

**HM YOUNG OFFENDERS' INSTITUTION,  
NORTHALLERTON**

**ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE  
INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD**

**2009-2010**

**1st March, 2009  
to  
28th February, 2010**

**IMB Statement of Purpose**

***'In all its activities the Board will uphold the principles of fairness and humanity in the treatment of prisoners while giving full weight to the maintenance of discipline and the interests and concerns of staff.'***

## **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.

***In compiling the report which follows, the IMB at Northallerton has remained true to its purpose and complied with its statutory duty. Such a report demands a ministerial response which is not superficially palliative; and which acknowledges the Board's concerns, whether or not it is possible to allay them.***

***The Board is committed to high quality monitoring. It considers - and wishes to emphasise - that a meaningful response from the minister to its reports is an essential part of this process.***

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## **NORTHALLERTON YOUNG OFFENDERS' INSTITUTION**

### **Function**

The prison dates from 1783 and was formerly the County Gaol for the North Riding of Yorkshire. Since 2002 it has been a Category 'C' Young Offenders' Institution. Offenders covered by the allocation criteria are those serving a sentence of less than 2 years from establishments within the Yorkshire and Humberside Area; and those from outside that area serving 18 months, or serving up to 4 years and within the last 3 months of their release date.

### **Location**

The prison is situated in the centre of Northallerton on a site which allows for no expansion.

### **Capacity**

The capacity is for 254 inmates: 101 double cells on A Wing and 45 single cells on C Wing which includes 2 safe custody cells not usually used for general purposes. Healthcare has one bed available for 24 hour watch. Enhanced prisoners have the privilege of a room for recreational purposes.

### **Facilities**

There is a small but well-equipped gym and a sports hall, but owing to the restrictions of the site there are no facilities for outdoor sporting activities. There is no dining room so offenders eat in their cells.

### **Catchment Area**

Yorkshire & Humberside, the North East and North West.

### **Service Providers**

- **Education** is provided by Manchester City College.
- **Healthcare** is provided by the North Yorkshire & York Primary Care Trust. A drug treatment service is provided by CARATs (Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice and Throughcare services). A Short Drugs Programme (SDP) is run by dedicated staff in the education department, though it has been badly affected by staffing problems this year. A pilot Integrated Drug Treatment Scheme (IDTS) has also been implemented.
- The **library** is provided by North Yorkshire County Council.
- A prison **radio** station was funded by North Yorkshire County Council's Connecting Youth Culture, but provision has now ceased.
- **Resettlement** services are provided by several organisations. SOVA (Supporting Others through Volunteer Action) has organised placements for offenders on release, but latterly Remploy has taken over this role. Job Centre Plus provides help with producing CVs and gives advice on jobs and training. Shelter offers help with accommodation.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Issues for ministerial attention raised in previous reports**

The concerns below were all raised in the report of 2008-9, as well as in preceding years, with neither acknowledgement nor action from the Minister.

The Board continues to find the following unacceptable:

1. Offenders' accommodation:
  - cells in double occupancy with unscreened lavatories **and** -
  - the need to eat meals in such cells.

*[25, 27.1, 27.6, 28.1, 28.4]*

2. The segregation unit:
  - the poor condition of the accommodation
  - the lack of any appropriate regime
  - time pressures on staff endeavouring to work with offenders.

*[23.1, 23.2, 23.3, 23.4, 25]*

3. Budgetary restrictions which:
  - impede sensible forward planning
  - inhibit the delivery of useful regimes in education, training and resettlement, and in the segregation unit
  - prevent refurbishment and redecoration, and impair cleanliness.

*[3.2, 7, 23.2, 23.3, 23.4, 25, 27.1, 28.1, 28.3, 28.4, 30, 31.1, 31.2, 31.3]*

4. Further examples of inappropriate transfer of offenders to Northallerton. Transfer should be avoided if offenders are:
  - presenting with severe mental health problems or personality disorders
  - undergoing health assessment or treatment at the transferring prison.

*[11, 15]*

5. Poor or non-existent opportunities for outdoor activity.

*[23.2, 30]*

### **Issues for ministerial attention raised for the first time in this report**

The Board is concerned about:

1. The implications of the introduction of C-Nomis. Computer inputting is time-consuming:
  - staff time and energy is diverted from face-to-face work with offenders
  - offenders' records still show sparse or incomplete detail.

*[23.2, 31.2, 31.3]*

2. Tedious and time-wasting difficulties in obtaining essential information from other areas of the criminal justice system.

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[32.4]

3. Unsatisfactory - and sometimes bizarre - situations generated by the requirements of central purchasing.

[28.2, 29.4]

**Commendations**

The Board commends the work of the Governor, the senior management team and all members of staff, especially in the face of circumstances which are not straightforward or encouraging.

In this report particular mention has been made of:

- work which involves diversity and equality issues in whatever way
- the projects organised by the education department
- the work of the healthcare staff
- the work of staff in the segregation unit
- the resourcefulness of the finance team.

[2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.5, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 16, 19, 23.1, 26, 28.1, 28.5]

***Buildings and facilities at Northallerton are poor, and the Board draws attention to this yet again. But the Board also emphasises how impressed it is by the conscientious and caring approach of staff to offenders: it is this which maintains respect and dignity in the prison.***

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'I was impressed ...' note IMB members' reports over and over again ' ... by the response to this young man ... by the meticulous assessment of need ... by the carefully tailored strategies ... by the personal support offered to this vulnerable offender ... by the decisions made, and the conscientious way they were relayed ...' This is the hallmark of the work at Northallerton: respect for individuals, recognition of their different needs, and responses to them.

The stuff of hard-pressed everyday prison life, this is the product of the caring common sense of staff and managers. In many ways it owes little to desk-bound policies, and evaluation is more a matter of feelings than statistics. Elderly buildings and tired facilities are not deal-breakers. Cumbersome procedures get satisfactorily pragmatic treatment wherever streamlining is possible. And the production line approach is resisted: there is a firm grip on the essential tenet that because individual needs differ, equal opportunity may in fact require unequal treatment.

IMB reports of rota visits are full of examples of diversity good practice; so are the reports Board members write on work with vulnerable offenders, on adjudications and segregation reviews, and on the various prison committees the IMB attends. The examples noted may be small, but they are very far from insignificant.

### **1. Policies and paperwork**

The following have been examined:

- Foreign Nationals Policy
- Disability Policy
- Diversity Action Plan
- Racial Equality Action Plan

All policies have been updated during 2009, but the latter two are to be completely overhauled in the forthcoming year.

The racist incident report forms (RIRFs) - 44 in 2009 - have also been examined.

### **2. Consultation**

Despite the Board's best efforts, monitoring the prison's consultative bodies has not been straightforward this year. Prior notice of meetings has often been a casualty of poor communication. In some cases, a significant number of staff changes during the year may not have helped.

Offenders too have sometimes seemed to be unaware of these constructive and potentially useful bodies and what they have to offer. On occasion concerns have been raised with the IMB which would have been best addressed through one of these consultative forums.

Nevertheless, whenever possible Board members have attended meetings of the following:

#### **2.1 Racial Equality Action Team (REAT)**

#### **2.2 Black Asian and Foreign National Offender Support Group (BAFNOSG)**

Offender representatives attend both these committees, which focus on the specific needs of offenders who are black, Asian or from another minority group (BME offenders) - a comparatively small proportion of the prison population, usually less than 10%. One of the representatives holds the position for the whole of his sentence, improving both contact and continuity.

Both these committees take seriously their remit to respond to queries and allay

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concerns. Members of staff attend the meetings to explain management decisions and offer reassurances about safety; and questionnaires make it possible to raise matters for both committees in advance, and so short-circuit the process of returning prompt answers to the wing.

### **2.3 Diversity committee**

The prison is aware of the hazards of equating diversity with racial equality, and recognises that other strands - disability, gender, faith - are important too. The committee is exploring ways of achieving a gentler, more subtle approach.

### **2.4 Consultative committee**

This committee aims to tap into opinions and concerns on the wings. The Board notes that offenders attending are now chosen just before the meeting: although they do indeed act as a sample, the awareness of the role of the representative has been lost, and with it ownership and responsibility.

**2.5** Other initiatives which aim to improve communication and response to need include an update of the **complaints procedure**. At present this elicits a daunting number of written responses: the prison proposes that instead an initial written application should be followed by a face-to-face reply from a duty manager. It may be possible to apply the same approach to racist incident reporting.

## **3. Access to regimes and facilities**

The Board has noted many attempts to ensure equal access, and picks out the following examples:

### **3.1 Disability**

Changes are planned for the questionnaire offenders complete at induction to provide information about disability. Though officers do offer support, the object is to make the process less anonymous, and more sympathetic - confessing to mental health problems, for instance, currently involves a tick in a box labelled 'mental illness'.

### **3.2 Learning differences**

Support is often hampered by the lack of specific diagnostic information. The education department offers one-to-one provision, and understands the needs of those unable to work with others in a classroom. Efforts are made to seek employment appropriate in these circumstances too.

Last year three very successful workshops for offenders were held as part of the AchieveAbility project, a national network to promote awareness of learning difference. The Board greatly regrets that because of lack of funding it has not been possible to repeat these workshops.

### **3.3 Faith**

The chaplaincy team sees all offenders at induction, and has contacts with representatives of many different faiths who will visit the prison if required.

During the course of the year the Imam has moved to a new post, and temporary cover has been necessary while his post is advertised. On the rare occasions that an Imam has been unable to attend, the prison has used a specially drawn up procedure to vet any offender volunteering to lead the Friday prayers. Special provision was also made for Muslim offenders this year at Ramadan, when the timing of the fast meant that hot meals were required late in the evening.

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**3.4 Language**

Translation facilities for those whose first language is not English are used, and so are picture cards resourcefully provided to meet immediate needs on the wing. Dictionaries and a copy of the prison handbook in the offender's own language are also available.

**3.5 Nationality**

The prison is well aware that offenders may need advice on immigration matters. Arrangements are made for contact with the immigration advisory service in Middlesbrough; and an immigration officer from the UK Border Agency in Leeds holds a regular surgery. (There are rarely more than 5 offenders of foreign nationality in the prison at any one time.)

**3.6 Families**

The need for support for offenders' families is recognised and provision is effective and much appreciated; officers are specially designated for this work. The family events mentioned in the IMB's last report were recognised by special awards from the charity 'Action for Prisoners' Families'.

A designated officer is specially trained to manage a death in custody.

**4. Training**

The new diversity and equality training course 'Challenge it. Change it.' continues to be run successfully. 56 out of 135 staff have been trained, and 87 non-uniformed staff.

The prison is also running a successful and well-attended customer service course for staff whose job involves interaction with the public.

**5. Promoting inclusion**

The Board was particularly impressed by the *Destiny Project*. This exhibition aimed to identify discrimination and its effects, and the young men involved, grappling heroically with stage fright, gave presentations of their work to an invited audience.

**6. Commendations**

- The caring and sensible equal treatment shown by staff at work with offenders in all areas of the prison.

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**7. Courses**

The courses offered by the Education Department last year have generally run successfully this year too. The staff produce good results bearing in mind the rapid turnover of offenders at the prison. Courses that deserve particular mention are the alcohol awareness course (though if more resources were available, two courses would be an asset), and the parenting course.

**8. Workshops**

The decorating workshop has produced fine results this year with great use of paint effects. The offenders are very enthusiastic as they believe they can use these skills to get a job. Joinery has also been extremely successful, and some offenders went on to higher qualifications at Leeds College on release.

The Radio Workshop run by Connecting Youth Culture was also very popular and successful. Unfortunately this project has been closed for security reasons.

The Waste Management course got off to a good start, but unfortunately the manager left, and it took months to replace him. One of the reasons for the delay was the length of time taken by security checks, and the Board draws attention to the way this can impinge upon regime. However, the course restarted in November and is now once again a successful provision. The establishment has a contract with Biffa to supply material for recycling.

These workshops have also had the benefit of providing another vehicle for the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Generally the offenders are very willing to brush up their skills in this practical environment.

**9. Projects**

The Education Department's Destiny Project, organised by April Stephenson, on equal opportunities and discrimination was a great success. The inspiration behind the project was Rosa Parks, the American civil rights activist. The exhibition was compiled by eleven young offenders in partnership with staff at the prison and the North Yorkshire County Council information service. The aim was to identify discrimination and its effects on others. An exhibition logo was designed by the offenders and appeared on T-shirts and posters. Each of the offenders looked at an area of discrimination and gave a talk on it. All of them said they had enjoyed doing this, and their research skills had been greatly improved, as well as their understanding of equality and discrimination in all contexts. From the audience's viewpoint, their social skills had certainly benefitted as well.

**10. Commendations**

- Worthwhile projects such as these, and the valuable links generated by opening them to members of the community.

## HEALTHCARE AND MENTAL HEALTH

### 11. Inappropriate Transfers

This is the ***fifth year in a row*** that the Board has raised the issue of the inappropriate transfer of offenders to Northallerton. Given the repeated reference in the Board's reports to such cases, it is disturbing that they can still occur. Although the number of cases is small, the impact on the individual offender can be grave, as the two examples below illustrate, both from November 2009. They are both clear cases of offenders being transferred unthinkingly from another prison without proper consideration of their individual circumstances.

One offender was transferred from Doncaster, despite having been in hospital for pain relief in relation to kidney stones, and for which he was waiting a further appointment. He was provided with pain relief at Northallerton but without nurses on duty after 6pm, it was unsuitable for him to remain in the prison. The other offender was received in Northallerton a week later from Lancaster Farms, even though he had an urgent oncology appointment arranged that month at Salford Royal Hospital.

Since this was the latest in a long line of such transfers made over the years from Lancaster Farms, the Board agreed the Chair should contact her opposite number at Lancaster Farms and ask for information as to why the transfer had been made. The response from Lancaster Farms IMB was deeply disappointing and the Board received no satisfactory explanation for the transfer nor indeed any evidence that any investigation had been made into the circumstances.

Both young men were returned to the prisons from which they had been received.

***Once again*** the Board remains concerned that such instances, which are completely unacceptable, will continue to recur until the circumstances of each offender to be transferred are properly and carefully considered by the transferring establishment.

### 12. Integrated Drug Treatment Scheme (IDTS)

Numbers remain very limited, which was expected because of the small number of hard drug users amongst Northallerton's population. The re-role of the prison may lead to an increased take-up of the scheme.

### 13. Level of Provision

Under the current Healthcare Manager, who leaves the prison at the end of this reporting year, the standard of service provided by staff has been excellent. There have been no complaints from offenders and enquiries by the IMB indicate that the service given by visiting GPs and dentists has been satisfactory. The relationship with the local hospital pharmacy has improved substantially and most items are now received within 24 hours.

### 14. Prison Health Steering Group/Prison Health Partnership Board

A member of the Board continues to act as an observer for this Group and only this month the Board has been invited to send an observer to attend meetings of the Partnership Board.

### 15. Issues for ministerial attention

- Transferring establishments to give proper and careful consideration to the health of each offender to be transferred and to the suitability of the receiving establishment.
- Better understanding between transferring and receiving establishments to avoid

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the inappropriate transfers of offenders.

- Improved co-operation between IMBs at transferring and receiving establishments.

**16. Commendations**

- The work of the permanent Healthcare Unit staff under the leadership of the Unit Manager.

## **SAFER CUSTODY**

Over the year, figures on incidents of bullying, assaults and self-harm have been remarkably stable.

### **17. Listeners**

Running the Listener scheme has always been problematic at Northallerton due to the rapid turnover of offenders. This last year has been even more difficult than usual. For the first six months the prison had three listeners operating for most of the time, covering both A and C Wings. For the last six months the prison has had only one - or no - listeners and this clearly creates problems for some new arrivals in C Wing. The Samaritans have been covering times when there are no listeners available.

Excellent posters are now on display to advertise the importance of the scheme, and recruitment was planned for April.

### **18. Exit surveys**

Throughout the year offenders have completed the Northallerton-designed exit survey before release, and it is encouraging that the majority of offenders say they have felt very safe or safe during their stay here.

### **19. Vulnerable offenders**

The ACCT system has worked very well this year. The figures and actual paperwork are available at all safer prisons and violence reduction committee meetings for members to check. Last year there was a problem with the transfer of information when offenders went to Education or work but this seems to have been largely overcome.

The Chaplaincy has done a great deal of work with vulnerable offenders, both in groups and as individuals.

### **20. Bullying**

Over the year bullying figures have been very low. In rare instances there has been repeat bullying but most bullying is an isolated incident. Assaults on staff or offenders have also been rare.

In November 2009, an anti-bullying week very successfully raised awareness of the dangers of bullying, with a booklet specially produced by offenders.

### **21. Commendations**

- The way bullying and anti-social behaviour is effectively controlled at Northallerton.

## SEGREGATION

### 22. Accommodation

The unit consists of offender accommodation of seven standard cells fitted with safer furniture, one special cell, one holding room, an offenders' shower, and the adjudication room. The main corridor is used to display information about the prison, application forms, library books and relevant staff information. There is a staff office and lavatory.

### 23. Staffing

**23.1** The two staff members on duty treat the offenders with care and compassion, and spend as much time as is possible working with them on a one-to-one basis. The officers are particularly good at tailoring 'carrot and stick' methods to individual needs. The Board has monitored incidents of very productive work with individual offenders: one example concerned an offender on an ACCT for whom a well-structured regime was devised, with a clear timetable and rules for appropriate behaviour, and with rewards for compliance.

**23.2** These opportunities, however, are becoming more and more limited. Staff are finding that maintaining computer records, as well as the paper ones which are needed for adjudications, is very time-consuming. It is practically impossible to offer any sort of regime when one of the two members of staff is completely occupied by computer-inputting: the time available for working with offenders is much reduced, and even use of the exercise yard is not possible without two staff members to supervise.

**23.3** The two pieces of gym equipment, mentioned in last year's report, are still redundant, and the plan to convert one of the cells to house this equipment, as in a mini-gym, has not materialised. In any case, use of the equipment, because of health and safety issues, would require organised and trained staffing.

**23.4** Staffing levels are further reduced to one officer at weekends, when one segregation officer covers the chapel and assists in C Wing exercise. Segregation staff also continue to help out on C Wing at other times.

### 24. Provision and facilities

Education provides in-cell learning for any offender who would have been attending the department in the main establishment. Showers are available every two days, and more frequently if staff time allows. Phone calls are facilitated every two days. There is a small exercise yard specifically for the use of offenders held in segregation.

Meals are provided by the servery on the adjacent C Wing. As segregation is a 'No Smoking' area, nicotine patches are provided by healthcare when necessary.

### 25. Issues for ministerial attention

**Board members feel strongly that conditions in the segregation unit have not changed materially for many years.** Visits to other establishments underline contrasts in standards of accommodation and regime. **As financial constraints bite, the Board fears that this area of the establishment will suffer further.**

- The Board reiterates its concern regarding **the condition of the accommodation.** Despite 'deep cleans' and redecorating, and the best efforts of staff, the fabric is not improved. Toilets and sinks remain stained, and detritus continues to build up between the window frames. There is a feeling everywhere of engrained dirt. There are no privacy screens around the lavatories. Airflow

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### **SEGREGATION**

remains limited unless cell doors are left open and the corridor windows opened, and it is difficult to maintain an acceptable temperature during extreme weather conditions.

- The Board deeply regrets the absence of any sort of formal *regime* in the unit. The proposal to develop an offender development unit, with a progressive six week programme, as mentioned in last year's report, has not been implemented, despite the considerable amount of time and work put into its formulation.

### **26. Commendations**

- The caring work of staff with individual offenders.

## OTHER AREAS FOR REPORT

### 27. Accommodation and cleanliness

**27.1 Accommodation continues to be a major concern for the Board, raising serious issues of decency and hygiene. The majority of cells at Northallerton are shared and meals are eaten in them; all cells contain lavatories which remain unscreened.**

The age of the prison, together with present financial cut backs, makes it impossible to achieve appropriate standards of decoration and repair, and high standards of cleanliness are much more difficult to achieve than in modern establishments.

**27.2** There has been some refurbishment during the reporting year. About half the cells on A wing and a number on C Wing have been repainted. More modern slimline lockers have been installed, some of which have small storage units which can be locked. Some cells have new graffiti boards.

There has been some ingenious, appropriate and entertaining re-decoration in Reception.

**27.3** On the wings, the standard of cleanliness over the past twelve months has been high. When concerns have been expressed in rota reports, there have been improvements, specifically in the showers.

**27.4** The condition of bedding and laundry has improved and has been satisfactory.

**27.5** Poor standards of accommodation also affect officers, particularly on C Wing, where the office is small and poorly furnished. Cleanliness in offices, particularly of carpets, is a concern.

#### **27.6 Issues for ministerial attention**

The need for *innovative thinking, improved planning, and appropriate financial provision* to tackle the problems of:

- shared cells with unscreened lavatories,
- the necessity of eating meals in these cells, and
- the difficulty of achieving high standards of cleanliness where facilities are old and out-dated.

### 28. Finance

**28.1 Funding of the establishment has been extremely difficult with management being asked for the sixth year running to make savings but still maintain a high level of service and regime. In a small establishment with very old buildings the effects of stringent budget restrictions are particularly acute.**

The achievements made are to the credit of management and staff, and it is a measure of the finance department's success that in 2009-10 a budget of £6.15 million was managed with only a £3.5K overspend. The Board continues to be extremely concerned that Northallerton remains seriously under-funded.

**28.2** Centralised contracts have once again proved to be both inefficient and costly. One example concerns the new canteen (prison shop) contract with DHL/Booker, which was introduced at Northallerton in April 2009. This led to a significant rise in the operational charge to the contractor, from £6K paid to Eurest in 2008-09 to £45K

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paid to DHL this year. This is offset by Northallerton's share of the profits, which means that the net charge is less than £10K - but a rise nonetheless.

Another example involved the Life Channel, the installation of which required three quotations to satisfy centralised purchasing criteria - despite there being only one provider of this service in the UK. The continued insistence on the necessary quotations took valuable management time and delayed the outcome in a tight financial year.

**28.3** The establishment was advised of a re-role to come in 2010, and of the need to put plans in place to create a local community prison. However, no budget allocation was made to work with, and the Board finds it difficult to envisage how such a large project can be undertaken - or even planned - without knowing what funding is available to make any necessary structural changes and also to set up a completely new regime for a different category of offender.

### **28.4 Issues for ministerial attention**

- The effects of budgetary restrictions, particularly acute in a small establishment with very old buildings and facilities.

### **28.5 Commendations**

- The work of all management involved in financial decision making.

## **29. Food**

**29.1** The food is of a consistently high quality with excellent choice. Menus focus on healthy and nutritious options.

**29.2** A new servery and floor were installed this year, which is a welcome investment.

**29.3** Training of offenders has increased over the year with courses leading to Food Safety Awareness in Catering accreditation.

**29.4** Board members have expressed some concerns over the (centrally issued) breakfast packs, which seem meagre in size. The Board also regrets that the catering officer is no longer allowed to purchase food which is close to its sell-by date from the centralised contractors 3663. With careful planning this made it possible to introduce cost savings into the weekly menu, using the saved funds to buy items not otherwise affordable.

## **30. Outdoor activity**

The two hard-surfaced outdoor yards are outdated and inadequate, particularly in an establishment housing young offenders. One (L-shaped, c10x15 metres) is specifically for the use of the segregation unit; the other is bigger (c20x30metres) but is currently not marked for organised sport.

While the Board acknowledges the difficulties presented by Northallerton's site, it looks for some wider thinking on this issue.

## **OTHER AREAS FOR REPORT**

### **31. Personal officer scheme**

The scheme seems to be gaining some momentum - on the whole offenders seem to know who their personal officer is - but the Board continues to have some concerns.

**31.1** Personal officers should see the offenders in their care on a weekly basis. The Board notes that time is allowed for personal officer duties, but in practice contact can be difficult or limited - for instance because officers are sometimes allocated to duty in other parts of the prison - and is certainly not possible on a casual basis.

**31.2** Another concern is record keeping. Officers feel that the introduction of C-Nomis has made keeping offenders' records up-to-date a time-consuming matter. The Board has noted examples of 'empty' records, and notes too that because good behaviour may paradoxically be less noticeable, there is a tendency to record negative comments rather more readily than positive ones. A Board member regularly attends meetings to review offender status under the incentives and earned privileges (IEP) scheme, and notes constant requests for more entries, particularly positive ones, on offenders' records.

### **31.3 *Issues for ministerial attention***

The difficulties which time constraints pose to personal officer work, in terms both of

- personal contact and -
- record keeping

### **32. Public protection**

**32.1** Public protection remains a high priority at Northallerton, and Board members regularly attend the multi-disciplinary meeting held monthly. The weekly interdepartmental risk management meeting is well attended and greatly reduces the length of the monthly strategy meeting. Reviews take place on Reception and continue while there is an element of risk and on release if considered necessary.

**32.2** Yorkshire and Humberside Region has been selected for the Early Adopter phase of a Layered Offender Management scheme which is intended to increase the level of shared working between prisons and probation. Northallerton began operating the scheme in February, and is presently identifying and addressing problems before the scheme is rolled out regionally.

**32.3** It remains impossible for the unit to achieve every National OASys requirement due to the high turnover of offenders. Although Area Office agreed that the target should be reduced this has not yet taken place.

**32.4** Difficulties in receiving information from other establishments still cause extra work for staff. The team spends a considerable amount of time gathering the missing information, essential if sound assessments are to be made.

## **WORK OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD**

### **33. Applications**

The Board has received 17 applications over the reporting period, which have been dealt with by the member on rota duty, then recorded and checked at our Board meeting.

The DVD showing the role of the IMB which was produced on a CYC course continues to be shown as part of the induction programme.

### **34. Board development**

The Board invited IMB members from HMYOI Deerbolt to visit Northallerton.

Members of the Board have undertaken C-Nomis Training, and attended other training sessions organised both by HM Prison Service and the IMB nationally.

Training before the monthly Board meetings continues, led both by prison staff and individual Board members. Subjects covered include fire safety, Shelter, the personal officer scheme, family liaison work, mental health, and information on the future re-role of the establishment. Discussion sessions based on the AMIMB Guide to Monitoring have also continued. Members of the Board attended the IMB Annual Conference and brought feedback to other members.

### **35. Objectives and policies**

The Board regularly reviews its policies and renews its service level agreement with the Governor. Each year the Board sets its own objectives through the team review process.

### **36. Relations with the Governor and Senior Management Team**

The working relationship with senior management is a solid and functional one. The Governor or his deputy attend every Board meeting, keeping the Board informed of any new issues and also responding to problems raised from rota reports. They also meet the IMB chair and vice-chair prior to every Board meeting.

### **37. Reviews, adjudications and committees**

Board members attend segregation reviews and adjudications and ACCT reviews whenever possible. Between them they attend the various prison committee meetings and report back on them. These include: SMT meetings, the finance, performance and strategy committees, diversity/REAT meetings, security, public protection, and the health and safety committees, and safer prisons and violence reduction meetings.

### **38. Rota visits**

The Board makes visits weekly following a rota. Two members are on duty in any one week, one acting as first on call and the other as cover. They try to cover all areas of the prison over a period, but on each rota visit go to segregation, healthcare, the kitchens and servery and both wings.

**WORK OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| <b>Board statistics</b>                                       |     |
| Recommended complement of Board Members                       | 10  |
| Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period  | 9   |
| Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period    | 9   |
| Number of new members joining within the reporting period     | 1   |
| Number of members leaving within reporting period             | 1   |
| Number of attendances at meetings other than Board meetings   | 58  |
| Total number of visits to the prison (including all meetings) | 266 |
| Total number of applications received                         | 17  |
| Total number of segregation reviews held                      | 19  |
| Total number of segregation reviews attended                  | 11  |

## Applications

| Code | Subject                             | 2007/8 | 2008/9 | 2009/10 |
|------|-------------------------------------|--------|--------|---------|
| A    | Accommodation                       | 1      | 1      | 1       |
| B    | Adjudications                       |        | 0      | 0       |
| C    | Diversity related                   |        | 0      | 0       |
| D    | Education/employment/training       | 5      | 4      | 1       |
| E    | Family/visits                       | 1      | 1      | 1       |
| F    | Food/kitchen related                |        | 1      | 0       |
| G    | Health related                      |        | 1      | 1       |
| H    | Property                            | 5      | 8      | 2       |
| I    | Sentence related                    | 6      | 1      | 2       |
| J    | Staff/prisoner/detainee related     | 5      | 2      | 3       |
| K    | Transfers                           | 3      | 2      | 0       |
| L    | Miscellaneous                       | 6      | 29     | 6       |
|      | <b>Total number of applications</b> | 32     | 50     | 17      |