



HMP/YOI ASKHAM GRANGE

ANNUAL REPORT

1 JULY 2012 – 30 JUNE 2013

**The Right Honourable the Secretary of State
For the Ministry of Justice**

Sir

I have the honour to submit the:

**ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD
HMP/YOI ASKHAM GRANGE
FOR THE PERIOD 1st July 2012 to 30th June 2013**

Members of the Board

Mr S Beyer– Chairman

Mr M Barrie

Mr C Golightly appointed 01-06-2013

Ms J Cox resigned 31-05-2013

Ms N Gooch

Ms J Guilfoyle

Ms J Henneker-Heaton resigned 21-08-2012

Mr R Hubbard resigned 31-12-2012

Mrs R King resigned 31-12-2012

Mrs D Smith resigned 05-11-2012

Dr A Wilson

Mr J Woolhouse appointed 01-06-2013

S C Beyer

Chairman 16-12-2013

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.** 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 18 months, which can be extended in exceptional circumstances, and it is complemented by a nursery.

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

HMP/YOI Askham Grange has yet again retained its High Performance Status with a re-offending rate below 7%, it meets or exceeds all criteria set for prisons, PRS Level 4, good MQPL/SQL, low ROTL failures/abscond rates, also approximately 10.7% under the PCA; the model operating cost for an establishment of this type. This makes the recent decision to close the prison somewhat baffling and one which the IMB at Askham believe is a high risk strategy that could result in increased re-offending rates. We challenge the premise that the savings made will be outweighed by the increased cost to the Treasury that will inevitably be the consequence of increased re-offending and the detrimental impact on families

- 2.1.1** 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 6.7%, which is the latest published figures for those 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 is convinced that this regime will not successfully transfer to open wings in closed prisons.
- 2.1.2** Askham's Conferencing business has been very successful in terms of training for residents and is also making progress on income generation.
The Café Nero Coffee shop is used by residents, conference delegates and staff is also showing a modest profit.
The ARC secretarial and fulfilment service has made considerable progress over the reporting period and is key part of the resettlement process at the prison.
The Board fears that all this progress and the wealth of experience will be lost with the closure of the prison
- 2.1.3** For some time the Board has been concerned that during our rota visits, a chaplain is seen infrequently and the Chaplaincy is accordingly, in darkness. We have also been concerned that there is no simple, rapid mechanism for Residents to contact and subsequently be seen by a chaplain or a Prison Visitor. New Residents to the prison are generally seen by a Chaplain 6 days after their arrival. This is counter to the PSI 51/2011 which indicates that they should be interviewed within 48hrs.
- 2.1.4** The Board continues to visit the prison twice a week for monitoring, often more frequently and matters of housekeeping have generally been rapidly resolved by staff at the appropriate level.
- 2.1.5** Despite a considerable period of uncertainty about the future, Askham Grange is still 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

3.1.1 Health Needs Assessment (HNA) Refresh

During the period, an HNA Refresh took place. It found that health conditions that are more prevalent at Askham Grange than comparison groups are: asthma, obesity, depression and smoking. This list remains unchanged since Oct/Nov 2010 (when a full HNA was conducted), except that epilepsy can now be added to the above list. The HNA Refresh also found that the prevalence of depression among residents has increased since the full HNA; but that there have been no significant changes in the prevalence of *other* conditions among residents. Access to healthcare for residents of Askham Grange is as good if not better than that experienced by individuals in the community. Residents can access a member of the healthcare team on a daily basis without an appointment. Thirty-five GP appointments are available each week (across 3 x GP sessions); these appointments continue to be filled, at a rate of 90%.

3.1.2 Residents' feedback on healthcare services (doctors and nurses, dentists and opticians)

Percentage of residents who ranked their experiences average, good or excellent:

	Period:			
	July-Sept '12*	Oct-Dec '12**	Jan-Mar '13***	April-June '13****
Level of access	94	98	96	87
Level of care received	96	95	91	90
Attitude/Professionalism	92	95	87	90

* Based on 30 questionnaires completed.

** Based on 30 questionnaires completed.

*** Based on 31 questionnaires completed.

**** Based on 29 questionnaires completed.

The above figures are extremely positive but on looking at the details, it becomes apparent that, with the exception of Oct-Dec '12 (when there were no optician comments

3.1.3 Missed healthcare appointments

Figures are as follows:

Period	Number/total appointments	Percentage %	Period	Number/total appointments	Percentage %
July '12	46/639	7.2	January '13	19/540	3.5
August '12	55/605	9.1	February '13	15/471	3.2
September '12	23/532	4.3	March '13	8/466	1.7
October '12	32/600	5.3	April '13	12/404	3
November '12	10/507	2	May '13	18/482	3.7
December '12	12/392	3.1	June '13	21/409	5.1

Apart from a small increase in June '13 and a decrease in March '13, the trend is downwards and stable at approximately 3% in the last six months. The healthcare team are currently looking at the value of placing residents on report for missing appointments (which is current practice).

3.1.4 Weekend healthcare

There is currently no weekend cover in the Healthcare Department. This is currently under review – to see if something else can be put in place - and is a concern for the following reason. If a resident needs a specific drug to be dispensed at the weekend – which can't be held in possession – and it can't be dispensed, then this could prevent a resident from moving to open conditions and thus progressing in their sentence plan.

3.1.5 Transfer of residents with medication

The transfer of residents from other establishments with the correct medication is still a problem, in spite of the best efforts of the healthcare team at Askham.

3.1.6 Dental

Non-urgent appointments are provided within six weeks. An NTR was issued, clarifying to residents that they are not allowed to smoke outside the dental surgery. All smoking paraphernalia now has to be left at Askham reception.

3.1.7 Miscellaneous

- In June '13 there were concerns about the length of time it takes to replace healthcare staff who have left, especially with the summer looming.
- June '13: all healthcare staff have completed statutory and mandatory training for Harrogate District Foundation Trust and HMP.
- The Healthcare Department can refer residents to 'healthy living' sessions at the gym.

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 and despite its low profile these problems are kept to a minimum.

3.2.2 Safer Custody

Residents at Askham Grange feel very safe and secure within the prison and this has been confirmed in recent surveys of the residents. The prison has taken a proactive stance on anti-bullying and has achieved remarkable success.

3.2.3 ACCTS

Last year the Prison developed its policy of actively supporting and monitoring residents on ACCTs at Askham Grange rather than returning them to closed conditions. Although there are relatively few ACCTS only two residents have been returned to closed conditions because of ACCTS.

3.3 Diversity – Equal Opportunities, Disability and Foreign Nationals.

3.3.1 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 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 (for Staff and Residents) to discuss and support these protected characteristics and they are generally chaired by the Governor.

The Equality Team Meeting's 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

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

3.3.2 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.

There were no diversity-related Comp 1 or Comp 1a submissions during the year. Neither were any of the 14 written Applications to IMB in any way related to diversity issues. There were a very low number (**X6**) 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), population of about **13.2 - 20%** at *HMP Askham Grange*, evidenced by the harmonious manner in which residents of all cultures live together. There were **x 9** foreign nationals resident at the prison over the last year.

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

3.3.4 The logistics and layout of the building present difficulties for residents with disabilities as with most accommodation and the education provision are located on the first and second floors, Nevertheless, staff make every effort to ensure that residents with permanent or temporary disabilities, and mothers with prams/pushchairs are housed in ground floor rooms. During the course of the year, the Residents' Association Room has been moved from the ground floor to the 1st floor in order to accommodate a new commercial/training facility. This has again created access problems. While a stair lift is available to anyone who cannot negotiate the stairs it is chronically unreliable and moreover at the far end of the building necessitating a long walk for disabled Residents or those mothers with pushchairs.

3.3.5 We reported last year that following the retirement of the Senior Chaplain in 2011, a rota was installed indicating that at least one Chaplain would be on duty within the prison for 6 days of the week. We have been concerned that during our rota visits, a chaplain is seen infrequently and the Chaplaincy is accordingly, in darkness. We have also been concerned that there is no simple, rapid mechanism for Residents to contact and subsequently be seen by a chaplain. New Residents to the prison are generally seen by a Chaplain 6 days after their arrival. This is counter to the PSI 51/2011 which indicates that they should be interviewed within 48hrs.

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

3.4 Learning and Skills

- 3.4.1** The section has faced a number of challenges in this period but has continued to make an exemplary contribution to the rehabilitation of the residents of Askham. A particular strength is the focus on looking at the women's needs holistically. Through this and by working cooperatively with all aspects of the prison the team contribute positively to the Education, Training and Employment targets for the prison. Each woman at Askham has a bespoke programme to meet the objectives of her Offender Management & Education plan. All are geared to career planning and resettlement.
- 3.4.2** The average number of women in the prison has dropped over the year and of these less are available to access Education. In June the average prison population was 100 with 67 potentially in learning. Over the year on average there has been a drop of 20. Residents are now able to access an increased range of enterprise activities such as the Arc, the Coffee Shop, the Conferencing Academy, Gardening and social enterprise in the form of beading & card making. This reduction in numbers combined with changes to the funding regime operated by the Skills Funding Agency has led to a reduction in delivery over the year, with further reductions anticipated. Level 3 courses have been tapered out and will no longer be delivered on site. Residents may still access these at the most appropriate institution or college via ROTL. Those over 24 years will need to apply for an Adult Learning Loan. The reduction in staff needed has been managed by natural wastage to date.
- 3.4.3** A further challenge is that residents are presenting with more complex learning needs and personality disorders, some of which may stem from substance abuse. Of 178 women involved in Education between August 2012 and July 2013, 56 had learning difficulties or disabilities. Specific support was given to 35; the others were assessed as coping well. The interdepartmental Disability meeting helps give coordinated support to individuals.
- 3.4.4** Education continues to be a priority within the prison and the section has been well supported to improve punctuality and attendance. For example, if further residents are required in the kitchens, staff will negotiate about individual levels of progress and need. There has been a significant decrease in the number of interruptions in sessions both from within the section and from outside. Success rates are high with 92% achieving units and residents on average achieve 10 units each. The success rate for Employability Skills is 93 Functional Skills 85% and Personal & Social Development 98%. 7 residents were successful in achieving the new Barista qualification, which is embedded in the Professional Cookery Course, in July. The quality of teaching and learning within the section is judged to be of a good standard with 100% of lesson observations being "good or better". 4 were judged to be "outstanding". Use of interactive whiteboards has become more embedded. Plans for the Virtual Campus have now been abandoned because of issues with broadband connectivity. Closer working across the Cluster has had positive outcomes for example the delivery of Food Hygiene courses at Askham.
- 3.4.5** Residents continue to access Distance Learning with currently 3 residents studying towards OU degrees and 5 studying through Stonebridge. Other residents have achieved college places, for example one is completing a level 1 Sign Language course, and another an Assessor's Award. Other plans are being put in place for the new academic year.
- 3.4.6** Some enrichment activities need to be noted particularly, for example, the work with Dance United Yorkshire. This enabled 2 residents, after 6 weeks preparation to take part in a successful performance in the community in front of 250 people. Another was the 4 performances the Clean Break Company delivered with 10 residents within the prison. The presence and focus shown by the women was commented on across the institution. The section has good links with the Library; a joint Book Club and quiz promotes discussion and interest as does "Storybook Mums". Through the Library residents can access York Explore in the community. This has been a valuable referral, for Lifers particularly, as it provides an introduction to the Internet and how to use it safely.

3.4.7 The Board congratulates all 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.

3.5 Pathways and Resettlement

3.5.1 Askham Grange continues to focus on resettlement and thereby retain a very low re-offending rate, below 6%. Despite all the uncertainty about the future of the prison members of staff have continued 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

3.5.2 Employment and volunteering levels remain high despite the rising levels of unemployment in the area. This is due in no small part to the dedication of the Pathways team and the holistic approach involving them, HealthCare, Education and Training and the Family Team.

3.6 Enterprise

3.6.1 The small Pathways unit continues to do outstanding work in placing residents who qualify in Stage 1 unpaid community work and Stage 2 paid commercial work. From their arrival residents are directed to educational programmes that are applicable to occupations they wish to pursue on their release and when appropriate, they are assisted to seek and obtain relevant employment. Excellent contact is maintained with national employers that frequently results in residents continuing their employment with the same company near to their homes on release. As a Board, we are convinced that this work makes a significant contribution to the low re-offending rate of women who spend the final part of their sentence at Askham Grange, ie. 6.04% over the five year period to 2011.

3.6.2 Following the appointment of a new Governor in 2012 there has been a strong emphasis on maximising income by expanding the conference potential of the building as emphasised by the addition of a new sub-title of "Askham Grange Conference Academy" being added.

3.6.3 The ground- floor Association Room has been converted to a cafe to enhance the Conference facilities but as does the Conference Academy, it also serves as an educational facility by providing valuable barista training for residents to achieve NVQ's that will assist employment opportunities on their release. We are told that conferencing and the cafe are both income-producing which is highly commendable. The ground-floor Association Room, which was little-used by Residents, has been an excellent venue for the location of the new cafe. A new Association Room has thus been created from former dormitory accommodation on the first floor and is both well used and popular with Residents. However, being located on the first floor means it is less accessible by residents with mobility issues especially older residents and mother and babies with buggies. Accordingly, alternative space has been made available for them near the dining room, and in addition, Residents with mobility problems are now allowed to associate in the pleasant foyer/reception area of the house (village square concept) which has comfortable seating and is now frequently used by mothers and babies.

3.6.4 Another innovation in the reporting year is the launch of the Askham Resource Centre (ARC) located in a self-contained unit on the perimeter of the grounds. Its purpose is to provide commercial outsourcing that is income generating whilst it also gives residents experience of acquiring business related skills in a real life setting.

3.6.5 Plans are being progressed to expand the present Gardens unit to a much enlarged Garden Centre selling own produced fruit and vegetables and other products to the public.

3.7 The Family Team

Last year saw the family team succeeding despite many problems with recruitment and staffing levels. They have built on that success and continue to provide excellent help and support 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

3.7.1 Mother and Baby Unit

The Mother and Baby Unit continues to provide excellent facilities for up to 10 mothers and their babies. Numbers continued to fall during the reporting period reflecting the decrease in numbers of expectant women or women with babies being given a custodial sentence. The Board endorses the sentencing policy that has led to this reduction.

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.

3.7.2 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. Attendance has dropped for two reasons:

- The drop in numbers of mothers with babies in the prison population as a whole
- The decision to only take babies and toddlers from residents which was based on costs rather than need, this has been the first year when the nursery has not been open to prison staff and local children

3.7.3 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. After an uncertain period last year an excellent service is now being provided by a full time member of staff.

3.7.4 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.

The Board thinks this facility will be difficult to replicate in the proposed local open units

3.8 Catering, Kitchens and Conferencing

3.8.2 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.

3.8.3 The Catering team has risen to the challenge of servicing the conference facility; they now offer a first class service to delegates while providing cost effective training and qualifications for residents.

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

4 Statistics

4.1 Board Statistics

Recommended Complement of Board Members	9
Number of Board Members at the start of the reporting period	10
Number of Board Members at the end of the reporting period	7
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	2
Number of members leaving within the reporting period	3
Total number of Board meetings during the reporting period	11
Average number of attendances at Board meetings during reporting period	80%
Total number of attendances at meetings other than Board meetings	43
Total number of visits to the prison (including all meetings)	181
Date of Annual Team Performance Review	02.04.13

4.2 Applications, Receptions, Adjudications and ACCTs

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Total number of written applications received	29	20	30	14
Total number of verbal applications received	26	9	14	8
Total number of receptions	220	212	171	145
Total number of Adjudications	69	70	48	72
Total number of ACCT's opened	7	21	8	6
Total number of request complaints	102	87	88	74
Code	Subject			2011/12
A	Accommodation			2
B	Adjudications			1
C	Equality & Diversity (inc religion)			0
D	Education/employment/training inc IEP			0
E 1	Family/visits inc mail & phone			1
E 2	Finance/pay			3
F	Food/kitchen related			1
G	Health related			4
H 1	Property (within current establishment)			0
H 2	Property (during transfer/in another establishment)			1
H 3	Canteen, facilities, Catalogue shopping, Argos			0
I	Sentence related (inc. HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-cat etc)			2
J	Staff/prisoner/detainee concerns inc bullying			2
K	Transfers			0
L	Miscellaneous			5
	Total number of IMB applications			22
	Of total: number of IMB Confidential Access was:			0

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 offers an excellent opportunity to women from closed conditions to re-establish themselves into the community. Many of its residents have served lengthy sentences and have become institutionalised and have to relearn how to take responsibility for themselves and their actions. Against the odds it has one of the lowest recidivism rates in the prison service, this success is not happenstance but is due to a dedicated staff team which focuses on all the issues surrounding resettlement including:

- Education
- Physical and mental health
- Accommodation
- Family life
- Employment and training

It is difficult to believe that the ethos and facilities at Askham Grange can be simply lifted and re-sited elsewhere.