



**HMP/YOI ASKHAM GRANGE**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**1 JULY 2011 – 30 JUNE 2012**



### **STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB**

The prison Act of 1952 and the Immigration and Asylum Act of 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 other official to whom he has delegated authority as it judges appropriate, any concerns 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 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 the prison records.

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## **1. Brief description of the Prison and its Functions**

- 1.1.** HMP/YOI Askham Grange is a women's open prison in the rural village of Askham Richard just South of York
- 1.2.** The baseline CNA of 151, an in-use CNA of 128 and an operational capacity of 126
- 1.3.** The population, all convicted, ranges in age from Young Offenders to residents of mature years. They predominantly live in dormitory accommodation but those on Stage Two resettlement and lifer prisoners have priority for single rooms and are placed on a waiting list as appropriate to ensure fairness of allocation.
- 1.4.** Askham Grange is an open prison in which the overriding ethos is for resettlement and preparation of the residents for their return to the community via its Interventions and Pathways regime which encompasses all aspects of the needs of the residents. It has provision for up to ten mothers with their babies, enabling them to maintain full time care of their child up to two years, whilst in prison, and it is complemented by a nursery which takes in some children from the prison staff and the local community. A family team works with them and all other mothers in Askham to prepare for life on release.
- 1.5.** The regime is focussed on reducing the re-offending rate by developing a wide range of skills to enhance their opportunities on release. All departments contribute to this in their separate ways.

## **2 Executive Summary**

- 2.1** HMP/YOI Askham Grange has retained its High Performance Status, a remarkable achievement considering the economies being made and the impact this can have on staff morale. The staff in all departments continue to do their best for the residents and their resettlement after release; very many going the extra mile in what they do
- 2.2** The problem of population suitability coupled with shorter length of sentences remains. However the reoffending rate remains one of the lowest in the country at circa 6% for prisoners who spend more than a year at Askham Grange, it is higher for those spending less than a year in the prison. The Board remains convinced that more work could be done for the good of women in prison by the right choice of residents being sent to Askham, with reasonable remaining lengths of sentence to serve transferring at the earliest appropriate moment to our open conditions.
- 2.3** The clustering of Askham Grange and New Hall prisons has, despite the Board's doubts, proved a success but the problem of senior management turnover remains with two deputy Governors and three cluster Governors in as many years, leaving little time for new strategies to become established.
- 2.4** The board hopes that the new focus on Askam's Conferencing business will prove a success in terms of training for residents and income generation; however it does have concerns about the impact it may have on the day to day lives of the residents.
- 2.5** The Board continues to visit the prison twice a week for monitoring, often more frequently and matters of housekeeping have generally been resolved by staff at the appropriate level.
- 2.6** Despite all the changes Askham Grange is an establishment in which residents generally feel safe and think that their wellbeing is looked after. This is due to the good work of the staff and we list the various departments who have contributed in the relevant part of the report.

### **3 The Care and Treatment of Offenders**

#### **3.1 Healthcare**

Healthcare at Askham Grange continues to provide a high standard for the residents and indeed quarterly surveys show a high level of satisfaction.

**3.1.1** A particular challenge for the Healthcare department has been the transfer of residents to Askham Grange from other establishments without the correct information about their healthcare needs or indeed without the correct medication. In order to remedy this problem, healthcare staff from Askham Grange visited HMP New Hall – from where a lot of transfers are made – and made direct contact with the matron there. Healthcare staff at Askham Grange are now able to be proactive in finding out the necessary healthcare information about residents who have transferred from New Hall. As a result of this positive step, healthcare staff at AG have extended this approach to other establishments from which residents have transferred.

#### **3.1.2 IDTS**

There has been an increase in the number of residents being supported by IDTS. In addition, the employment and retention of IDTS staff has become problematic because of issues around the commissioning and funding of the service. The Healthcare department will be looking at this staffing problem with Leeds and York Mental Health Trust, who employ the IDTS team.

#### **3.1.3 Residents Satisfaction Survey**

The results of the residents' quarterly healthcare survey, for the period April to June 2012, based on the completion of 30 questionnaires is typical of the result for the rest of the year

	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Below average</b>
<b>Level of access</b>				
Doctors and nurses	25	4	1	0
Dentist	7	8	6	4
Optician	7	5	5	0
<b>Level of care received</b>				
Doctors and nurses	20	8	0	1
Dentist	7	10	2	4
Optician	3	7	3	0
<b>Attitude/professionalism</b>				
Doctors and nurses	24	4	2	0
Dentist	9	7	3	4
Optician	6	5	2	0

Overall, this shows that of those questioned, the vast majority are very positive about the level of access and care they receive from the Healthcare department. In addition, they are also very satisfied with the attitude of Healthcare staff.

### **3.1.4 Mental Health**

During the same period mentioned above, seven residents stated that they accessed mental health services. Of those seven, feedback from six was 'excellent' and one 'good'.

### **3.1.5 Dental**

All non-urgent appointments are within the target of 6 weeks.

### **3.1.6 Missed Appointments**

Statistics for missed healthcare appointments during the period 1.7.11 to 30.6.12 reveal a steady increase, with the figure for June 2012 being 8%. Healthcare has recently taken steps to improve this statistic by giving a written warning to a resident who either misses her appointment or who is late and also noting this on her prison record.

## **3.2 Security and Safer Custody**

### **3.2.1 Security**

The Intelligence system at Askham Grange comprises Operational Intelligence and Strategic Intelligence and both form a vital part of the overall process. Much of this work concentrates on drug misuse, bullying and alcohol abuse. Security meetings are held monthly to review the overall picture as well as individual concerns.

Although Security maintains a low profile it nevertheless keeps well on top of the situation whilst allowing a relaxed overall atmosphere to be maintained.

### **3.2.2 Safer Custody**

Residents in general feel very safe within the prison and this has been confirmed in recent surveys of the residents. An anonymous exit survey is done with those being released. The prison takes a proactive stance on anti-bullying and results for the last year show a very positive result. A robust anti-bullying policy is in place and investigations are thorough and outcomes followed through. This allows any problems to be diagnosed early and action is taken if needed.

### **3.2.3 ACCTS**

The Prison has a policy of actively supporting and monitoring residents on ACCTs at Askham Grange rather than returning them to closed conditions. Few ACCTs are opened and are generally closed quite quickly.

## **3.3 Diversity – Equal Opportunities, Disability and Foreign Nationals.**

In line with previous years, the IMB of *HMP Askham Grange* is confident that the staff and management of the prison continue to be acutely conscious of all diversity matters, that they respond promptly to incidents that arise and moreover they ensure that appropriate educational information and procedures are in place for the support of residents and staff, independent of the nine protected characteristics of the Equalities Act (2010). There are four Equality Team meetings each year to discuss and support these protected characteristics.

Its aims are to uphold the *General Duty* of all prison staff and residents;

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- To advance equality of opportunity between different groups, and
- To foster good relations between different groups

The application of General duty has eliminated the need to apply and monitor targets for equal opportunities in prison staff.

**3.3.1** The Board is satisfied that there has been no serious evidence of discrimination or similar inappropriate behaviour, on grounds of race, sexual orientation, gender (inc. reassignment), marital and civil partner status, religion or belief, disability or age, in HMP Askham Grange during the course of the year.

Again, as in previous years, this is not only supported by the very low number of incidents or complaints (esp. RIRFs) during the past year, but confirmed by a perceived strong ethos within the establishment of equality.

**3.3.2** There were no diversity-related Comp 1 or Comp 1a submissions during the year. Neither were any of the 28 written Applications to IMB in any way related to diversity issues. There were a very low number (X8) of DIRFs submitted during the course of the year. The IMB now regularly monitor these and where appropriate, deliver feedback to the Equalities Team re. the fairness of their response.

**3.3.3** The Board remains satisfied that there are no issues affecting the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME), a population of about 14 – 17% at HMP Askham Grange, evidenced by the harmonious manner in which residents of all cultures live together. There were three foreign nationals resident at the prison over the last year.

**3.3.4** The previously successful Diversity Events Planning Group has now been subsumed into the responsibilities of the Equality Team.

**3.3.5** All markers on HMP Askham Grange's Equality Action Plan were either amber or green; none were red.

**3.3.6** The logistics and layout of the building with most accommodation and the education provision being located on the first and second floors, present difficulties for residents with disabilities, Nevertheless, staff make every effort to ensure that residents with permanent or temporary disabilities are not disadvantaged by this. For example, where possible, disabled residents are accommodated in ground-floor rooms. Also a stair lift is available to anyone who cannot negotiate the stairs.

**3.3.7** The year has seen the retirement of the Senior Chaplain after many years. His departure opened the opportunity to install a new rota which ensures that for most of the week; at least one Chaplain is now on duty within the Chaplaincy every day. This is a welcome transition.

**3.3.8** HMP Askham Grange staff and especially the catering team, planned and worked hard to meet the particular requirements of a very small number of Muslim residents during the festival of Ramadan. As a result, we are led to believe the festival passed successfully and without incident.

**3.3.9** The long-awaited conversion of the existing Christian chapel (at some financial cost) into a Multi-faith room is complete.

#### **3.4 Learning and Skills**

This Department continues to provide excellent educational opportunities for residents.

**3.4.1** Following from negotiations the previous year, the staff agreed to work more hours and the OLASS (Education) Manager & the Deputy increased their classroom hours. This has been challenging but has been successfully embedded. The team are now looking ahead to manage changes arising from the new OLASS 4 contract to be implemented from August 1<sup>st</sup> 2012. This will see the basis for funding change from staff hours to outcomes for learners. Measures are currently being put in place to improve attendance, though this is already 82%, above the target of 80%. Discussion, and liaison with, wider prison staff is taking place to ensure consistency of learning and that the widest possible opportunities continue to be offered to the residents. The forward thinking and strategic overview of the OLASS Manager is to be commended.

**3.4.2** An innovation this year has been the introduction of a Professional Cookery Course awarded by City & Guilds. Currently 10 residents are enrolled. The section benefitted from a three & a half month secondment by the Catering Manager from HMP Lindholme. He was able to enhance and guide the further development of the Conference Facilities and the opportunities this offers for residents. A Level 2 NVQ in Hospitality was offered as part of this pilot and two residents successfully completed the full qualification in this period. Funding and plans are now in place to offer a Barista qualification. This is a stand-alone unit of 20 hours at level 2 endorsed by QCF and it is part of the wider NVQ 3 in Professional Cookery. The "Nails" course and the in house Hairdressing Salon continue to be popular vocational choices. The challenge is to ensure the work experience here is at a realistic speed and range to match expectations in the work place so candidates working at NVQ Level 3 also complete work placements in salons in the community. The Business Administration courses Levels 1 -3 are very highly rated by residents, conference delegates & outside agencies that use these facilities. Both Business Admin & the Level 1 & 2 Customer Service courses provide valuable qualifications for those developing skills at the conferences & reception points at Askham Grange. The BICS cleaning course has now been developed into Level 2 NVQ in Cleaning Services to give residents more currency with employers on release. In addition all residents are given the opportunity as part of "Employability Skills" to participate in a mock interview with a

professional from the community and to practise addressing the issues of remorse and disclaiming.

- 3.4.3** Appropriate attention is paid to equality of opportunity and a range of individual needs are met, including those, for example, with mental health issues & a history of substance abuse. Detailed induction interviews include an assessment of personal learning styles, self-assessment of soft & transferable skills and ICT.
- 3.4.4** In the past year, the section has benefitted from some extra regional funding which has allowed the employment of a full time Learning Support Practitioner to give individual extra support on a 1-1 basis for Literacy and Numeracy. This has made a big difference in terms of successful outcomes. This type of support will be even more important in the future as the change is made to Functional Skills. The achievement of these qualifications relies on the application of knowledge and will therefore be more demanding of residents. To support this, plans are in place to develop a mentorship scheme among the residents, thereby also providing a route into employment as a learning support practitioner or functional skills teacher. Four residents are hoping to join the PTLLS (Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector) course at York College in the next academic year and one ex –resident has gained entry to university based on her success at PTLLS whilst at Askham.
- 3.4.5** Safeguarding is also recognised as a strength. This was evidenced at a mock Ofsted Inspection held by Manchester City College in July. The OLASS Manager is the Designated Person for Equality of Opportunity and Safeguarding. Her open door policy allows residents timely discussion of issues. Closer links with the Library have been developed over the course of the year, for example the Friday Book Club, and the two teams are working together to access guidance on the safe use of the internet for residents prior to their release. All ICT classrooms have a list of the pitfalls of improper use of the internet & social networking sites; this is to inform residents who have been imprisoned during the massive development of technology so they (and their families) are not gullible or misguided in their use of these sites.
- 3.4.6** The Deputy OLASS Manager was assigned the role of Virtual Campus Champion in January and was subsequently allocated some hours remission for the development of specialist resources for the Virtual Campus; she has developed some excellent resources for Professional Cookery with colleagues in the region. Unfortunately there have been a number of issues with the broadband connection and very limited access. A new router has been purchased and hopefully this will improve the situation. Some opportunity has been lost however as the staff member no longer has the hours to develop this valuable resource. The broadband issue should be resolved in the near future so Askham can make full use of this new facility.

**3.4.7** Residents continue to be involved in a diverse range of studies at Life Long Learning Courses in the community, at Askham Bryan College, York College of FE & HE, & Leeds City College. Others are engaged in distance learning and home study courses provided by the OU & other universities or Stonebridge College. At any given time there is likely to be about 30 residents (25% of the population) engaged in or applying for such courses. The Board congratulates these residents, many of whom have not previously aspired to further education, on seizing the opportunity through study and hard work, to make a new life for themselves in the future. Likewise, we as a Board applaud Askham Grange for providing the necessary resources, support and encouragement and hope the establishment will be able to continue so to do.

**3.4.8** The OLASS Manager has been pivotal to the development and success of these innovations and to the fully committed Learning and Skills staff. Her skills and inspiration are recognised and appreciated by the Board, staff and residents alike.

### **3.5 Pathways and Resettlement**

Askham Grange continues to focus on resettlement and thereby retain a very low re-offending rate of circa six per cent. Members of staff continue to deliver an outstanding service which is highly valued by the residents. They are aided in this by the work done in the Offender Management Unit, particularly by Probation.

**3.5.1** The success at Askham Grange is based on an holistic approach involving many departments within the prison. The departments involved include Health Care, Education and Training, Substance Misuse, Pathways and all its functions, the Family Team amongst others. Regular meetings try to ensure that the various departments work together for the good of the residents. As well as a strategic overview they also maintain a tactical brief on the progress of individual residents.

**3.5.2** Employment and volunteering levels remain high despite the rising levels of unemployment in the area and the 40% levy imposed under the Prisoners Earning Act. This has had a detrimental effect on the level of personal savings available to residents for deposits and rent to set up their homes on leaving prison.

**3.5.3** Training and resettlement becomes more difficult if the population becomes skewed towards short term sentences. Although this has to be balanced against keeping the prison at an economic working capacity the Board remain convinced that efforts should continue to identify suitable women from our feeder prisons who will most benefit from the resettlement support that Askham Grange can provide

### **3.6 The Family Team**

The family team is a multi-agency team working together to help with many issues relating to residents and their families. It is led by an experienced senior

officer who oversees the Mother and Baby Unit, the Nursery, the Family Worker, Acorn House and associated staff.

### **3.6.1 Mother and Baby Unit**

The Mother and Baby Unit continues to provide excellent facilities for up to 10 mothers and their babies. Although numbers within the unit have fallen slightly in the last six months of the reporting period, this was more a function of the decrease in numbers of expectant women or women with babies being given a custodial sentence than a reflection of the unit itself. The Unit staff are supportive of the mothers and recognise the difficulties of combining the demands of motherhood with the requirements of a sentence. The arrangements made and support offered to a mother giving birth whilst serving a sentence at Askham are done with great care and sensitivity and is to be particularly commended.

### **3.6.2 The Nursery**

The Nursery has superb facilities and is staffed by an enthusiastic and professional team who provide a safe, caring and stimulating environment for the babies of residents and also a number of community children, although the acceptance of these children is soon to cease for financial reasons. The Board will monitor the effect of this. The nursery staff, together with the Health Visitor, play an important role in providing support, information and advice to the mothers on health, child care and developmental issues and encourage mother-child interaction.

### **3.6.3 The Family Worker**

The role of the Family Worker is a vital one, enabling residents to address a multitude of family issues relating to their children and other family members. The first three months of the reporting period saw several staffing changes caused by an external provider withdrawing from the partnership contract. This led to a lack of confidence in the service amongst residents. Since the contract to provide a family worker was taken by Barnardo's, the current family worker has adopted new initiatives, including a weekly 'drop in' session and has succeeded in re-engaging with residents. The latter half of the period saw an excellent service being provided by a full time member of staff. This needs to continue to be monitored by the Board, as it highlights potential problems which can arise with external partnerships and contracts, which then impact on the residents.

### **3.6.4 Acorn House**

Acorn House continues to play an important role in preparing a resident for returning to normal family life upon release. It gives mothers opportunities for overnight stays with their children in accommodation within the prison grounds where they are responsible for normal domestic duties and care of their children. It is believed that this will ease the transition from custody back into the community and result in greater family stability.

### **3.7 Catering, Kitchens and Conferencing**

Catering continues to provide an excellent range of food for the residents, providing three meals a day including a cooked lunch. It serves good quality food for all ethnic backgrounds, dietary needs and food intolerances. This is reflected in the comments book in the dining hall.

**3.7.1** Although in the past conferencing has been a limited part of the catering activities, plans are afoot to upgrade this department to provide cost effective training and qualifications for residents while establishing a commercial conferencing facility.

**3.7.2** The Askham Grange Catering unit continues to be one of the few prisons in England to score 13/13 in the independently audited Annual Hygiene Inspection.

All this is a considerable achievement when judged against the slender budget the kitchens work on.

### **3.8 Health & Safety**

Meetings are held quarterly, Chaired by a Governor with representatives from all relevant areas of the establishment present. Reports are given verbally or via a written document.

**3.8.1** Agenda items include, Training, Accident Reports and statistics, H & S Inspections and Risk Assessment reviews, First Aid and Fire Advisors Report.

**3.8.2** Thorough consideration is given to these and other pertinent issues with proceedings conducted in a highly professional and effective manner.

**3.8.3** Of particular importance in this reporting year was the upgrading of all bedding, mattresses, curtains etc to comply with Crib 7 fire retardant requirements. This was completed with the minimum of disturbance to residents, including those in the Mother and Baby unit. It should be recorded that as a Board, we did not receive a single complaint or adverse comment on what could be a sensitive issue, as residents are allowed to have their own bedding etc.

**3.8.4** Well done all the Askham Grange staff involved.

## 4 Statistics

### 4.1 Board Statistics

Recommended Complement of Board Members	10
Number of Board Members at the start of the reporting period	10
Number of Board Members at the end of the reporting period	10
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	2
Number of members leaving within the reporting period	2
Total number of Board meetings during the reporting period	12
Average number of attendances at Board meetings during reporting period	73%
Total number of attendances at meetings other than Board meetings	167
Total number of visits to the prison (including all meetings)	353
Date of Annual Team Performance Review	27/01/12

### 4.2 Applications, Receptions, Adjudications and ACCTs

	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Total number of written applications received	27	29	20	30
Total number of verbal applications received	9	26	9	14
Total number of receptions	261	220	212	171
Total number of Adjudications	90	69	70	48
Total number of ACCT's opened	6	7	21	8
Total number of request complaints	85	102	87	88
<b>Code</b>	<b>Subject</b>			<b>2011/12</b>
A	Accommodation			1
B	Adjudications			0
C	Equality & Diversity (inc religion)			0
D	Education/employment/training inc IEP			0
E 1	Family/visits inc mail & phone			0
E 2	Finance/pay			1
F	Food/kitchen related			2
G	Health related			3
H 1	Property (within current establishment)			5
H 2	Property (during transfer/in another establishment)			1
H 3	Canteen, facilities, Catalogue shopping, Argos			1
I	Sentence related (inc. HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-cat etc)			3
J	Staff/prisoner/detainee concerns inc bullying			3
K	Transfers			0
L	Miscellaneous			10
	Total number of IMB applications			30
	Of total: number of IMB Confidential Access was:			

**4.3** With a working number generally of around 125 any small numerical variation can appear as a much larger percentage. As a board, we view numbers and compare month by month and year by year to see if there are any trends or variations that should give us cause for concern. They are reported at all our monthly meetings

## **5 Conclusion**

Askham Grange by the nature of what it does is an institution of high complexity, catering for a population more accustomed to an imposed ordered discipline. Living in an open prison brings its own complications with self-discipline on the part of the residents an absolute necessity. The regime at Askham still proves to be supportive and caring for the women in its custody, we find that all departments at Askham Grange do excellent work with a clear focus on the decent and humane treatment of residents whilst they are at Askham and also in the preparation for their release. As a board we have received help and co-operation from all departments in the prosecution of our role.