No. OF PRISONERS ON ENHANCED	536	537	544	543	543	545	545	551	557	561	556	547	549
No. OF PRISONERS IN PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY	559	568	570	540	557	621	635	617	613	601	605	591	595
No. OF PRISONERS UNEMPLOYED	107	107	96	92	58	45	37	60	54	75	61	80	66
No. OF PRISONERS MEDICALLY EXCUSED	7	6	6	9	7	8	6	8	9	10	14	14	9
No. OF ACCT's OPENED	8	8	13	10	10	13	10	11	10	7	16	13	11
No. OF STAFF WHO LEFT DURING MONTH	0	5	4	5	2	3	4	8	1	4	7	4	4
No. OF STAFF WHO JOINED DURING MONTH	1	20	3	4	4	9	1	7	2	17	20	10	8
NUMBER OF IMB APPLICATIONS	22	28	18	17	22	19	15	15	25	23	18	14	19
NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS	304	385	355	292	378	561	278	350	466	439	402	354	388
NUMBER OF OCCASIONS REQUIRING THE USE OF FORCE	6	10	5	5	2	15	12	15	7	11	10	13	10