



**HMP/YOI
NORTHALLERTON**

**ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD**

2011-2012

**1st March, 2011
to
29th February, 2012**

IMB Statement of Purpose

'In all its activities the Board will uphold the principles of fairness and humanity in the treatment of prisoners while giving full weight to the maintenance of discipline and the interests and concerns of staff.'

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 from members of the community in which the prison or centre is situated.

The Board is specifically charged to:

- 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.
- inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority as it judges appropriate, any concern it has.
- 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 prison records other than those involving health.

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HMP/YOI NORTHALLERTON

The prison was built in 1783 as the county gaol for the North Riding of Yorkshire. Since then it has been a military prison, a training prison for adults, a remand centre and, most recently, a young offender institution. In September 2010 its role changed again to that of a community prison for both adults and young offenders from the North Yorkshire area.

The prison's **location** is a town centre one. Its capacity is for 252 offenders in double and single cells on two wings, though since September 2010 numbers have been reduced to allow for the re-role, and for the refurbishment of accommodation. Facilities include a small but well-equipped gym and a sports hall.

In keeping with Prison Service policy to accommodate offenders as near to their homes as possible, the establishment's **reception criteria** gives priority to offenders with a North Yorkshire discharge address, including:

- adults serving 6 years or less in the last 2 years of their sentence, and
- young offenders serving two years or less, or in the last 3 months of their sentence.

Offenders come from HMP Doncaster, HMP Hull, and training prisons within the Yorkshire and Humberside area.

The establishment has an active **ROTL** (Release on Temporary Licence) scheme, with town visits and home leaves, and an increasing number of offenders employed outside the prison or involved in community work.

Service providers

- **Education** is provided by Manchester City College
- During the reporting year, **Healthcare** provision has been transferred to Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust. An Integrated Drug Treatment Scheme (IDTS) runs successfully, and CARATS (Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice and Throughcare Services) provides support as well as liaison with outside services.
- The **library** is provided by North Yorkshire County Council.
- **Resettlement services** have been offered by SOVA and Remploy, and Shelter provides help with accommodation and also debt and benefit advice. The Resettlement department, together with Education, provides help with producing CVs and gives advice on jobs and training.

Section 4

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Change, which began with the re-role in the autumn of 2010, has continued to be a by-word at HMP/YOI Northallerton. The Board has been deeply impressed by the work of staff and management - as ever Northallerton's great strength - and by their adaptability and resourcefulness on many different fronts.

To pick only a few **successes and achievements** out of many is perhaps invidious. Sometimes simply a stray comment or passing remark illustrates the quality of the relationship between staff and offender. However, the provision for older offenders in areas varying from exercise to diet has been impressive, and indeed the Board has noted many examples of respect for the needs and dignity for offenders of whatever age. A new ethos flourishes based on ROTL requirements, world-of-work skills and accreditation.

[1, 2.1, 5, 6, 9, 10, 19, 20, 21]

Without in any way wishing to detract from the foregoing, but in keeping with its mandate, IMB must also highlight for the Minister's attention continuing **concerns**. The re-role has inevitably involved higher staffing costs. Staff time and availability are an essential ingredient of Northallerton's success: budgetary restrictions, and the constraints they impose, are, as noted in last year's report, a matter of serious concern to the Board.

Inevitably, since Northallerton's elderly buildings in many ways defy modernisation; other concerns repeat those of foregoing reports. Shared cells containing lavatories are amongst these, and also the segregation unit, both accommodation and staffing there.

[15, 17, 18, 19.1, 21.1]

Like the prison, the Board looks to the future, and very much hopes that the high standards to be found at present can be maintained.

Section 5

DIVERSITY

1. The Board has no qualms about the approach of both staff and management to the needs and concerns of individual offenders - humanity, respect and dignity are always evident. The Board continues to value this.

2. New this year

- The re-role of the prison during the reporting year has resulted in a new range of diversity issues, especially those involving older offenders. The prison is aware of needs here and is responding to them.
- The prison understands too that some of these needs are sensitive matters, and is anxious for them to be made known only so that individual choices are increased and provision improved.

Plans are in hand to:

- assemble information on disability (including dyslexia), gender identity and sexuality. Because offenders may prefer to talk to other offenders rather than to an officer, offender representatives are to be trained to be responsible for this (or perhaps to offer support with form-filling). It may be possible to combine this with first-night interviews.
- draw up a data base of the above information, to be available to Healthcare, Education, and other departments.

The Board has been assured that disclosures made in confidence (notably to Healthcare) are respected.

2.1 The Board notes - and **applauds** - the prompt way in which the prison has responded to the needs and concerns of older offenders. Examples include:

- Dietary requirements: meal choices are healthier, with needs constantly under review and catered for (see also **Healthcare 10.1, Food 19**).
- Healthcare and gym sessions: Healthcare offers a number of clinics to meet needs of older offenders (see **Healthcare 10.1**), and special sessions are now run in the gym. Here more supervision has been provided to make it possible to offer specialist support and set appropriate targets, including, for instance, exercises for the back and advice on weight control.
- Canteen: the list has been widened, and a newspaper supplier is being sought.
- Library: a greater variety of reading material is being provided.

2.2 Also:

Changes made last year are now bedded in:

- The Diversity and Equalities Action Plan is now honed in light of the recommendations of HMCIP (see **Plans in hand**, above).
- Discrimination Incident Reporting Forms (DIRFs) now replace Racial Incident Report Forms (RIRFs).
- A representative from the RAF has been appointed as an independent observer of the Diversity and Equalities Team, and to be responsible for the quality assurance of DIRFs.

3. Consultation

Meetings monitored include:

- Diversity and Equalities Team
- Offender Diversity Team.

Now that older offenders are included, the Board notes a greater awareness of the concept of representation. Contributions to a meeting are more likely to be the product of consultation, rather than simply personal viewpoints.

An Insiders' Peer Mentoring Scheme helps with the induction of new offenders, offering information on how the prison runs and the facilities it offers.

4. RIRFs/DIRFs

13 in 6-month period 13.6.11 - 20.12.11, these have been monitored by the IMB.

Section 5

EDUCATION

5. The re-role has been a challenge for Education and Learning Skills, with an increasing number of adult offenders and a rapid rate of change. Nevertheless, staff have responded positively and flexibly, and the range of courses provided has changed almost on a day-to-day basis.

6. Developments this year

OLASS (Offender Learning and Skills Service) focuses on employability and the Board notes (31.12.11) that 40% of offenders go straight into employment on their release. A further 11% enter education or training.

- There are now more Level 2 courses, and higher levels of qualification in workshops: Waste Management has been introduced at both Levels 2 and 3, and also Hospitality and Catering, which has been particularly successful. Kitchen Fitting, Creative IT and Web Design, Food Safety and Catering, Health and Safety, Customer Service and Employability, and Business Venture courses all now run at Level 2. The new Hospitality Suite and the barber's shop ('Custody Cuts') both offer employment skills and world-of-work experience. A Certificate in the Principles and Preparation of Coaching Sport, a new course, has been advertised.
- Literacy and numeracy assessments take place as part of offenders' initial induction, but outstanding needs should be picked up by the CIAS (Careers Information and Advice Service). Both literacy and numeracy skills are taught when required in workshops, where they can be tailored to offenders' interests and needs. ESOL needs are met where necessary.
- Good use is made of the 'Toe by Toe' programme to promote adult literacy.

7. In-cell provision for offenders continues where necessary, as in the Segregation Unit.

8. The Education Department is now looking at distance learning provision, and offenders have access to an approved site enabled by the Virtual Campus, a major introduction this year. The establishment is a leading user of the Virtual Campus.

Section 5

HEALTHCARE AND MENTAL HEALTH

9. During a year of change, Healthcare has continued to maintain a strong reputation for the prompt and caring attention of offenders. There have been few applications to the Board relating to Healthcare, all have dealt with minor issues and all have been settled satisfactorily.

10. New this year

- A changed prison population to predominantly adult offenders has had an impact on the delivery of healthcare.
- The restructuring of the NHS has resulted in the transfer of Healthcare in the prison to Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust. This has been achieved without any impact on the standard of care within the prison.

10.1 These changes mean that:

- A new health needs assessment has been carried out, and an action plan approved for implementation.
- The costs of providing healthcare to a changed population in terms of prescriptions, dentistry and other medical costs, and also the costs of providing hospital escorts, have risen significantly.
- There is a long waiting list (currently 14 weeks) for dental care, and another weekly session is needed. Possible solutions are being investigated.

Also:

- Older offenders have expressed concerns about weekly menus. The catering manager is running a consultation exercise, and the menu is being revised (see **Food 19**).

The Board is impressed by:

- the range of clinics regularly provided: diabetes, acupuncture, smoking cessation, alcohol awareness, epilepsy, coronary heart disease, asthma, ENT (Ear, Nose and Throat) and GUM (Genitourinary Medicine).
- IDTS (Integrated Drug Treatment System), which is now well used, with 28 out of 37 possible users under treatment.

10.2 However, the Board also notes:

- There have been instances where a transferring prison has despatched offenders as fit for travel when in fact they are not. In some case Healthcare staff at Northallerton have discovered previously unidentified cases of medical need. There is an arrangement with Hull prison which will, if necessary, take back offenders who can be more appropriately cared for elsewhere.

11. Monitoring

An IMB observer attends meetings of the Prison Health Steering Group and is also invited to attend meetings of the Partnership Board. IMB members on rota always visit Healthcare and check on any open ACCTS (Assessment Care in Custody Teamwork).

Section 5

SAFER CUSTODY

12. Listeners

One of the advantages of the re-role has been that incoming offenders from other prisons are already trained: there are now three adult Listeners, two on C Wing and one on A Wing.

13. Vulnerable offenders

The number of ACCTS for the year ending December 2011 was relatively low: 43 (60 in the year ending December 2010).

The Multi-Faith Centre offers valuable support to individual offenders, who may be referred by staff or by themselves. Support groups provide opportunities for discussion; information can be passed to unit staff if necessary.

The Multi-Faith Centre also offers support in the case of a bereavement, and can contact families if necessary.

14. Violence reduction

Over the reporting year, the proportion of adults on role has increased, and is now some 80% of offenders. In some ways this has created a more stable atmosphere with less volatile behaviour from the younger offenders.

There has been a small but temporary increase in bullying since the re-role; staff put this down to an increase in mobile phones and drugs, with the ROTL programme providing more opportunity to import these. (See also **Segregation 15**.)

Effective use is made of the 'bully basic' demotion; the prison also makes use of an anti-bullying workbook filled in by offenders in their cells, with progress monitored and recorded. Exit surveys continue to be offered, and where these are completed, the majority of offenders say they feel 'safe' or 'very safe' at Northallerton.

Section 5

SEGREGATION

15. Concerns raised in previous years must be reiterated and re-emphasised: problems previously noted have become very much more immediate in the last year.

- **Use** since the re-role has greatly increased. It is common for all seven cells (including the holding cell) to be occupied.

Offenders held for their own protection: there has been a substantial increase in the number of offenders held in the unit for this reason, usually because of debts incurred through tobacco purchases. The problem is exacerbated by Northallerton's size, and the lack of alternative wing accommodation.

Some way must be found to tackle this problem effectively: various schemes have been tried and then had to be abandoned. At present, pressure on accommodation, and on staff, who must accompany offenders from the unit to their place of work, is a real difficulty.

- The **fabric** of this very old area is difficult to maintain, and work undertaken tends to be short-lived in effect.
 - Detritus stuffed behind the Perspex windows continues to be a problem.
 - Lavatories are unscreened and stained: the material of which they are constructed, Corian, though now more widely used in kitchen manufacture, is difficult to clean without the use of bleach.
- There is still no specific **regime** on the unit (see concerns raised in the Board's report, 2011). Education provides in-cell material for those who request it, and the library visits. Gym and religious activities are also available.

Recently, however, individually tailored regimes have been designed to achieve **reintegration into the residential units**. These are used for offenders who are in the unit for their own protection.

Targets are set to offer support and guidance to return offenders to a normal location, and may include:

- Virtual Campus (see **Education 8**).
- short periods of closely supervised wing association.

Targets are reviewed every seven days by a governor.

16. Adjudications and reviews

As noted in last year's report, these are managed very professionally by staff, procedures are clearly explained, and staff from other areas in the prison (including Healthcare) are represented if necessary.

The Board notes (report of an Adjudication and Standardisation meeting, 13.9.11) that Northallerton has a low adjudication rate compared to other prisons because of the skill of the staff in handling incidents, and in de-escalating situations which may be potentially violent or threatening.

Section 6

OTHER AREAS FOR REPORT

17. Accommodation and cleanliness

Currently C Wing (single cells) is used for those who have met ROTL requirements. A Wing accommodation (double cells) is used for Young Offenders and Category C and D offenders preparing for ROTL. All cells contain lavatories.

There has been a programme of re-decoration by Works over the last two years.

Screening of lavatories is an ongoing **concern** (see previous report, 2011), especially on A wing where cells are shared. Attempts have been made to tackle this problem, but though the Board must record some qualms, all lavatories are now, at least nominally, screened with curtains. These are provided by Prison Service Industries specially for Northallerton's cell type, and are designed to pull away easily from anchor points as an anti-ligature feature.

However:

- about half the cells have curtains which are not full length, and therefore afford neither privacy nor decency
- full length curtains have mesh panels in them for the benefit of officers.

18. Finance

Planned efficiency savings for 2011/12 were all on target. These savings have been made for a number of consecutive years, and the Board applauds the financial acumen with which the management handles these centrally imposed restrictions.

However, **the Board wishes to draw particular attention to:**

- **the high maintenance needs - and resultant costs - of a Victorian prison, and**
- **the serious effects of budget cuts on staffing.**

Such financial restrictions inevitably curtail the good work of the establishment, and may have an effect on security and safety.

Among a number of incidences, specific examples the Board has noted in rota reports include:

- the night-time staffing situation, which is limited to two officers, a Senior Officer and three OSGs (members of the Operational Support Group).
- the pressure on the two Reception staff when offenders return from ROTL, and use of the BOSS (Body Orifice Security Scanner) chair is required. Sometimes an induction officer may be available to help, but (s)he is also essentially involved in in-depth first night interviews and decisions about cell sharing.

The Board also notes:

- the anomaly of targets set by HMCIP which cannot be implemented for financial reasons. Longer hours of unlock for offenders, for example, cannot be put into practice because of staffing costs.

The HMCIP Action Plan also included improved screening of toilets, but the work was

abandoned because of the prohibitive cost.

- wage levels at Northallerton, which compare poorly with those of other establishments.
- the increased expenditure on security measures the budget has had to accommodate since the re-role. This has included:
 - netting cover to prevent items being thrown over the boundary wall into the exercise yards
 - mobile phone blocking equipment.

19. Food

- Current expenditure per offender is £2.10/day.
- The catering service is of high quality, with two hot meals a day. Vegetarian requirements are met, and the needs of those of different religions. At the weekend, provision is a hot breakfast, a hot lunch and a packed evening meal.
- Since the re-role, older offenders have asked for more traditional menus ('meat and three veg'), and for healthier options such as more wholemeal bread and rolls. Also options are needed for those whose health poses dietary requirements - angina sufferers, for instance, who are trying to control their salt intake. The Kitchen has done its best to comply with requests, but all potential solutions have cost implications.
- Meals are now produced in the prison and stored in foil containers which allow slow re-heating during the morning, giving better flavour retention.
- In the Kitchen and Servery offenders are trained and motivated to use newly acquired skills to seek employment in the catering industry on release. NVQ work is to be introduced. Alby's, the prison's Hospitality Suite, provides meals each lunchtime for officers and visitors, and gives offenders working there an excellent opportunity to gain qualifications (see **Education 6**).
- The year has seen a number of initiatives which are to be applauded. These include working with a market garden in Ripon to produce fruit and vegetables for the prison. Chutneys and relishes are then produced for both domestic consumption and resale at the Ripon outlet.

19.1 The Board's concerns include:

- the inefficiency of centralised purchasing.
The ability to buy locally is restricted; to do this would sometimes be convenient, with competitive prices. It would also provide useful involvement with the local community, and a good public relations exercise.
- quality.
Meat provided by the centralised contract, for instance, is often of poor quality. There is a small budget available for the prison's own purchases, which it puts to good use. Cakes and other confectionery are produced in the Kitchen at a substantially lower cost than if they had been bought centrally.
- funding: the key challenge for Catering Management.
There was an £8,200,000 overspend in 2011/12.

20. Incentives and Earned Privileges Schemes

The Board has noted how well this scheme functions, with much higher quality applications for enhanced status now that adults are included. These applications are all supported by personal officers and Education.

21. Preparation for release and resettlement

During the reporting year, offenders have completed over 20,000 hours of community service, working in local charity shops, the cemetery, the local football ground and the Walled Garden at Ripon. Three offenders have achieved paid employment.

21.1 However, the re-role has raised a number of issues connected with **ROTL**:

- The Board has received a number of complaints from offenders transferring to Northallerton about circumstances different from those associated with many Category C/D establishments. These involve less time out of cell than previously experienced and lower wages. Many problems seem to be the result of a lack of prior information, and a resulting mismatch of expectations.
- Category D offenders are experiencing a long wait to be cleared for ROTL, even those coming from other establishments where clearance had already been received. (The Board acknowledges that this is at least in part because ROTL is establishment-specific, and must be repeated on arrival at Northallerton.)
- Also some offenders are finding it difficult at Northallerton to access the necessary - or relevant - courses, and despite electronic records held by Manchester College, there seems to be a delay in acknowledging certification.
- The introduction of more sophisticated adult offenders has highlighted the need for stringent security standards in combating the introduction of illicit articles. ROTL also offers opportunities to import drugs and mobile phones.
- Improved intelligence sources and intelligence-led searching helps to detect these and disrupt supply routes. There are implications here in terms of staffing costs, which must be met from budget, and this is noted by the Board (see **Finance 18**).

and

- The Prisoners' Earnings Act, implemented in September 2011, deducts 40% of an offender's net earnings (after tax, national insurance and any payments under court orders). (The money goes to the charity Victim Support.) The Board has some qualms about the effect of this development in terms of the reduced incentive it presents.

Section 7

WORK OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

22. Applications

The IMB is receiving considerably more applications (75 in the reporting year), the majority of which come from adult offenders. Category D offenders note the length of time taken to grant ROTL, as well as difficulty at Northallerton in achieving all the requirements. There have been complaints about the restrictions of A Wing, particularly time out of cell, and wage levels too are a cause of dissatisfaction.

23. Board Development

- Visits: to HMP Kirklevington, chosen because it is primarily a rehabilitation prison with most of the offenders engaged in ROTL.
- Training: sessions at the start of monthly Board meetings have been run by prison staff. Subjects have included:
 - Catering
 - Healthcare
 - IDTS
 - Security
 - Education
- Two members attended the IMB annual conference, and gave feedback at a Board meeting.
- Also at Board meetings, the Governor and Deputy Governor have reviewed the changes involved in the year's work since the re-role.

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board Members	10
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	8
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	9
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	2
Number of members leaving within reporting period	1
Number of attendances at meetings other than Board meetings	29
Total number of visits to the prison (including all meetings)	291
Total number of applications received	75
Total number of segregation reviews held	58
Total number of segregation reviews attended	25

Applications

Code	Subject	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
A	Accommodation	1	4	1
B	Adjudications	0	1	2
C	Diversity related	0	1	0
D	Education/employment/training	1	2	4
E	Family/visits	1	7	4
F	Food/kitchen related	0	1	2
G	Health related	1	1	3
H	Property	2	8	15
I	Sentence related	2	6	12
J	Staff/prisoner related	3	3	11
K	Transfers	0	3	6
L	Miscellaneous	6	14	15
	Total number of applications	17	51	75