

**HMP/YOI
NORTHALLERTON**

**ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD**

2012-2013

**1st March, 2012
to
28th February, 2013**

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.

Section 2

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section 1

The Statutory Role of the IMB

Section 2

Contents

Section 3

HMP/YOI Northallerton

Section 4

Executive Summary

Section 5

Diversity

Education

Healthcare and Mental Health

Safer Custody

Segregation

Section 6

Other Areas for Report:

Accommodation and cleanliness

Finance

Food

Incentives and earned privileges scheme

Preparation for release and resettlement

Section 7

The Work of the Independent Monitoring Board

Section 3

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 is linked in a mini system working with Hull, Everthorpe and Wolds so as to complement each others' work and increase local efficiencies and specialisations.

Northallerton's location is a town centre one. During the reporting year, the number of offenders in the establishment has been roughly 220, varying between 234 (September, 2012) and 219 (December 2012). Facilities at the prison include a small but well-equipped gym and a sports hall. The Hospitality Suite, Alby's, provides meals and snacks for officers and visitors to the prison.

As a community prison, the target is a North Yorkshire population of 66%; at the end of February, the proportion was 53%. Effective contact between the prison and offenders' homes becomes possible, as well as increased intervention to support a reduction in re-offending.

Snapshot surveys of ethnicity, nationality and age show that the prison population is 88-91% white, and in the last quarter (2012), 64% were under 30. (Statistics taken from a report to the Diversity and Equalities Team Meeting, 7.1.13.)

The establishment has an active ROTL (Release on Temporary Licence) scheme, with town visits and home leaves, and approximately 30 offenders employed outside the prison or involved in community work. Between April 2012 and February 2013, 40,497 hours were worked in the community.

Service providers

- **Education** is provided by Manchester City College
- **Healthcare** provision is by Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust, and Leeds and York Partnership Trust.
IDTS (Integrated Drug Treatment Scheme) runs successfully; and
CARATS (Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice and Throughcare Services) provide support as well as liaison with outside services.
- The **library** is provided by North Yorkshire County Council.
- **Resettlement services** are offered by:

Shelter: support with housing and homelessness, also debt and benefit advice.

The Resettlement department, together with Education, provides help with producing CVs and gives advice on jobs and training.

The prison has connections with a number of other charities and organisations working in the resettlement field, of which examples are:

St. Giles Trust: an employability programme led by West Yorkshire Probation aiming to improve prospects of work for offenders and ex-offenders.

Job Centre Plus deals with Fresh Start appointments, income support and benefit enquiries. The National Career Service works with offenders' career plans, as does Connexions with Young Offenders.

Section 4

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Board continues to be deeply impressed by the work at Northallerton, now going forward under a new Governor with the firm purpose of establishing its role as a community prison. As in previous reporting years, the Board feels that the work of management and staff, and their adaptability and resourcefulness on many different fronts, is Northallerton's greatest strength.

Indeed, this year, in a report to a full staff meeting (4.4.12), some six weeks after his arrival the Governor remarked: ' My overarching assessment of our performance ... is our staff-prisoner relationships and staff interpersonal skills are, in the main, second to none.' The Board continues to concur.

This reporting year, however, has seen a death in custody. The Board shares the deep distress of all offenders and staff, and offers totally uncritical support. The staff involved showed humanity and a high degree of professionalism.

[10.1, 11]

Nevertheless, the **successes and achievements** of the year are many, and responses to changes and needs well thought out and appropriate. The Board has noted many examples of respect for the needs and dignity of offenders of whatever age.

[1, 2.1, 5.1, 6, 6.1, 15, 17, 18, 19, 21, 23, 23.2]

Nevertheless, in keeping with its mandate, the Board must highlight for the Minister's attention a number of **concerns**. Inevitably, since Northallerton's elderly buildings in many ways defy modernisation, many of these concerns repeat those of foregoing reports. Shared cells containing lavatories are amongst these, and also accommodation in the segregation unit. The Governor's budget obviously poses financial constraints, though these have been constructively and positively handled.

[7, 8.1, 8.2, 10.1, 10.2, 11, 12, 14.1, 16, 19.2, 20, 23.1]

The Board is confident that Northallerton will continue its successful progress.

Section 5

DIVERSITY

1. In last year's report, the Board noted the humanity, respect and dignity evident at Northallerton. This confidence has continued throughout the current reporting year, and wavered only fleetingly when a report of a Diversity and Equalities Team Meeting (7.1.13) commented on the extent to which the prison's work is driven by systems and statistics. However, the Board does have confidence that at Northallerton the response is not to figures, but to people and their needs.

2. New this year

Improving communication with offenders is a work in progress:

- The Governor now runs monthly 'Listen to Improve' groups. A random group of offenders meet alone with the Governor to discuss a wide range of issues.
- Three new offender focus groups have been established. Work to improve the effectiveness of wing representatives continues: representation, which involves consultation with and feedback from peers, is not always fully understood or put into practice by offenders.
- A new Disability Disclosure Questionnaire works well, with offenders ready to declare disabilities such as reduced mobility, visual and hearing impairment, dyslexia, ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), mental health problems and consequent needs.
- A Diversity Questionnaire is to be trialled for a month. Collecting information about diversity - gender and sexuality issues - has proved much more problematic, with offenders reluctant at Induction to provide this information.
The Board is reassured that this information is only required so that appropriate support can be offered if difficulties arise. A written questionnaire also raises the issue of support which may be necessary for those with literacy problems.
- Contact points have been designated between departments and the Disability Liaison Officer, so that support and assistance with disability-related issues can be ensured.
- A ROTL equality impact assessment has been completed. Few BME (black, minority ethnic) offenders are eligible for and are awarded ROTL, but no fewer than the prison's small BME population would warrant.

2.1 The Board notes - and **applauds** - developments, sometimes small but nevertheless important, during the reporting year which represent an awareness of and, where possible, a response to individual needs. A number of examples chosen out of many include:

- PE for older offenders: the provision of an appropriate regime (not high energy) is appreciated. (It is not, however, possible to access the weights room except by stairs.)
- Residential: wherever possible the wings have complied with requests for older offenders' cells to be grouped together, so as to reduce disturbance from younger offenders at night time.

- Religion: two offenders gave their religion as Buddhist (December 2012), and the multi-faith team arranged for a Buddhist monk to visit on a monthly basis. A Sikh chaplain also visits twice a month.
- Library: copies of the 'Travellers' Times' are appreciated.

3. Consultation

Meetings monitored include:

- Diversity and Equalities Team
- Offender Diversity Team
- Wing Consultative Committees

4. DIRFs (Discrimination Incident Report Forms)

25 during the reporting year. Most involved perceived racism or use of racist language, and measures taken have included advice, guidance, warnings and the occasional IEP (Incentives and Earned Privileges scheme) downgrade.

Rigorous external scrutiny has been provided by an SNCO (Senior Non-Commissioned Officer) from the Royal Air Force, with clear and concise feedback.

Section 5

EDUCATION

5. This year has been one of consolidation after the prison's change of role of the past year. As offenders now frequently have Entry Level and Level One in several subjects, many more Level Two and Three courses are provided. The lower levels are still available, often taught in cell or in an embedded workshop context.

5.1 NVQ (National Vocational Qualifications), OCR examination board syllabuses, and City and Guilds courses are taught successfully in a variety of subjects. Business Administration is popular, with the in-house company Northallerton Business Solutions providing the prison with leaflets, posters and analysis reports.

6. Successful **new courses** this year include:

- Hospitality and Food Safety in the Hospitality Suite, Alby's, and also a barista training course
- Hairdressing
- Waste Management
- Mentoring: discussions are in hand to enable co-ordination with the Listeners' training course.

6.1 Other **changes** in hand:

- There are plans to develop an OLASS funded (Offender Learning and Skills Service) Maintenance Operations workshop next year, covering the repair and maintenance of ageing facilities. The project remains subject to financial constraints.
- The Virtual Campus is now running. At the moment this is staffed by the Education department, but prison staff are being trained so that provision can be increased to evenings and weekends, a development which the Board feels is particularly noteworthy.

6.2 Staff in the department describe the past year as more fulfilling than previous years, and to ensure that successful provision continues, there will be a curriculum review in April, involving prison staff as well as Manchester College.

7. The Board has great **praise** for the successful hospitality course, and the development of the Virtual Campus. Its main **concern** is that budget restrictions will prevent the continued expansion of the very successful Education and Training programmes.

Section 5

HEALTHCARE AND MENTAL HEALTH

8.1 This has been a challenging year for the prison healthcare team. A changing prison population, with a number of offenders now over 45, combined with the reorganisation of the National Health Service and tight budgets, led to serious pressure on staff. After some delay, additional finance and staffing have been provided, and a new healthcare action plan implemented.

8.2 Offenders' main preoccupations are access to a general practitioner and to dental sessions. The Board is confident, however, that provision is largely comparable to provision in the community:

The GP is available six days a week.

Increased funding has been provided for a limited number of extra sessions to reduce the length of the dental waiting list in the short term.

It is hoped to revive offender healthcare forums.

9. Measures in hand to meet changes in the prison population include:

- Budgeting for the rising costs of medical and dental care, prescriptions, escorts etc.
- Additional staff appointments made or being made.
- Provision of care/programmes appropriate to the new population (alcohol support, smoking cessation, monthly hepatitis 'C' clinics, weight management course etc).
- Extra staffing funded for the IDTS programme, which has faced a huge increase in demand, and has covered more than 75 offenders.

10. Issues faced during the year include:

10.1. A death in custody (see **Safer Custody, 11**). The offender had been transferred from HMP Hull in November, 2012. He had serious learning difficulties, and was awaiting an assessment from a community Mental Health Team to decide his needs on release in January. It seems that this assessment was not undertaken at HMP Hull, nor at Northallerton.

The Board noted the great support offered to the offender concerned by the staff at Northallerton, but believes strongly that prison cannot be an appropriate location for a person in his circumstances and with his needs.

10.2 The reception of offenders with outstanding medical conditions. Northallerton has continued to be sent offenders already receiving treatment elsewhere, either in the transferring prison or in a hospital. This poses obvious problems of continuity, and also places a strain on staffing at Northallerton because of the need to provide hospital escorts. Better recording of instances where offenders have been transferred with unresolved healthcare issues will be used to persuade transferring prisons to improve their procedures.

10.3 An outbreak of measles during January: this had considerable impact on the life of the prison. The Health Protection Agency was involved, and a phased programme of immunisation for staff and prisoners commissioned.

Again, the efforts of healthcare staff at this time were commendable.

Section 5

SAFER CUSTODY

11. Death in custody

Sadly, it is necessary to record a death in custody (28.12.12).

The IMB member on rota duty was promptly notified by the Governor, and IMB serious incident contingency plans were deployed. The IMB was very closely involved by the Governor in all the prison's subsequent work, in particular in a review of all the open ACCTS (Assessment Care in Custody Teamwork), and of the prison's support for these and other offenders thought to be vulnerable. Appropriate measures were also taken to offer support to the offender's family, as well as to offer counselling to staff who might seek it.

Both staff and offenders were deeply affected by the death. The Board's member on rota felt that the incident and its aftermath were extremely well handled by the Governor, and the conduct of the staff involved was outstanding.

At the time of compiling this report, the results of investigations by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman and North Yorkshire Police acting on behalf of the Coroner's Office are still awaited, so the Board is aware that further detailed comment is inappropriate.

12. Listeners

Currently (February, 2013), there is only one Listener, a figure below the national protocol negotiated between the Samaritans and NOMS (National Offender Management Service). Ten candidates have applied for interview and training, and hopefully this means that the scheme will not have to be suspended.

There are two Samaritan hand-held phones (one for each wing) which can be left in a cell overnight. In any case, offenders often prefer the confidentiality and anonymity of the Samaritans.

The Samaritans, however, were not immediately notified about the death in custody, so that the support they were able to provide was limited.

13. Vulnerable offenders

There were 36 ACCTs during the year ending December 2012 (43 in 2011, and 60 in 2010). ACCTs documents are regularly monitored by the IMB member on rota.

The IMB is impressed by the care and support available for vulnerable offenders. Healthcare offers 'time out' - time alone, a bath, talking therapy, acupuncture. The Multi-Faith Centre also offers valuable support, working both with individuals and groups, and can contact families if necessary.

14. Violence reduction

The reporting year has seen some increase of violence. In the early days of the re-role, numbers were low so that changes could be bedded in: now the main criteria for the community prison is that offenders should come from North Yorkshire, and occasionally issues between offenders from outside the prison re-surface inside.

However, staff have excellent relationships with offenders, and work constantly at violence reduction. (See **Segregation, 15.**)

14.1 Bullying continues to be a matter of some concern. This seems to be related to the increased opportunities ROTL provides to import drugs and mobile phones; the widespread use of tobacco also generates unpaid loans. (See 'zero tolerance' approach, **Segregation, 15.**)

Anti-bullying measures are stringent. Three weeks of active monitoring, with information forwarded to the violence reduction co-ordinator, may result in a 'bully basic' demotion.

Exit surveys are offered, though very few are completed (none between October and December). Those that are returned show that offenders feel 'safe' or 'very safe' at Northallerton.

Section 5

SEGREGATION

15. The Board continues to value the work of the Segregation staff in offering one-to-one relationships and support for the offenders in their care. Their skill in de-escalating violent or disruptive incidents is noted too. This is despite time restrictions due to the pressure of essential computer work, attending adjudications and reviews, and acting as escorts to Education as part of regime stipulations.

During the reporting year a 'zero tolerance' policy was introduced to counter the possession/use of illicit substances. Initially this meant that the Segregation staff's duties covered offenders both in Segregation and those serving cellular confinement on A wing. This situation has now eased, with A wing staff covering any such eventualities.

Healthcare, the Chaplaincy team and the duty Governor visit daily.

16. Great efforts have been made towards improving the appearance of the area and displaying information for its occupants. Inevitably, however, **concerns** about the dated fabric of the unit continue:

- The Perspex has been removed from the windows, but detritus still tends to accumulate between the window bars. Unit staff are very aware that cleaning must be kept up to date (minutes of an Adjudication Standardisation meeting, 11.12.12.), as the accumulated detritus may be a source of material to be used for self-harm.
- The unscreened lavatories are old, and stains difficult to remove without the use of bleach.
- Because of the age of the building, it is difficult to regulate the temperature, so that cells are cold in winter and hot in summer.

17. Regime: efforts have been made to ensure that time in the unit is reasonably profitably filled:

- Some individual regimes are planned, including escorted visits to Education, Resettlement and the Multi-Faith Centre. These are often part of a re-integration plan. Some education work is provided in-cell.
- The Library provides books, and jigsaws are available.
- There is some outdoor exercise equipment in the small exercise yard, and indoor equipment is available to be used in the two CCTV monitored cells and with supervision on the landing area.
- CARATS attend to work with relevant offenders.

18. Adjudications and reviews

Promoting a drug free environment is a key concern, with accompanying improvements in security to control the supply and demand of illicit substances.

Adjudications and reviews are taken on the due dates, and are attended by staff from Healthcare, the Chaplaincy, Segregation staff, and any staff offering relevant witness accounts. The process is always explained to the offender, who is given every opportunity to present a written or verbal account of the incident, and to call witnesses if he wishes. Decisions made are always fully explained.

The IMB is satisfied that these processes are handled professionally, and where necessary investigated thoroughly. The IMB attends regularly, and in the case of reviews, checks the paperwork if unable to attend.

Section 6

OTHER AREAS FOR REPORT

19. Accommodation and cleanliness

19.1 C wing: single cells used for Category C & D offenders, and Young Offenders preparing for ROTL. All cells are single occupancy and contain lavatories, with full length curtaining with viewing panels. The wing is currently being repainted by offenders from the works department and others.

All cells appear tidy and clean, as do the main corridors and communal areas.

19.2 A wing: most cells are double. Screening of lavatories on this wing is still a concern. The IMB has been assured that the curtains provided are Prison Service issue, but there are cells with curtains that stop well short of the floor, affording reduced privacy.

Again, most cells appear tidy and clean. One cell showed signs of needing re-plastering because of damage caused by the removal of posters. This is scheduled, and the practice of posters on walls has been stopped. Guard rails on top bunks are evident, although some are in the process of being replaced.

The general impression on the wings, and in offices, kitchen and gym, is of cleanliness. A rolling programme of maintenance and redecoration (often involving offenders) is in hand. Re-organisation in the wing offices has been carried out to improve working conditions and efficiency.

The perimeter is always tidy, and the flowerbeds outside the wall are a credit and are often commented on by passers-by.

20. Finance

The Board has a number of **concerns**:

- This is the eighth consecutive year that the establishment has reduced its budget and met the guidelines of financial constraint. It is a credit to the management that this has been achieved but inevitably there are implications in terms of regime. (See, for example, **Education, concerns, 7.**)
- Capital requisitions have been halted. This means, for instance, the modular building planned for the development of an income-generating workshop to bid for outside work cannot be purchased. Other plans for training and community projects may be jeopardised too.

A laundry is to be developed within the CES (Clothing Exchange Stores) department, and funding is available to invest in equipment.

- The Board still feels strongly about central purchasing, despite the Minister's detailed response to its report for 2011/2012:

It results in the procurement of goods which could be purchased more cheaply locally.

It means reduced local involvement, out of keeping in a developing community prison.

- Tender processing by the Works Department is lengthy, and often involves contracted suppliers sub-contracting, which may result in a higher cost overall.
- Some of the 2013/14 budgets have been standardised across the prison service and are not negotiable. This is despite the fact that establishments are very different in purpose and practice, and particularly in the type and age of their buildings.

21. Food

The Board **applauds** practical and constructive responses to requests and problems, despite tight budgets. Examples are:

- The kitchen has complied willingly when asked for healthy eating options, including a greater variety of salads and vegetables, and this meets with approval from all offenders. New salad boxes are 'a show stealer' (feedback from an offender diversity meeting, 21.11.12.). Religious and dietary needs are well covered.
- By request, weekend tea/breakfast packs have been supplemented with a piece of flapjack to fill the hungry gap in the evening.
- The prison is working on a business plan to develop its own bakery in the kitchen by July 2013, and hopes to reduce procurement costs by baking the establishment's own bread.

22. Incentives and Earned Privileges Schemes

The scheme faces some handicaps at Northallerton: the bonuses enhanced status can offer are few. In such a small establishment separate accommodation is not possible, and with recent wage rises of between 20% and 60% depending on the work undertaken (from 1.6.12), further rises are unlikely.

Possible alternative privileges for enhanced offenders are under consideration:

- Increased phone credits
- A small increase in allowances from wages to be spent on canteen
- An improved enhanced room, with microwave oven and sandwich toaster.

The scheme can be productively used as a disciplinary measure, and the Board has monitored adjudications when this has been the case.

23. Preparation for release and resettlement

Amongst a number of **successes** this year the Board notes:

- Partnerships the prison has developed with some fifty agencies and voluntary organisations in the community, as well as close liaison with HMP Hull, HMP Everthorpe and HMP Wolds.
- Regular Family Days, and good use made of the 'Storybook Dads' scheme provided in the library.
- A placement for a student from Darlington College, which provides appropriate play facilities for children in Visits, as well as a model of child care for fathers.
- Accommodation: 97% of offenders are released to settled accommodation. Importantly, also, since Shelter's work has been extended into financial and debt management, some £4K of offenders' debts have been written off in the past months. This gives offenders a greatly improved chance of managing their finances on release.

23.1 Concerns include:

- Work is only just beginning on an offenders' Restorative Justice programme, introducing initiatives such as victim empathy. Facilitators' training is now in hand.
- Reducing Re-offending Strategy Group meetings (quarterly) should provide an ideal opportunity for structured liaison. The Board has found, however, that these meetings are not always attended by relevant managers or their representatives, and this can mean that their value and effectiveness are reduced.

23.2 ROTL

Placements include those in the charity shops of Age UK and Sue Ryder Care, as well as the upkeep of local football and burial grounds. Offenders use public transport, though two have used their own bicycles. There has also been participation in a local Community Payback scheme with North Yorkshire Probation Service.

New projects include:

- Use of some local allotments to provide raw materials for the prison's Hospitality Suite.
- Development of a 'prison garden' to the north of the prison as part of a move to increase open space and wildlife areas within the town.

Paid employment:

- This presents problems because of the economic climate and local unemployment levels. However, three offenders are in paid employment, and sourced and arranged these jobs themselves.
- The use of the Virtual Campus is to be developed to support opportunities for release or ROTL.
- The ROTL programme is to be reviewed so that unsupervised applicants are able to visit Job Centre Plus.

The Board notes the **success** of the great majority of ROTL decisions and arrangements. Young Offenders, however, may need a more structured approach, with an initial programme of external work projects with greater supervision. This, of course, would have staffing implications.

Section 7

THE WORK OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

24. Applications

There has been an increase in applications since the re-role (90 in the reporting year): adult offenders seem to be more aware of possible interventions open to them.

The Board has spoken to all offenders who submitted applications, but in the event, many applications duplicated Complaints or Governor's Applications, and IMB action was dependent on the outcome of these. Other applications concerned matters in which the Board cannot be involved (sentence- or ROTL-related decisions, and transfer to other establishments, for instance).

25. Board Development

There have been a number of training sessions this year on the effects of the re-role:

- A Deputy Governor gave an overall view of the work in a community prison with more adults than young offenders.
- Shelter outlined how the change has affected their work on both offenders' housing needs and their finances.
- Security spoke about the work which could be achieved with offenders who are serving longer sentences, and the advantages continuity offers.
- Healthcare explained the increased problems they faced with conditions like diabetes and arthritis, which were rarely seen in the 18-21 age group.

Three members were involved in a live hostage training exercise.

We also had a visit from the IMB at HMP Everthorpe. We discussed how Northallerton's very old buildings affect our work, and compared the offenders we both now deal with.

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board Members	10
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	9
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	9
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	1
Number of members leaving within reporting period	1
Number of attendances at meetings other than Board meetings	58
Total number of visits to the prison (including all meetings)	382
Total number of applications received	90
Total number of segregation reviews held	60
Total number of segregation reviews attended	45

Applications

Code	Subject	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
A	Accommodation	4	1	3
B	Adjudications	1	2	3
C	Diversity related	1	0	3
D	Education/employment/training	2	4	3
E	Family/visits	7	4	2
F	Food/kitchen related	1	2	2
G	Health related	1	3	9
H	Property	8	15	10
I	Sentence related	6	12	24
J	Staff/prisoner related	3	11	6
K	Transfers	3	6	16
L	Miscellaneous	14	15	9
	Total number of applications	51	75	90