



Independent Monitoring Board

HMP Nottingham

Annual Report

To Her Majesty's Secretary of State at the Ministry of Justice

For the period

1st March 2011 to 28th February 2012

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1. Statutory Role of the IMB

The Prisons Act 1952 and the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 require every prison to be monitored by an Independent Board appointed by the Home Secretary from members of the community in which the prison 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.

2. Executive summary

2.1. Policy Matters for the attention of the Justice Minister

2.1.1. In common with other prisons, HMP Nottingham is overcrowded. This matter is beyond the control of the Prison, and mostly beyond the control of NOMS. (Section 12 refers). Of particular concern is the amount of time prisoners with serious mental health problems sometimes spend at the prison before a more suitable location is found.

2.1.2. Whilst organisation strategy is a political matter that the Board would not wish to comment upon, the Minister may wish to be aware of the impact on staff morale of the many aspects of employment which are causing concern at the present time. (Sections 4.1 refers)

2.1.3 Prisoners complain about the very low amounts of money they can earn, and the Board agrees that fairer remuneration would be appropriate.

2.2. Policy matters for the attention of the National Offender Management Service, (NOMS.)

2.2.1. Young offenders sent to HMP Nottingham after sentencing are not always moved to YOI's within seven days as we were told would be the case. (Section 4.1).

2.2.2. The arrangements for transporting prisoners to HMP Nottingham from Court frequently mean they arrive late into the evening (Section 11 refers).

2.2.3. The prisoner number system used by some private prisons is different from the P.NOMIS ID system and causes difficulty tracking prisoners (Section 13 refers).

2.2.4 Differences in permitted items from facilities lists at different prisons (typically of the same category) cause confusion and issues with prisoners (Section 13).

2.2.5. We suggest the holding of a central spare facility for the making of ID cards to overcome the considerable inconvenience that has been experienced at HMP Nottingham when a singular facility failed on several occasions.

2.3. Operational matters

2.3.1. Both Faith Awareness training (Section 5.1) and Mental Health training (Section 7.3) for some officers is awaited.

2.3.2 Attendance at education is very low which means that valuable resources are being wasted (Section 6.3 refers).

2.3.3 The nature of work opportunities continues to be uninspiring. (Section 6.4 refers).

2.3.4. The dining out arrangements on F Wing are commended and the Board hopes they can be extended to other wings (Section 12 refers).

2.3.5 The practice of prisoners leaving property at HMP Nottingham when attending Court is a source of difficulty when they are then taken to another establishment. This could be dealt with either by ensuring that all property is taken or by putting in place procedures to ensure that it follows relocated prisoners (Section 13).

3. Matters raised in the 2010 to 2011 Annual Report

3.1. The Board appreciates the replies received from:
Crispin Blunt MP, Minister for Justice;
Doctor Peter Selby, President of the Independent Monitoring Board National Council;
The National Offender Management Service (NOMS).

The opportunity to join the visit of the Minister and members of NOMS and to discuss aspects of life at HMP Nottingham was appreciated.

3.2. The Board makes the following observations in relation to the responses received:-

With regards to the general issue of overcrowding and the various policies and practices which contribute to the overall situation there has been little if any change during the current year; indeed, the civil unrest in August led to a worsening of the situation for a lengthy part of the reporting period. The Board raises these issues again in this report because they impact on the wellbeing of prisoners and their experience of custody. Location away from home, property lost during transfer and the slow workings of the system can lead to personal frustration and anger and feature heavily as reasons for applications made to us.

Difficulties between the Prison and Lincoln College have continued to feature during this reporting period (Section 6 below) and attendance at classes has been disappointing. Similarly, in spite of efforts by the prison to broaden the work options available in the prison, progress in this area is slow; it has to be recognized that the general economic climate at the present time makes this aspect of prison management especially challenging.

4. Description of the Prison

4.1. The Community Prison. Throughout the reporting period the prison has operated at or near capacity of 1060 adult prisoners and remanded young offenders; young prisoners are accommodated throughout the prison rather than being concentrated together, although young offenders do not normally share cells with other adults. Convicted young offenders are often sent to HMP Nottingham from the courts with the intention that they should be moved on to more suitable establishments but pressures within the overall system have meant that this has sometimes taken more than the 7 days we were advised would be the protocol when the prison was expanded. Concentration of young offenders on wings has been a focus for prison management at various times throughout the year and disruption on B wing in particular has sometimes been attributed to this group. As the year progressed, this issue seemed to be under better control.

The designation as a community prison means that prisoners sentenced in Nottingham and Derby with short sentences, 12 months or less, stay in the prison until released directly back into their local communities. One of the less desirable outcomes of this strategy is the increased scope for issues in the community to migrate into the prison and cause disruption. The Board commends the efforts of the prison management in proactively monitoring external information sources in order to be pre-warned of potential issues, which has been a special focus since the importance of the issue was demonstrated by a serious assault on the exercise yard, rooted in prisoners obtaining information about another offender from outside the prison.

In theory, prisoners dispersed elsewhere in the country will return to HMP Nottingham for the remaining three months of their sentence prior to release; the Board has no access to information which would enable us to verify the extent to which this goal is achieved - presumably the local probation services would be able to assess this. Regardless of objectives, the prison is part of the wider estate and vulnerable to the same pressures as other establishments. This was evident in August 2011 when the civil unrest created not only local pressures but dispersal from HMP Pentonville. Prisoners housed a long way from home frequently contact us seeking assistance with transfers; typically there is little we can do other than ensure they are advised of the situation. Some such prisoners are detainees held under UKBA warrants but deemed unsuitable for IRCs, and they are a group who are more than averagely agitated by their situation. Whilst numbers of IPP Category B prisoners are lower than in the past, a few do continue to be located at Nottingham which has no suitable provision for their progress towards parole.

Reorganisation of support functions has been a feature of prison life throughout the year as the 'Operation Greyhound' initiative has sought to streamline activities to improve both cost and operational effectiveness. At the end of the period, moves were in hand to merge the Offender Management Unit and the Custody Office.

The prison has many dedicated and effective staff and it is highly regrettable that the stresses of working in a prison are presently exacerbated by worry about personal future. Issues regarding market testing, pay freezes and pension changes are mentioned to us frequently and cannot be expected to enhance performance. However, we do observe many instances of interaction with prisoners which evidences basic human respect in a way that preserves dignity in very difficult situations. We wish to mention in particular the Separation and Care Unit staff who often have to deal with mentally ill prisoners and do an excellent job (Section 12 below) and staff in Reception who have been observed demonstrating empathy with the position of newly imprisoned men.

4.2. Outside agencies. The management and rehabilitation of prisoners depends on the effectiveness of partnerships with specialist agencies and providers of services. Whilst there is much to commend this strategy, it is not without its difficulties. In addition to the services

provided inside the prison - Healthcare (Section 7), Education (Section 6), and Visits (Section 14) which the Board generally has no difficulty monitoring, it is becoming evident that many other agencies impact upon the lives of prisoners. Where more than one party is involved in any activity it can be difficult to determine where responsibilities lie and as it is a factor of 21st century life that every agency manages to targets, there is a risk of those targets conflicting. The difficulties experienced by Reception (Section 11) are partly the result of the size of the establishment but also result from the way the transport of prisoners from courts is managed. These external agencies are more difficult for us to monitor as we have no face to face contact. It was particularly pleasing that both local city councils responded to our correspondence concerning the risk of homelessness amongst discharged prisoners (Section 20) and we will be adopting a more pro-active approach in future when we think an agency may either be unaware of a problem or where we believe our perspective may inform decision-making with a positive impact for prisoners.

Areas Which Must Be Reported

5. Diversity.

5.1. Race Equality. During the year, 72 % of the prison population was White British, 24 % was from a BME background and 4% not stated. Analysing the BME population: 6% are from Asian backgrounds, and 8% of Black heritage, 4% of dual heritage and 4% were from other white backgrounds.

New DIRF (Discrimination Incident Report forms) were introduced in June 2011 and therefore comparisons with previous years cannot be accurately made. Overall there has been a 61% reduction in the number of race complaints. The majority of these are complaints of prisoners against staff on grounds of race. After investigation, only one complaint has been upheld and resulted in disciplinary action.

The Board note that the proposed faith awareness training for staff has not taken place yet and hope the training will be implemented soon.

5.2. Disability. Approximately 20% of prisoners self-report disabilities. The majority are associated with mental health issues and learning difficulties. Peer support groups have been set up for older prisoners and prisoners with disabilities. An Equality Action team has met regularly, chaired by the Governor. In future this will be a regular agenda item at SMT (Senior Management Team) meetings.

5.3. Foreign Nationals. Approximately 10% of the prison population are of foreign origin. There are currently 13 “out of sentence” prisoners. The prison is in constant contact with UKBA regarding deportations but delays to deportation are a recurrent source of discontent and have been implicated in some of the serious incidents during the year. Following an attack on a member of staff during a routine meeting, risk analysis is being undertaken to improve safety for all. Foreign language reading materials are accessed through the Library. Approximately £600 of foreign calls are made each month, and translation and interpretation services have been available through Big Word.

6. Learning and Skills:

6.1. OLASS Provider. Learning and Skills have continued to be provided by Lincoln College and, regrettably, many of the concerns raised in previous reports about the relationship between the college and the prison have continued to be an issue. However, stable management at local level and good relations between the OLASS Manager and the Head of Learning and Skills have been effective in securing substantial improvements in learner outcomes.

The College continues to impose a recruitment freeze meaning that the service is heavily dependent on sessional staff and high levels of absenteeism suggest low morale. However, sessional staff are well qualified and tend to be a fairly stable group helping to mitigate the situation to some extent. During the year all providers became aware that the entire contract for prison learning and skills provision was to be retendered and the outcome of this was evident as the reporting period ended. The Board has some concerns about provision from Milton Keynes College which is even further away than Lincoln and wonders how realistic the focus on the needs of the local employment market will be in practice. There is also the perennial concern that the long period of uncertainty during tendering, followed by several months of preparation and then the actual change in provider creates a very lengthy period of instability - well over a year.

6.2. Provision. This year has seen some embedding of the range of new qualifications introduced after the expansion of the prison two years ago. There has been a focus on short,

intensive, qualification focussed courses and in consequence the total number of qualifications awarded will approach 3000 in the 2011/2 financial year representing a doubling in attainment on the previous year. Qualification in, for example, catering, building trades, personal training and events stewarding help to improve employability.

The media studio was commissioned during the year and interfaces the broadcasting of prison radio across the establishment. The virtual campus has been commissioned but the process was very slow and was hampered by delays in staff training; more recently it has been non-functional again because of staff absence.

6.3. Attendance. Whilst our own and the provider's evidence continue to indicate that prisoners generally like the provision, engagement on programmes is still an issue with classes often below capacity. Overall allocation of places rests at around 65% and of those allocated up to a third do not attend; this means that around two thirds of available education is not taken up on a daily basis. Route delays have been a particular problem during the year for all regime activities and prisoner visits, legal appointments and health appointments all have an impact on attendance as do prisoners who just absent themselves; towards the end of the reporting period it was apparent that this problem had largely been resolved. A further issue relates to out of cell opportunities provided by partner agencies and some prison departments which are not integrated into the regimes timetable and therefore sometimes compete with rather than complement the provision. The prison has been attempting to improve attendance at all regime activities throughout the year and there have been some improvements, with further promising changes due to come on-stream at the end of the reporting period. It is a matter of concern that every time we visit wings we can find men in their cell, often asleep or watching daytime television when opportunities for out of cell activities are available and we hope that the coming year will see some improvement in this situation. It has been suggested by prisoners and also by staff that the rates of remuneration for all activities and especially for education (which has the lowest rates) are unreasonably low and we agree with this view.

6.4. Workshops. Eight workshops are available, 3 are used for education for vocational training, the remaining 5 industrial workshops are used for related functions that include packing prison breakfast packs, producing prison issue tee shirts, sheeting and towels, producing briquettes from prison recycled paper, producing garden planters from reclaimed pallets and recycling dry Nottingham prison waste. New initiatives include sign writing, local council refurbishment of park benches and a partnership scheme with groundwork projects again with the local council. All prisoners are encouraged to attain a work related qualification and there has been an increased number of passes compared to previous years, this despite many prisoners with learning difficulties. Prisoners can earn £11 per week, dependent upon various targets set by the management. The 5 industrial workshops have a capacity of 260 with 160 (61%) registered. VP prisoners have their own workshop with a capacity of 60, but sessions are poorly attended with an average of 24. The workshops have a budget of 13 staff; however they have 2 vacancies and 4 long-term sick. Prisoners are targeted to work a 30 hour week but the board often finds prisoners in the workshops with no work to do playing games to occupy their time.

The board has criticised the mundane and uninspiring work in the Industrial workshops in previous annual reports and this continues to be a concern.

7. Health Care Provision

7.1. New Contract. Experience of the new contract for healthcare has been generally positive. Quarterly meetings are held by the Health Partnership Board for HMP Nottingham; IMB generally attends these meetings and difficulties in the relationship between IMB and Healthcare are largely resolved. The healthcare provider has changed its name to Integrated

Health and is working towards an integrated pathway for mental health and substance misuse. Staffing levels in healthcare are good at the time of this report with only 3 general nurse and 2 healthcare assistant vacancies.

7.2. Appointments. DNA (did not attend) appointments remain an issue with the highest being 400 missed appointments in one month. It has been proposed, but not yet implemented, that healthcare staff responsible for prisoner appointments check P-NOMIS to avoid appointments clashing with prison visits. A working party was established to try and address the wider issues around DNA healthcare appointments, and plans were in preparation towards the end of the reporting period for improvements to the procedures.

Prisoners sometimes have an unrealistic expectation of the time it takes to receive a healthcare appointment. The healthcare manager is exploring ways of being able to inform prisoners of expected length of time between a request and appointment. At the present no member of the healthcare team is involved in giving this type of information in the prisoner induction programme nor are there posters in the holding cells or on the wings. This is part of the wider issue of prisoner frustration arising from having no facility to personally influence or enquire about issues significant to the individual which are often the subject of applications to IMB.

There remains an issue surrounding the access of VPs (vulnerable prisoners) to specialist appointments. Specialists are willing to hold lunch time clinics for these prisoners and at the end of the reporting period plans were being made to implement new procedures in April. General Practitioners hold early morning sessions in the healthcare clinic. General Nurses hold clinics on the VP wing with the mental health nurses seeing prisoners on the wing by prearranged appointment.

There is always pressure on the dental health provision at the prison because of the poor dental health of many prisoners. Dental waiting lists are now under control with all prisoners with dental health needs being triaged by the dental nurse. All urgent cases are usually seen within 3 days by the dentist with pain relief prescribed in the intervening period.

A podiatrist and optician also hold regular clinics at the prison.

7.3. Mental Health Training. Monthly mental health training given by a qualified Mental Health Nurse with a teaching qualification can be accessed by Uniformed Staff. All Officers from the Segregation and Reassessment Unit (SARU) and as many other uniformed officers as possible are given training in mental health. It is proposed to implement more in-depth mental health training for some uniformed staff on each wing because of the prevalence of prisoners suffering from mental illness.

8. Safer Custody

8.1. Suicide and Self Harm Prevention. During the last year there has been a decline in the prison population of acts of self harm particularly in the last quarter of the year. However, there has been an increase in the number of young offenders self-harming. Young offenders do not use the Listener Scheme as much as other prisoners. Listeners are part of the induction process and are present in the first night centre. There are 8 listeners working in the prison and the Samaritans are currently recruiting more prisoners for the next training course.

8.2. Violence Reduction. Incidents of assaults prisoner on prisoner have not increased significantly during the last year. Of concern to the prison are gang related issues in the community that have transferred to the prison. Security manages the numbers of gang

members on each wing and their vigilance generally enables the wing staff to keep control of potential trouble.

Incidents of assault on staff at HMP Nottingham between March 2011 and January have resulted in 35 members of staff sustaining injury; thirty four were male, one female. Three were injured in one incident in the SARU, two were injured in separate incidents in SARU and the other assaults were on the wings, workshops, reception and education. It is important to recognise that other injuries to staff occur in the course of their duties when they are involved in control and restraint incidents.

At the time of the incidents, the proportions of prisoners that were convicted or on remand were roughly 50:50. Weapons were used in eleven of the incidents. Where no weapon was used, strikes were made with fist or arm. There were two incidences of biting and a head injury where the officer's helmet was ripped off by a prisoner. Some of the assaults on staff resulted in very serious injury, stays in hospital and time away from work. Prison Officers were extremely unhappy about the assaults and the matter was reported by the national media. They were agitated further by a perception that incidents inside the prison were taken less seriously by the Crown Prosecution Service than similar events in the community. The Governor has now sought and received an assurance from the CPS that this is not the case. The Board thinks it is extremely important that staff received support in these circumstances, both on an individual basis and in the context of a robust system for dealing with offenders; if this is not the case and officers confidence in the system is undermined, it will impact on prisoners by restricting the small amount of self determination they have and increasing the amount of time in cell. It is to the credit of the prison management that this area has been given a very high profile in recent months and the situation seems to have improved.

9. Segregation and Reassessment Unit.

9.1. Use of the Unit. The Unit continues to be busy. It has never been empty and has averaged 8 occupants of the 14 beds at any one time. Several particularly challenging prisoners have been accommodated for significant periods of time. (See 9.3 below).

9.2. Developments. A number of improvements have been introduced including weekly periods of gym and in-cell education if appropriate; risk-assessed shared exercise periods, cell safety boxes for the storage of medication and smoking materials, a new improved system for managing prisoners' property during moves to and from the Unit and discharge reports so that upon transfer back to the wings information about time in the Unit can be shared with wing staff.

9.3. Cell improvements. Partly because of a spate of prisoner damage (from the particularly challenging prisoners referred to at 9.1 above), partly because the cells are 'tired' and prone to damage, there is a need to refurbish the cells in order to render them less vulnerable to damage. A bid for the requisite funding has been submitted.

Other Areas on Which the Board Wishes to Report.

10. Staffing.

10.1. General Issues. It is still the case that the ethnic profile of the staff does not reflect that of the prisoner community.

Uncertainty about the future structure of the prison service and issues around terms and conditions have undermined morale throughout the reporting period. The matter was further exacerbated by the assaults on staff and nine serious incidents causing the command suite to be opened between October and the end of February. During incidents, all of which were videoed by the prison, staff were observed dealing with difficult situations in an effective manner.

The IMB was pleased to be represented at the ceremony in January to award officers and managers with long and meritorious service certificates; the longest service recognised was 42 years.

10.2. Health and Safety. Regular Health & Safety meetings are held and issues are taken very seriously at the prison; constant monitoring is required to ensure that the policies are embedded throughout the establishment and that staff have the time to practice safe systems of work and fill in the appropriate accident forms etc. Levels of staffing have meant that staff are sometimes unable to attend planned training sessions. Staff have been encouraged to have vaccinations for Hep A/B and should sign a declaration if they wish to opt out. Staff voiced concern that when prisoners were transferred from the SARU at other establishments they did not automatically go to the SARU in Nottingham which meant that wing staff are initially dealing with a prisoner without a risk assessment. Towards the end of the reporting period, procedures to improve information for wing staff about risk when dealing with a new prisoner were being piloted.

10.3. Governors. In a large prison some mobility of management is inevitable and no doubt desirable. Fortunately, the reporting period was a time of relative stability with most senior staff remaining in post. However the changes to the arrangements for Grade 7 trainee Governors has meant most of those who were progressing through the process reverting to uniformed service and the Board is aware of uncertainty over the number of managers at Grade 7 allocated to the prison under the 'Fair and Sustainable ' provisions. This will be yet another source of uncertainty during the coming year.

11. Reception.

Reception at Nottingham is busy and delays in the evening, which causes prisoners to arrive well after 8pm, cause difficulties throughout the system. Healthcare must ensure proper screening and the first night centre on C Wing has to be staffed to manage late arrivals. Sometimes it is 11pm before vulnerable new prisoners can be settled. Most of the delays are attributable to the working of the new transport from court contract; no doubt the contractor is arranging the schedule to minimise cost but if this leads to high additional cost at the prison it is a false economy and the impact on prisoners needs to be given priority.

12. Overcrowding.

Every year the Board draws attention to the many and various reasons and effects of overcrowding. There are still prisoners spending very long periods on remand and sometimes then being released to the care of Probation or acquitted and some cases are discontinued. There also are still Category B prisoners on IPP sentences in HMP

Nottingham unable to complete courses which would lead to their consideration for release and a high number of prisoners continue to be recalled for breaches of licence.

Prisoners with mental health disorders continue to be placed at HMP Nottingham which has no proper provision for them and sometimes has no choice but to keep them in the SARU until their mental health disorder is assessed. The work done by SARU staff with these prisoners is commendable.

In spite of overcrowding, the prison does try to improve the custody experience for prisoners. The most notable recent example of this has been the arrangements for communal dining on F Wing which accommodates vulnerable prisoners. The Board hopes it will prove possible to extend this facility to other wings, but does not underestimate the challenges, not least the fact that the wings are not designed with large communal areas.

13. Prisoners Property

The practice of prisoners leaving their property at the prison when they go to court has caused problems and a considerable amount of work when they do not return to HMP Nottingham or are released. Whilst the Board can see the attraction of not transporting large quantities of personal effects around the local area, the procedure needs to be able to respond quickly to resolve problems when the unpredictable happens. On several occasions this year problems have been referred to us by IMBs at other establishments, and whilst we are pleased to assist with resolving the issues and grateful for the efficient assistance of some staff at Nottingham when the issue is raised, we would suggest that they should not need to be referred to us at all. The matter is made hugely more complicated by prisoners moving to private prisons where different prisoner numbers are used. One set of identification numbers for the entire estate would make life easier for everyone. Additionally problems with property frequently occur due to the differing Facilities Lists between establishments meaning that transferring prisoners can be denied items at prison A that were approved at prison B, resulting in storage and lost/mislaid property issues.

14. Visits

With two visits halls being available, there is generally no shortage of space for visitors. A long standing problem with an inaccurate voice recording of information relating to the opening of the visits booking line has now been resolved. Plans are in place for visits booking to be undertaken in the near future by PACT (Prisoner Advice and Care Trust), which should enhance the visitors' experience.

PACT continues to make a valuable contribution to the well being of visitors by the amount of information available in the Visitors' Centre and the face to face help provided with both specific and generic problems. Telephone calls seeking help and guidance have continued to increase during the year indicating PACT's positive influence in assisting friends and families with their issues.

It is essential that a consistency of approach by all staff responsible for visitors accessing the prison is maintained as this has caused several issues during the year relating to acceptable ID, requirements for babies, acceptable dress, etc.

The monthly 'Family Days' continue to be a success but unfortunately the aim of extending these to twice monthly has not materialized.

15. Chaplaincy

It has been a very successful year celebrating the major faith festivals - Easter, Christmas, Ramadan and Eid, which have all been well resourced, advertised and attended. Observances of Ramadan fast were facilitated with the use of food flasks which enable food to be kept warm for the night. The National Prison Fellowship initiative Angel Tree was used by 60 prisoners to send out 100 presents to their children. At Ramadan a local Muslim Organisation presented to the prison chaplaincy a prayer cap, perfume, prayer beads, a book on Ramadan and a CD on spirituality was given to each Muslim prisoner fasting during Ramadan. The numbers of prisoners attending faith education has increased throughout the year giving real encouragement to the Chaplaincy team.

After a serious incident at a service in the chapel, it was decided that prisoners may only sign up for worship at services within the faith recorded on their P-NOMIS record. Any prisoner who wants to convert to or find out more about a different religion must first apply to see the relevant Chaplain to discuss the situation in more detail. This seems to be having the desired results of less prisoner disruption, allowing those who genuinely want to be there the opportunity to worship.

However, there have been issues around prisoners being able to sign up for services or denied access on grounds that there are too few places available which has proved untrue when investigated. The Chaplaincy team has worked hard to address both these situations and governors have been supportive, but with varying degrees of success. There still remain occasions where fewer numbers attend services than indicated on sign up lists. This is sometimes due to prisoners changing their minds but also to prisoners not being unlocked and taken to the services. This has happened both for Muslim prayers though more often for Sunday services.

At present the prison chaplaincy team have no administrative support and this is impacting on the time the staff have available for face to face contact with prisoners and could lead to the detriment of prisoner's spiritual and emotional needs.

16. Prison Council meetings

Wing and full prison council meetings were introduced in this reporting year and are still being developed. Monthly wing council meetings give the elected wing prisoners the opportunity to bring wing issues and concerns to the Governor, typically these can be food quality, mail, hygiene. Full prison council meetings are held monthly and act as a representative body for the whole estate of the prison arrangements that affect prisoners.

The Board attends full council meetings and some wing council meetings and appreciates the culture change of involving prisoners to enhance the quality of life within the establishment; we look forward to this initiative having full support from all areas of HMP Nottingham.

17. Car Parking

Car parking for visitors is inadequate and a perpetual problem for the many visitors for whom public transport is not a suitable option, such as parents with young children, disabilities and visitors who have to travel some distance.

18. Mentoring

A Futures Unlocked Community Chaplain has been appointed and will take up the post once security checked. The initial funding is for a 7 month period but it is hope that once

established there will be continued funding for this project enabling more prisoners to have a mentor prior to and after release from prison.

19. Restorative Justice

Following a successful pilot project, the prison launched its REBUILD restorative justice project. Staff have been specially trained as facilitators and the project will focus on acquisitive crime. The Board commends this initiative as a contribution to the rehabilitation of offenders and will monitor its impact and success.

20. Housing

Whilst the prison has consistently exceeded its indicator (88%) for those leaving custody having somewhere to live, the Board remains concerned about the relatively small number of prisoners who leave without a home. The prison works closely with Local Authorities in this area and the Board became particularly concerned towards the end of 2011 that public spending cuts were having an impact on hostel places and the risk of newly released prisoners sleeping rough was increasing. We wrote to both Nottingham and Derby City Councils about our concerns and have been very pleased to receive responses from both which acknowledge the vulnerability of ex offenders who are homeless and the potential impact on community safety; it was especially helpful that one of the councils was able to identify some communications weaknesses in the process of securing housing for newly released ex-offenders and this in turn has been reflected in further discussions between prison and council officers. We will continue to monitor the situation.

21. ID Cards

A problem arose towards the end of the period when the machine which produces identity cards broke down. Inevitably this was not predictable and quite a lot of prisoners came into the establishment without ID. From the prisoners' point of view, the most significant problem was the inability to access gym sessions and we received many complaints; healthcare advised that the absence of ID had the potential to create risks over medication errors. Governors and Reception staff worked very hard to rectify the problem using temporary measures and, when the machine was mended, to clear the backlog; their efforts were hampered by the fact that the machine then failed several times more leading to repeats of the problem. A new backup machine has been purchased. It seems very unlikely that this is the only time the prison estate has experienced such difficulties and wonder whether a reserve facility could not be held centrally for deployment in similar situations.

22. Work of the Board.

22.1. Composition of the Board:

Full complement	20
Number at start of reporting period	13
Number leaving during reporting period	1
Number of new members during reporting period	3
Number at end of reporting period	15

Individual members of the Board have worked well and each contributed their skills to make an effective and harmonious team. The Board has benefitted tremendously from the support of a dedicated and very efficient clerk and also appreciates the occasional help of his colleagues. All 12 Board meetings during the reporting year have been attended by either the Governor or Deputy Governor.

22.2. Duties

The Board has continued to monitor the prison through a weekly rota visit; members also visit to attend Reviews in the SARU, deal with Applications and monitor the work of the prison through attending a wide range of meetings. The Board appreciates the positive attitude of the Governor and wider management team to its work. The organisation of our work continues to evolve; taking a flexible approach has allowed us to cover all responsibilities in spite of fluctuating membership. The total number of visits made by members cannot be reported because the documentation has been lost during two office moves.

A visit to Dovegate Prison was informative about scope for better prisoner work opportunities. Several members have completed National Courses and in addition some members have attended control and restraint training sessions at the prison. Members of the prison staff and sometimes representatives of partner organisations attend our board meetings and provide a much appreciated source of training.

The number of serious incidents over the winter months stretched our procedures and resources but we attended all but one incident when the command suite was open; on that one occasion the incident was resolved before we could attend. On every occasion our attendance was welcomed by the Silver Command and time was taken to brief us.

22.3. Applications:

2006	357
2007	352
2008	254
2009	257
2010	444
2011	482

The increase in 2011 when compared to 2010 has to be set against the fact that the prison did not reach full capacity until July 2010; we do not have any concerns about the level of applications, although coping with an average of 12 per week - and unpredictable peaks of over 20 has challenged our resources and organisation and we are continuing to adapt our schedules. Significant numbers (over 20, representing about 5%) of applications related to the following categories;

Healthcare	30
Mail	20
Warnings	22
Property	58
Staff issues	21
Requests to see a specialist	28
Custody	21
Transfers/ wing relocation	40
Visits	38
Work	35