



# **INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD**

**HER MAJESTY'S PRISON & YOUNG OFFENDER INSTITUTION  
HOLME HOUSE**

**STOCKTON-ON-TEES**

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

**2016**

**(1 January to 31 December 2016)**



## **Section 1**

### **Statutory Role of the Independent Monitoring Board**

- 1.1. The Prison Act 1952 and the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 require every prison and IRC to be monitored by an independent Board appointed by the Secretary of State from members of the community in which the Prison or centre is situated.
- 1.2. The Board is specifically charged to:
  - a. 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.
  - b. Inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority as it judges appropriate, any concern it has.
  - c. **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.**
- 1.3. 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.



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## Section 3

### Description of the Prison

1. Holme House is a purpose built Category B local prison holding both adult male prisoners [ 21 and over] who are either remanded in custody or convicted and a small number of young offenders [18 – 21]. However, the highest percentage of prisoners are Category C prisoners plus a very small number of Category D prisoners.
2. The operational capacity [OP CAP] has mainly stayed at 1210 in 2016. The population has fluctuated from a low of 1157 in July to 1207 in December but for six months the population has been over 1200.
3. Services within the prison are provided by the following organisations:
  - Education, Learning and Skills: **Novus**
  - Healthcare: **G4S** covering nursing and support admin services, **Spectrum** covering GP and Pharmacy, **Burgess and Hyder** covering dentistry, **Tees, Esk and Wear Valley** [TEWV] covering Mental Health and **Lifeline** covering non clinical substance misuse.
  - **Durham Tees Valley Community Rehabilitation Company** [DTVCRC] providing Through the Gate [TTG] covering housing, debt management and benefits.
  - Visitors Centre and Family Support: **North East Prisons After Care Service** [NEPACS]
  - Works and Stores : **Amey**
4. The main voluntary provider of services is :
  - Training of Listeners: **Samaritans**
5. The prison consists of seven house blocks including one for Vulnerable Prisoners [VPs]. There are 14 Industrial Workshops offering 288 placements, 7 vocational workshops run by Novus offering 54 placement and various mainly full time educational courses offering 134 places. There are approximately 200 other employment opportunities for prisoners. Holme House has an In Patients facility with 15 beds and a Palliative Care Suite with 2 beds. The latter is also used by other North East prisons. There is also a large gym.
6. On the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2016 Holme House officially gained the status of a Reform prison with an Executive Governor in charges of both Holme House and Kirklevington Grange Reform Prisons. Plans are in place to become a Cat C training prison in 2017. It was announced in December that Holme House will receive £9M over the next three years. This investment is to enable prisoners to be drug free in prison and on release.

## Section 4 Executive Summary

### 4.1 Overall Summary

1. On the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2016 Holme House officially gained the status of a Reform Prison with an Executive Governor in place. This was preceded by six weeks of consultation across staff, prisoner and stakeholder groups. The main concerns raised were safety issues, drug misuse [particularly PS – Psychoactive Substances - eg spice], the need to develop purposeful work opportunities, prisoner decency, stores and kit problems, violence reduction, the environment of the Visitors' Centre / Visits Hall and the poor service provided by some contracts. The Governor and Executive Governor took initial steps to solve some of these issues. Plans are in place to reduce or resolve others but there is a time delay which both staff and prisoners find frustrating. However in 2017 many of these changes will hopefully take place.
2. In the second half of 2016 the IMB noticed an increasing number of troublesome, manipulative, dangerous prisoners who were very demanding in terms of staff time which affected staff morale and staff and prisoner safety. In the last 3 – 4 months of 2016 this was compounded by the arrival of 40+ prisoners from trouble hit prisons. This type of prisoner often has other issues. Some of these prisoners end up in SEG and are difficult to transfer to other prisons. Some end up in Healthcare and take up beds needed by other prisoners. The atmosphere and “feel” of the prison has changed in a negative way for both staff and prisoners and has implications for so many aspects of prison life. **Various examples of this are outlined in sections 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7 and 5.8.**
3. Staff morale has deteriorated. We are “just coping” and “fire fighting” are comments made to us by officers. They often feel frustrated because they do not have continuity of care with prisoners as they are often detailed to work in other areas of the prison. They feel that they have lost ownership of their roles. Increased levels of violence, poor staffing levels due to staff sickness and the increasing challenges presented by the current prisoner population add to the difficulty of their role. This impacts on the quality of interventions with prisoners. However the IMB welcomes the introduction of the Five Minute Intervention [FMI] training which will be rolled out to officers at the beginning of 2017 and the prospect of extra staffing. **Examples of this are outlined in sections 5.3, 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7.**
4. The high prison population within the context of the numbers of challenging prisoners and staff shortages is a great concern. High risk prisoners sometimes have to be placed on house blocks or wings which are not suitable for them and their presence is intimidating for other prisoners. It creates immense pressure on staff and resources in SEG and Healthcare. It also greatly reduces the ability of the prison to move or isolate certain groups or individuals, which has a direct effect on incidents of violence, bullying and prisoner wellbeing. **Examples of this are outlined in sections 5.3, 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7.**
5. Incidents of violence towards officers and among prisoners have increased in 2016. The data collected by the prison shows a decrease in stability and safety for prisoners. The prison has put measures in place to monitor and reduce this but the added complications of increased drug use, particularly PS, the increased number of prisoners on ACCTs [Assessment, Care in Custody Teamwork] and staff shortages all compound the volatile situation. The IMB recognises the ongoing, excellent work of the Safer Custody Team and their plans to counter this problem in 2017. **Examples of this are outlined in detail in section 5.3 and 5.6.**

6. The impact of Benchmarking is still evident in 2016. Staff shortages impact directly on the health, safety and wellbeing of prisoners on many levels. Regimes have been delivered appropriately with the staff available on the day but more staff are needed. It is hoped that current staffing levels will improve as the new profiles are introduced and new staff are appointed in 2017. The IMB recognises the pressures felt by front line staff and has seen many examples of how effectively they work as a team when there is a serious incident. Many officers are resilient and adaptable and work in the best interests of the prisoners. **Examples of this are outlined in sections 5.2, 5.3,5.5, 5.7 and 5.8.**
7. The new leadership quickly realised that poor communication channels in the prison was an issue which needed to be addressed. Prisoners feel that there is no handover between officers from one shift to another so officers are not aware of issues which have arisen. Officers are not unlocking prisoners because they have not been told to do so. Staff are sometimes not aware of changes in regime or procedure. The Executive Governor has set up an Internal Communication and Staff Engagement Project to improve communication on all levels. The work started at the end of 2016 and the IMB hopes that the project delivers improvements in 2017.
8. Healthcare services are a major concern for the IMB and prisoners – 13.9% of the applications in 2016 were health related. The IMB has concerns about staffing levels, waiting times for primary care appointments, the ability of the providers to meet the needs of prisoners, the ability of the prison to escort prisoners to outside appointments and the blocking of in - patient beds by prisoners with mental health problems. The healthcare complaints system is not transparent or consistent across the providers. **Examples of this are outlined in section 5.3.**
9. The kit situation has improved over the year but there are still signs of shortages and poor quality which impact negatively on the decency of prisoners. The IMB is aware of the efforts made in the second half of 2016 to remedy the situation and of the plans to move towards a 'decent cell' for all prisoners. The IMB will continue to monitor the situation in 2017. **Examples of this are outlined in section 5.8.**
10. The IMB would also like to record the positive achievements during 2016.
  - The support provided by the new Governor and Executive Governor in enabling the Residence Governor to buy much needed items to improve the fabric of the cells.
  - The extra staff which have been employed since the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2016.
  - The move to develop better links with local employers and businesses.
  - The planning and preparation for the introduction of in-cell technology.

## Particular Issues Requiring A Response

### 4.2 From the Governor

Issues identified by the Board in rota reports are raised in a monthly report to the Governor who provides both verbal and written responses in consultation with his SMT [Senior Management Team]. Specific questions are asked and responses provided which are discussed during the board meeting. The Board greatly appreciates these responses. Hence there are few issues in this report which require a response from the Governor.

The main issues outstanding where action is currently in hand are:

- To continue to implement the Decency Charter
- To improve the fabric of the house blocks and the Visits' Hall

- To improve communication channels
- To improve the complaints system
- To provide laundry access for all house blocks
- To improve the safety and stability of the prison
- To improve the management of attendance at work and education

#### 4.3 From the Executive Governor

1. The Board is very concerned about the ability of some external contracts to deliver a good quality service. This is particularly evident in the various healthcare providers and Amey which covers Stores and Works. The frustration is that it is very difficult to clarify the detail of the contract and therefore how to enforce accountability. The IMB appreciates that it is an “inherited” situation but we would urge the Executive Governor to take these concerns into consideration when contracts are due for renewal or bring forward the termination of these contracts.
2. Staffing levels in 2016 are an area of concern. The IMB would welcome any attempt to increase the numbers of front line officers and admin staff.
3. Prisoners with serious mental health issues who require a bed in a secure mental health unit have to wait too long for a transfer. This puts pressure on staff in Health Care and SEG who do not have the time, knowledge or skills to deal appropriately with these prisoners. We would urge the Executive Governor to raise this issue with the relevant authorities at both a local and national level.

#### **Previous Year’s Concerns:**

1. We asked questions of the Minister about the more autonomous role promised to governors and two questions about service delivery contracts. Responsibility for these areas has now moved to the Governor, Executive Governor and the Executive Board since the change in status of Holme House. The IMB welcomes this change and is much more positive now about the future management of the prison than we were at the beginning of 2016.
2. The IMB was concerned about the effects of NPS [New Psychoactive Substances] year and we were told that the North East has a NPS Strategy for 2016 and that literature would be produced to support staff dealing with NPS issues. This is an ongoing and growing problem but the funding over the next three years to create a drug free prison is a very welcome development for prisoners and staff.
3. We were concerned about the lack of support for prisons in dealing with mental health issues. The response from NOMS was disappointing. We have not seen any evidence that “the number of qualified staff within Holme House in-reach team is adequate to meet the needs of prisoners within HMP Holme House”. The evidence shows that mental health is a major issue linked to in patient bed occupancy, drug taking and aggressive and violent behaviour towards other prisoner and officers.
4. Staffing levels were a continuing concern in 2015 and were specifically mentioned in the Executive Summary and in the Safer Custody section. In late 2016 the Justice Secretary announced funding for new officers – 20 more officers for Holme House. This is extremely

welcome but throughout 2016 we have repeatedly seen the results of inadequate staffing levels which compromise prisoner and staff safety and the quality of prisoners' health and wellbeing.

The IMB is grateful to the Governor, his Senior Management Team and the staff for their openness, accessibility and support during the reporting year which has been a year of many changes and challenges.

## **Section 5**

### **5.1 Equality and Inclusion**

1. HM Holme House Prison demonstrates that, in the main, it values and respects the protected criteria, as defined in the Equality Act 2010 and ensures that all prisoners' diverse needs are met. The prison has a Safety and Equality Action Plan, which is reviewed monthly by the Safer Prisons Meeting. This meeting is attended by the IMB.

2. The population of the prison with a disability requiring social care averages 58 of which about 28 at any one time require a PEEP (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan) 78 prisoners requiring reasonable adjustments making to enable them to live a normal life as a prisoner. The prison has made some improvements to enable wheel chair users to move around by moving the VPs, with the biggest number of wheel chair users, to a newer wing that is provided with a lift. The prison does a good job in assisting people with disabilities.

3. To assist disabled prisoners Equality Champions are trained and present on each house block to assist where necessary. The Local Authority carries out its duty by providing adaptations in personal care when required. The IMB attends regular meetings with the Equality Champions and is impressed by their commitment.

4. Holme House has a multi-faith Chaplaincy which provides services to all prisoners, and accommodates every faith. On arrival at the prison prisoners are given details about the chaplaincy and all of the faiths which are accommodated. Any faith that does not have a resident or visiting clergy will be enabled by the team. The Chaplaincy holds regular services and classes.

5. The prison excels in its provision of faith related dietary needs and again this year Ramadan and Eid were very well catered for following consultation with prisoners.

6. When the Safer Custody Team has been contacted by the IMB they have responded quickly to our concerns.

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

1. The provision at Holme House is delivered by NOVUS (which is the offender learning arm of The Manchester College TMC) under the fifth year of the Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) 4 contract. The mission for NOVUS is to improve lives and economic success through learning and skills.

2. When prisoners first arrive at Holme House their English and maths skills are assessed by NOVUS staff, unless they have a previous score less than six months old. They are given attainment scores using the nationally recognised parameters. These scores are used by the Career Service (operated by the *National Careers Service*) when giving advice and guidance to prisoners as to their future work and training options.
3. A comprehensive Learning, Skills and Employment prospectus is given to all prisoners on induction listing all the options for work and education available at Holme House. There are qualifications provided. The scope of the courses and work based training on offer in the Prison is chosen using the latest local labour market information gathered from a wide range of partner organisations. The virtual campus computer system runs “live” job searches and has employability information for end of sentence prisoners.
4. There were 4077 educational modules started during the 2015-2016 academic year with a success rate of 98% (6% increase on 2014-15). So far for 2016-17 there have been 1361 starts with a success rate of 91% for programmes completed to date, forecast success rate for 2016-17 is 98%. The content of each module is designed to be transferable so the training can continue at another prison or at local community colleges on release. There are 90 full-time education places and over 114 part-time places in mornings and afternoons, these take place within the Education department as well as in-work training at the relevant workshops.
5. The effort to ensure functional skills are embedded in the workshops has continued. Embedded delivery of Functional Skills English and maths is provided in the prison Industries and Horticulture as well as Novus Bistro and Bistro Kitchen, Construction programmes (Bricklaying, Fitted Interiors, Renewable Energy, Painting & Decorating) and Barbering. The Business Enterprise Centre is now fully operational and provides opportunities for up to 30 learners to gain practical work experience in a range of business administration, enterprise, customer service and IT tasks for customers, whilst studying towards industry recognised qualifications. Learners in the Business Enterprise Centre also work with a Functional Skills Tutor to develop their English and maths skills. Novus is working closely with local partner organisations to assist them with the delivery of their programmes gained through grant funding. Novus has funded a Project Lead on a 6 month seconded basis to develop and foster links with local partners to design and deliver creative programmes.

## The Library

1. Stockton on Tees Borough Council provides the funding for library provision at HMP Holme House. The library is warm and welcoming with a large range of books and knowledgeable staff. There is no provision on Saturdays but the library stays open on Mondays and Wednesdays for full time working prisoners.
2. Whilst the fall in numbers seen after staffing changes in 2012-2013 has still not yet been fully reversed (even though the library is open on the two evenings mentioned above) numbers have increased significantly in 2016. The strategy of arranging visits during education classes has resulted in a much improved attendance with numbers of fifty or so coming to the library for each session. Whilst there are still some question marks regarding the use of ‘education time’ to visit the library instead of what would have been general association time there is no doubting the increase in usage.
3. The provision for full time workers on Monday and Wednesday evenings also seems to be settling into a routine. However all too often visits are often cancelled due to staff absence and short notice staff redeployment as well as a variety of regime problems
4. Prison Information Workers’ role has led to a halving of the numbers of books lost. Library study sessions introduced this year have been popular with learners using the library for personal study including distance learning and practice for driving theory & CSCS tests.

The Shannon Trust Reading Plan is working well with a number of peer mentor/learner pairs.

### **5.3 Healthcare and Mental Health**

The contracted healthcare providers are G4S [primary healthcare], Spectrum [doctors and pharmacy], Burgess and Hyder [dentist], Lifeline [non clinical DART] and Tees, Esk Valley and Wear TEVW and Rethink [Mental health]. Within HMP Holme House providers are monitored by two forums which meet monthly to consider the delivery of services. These are the Local Delivery Board, chaired by the No.1 Governor and the Health Improvement Meeting. Healthcare is provided for all prisoners, with medical assessment provided within 24 hours of reception into the prison.

#### **G4S Primary Care and Spectrum**

1. The healthcare team, under the leadership of the healthcare manager, continues to deliver a high standard of care, despite being beset across the year, by significant clinical vacancies. Staff sickness, maternity leave and recruitment have proved problematic for most of the year with an average of 12 vacancies out of a complement of approx. 30 staff. This has led to the frequent use of Bank and Agency staff.
2. Prisoners are now able to use house block telephones to make healthcare appointments. This system is working well. The average wait for a prisoner to see the GP is around 5 weeks at the end of 2016. This suggests to the Board that it is far quicker to see the GP in the community.
3. Prisoners in reception, who have prescriptions previously supplied by outside GPs are checked by the prison doctor. The outside GP is consulted and the prescription is adjusted, where necessary. This results in a high number of complaints to healthcare, mainly about prescription medication being changed to more generic drugs or failing to automatically receive the drug of choice. Another common complaint is the inability to make a timely appointment with one of the healthcare providers.
4. Staffing, within the prison, has created problems with escorts; although the prison has done a considerable amount of work on this. Sometimes house blocks are 'closed down' to facilitate the release of officers to accompany prisoners for their appointments, but frequently, appointments have to be cancelled by the prison because of staffing issues. The appointments are monitored by a spreadsheet for these emergency visits, which because of the urgency, is looked at daily by the Head of Healthcare and Senior Staff.
5. Outside hospital appointments have proved problematic in 2016. Local hospitals are unable to appreciate the position of the prison and have seemingly lost trust with the prison's difficulties. The Commissioner is involved in attempting to intervene in this matter.
6. Seventeen beds are available for in-patient care, two of which are for palliative care. In 2016, the unit has been overwhelmed by prisoners with Mental Health and Social Care problems. The Commissioner for Health and Justice in the North East Region, is committed to putting plans in place to effect a smooth and rapid transfer from prison to secure mental health hospitals for those patients with severe mental health problems. However, this report will allude more to this matter under the Mental Health section.
7. House block 3 moved to House block 7 in November, enabling wheelchair users better access to facilities. The prison is linked with Stockton Borough Council who conduct

frequent assessments with those prisoners deemed to have needs in this and other social care areas.

8. There is a two week waiting list to see the optician. In 2016 a smoke free steering group committee was formed to plan the prison for a smoke free regime. This meeting continues and plans are progressing well. Prisoners are offered smoking cessation classes by the Pharmacy department. Prisoners are very appreciative of this service.

### Burgess and Hyder

1. The wait for dental appointments has given cause for concern this year. At one point prisoners were waiting 14 weeks for a first appointment, which was totally unsatisfactory, but with the intervention of the Number1 Governor, this was urgently addressed by the contractor, and extra staff were put in place to reduce waiting times. At the end of the year, the waiting list for first appointments was 9 weeks, with ongoing appointments, 8 weeks. The Board suggests that this does not compare favourably with community dental care.

### Mental Health

1. Mental Health care has been efficient and effective throughout 2016. Staff have a good working relationship with the prison and wider community. Self referral is available to all prisoners; and anyone within the prison, can refer a prisoner to the service. There is a total of 11 staff within Holme House, consisting of Primary practitioners, who deal with patients with anxiety and depression ( Rethink staff) and Secondary practitioners who deal with more severe mental health issues, such as Psychosis and Higher Risk prisoners.
2. Visiting Psychiatrists are available three times a week; MIND offers 4 counselling sessions per week and a Learning Disability nurse and Consultant are available. All services deal with a complexity of issues.
3. Practitioner caseloads are approx. 20+.Weekend cover is available on Saturday, Sunday and Bank holidays, between the hours of 8-4. Out of hours cover is on an 'on call' basis.
4. Psychoactive substances have made a big impact on the service and work in this area is ongoing.
5. This report alluded to the mental health impact on 'In Patient' care. Many beds for physical patients are 'bed blocked' by mental health patients needing urgent high security beds in Mental Health hospitals. At the end of the year, 3 patients have been accepted for beds in Nottingham, Sheffield and Manchester, but unfortunately a 'dead man's shoes' situation means that none is currently available. Two more patients are awaiting assessment. The Board feel that this is a serious problem which needs to be urgently addressed nationally.
6. The Board would like to congratulate the Holme House Mental Health Team. In the National Prison Quality Network, the team were judged to be joint first. This is an achievement of which to be very proud.

## Drug and Alcohol Reduction [DART]

1. When a prisoner enters the prison he is seen within 24 hours by the DART team and is offered the opportunity to work with them. In 2016 550 prisoners accepted this offer. The aim of the course, which lasts for approximately 12 months, is to encourage prisoners to change their way of thinking and become motivated to give up methadone entirely. There is significant involvement of 'Senior Residents' ie prisoners who have completed the programme, in the courses. A prisoner may decide to embark on a rapid reduction process whereby their daily methadone intake is reduced by 5mil per day on a weekly basis until they reach 40mil per day. Those prisoners who successfully reduce their methadone intake down to 40 mil per day become eligible for transfer to the Therapeutic Unit where they will be helped to reduce to zero and then sustain it at zero.
2. In the Drug Reduction Wing prisoners work in groups of a maximum of 10. The aim is to run 6 courses per year. Each course runs for 10 weeks followed by a 2 week sustain period to show that the prisoner can continue at a zero methadone level. On successful completion the prisoner then moves to the other wing of the House Block which is the Therapeutic wing where they are under a less restricted and controlled environment. The two groups in December started with 20 prisoners, 3 dropped out early. Of the remaining 17, 4 have already reduced to zero and maintained it for 2 weeks and moved to the other wing. It is anticipated 12 of the remaining 13 will also complete successfully.
3. Due to overall pressure of numbers in the prison an increasing number of prisoners who have no desire to give up drugs are being housed on the wing. This is having a detrimental effect on the wings original function ie to encourage prisoners to come off drugs.

The IMB welcomes the funding announced at the end of the year to make Holme House a Drug Recovery prison.

2. In 2016, a smoke free steering group committee was formed to plan the prison for a smoke free regime. This meeting continues and plans are progressing well. Prisoners are offered smoking cessation classes by the Pharmacy department. Prisoners are very appreciative of this service.

## **5.4 Purposeful Activity**

1. The Board continues to monitor the drive to increase the range and value of work related time for prisoners. The re-designation of Holme House means the area of purposeful supports the endeavours of the Minister and the Prison Service in developing the opportunities for full time work particularly where such opportunity relates to work which results in an end product going to an outside customer. In the view of the Board, this promotes the acquisition of new skills and pride in the exercise of those skills. It enables prisoners to work overtime and earn extra moneys and, most importantly, it ensures that prisoners appreciate the importance of punctual delivery of quality products thus linking "prison work" with the standards required on release.
2. The achievements of 2016 have built on the previous development of purposeful activity. Both instructors and prisoners have met the challenges of the work required of them during the course of the year with great skill. The Board would like to compliment all those involved. During the year 430 prisoners have been placed in employment and 153 have enrolled on vocational qualifications linked to their area of work.

3. All industries workplaces now have a document called “distance travelled” that records the men’s progress whilst in the workshop .This included skills learnt, equipment tools used etc. but also documents softer skills such as communicating with others and conduct, time keeping and attitude. Hopefully this will be a source of evidence to enable the men to gain employment upon release

#### Kitchens

4. The kitchens have continued to work effectively providing breakfast and two main meals a day [which offer a hot option] often to over 1200 prisoners. There is a varied menu and the needs of minorities, including vegetarians and prisoners on special diets, are properly addressed. The kitchens have also provided quality food for special occasions such as Christmas Day and Ramadan.
5. The Kitchens provide a range of qualifications including NVQs, Food Hygiene and Health and Safety. Prisoners can also gain expertise in specialist areas eg bakery.
6. The Board is particularly pleased to note that the Food Forum meetings continue to be productive. Meetings are usually chaired by a governor and the contributions of the prisoners have been, in the main, positive and helpful. The kitchens have appreciated this input and have done what it could to meet the suggestions. A member of the IMB always attends these meetings.

For more information please refer to Section 5.7 Residential Services

#### The Bistro.

1. This remains a valuable facility and training tool. Those involved with The Bistro are to be congratulated on the quality of service offered.

#### Woodwork Joinery & CNC and Soft Furnishing workshops.

2. During 2016, the workshops have worked on contracts for customers both within and outside the Prison Estate. One large contract for AEB was challenging but very successful and has led to a second contract. The wood working shops is now a major supplier of white wood furniture to the prison service
3. Towards the end of the year the workshops started a sizeable repeat contract for another outside customer. This is a reflection of what a group of prisoners can do when presented with a suitable challenge. The Board would like to congratulate both trainers and prisoners (not forgetting Prison Industries who negotiated the contract) on a very good year. The prison has now sourced a couple of local manufacturers who are wanting to put work into Holme House and would look at employing the men upon release. Unfortunately, it has still been impossible to institute a training course in computer design technology.

### Laundry

4. The laundry continues to work well although problems of ensuring that adequate supplies of clean kit are available at the right time and place within the Prison have continued throughout the year. The situation continues to be monitored.
5. At the end of 2016 the laundry was only working on one small contract for an outside customer. The main external customer was able to take his work in 'house' again following completion of repairs to the customer's own laundry. Working to the exacting standards required by external clients is valuable.

### Canteen workshop.

6. This workshop continues to operate under the aegis of DHL and currently puts up the canteen for seven establishments. The prisoners working in the workshop and the staff who manage are to be congratulated on the high quality of the work that they do which is exacting requiring a high degree of concentration. This is reflected in the relatively small number of applications received by the Board on the subject.

### Clothing workshop.

7. The workshop continues to supply the Prison with small items of clothing and towels. The work is done well and efficiently.

### Upholstery

8. The upholstery workshop employs up to 10 men who repair a variety of items from pool tables to office furniture chairs and gym benches. They also manufacture and upholster headboards for large hotel chains

### Gardens.

9. The high standard of grounds within the Prison is testament to the dedication of instructor and prisoners alike. The prisoners speak of the plants they cultivate and their work with genuine enthusiasm.

The IMB commends the Workshop Manager and his team who have provided a range of work based experiences for prisoners and the IMB looks forward to future developments in 2017.

## **5.5 Resettlement**

1. There are some excellent examples of how the different Pathways to Reducing Reoffending have contributed to reducing the risk of reoffending. Within the Family Pathway NEPACs continues to build personal links with families and to facilitate their ability to visit and connect with family members. The Governor in charge of Reoffending

recognises that the links with prison staff could be improved and has plans to do this in 2017.

2. Within the Drugs Pathway there has been an extended transition period at the beginning of 2016 due to Lifelines taking over the contract. However, after initial staffing and management issues this has settled down. Towards the end of 2016 some methadone users were in employment. These prisoners were carefully risk assessed, including their level of commitment, and given a two week induction and assessment period. This roll out started at the end of the year and this will be accelerated throughout 2017 in line with the new status of Holme House as a Cat C training prison to offer full employment opportunities.
3. The Employment Pathway has produced increased opportunities to offer meaningful employment and skill training. New contracts with for example AEB and Nifco have been won. There has been a rise in production, quality and output – recognised and rewarded by a new 2 year contract from AEB. Instructors have experienced a cultural change with the emphasis more on linking soft skills to Distance Learning. The IMB welcomes these changes and the increased importance of employment in the future. The Governor now wants to focus on accessing employment opportunities for prisoners on release.
4. Within the Education pathway progress has been slower. However, a more effective management team has been developed which has addressed some of the problems eg getting prisoners from the house blocks to their lessons on time. Efficiency targets have been hit by staff meetings and regime changes in the last quarter with cancellations up from 1.5% to a high of 12% in November. However, class cancellations eg due to staff shortages have been reduced. A weakness in this pathway is the speed of job allocations by the Activity Management Unit [AMU] in the last quarter due to shortages of trained staff. A Distance Learning Centre is planned for 2017.
5. Good progress has been made in the Housing Pathway. Please refer to the CRC [Community Rehabilitation Company] section paragraph 2. The CRC is committed to finding accommodation and there has been an increase in the quality and quantity of accommodation provided in 2016. There are plans to build on this in 2017, for example, by introducing Good Tenant Programmes for prisoners in 2017.
6. The Programmes Pathway is covered in the section below.

### **Engagement Centre**

1. Each day a named officer on house block 1 is detailed to be responsible for new prisoner arrivals. They interview the prisoner in Reception then accommodate them on HB 1 but there is no longer a designated first night wing. The full initial induction takes place on the houseblock by a prisoner mentor and then prisoners are moved as soon as possible onto other house blocks. There is a fast track induction process for prisoners who are recently familiar with Holme House involving the Prisoner Information Worker [PIW] on houseblock 1.
2. The second induction takes place in the Engagement Centre, delivered by the National Careers Service [NCS], Student Support Workers from Novus, Learning and Skills staff and two peer mentors. It was recognised early in 2016 that the system needed to be modified. As a result of feedback from the Prison Health Check, the Head of the Northern Cluster of Learning and Skills, Novus and prisoners it was decided to add more sessions to smaller groups [maximum of 8]. In a more informal setting prisoners could speak to staff

and prisoner representatives from the work and learning areas. If prisoners are unsure about the learning and skills opportunities they can return the next week.

3. New prisoners attend the EC for a minimum of two visits depending on their needs and their prior knowledge of Home House. The TTG [Through The Gate] team is also available if needed. Recently there have been a high number of refusals compounded by staff shortages in the Activity Management Unit [AMU] and regime changes and close downs. The IMB is however pleased to see that the backlog has been greatly reduced by December 2016.

### **Durham Tees Valley Community Rehabilitation Company [DTVCRC]**

1. The team has been fully staffed in 2016 and includes DTVCRC, Thirteen, The Wise Group and NEPACS who work as a fully integrated team. The Through The Gate [TTG] Manager regularly attends the bi monthly RIGG and Partnership Meetings and also key staff meet regularly with the Governor responsible for Reoffending and with the Governor and Executive Governor. The Manager also has regular conversations with the Governor responsible for Offender Management Unit [OMU]. There has been an ongoing improvement in communications between the TTG team and Offender Supervisors in 2016.
2. All prisoners are seen on arrival and in September and October 100% of prisoners were seen within 5 days and the Basic Custody Screening Tool completed. This exceeds the targets set, which have already been increased for 2016. All prisoners are contacted within 12 weeks of their release and if requested will be seen during the sentence, often signposting them to support within the prison or the TTG supply chain. 97% of prisoners respond positively to this contact and 90% of referrals to Thirteen and The Wise Group are found accommodation on release.
3. All staff are encouraged to research data and the information available so that their support meets the needs of the individual. In one instance a member of the team had suspicions about a prisoner being a domestic violence perpetrator even though there was no evidence on the system. Investigations were made and this was in fact the case and obviously has implications for accommodation and access to the family. Sharing information is vital and the TTG team share information using CNOMIS, OAYSIS within Holme House and NDelius within the community. This explains part the success of the team.
4. The TTG team has continued to develop good local contacts. In order to support prisoners from outside the local area the team has developed good links with Newcastle, Sunderland and Cumbria but it is more difficult to support those who come from other parts of the country.
5. During 2016 the TTG team was nationally recognised by NOMS as providing a well established TTG provision. It has also won a local NEPACS award. In October 2016 a HMIP inspection took place. The initial verbal feedback was that the team works as one, uses the skills of the staff to provide a seamless service and was praised for its good sharing of information, good communication with prisoners.

### **Offender Management Unit [OMU]**

1. 2016 has again been a challenging year for OMU but the number of applications from prisoners has decreased from 14.7% in 2015 11.2% in 2016. The main challenge has been

staffing. The Governor in charge of OMU does not feel that OMU is adequately resourced by the Probation Service. On the 1<sup>st</sup> December out of an allocation of six there were three in post with only an increase of one expected in the immediate future. The Band 4 Offender Supervisors [OS] within OMU continue to have a primary or secondary role and this allows primary officers to have a larger share of the prisoner workload. However, these officers are often detailed, sometimes at short notice, to other areas of the prison and the use of Payment Plus [PP] has not been consistently available to cope with the workload. For example, in May 906 hours were lost due to the redeployment of Band 4 officers and sickness. This was half of the hours which OMU should have been detailed. From this month onwards the backlog of OASys increased regularly each month until the end of 2016.

2. The workload of OMU has increased. The transition of Holme House becoming a Cat C training prison has been an additional layer of work for OMU with the difficulties of moving Cat B prisoners. The high prison population, the transfer of prisoners from Bedford, Nottingham, Lewes and Moorland and prisoners arriving with no current Oasys or Basic Custody Screening Assessment completed have all contributed to an increased workload.
3. However the Governor in OMU has made changes to counter some of the frustrations both staff and prisoners feel when the system seems slow to respond. The Governor regularly receives letters directly from prisoners and she responds to their queries and complaints herself. She has also increased staff in OCA [Offender, Classification and Allocations] from one to two admin staff and one of her managers now has responsibility for OCA. She is trying to improve the HDC [Home Detention Curfew] process by initially asking for more information from prisoners to give staff more options when dealing with releases. She is very aware that OMU needs to change their working practices and she wants to move to a team approach to case management in 2017.
4. The IMB welcomes the plans for the future and the higher profile given to OCA. However we are very aware of the implications of not having sufficient staffing levels and the frustrations felt by prisoners, for example, when they do not have regular contact with their Offender Supervisor or feel that their transfer request is being ignored.

#### Offender Management System [OASys]

1. 2016 has seen a steady increase in the backlog of OASys from 72 in January to 220 in December. The reasons for this are sickness, the lack of staff due to their dual role as well as the consistency in staffing and in November the transfer of prisoners from trouble hit prisons. Each OASys takes approximately 10 -12 hours to complete and short term periods of Payment plus over the last few months has not allowed enough time to reduce the back log . The Governor is limited in the action she can take but in November she allocated all indeterminate prisoners cases to the seconded probation staff who work within the OMU department to relieve some of the pressure on offender supervisors. The 2015 report made the same observations and although the lack of progress is disappointing the IMB understands that the solution is more appropriate staffing levels and consistency of staffing.

#### Observation, Classification and Allocations [OCA]

OCA has continued to sustain a high workload in 2016. Routine reviews are conducted on time with an increase in requests for re categorisation from B to C - due to Re role pending and C to D due to the improved process between Holme House and Kirklevington. The latter has electronic access to Holme House's Nomis , Oasys and Mercury and come and interview everyone put forward on a weekly basis.

#### Home Detention Curfew. [HDC]

In an effort to speed up the process of HDC applications OMU now asks for more information from prisoners at the beginning of the process. The wording of all communications with the prisoners has been clarified, two addresses are now required and, in the event that the accommodation is not suitable then they are asked if they are would like to be considered for BASS accommodation. This should speed the process up for decision making in the future. The majority of delays are around unsuitable addresses provided

### **Offender Behaviour Programmes[OBP]**

1. The OBPs offered are Self Change Programme [SCP], Healthy Relationships Programme [HRP], Healthy Sex Programme [HSP] and Resolve which are all accessed by prisoners from other prisons. In addition there is a Thinking Skills Programme [TSP]. Prisoners do think that these programmes are helpful. They help in in sentence progression eg evidence of reducing the risk they pose to the public. They help prisoners to manage their custody in being able to cope with difficult situations and they help in violence reduction by enabling prisoners to find alternative ways of reacting. One to one post programme reviews are carried out by the Programmes Team and the Offender Supervisors or Offender Managers and minutes are taken by a team member. Thus is a robust method of gathering evidence.
2. The team has improved the quality of the selection process this year by using one to one interviews where possible, psychology assessments and data collection including PNOMIS case notes. The team has full confidence in the accredited programmes on offer.
3. The team is fully staffed and uses staff from a range of backgrounds eg it has two Band 4 specialist officers and 3 seconded Probation Officers who deliver programmes. However the manager is aware of the need to have more staff to deliver more programmes.

The IMB welcomes the changes in the prisoner induction process as it focuses more on the individual needs of the prisoner. Great efforts have been made this year to encourage more employers to visit the prison eg on the 3rd November 73 guests, including local employers and agencies from both Holme House and Kirklevington Grange attended an Employment Day. There was a display of quality products from the Industries' Workshops with staff on hand to discuss the products and the opportunity of future contracts for services or goods.

The bimonthly RRIg meetings do encourage the Pathway partners to share information, ideas and future plans. However, this good practice is hindered by the fact that not all Pathway Leaders attend. It is hoped that this will be improved in 2017 when the format of the meeting will change to create two separate meetings following feedback from internal reviews.

Feedback and the achievement of targets shows that the TTG team is working efficiently and effectively to improve supports for prisoners. The IMB welcomes this and hopes that plans to use the Prince Bishops Community Bank in 2017 will enable more prisoners to leave with a bank account and enable those with debts to use their wages in prison to pay off debts in the community. In 2016 159 prisoners opened bank accounts mainly with the Halifax but the Prince Bishops Community Bank offers a better service for prisoners with debts in the community.

The OAYSys backlog does have consequences for reducing reoffending. Every OBP uses OAYSys to assess the needs and suitability of prisoners for the OBPs. Too often prisoners have to

wait for a place. Some prisoners do not access a programme because the delays mean they cannot complete the programme before their release. The IMB is well aware that Programmes staff and Offender Supervisors and Offender Managers do not have joint training and planning because of time pressures. However, it hopes to see some improvement in 2017.

In our view there are many staff working extremely hard to reduce reoffending and there have been many examples of joint approaches and mutual support. The IMB welcomes this and is optimistic about progress in 2017.s

## 5.6 SAFER CUSTODY

1. 2016 has been an extremely challenging year for Holme House Prison given the exponential increase in violent incidents and acts of self-harm demonstrated by statistics below giving comparative figures for 2015/16. This situation largely mirrors the national picture.
2. A great deal of effort has gone into the analysis of statistical data to determine reasons behind these increases and the Violence Diagnostic Tool (VDT) has been key in this coupled with discussions with prisoners and staff, culminating in a full day workshop in November.
3. As a consequence a number of factors were identified some of which are listed below together with ongoing actions.
  - Increase in access to and use of psychoactive substances (PS): **Introduction of tests for these drugs within mandatory drug tests (MDT); increased vigilance and checks at Visits, in correspondence etc.; stiffer sanctions and penalties; greater emphasis on cell checks.**
  - Lack of CCTV coverage leading to blind spots where assaults could be made: **Enhanced CCTV coverage across prison.**
  - 80/20 effect: A relatively small number of prisoners causing a disproportionate amount of trouble through bullying, intimidation and assaults: **Weekly identification of most violent and troublesome prisoners by Security and Custodial Managers. Regular distribution and movement of these prisoners within the prison to mitigate their impact**
  - Transfer in of out of area prisoners, especially those from prisons where indiscipline had occurred, conspiring with each other to create incidents: **Distribution across house blocks where possible to stop gangs forming/ conspiracies. Proforma introduced at Reception to gather information about transferees so that prison is aware of exactly who they are dealing with and can locate and manage accordingly.**
  - Frustration with a lack of access to some basic facilities such as clean kit and bedding, doubling up in cells intended for single use, limitations on food quality and choices due to problems with kitchen equipment, regular curtailment of regime due to staff shortages: **A number of actions put in place reflected in other sections of the report.**
  - Lack of continuity of officers on house blocks and fewer officers with the time to get to know and engage with prisoners in their charge thereby negating awareness of problems before they occur: **New profiles and groupings to be introduced in early 2017 together with training in 5 minute interventions (FMI) will hopefully counter this in part together with the recruitment of more officers and OSGs.**

- Failure to follow laid down procedures around searching, cell fabric checks and safe unlocking: **Reissue of guidance and instructions on these procedures coupled with more robust management checks**
- The number of prisoners with mental health problems for who prison is not the appropriate place: **Action outside the control of the prison but working cooperatively with Commissioner for Offender Health in the region to find ways of dealing with the problem**
- Problems from the outside being brought into prison. Passing on of debts within the prison: **This has resulted in more prisoners seeking OP (own protection) status. That in turn has caused a problem of location. Normally located on VP house block but due to population pressures located on HB4 overspill for most of the year creating the need for separate regime, adding extra pressure to already very tight resources. Currently in the process of trying to exchange OPs with VPs from elsewhere and looking at introducing a Reintegration Unit within the Reform Prisons agenda which could possibly house OPs. Also, taking a more robust approach to signing up prisoners as OPs.**

4. Additionally, a group of prisoners and officers led by the Head of Safer Custody under the title ACTIVISTS (Achieving Change through Integrated Violence Reduction, Ideas and Strategies) is now meeting regularly to share thoughts and potential actions behind reasons for violent incidents.

5. **ACCTs:** 692 ACCTs were opened in the period January to December 2016, an average of 59.5 per month, against a total of 643, average of 53.5 per month for the same period last year. However, within this year's figures, there was an exponential rise in the no. of ACCTs from August - December with a total of 346 opened, an average of 69.2 per month with a high of 81 in October. This increase was largely attributable to incidents of self-harm caused by a number of very troubled prisoners.

6. The in depth breakdown of ACCT information covered in the VDT is closely monitored and analysed to identify any trends/ problem areas for action. ACCT Reviews and documentation are also the subject of closer scrutiny and training at present.

7. **Violent Incidents:** There have 816 incidents of violence this year compared with 470 in the same period last year, an alarming increase of 73.6%. Most worryingly there have been 46 assaults on staff since April 2016, 8 of which were classed as serious, an average of 5.1 staff assaults per month against 1.7 in 2015 with a high of 9 staff assaults in December. This compares with 20 staff assaults in the whole of 2016. There have been 146 prisoner on prisoner assaults in the same period, 20 of which were classed as serious, an average of 16.2 per month against 9.3 in 2015. There are now designated hotspot areas within the prison identified by posters, with most prisoner on prisoner assaults taking place in cells, on the wings or on association.

8. The new Cell Sharing Risk Assessment (CSRA) has proved very challenging for the prison this year given the need for an increase in the number of single cells at a time of almost maximum capacity with high nos. of prisoners arriving without a PNC and a rise in the no. of high risk prisoners (386 at December 2016) This has had a knock on effect across the prison in ensuring that these prisoners are appropriately identified and managed.

9. There were 17 trained Listeners at the year-end who do an excellent job in listening to troubled prisoners and who are extremely well trained and supported by the Samaritans. There are ongoing issues about adherence to the open door policy for Listeners and also about following laid down procedures for the use of the Samaritan phone but these issues are being addressed through reminders and education.

10. There have been 47 constant watches this year requiring 4620 recorded man hours plus hours detailed at short notice and during the night involving some very troubled and violent prisoners who have been responsible for some of the staff assaults. This has placed a very substantial demand on already stretched resources. The Board would commend the care and compassion that is shown to these prisoners by Governors, Discipline and nursing staff in very difficult and trying circumstances.

11. There have been two deaths in custody in 2016 and three inquests. All three inquests concluded that death was due to natural causes, in two cases concluded at pre inquest reviews.

12. Wrapped around all of this has been the constant pressure on resources which the Board has been highlighting for the last three years since the introduction of benchmarking. This coupled with an increasingly violent prison population has made for a very challenging and often threatening environment this year with a noticeable change in the atmosphere and camaraderie around the prison. The Board is especially concerned about the number of assaults on staff and would wish to commend the Safer Custody Team, Governors, fellow officers and partner organisations who continue to care and provide for prisoners, often at risk to their personal safety.

### **5.7 Segregation, Care and Separation, Close Supervision**

1. The Segregation Unit (SEG) has borne the brunt this year of the high prison population and the high numbers of violent and troubled prisoners who have been located there, often for long periods of time under PSO 1700, refusing to locate elsewhere in the prison. This has been exacerbated by the number of out of area prisoners who have been received from other prisons after serious concerted indiscipline (Lewes, Bedford, Nottingham and Birmingham) a number who have often ended up in the unit. Many prisoners over the course of the year have had to be unlocked by three officers due to their violent and often unpredictable behaviour placing an even greater strain on overstretched resources and a concern for the personal safety of officers.
2. SEG has capacity to house a maximum of 28 prisoners but this is rarely achievable due to the number of cells which are out of use at any one time due to damage by recalcitrant prisoners either through cell fires or damage to the fabric of the cell. Indeed, there was an incident of serious concerted indiscipline in SEG in November this year resulting in 10 cells being out of use with three prisoners placed in Special Accommodation. For a large part of the year SEG has housed an average 18 – 22 prisoners and on a few occasions latterly prisoners receiving cellular confinement on Adjudications have had to serve this in their normal location within a house block due to SEG being full.
3. IMB members visit SEG at least weekly and over the course of the week see and speak to all prisoners located there. The Board is notified promptly when prisoners are moved to SEG either in person or via voicemail in the IMB office.
4. IMB members attend virtually all 14 day GOOD Reviews which are conducted every Monday afternoon but attend 72 hour reviews on an ad hoc basis only. All GOOD decisions have been supported by the Board this year.
5. The Board is concerned about the high number of prisoners on open ACCTs who have been held in SEG this year (49 from April to date) but is satisfied that there was no alternative given their violent and refractory nature, that SEG was the appropriate location to ensure both their personal safety and that of nursing and discipline staff and that proper procedures and reviews were followed to accommodate this.

6. Yet again this year the Board has had occasion to express concern at points about the low staffing levels in SEG especially given the nature and volume of the SEG prisoners, and particularly the absence of any regular and consistent oversight from Supervising Officers. There have been times when it has not been possible for members to do their rounds as there were not two officers available to unlock. This has been slightly mitigated by the allocation of clerical resource in the latter part of the year to assist with the backlog of adjudications. (See para 5.12)The Board does however acknowledge the continuity now provided by the Head of Residence who sees and talks to prisoners on a daily basis and is therefore well placed to determine and facilitate appropriate action for individual prisoners.
7. There have been issues this year about delays in receipt of property for prisoners held in SEG, particularly under GOOD, as it can take some while for their property to reach them, exacerbated by failure to sometimes follow due process relative to cell clearances. Prisoners can be in SEG for days before their property reaches them. This adds to their sense of grievance and SEG officers invariably pick up the flak.
8. SEG can hardly be classed as a rehabilitative environment. Whilst prisoners in SEG have access to basic entitlements there is little evidence of in cell or purposeful activity as defined within the prison's own Segregation Policy, perhaps understandable this year given the nature of the prisoners and limitations on resources. The Board would however hope that this is something that might be addressed within the Reform Prisons agenda in the coming year.
9. On a positive note the washing machine and drier were finally installed in SEG enabling a ready supply of kit and bedding, particularly welcome given the level of churn within the unit. The standard of cleaning provided by the prisoners working in SEG is high. The cleaners should also be commended for managing all the extra work created by constant and ongoing damage to cells and landing areas. However, the environment for officers is poor, both in terms of work areas and with an absence of any rest facilities. The Board therefore welcome the intent to upgrade these areas in the coming year.
10. Special Accommodation has been used 35 times this year since April, albeit this figure includes particularly problematic prisoners who have been placed there on more than one occasion. IMB is always properly informed and has visited prisoners or very occasionally attended a 24 hr review as required.
11. Adjudications are conducted on a daily basis by the Duty Governor and the Independent Adjudicator attends monthly. IMB members monitor this process through regular attendance to check that proper procedures are followed and that a fair and consistent approach is adopted. That however has been compromised this year as indicated in para 5.11 below. There have been 2260 adjudications in the period April – December, an average of 282.5 per month against a monthly average of 168 in the performance year ending March 2016.
12. There have been substantial problems with a backlog of adjudications since mid- year caused by a number of factors namely the sheer volume, the length of time to prepare the relevant paperwork and the number of adjudications remanded due to the non- availability of reporting officers compounded by limited resources within SEG to accommodate both this, the high churn of SEG prisoners and the normal daily SEG routine. At the worst point there was a backlog of over 300 outstanding adjudications and at least two thirds of these had to be written off as they were out of time. This is neither fair nor consistent and gives out the wrong signals to prisoners that bad behaviour goes unpunished. It is also a disincentive to officers to put prisoners on report.

13. A number of actions were put in place including the appointment of administrative support to complete the relevant paperwork, the provision of a spreadsheet to capture and monitor all outstanding adjudications, diarying adjudications to accommodate availability of reporting officers and prioritising and tabling adjudications relative to deadlines. Additionally, a few extra adjudication sessions were conducted on a Sunday by the Duty Governors. At the time of writing this report there were 87 outstanding remanded adjudications including 12 remanded by the police. The Adjudications Officer is attempting to put on 5 remand adjudications daily in addition to the new adjudications and 12 on a Sunday subject to availability of staff. The Board will continue to monitor the situation.

14. Overall, this has been a traumatic year in SEG which has taken its toll on some very experienced staff. The Board would therefore commend all those who work in SEG for their professionalism and care in dealing with both very damaged and difficult prisoners but especially for their unfailing helpfulness, support and good humour when responding to the needs of members.

## **5.7 Residential Services**

### Kitchens and Catering

1. The kitchen has faced intolerable pressures this year due to broken equipment . This reached crisis point towards the end of the year when the kitchen was unable to bake bread and associated products, to provide hot puddings and faced great difficulty in producing even the basic menu for 1200 prisoners. At one point only one of four ovens was working.
2. This was due to a breakdown in the contractual arrangements for repair or replacement of equipment within laid down timescales and came at a substantial cost, both financially to the prison budget and on the stress levels of the Kitchen Manager and her team.
3. IMB escalated these problems through the appropriate channels , supporting the attempts of management, with an excellent outcome resulting in a fully working kitchen by Christmas and negotiations in hand to secure compensation for increased costs sustained by the prison.
4. Despite this the number of complaints about the quality and choice of food has continued to be low as prisoners were basically resigned to limitations with the menu and quality of food due to problems in the kitchen.
5. The kitchen excels in the provision of special diets. Religious celebrations are catered for well, including Ramadan. The catering management is constantly exploring ways to vary the range of food offered and does very well within the constraints of the budgets provided to introduce new products.
6. The monthly Food Forum meetings are attended by Servery workers and give an opportunity for governors and kitchen staff to discuss new ideas. These meetings are attended by the IMB and have become much more productive during 2016.
7. Serveries are regularly visited by the IMB. There is some concern about the lack of protective clothing worn by Servery workers.

8. Theft of food from the kitchens has continued unabated this year despite efforts to improve searching .This is largely attributable to the constant churn of prisoners working there for short periods , many of whom are reluctant to be there. This situation should hopefully be resolved in the transition to a Category C prison and a more settled prison population.
9. Prisoners allocated for daily duty in the kitchens are nominated by AMU ( Activity Management Unit ). That department will rarely know if the prisoner allocated is unavailable for some perfectly good reason. The consequence is that the kitchen staff really only know how many prisoners are available to work in the kitchens when the shift actually starts. This adds to the pressures on the Kitchen Manager and her staff.
10. The Board would commend the Kitchen Manager and her team for their unfailing efforts to continue to provide the best food they could in the face of the many challenges this year. It also welcomes the increase in the catering budget.

#### Accommodation:

1. The specific roles of the seven house blocks have become more fluid throughout 2016 due to House Block 2 no longer dispensing methadone and having to take more unemployed prisoners. However, there will be many changes in the “separate” populations as Holme House becomes a Cat C prison in 2017 and most house blocks will have similar populations of prisoners.
2. In 2015 the IMB raised concerns about the state of cell furniture and privacy. Since Holme House became a Reform Prison extra funding has been made available for the purchase of furniture [lockers, tables, chairs bins and cleaning equipment]. Privacy issues still exist and privacy screens and fittings have been ordered but the former unfortunately did not arrive. However, the Residence Governor has now found an alternative local source so the privacy issue in shared cells will be solved early in 2017. Lockable cabinets are an HMCIP recommendation, but will be provided next year.
3. There is a recognised problem with the painting of cells and interview rooms across most house blocks. Although prisoners have been used to do some of the work, many cells have still not been painted. The high prison population means that there is limited time to re paint cells before new prisoners arrive or when prisoners are moved within the prison, which has been a frequent occurrence this year. The Governor has responded to IMB concerns and asked the IMB to look at all interview rooms and give feedback.
4. There are problems with showers and sometimes toilets being out of use in various areas of the prison. This has been raised twice in our monthly reports and more frequently in board meetings with the Governor. This is due to the ageing fabric of the prison but there is still a time lag between the reporting of the problem and resolution by Amey.

#### C Kit

1. This is now the fourth consecutive year that the IMB has been concerned with prisoner kit shortages and extra funding has been made available and large orders have been placed. Consequently in the second half of 2016 there has been sufficient kit in the prison. Poor management of kit by both Amey in the Main Stores and the collection, retention by prisoners and handing out of kit [ counting in and counting out] on the house blocks have resulted in shortages for prisoners. The IMB welcomed the action taken by the Governor to

use OSGs to organise the storage of kit in the Main Stores but the shortage of kit is an ongoing problem.

2. The laundry of prisoners' personal items of clothing continues to be problematic on three house blocks where prisoners have to wash their clothing in their cells. Concerns about this have been raised by both officers and prisoners. The other four house blocks either have washing facilities on the wings or send their personal kit in bags to the laundry. The IMB is pleased to hear that there are plans to solve this issue in early 2017 when all five house blocks without washing facilities will have access to the central laundry.
3. The IMB and the Residence Governors are aware that the quality assurance of bedding was very poor at the beginning of 2016. By June prisoner laundry workers started to do the quality assurance of all bedding. There is not a fully consistent approach across the house blocks regarding the counting in and out of kit.

**The IMB regrets that not enough progress has been made in 2016 towards achieving “a decent cell” but recognises that work is in progress towards this, well supported by the Governor, the Executive Governor and the Executive Board. There were difficulties in the ordering process eg only a limited number of items could be ordered at one time but in the second half of 2016 the prison has developed a much improved working and cooperative relationship with Branston.**

**The quality of the services provided by Amey have in some ways hindered progress towards the decency of the prisoner experience. Prisoner expectations are also difficult to change and so some prisoners still 'hoard' better quality kit. However there are hopeful signs that the kit and laundry issues can be solved in the coming months.**

**The IMB hope to see a big improvement in 2017 and will continue to raise our concerns with the Governor.**

D Prisoner Consultations and Prisoner Information Workers.

1. Prisoner Consultation Meetings were intended to take place monthly on all house blocks but it has not been consistent and often on an ad hoc basis. This is an excellent forum to raise, discuss and possibly resolve issues for prisoners and so reduce the tensions and triggers for unrest or bad feeling. However, work started late in December with the CMs to reinforce the monthly meetings with minutes as part of an evidence based approach to prisoner consultation. The IMB welcomes this and will attend if possible as all board members are allocated to a house block. There are many other opportunities for prisoner consultation eg bi monthly food forums, meetings with Listeners and Equality Champions, Violence Reduction meetings and forums for protected characteristics. In 2016 the new Governor also had consultations with prisoners.
2. The PIWs have been well established on all house blocks and their role is valued by officers, admin staff and fellow prisoners.

E Catalogue Orders

1. The IMB has received only 11 applications in 2016 compared to 35 in 2015. The IMB does feel that the number of verbal complaints made to us has also decreased. The main one is the delay in actually accessing their property in Reception which is often due to staffing and operational issues.

F Core Day

1. There has been an increase in the number of times that the the regimes on the house blocks have been curtailed and prisoners have been locked in their cells. The prison does not always have the capacity to deal with incidents eg bed watches, PS linked violence and regime restrictions are inevitable. It does try to shut down the regimes fairly across the prison but prisoners are annoyed, particularly if they have little or no advanced warning. Communication is not always clear and timely but there have been efforts to use white boards on the wings to give advance notice and if it is late notice, to personally deliver notices to each cell.

**It is important that communication with prisoners is timely and that a brief explanation is given. The IMB is anxious to prevent a negative reaction from prisoners, particularly as staff shortages and staff sickness is likely to remain a problem in the short term.**

2. In November two house blocks were moved to enable VPs and OPs to have a bigger house block and prevent an overspill onto other house blocks. The move also meant that those VPs with mobility and social care needs were better accommodated.

G. Applications and complaints

1. There has been a reduction in the number of complaints to the IMB. However, the IMB has had numerous verbal and some written complaints from prisoners stating that they receive no response to their general applications and Comp 1 and 1A forms. This was raised in December with the governor and the SMT has put in place actions to address each of our concerns. The IMB was pleased with the response and hopes that very soon in 2017 the prisoners will benefit from a transparent, reliable and fair complaints system. The IMB will continue to monitor this in 2017.



## Section 6

### Booking of Visits

1. Families can book multiple visits for a two week period by email or by phone. This year there have been problems getting visitor added to the contact lists. Delays of 2 -3 weeks have been experienced by families at various times during the year. This issue has been raised by the IMB three times to the Governor. Towards the end of 2016 there have been fewer problems as the Centre Manger has devised a means of checking visitor lists prior to the visit. This is partly as result of an improvement in working relations between the prison and NEPACS.

### 6.2 Visitor Centre / Visits

1. The Visitors' Centre is not particularly appropriate as the area is too small for the numbers of visitors and the play area is too small. The Visits Hall, however, does have a good play area and youth zone which are both well used by families. The static furniture here does hinder to some extent activities with fathers and children during family days but the staff are imaginative in their use of the area. The Centre Manager does not believe that these conditions have impacted negatively on family engagement as the visitor numbers are consistently high and there has been no decrease compared to 2015. Reform prison status has brought about plans to improve and refurbish both areas early in 2017 and the Centre Manager welcomes these changes.
2. Family links are actively encouraged. In 2016 there were 7 family days held in the school holidays. These are much welcomed and appreciated by the families. After every event written and verbal feedback is given and this includes the children. The feedback is always extremely positive – the only negative comment is that there are not often enough. Security restrictions have stopped the offer of these events to VPs but the Centre Manager and the IMB would like to see them in the future. Other workshops have taken place eg an author held a workshop for 29 families attending a family visit.
3. NEPACS also encourages family links by having a Family Support Worker based in the prison who builds links between the prisoners and their families. There are bi monthly Children and Family Pathway Meetings with representatives from local agencies eg MIND and the Department of Work and Pensions. These meetings enable the NEPACS staff to be upskilled and more proactive in making more effective links with outside agencies. The IMB welcomes this local network of contacts in supporting prisoners and their families. NEPACS has also organised 5 sessions in 2016 involving prisoner peer mentors talking to teachers and social workers about the impact on their families. Evidence shows that the NEPACS staff make a great deal of effort to encourage family links.

### 6.3 Reception

1. High numbers of prisoners arriving without a PNC and a rise in the number of high risk prisoners (386 at December 2016) have caused problems for Reception staff as they have not been able to process these prisoners thoroughly and carefully. This was compounded by the arrival of prisoners from trouble hit prisons towards the end of 2016.
2. Prisoners transferred from other prisons often arrive without all of their property, a problem reflected in the number of applications received in 2016. This problem was compounded by prisoners moved to Holme House from trouble hit prisons. Prisoners often experience

delays in being taken down to collect their property from Reception. This is caused by staff shortages on the house blocks and by delays in transferring property from Stores, run by Amey, to Reception. This can cause distress and resentment in prisoners. At times during the year Holme House has organised its own transport to move property to and from other prisons.

3. Prisoners who move house block or go to SEG sometimes experience problems when a cell clearance does not happen quickly or the cell clearance is not carried out following correct procedures. The IMB will continue to monitor this situation in 2017.

## Section 7

### The Work of the Independent Monitoring Board

#### Applications to the Board

| Code | Subject   | Year 2013  | Year 2014   | Year 2015  | Year 2016  |
|------|---|------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| A    | Accommodation   | 23         | 51          | 21         | 13         |
| B    | Adjudications   | 4          | 16          | 7          | 12         |
| C    | Equality & Diversity (inc religion)                                   | 5          | 7           | 4          | 7          |
| D    | Education/employment/training inc IEP                                 | 91         | 103         | 41         | 33         |
| E 1  | Family/visits inc mail & phone  | 119        | 116         | 76         | 54         |
| E 2  | Finance/pay   | 76         | 70          | 39         | 34         |
| F    | Food/kitchen related  | 72         | 41          | 22         | 14         |
| G    | Health related  | 111        | 139         | 114        | 81         |
| H 1  | Property (within current establishment)                               | 78         | 107         | 55         | 55         |
| H 2  | Property (during transfer/in another establishment)                   | 68         | 77          | 53         | 71         |
| H 3  | Canteen, facilities, Catalogue shopping, Argos                        | 22         | 20          | 35         | 11         |
| I    | Sentence related (inc. HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-cat etc.) | 123        | 170         | 101        | 65         |
| J    | Staff/prisoner/detainee concerns inc bullying                         | 44         | 66          | 42         | 32         |
| K    | Transfers   | 91         | 120         | 43         | 43         |
| L    | Miscellaneous   | 44         | 62          | 32         | 54         |
|      | <b>Total number of IMB applications</b>                               | <b>971</b> | <b>1165</b> | <b>685</b> | <b>579</b> |

1. The Board received 106 fewer applications in 2016 than it received in 2015. Proportionately, of the overall total, the highest categories were Category G Health Related (13.9%), Category H2 Property [from another establishment] related (12.2%) and Category I Sentence Related (11.2 %). These are the main categories of applications accounting for 217 or 37.4% of 2016 applications. The continuing reduction in the total number of applications is welcomed by the IMB and reflects the greater role of the Prisoner Information Workers on all of the house blocks.
2. Health related applications are often linked to procedures within Health Care. Complaints are often about the long waiting times for appointments, particularly for dental care and the lack of response to health care complaints. This reflects the situation in 2015. In 2016 prisoners were also concerned about the delays or cancellations for out patients appointments at local hospitals.

3. Property issues continue to be a major concern for prisoners. In the last 3 months of 2016 this was exacerbated by transfers of prisoners from trouble hit prisons. There has been no noticeable improvement and the loss of personal items continues to cause distress for many prisoners.
  
4. Sentence related applications are often due to prisoners' perception that they have been overlooked by OMU or a frustration that they have little contact with their Offender Supervisors.

**Board Statistics**

|   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| <b>BOARD STATISTICS</b>   |                     |
| <b>Recommended Complement of Board Members</b>                      | <b>18</b>           |
| <b>Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period</b> | <b>9</b>            |
| <b>Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period</b>   | <b>7</b>            |
| <b>Number of new members joining within the reporting period</b>    | <b>1</b>            |
| <b>Number of members leaving within reporting period</b>            | <b>3</b>            |
| <b>Total number of Board meetings during reporting period</b>       | <b>12</b>           |
| <b>Total number of visits to the Establishment</b>                  | <b>411</b>          |
| <b>Total number of segregation reviews held</b>                     | <b>Not recorded</b> |
| <b>Total number of segregation reviews attended</b>                 | <b>Not recorded</b> |
| <b>Date of Annual Team Performance Review</b>                       | <b>5th Jan 2016</b> |

**Board Matters**

- 1 It is vital that the IMB recruits new members in 2017 as we are struggling at times in the second half of 2016 to fulfill our role. A recruitment campaign is planned for January 2017.
  
- 2 The Board operates a weekly rota with 6 members attending on a specific day each week. The remaining member covers one week per month. All statutory areas are visited at least weekly. Applications are logged as received and dealt with normally within the week by one of the rota members.
  
7. 14 day GOOD Reviews are held every Monday afternoon, conducted by a Residential Governor, with an IMB member in attendance. 72 hr reviews are attended on an ad hoc basis subject to availability of member but, failing that, all those in the SEG. are seen at least weekly. Adjudications are regularly observed.
  
- 4 A Daily Rota Report is completed which is then used as the basis for a written report from the Board Chair to the Governor, together with an analysis of applications received in month, with a written response from the Governor tabled for discussion at the subsequent Board Meeting.
  
- 5 Each member is allocated a special area(s) of responsibility at the start of the reporting year which they are expected to monitor, reporting back to the Board to an agreed timetable and providing a contribution to the Annual Report.
  
- 6 Board members attend meetings specific to their area of responsibility as observers, prepare written reports for all members and give updates if appropriate at each Board Meeting. Other meetings are attended by the member on rota that day.
  
- 7 In addition, ongoing training and updates are provided by guest speakers at the Board Meetings, attendance at staff training sessions and workshops and regular meetings with the Governor. The IMB welcomes these opportunities. One member attended the 2016 National Conference. Closer links have been made with other North East prisons resulting in reciprocal visits to one prison and more planned in 2017.
  
- 7 There have been two inquests this year. The Board no longer attends those where the prisoner has died from natural causes.

The Chair would like to thank the board members for their hard work this year. The Board has lost three members during 2016 and two members at the very end of 2015. It is to their credit that we have managed to cover the statutory aspects of our work, attend meetings and cover the rota visits. The Chair also appreciates the support of our current IMB clerk.

