



H M PRISON LOWDHAM GRANGE

ANNUAL REPORT

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1. INTRODUCTION

This is the 14th Annual Report from the IMB on HMP Lowdham Grange, a Category B male training establishment operated by Serco, where respect, decency and zero tolerance work together to provide a positive regime for all involved at the prison.

2. STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

The Prisons Act 1952 and the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 require every prison and IRC to be monitored by an Independent Board appointed by the Home Secretary (and lately the Secretary of State for Justice) from members of the community in which the prison or centre is situated.

The Board is specifically charged to:

- (1) satisfy itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in custody within its prison and the range and adequacy of the programmes preparing them for release.
- (2) inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority as it judges appropriate, any concern it has.
- (3) report annually to the Secretary of State on how well the prison has met the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have on those in its custody.

To enable the Board to carry out these duties effectively its members have right of access to every prisoner and every part of the prison and also to the prison's records.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

As at 31/01/12 the prisoner population was 915 and the average for the year was 910. The Certified Normal Accommodation is 925 with an Operational Capacity of 978. During the year the number of prisoners serving life sentences has raised slightly. All Indeterminate Sentence prisoners are fully integrated within the prison population.

The prisoners are held in five houseblocks. Two of these houseblocks 1 and 2 are standard cross design of four wings with communal showers whilst the other three houseblocks each consist of two wings and have en-suite shower facilities. There are in-cell telephones in all the cells in the prison.

All the exercise yards and the wings themselves have a variety of exercise equipment installed for the use of prisoners. In addition, there are two supervised Gyms.

General healthcare is provided by Serco Health whilst secondary healthcare is provided by Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust. General Practitioners and the Dentist are subcontracted to Serco Health.

The prison provides the Integrated Drug Treatment System and substance misuse programmes.

Education is provided by Serco with outside contractors providing IT Media based cover.

The Buffet bar in the Visits area is run by volunteers for Haywood House, a local hospice.

The Board was particularly pleased that the prison has maintained its level 4 rating by NOMS during the reporting period.

4. DIVERSITY STATEMENT

The IMB at HMP Lowdham Grange (The Board) is committed to an inclusive approach to diversity which encompasses and promotes greater interaction and understanding between people of different backgrounds including but not limited to race, religion, gender, nationality, sexuality, marital status, disability and age. We recognise that a fully inclusive approach to diversity must also respond to differences that cut across social and cultural categories such as but not limited to mental health and literacy.

The Board values this approach to diversity within its recruitment and board development practices with the aim of increasing the repertoire of skills and awareness amongst its members so that it can more appreciate and understand the diverse needs and perspectives of the prisoners, visitors, management and staff at HMP Lowdham Grange.

All members of The Board will undertake their duties in a manner that is accessible and inclusive to everyone within the prison.

The Board will monitor the prison to establish and confirm that all persons at the prison act fairly to each other within the spirit of this statement.

Where this is not the case, The Board will alert the appropriate party including Senior Management, the Director, The Area Manager and the Minister for Prisons at the Department of Justice.

5. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

5.1 General

The IMB is satisfied that HMP Lowdham Grange has been managed and operated well during the reporting period and that staff have treated all the prisoners with appropriate respect. They have also dealt with many demanding prisoners in a professional and humane way.

Once again the prison has retained its Level 4 rating during the reporting period. This is an indication of the level of dedication and hard work of both management and staff throughout the prison.

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

5.2 Applications to the IMB

There have been a high proportion of applications to the IMB regarding lost property, particularly relating to relocation to HMP Lowdham Grange.

5.3 Business Enterprises

There have been a number of interesting developments in the Business Enterprise activity, including increased commercial activity and the award of a range of qualifications for the prisoners involved.

5.4 Healthcare Unit

Whilst there have been improvements, the IMB has been concerned about the level of healthcare service provided for the prisoners. There is also some ongoing concern about the number of prisoners with serious mental health problems.

5.5 Safer Custody

The safer custody team has performed well during the reporting period and raised its profile within the prison. Unfortunately there have been two deaths in custody, one of which was due to a terminal illness.

6. REPORTS

6.1 Amenities, Learning and Skills

In Learning and Skills the emphasis is on supplying the necessary qualifications for the prisoners to further their chances of finding employment on release. Some of these qualifications are provided through the Education Department, some involving practical skills are made available in the business enterprise workshops and some where both make a contribution.

A new Education Manager was appointed in December 2011. During most of the reporting period education was run by the Deputy Manager who continued to maintain the efficiency of the Department.

An Ofsted inspection during the early part of the reporting year resulted in an encouraging report. All Key Performance Targets for learning and skills were met. The regime ran well although it is expected that considerable changes will be made for the forthcoming year.

6.2 Applications to the IMB

The IMB has noted that a high proportion of the prisoners' applications relate to losses of property, often following transfer from other prisons. The prisons from which the prisoners have come have often seemed reluctant to co-operate with arrangements for following up and forwarding property.

6.3 Business Enterprises

The Business Enterprises activity at Lowdham Grange comprises five workshops and they are divided as follows:

Units 1 and 2 together employ 75 prisoners, (55 and 20 respectively) and deal with assembly and packaging operations. They carry out work for a variety of high street names and other organisations.

Unit 3 employs 35 prisoners and produces a variety of textile items including curtains, blinds, embroidery and cushions.

Unit 4 (Bag & Tag) employs 17 prisoners. This is the prison shop and distributes items purchased by the prisoners via the ATMs located on all the wings in the prison.

Unit 5 employs 35 prisoners and deals with the assembly of chairs and sofas for a high street name. Credit should be given for the fact that the prison encouraged one of the prisoners due for release to apply for and be interviewed for a job with the partner company on release. The successful prisoner is still working for the company.

As a further development, Units 3 and 5 now trade under the title Lowdham Grange Interiors.

Prisoners are also employed in a small Recycling unit. They recycle all cardboard, waste paper and old electrical equipment. The recycled waste is then sold and the proceeds donated to charity and used to purchase tools. The prisoners also make bird tables, benches and other garden items out of wooden pallets that come into the prison. Many of these items are sold to prison staff.

During the year the following qualifications were awarded to prisoners:

<u>NVQ level 2:</u>	56	Performing Manufacturing Operations .
	66	Warehouse and Storage.
	11	Upholstery
	6	Cabinet making
	1	Textile cutting
<u>NVQ level 3:</u>	1	Upholstery design.

Some of these qualifications were awarded by Edexcel through Nergy Group, an outside training company.

6.4 Diversity

As a privately run prison HMP Lowdham Grange has to adhere to the NOMS policies on diversity. There is an internal Diversity and Race Equality Action Team which meets bimonthly and at which prisoners' representatives and Senior Managers can deal effectively with any diversity issues which may arise. Disability Liaison Officers monitor the specific needs of vulnerable prisoners, older prisoners and those with disabilities involving some 289 prisoners.

6.5 Healthcare and Mental Health

A new manager of the Healthcare Unit was appointed in May 2011 and this has resulted in certain improvements in the way the Unit has been run. These have included, for example, the better arrangements for escorting of prisoners to the healthcare unit and improved communication between the unit and prisoners about their treatment, referrals and appointments. However, some of our concerns reported for the previous year continued. Towards the end of the year the level of service provided was still causing disquiet, particularly in relation to lengthy waiting times for appointments which was also exacerbated by a lack of cover for the general practitioner and the dentist. Senior staff have been working on overcoming these problems and are making progress but there is still some way to go.

There have also been a high number of prisoners with serious mental health problems and some difficulties have been experienced in transferring the very serious cases to more appropriate establishments.

6.6 Kitchen Refurbishment.

As stated in our previous report Lowdham Grange had a new kitchen as part of the large expansion that took place last year.

In early 2011 it was noticed that there were problems with the floor lifting and cracking.

In March 2011 the contractors returned. They relocated all the kitchen equipment to a temporary kitchen that had been established in Portacabin accommodation in the Work's Department compound. The floor was then repaired and the equipment re installed.

The work was well planned and took place over an 8 week period.

The kitchen staff, including prisoners, worked very hard to ensure that no meals were missed and that the normal prison menu was maintained. The temporary accommodation was not ideal and necessitated working hard in hot, difficult conditions and they should be praised for their efforts.

6.7 Reintegration/Separation & Care Unit (Segregation)

This continues to be one of the most challenging parts of the prison and the staff have managed the unit in a very professional and dedicated manner. The policy of reintegrating prisoners back onto the prison wings continues though there have been times when there were a high number of prisoners in the unit partly as some of them were refusing to be relocated within the prison.

6.8 Safer Custody

The safer custody team has raised its profile in the prison and this has had a very positive impact on the stability of the prison by carefully monitoring those prisoners at risk of self harming and those with depression and other mental health issues. During the reporting period there have been 184 prisoners on ACCTs resulting from self harming or threatening self harm. Quality case reviews are carried out where there is seen to be a significant risk to the individual and these are attended by a multi-disciplinary board membership.

Regrettably, there have been two deaths in custody during the reporting period. One of these was due to a terminal illness. The other, which occurred in March 2011, has been investigated by the Prisons Ombudsman, but at the time of writing there has been no Coroner's inquest. The IMB is concerned that this prisoner's family have had to wait so long for closure. The way in which staff dealt with this situation at the time and since has been impressive. In particular, the Family Liaison Officer has maintained contact with the family over a lengthy period and provided them with considerable support.

7. INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD STATISTICS

7(a) BOARD STATISTICS

BOARD STATISTICS	
Recommended Complement of Board Members	16
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	15
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	10
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	0
Number of members leaving within reporting period	5
Number of attendances at meetings other than Board meetings and Reviews	19
Total number of visits to the prison/IRC (including all meetings)	459
Total number of applications received	300

7 (b) APPLICATIONS

Code	Subject	2011/2012
A	Accommodation	0
B	Adjudications	3
C	Diversity related	4
D	Education/employment/training	8
E	Family/visits	14
F	Food/kitchen related	1
G	Health related	46
H	Property	77
I	Sentence related	9
J	Staff/prisoner/detainee related	20
K	Transfers	11
L	Miscellaneous	76
M	Confidential Access	20
N	Complaints process	11
	Total number of applications	300

<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>Feb-11</u>	<u>Mar-11</u>	<u>Apr-11</u>	<u>May-11</u>	<u>Jun-11</u>	<u>Jul-11</u>	<u>Aug-11</u>	<u>Sept-11</u>	<u>Oct-11</u>	<u>Nov-11</u>	<u>Dec-11</u>	<u>Jan-12</u>	<u>MONTHLY AVERAGE FOR THE LAST 12 MONTHS</u>
<u>AVERAGE POPULATION FOR EACH MONTH</u>	921	919	848	915	917	918	914	916	910	912	916	914	910
<u>No. OF PRISONERS ON BASIC</u>	32	27	17	18	17	15	15	29	36	32	24	33	23
<u>No. OF PRISONERS ON STANDARD</u>	134	148	148	141	117	111	105	96	106	124	135	133	125
<u>No. OF PRISONERS ON ENHANCED</u>	755	736	738	762	779	792	801	785	765	761	757	749	765
<u>No. OF PRISONERS IN PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY</u>	818	826	824	817	839	834	820	818	804	805	781	773	815
<u>No. OF PRISONERS UNEMPLOYED</u>	86	75	71	74	67	68	68	74	82	87	100	107	80
<u>No. OF PRISONERS MEDICALLY EXCUSED</u>	12	11	11	24	12	18	29	19	24	24	33	25	19
<u>No. OF ACCT's OPENED</u>	17	20	16	15	10	16	17	11	15	11	13	23	14
<u>No. OF STAFF WHO LEFT DURING MONTH</u>	4	11	2	6	3	2	2	6	6	4	3	4	5
<u>No. OF STAFF WHO JOINED DURING MONTH</u>	4	8	15	5	8	2	5	16	3	1	3	0	7
<u>NUMBER OF IMB APPLICATIONS</u>	42	30	17	21	22	24	39	23	26	14	21	20	28
<u>NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS</u>	340	495	355	455	461	312	245	317	404	521	479	399	397
<u>NUMBER OF OCCASIONS REQUIRING THE USE OF FORCE</u>	12	15	15	26	19	14	28	9	30	17	25	15	19
<u>3x Retired prisoners</u>													

8. QUESTIONS

The IMB has no questions for the Minister or Serco.