



**H M PRISON LOWDHAM GRANGE**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**1ST FEBRUARY 2012 – 31ST JANUARY 2013**

## **Section 1**

### **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.

## **Section 2**

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### **Section 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 risen slightly. All Indeterminate Sentence prisoners are fully integrated within the prison population.

The prisoners are held in five house-blocks. House-blocks 1 and 2 are standard cross design of four wings with communal showers whilst the other 3 house-blocks each consist of two wings and have en-suite shower facilities. There are in-cell telephones in all the cells in the prison.

All of the exercise yards and the wings have a variety of exercise equipment installed for the use of prisoners. Gym facilities are also available.

General healthcare is provided by Serco Health with sub contracted GP and Dental Services. Secondary Mental Healthcare is provided by Nottingham Healthcare NHS Trust.

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.

## **Section 4**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The IMB is satisfied that HMP Lowdham Grange has been managed and operated well. The prison endeavours to treat all prisoners with respect and decency.

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

The management of a transgender prisoner has provided a steep learning curve for all concerned but has been handled well.

The Healthcare Unit have made significant reductions in waiting times for GP and Dentist work, this is still ongoing.

Provision of secondary mental healthcare is a source of some concern.

The psychology department has formed a multi-agency safety and health group which works closely with various departments to provide a consistent approach to meeting the needs of vulnerable prisoners.

A Prisoner Advice Line, manned by prisoners, has been introduced to provide prisoners with help with their problems.

Whilst purposeful activity has remained high the impact of the recession has made it more difficult to acquire work for prisoners.

The loss of prisoners' property on transfer between prisons continues to be one of the most difficult areas to manage.

## **Section 5**

### **REPORTS**

#### **5.1 Equality & Inclusion**

Equality and Inclusion at HMP Lowdham Grange is driven by national policy as expressed in the 2010 Equalities Act and the subsequent NOMS policy.

Work in this area is led by a knowledgeable and effective Equalities Officer who takes wide ranging steps to ensure that equality of opportunity is offered to prisoners with any of the 'protected characteristics'. These steps include:

- The training of all staff during their induction to the prison
- An introduction to equalities policies and practice provided to all prisoners during their induction to the prison
- Holding regular consultation meetings with prisoners (known at the Diversity and Race Equality Action Team meetings)
- Ensuring that all prisoners and staff can report incidents of discrimination on Discrimination Incident Reporting forms. Such incidents are then investigated and appropriate action taken if necessary.
- Holding events to promote a positive approach to diversity in the prison. In 2012 a series of events were held during 'Black History Month' in October.

In addition, members of The Board seek to ensure that they monitor that the policy is effectively implemented around the prison as a part of their wider monitoring visits.

The Board is mindful that its membership lacks representation from some significant groups as identified in The Act and are striving to encourage applications from more diverse groups for any vacancies occurring.

#### **5.2 Education, Learning and Skills**

The Education Department has offered a wide range of courses this year, many with an emphasis on rehabilitation, including Life Skills and Employment Skills.

With more prisoners coming into the prison at level 1 English and Maths it has been a priority to ensure that they do not repeat skills already achieved at Entry level at other prisons. There are a number of Basic Skills courses and the importance of progression is recognised.

There appears to be a good support from managers and liaison with the Psychology Department to cover courses in the prisoners' Sentence Plans.

There are 29 tutors covering a wide range of subjects and although it is difficult to assess whether there are enough courses to cover all needs, the prisoners are on the whole positive about courses. The 'on the job' NVQ courses in Industries are working well and qualified assessors ensure qualifications up to level 2 can be achieved, with a College offering accreditation for higher level courses. There are at least 20 students studying Open University courses.

The much praised 'Story Time Dads' continues. With more prisoners being computer literate IT and Media Development continue to offer good opportunities for many.

Together with Basic Skills and the Vocational courses already in place, and the forthcoming addition of a Gym Academy it is encouraging that there is a positive ethos for future employment prospects for the prisoners at HMP Lowdham Grange.

### 5.3 Healthcare & Mental Health

The prison population during this reporting period has hovered around 900 and continues to make heavy demands on the Healthcare services provided by Serco Health. These services are provided in limited, suitable accommodation with courtesy and privacy.

The GP services are covered by an NHS practice providing GP cover 3 days per week and an Advanced Nurse Practitioner 2 days a week.

Exceptionally long waiting times for Doctor and Dentist appointments, as previously reported, have seen considerable efforts/interventions by management which have resulted in significant reductions. A newly appointed Dentist is in attendance on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays weekly, with additional cover following Bank holiday weekends. In line with these changes prisoner complaints about Healthcare have noticeably reduced since our last report. However we are mindful that constant monitoring is necessary to maintain nationally acceptable standards.

Dentist waiting times in April 2012 were 15 weeks for an initial appointment; this is now 6 weeks, bringing them more in line with National Guidelines.

Dentist waiting times in April 2012 were 25 weeks for treatment; this is now 7 weeks.

#### Primary Mental Health

This team functions with 1 full time Lead and 2 Full time Mental Health Nurses.

#### Secondary Mental Health

This team is provided by the Nottingham Healthcare NHS Trust and functions with a Forensic Psychiatrist, 2 Secondary Mental Health nurses and 1 Forensic Occupational Therapist

At the current time of reporting the number of Secondary Mental Health care professionals has not increased in line with the prison population increase of 400 over the past few years.

Mental health problems continue to increase year on year. Self harm incidents follow an upward trend. A high proportion of these are due to single individuals inflicting repeated acts of self harm.

The staff working in all areas of Healthcare at Lowdham Grange carry out their demanding and challenging duties with great dedication, dignity, equality, fairness and professionalism.

#### 5.4 Purposeful activity

All prisoners arriving at HMP Lowdham Grange are expected to participate in either work through Business Enterprises or Residential work within the establishment.

During the induction week for prisoners coming to Lowdham Grange, their employment needs or suitability for work and/or their educational requirements will be assessed. Prisoners are informed of all activities and vacancies they can apply for. They may then apply for any positions within the prison and they are also placed on the unemployed waiting list.

Prisoners are allocated employment by either reaching the top of the waiting list for the position they have applied for or the top of the unemployed list. Every work placement is dealt with in date order to ensure that it is a fair and decent system.

All vacancies that do not have a waiting list are advertised on in-cell TV and through the Prisoners Information Action Committee (PIAC)

At the end of the reporting period there were 112 unemployed prisoners at Lowdham Grange for various reasons. Nevertheless all prisoners were still engaged either in education or in sessions in the gymnasium.

The type of work offered in the Business Enterprise Unit consists of:

Unit 1	Packaging	-	61 prisoners
Unit 3	Sewing unit	-	43 prisoners
Unit 4	Bag & Tag	-	15 prisoners
Unit 5	Furniture and upholstery	-	39 prisoners
	Total	-	158 prisoners out of a population of about 900.

Residential work was the predominant activity, be it cleaning (210), or serverly work (56), with a total of 445 on other activities such as Buddys, PIAC Representatives, Painters, Orderlies etc.

There are 48 prisoners on full time education and a total of 37 on vocational training consisting of industrial cleaning, bricklaying, electrical and plumbing.

Prisoners opting for vocational courses have to be educated to Entry level to ensure that they are qualified before starting the course which comes with NVQ status in preparation for employment upon release.

In conclusion, HMP Lowdham Grange goes a long way in providing purposeful activity in fulfilling its obligation as a Category B Training Prison.

#### 5.6 Resettlement

Until recently it was rare for prisoners to be released from HMP Lowdham Grange, but during the reporting period some 80 prisoners were released. Care has been taken in each case to ensure that the prisoner had accommodation to go to and job prospects.

A very successful resettlement course was run during the year which the prison had hoped to repeat but, regrettably, this proved to be too expensive. It was replaced by a course run jointly by the prison and a contractor Cementafuture.

A good relationship has been built up with outside agencies and a well attended open day has been held for prisoners. This has resulted in further good links being created. All 18 members of the psychology team were closely involved in these activities.

### 5.7 Safer Custody

The Safer Custody Team is a small well managed unit giving support to prisoners on ACCTs as well as self harmers and other vulnerable prisoners. Many of the reported 'self-harms' are due to single individuals inflicting repeated acts of self harm.

The Safer Custody Team co-ordinate and manage the Buddy system as well as dealing with violence reduction and suicide awareness. Victims of bullying are well supported and the perpetrators challenged. The Team also manages a Prison Support Diary where individual prisoners can be supported over memorable difficult dates.

Staff in the Psychology Department has worked hard within the prison to establish a Multi Agency Safety & Health Group (MASH). This requires input from many different departments including Safer Custody for vulnerable prisoners, or those who find it difficult to cope, but who are not necessarily suicidal or have thoughts of self harm. This encourages the consistent, cross-departmental management of these prisoners.

There were no Deaths in Custody during the reporting period.

### 5.8 Reintegration, Care & Separation, Close Supervision

This separate unit consisting of 25 cells, office accommodation, kitchen, showers and 3 separate exercise yards continues to be the most challenging part of the prison.

The conditions, facilities, staffing and management of the unit are of a high standard.

The paper work is readily accessible and is usually up to date.

Reviews are carried out on Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons and the Board attend at least 95% of them.

The Board is free to speak to each prisoner in the unit and carries out a weekly round in conjunction to the 3 Review Hearings. There was 1 application to the full Board during the year which was resolved to the prisoner's satisfaction.

During the reporting period prisoners sentenced to cellular confinement following adjudication served this time on B Wing.

During the first half of the reporting year, too many of the prisoners in the unit for disciplinary reasons, remained on Enhanced Regime and were not subjected to an IEP Review. This situation improved towards the end of the reporting period.

There have been a small number of prisoners in the Unit for more than 3 months. When this happens the unit manager writes to the NOMS Controller and copies in the IMB giving reasons and advising what is to be done to remedy the situation.

Too many prisoners continue to see a move to the unit as a way of being transferred out of the Prison.

#### 5.9 Residential Services (includes accommodation, food, catering and kitchens)

The prisoners are housed in five house blocks.

House blocks 1 and 2 have 4 wings on each house block in a standard cross design with a control room at the centre. These 8 wings are about 15 years old. There are communal showers on each wing.

House blocks 3, 4 and 5 consisting of 2 wings each have en-suite shower facilities in each cell. These wings were built more recently.

Approximately 65 prisoners are housed on each of the 14 wings. There are in-cell telephones in all the cells in the prison. Each wing has its own exercise yard with gym equipment installed in the yard. There is also gym equipment on each wing.

There are also numerous ancillary buildings comprising workshops, kitchen, administration, reception, sports hall, healthcare, visits, work department, and a segregation unit.

The prison and grounds are well maintained looking modern, clean and tidy.

During the reporting period there was a move from providing a full lunch menu to a choice of 2 soups and a choice of sandwiches.

## **Section 6**

### **ADDITIONAL REPORTS**

#### **6.1 Business Enterprises Products**

Within the Business Enterprises unit *Lowdham Grange Interiors* continue to produce high quality furniture for the open market whilst the sewing shop produces a wide range of upholstery and soft furnishings.

#### **6.2 Drugs/Substance Abuse**

Hooch still remains a problem in the establishment and Mandatory Drug Testing figures continued to show occasional spikes. There have been a number of targeted lockdowns and searches which have been successful.

#### **6.3 Gymnasium**

Towards the end of the reporting period one of the gymnasias was closed. This facility is being converted and is due to be reopened as a physical education academy. However, this has caused a serious overload within the remaining gymnasium. The Board has raised concerns with senior management and are continuing to monitor this situation.

#### **6.4 Prisoner Advice Line (PAL)**

This service was established as a full time position for a minimum of two suitably qualified prisoners to provide advice and guidance on many different issues to other prisoners in the establishment. The prisoners are able to access this service through the in-cell telephone system. The service is located in the Visits area and is fully equipped with limited access computers and telephones together with a range of paper based information. Since the innovation of the PAL there has been a reduction in the number of complaints to the prison and applications to the IMB.

#### **6.5 Prisoner Property**

The issue of property is still a major concern to the Board. When a prisoner is transferred from another establishment they are often separated from their property. The problems occur particularly when the sending prison is slow or even unresponsive to the receiving prison over lost property issues thus causing unnecessary frustration and anxiety for the prisoner. This is a fundamental problem which requires serious attention.

#### **6.6 Serious Incidents**

Whilst classed as “serious incidents” those which occurred during the year were of a relatively minor nature and were managed in a professional manner.

## 6.7 Transgender Prisoner

During the reporting period the Board was informed of the presence of a transgender prisoner. It is worthy of note that this was the first such event for HMP Lowdham Grange and the Board. The support and help given to the prisoner, staff and IMB was exemplary. However, this proved very challenging for some members of staff and prisoners. Towards the end of the reporting period the prisoner in question was transferred.

## **Section 7**

### **7.1 The Work of the Independent Monitoring Board**

<b><u>BOARD STATISTICS</u></b>	
Recommended Complement of Board Members	16
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	10
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	13
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	5
Number of members leaving within reporting period	2
Total number of Board meetings during reporting period	12
Total number of visits to the Establishment	584
Total number of segregation reviews held	130
Total number of segregation reviews attended	126
Date of Annual Team Performance Review	20/12/2012

## 7.2 IMB Applications

Code	Subject	Year 2009-10	Year 2010-11	Year 2011-12	Year 2012-13
A	Accommodation	0	4	0	1
B	Adjudications	6	5	3	4
C	Equality & Diversity (inc religion)	1	17	4	7
D	Education/employment/training inc IEP	21	12	8	12
E 1	Family/visits inc mail & phone	14	8	14	16
E 2	Finance/pay	0	0	0	0
F	Food/Kitchen Related	3	3	3	6
G	Health related	46	47	46	39
H 1	Property (within current establishment)	30	121	77	71
H 2	Property (during transfer/in another establishment)	In total	In total	In total	In total
H 3	Canteen, facilities, Catalogue shopping, Argos	0	0	0	0
I	Sentence related (inc. HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-cat etc)	22	12	9	16
J	Staff/prisoner/detainee concerns inc bullying	6	8	20	7
K	Transfers	9	8	11	8
L	Miscellaneous	83	80	87	76
M	Total number of IMB applications	241	325	280	280
N	Of total: number of IMB Confidential Access was:	18	27	20	17

## **8. QUESTION FOR THE MINISTER**

What action is the Minister proposing to take to address the ongoing issue of prisoners 'property going missing between establishments?