



**Annual Report**  
of the  
**Independent Monitoring Board**  
at

**HMP/YOI ASKHAM GRANGE**

For reporting years  
1<sup>st</sup> July 2016 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2018

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*Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody*

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## **1 STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB**

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The Prison Act 1952 requires every prison 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.

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**

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HMP/YOI Askham Grange is well managed with an ethos of preparing residents, many of whom are serving long term sentences, for release into the community. Residents are treated fairly and with respect. This is reflected in the low number of complaints to the Governor and IMB.

Great emphasis is placed on training and work placement with all residents of working age either in training/education, community work or paid work. A large number of residents leave the prison with accommodation and employment secured. This is due in no small part to Askham's Employment Hub team. A spot check showed of 98 residents in Askham at the time, 39 were involved in community work, 24 were in paid employment and the remainder in education/training or working in Askham's Conference Unit, one of the two cafes, the gardens and garden centre.

Askham Grange is an establishment in which residents generally feel safe and think that their wellbeing is looked after. This is due to the good work of the staff and evidenced by the thank you cards from residents on display at the Gate, and Family Day attendance by ex-residents.

The Corston Report, 10 Years On, published in 2017 shows areas of major concern for women in prison regarding initial assessment of residents, training and education, accommodation and employment on release. HMP Askham Grange excels in these areas and is a good example of best practice in the Women's Prison Estate.

### **Main Areas for Development**

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#### **TO THE MINISTER**

HMP/YOI Askham Grange has considerable success in preparing women for their return to the outside world. This is because of its focus on education and training, coupled with methodical assessment of the residents' needs and thorough risk assessment before allowing Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL). Lack of investment in the fabric of its facilities is now starting to be addressed. Please ensure it continues.

## TO THE PRISON SERVICE

In recent years the IMB at Askham has consistently expressed concern at the number of short term sentence prisoners sent to the establishment. We are concerned that this not only affects discipline but also the prospects for the women on release. The prison gets its best results by working with the women for periods of at least a year, and in the past this has been reflected with very low recidivism rates.

**Please place greater emphasis on sending suitable prisoners who will benefit from time spent at Askham Grange.**

The transfer of medicines with prisoners is still a problem as the Healthcare Centre is not staffed full time, so women arriving without their medication can create unnecessary distress and disruption to their treatment

**Please instruct Askham's feeder prisons to ensure the correct medications are sent with prisoners.**

### 3 DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

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3.1 HMP/YOI Askham Grange is a women's open prison in the rural village of Askham Richard just south of York

3.2 The baseline CNA is 128, and an operational capacity of 128.

3.3 Askham Grange is an open prison in which the overriding ethos is for resettlement and preparation of the residents for their return to the community via its Interventions and Pathways regime, which encompasses all aspects of the needs of the residents. It has provision for up to ten mothers with their babies, enabling them to maintain full time care of their child up to two years whilst in prison, and it is complemented by a nursery which is run by Barnardo's. A family team works with them and all other mothers in Askham to prepare for life on release.

3.3 The regime is focused on reducing the re-offending rate by developing a wide range of skills to enhance their opportunities on release. All departments contribute to this in their separate ways.

### 4 SAFETY

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4.1 Residents in general feel very safe within the prison and this has been confirmed in HMCIP inspections and surveys of the residents. An anonymous exit survey is done with those being released, particularly concerning bullying, and results for the last year show a very positive result. This allows any problems to be diagnosed early and action taken if needed. This should mean that the reviewing process is more manageable.

4.2 A robust anti-bullying policy is in place and investigations are thorough and outcomes followed through.

4.3 Few ACCTs are opened and are generally closed quite quickly. Those residents on ACCTs are monitored carefully and support is given.

4.4 The IMB is able to speak freely to all prisoners at all times and they are also able to approach us at any time if needed.

- 4.5 A Family Day held in the summer had over 60 family members attending and participating with officers and staff. This is a practical demonstration of how safe both residents and their families feel in Askham Grange, and reflects the mutual respect staff and residents show each other.

## **5 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS**

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- 5.1 As Askham is an open prison, each resident has access to all facilities and amenities. Although there is not a specific Board member to monitor equality and fairness, it is the Board's opinion that all these situations are not an issue at Askham, ROTLs, training and job allocation reflect the overall population of the prison and are not biased. Residents are routinely treated on a one to one basis with consideration to their own individual needs. If, however, they feel a need to complain, they have full understanding of the procedures and how to escalate the complaint to all levels if required. The prison has invested a significant amount in disabled accommodation and facilities, all the main areas such as the library, dining hall and gardens are accessible to all but not all bedrooms are accessible to disabled residents this is due to the age and construction of the building.
- 5.2 Religious beliefs are extremely well supported. A humanist celebrant visits, as do a Catholic priest, an imam and a Church of England vicar. Any other religions are also well supported.
- 5.3 Askham hosted six Family Days this year, which had an average attendance of 60 people. The main aim of these events is to maintain and enhance family relationships and also support social care to enhance family or child/parent contact which aids resettlement. This has been proven with Askham's record of low reoffending rates. At each event other criminal justice professionals can come to monitor. Each prisoner's access to Family Day visits is decided on a case by case basis and these visitors need not be blood ties but just role models.

## **6 SEGREGATION/CARE AND SEPARATION UNIT**

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- 6.1 The Segregation Unit at Askham is defined as the special accommodation/bedsit and allows officers to supervise vulnerable prisoners. Although rarely used, on average less than once a month, it is maintained to a high standard. It enables officers oversee residents who may be at risk of self-harming, thinking of absconding, or after a stay in hospital. Occasionally it is used when an ACCT has been opened. It is also used when a resident is going to be returned to closed conditions as a result of an adjudication or an attempted abscond. There has been no difference in its usage over this year.
- 6.2 All administrative paperwork linked is always properly completed and up to date. Although Board members do not attend all adjudications they are notified when an adjudication is called and do attend on an ad-hoc basis. It is the Board's opinion that adjudications are fairly conducted and that after an adjudication the prisoner is always fully aware of their appeal rights.

## 7 ACCOMMODATION (including communication)

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- 7.1 It is the Board's view that the accommodation at Askham Grange is to a good standard with various types of accommodation throughout the establishment.
- 26 dormitory rooms are in the main house, mainly for new arrivals and in-house workers.  
An upgrade to these rooms has been ongoing throughout the reporting period with the replacement of carpets and furniture.
  - 15 single occupation rooms in the Acorn Centre are mainly for stage 1 residents performing volunteer community work.
  - 15 single occupation rooms in the Annex are mainly for stage 2 residents working in the community in paid work.
  - 10 single occupation rooms in the Mother and Baby unit offer a high standard of accommodation for mothers and their babies.
- 7.2 The Board is pleased to see a good response by the maintenance department (Amey) when faults to washing machines and other equipment are reported.
- 7.3 The Board was pleased to see two rooms in the Annex upgraded to enable the use by disabled residents with special wider doors for easier access for wheelchairs.
- 7.4 One area of exceptional quality is the nursery for babies, offering a bright, colourful area with educational toys and a secure outside area.
- 7.5 The kitchen is well managed, providing an excellent range of food for all ethnic backgrounds, dietary needs and food intolerances. The Board checks the comments book weekly, with residents regularly writing positive comments regarding the food.
- 7.6 Communications between staff and residents are very good and a good example of this is the monthly residents' meeting with the Governor, which is supported by selected residents who put forward to the Governor any concerns or issues. This has proved to be beneficial, not only for residents, but also staff. The meetings are minuted with action points and feedback provided to the residents.
- 7.7 The Board is pleased to monitor the upgrade to the accommodation which has continued throughout the year with new flooring, furniture and decorations to the Annex area. The toilets and shower areas in the Annex have also been upgraded to a good standard. The Governor has introduced a future plan of works to upgrade the toilets and bathroom areas in the main building which are in need of refurbishment. The Board will continue to monitor the proposed works.
- 7.8 Acomb House is an independent facility at Askham designed for overnight extended family visits, which is available to all residents. This was used 89 times in 2016/17 and nearly every weekend.
- 7.9 Board members continue to monitor the standard of meals and cleanliness in the kitchen area. No concerns in this area have been reported by the Board.
- 7.10 The communications between staff and residents continue to be good. The monthly residents' meetings have proved to be very positive for both staff and residents. The Governor has also introduced a Resident's Awards scheme whereby residents are nominated by either staff or other residents to be awarded for "going the extra mile", either helping other residents or achieving

something that has helped themselves or others. Certificates are awarded to residents in a formal awards ceremony.

## **8 HEALTHCARE (including mental health and social care)**

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- 8.1 The Health Centre provides accommodation suitable for the provision of medical services to residents. Care UK has been the healthcare provider at Askham Grange since 2016.
- 8.2 As there is no on-site pharmacy, prescriptions are sent out to a pharmacy contracted for the delivery of these. The work and effort that has gone into ensuring that medicines for new arrivals from their previous prison establishments are forwarded in a timely manner has resulted in some improvement, but lack of medicines on arrival still causes problems.
- 8.3 Residents have a first medical assessment within twenty-four hours of reception and a second one to follow within seven days. Through this screening any medical, health or social care needs are identified and addressed. The Health Centre operates a triage system and residents have access to a GP on site and, if necessary, they can be referred out according to medical need.
- 8.4 Patient survey data evidences high levels of satisfaction across all healthcare services. Excellence ratings from resident survey data are impressive. Based on the Patient Experience Survey data regarding likelihood of recommendation of the service to other prisoners, the overall score for the period to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 was 100%. Across this same period the overall excellence score was 85% or above. There are very few concerns expressed by residents, in fact during the period July 2017- April 2018 just one concern was submitted and in such cases the Care UK Concerns and Complaints policy is followed.
- 8.5 The Healthcare team is represented at relevant meetings at Askham Grange including for example the Drugs Strategy meetings, Safer Custody meetings and Senior Management Team meetings.
- 8.6 In terms of good practice, it is worth noting that two members of the Healthcare team were nominated in a recent round of staff awards at Askham Grange.
- 8.7 The gym and exercise activities on offer aim to promote the physical health of residents and in March 2018 outside gym equipment was installed in the prison grounds to expand opportunities for participation in exercise outdoors. In the summer months outdoor games and activities are popular, alongside the regular yoga and circuits classes. Gym orderlies have opportunities to gain the level 1 Fitness and Physical Activity qualification and the level 2 Gym Instructor qualification. Interest has been expressed by residents in adding the level 3 qualification. First Aid Certificate training will also be offered to residents in the future and this will be yet another opportunity for them to gain useful and valuable skills and certification.
- 8.8 Mindfulness courses are offered to residents as one of a range of strategies to support mental health issues. The mindfulness courses are voluntary and designed to help residents cope with a range of issues such as stress, depression and drug rehabilitation. They are run by a mental health nurse and a clinical psychologist, the emphasis being on an early intervention approach. The

challenges for Healthcare may be considered somewhat different in an open prison setting such as Askham Grange from some of the challenges which may arise in a closed setting. On arrival at Askham Grange some residents may require support from the Healthcare team if initially they experience increased anxiety, which can be provoked by adapting to open conditions after being more used to the regime of a closed setting. Furthermore, an important part of supporting residents to prepare for release is the support provided by the Healthcare team to aid residents in developing the autonomy, responsibility and knowledge necessary to access the healthcare services they may require when back in the community.

- 8.9 The evidence suggests that residents are well-served by the Healthcare team and the provision of healthcare services at Askham Grange.

## **9 EDUCATION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES**

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- 9.1 The Learning and Skills department has had another very successful year. The department was awarded the highest award of 'Good' when it was audited by Novus in 2017. Delivery at Askham Grange has been 169% efficient against planned delivery and had a learner success rate of 97% for all qualifications. All staff have achieved outstanding or good in observations of teaching and learning. The success rates have been consistently extremely high over the last five years.
- 9.2 The department has a rigorous induction process which allows each resident to focus on one career aspiration. Following induction, an action plan is drawn up with the resident. Women who have difficulties or disabilities are assessed and the department provides any individual support they need.
- 9.3 In addition to their close working relationship across various departments of the prison, the department works closely with the National Careers Service from the time of a resident's initial assessment to her release with a robust plan to help her gain employment. Other outside providers include the University of York St John, which provides drama and singing workshops and Inova which concentrates on empowering women for the workplace.
- 9.5 The department runs courses in English, Maths, IT, Customer Service, Professional Cookery, Hairdressing, Beauty Therapy and Nail Technology and Self-Employment. Residents are increasingly interested in the option of self-employment on release. In preparation for this, they can take part in a Small Firms Enterprise Development Initiative (SFEDI) course. The curriculum is under constant review to ensure provision meets both learners' and employers' changing requirements and demands. Reviews are conducted through QDP learner surveys, needs analysis, course reviews, focus-groups and end of course evaluation forms. This year the department introduced courses on animal care to meet the need for this as a career option. The Dogs Trust comes into the prison and delivers free accredited and non-accredited courses. These courses are very well attended. The department works in close collaboration with HMP/ YOI New Hall. Staff from both prisons meet to share good practice and resources and to ensure that courses can be continued seamlessly when residents are transferred from New Hall to Askham Grange.

- 9.6 Residents can undertake courses at outside colleges or by distance learning. During the period, one resident has started the Level 3 VRQ (Vocationally Ready Qualification) in Hairdressing at a local college. The number of residents taking distance learning courses has greatly increased. The courses, which include Mental Health Awareness, Understanding Nutrition and Health, and Equality and Diversity, lead to a Level 2 qualification with NCFE. It is relevant to note that women studying on distance learning courses do so in their own time.
- 9.7 Throughout the year, a variety of products have been produced by the women and sold in the Craft Cabin and the shop in the garden centre. The women have also enthusiastically supported the charity 'Days for Girls', making washable sanitary products for women and girls in developing countries.
- 9.8 The department has introduced a range of Enrichment activities. A talk was given by an ex-prisoner who has set up New Leaf, an organisation that supports ex-offenders (funded by the National Careers Service Inspiration Fund). Enrichment meetings are now held regularly to coordinate the work, and a schedule of activities is displayed in the main corridor so residents can take back control and plan their free time.
- 9.9 Residents have a tradition of helping each other by sharing skills they acquired prior to arriving at Askham Grange. In the past year, residents have run courses in their own time on knitting, crochet, card-making, dancing, Zumba, accountancy and budget management. Having identified gaps in the curriculum, residents set up a course called 'Positive View' to help support each other to have greater confidence in the workplace.

The Hardman Trust created a Fund in memory of Dick Hubbard, a Chair of the IMB who died in 2015. The Trust offers funding to residents who are serving a sentence of seven years or more and are within two years of release. In 2016/17 four residents qualified for a Dick Hubbard award which will help them to set up their own mobile beauty business on release. They attended the Award Ceremony at HMP North Sea Camp in Lincolnshire in December 2017.

## **10 WORK, VOCATIONAL TRAINING and EMPLOYMENT**

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- 10.1 Newly arrived residents at Askham Grange undergo an induction programme, where their educational needs are assessed, and work opportunities discussed. All residents commence stage one where they are allocated to in-house work that runs alongside their educational needs. The Board regularly seeks opinions from residents regarding Askham Grange's induction programme and work placements. 90% of new residents are satisfied with their induction and keen to commence their work/education programme.
- 10.2 Askham Grange's Pathways department/Employment Hub provides good opportunities for residents to obtain paid work in the community by progressing through stages of in-house employment to unpaid community work and finally paid work. Pathways/Employment Hub staff have excellent knowledge and contacts with local voluntary organisations, employers, the National Careers Service and Job Centre Plus. The opportunity to gain work experience helps residents to gain employment on their release. Others pursue education and training courses. 33% is the monthly key performance target (KPT) for discharged residents for those in full-time/part-time or self-employed.

31% is the monthly KPT for discharged residents in full-time education/part time education and voluntary work.

Below are the percentages of residents who were discharged in full/part time work or education from July 2016 to June 2018.

Month	Discharged	Full/PT Employment	% Achieved	Full/PT Education	% Achieved	Discharged. no Employment or Education	%
July 2016	16	2	12.5%	7	43.8%	7	43.8%
August	13	5	38.5%	0	0.0%	8	61.5%
September	13	1	7.7%	2	15.4%	10	76.9%
October	10	5	50.0%	1	10.0%	4	40.0%
November	9	3	33.3%	3	33.33%	3	33.3%
December	12	2	16.7%	1	8.3%	9	75.0%
January	11	3	27.3%	2	18.2%	6	54.5%
February	13	6	46.15%	1	7.69%	6	46.1%
March	11	2	18.18%	1	9.09%	8	72.7%
April	16	6	37.5%	3	18.75%	7	43.7%
May	6	2	33.33%	0	0.0%	4	66.6%
June	14	4	28.57%	3	21.43%	7	50.0%
<b>Year %</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>28.47%</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>16.66%</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>54.8%</b>
July 2017	9	2	22.0%	2	22.0%	5	56.0%
August	15	6	40.0%	1	7.0%	8	53.0%
September	12	4	33.0%	2	17.0%	6	50.0%
October	12	3	25.0%	3	25.0%	6	50.0%
November	13	6	46.0%	2	15.0%	5	38.0%
December	11	2	18.0%	3	27.0%	6	55.0%
January	11	5	45.0%	0	0.0%	6	55.0%
February	8	4	50.0%	1	13.0%	3	38.0%
March	15	6	40.0%	5	33.0%	4	27.0%
April	7	3	43.0%	0	0.0%	4	57.0%
May	10	4	40.0%	2	20.0%	4	40.0%
June	11	4	36.0%	1	9.0%	6	55.0%
<b>Year %</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>38.0%</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>17.0%</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>45.0%</b>

10.3 Other examples of forward thinking at Askham Grange are the “Enterprise” functions, including Café Fairburn for residents and visitors, ARC (Askham Grange Resource Centre) managed by Together Women Project, Conference Academy, Garden Centre, selling plants and other items to the public and a newly opened Grange Café attached to the Garden Centre and opened to the public. The Board considers these enterprise functions to be excellent examples of residents working in an environment of trust, and having the opportunity to achieve NVQ qualifications.

10.4 When talking to residents they are very positive regarding the work and appreciate the opportunity to learn new skills, and achieve qualifications. Good examples of residents helping the local community are by volunteering to serve teas and generally assist in the village hall during the summer. A credit to the gardens department is the positive comments regularly received from visitors and Board members on how the attractive and well-kept grounds enhance the prison setting.

- 10.5 The Pathways department continues to provide voluntary and paid work to residents, with over 50% of residents obtaining either full or part time work or education when discharged from Askham Grange.
- 10.6 Special mention should be made of the opening of “The Grange” in 2017 which has proved to be a success and serves teas, coffees and cakes to the public. The selling of other items such as bread, milk etc is also being discussed. The Garden Centre has done particularly well, with over £18k being taken for plant sales in May 2018.

## 11 RESETTLEMENT PREPARATION

- 11.1 The Offender Management Unit sees new arrivals in the first 24 hours and an assessment is completed in 7 to 10 days. The Education and Employment Hub sees new arrivals within 24 hours. In any given week over 50% of the residents are in external employment or community work. Those in the prison are in education, training or working within the prison in the coffee shops, gardens, Garden Centre, conferencing, catering or the Inside Out fulfilment centre. Great emphasis is placed on residents attaining practical experience to prepare them for release
- 11.2 Several Recruitment Receptions are held each year with good attendance by local and national employers.
- 11.2 In 2018 over 45% of prisoners released had accommodation, employment or education training. This achievement reflects the original Corston Report objectives and HMP Askham Grange can be proud of its Resettlement Programme.

## A Section – Work of Board

<b>BOARD STATISTICS</b>	
Recommended Complement of Board Members	10
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	5
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	6
Total number of visits to the Establishment	371
Total number of segregation reviews attended	N/A

## Section - Applications

Code	Subject	2017 To 2018	2016 To 2017	2015 To 2016
A	Accommodation including laundry, clothing, ablutions		1	1
B	Discipline including adjudications, IEP, sanctions			
C	Equality			
D	Purposeful Activity including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell			
E 1	Letters, visits, phones, public protection restrictions	1	1	2
E 2	Finance including pay, private monies, spends			
F	Food and kitchens			
G	Health including physical, mental, social care			
H 1	Property within this establishment	1		1
H 2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	1		
H 3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)		1	
I	Sentence management including HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	1	1	3
J	Staff/prisoner concerns including bullying	1	2	1
K	Transfers			
	<b>Total number of IMB applications</b>	5	6	8