

INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

HOLME HOUSE PRISON

STOCKTON-ON-TEES.

A N N U A L R E P O R T

2010

MEMBERSHIP OF BOARD

The following people served on the Independent Monitoring Board during the course of the year

Chairman Mr. Richard Merritt

Vice-Chairman Mrs. Janet Taylor

Members (in alphabetical order)

Mrs. Muriel Blythman, J.P.

Mr. Mark Boagey (Resigned November 2010)

Mrs. Linda Broadhead, O.B.E.

Mr. Leo Hall (Appointed December 2010)

Mrs. Susan Heathcote (Appointed December 2010)

Mr. Leo Murphy, J.P. (Resigned January 2010)

Mr. Ian Noble

Mrs. Carolyn Russell (Resigned November 2010)

Ms. Debra Stevenson

Mr. Philip Stokes (Appointed December 2010)

Miss. Kirsty Struthers (Resigned January 2011)

Mrs. Carole Ward

Mrs. Elizabeth Waters

Mrs. Jill Wilkinson (Appointed December 2010)

Clerks to the Board Miss. Michelle Parkinson

Mr. Dave Cooper M.B.E.

(The Board would like to express their sincere thanks to their Clerks for the courteous and efficient service over the year)

C O N T E N T S.

This report contains the following items:-

1. Executive Summary
2. Section 1 - Introduction
3. Section 2 -The role of the Independent Monitoring Board.
4. Section 3 – Description of the Prison
5. Section 4 - Particular issues
 - a) Those which require an immediate response
 - b) Those which do not require an immediate response
6. Section 5 - Overall Judgment of the Prison
7. Section 6 – Specific Area Reports
8. Section 7 – Other Areas of the Prison to be reported on
9. Appendix 1 – Applications by subject
10. Appendix 2 – Board Statistics

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- ES1. This report covers the work of the Independent Monitoring Board at Holme House Prison for the calendar year 2010.
- ES2. The year at Holme House has been significant with the handover of houseblock 7 and the new Regime Buildings. There have been the usual teething problems but the facilities offered, in particular by the new Regime Buildings, have added considerably to what Holme House can offer those committed to its charge.
- ES3. The Board is pleased that suggested proposals to incorporate IMBs within the regulatory structure of the prison service have not been proceeded with.
- ES4. This has not been an easy year for the Board. A combination of circumstances reduced the number of active members of the Board. The Board comprises volunteers who give of their time to the Board freely. However, the Board has followed a policy of trying to monitor closely the many aspects of prison life recording what members observe in greater detail than hitherto. This has meant that the Board has been operating a rota schedule of one member on rota per week over a five weekly cycle with assistance given by other members on an ad hoc basis.
- ES5. The Board considers that the Prison was, overall, well managed in the year under review and that inmates are treated with the respect that they are entitled to – see section 5.1. The Board considered that the atmosphere within the Prison was good. The Board consider this to be a credit to the Governing Governor, Senior Management Team, staff and prisoner alike.
- ES6. In Section 4 of the report, the Board raises concerns which it considers should be addressed by the prison authorities. These are
- a) the lack of a sex offenders treatment programme at Holme House – see paragraph 4.2
 - b) the continuing delays in the holding of inquests into deaths in custody – see paragraph 4.3
 - c) transfers between prisons especially for prisoners brought into the Prison from outside the area - paragraph 4.4
 - d) issues over IPP prisoners continuing in custody after the tariff has expired - paragraph 4.5
 - e) the shortcomings of the system of centralised purchasing of food for the kitchens – see paragraph 4.6
 - f) Whilst the Board acknowledges the substantial increase in expenditure on prisons over the past years and that, even after the present reductions in funding, the Prison Service will be considerably better funded than it was in 2003, it is concerned about the impact of budget cuts on prison morale. The Board considers that a careful balance must be maintained between the uniformed and management staff– see paragraph 4.11.

Section 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report attempts to give a brief summary of the work and issues addressed by the Board in the year ending December 31st. 2010. Although there will inevitably be some duplication on matters which will appear in reports prepared by other bodies or in other specialist documents, the report looks at the issues solely from the point of view of the Board.
- 1.2 The Annual Report is addressed formally to the Secretary of State for Justice and to the Minister with specific responsibility for prisons, presently Mr. Crispin Blunt, M.P. Copies are provided for the information of the President of the National Council of Independent Monitoring Boards, Director General and Area Manager of the National Offenders' Management Service, local Members of Parliament and the public generally (both locally and further afield) through the press and local library services.
- 1.3 In addition, the Report is addressed to the Governor of H.M. Prison Holme House and the Board hope that the contents will be of interest in varying degrees to all who work in the Prison since it comments on many of the services which are provided by the Prison and its staff. A copy will be placed in the Prison Library.
- 1.4 Although the editing of the report has been the work of a small sub-committee of the Board, contributions to the report have been received from most members. The draft report has been considered by the Board and discussed. It is the report of the whole Board.

Section 2. The Role of the Independent Monitoring Board

- 2.1 It is a statutory requirement set out in The Prisons Act 1952 that the conditions in every prison shall be monitored by an independent board appointed by the Secretary of State for Justice (formerly by the Home Secretary) from members of the communities in which the prison is located. All members of the Board are volunteers giving of their time freely.
- 2.2 The Board is specifically charged:-
 - 2.1.1 To satisfy itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in custody within the Prison and the range and adequacy of the programmes preparing them for release.
 - 2.1.2 Promptly to inform the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority, of any concerns that the Board may consider appropriate so to do
 - 2.1.3 To report annually to the Secretary of State on how the Prison has met the standards and requirements placed upon it and what impact these have on those in its custody

To enable the Board fully to carry out these duties effectively, members of the Board have a right of access to every prisoner and each part of the Prison and most prison records.

- 2.3 The Board meets formally every month throughout the year.
- 2.4 One member of the Board is on rota duty each week. This requires members to attend the Prison both to deal with applications from prisoners and others to the Board and to visit the various areas within the Prison on a regular basis.
- 2.5 The Board consider that regular visits are essential to maintain the credibility of the Board both in the eyes of the prisoners and in those of the staff. Such visits hopefully ensure that the Board becomes aware at an early stage of any problems which might arise within the Prison.
- 2.6 Board members are allocated areas of special interest and attend meetings of the Prison falling within such areas. Members also attend adjudications and GOOD reviews whether carried out by a governor or the Independent District Judge.
- 2.7 The full complement of the Board is 18 members. As at 31st. December 2010, the Board had 13 members of whom four had just been appointed. One member resigned in January 2011. The shortage of members, particularly experienced ones, has been a constant anxiety to the Board during the course of the year.
- 2.8 As a result of the shortfall in the membership of the Board, constant efforts were made to encourage applications for appointment to the Board. The most effective medium for attracting potential members came from a suitably worded notice in local shops. Four members were appointed towards the end of the year and they are currently undergoing training. Members of the Board continue to make efforts to seek out people who might be suitable.
- 2.9 During the year, Board members attended various courses organised by the IMB Secretariat. Those who attended found these courses well organised and helpful. The Board is grateful to those at the Secretariat for their assistance throughout the year.
- 2.10 Board members also attended training courses organised by the Prison Training department and available to prison staff where appropriate.
- 2.11 The Board followed the practice of the previous year and organised an “away day” in the early part of the year. The purpose was to ensure that the Board planned their activities for the coming year and it was found to be of assistance. Two members of the Board attended the Annual Conference. The Chairman was only able to attend one of the meetings of Area Chairmen and women. The Board would also like to pay tribute to the time given to the service of local IMBs by our Regional Representative, Mr. John Weightman.

- 2.12 The Board has also attempted at all times to educate itself better on issues facing the Prison and those who are affected by it. There is a brief talk given by a member of the Prison staff before most meetings of the Board which members find to be very helpful. The Governor, his deputy or one of the assistant governors attends each meeting of the Board and the Board would like to express its appreciation for this opportunity of discussing any concerns members may have with the governor attending the meeting.
- 2.13 The Governing Governor delivers a quarterly address to all the staff outlining his plans and discusses the challenges facing the Prison and inviting questions. The notes prepared by the Governor are then made available on the intranet. Members of the Board attend these meetings and commend the Governor for holding them.

Section 3 – Description of the Prison

- 3.1 Holme House is a purpose built local category B adult prison for male prisoners. It was opened in May 1992. It has been expanded on various occasions. During the course of the year houseblock 7 was handed over to the Prison as were Regime buildings 1 and 2.
- 3.2 Certified normal accommodation is now 1034 and the current operational capacity is 1212 prisoners. These prisoners are housed in 7 houseblocks. However, with the change in government policy on sentencing, prisoner numbers have rarely exceeded 1000 and houseblock 5 was taken out of service towards the end of the year. It has been thoroughly cleaned and redecorated.
- 3.3 During the course of the year, Holme House accepted an increased number of young offenders and was recognised as a Young Offenders' Institution alongside the current HMP status.
- 3.4 The Prison supplies 820 work/education activity places for inmates. This is the result of the addition of Regime Buildings 1 and 2. The Board particularly welcomes this expanded facility.
- 3.5 The Prison caters for both those awaiting trial or sentence and those who have been convicted by the courts. It serves primarily the Tees Valley, South West and South East Durham and the contiguous parts of North Yorkshire. The make up of the population of the Prison does vary from time to time; as at 15th December 2010, it was not known the home areas from which 32% of the population of the Prison came from. However, of those whose home locality was known, 86% of the prisoners came from within a 50 miles radius from Holme House.
- 3.6 The Prison works in conjunction with various outside voluntary and community organisations in endeavours to reduce subsequent offending. Some of these projects are long term and some address a more immediate

issue. The Board considers that the time given by members of the Prison staff to such organisations is valuable.

Section 4 – Particular issues

Issues requiring a response

- 4.1 There were matters which arose during the year which caused the Board concern and which, in their view, require some form of response from The Secretary of State or the National Offender Management Service. It should be added that some of these are concerns carried forward from 2009 and earlier. The Board notes with gratitude that a detailed response to its report for 2009 was received from the Minister for Prisons. The Board was also grateful to the President of the National Council of the IMB for his response to its report and his interest in the affairs of this and other prisons throughout the year.
- 4.2 Holme House does not offer a Sex Offenders' Treatment Course of any description. The Prison has an entire houseblock of vulnerable prisoners, most of whom will be sex offenders. As part of their sentence plan, such prisoners are frequently required to attend such a course. Prisoners seeking such a course are usually transferred to HMP Acklington subject to space being available both in the prison and on the courses. The Board considers that a prison the size of Holme House should offer a sex offenders' course of sufficient content to obviate the need to transfer prisoners to other prisons to fulfil this important part of their sentence plans.
- 4.3 The Board regrets that it continues to be concerned about delays in the holding of inquests into deaths within the Prison. The Board appreciate that inquests have become increasingly adversarial with the inevitable result that there has been a great increase in the volume of paperwork required and a considerable increase in the duration of inquests. However, the delays contribute greatly to the stress felt by members of staff and other prisoners who might be involved in the inquest process as well as members of the family of the Deceased. The delay inevitably makes accurate recollection of the facts surrounding the death more difficult. During the course of 2010, only one inquest into a death in prison was held. As at 21st. December 2010, there were ten inquests outstanding including one into a death which occurred in 2005. Since there were two deaths in the Prison in 2010, this means that the backlog of outstanding inquests has, in fact, got longer.
- 4.4 Despite the fact that the Prison caters very largely for prisoners who reside within 50 miles, there have been several recent instances of prisoners coming to the Prison from other parts of England. With the enlargement of the Prison, this is inevitable, but the problems faced by those wishing to visit prisoners should not be overlooked. The Board continues to receive more applications

complaining about difficulties in obtaining transfers to prisons nearer to the prisoner's home than any other ground with the exception of property and many of the applications relating to property tend to be from prisoners who have been transferred from other prisons. The problem of linking availability of places in a local prison with transport seems to be very difficult. Anything which could be done to ease this problem would be valuable.

- 4.5 The prison currently houses 40 IPP prisoners of whom 19 are over tariff. In some cases this is due to sentence plans not having been completed as not all courses have been taken. This is not the fault of the prisoners. They have had to wait, in some cases for over a year, to be placed on particular courses. These courses have not always been available at Holme House so transfers are necessary to prisons where they are on offer with the additional difficulties and delays such transfers can cause. This, in the view of the Board, emphasises the importance of enlarging the "offer" by Holme House to ensure that prisoners do not exceed their tariff.
- 4.6 The decision of the government in 2008 to establish a central purchasing system for food products has proved most unsatisfactory. There would appear to have been no cost savings as far as the Holme House catering budget is concerned and the range and quality of food on offer to prisoners has been reduced. The Board would urge the Secretary of State to permit local purchasing to be re-established.
- 4.7 There are two matters of concern which involve the Governor. The personal officer scheme remains very patchy. The Board considers that the initiative to allocate personal officers is much to be welcomed provided it works smoothly. There appear to be difficulties in entering the notes on the prisoner's personal files which are held on a computer mainly due to the fact that only one person can work on the computer terminal in the houseblock office at a time. The Board draws this practical problem to the attention of the Prison. The Board is also aware that the uptake of training places for the personal officer course was disappointing. Whilst there are pressures from other needs within the Prison, the Board do feel that the Prison should place considerable weight on the personal officer scheme.
- 4.8 The Board is aware of the constant efforts being made by the Prison staff to control the flow of drugs into the Prison. The Board therefore supports the Governor in his ongoing efforts to secure a body scanner on a trial basis as a means of either preventing or at least minimising the flow of drugs into the prison

Issues of concern not requiring a response

- 4.9 The Board noted the following matters which do not require an immediate response but which the Board will monitor in the coming year.
- 4.10 There is still no system in place to ensure that prisoners receive back the same clothes they sent to be laundered. This has resulted in a reluctance therefore

on part of prisoners to have any of their own clothes/bedding laundered as they have no confidence that they will be returned. There have been cases of prisoners at Holme House being issued with sweatshirts embossed with name of another prison. It is unclear how these came to be in the system. Since there is a project underway to allow more prisoners to wear their own clothing (one which the Board fully supports) there will have to be improved efficiencies in place to ensure that an individual's clothing will be returned to him by the laundry.

- 4.11 The Board appreciates that there has been a considerable increase in the Prison Service budget over the past decade and that even after the current round of cuts, the Service will be well funded compared with that funding which existed before the financial year 2003/2004. However, coping with the impact of any cuts in the current level of expenditure imposes on the management of the Prison serious pressures and the Board remains very concerned that future cuts should not reduce the front line standards which in Holme House are high. In particular, the balance between uniformed and management staff must be maintained.
- 4.12 Although there has been a considerable improvement in notification, there have been instances during the year under review when the Board was not advised of a serious reportable incident. The Board is conscious that several departments within the Prison, particularly the Seg and the Orderly Office, have advised the Board of these incidents, which is much appreciated.

Section 5 – Overall judgement of the Prison

- 5.1 The Board considers that the Prison was, overall, well managed in the year under review and that prisoners are treated with the respect to which they are entitled.
- 5.2 There have been times when Holme House has been under pressure during the year to house a large number of prisoners in drafts from other prisons, either as a result of disturbances in establishments or by prisons in other parts of the country becoming full. This pressure is likely to increase with the closure of older establishments. The Board continues to feel that the additional strain inevitably imposed upon the staff has been handled well. However, it is hoped that these relocations will be short term and that the prisoners transferred will return to their home areas sooner rather than later.
- 5.3 The arrival of a shipment of prisoners from out of the area can be unsettling but the Board have noted that the atmosphere within the prison remains good. The Board consider that the Governor and his staff (including those supplied by the outside agencies working within the Prison) should be congratulated on their efforts and commitment during the year under review.
- 5.4 As at the 15th. December 2010, the ethnic mix between white and Black, Asian, Chinese and Mixed within the prison was 89.6% to 5.0% (with 5%

where the ethnic code is missing). On 15th. December 2010, the division between British and Foreign nationals was 97% to 2% with 1% unknown. It is difficult to relate the ethnicity figure to the percentage of BME in the local population as a whole since as at that date, the percentage of the prison population was 58% from a home address within a radius of 50 miles of the Prison and 9% from a distance in excess of that. In 32%, information was not available.

- 5.5 During the course of the year, there were two deaths in custody, Mr. Karl Sowden on 29th. July and Mr. Derek Robson who dies of natural causes on 9th. December 2010.

Section 6 – Specific Area Reports

6. Drug Strategy.

- a. There continues to be a robust and cohesive approach to illicit drug supply reduction within Holme House. Drug Strategy is implemented and monitored by a multi-disciplinary team led by the Head of Reducing Re-offending Governor with day to day operational implementation delegated to the Establishment Drugs Co-ordinator (EDC).
- b. Holme House has a Drug and Alcohol Strategy which is revised annually and which incorporates the findings from the local analysis of needs. The strategy for 2010/2011 was updated in November 2010. This is further supported by the Drugs Supply Reduction Good Practice Guide Action Plan resulting from last year's Blakey Report.
- c. A Drug Strategy meeting is held bi-monthly chaired by the Head of Reducing Re-offending and is attended by all relevant functions within the prison as well as a representative from one of the external Drug Action Teams. A member of the IMB Boards attends these meetings. The meetings have benefited this year from the regular attendance of the pharmacy department. Attempts have been made to secure a GP presence but this has not been achieved given the other pressures facing this function.
- d. Commendably, Holme House achieved the EOY KPT for Mandatory Drug Testing (MDT) at 31/03/10 with 17.6% against a target of 18% being the only prison in the North East to do so. Performance to December 2010 is standing at 15.3% against a KPT of 18%.
- e. Issues have arisen over the year including :
 - i. Increase in poly drug users. Despite the introduction of IDTS and methadone maintenance, about 10% of all positive drug tests indicate poly drug use.

- ii. Failure to recruit Alcohol Worker due to problems with the recruitment process (i.e. calibre of candidates and failure to attend for interview).
 - iii. Unidentified blue tablets in circulation resulting in some severe physical and mental reactions amongst certain individuals.
 - iv. Delays in the introduction of methasoft and iris recognition machines to assist the IDTS function and the time of healthcare staff consumed by the administering of methadone which was administered to some 186 prisoners, 121 of whom are on maintenance with an additional 27 on buprenorphine at December 2010.
 - v. Delays in the installation of the new windows to the cells intended to prevent the passage of drugs.
- f. There have, however, been a number of positive achievements over the course of the year including:
- i. Equalisation of payments to prisoners participating in the Therapeutic Community (TC). This, together with improved referrals to the TC from CARATS (Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice, Throughcare), Mental Health and via protocols with other prisons, has resulted in full occupancy and fewer deselections. The Board commend the TC, who with support from colleagues, have developed a first class facility which is recognised nationally.
 - ii. Improvements to the staffing of the CARAT Team. For much of the year CARATs operated with severe staff shortages compounded by the long term absence of the Team Manager. This clearly impacted on their contractual responsibilities with delayed access for prisoners and difficulties managing group sessions. The appointment of a temporary manager and the gradual recruitment of new team members in the second half of the year have greatly improved the situation. It is to the credit of the team, that despite the severe staff shortages, they still achieved a score of 78% in the Standard 65 Audit in August.
 - iii. The Board commend the CARAT Team for their achievements this year in the face of these difficulties and the EDC for supporting them and look forward to their ability to adopt a more proactive approach in the coming year.
 - iv. The creation of a prisoner employment orderly position within the CARAT Team, attending prisoner inductions to inform other prisoners about drug issues and also to participate in CARAT Group sessions.
 - v. The introduction of a confidential hotline for prisoners under duress to access via the internal PIN system which will, hopefully, help to counter findings from the local needs analysis whereby 65% of those surveyed said they felt pressured to smuggle drugs into prison following temporary release.

- vi. The introduction of protocols to expand the working arrangements with the local drugs squad to develop liaison arrangements and the sharing of intelligence.
- g. The prison has continued its robust approach to drug supply reduction via the BOSS chair (to detect mobile phones), the drugs dogs, checking of correspondence, targeting of visits, arresting/banning visitors & checking of perimeter walls.
- h. Drugs circulating within the Prison continue to present a major challenge with the need for continuing vigilance in the coming year. During 2011 the IMB Board intend to monitor the introduction of a drug recovery wing scheduled for June 2011 as one of four pilot sites nationally, developments with the bid to install a body scanner, the installation of the new cell windows scheduled from February 2011 and ongoing development of IDTS including full implementation of the methasoft and iris recognition machines .

7. Diversity.

- a. Holme House has a Single Equality Policy (SEP) and Action Plan covering all aspects of equality and diversity for both staff and prisoners. The strategy covers race, nationality, disability, age, faith, gender, sexual orientation and gypsy/travellers.
- b. Structurally, there is an Equality and Public Confidence Manager at governor grade reporting to the Deputy Governor, supported by staff members with a lead responsibility for each strand of the diversity policy and action plan. This is further supported by prisoner equality representatives on each wing covering all strands of diversity. All the prisoner representatives have been trained in the Challenge It, Change It programme.
- c. There is a bi-monthly meeting of the SEDAT (Single Equality Diversity Action Team) chaired by the Deputy Governor and attended by strand leaders. Prisoner representatives also attend the first part of the meeting together with relevant function heads. An IMB member attends as an observer. The Action Plan is reviewed at these meetings together with the SMART data and monitoring of RIRFs (Racial Incident Report Forms).
- d. The prisoner reps. meet monthly for further training & information sessions and also to identify any issues to be raised at the SEDAT meetings. As part of the Diversity Week the prisoner reps met together with facilitators to identify issues which they would wish to be factored into the business planning for 2011/2012. The Board consider that this should be flagged up as good practice for future years.

- e. Diversity issues are given a high profile within Holme House and a lot of hard work and effort has gone into this aspect of prison life not only to ensure compliance with legislation but also so that the needs and views of all minority groups are heard and accommodated wherever possible without overlooking the needs and views of the remainder of the Prison community. This approach and commitment was reflected in the Prison's success when they received two of the main awards at the 2010 North East Equality Awards namely outstanding contribution by a large organisation and outstanding practice. The Board would like to commend the team for their success.
- f. There are many examples of positive outcomes this year such as the opening of HB7 which is Disability Discrimination Act compliant with four cells specifically designed to provide excellent accommodation for wheelchair users. Conversely, it is perhaps in the area of disability where the Prison needs to take positive actions to ensure the needs of all disabled prisoners are met. Although the prison does have a DLO (Disability Liaison Officer), it has not been possible for most of the year to find out how many disabled prisoners there were within the overall prison population of Holme House. Not all disabled prisoners are identified (particularly those whose disability is not obvious such as difficulty in hearing) and even when they are appropriate action is not always taken to ensure that their needs are met. Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPS) were not always in place or updated. At December 2010 approximately 30 prisoners had been identified with special needs since January 2010. This is, therefore, an aspect of diversity that requires further monitoring by IMB in the coming year.
- g. As at 15th. December 2010 there were 57 older prisoners, that is to say those aged over 50. During the year the prison has embarked on a series of initiatives to improve the lot of older prisoners including commissioning a piece of work to review the needs of older prisoners looking at work and education, what is currently in place and what else might be provided. This review will be brought to the SEDAT Meeting after consideration by the Senior Management Team. There is currently an Over 50s Club & daily remedial sessions in the gym. The recent HMCIP Report also picked up other issues relative to this group which the Board will monitor in the coming year.
- h. There has been a marked decrease in the number of RIRFs this year, down from 94 in 2009 to 59 for the same period in 2010, a 37% reduction. This is highly commendable and reflects the good work done by both staff and especially prisoner equality representatives who attend Induction to talk about racism and also do good work on the wings to counter any signs of racist behaviour.
- i. Whilst there have been some instances of cross contamination of food, this has been overcome by the establishment of clearly defined areas within the cold storage for Halal as opposed to non-halal foods. There

was also a very positive response from prisoners to the arrangements for Ramadan. The Board commend the catering staff for this.

- j. There were 25 foreign nationals in HH in December 2010 with a further two whose status is unknown and 2 sole detainees. There has been some excellent work this year on the part of the Foreign National Co-ordinator (FNC) to improve the lot of these prisoners including arranging Foreign National Surgeries at bi-monthly intervals attended by the Border Agency. All FN prisoners are seen at admission by the FNC, informed about the possibility of returning home to serve their sentences and given assistance with any individual issues. Towards the end of last year all IMBs were asked to identify those prisoners who wished to go home but were unable to do so. None were identified at Holme House. All key prisoner information is now produced in a variety of languages and prisoners have access to interpreting services. The FNC won an award for her outstanding contribution to diversity issues at the local Criminal Justice Awards for 2010.
- k. A Diversity Week was held over two weeks from November to December this year. Despite excellent planning and preparation many events had to be either cancelled or postponed due to the bad weather which swept the country. There was, however, an excellent presentation on transgender from an external organisation, Kameleon, with further sessions planned in the New Year.
- l. The Gypsy and Traveller strand is in the process of further development and a transgender policy was to be produced. An issue which IMB will want to monitor in 2011 is facilities afforded to Young Offenders as technically Holme House was designated YOI status in the second half of 2010.
- m. The Board acknowledges the hard work and effort that has once again been put into this aspect of prison life and the positive effect it has on prisoners and staff alike. In particular the Board would wish to recognise and support the extensive and expanding partnership work with external organisations who can assist with the rehabilitation of prisoners whilst in prison but especially at release back into the community.

8. Learning , Skills and Employment.

- a. This has been an extremely challenging year for all involved in the delivery of learning and skills in Holme House, not least the staff of The Manchester College. The Manchester College won the OLASS (Offender Learning and Skills Service) contract for prisons in the north-east region in August 2009. The majority of staff previously employed in the prison on contract to Stockton Adult Education transferred to the new employer on the same terms as they previously enjoyed. However, the new contract was immediately beset by

problems stemming from the contract's financial viability. This resulted in a restructuring exercise within the Education Department. There followed a period of uncertainty and change for the Education staff within Holme House during the spring and summer months until a final agreement was secured. The staff restructure resulted in a change in the make up of the staff to 50% permanent and 50% hourly paid to maximise delivery and contract costs. The restructuring also saw the introduction of new posts including Deputy OLASS Manager and Student Support Worker.

- b. The prison expansion coincided with The Manchester College restructure. This caused delays in recruitment of new staff. There was a further period of change for the existing staff who had to change location within the prison at least twice to accommodate refurbishment of the Library and the old education wing. Coincidentally, there was a change in the curriculum to meet the new contract specification. As at August 2010, expansion was partially complete but there were insufficient staff and spaces for delivery to deliver fully to the requirements of the new contract. There were further complications in that Regime 2 building was not completed and there was also a lack of prison staff to deliver the new curriculum. It is totally to the credit of the Education Manager and her team, fully supported by the Head of Learning & Skills (HOLS) and the Governor, that prisoners were mostly unaffected by all of this although there were limitations in delivering sufficient places to meet all prisoners needs with only 53% of the contract being able to be delivered in August.
- c. There was an unannounced HMCIP Inspection in July 2010 with an OFSTED inspection taking place at the same time. The findings of the HMCIP were largely positive particularly about the strategic management of learning and skills, the range of learning on offer and the quality of the teaching, training and coaching. The inspections revealed areas for improvement included
 - i) punctuality and attendance,
 - ii) better opportunities for accreditation
 - iii) better data collection via the Learner Records System (formerly known as MIAPS) to eliminate the need for unnecessary testing and to provide an up-to-date record of a prisoner's learning which would follow the prisoner should he be transferred to another prison or into the community.
- d. The OFSTED inspection awarded Grade 3s in all categories with an overall Grade 3, (Satisfactory), a remarkable achievement given all the problems outlined above.
- e. On any one day there were, by the end of the year, approximately 820 work/education places available made up of 420+ work places, 65 full time education places & 320 part time education places. Further opportunities are coming on stream for 2011 in, for example, the

kitchens where a new bakery is planned and there is to be an expanded canteen, etc. The current offer compares with 539 places at December 2009. There is a wide and varied range of learning opportunities for prisoners to choose from both academically and vocationally. The vocational courses are being constantly expanding as more opportunities come on stream. Recent innovations include courses in construction, customer care and renewable energy. These add to the offer from existing opportunities in forklift truck, warehousing and laundry courses. Additionally many of the work opportunities provide accredited qualifications.

- f. Instructors and workshop staff are to be commended for both the quality of their teaching and oversight of prisoners together with the culture of respect and behaviour reflected in the HMCIP report. Credit must go to the HOLS who has secured access to additional funding via external funding streams such as ESF to enable partnership working with external organisations such as Hartlepool College who deliver fork lift truck, warehouse, laundry and waste management training. Hartlepool College also carry out the accreditation process in qualifications for other vocational areas.
- g. Given the need for skills likely to enhance the chances of employment, the prison now run a Fast Track to Work course for prisoners in the last 8 weeks of their sentence. It is run by The Manchester College in partnership with JC+ and Pertemps. This year the HOLS, in partnership with these same agencies, has successfully organised an Employer Engagement event & an Employer Open Day in the prison. The Board commends these initiatives.
- h. There have been other positive initiatives and developments during the year to enhance the prisoners' learning experience including:
 - i) The introduction of a 2 day Short Stay Assessment Centre where prisoners are assessed for literacy, numeracy and language skills followed by an interview with a CIAS adviser to determine their learning and employment objectives as part of their sentence plan linking into career options, with guidance on the completion of an application form for appropriate work or education opportunities in the prison. On the second day they have the opportunity to undertake some initial qualifications such as manual handling, basic health and safety or a food hygiene certificate. This has many advantages not least the ability to fast stream prisoners into appropriate opportunities ensuring they engage much earlier in purposeful activity.
 - ii) On the back of this there is now one single point which captures details of every work and learning

opportunity in the prison, namely the Activity Management Unit (AMU). This unit allocates all prisoners to vacant places at its weekly Board meeting. If prisoners refuse to participate in work or education they receive only unemployment pay and one gym session per week but refusal to work is likely to be factored into the IEPS from April this year.

- i. The appointment of a Student Support Worker referred to earlier which has enhanced partnership working opportunities between The Manchester College, the prison and CIAS and is beginning to help ensure assessments are not repeated unnecessarily and learner plans are continued.
- j. Awards to learners. Special credit must go to The Manchester College staff for their initiative in the face of strike action by UCU in support of a national initiative. At 24 hours notice in August they organised a Learners' Conference in the chapel for all those prisoners who should have been at education. The OLASS Management Team and remaining team members conducted a consultation and survey about all aspects of education in the prison, held a competition to name the two new regime buildings and gave out awards to learners. The event was such a success that they are now considering holding it annually.
- k. Inevitably there are still a number of areas for improvement which are being worked on but which take time to bring about given the size of the establishment. Technically, there are now more learning, work and activity opportunities than there are prisoners although obviously not everybody is purposefully engaged for a raft of reasons including level of ability, eligibility conditions, risk assessments etc. In the case of risk assessments there have been delays of up to a month particularly for high risk areas such as the kitchen resulting in work spaces being unfilled and prisoners left unemployed. A new procedure has recently been put in place to overcome this and the Board will want to monitor the impact of this. Punctuality and attendance at work and learning have again been problematic. Whilst improving, this will also require close monitoring. Two other initiatives are due to come on stream shortly: the virtual campus and the intention to house the majority of those employed in the workshops on HB2. The object of concentrating those employed in houseblock 2 is to minimise difficulties in extending the working day to 34.75 hours in line with the "working prison" ethos. The Board will follow these developments with interest.
- l. In conclusion the Board would commend the many people involved in the learning, skills and employment agenda within Holme House. In the two new Regime Buildings, the Prison has an educational facility to be proud of. There is an opportunity to make a very real difference to the lives and achievements of many prisoners.

9. Library

- a. Library services continue to be delivered to a high standard by staff from Stockton Borough Council comprising two qualified librarians who job share and three part time library assistants.
- b. The library is open mornings and afternoons during the week and from 8.45am to noon on Saturdays to allow those who work to attend. The library is well stocked with an imaginative range of books, CDs and audio tapes as well as the mandatory publications. It has close links with local libraries and can obtain books promptly if such book is not available in the prison library. There are also a number of computer screens to assist in the learning process.
- c. As with the Education Department, 2010 has been a challenging year for the library team. The library was closed for over three months in the middle of the year whilst alterations and refurbishments were carried out to compliment the new houseblock and regime buildings. The library staff continued to provide a reduced service on each houseblock which by no means ideal but did have a positive outcome in that it showcased what was on offer and introduced the library staff to some prisoners who had never previously used the library.
- d. The library staff continue to be proactive and imaginative in terms of activities additional to the standard services. Some examples are:
 - A) Toe-by-Toe - a mentoring scheme which enables offenders who can read to support those who are non-readers. This is to be run in the gym each morning Monday to Friday with back up from gym instructors who have also been trained as mentors.
 - B) Careers Corner - to be set up in the library in partnership with other organisations such as JC+ with the objective of using the library as a resource centre rather than simply a place from which to borrow books.
 - C) Healthy Books initiative - to promote books on healthy living and well being to compliment work being done by the Health Promotion Action Group.
 - D) Library Open Day - to encourage awareness of what the library has to offer, especially to officers so they actively encourage prisoners to attend.
 - E) Running a monthly Reading Group for a small group of prisoners which library staff would like to expand.
 - F) To set up board in library for book reviews provided by prisoners.
- e. Disappointingly, despite all this good work, usage figures for the library are at best erratic and at worst poor considering the prison population and the opening of a new houseblock this year. The library has an aspirational target of 1000 attendees per month but actual attendance is falling short of this. The Regimes Manager has put a lot

of effort in to tackling attendance issues with individual HBs with varying success but as library attendance is not compulsory, and often has to compete with sessions at the gym, it is hard to prove that prisoners are not being given the opportunity to attend.

- f. In summary a tremendous amount of good work is taking place within the library but the success of some of the initiatives is being hampered by resource issues of either library or discipline staff the latter of which will hopefully be improved by the new profiles allowing for a dedicated uniformed library officer from April 2011.

10. Segregation Unit

- a. The Unit has had to work under some difficulties during the course of the year. Work has been done to enlarge the existing segregation unit by two cells although fortunately these additional cells have not so far been necessary.
- b. The staff in the Segregation Unit continue to deal with some very troubled prisoners in a sympathetic and effective manner. The Board Member on rota will visit the Seg several times in a rota week, and it is pleasing to note that the atmosphere in the Unit is almost always warm and the vast majority of those detained in the Unit seem genuinely appreciative of the Unit's work.
- c. The Board is pleased to note that the formalities laid down for dealing with refusal of food or dirty protests are carried out meticulously.
- d. The Board continues to be present at GOOD reviews and adjudications (including those by the independent adjudicator) where possible. The Board is grateful that the staff in the Unit for advising the Board of the fact when a prisoner has been brought into the Unit.

11. Violence reduction

- a. Meetings of the Violence Reduction Committee are held on a regular basis. They are well attended, constructive and recorded.
- b. Minutes of the meetings are made available to the Board who are usually represented at such meetings.
- c. There have been no aspects of the Committee's deliberations which have caused the Board anxiety.

12. Security

- a. The Board has noted that the problems of the smuggling into the Prison of drugs and mobile phones remains a major issue for staff. Prison staff are to be congratulated on the successes which have been achieved in restricting the flow of such items into the Prison although the Board are conscious that these successes have not prevented the incidence of drug use within the Prison.
- b. The Board noted the comment by HMCIP that the use of control and restraint was more prevalent in Holme House than in comparable prisons. However, the Board has not received any complaint about the treatment of prisoners brought into the Unit under restraint.
- c. There is continuing training given to staff throughout the year and members of the Board make use of the sessions to ensure that members understand the proper action to be taken in an emergency.

13. Health and safety issues

- a. The Board notes the state of the Prison as a matter of routine during rota visits. On the whole, the amount of litter within the Prison grounds has diminished, although there do remain occasions when the area around certain houseblocks could be tidier. However, the Board recognises that inmates do throw items, including unconsumed food, from the windows of the cells. This attracts birds and vermin, particularly rats, but the Prison is aware of this and attention to the problem is given. The new windows currently being installed in cells should prevent this.
- b. During the very cold weather in December there were areas within the Prison which, despite the best endeavours of the staff and the cleaning parties, did become very dangerous. This gave rise to a difficulty when an ambulance came to the Prison but the para-medics in the ambulance would not cross the area between the ambulance and the nearest door to the Prison. The Board suggested to the Governor responsible for liaising with the ambulance service that the ambulance health and safety rules be ascertained.

14. Healthcare.

- a. It is a measure of the huge strides made in Healthcare over the last year that they have been recognised as Highest Performing Prison in the NE status. The introduction of restructured shift patterns and re-profiling against the prison's core day has both improved efficiency and led to a reduction in overtime hours. Improved co-operation between nurses has also led to a better and more immediate service being provided to outpatients.

- b. The current outpatient facility has been redesigned, enabling centralised patient clinics, thus providing an enhanced service to patients with reduced waiting time.
- c. The removal of patient beds from CNA has transformed the inpatient facility from an extension of a prison wing into a fully functional, patient focussed NHS facility housed within a custodial setting. The admission criteria are such that beds are now occupied by those with clinical need. (In the past inmates were routinely sent to Healthcare from reception if they had any addiction).
- d. A strict 'no smoking' policy now applies within this facility.
- e. Whilst efforts have been made to improve the look of communal areas, individual cells are dark and very unwelcoming. It is hoped that money set aside for infection control cells will also lead to an improvement in some cells. The crisis suite is also very much in need of refurbishment.
- f. The board has monitored the use of the camera cell policy and found it has been followed closely. The Board, which includes a visit to Healthcare on very nearly all rota visits, has received few applications involving complaints about healthcare.
- g. The association with a different GP practice has lead to more consistency and a very strong prescribing formula. However, though the lead GP is excellent, issues of recruitment have meant the use of locums from time to time.
- h. There have been few problems with outside hospital visits, escorts have been available as needed.
- i. Pharmacy provision has been enhanced by the recruitment of new staff and a time-sensitive action plan being implemented. It is hoped to extend opening hours to incorporate weekend opening.
- j. The main drain on nursing resources is undoubtedly the number of staff involved in issuing methadone on the house blocks. There are currently over 180 prisoners receiving methadone and 35 receiving subutex. This requires very careful supervision. Although the prison does have an IDTS programme, most prisoners are opting not to be assisted to detox. Only very limited numbers also opt to join the therapeutic community. This is a major issue.
- k. As the officers that work on healthcare are currently funded by the Hospital Trust, the Board wonder to what extent it would be helpful for Healthcare management to have a part in their recruitment/selection.
- l. The success of the healthcare team is also reflected in their successful and acclaimed Care Quality Registration status, achieved January

2010. The Board wish to congratulate the Healthcare team on all their hard work and success. It remains to be seen how things will progress in the near future as the Healthcare provision is to go to private contract and not remain with the current Trust.

14 Gym.

- a. It would be difficult to overstate the importance of the gym both in maintaining prisoner morale and in resettlement.
- b. As well as the recreational facilities (weights and fitness rooms, sport hall and outdoor pitch) the gym also run certified PE courses in areas such as gym instructor, football etc. lasting 15 weeks and leading to a recognised qualification.
- c. In addition to this, many specialised groups are run.
 - i) Remedial/weight loss groups run each morning dealing with problems such as obesity, rehabilitation from physical injury (there is physiotherapy input) and weight gain which can often occur after drug withdrawal.
 - ii) As part of the healthy living course run by the therapeutic community, the gym staff provide input on healthy lifestyles and first aid.
 - iii) The family matters courses level 1 and 2 are run by gym staff as a vital part of resettlement. These also include family visits - when partners and children are welcomed in the sports hall with activities for children and a buffet laid on. These days are also run for listeners and gym orderlies in recognition of the work they do.
 - iv) The staff deliver two sessions for a mental health programme focussing on gentle exercise and building up confidence.
 - v) The accredited Compass course is run by gym staff, this again builds confidence and self-esteem.
 - vi) There are special exercise classes for the over 50's.
 - vii) There is a 5 a side football league with competition between houses.
- d. For part of 2010 the outdoor pitch was unavailable because of building work on House block 7, this is now back in action albeit now somewhat reduced in size. Also, problems with flooring in weights room have meant this was not in use for part of the year. The gym staff worked around these issued to maintain the standard of their delivery.

- e. Because of the commitment and enthusiasm of the staff, gym sessions are very important to prisoners and the gym fulfils a very important role in the discipline system. Prisoners who refuse to attend work or education are red carded and can only have 1 gym session a week. The number of gym sessions otherwise allotted to each prisoner is well above this minimum. For enhanced prisoners there are 4 sessions a week. Those in full time work or education are entitled to two weekly sessions and an enhanced session at weekends. The contribution this makes to the well being of the prisoners is very important.
- f. Whenever the Board has had any queries to do with the gym, staff have been both efficient and unfailingly helpful in answering them.
- g. The gym staff also make a valuable contribution to other aspects of Prison life. The gym staff provide training for staff such as Personal Safety Training. Some of the gym staff are trained negotiators, others are C and R trained, they have roles throughout the prison. The Board would like to congratulate the gym staff on all the work they do.

15. Mental Health.

- a. The mental health team at Holme House provide an essential and excellent service. As anyone can now make a referral (in the past this had been restricted to nurses), the number of referrals has doubled, and the target of seeing everyone within 72 hours has largely been met. The triage system is now well established, including a risk assessment (as developed by the National Patient Safety agency - a new suicide and self-harm prevention tool.)
- b. The mental health awareness training and pack developed here for use with Listeners is now delivered regionally.
- c. Training has also been provided for staff to improve understanding of personality disorders.
- d. Day services have been put in place, including a mental health classroom based group and future steps, a rolling programme to help build up confidence and self-esteem.
- e. Self-help leaflets are available for prisoners dealing with stress or depression.
- f. MIND currently have two counsellors visiting the prison with two more to start once security clearance is complete.

- g. There have been few staffing issues this year and the team have recently been granted funding for one extra full-time nursing assistant and for a part-time member of staff to work in the field of dual diagnosis.
- h. The high standards achieved by the team have been recognised by an award for ‘ Working in partnership with other agencies’ and a highly commended for ‘Developing excellent services’.
- i. Members of the board have been impressed by the input of mental health staff in ACCT reviews and the work done with these prisoners. The high standard of the service provided by the team is reflected in the lack of complaints/applications received by the board (the single one referring to a delay over the Christmas period).
- j. The Board commends the team for all their hard work and would like to thank them for their openness and helpfulness in answering any questions that we have raised. It is to be hoped that, with the service passing to a private provider, that nothing will be done to jeopardise the level of commitment and motivation of the staff and the level of excellence currently achieved.

16. Safer Custody.

- a. The prison began the year with a long action plan for Safer Custody and most of this has already been implemented, thanks to the hard work of all involved. Some of the targets are only partly met, the Assessment Care in Custody Teamwork (ACCT) training for all people who work in the prison is still ongoing, there were problems around availability of trainers, however more staff in the prison are now able to deliver the training and there has also been an increase in the number of ACCT assessors. ACCT case manager training is now mandatory for all staff at senior officer level or above.
- b. The new camera cell policy is fully operational. The recording of observations on ACCT documents has improved so that, on the whole, all entries reflect meaningful interactions.
- c. For the first time this year, the prison saw the introduction of constant watches for vulnerable prisoners.
- d. There are now more staff involved in Safer custody policy and delivery, there is a full-time

senior officer and a part-time officer as well as administration cover, this is a great improvement on last year. The role of safer custody co-ordinator has now been joined to that of Violence Reduction and both areas are under the supervision of one governor. At the same time, the meetings for safer custody (every two months) and Violence Reduction (monthly) have combined to a monthly 'Safer prison' meeting as it was realised that much of the material dealt with (e.g. ACCT numbers) was being duplicated. Attendance at the safer Custody meetings has been poor from time to time, the new system of joint meetings should address this issue.

- e. There has only been one inquest this year. The prison provided preparation for staff having to give evidence and this was greatly appreciated as well as being very effective. Given the length of time between deaths and final inquests (in some cases 5 years or more) this preparation is seen by the Board to be essential, although the Board would prefer it if there could be a greater input of legal advice at the time the initial statements are prepared in the case of any death which is likely to prove contentious.
- f. There have been two deaths in custody this year. The Board would like to commend the staff on the way these were handled, both at the time of the incidents and in subsequent briefings. Full support was available both to staff involved and to families.
- g. The number of ACCT's opened this year compared to 2009 can be seen in the table attached. The increase reflects the increase in prison population but also, the Board feels, a greater awareness among staff of needs of prisoners.
- h. The improvement in safer custody was also reflected in the audit that took place this year.
- i. The board feels that progress has been made towards the achievement of the aim of the safer custody policy that all staff should be equipped to deliver a safer, decent environment.

ACCT Totals	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
2009	26	25	22	30	21	36	27	20	20	19	27	18
2010	19	27	38	31	27	21	40	21	30	29	31	27

Totals. 2009 291

2010 341

17. Listeners.

- a. The listener scheme is operated in Holme House with the support and training provided by Teesside Samaritans. The Prison and Board are grateful to the Samaritans for all their help. There have been some problems around training, the Board acknowledges that this charitable organisation, like the IMB, has to depend on volunteers, and, in the present climate, these are not always easy to find especially as the prison schedule imposes limitations on time available for training.
- b. There have been fewer difficulties this year with issues such as staff using prisoners on the rota and willingness to allow prisoners to use the service at night, though these do crop up from time to time. The help provided by the listeners is invaluable and the Board would like to extend its thanks to all involved for the work they do.
- c. Holme House is the first prison in the country to offer Mental Health awareness training to listeners. This was delivered by the Mental Health team and was so well received that other prisons are now implementing it.
- d. Also, this year a Governor has been present to chair the monthly Listeners' meetings, this was not always the case in the past.
- e. The Prison is seeking actively to canvas more prisoners to train as Listeners. There will always be issues around trained Listeners moving on, either to complete courses at other prisons or on being discharged.
- f. The Board and the Prison acknowledge the value of the support provided by the Listeners to prisoners in distress and wish to thank all involved for their dedication and professionalism.

18. Incentives and Earned Privileges Scheme (IEPS)

- a. Holme House, in common with all prisons, operates an IEPS. The policy is documented in a detailed policy statement and available to all staff for consultation. There have been some issues this year with the implementation of the Scheme, the Board having received a number of applications from prisoners about this.
- b. One cause of concern was prisoners being turned down for enhanced status when their case notes had no negative comments. This seems to be in part due to the fact that adding to case notes now requires access to a computer and time to log on etc. Computers in house block offices are often in use. In the past, notes could be added quickly and easily to the paper files. The board has found a similar issue with respect to Personal Officers adding weekly comments to notes.
- c. On several other occasions, staff did not have a clear understanding of the rules underpinning IEPS particularly the rules relating to demotion.
- d. As the prison has been made aware of these concerns, so the number of applications to the Board has fallen.
- e. A new IEPS policy is in the process of development to take on comments made by the inspection team after their visit. The Board looks forward to this being introduced.

19. Vulnerable Prisoners.

- a. All vulnerable prisoners at Holme House are housed in a single Houseblock. No other prisoners are housed here. This can lead to problems for management with changing rolls, movements of prisoners do not always fit the accommodation available, meaning sometimes this houseblock can have too many spaces whilst at others space is at a premium.
- b. Vulnerable prisoners are well catered for at Holme House in terms of work, exercise and education. There is still the problem, however, of prisoners having to be transferred to do the S.O.T.P. As transfer is almost always to Acklington; this can exacerbate the problem of visits for those prisoners from outside the region. OCA do not always consider the possibility of a prisoner whose home area is to the south of the Prison being transferred to a prison offering SOTP which is to the south of Holme House.

20. Chaplaincy.

- a. The chaplaincy have continued to play a vital role in the prison, both with respect to providing religious services and groups and in supporting all prisoners, whatever their faiths. The chaplains are trusted by the prisoners and are often seen by them as counsellors in whom they can confide or whom they can ask for advice.

- b. The number of chaplains has been below the usual requirement, particularly since the opening of a houseblock increased the potential roll. In addition, there was no Buddhist chaplain. Both these issues have been addressed with the appointment of an extra chaplain from January 2011 and the appointment of a Buddhist chaplain, although he has not yet taken up his post because of the delay with security clearance.
- c. Among the services offered, an extra session has been set up weekly for Vulnerable Prisoners who are Roman Catholic.
- d. It had been hoped that, with the building work on the new regime buildings, there might be an opportunity to extend the multi-faith room. This has not happened. At present, the room is adequate for Muslim prayers but, when the number of prisoners professing the Moslem faith who wish to attend increases, these have to be in the chapel, which is not ideal. Also, the prison regime does not allow for the Muslim prisoners to shower before prayers on a Friday.
- e. The chaplaincy team have been very supportive of the Board and have invariably been willing to assist in anyway they can.
- f. The Board would like to congratulate the chaplaincy team on the care with which special services, such as the Christmas services are planned. It is no doubt a disappointment to them that the attendance is not better.

21. Imprisonment for public protection (IPP)

- a. The prison currently houses 40 IPP prisoners of whom 19 are over tariff. In some cases this is due to sentence plans not having been completed as not all courses have been taken. This is not the fault of the prisoners. They have had to wait, in some cases for over a year, to be placed on particular courses. These courses have not always been available at Holme House so transfers are necessary to prisons where they are on offer with the additional difficulties transfers can cause.
- b. The Board is concerned that there should be so many prisoners sentenced to IPP whose sentences do go over tariff. The Board feels that there is a lack of co-ordination in ensuring that the courses or other steps which have to be taken before a prisoner can be released are not put in place before the tariff date arrives.

22. Accommodation.

- a. Holme House has a mixture of single and double cells. There have been few applications to the Board on the quality of the accommodation. Houseblock 7 offers the same mix of cells and the quality both of the design and build is to be commended.
- b. Currently not all cells have curtains at the windows although there is an ongoing programme to supply them. The Board welcomes this. HMCIP also commented that prisoners were expected to eat their meals in cells where there

are no divisions between the lavatories and the living accommodation within the cell. The Board concurs with HMCIP in this.

- c. Personal laundry remains an issue. The Prison is seeking to extend the ability of prisoners to wear their own clothing and the Board commends the Prison on this initiative. However, the success of that scheme will depend on the safe return of laundry to the prisoners who sent it, including bags which have tags. The laundry is done centrally in a laundry which also serves outside prisons so the possibility of confusion is considerable. There does not appear to be an easy solution to this.

23. Foreign Nationals.

- a. As at 15th. December 2010 there were 25 Foreign National prisoners in Holme House with two whose status was unknown.
- b. For further comments on foreign nationals, reference is made to the section of the Report on diversity.

Section 7 – Other areas of the Prison to be reported on.

24. Kitchen

- 24.1. The quality of the food is fundamental to the atmosphere within a prison. The food at Holme House has traditionally been good. However, the year 2010 has presented the kitchen supervisor and her staff with various challenges. At the start of the year, the kitchens were housed in a series of linked portacabins which served as a temporary kitchen whilst the permanent site was being adapted to cater for the increased number of prisoners anticipated as a result of the addition of houseblock 7. This accommodation caused various problems, exacerbated by the very cold weather in the early spring, but the difficulties were overcome to a greater or lesser extent over the period of use.
- 24.2. The new kitchens were opened for use in June 2010 some six weeks behind schedule. The equipment was top class but teething troubles arose not least because no instruction books or training was provided by the supplier. Again these difficulties were surmounted, but it all took time. In the opinion of the Board, the catering manager, Mrs. Sandra Jowers, and her staff and those prisoners working in the kitchens are to be congratulated on their determination not to allow these problems to undermine morale.
- 24.3. Towards the end of the year, a proposal to extend the kitchen function to include a bakery was approved and the funds allotted. The Board fully supported this venture which should improve the quality of the offer and lessen the cost of supply.

- 24.4. During the year, there was an unannounced visit by HMCIP. The Inspectorate raised various issues concerning the kitchens. These and the measures taken to address the issues are as follows:-
- 24.4.1. Daily cleaning routine. HMCIP made several comments on the cleanliness within the kitchens. It was unfortunate that the visit by the Inspectors followed close on the heels of the move back to the main kitchens and the fact that there were snagging items still outstanding in the kitchens relating to the floor. There were further problems which arose out of the fact that some of the cookers had been fixed in such a way that it was impossible to clean behind them on a routine basis. However, these issues have now been addressed and the kitchen is given a regular clean with a major clean on a monthly basis with the fixed equipment being disconnected allowing thorough cleaning behind.
 - 24.4.2. Training of staff and prisoners. This has been a considerable problem for the Kitchen Manageress. The staff total 20 but holidays and sickness can diminish the number on shift considerably. The obvious need for staff to have security clearance means that it is not possible to draw on casual staff to plug gaps. Likewise attracting prisoners to work in the kitchens and the clearance of such prisoners to work in the kitchens is frequently time consuming. Ideally there should be 24 prisoners cleared to work in two shifts of 12 but this ideal is frequently not met. Once the bakery is functioning, this will require an additional 12 prisoners. In a local prison there is a considerable turn over of prisoners which means that trained personnel are lost at the end of their sentence. A close liaison between kitchens and administration is necessary to ensure that a flow of prisoners willing and cleared to work in the kitchens is essential. The Prison is to be congratulated for introducing a new system of security clearance which should result in a smoother flow of suitable prisoners.
 - 24.4.3. Cross contamination. HMCIP drew attention to the need to isolate halal food from non-halal food stocks. This has now been achieved by the use of a special 'fridge for halal meat.
 - 24.4.4. Food comment books. These have now been introduced at the houseblock serveries and they make useful reading for the Board during routine visits.
- 24.5 Over the course of the year, it is regrettable to say that the perception of the food throughout the Prison has been more negative. There is a tight budget for the food supply and any food inflation simply presents greater difficulties in meeting the legitimate expectations of the prisoner whilst staying within cost limits. In the opinion of the Board, the principal contributors to this situation are:-
- 24.5.1 The fact that the prisoners are from time to time not receiving the food they have previously ordered particularly if they are on the wing last to go for their food. The Board refers to point three below.
 - 24.5.2 The fact that food is eaten in cells and it can take some time for the food to pass from servery to cell. Unless the food is very hot when it leaves the servery, it will often be cool, if not cold, by the time it comes to be eaten. Despite efforts, the heated trays in the serveries are frequently not turned on early enough before food is delivered to provide a really hot supply once the prisoners arrive to be served.

- 24.5.3 The introduction during 2009 of the centralised purchasing scheme whereby all supplies come through one contractor. Experience has shown that the supplier sometimes changes the product delivered and the quality of the food supplied can be below acceptable standards. Before this novation, the Manageress was able to buy from several local suppliers approved by the Prison Service, and there was a constant communication between kitchen and suppliers. This resulted in a better and more varied supply at a more competitive price. The Board urges the Secretary of State to allow greater initiative on the part of the local kitchen supervisory staff.
- 24.6 Despite the comments set out above, the Board considers that the kitchens and those who have worked in them over the year have fulfilled their vital role with determination and considerable success. A food forum has been introduced which should improve the passage of comment between consumer and provider. Various of the prisoners have studied for NVQs in catering which is an added opportunity for those imprisoned in Holme House.
- 24.7 Members of the Board as a matter of routine visit the kitchens and serveries and test the food to be served to prisoners.

25 Canteen

- 25.1 The canteen is another very important part of prison life and offers a useful source of work for vulnerable prisoners. The system introduced in 2009 seems to have worked fairly well and the number of applications relating to the canteen has reduced. The Prison continues to be the provider of canteen services to other prisons.
- 25.2 It remains a matter of regret that it has not been possible to increase the “wages” paid to prisoners, particularly those not in work. However, in the current financial climate, the Board appreciate that this is not a matter of top priority.

26 Visitor Centre

- 26.1 The Visitor Centre continues to be the first point of call for the visitor to the Prison. The Centre Manager, Mrs. Ros Thompson, and her staff and volunteers have to deal with a wide range of problems and emotional stresses as one might expect from families visiting a prisoner. They continue to provide a welcoming face despite the difficulties.
- 26.2 The Centre has been enlarged during the course of the year by the addition of a conservatory type extension. This will provide useful additional accommodation for various activities especially if prisoner numbers increase.
- 26.3 The Centre includes a small facility for the sale of drinks and light refreshments. This has mainly been staffed by a prisoner from Kirklevington Resettlement Prison but for some reason this flow of assistance dried up during the course of the year. The facility closed and this had a considerable impact on the finance of the Centre since the profits from this facility goes to pay the expenses of the volunteers who are an integral part of the Centre. The Board was pleased to

hear early in 2011 that this interruption in the supply of help has now been brought to an end.

- 26.4 The Board is disappointed that the provision of a daily list of prisoners coming into the Prison and who are entitled to an initial visit is still not being supplied on a regular basis although the position has improved since last year.
- 26.5 The visiting facilities within the Prison do seek to provide a welcoming and comforting atmosphere for those using it. Again, the provision of play and refreshment facilities adds much to the quality of the visit.
- 26.6 The Prison staff have to be constantly alert to check efforts to smuggle drugs into the Prison through the visiting room. Several substantial finds have been made over the year and the staff are to be congratulated for their vigilance.

27. Administration

- 27.1 The Board would like to record its gratitude to the many members of the administrative staff who have given the Board a great deal of assistance during the course of the year. The Board would like in particular to record its thanks to the two people who have acted as our clerk during the course 2010, Miss. Michelle Parkinson and Mr. Dave Cooper, MBE. Their efficiency and good humour have done an enormous amount to ensure that the Board fulfils its duties despite the small numbers of members of the Board available.
- 27.2 The Board was never aware of any particular problems arising in this section of the Prison.

28. Workshops

- 28.1 The completion the new Regimes Buildings has resulted in an increase in the space available for workshops. The new facilities are impressive. The Board was pleased to hear that Manchester College was responding to the changes in the skills required in the market place and tailoring the courses on offer to prisoners to give them the best chance of securing employment once the date for their release is arrived at. The time it takes to carry out security checks on prospective members of the training staff can cause problems but the Board has the impression that these delays are not as great as formerly.
- 28.2 The Prison has always had a range of well equipped and managed workshops which include wood workshops, soft furnishings, tailoring and print rooms. The workshops supply a range of furniture and other items to government departments. This gives to the prisoners who work in them a sense of achievement. The staff working in the workshops are to be congratulated on the determination with which they train the prisoners allocated to that part of the Prison.

28.3 There remains an occasional problem of sickness amongst the staff which results in a reduction of the work on offer since the ratio of 1 trainer to 10 prisoners must be maintained.

29. Gardens

29.1 The completion of the construction work within the Prison has assisted the garden staff in their efforts to ensure that the environment within the security fencing is as pleasant as possible. It has been particularly noticeable that the cleanliness surrounding the houseblocks has definitely improved with a corresponding reduction in the problem of vermin infestation. The joint efforts of the work parties who clean up the litter around the Prison and the wing staff who are increasingly vigilant in preventing waste being deposited outside the cell windows is to be commended.

29.2 The greenhouses continue to provide a training facility for a relatively small number of prisoners, but it is one which is appreciated by those fortunate to secure a place in this training.

Appendix 1 Details of applications

CODE	SUBJECT	2009	2010
A	Accommodation	10	28
B	Adjudications	10	3
C	Diversity Related	9	7
D	Education /employment/training	20	58
E	Family / Visits	23	30
F	Food / kitchen related	3	19
G	Health related	25	80
H	Property	30	101
I	Sentence related	53	57
J	Staff/ prisoner/ detainee related	30	27
K	Transfers	73	99
L	Miscellaneous	66	171
	TOTALS	352	680

NOTE

- a. Among the miscellaneous, at various times of the year, the main categories for 2009 have been IEPS, Mail and Canteen. The complaints concerning the canteen clustered around the change over to the new system.
- b. A very high proportion of the applications came from Houseblock 3 (Vulnerable Prisoners).
- c. Applications relating to healthcare diminished once proper staffing levels were in place.

Appendix 2.

BOARD STATISTICS 2010

Recommended complement of Board Members	18
Number of Board Members at the start of the reporting period	12
Number of Board Members at the end of the reporting period	13
Number of new Board Members joining during the reporting period	4
Number of Board Members leaving the Board during reporting period	3
Number of Board Meetings during reporting period	12
Average number of attendances at Board Meetings	7.00
Number of attendances at meetings other than Board meetings	58
Total number of visits to the prison (including all meetings)	412
Total number of applications dealt with during reporting period	680
N.B. No records were kept of attendances at segregation reviews	