



HYDEBANK WOOD PRISON AND YOUNG OFFENDERS CENTRE
Independent Monitoring Board's Annual Report for 2006/07



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Mission Statement

To monitor the quality of prison life, working to ensure fairness and accountability in prison.

Statement of Purpose

Members of the Independent Monitoring Board for Hydebank Wood Prison and Young Offenders Centre are appointed by the Secretary of State under Section 3 of the Treatment of Offenders Act (NI) 1968 and under the Prison Act (NI) 1953. The Board is required to:

- visit Hydebank Wood regularly and report to the Secretary of State on the conditions of imprisonment and the treatment of offenders;
- consider requests and complaints made by prisoners to the Board;
- report matters of concern to the Governor or, in serious cases, the Secretary of State; and
- exercise certain powers that are given under the Prison and Young Offender Centre Rules (NI) 2005.

The Prison Rules further require the Board to satisfy itself as to:

- the treatment of prisoners including provision for their healthcare and other welfare while in prison;
- the facilities available to prisoners to allow them to make purposeful use of their time; and
- the cleanliness and adequacy of prison premises.

1 | Chairman's Introduction

As chairman of the Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) at Hydebank Wood Prison and Young Offenders Centre, I am pleased to present the IMB's report for the period 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007.

Hydebank Wood is one part of Northern Ireland's three-establishment prisons estate, along with Maghaberry Prison and Magilligan Prison. Hydebank Wood is a women's prison and a male young offenders centre, housing all sentenced and remand prisoners in these two categories on a single campus.

The operation of prisons has changed markedly in recent years, with much greater transparency and accountability. However, despite the increasing openness, prison establishments remain essentially secret places. To a certain extent, their very nature demands that. Yet that secrecy brings with it the need for public scrutiny, because prisons are part of the fabric of our society every bit as much as other institutions such as schools or hospitals. A very important element of the public scrutiny of prisons is exercised by the citizens who make up the IMB at each establishment.

The members of the IMB at Hydebank Wood Prison and Young Offenders Centre are individually appointed by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and in one respect are his eyes and ears. The members have a duty to report to the Secretary of State if the high standards which are demanded in our public services are not being met, regardless of the reason. Moreover, IMB members' obligations extend beyond their duty to the Secretary of State. They are appointed as members of the public and are the watchdogs of human rights in one of the most closed institutions in our society.

I would like to thank all my IMB colleagues for their hard work and commitment during the year. Many of the members have full time jobs and/or family commitments, and it is a tribute to them that they are willing to make time for what can sometimes be a difficult and emotionally taxing role. It should be emphasised that all members of the IMB are unpaid volunteers.

The IMB at Hydebank Wood has a complement of 15 but for the first nine months of the reporting year it had to operate with only eleven members. At the beginning of 2007 the IMB welcomed four new members and looked forward to functioning again at full strength. However, that was not to be. It is with sadness that I have to report the untimely death of my colleague, Michael Breslin, on 17 March 2007. Michael served the IMB with distinction and will be sorely missed.

The IMB wishes to place on record its thanks to the governor and his management team for their support, and to those other members of his staff who kindly cooperated with it. The IMB also wishes to thank the director of the Northern Ireland Prison Service and his headquarters colleagues for providing assistance, clarification and support as required.

I should make it clear that the aspirations of the IMB mirror those of the director, the governor and their respective management teams, in that we all wish to see Hydebank Wood meet the criteria for a healthy prison, viz safety, respect, purposeful activity and resettlement. The IMB makes a number of recommendations to that end in this report. It considers its recommendations to be constructive, and hopes that they will be accepted as such.

Jimmy McClean
Chairman of Independent Monitoring Board

2 | Report Overview

- 2.1** A stand-alone, purpose built women's prison for Northern Ireland remains a priority. Currently, the women prisoners have to share a campus with young male prisoners, and that imposes its own limitations. For example, women prisoners should be able to move about unescorted, but a shared prison rules this out. There is an urgent need for a separate prison that could focus on the specific needs of women. No matter how many enhancements are made to Ash House, it will always remain an integral part of the male young offender centre, as originally planned. It should be stressed that a shared campus also disadvantages the majority male prisoner population.
- 2.2** Three in every four prisoners at Hydebank Wood have mental illness and/or personality disorder. Three in every four prisoners at Hydebank Wood have abused alcohol and/or drugs. Three in every four prisoners at Hydebank Wood have very basic literacy and numeracy skills. Three in every four prisoners at Hydebank Wood will re-offend. These statistics paint a dire picture and help us to understand the complexity of managing an establishment such as Hydebank Wood.
- 2.3** The foregoing statistics also underscore the necessity of a therapeutic and rehabilitative approach at Hydebank Wood. In this respect, some staff at Hydebank Wood already stand out as beacons of good practice, but too many appear to lack motivation or direction. A culture change needs to take place. As a starting point, all staff should be required to proactively engage with the prisoners in their care. At the same time, the prison officer's job at Hydebank Wood needs to be enriched and clearly defined and any shortfall in the officer's skills remedied through training. These should lead to higher levels of professionalism and job satisfaction. There is an obligation on the Northern Ireland Prison Service to keep its employees engaged and to re-engage the disengaged. As matters stand, the Northern Ireland Prison Service does not appear to be getting full value for money from some of its own staff at Hydebank Wood.
- 2.4** The IMB would wish to see staff at Hydebank Wood leave behind the turnkey image and move away from the security ethos. The IMB considers that the current maximum period of cellular confinement is too draconian and should be reduced from seven to three days, and should be used less liberally. Many of the prisoners at the receiving end of the adjudication process have mental illness or personality disorder, and frankly would derive far more benefit from therapeutic intervention than they do from being locked away from their peers in solitary confinement with little or no stimulation. Such punishments could indeed exacerbate their condition.
- 2.5** The unscheduled lock-down of prisoners and the curtailment of normal periods of association occurred throughout the reporting year, but mostly in the summer months. The reason given for these restrictions was 'staffing difficulties'. However, the high cost per prisoner place in Northern Ireland (£90,298 per annum) would suggest a more than adequate staffing provision. Staff sickness absence also affected prisoners' normal day to day activities, with an increase in such absenteeism during the summer months. A long-standing 'safe staffing levels' agreement with the Prison Officers Association was also a factor in determining whether the unscheduled lock-down of prisoners was necessary.

- 2.6** With the residential house refurbishment programme still under way and the prisoner population relatively high, enforced cell-sharing by young male prisoners continued throughout the reporting year. The need for cell-sharing should cease when the refurbishment programme is completed in 2007/08. Notwithstanding this, the IMB disagrees in principle with cell-sharing and calls upon the Northern Ireland Prison Service to declare its intention to eliminate the practice in the interests of common decency.
- 2.7** The IMB draws attention again to the operational difficulties at Hydebank Wood caused by delays in fulfilling construction and refurbishment contracts.
- 2.8** There is an urgent need for prison officers on the landings to become involved in the resettlement of prisoners in their care and for resettlement to become the core focus of all staff at Hydebank Wood. It is not sufficient to leave responsibility for resettlement to the combined efforts of the various agencies concerned and the small number of Prison Service staff directly involved. In this report the IMB again calls for the introduction of a personal officer scheme at Hydebank Wood.

3 | Summary of Recommendations

- 3.1** A stand-alone, purpose built women's prison should be provided in Northern Ireland [paragraph 4.6].
- 3.2** The sickness absenteeism target for Hydebank Wood should be pitched at a more realistic (lower) level, and at a level more stretching to achieve [paragraph 4.10].
- 3.3** A root and branch review of staffing at Hydebank Wood should be undertaken, with the aims of incorporating a higher degree of flexibility in the alignment of staff to workload and discontinuing the practice of minimum staffing levels [paragraph 4.12].
- 3.4** Many more prisoners should be allowed to move within Hydebank Wood unescorted and with minimal supervision, and when escorting is deemed necessary it should be undertaken by prison custody officers [paragraph 4.14].
- 3.5** The implementation of female specific policies and procedures at Hydebank Wood should be completed [paragraph 4.15].
- 3.6** Consideration should be given to limited external recruitment to governor grades at Hydebank Wood [paragraph 4.16].
- 3.7** Consideration should be given to limited staff exchanges or secondments for development purposes to young offender institutions and women's prisons in Great Britain or the Irish Republic [paragraph 4.16].

3 | Summary of Recommendations

- 3.8** A structured programme of brief visits by small groups of Hydebank Wood staff to prison establishments in Great Britain or the Irish Republic should be initiated, to identify examples of good practice that could be transplanted to Hydebank Wood [paragraph 4.17].
- 3.9** Hydebank Wood's relationship with local government should be broadened to embrace all 26 district councils in Northern Ireland [paragraph 4.18].
- 3.10** Women prisoners should be transferred in vehicles separate from male prisoners and attention should be paid to their individual needs [paragraph 5.2].
- 3.11** The reception area at Hydebank Wood should be refurbished as a matter of urgency [paragraph 5.3].
- 3.12** A full explanation of the IMB's role should be incorporated in the induction programme for new committals [paragraph 5.5].
- 3.13** The planning and management of construction and refurbishment contracts at Hydebank Wood should be tightened up to avoid delays [paragraph 6.3].
- 3.14** The Northern Ireland Prison Service should declare, in the interests of decency, its intention to eliminate enforced cell-sharing at Hydebank Wood at the earliest opportunity [paragraph 6.6].
- 3.15** Prison officers at Hydebank Wood should proactively engage with the prisoners in their care at all times, and managers should 'walk the job' to ensure that proper engagement is taking place in practice [paragraph 6.14].
- 3.16** All staff at Hydebank Wood should be reminded that they are required to set a personal example in their dealings with prisoners [paragraph 6.15].
- 3.17** All staff at Hydebank Wood should be told that use of foul language against or in the presence of prisoners will not be tolerated [paragraph 6.15].
- 3.18** As a matter of principle, staff at Hydebank Wood should always use first names when speaking with male or female prisoners, or when communicating about them [paragraph 6.16].
- 3.19** An effective personal officer scheme should be introduced at Hydebank Wood, with each prisoner having a named personal officer [paragraph 6.18].
- 3.20** All Prison Service staff at Hydebank Wood should wear an identification badge, showing their name, grade and job title, and the governor and his senior management team should take the lead by wearing such badges themselves [paragraph 6.20].
- 3.21** All external agency employees working with prisoners in Hydebank Wood should be required to wear badges identifying them by name, organisation and job title [paragraph 6.20].

3 | Summary of Recommendations

- 3.22** The governor should investigate (a) the disparity between the incidence of male and female prisoner bullying and (b) the low proportion of substantiated male bullying cases [paragraph 7.4].
- 3.23** Staff training in self-harm and suicide awareness should be extended to ensure 100% coverage at Hydebank Wood [paragraph 7.8].
- 3.24** The Northern Ireland Prison Service should discontinue the practice at Hydebank Wood of using isolation in an unfurnished observation cell and the wearing of 'safe' clothing as a technique for managing prisoners identified as being at risk of suicide or liable to self-harm [paragraph 7.13].
- 3.25** A written record should be maintained at Hydebank Wood of all use of unfurnished observation cells and 'safe' clothing [paragraph 7.14].
- 3.26** Robust and auditable controls should be provided to ensure equality of treatment for each and every prisoner at Hydebank Wood [paragraph 7.20].
- 3.27** All staff at Hydebank Wood should receive cultural awareness training in respect of the Catholic community in Northern Ireland and how it differs from the Protestant community culture [paragraph 7.21].
- 3.28** All staff at Hydebank Wood should receive cultural awareness training in respect of the Irish traveller community [paragraph 7.22].
- 3.29** A modest kitchen facility should be provided in the entrance area of the visitors centre, to enable NIACRO staff to offer tea/coffee and snacks to prisoners' visitors who have to travel some distance to reach Hydebank Wood [paragraph 7.25].
- 3.30** Women prisoners should be employed in the visitors centre to help NIACRO provide a limited catering service [paragraph 7.25].
- 3.31** The visitors centre at Hydebank Wood should remain open for prisoners' visitors over the lunchtime period [paragraph 7.26].
- 3.32** The visitors centre should be used as a showcase for prisoners' work at Hydebank Wood, and a limited range of products should be offered for sale to prisoners' visitors, with a facility for replenishment as required [paragraph 7.27].
- 3.33** The Northern Ireland Prison Service should consider partially subsidising prisoners' telephone calls to their families [paragraph 7.28].
- 3.34** The governor of Hydebank Wood should refer all inmate allegations of assault or harassment by staff to the prisoner ombudsman for initial investigation, instead of conducting an in-house inquiry. The prisoner ombudsman would make the decision to refer an allegation to the police for full investigation [paragraph 7.30].

3 | Summary of Recommendations

- 3.35** The advocacy service at Hydebank Wood for young prisoners under the age of 18 years should be made available to those prisoners aged 18 and above who clearly would not have the mental capacity to represent themselves at disciplinary hearings, or to submit a complaint or request [paragraph 7.33].
- 3.36** Girls under the age of 18 years should not be accommodated along with adult women prisoners at Hydebank Wood [paragraph 7.37].
- 3.37** The Northern Ireland Prison Service should put in place robust controls to ensure that all prisoners in its care at Hydebank Wood receive a comprehensive healthcare service (including mental health provision) and, as promised, at a level higher than previously delivered in-house [paragraph 8.2].
- 3.38** A head of healthcare senior management post should be created at Hydebank Wood, with the jobholder reporting direct to the governor [paragraph 8.3].
- 3.39** The agency nurses employed at Hydebank Wood should be replaced by permanent nurses, subject of course to a review of healthcare staffing needs [paragraph 8.4].
- 3.40** The services of an occupational therapist and a physiotherapist should be provided at Hydebank Wood on a sessional basis [paragraph 8.6].
- 3.41** Oral hygiene sessions should be introduced at Hydebank Wood [paragraph 8.7].
- 3.42** The necessary support should be provided to enable the consultant psychiatrist to undertake at least two sessions per week for the women and young men imprisoned in Hydebank Wood [paragraph 8.8].
- 3.43** The current vacancies at Hydebank Wood for a senior forensic psychologist and a part-time support administrator should be filled without further delay [paragraph 8.9].
- 3.44** A clinical psychologist post should be created at Hydebank Wood [paragraph 8.10].
- 3.45** Additional weekly sessions should be provided by the existing community mental health in-reach support service to more fully meet the needs of the male and female prisoner population at Hydebank Wood [paragraph 8.11].
- 3.46** The GP service for women prisoners should be enhanced to bring it into line with the GP service for male young offenders at Hydebank Wood [paragraph 8.12].
- 3.47** The renovations to the healthcare centre at Hydebank Wood scheduled to be carried out in 2006/07 should be undertaken during the year 2007/08, if the planned alterations are still deemed appropriate [paragraph 8.15].
- 3.48** Any necessary cessation or reduction of prescribed medication for newly committed prisoners should be effected on a gradual basis [paragraph 8.16].

3 | Summary of Recommendations

- 3.49** A dedicated unit should be provided in Northern Ireland for young prisoners with severe personality disorder [paragraph 8.18].
- 3.50** At Hydebank Wood each prisoner with a personality disorder should be allocated a named personal officer [paragraph 8.19].
- 3.51** One person, a head of education, should be given responsibility at Hydebank Wood for all education including vocational training, library services and physical education [paragraph 9.11].
- 3.52** Serious consideration should be given to outsourcing all education and vocational training services at Hydebank Wood to a mainstream college of further education [paragraph 9.2].
- 3.53** Further drama and other arts projects should be undertaken at Hydebank Wood [paragraph 9.10].
- 3.54** A broad spectrum of reading material (books, magazines and newspapers) appropriate to the interests of women and young men should be made available on the landings and in the special supervision units [paragraph 9.11].
- 3.55** A newspaper of choice should be delivered daily to each prisoner in his or her cell [paragraph 9.12].
- 3.56** In vocational training, the maximum number of trainees per class should be increased to ten, and attendance should be closely monitored to minimise non-attendance [paragraph 9.14].
- 3.57** The vocational training needs of women prisoners should be properly assessed, bearing in mind that the overall numbers will always be relatively small and recognising that one-to-one tutoring might be necessary [paragraph 9.16].
- 3.58** The Northern Ireland Prison Service should undertake a study to determine whether the vocational training courses currently on offer have produced real jobs for inmates on their release from Hydebank Wood. The study should also ascertain the labour market available to ex-offenders in Northern Ireland, which should give pointers as to future vocational training provision [paragraph 9.17].
- 3.59** All vocational trainees at Hydebank Wood should take a lunch pack with them to their place of work, and they should work a full day without returning to their residential accommodation in the middle of the day as at present [paragraph 9.20].
- 3.60** Much more frequent use should be made of the playing field facilities at Hydebank Wood, by female as well as male prisoners [paragraph 9.22].
- 3.61** Arrangements should be put in place for the IMB to be notified in future when handcuffs are used to restrain prisoners at Hydebank Wood [paragraph 10.4].

3 | Summary of Recommendations

- 3.62** The relatively high frequency of use of control and restraint techniques against women prisoners should be investigated [paragraph 10.5].
- 3.63** The exercise of control and restraint techniques by male prison officers on women prisoners should be discontinued, and should in future be undertaken by female officers [paragraph 10.6].
- 3.64** A healthcare rather than a security approach should be adopted for dealing with behavioural outbursts by mentally ill and/or personality disordered prisoners. This might entail transferring the prisoner to a specialist hospital unit in the community [paragraph 10.7].
- 3.65** Hydebank Wood should reduce its seven days maximum period of cellular confinement to three days [paragraph 10.17].
- 3.66** When cellular confinement is imposed at Hydebank Wood, no other privilege should be lost, except in exceptional circumstances [paragraph 10.18].
- 3.67** Reading material, a radio and tobacco should be made available at all times to inmates in cellular confinement [paragraph 10.18].
- 3.68** Properly constituted investigation and adjudication procedures should be followed in dealing with serious breaches of the prison rules, and the practice of informal group punishments should be discontinued at Hydebank Wood [paragraph 10.19].
- 3.69** A review should be undertaken of the efficacy of the medical examination of prisoners at Hydebank Wood prior to the imposition of cellular confinement or loss of normal association [paragraph 10.20].
- 3.70** All adjudicating governors at Hydebank Wood should receive mental health awareness training as a matter of urgency [paragraph 10.20].
- 3.71** As an alternative to the current punitive measures, a fresh strategy should be devised at Hydebank Wood for managing prisoners with mental illness and/or personality disorder who present with anti-social behaviour and do not conform [paragraph 10.21].
- 3.72** Inmates held in the special supervision unit in cells without in-cell sanitation should be allowed access to the lavatory 24 hours a day, and they should be permitted to summon an officer for that purpose by using the emergency bell provided [paragraph 10.22].
- 3.73** Special supervision unit cells should always be examined by staff for cleanliness prior to occupation by a prisoner [paragraph 10.24].
- 3.74** Urgent action should be taken to improve the ventilation in the cells in the male special supervision unit [paragraph 10.24].

3 | Summary of Recommendations

- 3.75** A properly tailored programme of one-to-one therapeutic and rehabilitative counselling should be introduced for all prisoners held in the special supervision units [paragraph 10.25].
- 3.76** The incentives and earned privileges scheme at Hydebank Wood should be reviewed to ensure that it is being applied fairly, transparently and consistently [paragraph 10.28].
- 3.77** The wording of the incentives and earned privileges scheme should be tightened up to minimise the need for staff discretion [paragraph 10.29].
- 3.78** Everyone employed at Hydebank Wood should focus on the common goals of effective rehabilitation of prisoners and their reintegration into society [paragraph 11.3].
- 3.79** Additional funding should be provided to facilitate a more frequent attendance at Hydebank Wood by Housing Rights Service, who currently attend on one day a fortnight to give accommodation advice to prisoners [paragraph 11.6].
- 3.80** More prison officers at Hydebank Wood should be encouraged and trained to deliver prisoner programmes [paragraph 11.8].
- 3.81** Hydebank Wood should now formulate its own fresh policy and action plan on alcohol and substance misuse, as stipulated in paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2 of the Northern Ireland Prison Service's revised policy document published in July 2006 [paragraph 11.11].
- 3.82** The Northern Ireland Prison Service should now consider introducing the latest drugs detection technology at Hydebank Wood, as an eventual replacement for passive drug dogs [paragraph 11.13].
- 3.83** Searches should be introduced of all prison officers, administrative staff, agency workers, building contractor employees, etc prior to entering Hydebank Wood, albeit on a random basis [paragraph 11.14].
- 3.84** Inmates should not be held in the special supervision unit on the sole basis of an indication by a passive drug dog [paragraph 11.15].
- 3.85** The Northern Ireland Prison Service itself should provide insurance cover in respect of prisoners on training placements with external employers [paragraph 11.18].
- 3.86** Further out of prison work opportunities should be identified within the Prison Service estate and/or elsewhere in the public and voluntary sectors [paragraph 11.19].
- 3.87** The per capita daily catering allowance should be reviewed [paragraph 12.2].
- 3.88** The kitchen's current accommodation and equipment provision should be improved as indicated in the report [paragraph 12.3].
- 3.89** The planned refurbishment of the laundry should be undertaken [paragraph 12.6].

4 | The Establishment

- 4.1** Hydebank Wood was built in 1976 as the centre for all male young offenders in Northern Ireland, remand and sentenced. It is located in an extensive wooded estate on the southern outskirts of Belfast. It has five residential houses on a single campus - Ash, Beech, Cedar, Elm and Willow. All women prisoners were transferred from Maghaberry Prison (Mourne House) to Hydebank Wood in June 2004, and Ash House was designated Northern Ireland's prison for women.
- 4.2** The prisoner population at Hydebank Wood on 31 March 2006 stood at 194 and a year later at 30 March 2007 was 182. In the early months of 2006/07 the population climbed and by 30 June it had reached 259. Thereafter it declined gradually. The month end average for the reporting year was 237 prisoners. The number of prison grade staff caring for the prisoner population at Hydebank Wood totalled 309 at 1 February 2007 ie approximately 1.3 staff members for each prisoner.
- 4.3** The reporting year again witnessed an increase in the number of women imprisoned, with a recorded high of 56 prisoners in summer 2006. Figures in the high 30s were more generally the norm.
- 4.4** The female prisoner population remained disparate in nature during 2006/07. They ranged from life-sentenced to those serving short periods for fine default; there were remand as well as sentenced; and there were adults and juveniles. This continued to present challenges for management and staff in providing an appropriate environment and regime that adequately responded to the multiplicity and complexity of need. The reporting year saw 115 women imprisoned for fine default - of these, 74 had originally been fined for motoring offences or television licence evasion. Aside from the trauma associated with the period of incarceration, the demand that this category of prisoner places on the system simply in terms of processing, must indicate a strong argument for fine defaulters not becoming part of the prison population.
- 4.5** Proposed changes in criminal justice legislation will introduce new sentencing powers in Northern Ireland, which will have implications for the size of the prisoner population at Hydebank Wood. The introduction of indeterminate and extended public protection sentences and the end of automatic 50% remission will increase the prisoner population at the upper end of the sentencing spectrum. At the lower end of the spectrum, there should be a reduction in prisoner numbers with fine defaulters, etc less likely to receive a custodial sentence.
- 4.6** In its report for 2005/06, the IMB recommended that continued consideration should be given to the provision of a custom-built prison exclusively for the needs of Northern Ireland's women. In its response the Northern Ireland Prison Service accepted that Ash House was not the long term solution for female prisoners. It also indicated that the provision of a women's prison was being addressed in its strategic estate proposals, which were to be taken forward by Government in the context of the 2007 comprehensive spending review. As there was no announcement by the end of the reporting year 2006/07, the IMB is duty bound to repeat its recommendation.

4 | The Establishment

- 4.7** The curtailment of periods of association and the unscheduled lock-down of prisoners were ongoing features at Hydebank Wood throughout the year, but were most prevalent during the summer months. Invariably, these were attributed to 'staffing difficulties'. Likewise, the IMB continually heard about prisoners' normal day to day activities being refused or restricted because there was no staff member available to escort or supervise them.
- 4.8** Prisons are labour intensive and the high cost per prisoner place in Northern Ireland (£85,250 was the reporting year target) would suggest that the staffing level at Hydebank Wood and the other two establishments was more than adequate. Simple observation by lay members of the IMB would tend to bear that out.
- 4.9** Staff sickness absence also affected the services provided for prisoners at Hydebank Wood. An increased level was noted during the summer months. It is understood that a substantial proportion of staff incurred little or no sickness absence during the year and this would suggest that some staff members had high levels of such absenteeism. The IMB commends the ongoing management actions taken to improve attendance at Hydebank Wood, but more needs to be done.
- 4.10** It was surprising to note that one of the key performance targets incorporated in Hydebank Wood's published business plan for the year 2006/07 was to reduce the rate of absenteeism to an annual average of 13.75 days per head. By any standards this was a high target and too easy to meet. The IMB recommends that in future the absenteeism target for Hydebank Wood should be pitched at a more realistic level and at a level more stretching to achieve.
- 4.11** The governor confirmed the existence of 'safe staffing levels' at Hydebank Wood which had been agreed with the Prison Officers Association (POA); there was an agreement specifying the minimum number of staff for each work unit, irrespective of actual need. The governor indicated that he had no discretion and that the number of staff deployed to each area was a requirement under a 'framework planning' agreement initiated in 1992 and completed in 1996/97. The governor admitted that he had no means of re-negotiating the POA agreement and had to abide by its terms.
- 4.12** The IMB recommends that the Northern Ireland Prison Service should undertake a root and branch review of staffing at Hydebank Wood, with the aims of incorporating a higher degree of flexibility in the alignment of staff to workload and discontinuing the practice of minimum staffing levels.
- 4.13** In October 2006 the governor told his managers to start considering their strategies for the financial year 2007/08, bearing in mind that they would all have to do more with fewer staff. In the event, the Northern Ireland Prison Service and the Prison Officers Association agreed a three year pay and efficiency deal with effect from April 2007. The IMB will cover the impact of that deal in its next annual report.

4 | The Establishment

- 4.14** During the year the IMB observed prison officers escorting prisoners from one part of the prison to another, often with one, two or three prisoners at a time. This seemed wasteful in terms of the prison officer's time. The IMB recommends that many more prisoners be allowed to move within the prison unescorted and with minimal supervision, and that when escorting is deemed necessary it should be undertaken by prison custody officers. This would free up prison officers to perform more meaningful work.
- 4.15** In its report for 2005/06 the IMB recommended that the specific requirements of women prisoners needed to be taken account of and female specific policies and procedures implemented as soon as possible. In response, the Northern Ireland Prison Service stated that a strategy for the management of women in custody was being developed in collaboration with key stakeholders, and that this included the development of further specific policies and procedures. The IMB recalls that an experienced governor was seconded from the English Prison Service in May 2005 with a remit to develop policies for Northern Ireland's women prisoners. Her period of secondment lasted approximately eleven months and ended in March 2006. The IMB repeats its recommendation.
- 4.16** Hydebank Wood is a small establishment in a relatively small prison service. The governors and prison officers all tend to know each other; indeed most of the governors started their career as basic grade prison officers and in many cases were basic grade colleagues of the officers they now manage. The IMB feels that it would be beneficial to inject some fresh thinking and to that end recommends that consideration be given to limited external recruitment to governor grades at Hydebank Wood. Furthermore, the IMB recommends that consideration be given to limited staff exchanges or secondments for development purposes to young offender institutions or women's prisons in Great Britain or the Irish Republic.
- 4.17** Each year IMB members visit prison establishments in Great Britain or the Irish Republic. During these brief visits they identify examples of good practice which they feel could be usefully transplanted to Hydebank Wood. The IMB considers that Hydebank Wood would benefit from a structured programme of similar brief visits by small groups of its staff to establishments in other jurisdictions, and recommends accordingly.
- 4.18** Prisons are closed institutions and it is to Hydebank Wood's credit that over the past few years it has established a relationship with Castlereagh Borough Council, not least because of its location in the Council's geographical area. However, Hydebank Wood's inmate population is drawn from all parts of Northern Ireland. The IMB recommends therefore that Hydebank Wood's relationship with local government should be broadened to embrace all 26 district councils in Northern Ireland.
- 4.19** At the end of the reporting year, the Northern Ireland Prison Service was still investigating alleged staff irregularities at Hydebank Wood. The IMB will include the outcome in its report for 2007/08.

5 | Arrival in Custody

Movement to and from Court

- 5.1** In February 2007 the Northern Ireland Prison Service established a fully integrated prisoner escorting and court custody service under a single management structure. Over 100 staff transferred to the Northern Ireland Prison Service from the private security company (Maybin), which formerly had responsibility for the supervision of prisoners in magistrates courts. They will be joined in the coming months by newly recruited prison custody officers. The Northern Ireland Prison Service expects the new arrangements to be fully operational by autumn 2007. In the light of normal practice nowadays for public bodies to outsource peripheral activities to the private sector, the IMB notes with interest this transfer of employees from the private sector to the public sector.
- 5.2** Following an inspection of Ash House in November 2004, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons recommended that women prisoners should be transported in vehicles separate from male prisoners and that attention should be paid to their individual needs. There is evidence to suggest that this has not been happening. Reasons given were the impracticality of sending two vehicles to the same destination and insufficient parking space at the courthouse concerned. The IMB reiterates the recommendation of HM Chief Inspector of Prisons.

Reception

- 5.3** Each year the IMB draws attention to the desirability of a bright, modern and friendly reception area. This is what an inmate first sees on entering Hydebank Wood, and first impressions are lasting impressions. Many inmates are very vulnerable in the first hours after a court appearance, and particularly if they have just been sentenced. This vulnerability can be heightened in the case of first time offenders. The reception area at Hydebank Wood is in urgent need of refurbishment. It received a coat of paint during the reporting year and the staff carried out some creative work on the wall tiles in an effort to brighten the place. The floor is badly marked with paint stains. Not only is the whole area depressing for inmates, but the staff facilities also leave a lot to be desired. The IMB recommends that the reception area should be refurbished as a matter of urgency. It is interesting to note that a similar recommendation was made by the then visiting committee five years ago.

5 | Arrival in Custody

First Night Arrangements

- 5.4 The early period in prison custody is a time of heightened risk of self-harm and suicide. The first night in custody can and should be used by staff to help reduce distress amongst newly arrived prisoners. The IMB would welcome any extra effort on the part of staff to reassure newcomers, particularly those arriving at Hydebank Wood for the very first time. This is a time when small gestures would go a long way towards settling an inmate. Currently, officers on the committal landing are advised when a new inmate arrives, and special attention is given to anyone who might be vulnerable or might self-harm. Each inmate is given a first night pack.

Induction

- 5.5 The induction programme is regarded as the basis for the resettlement process and preparation for release therefore begins as soon as the inmate arrives at Hydebank Wood. The duration of the induction programme is eight hours spread over one and a half days, and covers twelve separate topics. The IMB feels that some inmates suffer from information overload due to the intensity of the programme. Frequently the IMB encounters inmates who have no knowledge of the IMB or its role. The IMB therefore recommends that a full explanation be incorporated in the induction programme.

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Residential Accommodation

- 6.1 The IMB welcomes the benefits that flow from the construction or refurbishment of prison buildings. It also accepts that a degree of inconvenience is inevitable with such works. However, the period and extent of such inconvenience should be kept to a minimum by good planning. To the lay observer, the planning in respect of recent refurbishments at Hydebank Wood appears to have been inadequate, disjointed and made 'on the hoof'. For example, in February 2006 all women prisoners were transferred temporarily from Ash House to Beech House to enable the installation of in-cell sanitation in Ash House. The IMB understands that the contract for such work was not signed until June 2006 and work did not commence until 10 July 2006. Then sometime later in 2006 it was decided to provide a special accommodation unit in Ash House for long-term women prisoners. This affected the completion date and the work was not completed until April 2007. Ash House had been out of use for 14 months, but with better planning this period of disruption could have been reduced by at least five months. This was happening at a time of rising prisoner numbers and the lack of proper planning contributed to the over-crowding at Hydebank Wood during the reporting year.

- 6.2 It is worth mentioning that Ash House had a major refurbishment over an eight months period from September 2003 to April 2004. The opportunity could, and perhaps should, have been taken then to incorporate in-cell sanitation. The cost implication of not carrying out the work at that time must be considerable, not to mention the further disruption to the prisoner population.

- 6.3 The IMB has been reporting a pattern of delays in fulfilling construction and refurbishment contracts at Hydebank Wood as far back as 2002. The IMB recommends that the planning and management of all such works should be tightened up.

Cell-sharing

- 6.4 With one of the residential blocks (Ash House) still out of use for refurbishment, cell-sharing by male young offenders continued at Hydebank Wood throughout the reporting year. Moreover, with cell-sharing nearing a maximum in terms of feasibility, the governor decided during the year to provide dormitory facilities to accommodate up to ten male young offenders in bunk beds in Willow House. In the event, use of the new dormitory was not needed.

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- 6.5** It was not surprising to the IMB that most inmates when asked, expressed a strong preference to be in cells on their own. There are many things prisoners are comfortable about doing in private, but less comfortable about doing if someone else is present. There are some very intimate things, such as using the lavatory, which many people would be extremely unhappy about doing in the presence of others, and equally unhappy about others doing in their presence. Apart from the lack of privacy, sharing a cell with someone has its own particular problems. You may not like your cellmate. They may have habits which in normal course you would be able to put up with, but which you become much more aware of in the confines of a small prison cell designed for one person. They may get on your nerves. Sharing a confined space with someone has its own tensions - for example, disagreements about which television channel to watch. In the end, we all need our private space. That has particular relevance for prisoners who have to conform to a host of rules regulating their behaviour when they are out of their cells.
- 6.6** The IMB acknowledges that the Northern Ireland Prison Service is obliged to find accommodation for all persons sent to prison by the courts. Nevertheless, the IMB recommends that the Prison Service should declare, in the interests of decency, its intention to eliminate enforced cell-sharing at Hydebank Wood at the earliest opportunity.
- 6.7** The report of the Criminal Justice Inspectorate's thematic inspection of hate crime (January 2007) highlighted the recent transition of Northern Ireland into a multi-cultural society. Increased diversity has led to the formation of a range of minorities including migrant workers, gay and disabled persons, etc. To a worrying extent, people in these minority groups are increasingly inheriting the scapegoat role and being targeted by people who would previously have acted out their traditional hatred on the other religious community, Protestant or Catholic. This recent trend is mentioned to flag up the increasing list of risks associated with cell-sharing. In this connection, the IMB is always conscious of the murder of Zahid Mubarek by his racist cellmate at Feltham Young Offender Institution in 2000.
- 6.8** The IMB was told during the year that there was general staff unease in respect of cell-sharing at Hydebank Wood. Apparently, prison officers were reluctant to take responsibility for the risk assessments associated with cell-sharing, as they feared being singled out for blame if things went wrong.

Premature Transfers

- 6.9** In July/ August 2006 eighteen male young offenders were transferred to Maghaberry Prison to alleviate over-crowding at Hydebank Wood. In normal circumstances these inmates would not have been transferred to an adult prison at that time. The IMB expressed disappointment that these young men had to be uprooted and transferred prematurely to an establishment designed for adults, purely because of over-crowding at Hydebank Wood.

Juvenile Unit

- 6.10** The juvenile unit is located in Willow 1 and Willow 2, and houses all Hydebank Wood's male inmates aged under 18 years. The unit can accommodate up to 26 boys.

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- 6.11** Children aged under 17 years can be transferred from Woodlands juvenile justice centre (Bangor) to Hydebank Wood when they are deemed to be at risk of harming others or themselves, or when a court orders that they serve the unexpired portion of a juvenile justice order in a young offenders centre. Youth courts can commit young persons aged under 18 years direct to a young offenders centre.
- 6.12** All young persons aged under 18 years are legally children, and are subject to child protection procedures. Staff employed in the juvenile unit are required to have undergone child protection training. At the reporting year end, 44 members of staff had received such training. During the year eight child protection referrals were logged.
- 6.13** The early period in custody is a time of particular risk of self-harm or suicide. In February 2007 it was decided therefore as a precaution to conduct observations at 15 minute intervals on newly committed juvenile inmates for their first 24 hours in Hydebank Wood. The IMB welcomes this new measure.

Staff/prisoner Relationships

- 6.14** In the main the IMB observed relatively little proactive engagement of inmates by prison officers. However, there were some notable exceptions to this general observation, and those staff members are to be highly commended. The observed relationships between staff and inmates tended to be reactive, with the inmates approaching staff in the first instance. Too many staff tended to keep their distance or remain seated at their desk, rather than positively engage with inmates on the landings. The IMB recommends that prison officers proactively engage with the prisoners in their care at all times, and that managers 'walk the job' more than they currently do, to ensure that proper engagement is taking place in practice.
- 6.15** Prisoners should be treated respectfully by staff at all times. However, IMB members have on occasions heard officers swearing at young male inmates. Such behaviour is to be deplored. At Hydebank Wood swearing by an inmate at an officer would invariably be treated as a disciplinary offence. Thus, Hydebank Wood is operating a double standard in this respect. The IMB recommends that all staff should be reminded that they are required to set a personal example in their dealings with prisoners. Furthermore, all staff should be told that use of foul language against or in the presence of prisoners will not be tolerated.
- 6.16** The IMB has observed that in Hydebank Wood prison staff invariably address women prisoners by their first name, and that women prisoners are frequently on first name terms with staff members. This is in stark contrast to the treatment of male young offenders who are normally addressed by their surname, and they in turn are required to use the term 'sir' or 'miss' when addressing staff. The IMB has noted that this inequality of treatment extends to written and oral communication by staff members. The IMB recommends that staff as a matter of principle should always use first names when speaking with prisoners including male young offenders, or when communicating about them. Such behaviour is only common decency and should help to improve inter-personal relationships within Hydebank Wood.

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Personal Officers

- 6.17 The concept of the personal officer (key worker) is of a prison officer who has responsibility for the care of a small number of designated prisoners on an ongoing basis. Prisoners should know their named personal officer and should be able to access him/her as an initial point of reference. Personal officers should be aware of the individual needs of their prisoners and help them to access the services they require or respond to any matters they raise. Personal officers should also know the personal circumstances of their prisoners and, where necessary, act as a point of contact with the prisoners’ families and encourage appropriate links with them.
- 6.18 The role of a personal officer is central to the care of prisoners and their preparation for release back into the community. An attempt was made about six years ago to introduce the personal officer scheme at Hydebank Wood but it never really got off the ground. In its report last year, the IMB recommended the introduction of an effective personal officer scheme at Hydebank Wood, but by the end of the reporting year no such scheme had materialised. The IMB is strongly of the view that a personal officer scheme is an essential component of a progressive prison regime, and has no hesitation in repeating its recommendation that each prisoner at Hydebank Wood should have a named personal officer.
- 6.19 In its response to the IMB’s recommendation in last year’s report, the Northern Ireland Prison Service stated that, in line with its Blueprint programme, it had in hand initiatives to develop active engagement with inmates and to ensure that all staff were provided with training in the skills and attributes which personal officers should display; training and familiarisation with resettlement issues would be provided for staff, with the emphasis on the role of the prison officer in helping prisoners address their offending behaviour in preparation for release. The IMB considers that ‘active engagement with prisoners’ in itself does not equate to a personal officer or key worker role in the full sense. Moreover, the proposed training and familiarisation are part and parcel of any prison officer’s job.

Staff Identification

- 6.20 Prison officers at Hydebank Wood wear civilian clothes rather than the standard Prison Service uniform. It is not therefore possible to identify officers by name, grade or job title. In last year’s report the IMB recommended that identification badges should be worn by all staff at Hydebank Wood. In response the Northern Ireland Prison Service confirmed that name badges had been issued to all staff who wished to wear them on a voluntary basis. The IMB has not seen any staff wearing identification badges and therefore repeats its recommendation in respect of all Prison Service employees at Hydebank Wood, not just prison officers. Furthermore, the IMB recommends that the governor and his senior management team should take the lead by wearing such badges themselves. The same principle applies to all external agency employees working with prisoners in Hydebank Wood, viz Probation Board, NIACRO, Opportunity Youth, Banardos, Impact team, Cruse and all National Health Service personnel. The IMB recommends that all agency workers should be required to wear badges identifying them by name, organisation and job title.

7 | Duty of Care

Bullying

- 7.1 The anti-bullying strategy at Hydebank Wood falls within the remit of the safer custody group whose members examine complaints of bullying and monitor trends in this area. During 2006 the safer custody group commissioned a bullying survey which included women prisoners and young male inmates. The survey found that those imprisoned at Hydebank Wood felt ‘generally safe’. The safer custody group considered this response unsatisfactory, and propose to take follow-up action.
- 7.2 The safer custody group noted that generally speaking the nature of bullying at Hydebank Wood had a gender difference. Young men tended to be overt, using physical violence or threats of violence. Women on the other hand employed more subtle methods.
- 7.3 Bullying can be reported by letter, telephone or word of mouth. All reported incidents are thoroughly investigated by a principal officer. If a prima facie case of bullying is established, the alleged perpetrator is charged and in-house disciplinary procedures followed. The number of logged incidents of bullying during the reporting year 2006/07 can be summarised as follows:

Male	Female
10 alleged bullying incidents	26 alleged bullying incidents
1 allegation substantiated	11 allegations substantiated
9 unsubstantiated	9 unsubstantiated
	2 complaints withdrawn
	1 not investigated as prisoner discharged

- 7.4 The IMB recommends that the governor investigates (a) the disparity between the incidence of male and female bullying as evidenced by the foregoing statistics, and (b) the low proportion of substantiated male bullying cases (10% of total allegations).

Self-harm and Suicide

- 7.5 The early period in prison is a time of heightened risk of self-harm and suicide. Uncertainty about the outcome of the prisoner’s court case and the difficulties in coping with the new environment are risk factors. Inmates charged with offences of a sexual nature are particularly at risk. The rate of self-harm is highest among women and girls in prison, and many self-harmers will cut or burn themselves repeatedly.
- 7.6 During the reporting year there were 22 incidents of self-harm and two attempted suicides by male young offenders at Hydebank Wood. The levels were much higher among women prisoners with 64 incidents of self-harm and five attempted suicides.

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- 7.7** A multi-discipline committee, the safe custody group, has responsibility for the management of at-risk prisoners at Hydebank Wood. It is chaired by the deputy governor. A senior prison officer acts as self-harm and suicide awareness co-ordinator.
- 7.8** A total of 54 prison officers, together with the majority of Opportunity Youth workers and probation staff, have received training in suicide awareness and self-harm. That leaves approximately 200 staff at Hydebank Wood who have not yet received this essential training. The IMB recommends that the programme of training be extended to ensure 100% coverage.
- 7.9** The prisoner at risk (PAR-1) procedures continued to operate and a total of 119 new cases were raised during the year, comprising 62 cases in respect of women and 57 cases in respect of young male prisoners.
- 7.10** The existing prisoner at risk (PAR-1) model has been reviewed in line with recommendations in the report of the McClelland review of non-natural deaths in Northern Ireland Prison Service establishments (November 2005). The model currently used in England and Wales (assessment, care in custody and teamwork) is being tailored for use in Northern Ireland prisons. There has been inconsistency in the completion of PAR-1 forms at Hydebank Wood, and this is being addressed.
- 7.11** A number of initiatives are available at Hydebank Wood:
- Buddy scheme whereby an appropriate prisoner shares a cell with a distressed prisoner;
 - Samaritan telephones on the landings for prisoner use at any time;
 - Insider scheme where an appropriate prisoner offers practical support to new committals for a period of 48 hours;
 - Suicide awareness aide-memoire produced for staff and others who have direct contact with prisoners; and
 - Mood mapping - a limited pilot scheme.
- 7.12** The IMB welcomes the multi-agency approach to the management of at-risk prisoners at Hydebank Wood. The IMB also commends the work of the self-harm and suicide awareness co-ordinator and those members of staff who conscientiously care for vulnerable prisoners in their charge, and who remain vigilant at all times.
- 7.13** The IMB recommends that the Northern Ireland Prison Service should discontinue the practice at Hydebank Wood of using isolation in an unfurnished cell and the wearing of 'safe' clothing as a technique for managing prisoners identified as being at risk of suicide or liable to self-harm.

7 | Duty of Care

- 7.14** In response to a recommendation in the IMB's report for 2005/06, the Prison Service indicated that prisoners would only be held in unfurnished cells and in anti-suicide clothing in extreme and exceptional circumstances where they pose a risk to their own safety. In preparation for this year's report, the IMB asked the governor to provide the actual number of occasions during 2006/07 when prisoners were required to wear a 'safe' suit or dress. The IMB was somewhat surprised at the response which indicated that no such statistics were held. In 2005/06 women prisoners had been required to wear a 'safe' dress on 229 occasions. The IMB recommends that a written record should be maintained at Hydebank Wood of all use of unfurnished observation cells and 'safe' clothing, including the justification signed by the governor.
- 7.15** In March 2004 Roseanne Irvine, a 34 year old prisoner with a history of mental health difficulties, committed suicide in Maghaberry Prison. The inquest into her death took place during the reporting year (on 6 February 2007) and the coroner declared that the prison system had failed Roseanne. The IMB trusts that management at Hydebank Wood have put in place controls to ensure that there will be no repetition of the contributory failures highlighted by the coroner.
- 7.16** In February 2007 the mental health charity Rethink brought live theatre to Hydebank Wood with a performance of 'Revolving Door', a play that sensitively explored the issues around adolescent suicide. The IMB welcomes initiatives such as this, bearing in mind the incidence of suicide among young males in Northern Ireland.
- 7.17** A training session provided by the Northern Ireland Prison Service for IMB members during 2006 included a showing of CCTV footage of the attempted suicide by hanging of a young woman, who had been a serving prisoner at Hydebank Wood at the time of the training and was known to IMB members. Her consent had not been obtained. The governor expressed the view that her human rights had not been contravened as there were signs exhibited at Hydebank Wood informing inmates that CCTV footage could be used for detection of crime, health and safety and training purposes. The governor acknowledged the sensitivities involved, but felt that it was helpful for the footage to be seen. Some IMB members considered that there was a fundamental ethical issue and contended that the notices would be neither read nor understood by prisoners. No attempt had been made to ensure the subject prisoner's anonymity. Other IMB members felt that it was educational to view footage of the incident and see how well the suicide attempt had been dealt with by staff.

7 | Duty of Care

7.18 Equality

The religious composition of the prisoner population at Hydebank Wood in April 2006 was as follows:

	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
Catholic	114	19	133	54.7
Protestant	54	15	69	28.4
Other/none	37	4	41	16.9
Total	205	38	243	100

For those prisoners deemed Catholic or Protestant, the split was 65.8% Catholic and 34.2% Protestant.

7.19 The religious composition of prison grade staff at Hydebank Wood at 1 February 2007 was as follows:-

Catholic	19	(6.1%)
Protestant	257	(83.2%)
Non-determined	33	(10.7%)
Total	309	

For those staff deemed Catholic or Protestant, the split was 6.9% Catholic and 93.1 % Protestant.

7.20 The religious composition of the prisoner population at Hydebank Wood contrasts sharply with the religious composition of the prison grade staff employed at Hydebank Wood, which shows a marked under-representation of Catholics. The Northern Ireland Prison Service has put in place affirmative measures aimed at remedying the imbalance in its staff. Realistically, however, the imbalance at Hydebank Wood will continue for the foreseeable future and clearly the workforce will not reflect the community it serves. There is an urgent need for robust and auditable controls to ensure equality of treatment for each and every prisoner at Hydebank Wood, and the IMB recommends the provision of such controls.

7.21 With the marked over-representation of Protestants in the Hydebank Wood workforce and the majority of the prisoner population being Catholic, it would be beneficial for staff to receive cultural awareness training in respect of the Catholic community in Northern Ireland and how it differs from the Protestant culture. The IMB recommends that such training be provided.

7.22 The IMB has noted that the Irish traveller community is continuously represented among the prisoner population of Hydebank Wood, and considers that it would be helpful for staff to receive some cultural awareness training in respect of the traveller community. The IMB recommends accordingly.

7 | Duty of Care

Visitors Centre

- 7.23 The IMB commends the prison officers and NIACRO staff employed in the visitors centre for their commitment to facilitating good quality links between prisoners and their partners, families and friends. The NIACRO manager and her staff provide valuable support to visitors on practical and emotional issues.
- 7.24 The IMB also commends the family liaison officers who facilitate the child and family centred visits now on offer at Hydebank Wood. The purpose of these visits is to enable prisoners who have children, or inmates who are children themselves, to spend time with their family to help create and strengthen family bonds. Such visits take place in a purpose-built room and last two hours. Other worthwhile initiatives aimed at enhancing the link between prisoner and family include the 'Parents Aloud' reading programme, parenting courses and family tours.
- 7.25 Many prisoners' visitors have to travel some distance to reach Hydebank Wood and NIACRO staff would wish to be in a position to offer them tea/coffee and snacks when they arrive at the visitors centre. Currently there is no kitchen in the entrance area to enable them to do so. The IMB recommends that a modest kitchen facility be provided. Furthermore, the IMB recommends that women prisoners be employed in the visitors centre to help provide this catering service. Some women prisoners had expressed an interest in working in the prison's central kitchen, but their request had been rejected because insufficient women were available to make such work viable.
- 7.26 The IMB understands that some prisoners' visitors arrive during the lunchtime period when the visitors centre is closed, and have to wait around or go away. The IMB feels that a valuable resource such as the visitors centre should remain open over the lunchtime period, and recommends accordingly.
- 7.27 Many male and female prisoners are employed in horticulture, cottage industries, etc and produce items of marketable quality. The IMB considers that the visitors centre should be used as a showcase for prisoners' work and recommends that a limited range of products be offered for sale to prisoners' visitors, with a facility for replenishment as required.
- ### Telephone Calls
- 7.28 The IMB continually receives complaints from prisoners about the high cost of telephone calls. This is exacerbated by the fact that in many instances their families do not have a land-line, and the cost of calls to a mobile telephone is relatively high. As ongoing contact is an important element in the resettlement process, the IMB recommends that the Northern Ireland Prison Service should consider partially subsidising such calls. The IMB commends the Prison Service for providing one free telephone call per week for foreign national prisoners.

7 | Duty of Care

Letters

- 7.29** Prisoners are allowed to send two letters each week at public expense. However, communication by letter is less popular than telephone use. There were some recent complaints about in-house delays to incoming mail, but remedial action was taken.

Allegations of Assault or Harassment

- 7.30** From time to time the IMB receives inmate allegations of assault or harassment by prison officers. These complaints are passed on to the governor for investigation. The IMB is not privy to the extent or nature of such internal investigations, or whether any consideration is given to police involvement. The Prisoner Ombudsman for Northern Ireland has the resources to investigate any serious allegation, but can only do so if the allegation is referred to his office. The IMB recommends that the governor should promptly refer all inmate allegations of assault or harassment by staff to the Prisoner Ombudsman for investigation, instead of carrying out an in-house inquiry. This would provide independence. The Prisoner Ombudsman would make the decision to refer an allegation to the police for full investigation. This recommended change in procedure would have to be agreed between the Northern Ireland Prison Service and the Prisoner Ombudsman.

Advocacy Service

- 7.31** The Northern Ireland Prison Service employs the Opportunity Youth organisation to provide an advocacy service at Hydebank Wood for young offenders under the age of 18 years. A policy paper on this service was issued in August 2006.
- 7.32** Advocacy is available, if requested, to give advice and support to a young prisoner who is charged with a disciplinary offence, and to speak for the young person concerned at the disciplinary hearing. An advocate is also available to give young prisoners advice on their rights under the complaints procedure and, if required, to provide assistance in writing the complaint. In addition, an advocate is available to give the necessary support and advice to help a young person make a request.
- 7.33** There are many prisoners at Hydebank Wood aged 18 and above, male and female, who clearly would not have the mental capacity to represent themselves at disciplinary hearings, or to submit a complaint or request. The IMB feels that there is a strong case for extending the availability of the advocacy service at Hydebank Wood to cover such prisoners, and recommends accordingly.

7 | Duty of Care

7.34 Child Protection

The Northern Ireland Prison Service indicated in response to a recommendation in the IMB's report for 2005/06, that a draft child protection policy document would be issued for consultation purposes early in 2007. In the event, three inter-linking policies covering the various aspects of child protection that arise, in a custodial setting, were published on 4 April 2007 and put out for public consultation.

- 7.35** The three policies are titled:

- Child protection policy and procedures for Hydebank Wood Prison and Young Offenders Centre;
- Child protection policy and procedures for children visiting prison establishments in Northern Ireland; and
- Child protection policy and procedures for managing visits to, and communication with, those who present a risk to children.

- 7.36** Common to all three policies is a requirement for staff to be alert to indicators of abuse and know how to respond. The policies provide for the appointment of a child protection coordinator at each establishment and the creation of a child protection committee to ensure that information is shared and acted upon to protect the interests of children. Hydebank Wood already had a child protection coordinator in place during the reporting year, but the IMB has not been able to confirm whether it had a child protection committee.

Girls under 18 years

- 7.37** In its report for 2005 /06 the IMB recommended that girls under the age of 18 should not be accommodated along with adult women prisoners at Hydebank Wood. In response, the Northern Ireland Prison Service indicated that discussions were under way with the Northern Ireland Office's criminal justice directorate in relation to the scope for addressing the issue. However, no change had been announced by the end of the reporting year 2006/07. The IMB therefore repeats its recommendation. It should perhaps be mentioned that HM Chief Inspector of Prisons made the same recommendation in January 2005 following an unannounced inspection at Hydebank Wood on 28-30 November 2004.

8 | Healthcare

- 8.1** Prisoners are more likely to come from lower socio-economic groups and have poor levels of education, factors which are inextricably linked with ill-health. Prison based health promotion therefore gives access to a population it would normally be hard to reach, offering a unique opportunity to tackle issues of social exclusion and inequalities of health, and to increase the capacity of prisoners to fulfill their potential upon release. For these reasons, the Northern Ireland Prison Service and the Health Promotion Agency came together to hold a one day conference in Lisburn on 12 September 2006 entitled 'Promoting Healthy Prisons'.
- 8.2** One point that was raised at that conference related to the planned transfer in April 2007 of lead responsibility for healthcare in Northern Ireland's prison establishments from the Northern Ireland Prison Service to the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. The question was whether the NHS Trust/s involved would regard prisons as a priority and allocate sufficient funding to meet their special healthcare needs. The IMB considers that to be a fundamental issue and recommends that the Northern Ireland Prison Service puts in place robust controls to ensure that all prisoners in its care receive a comprehensive healthcare service (including mental health services) and, as promised, at a level higher than previously delivered in-house.
- 8.3** As matters stand, Hydebank Wood's healthcare centre is managed by an acting principal nursing officer, who in turn reports to the director inmate services, a lay manager and one of the governor's direct reports. This is indicative of the apparent low priority given to healthcare at Hydebank Wood. Such an opinion is corroborated by the fact that the principal psychologist, the education officer and the probation manager are all direct reports to the governor. The IMB is strongly of the view that healthcare ought to be at the very heart of Hydebank Wood and recommends that a head of healthcare senior management post be created, with the jobholder reporting direct to the governor.
- 8.4** During 2006/07 the healthcare staffing complement remained unchanged at 14 and comprised one principal nursing officer, one senior nursing officer, three psychiatric nurses, four general nurses and five healthcare officers. There were two nurse vacancies and, because of a moratorium on recruitment, these vacancies had to be covered by employing agency nurses. However, it is understood that agency nurses could not be left on their own with prisoners, and that this affected staffing flexibility. The IMB recommends that the agency nurses be replaced by permanent staff, subject of course to a review of healthcare staffing needs at Hydebank Wood.
- 8.5** With the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety scheduled to assume lead responsibility for healthcare in Northern Ireland's prisons on 1 April 2007, the existing healthcare staff at Hydebank Wood were understandably uncertain how the change would affect them personally. Management would need to bear this in mind as the new structures are put in place, and to communicate with the healthcare staff on an ongoing basis.
- 8.6** There is a need at Hydebank Wood for an occupational therapist and a physiotherapist, and the IMB recommends the provision of such professional services on a sessional basis.

8 | Healthcare

- 8.7** The IMB was pleased to note that five dentist sessions per week were now being provided, plus one extra session per week where necessary to clear the waiting list. However, there were no separate oral hygiene sessions during the year. The oral health of male young offenders is generally well below par and the IMB therefore recommends that oral hygiene sessions be introduced at Hydebank Wood.
- 8.8** A consultant psychiatrist attends Hydebank Wood for one session each week. It is understood that there is a need for at least two such sessions each week, but that this has not been feasible because the consultant concerned has no supporting specialist registrar to assist with the workload. The IMB recognises the extremely valuable work performed by the consultant psychiatrist and recommends that the necessary support be provided to enable her to undertake at least two sessions per week for the women and young men imprisoned in Hydebank Wood.
- 8.9** Psychology services at Hydebank Wood are currently provided by one principal forensic psychologist working on her own. There are vacancies for a senior forensic psychologist (jobholder resigned during the reporting year) and a part-time admin support post (approved in February 2007). The IMB recommends that these two vacancies be filled without delay. The key areas covered by these posts include resettlement, prisoner programmes, sex offenders, lifers, prisoners with problems and safer custody.
- 8.10** There is no clinical psychologist employed at Hydebank Wood. Clinical psychologists apply psychology to clinical mental distress, dysfunction or disorder. They carry out assessments and apply psycho-education and psycho-therapy to help clients improve their subjective well-being, mental health and life-functioning. The IMB considers that a clinical psychologist would bring considerable therapeutic benefit to the prisoner population of Hydebank Wood (women and adolescent males), and therefore recommends that such a post be created.
- 8.11** During 2005/06 a community mental health in-reach support service was initiated for adult female prisoners at Hydebank Wood. The service was delivered by community psychiatric nurses employed by South and East Belfast Trust. In last year's report the IMB recommended that the service should be extended to male and female young offenders at Hydebank Wood with mental health problems. In its response the Northern Ireland Prison Service indicated that that would be taken forward as scope permitted. With approximately three quarters of the prisoner population at Hydebank Wood having mental illness and/or personality disorder, the IMB considers that this valuable service should be enlarged and to that end recommends that sufficient additional weekly sessions be provided to meet the need.
- 8.12** A local GP practice provides a comprehensive service for male young offenders, ie regular daytime visits to Hydebank Wood and a 24-hour call-out service. However, the service provided for women prisoners falls short of that provided for males in that there are daytime visits to the prison but no out-of-hours GP call-out, when the service is limited to advice by telephone. In last year's report the IMB recommended that the GP service for female prisoners should be brought into line with that currently provided for male inmates. As there had been no change by the end of the reporting year, the IMB repeats its recommendation.

8 | Healthcare

- 8.13** The IMB was pleased to note the re-launch by the healthcare centre of a number of proactive measures for the benefit of the prisoner population. These included ‘well woman’ and ‘well man’ clinics, mental health support, cessation of smoking, medicine management, nutrition and exercise advice, Chlamidia screening and Hepatitis B screening and prevention.
- 8.14** On 1 April 2006 The Northern Ireland Prison Service created a new post of clinical governance manager.
- 8.15** The existing healthcare centre at Hydebank Wood opened in September 2002. Major renovations were scheduled to be carried out during the reporting year to provide six single inpatient rooms (one with en suite facilities) and two waiting rooms. By the year end this work had not commenced. If the planned alterations are still deemed appropriate, the IMB recommends that the work should be undertaken during the year 2007/08.
- 8.16** During the reporting year the IMB received complaints from recently committed prisoners about their existing prescribed medication being discontinued or drastically reduced upon entering Hydebank Wood. The prisoners concerned were finding it extremely difficult to cope with the withdrawal or reduction of externally prescribed medication. The IMB understands that Northern Ireland is at or near the top of UK regions in terms of the amount or rate of prescribing by general practitioners, and that Hydebank Wood’s in-house medical practitioners are sometimes unwilling to prescribe at such high levels. From a lay standpoint, it appears to the IMB somewhat inhumane to suddenly withdraw the crutch of medication from newly committed prisoners, many of whom are vulnerable individuals and finding it difficult enough coping with imprisonment. The IMB therefore recommends that any necessary cessation or reduction of prescribed medication should be effected on a gradual basis.
- 8.17** Prisoners with personality disorders have to be managed within the normal prison setting, because no secure specialist unit currently exists in Northern Ireland. If a prisoner’s personality disorder manifests itself in disruptive behaviour, the prisoner is normally subjected to disciplinary adjudication and sent to the special supervision unit where he/she is held in solitary confinement with little or nothing in the way of stimulation. In a few cases the prisoner is held in the healthcare centre as an inpatient. In cases of persistent negative behaviour, young male prisoners can be transferred to an adult prison as incorrigible. There does not appear to be any creativity or strategy for the management of such offenders.
- 8.18** The IMB recommends that a dedicated unit should be provided in Northern Ireland for young prisoners with severe personality disorders.
- 8.19** The IMB also feels that measures should be taken within Hydebank Wood to better manage prisoners with personality disorders. The IMB recommends that each prisoner with a personality disorder should be allocated a named personal officer who would be fully conversant with his/her background and condition, and who would make a particular effort to get to know the prisoner and to keep an eye on his/her state of mind. The personal officer would also be responsible for ensuring that the prisoner was appropriately occupied with, for example, work, education or behaviour modification programmes.

9 | Activities

Education

- 9.1** The IMB does not see the logic in education and vocational training being managed separately at Hydebank Wood. Its reports for 2004/05 and 2005/06 therefore recommended that one person, a head of education, be given responsibility for all education including vocational training and library services. In its response, Northern Ireland Prison Service indicated that a major review of education and vocational training management arrangements had been undertaken, and that the review’s findings would be published soon. No announcement had been made by the reporting year end, so the IMB repeats its recommendation. However, this time the IMB considers that the scope of the proposed head of education’s remit should be extended to include physical education.
- 9.2** Teachers and vocational training instructors at Hydebank Wood are direct employees of the Northern Ireland Prison Service. Absences on sickness leave or for any other reason mean that classes or workshop sessions are simply cancelled, and this has been known to extend to several months on occasions at Hydebank Wood. The IMB is aware that in some prison establishments in Great Britain, education and vocational training are provided locally by mainstream colleges of further education. The IMB recommends that serious consideration be given to similarly outsourcing such services at Hydebank Wood. In such a scenario, the provider college would be responsible for covering absences from its own staff or by employing substitute teachers or instructors, thus ensuring proper continuity and replicating what is available to external students.
- 9.3** Education Services had a high participation of males in Literacy Entry Levels 1, 2 and 3 with 46 inmates gaining accreditation. Entry Level studies provide a very necessary leverage for the boys as 70% of the YOC inmates fail below Level 1 Literacy.

The following table gives statistics for the past year in the Literacy and Numeracy courses:

Course	Males Accredited	Females Accredited
Literacy Entry Level 1	2	1
Literacy Entry Level 2	11	-
Literacy Entry Level 3	33	2
Literacy Level 1	19	2
Literacy Level 2	4	-
Numeracy Entry Level 1	1	-
Numeracy Entry Level 2	6	-
Numeracy Entry Level 3	13	2

9 | Activities

9.4 Male offenders also engaged in the following programmes:

Course	Results
GCSE Modular Mathematics	1 D Grade 1 E Grade 3 modules gained by one student before release
GCSE English Language	3 C Grades 1 D Grade
AS History	3 modules
AS English Literature	3 modules
Job Seeking Skills (Entry Level 3)	19
Preparation for Employment (level 1)	10
Digital Technology	3

- 9.5 In addition to the above, classes are also offered in Computer Studies including new CLAIT, AQA Unit Awards and Digital Imaging. Music courses are given in Guitar, Keyboard and DJ work. There is also a good range of interest courses in Cookery, Craft, Leathercraft, Fine Art and Creative Writing (in association with the Prison Arts Foundation).
- 9.6 Open University courses are provided through Education Services with several prisoners qualifying for studying in short courses such as The Planets', Studying Mammals', Introduction to the Human Genome, Writing Fiction, and Writing Essays. There have been two successful completions of O.U. short courses so far this year. Two students are currently in Undergraduate O.U. Social Science studies.
- 9.7 In the past year several new programmes have been introduced. Within the realms of citizenship courses are offered on the Criminal Justice System and Rights and Responsibilities. Relationships have been forged with Edgehill Centre for Reconciliation with a study group being set up to look at the subject of "My Identity".
- 9.8 ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) is offered to foreign nationals who wish to improve their English. A number of NEC (The National Extension College) correspondence courses are also available such as Introduction to Counselling Skills and introductory packs to various GCSE courses entitled "Getting Started in".
- 9.9 Fortunately, the waiting time for allocation to appropriate classes has been shortened with the appointment of four new full time teachers. Their contribution increases the time that can now be devoted to the lowest and highest levels of English and Maths.

9 | Activities

Drama

- 9.10 A highlight of the year was the staging of the play 'Observe the Sons of Ulster marching towards the Somme'. The cast comprised 13 young male prisoners, who had no previous acting experience. The skill and experience of local producer and actor, Dan Gordon, brought the production to fruition, and it was performed to full houses on 12, 13 and 14 June 2006. The idea of staging a play involving inmates was conceived by Mike Maloney of the Prison Arts Foundation and Brendan Byrne of Hotshot Films. A series of documentaries were filmed based on the production of the play. The IMB commends the governor for approving this particular project. Moreover, the IMB recognises the importance of the arts in bringing about positive change in prisoners and recommends that further drama and other arts projects should be undertaken at Hydebank Wood.

Library

- 9.11 The library is staffed for two full days and one evening each week. The IMB would wish to see far more use made of this valuable resource. By way of outreach, the IMB recommends that a broad spectrum of reading material (books, magazines and newspapers) appropriate to the interests of women and young men should be made available on the landings and in the special supervision units, in bookshelves or trolleys.

Newspapers

- 9.12 Recently, the IMB visited a male young offender institution in Scotland where a newspaper of choice was delivered daily to each prisoner in his cell. The IMB recommends that this initiative should be replicated at Hydebank Wood. It should be regarded as another means of improving prisoners' reading skills.

Vocational Training

- 9.13 Most vocational training at Hydebank Wood is delivered by the vocational training unit. There are courses in plumbing, horticulture (separate courses for males and females), painting and decorating, carpentry and joinery, industrial cleaning, grounds maintenance and bricklaying. There are eight training courses with a maximum of eight trainees employed on each. Horticulture is the exception with a maximum of ten trainees. The IMB has been told that demand for places is high and that each course has a waiting list. However, the IMB has also been told that the attendance level is only 70%. Plumbing and horticulture for male young offenders were introduced at the beginning of the reporting year. The IMB recommends that the maximum number of trainees per class should be increased to ten, and furthermore recommends that attendance should be closely monitored to minimise non-attendance.
- 9.14 The catering and physical education units also provide opportunities for inmates to achieve vocational qualifications in their respective fields.

9 | Activities

- 9.15** Hydebank Wood has qualified instructors and workshop facilities that are on a par with mainstream colleges of further education. It also has separate gardens and greenhouses for women prisoners and young male inmates, and these provide the base for horticulture training. The IMB frequently finds workshops closed and upon enquiry discovers that the instructor is absent for one reason or another. The IMB's recommendation at paragraph 9.2 should remedy this and ensure more continuity.
- 9.16** The vocational training on offer at Hydebank Wood was originally based on the perceived needs of male young offenders. The arrival of women prisoners did not change that. Currently, the only vocational training open to women is horticulture. The IMB has suggested other training subjects such as professional hairdressing, business skills, etc, but the small number of potential trainees is put forward as the reason for saying that such courses are not viable. Lack of interest has also been mentioned. The IMB recommends that the vocational training needs of women prisoners should be properly assessed, bearing in mind that the overall numbers will always be relatively small and recognising that one-to-one tutoring might be necessary. The female labour market would also be relevant.
- 9.17** Realistically, many of those who enrol for vocational training at Hydebank Wood have little chance of obtaining the formal qualifications needed to practice the trade concerned. Some do not have the basic numeracy or literacy to undertake the necessary examinations. For example, some new trainees are unable to perform simple linear measurement. Attendance of many vocational trainees can only therefore be regarded as work experience or occupational therapy, rather than proper vocational training leading to professional employment. The IMB wonders whether this expensive resource is being put to proper use. To help answer that question, the IMB recommends that the Northern Ireland Prison Service should undertake a study to determine whether the courses currently on offer have produced real jobs for inmates on their release from Hydebank Wood. The study should also ascertain the labour market available to ex-offenders in Northern Ireland, which should give pointers as to future vocational training provision.
- 9.18** Vocational trainees have been instrumental in raising substantial sums of money for charities such as Marie Curie Cancer Care, the Ulster Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the Rape Crisis Centre and the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association. The trainees have achieved this by making holly wreaths, cutting up storm-damaged trees for firewood logs, growing hanging baskets and other floral items, etc. The IMB commends such work, as it gives the prisoners concerned the opportunity to help others less fortunate than themselves through their own efforts, and thereby enhance their self-worth. The work also provides the opportunity for creative expression or, in the case of the logs, vigorous exercise in the fresh air. The IMB commends the prison officers who supervise such initiatives for the encouragement and guidance given to the prisoners concerned.

9 | Activities

- 9.19** Early in the reporting year the IMB remarked that it was normal practice for tradesmen to bring their lunch with them and eat it on the job; it therefore suggested that vocational trainees at Hydebank Wood should do the same and work a full day in the workshops, greenhouses, kitchen or grounds. The IMB felt that this would provide a much more realistic working scenario for the prisoners concerned and at the same time significantly increase the number of out-of-cell activity hours. Local management's response was that such a change in working practice was certainly an aspiration but at that stage it would have implications for staff manning levels. No change had occurred by the year end and vocational trainees were still being returned to their residential houses for lunch and lock-up in their cells.
- 9.20** The IMB feels that any necessary adjustments to the staff working pattern would be worth the effort; it recommends that all vocational training inmates should take a lunch pack with them to their place of work and that they should work a full day without returning to their residential accommodation in the middle of the day as at present.

Physical Education

- 9.21** The PE department at Hydebank Wood has a well equipped complex including a sports hall incorporating a rock-climbing wall, a weight training and fitness suite and four outdoor playing fields, two with an all weather surface and two with a grass surface.
- 9.22** The IMB would wish to see much more frequent use made of the excellent playing field facilities, by female as well as male prisoners, and recommends accordingly.
- 9.23** Physical education is popular with the prisoner population at Hydebank Wood, as the following statistics testify:

	Males	Females
Numbers through gym	14936	1695
Weightlifting awards	85	25
Hill walking	5	0
Canoeing	0	3
Rock climbing	0	4
First Aid	20	13
Manual handling	263	42
Duke of Edinburgh Award	30	27
Sports therapy treatment	111	82
Gym instructor award level 1	4	0

9 | Activities

- 9.24 During the year Hydebank Wood hosted the Belfast and District special needs soccer team in their preparation for the 2006 All Ireland Special Olympics. Selected inmates and PE staff assisted in training events over a period of weeks. During summer 2006 several ‘outside’ soccer teams visited Hydebank Wood to play the inmate team. All of the matches were played in the right spirit.
- 9.25 Towards the end of the reporting year the changing and office areas of the PE department were refurbished. Disruption to the programmes was kept to a minimum.
- 9.26 PE staff members attended a Steroid Abuse course which would enable them to provide advice to inmates at the induction stage.

Chaplains

- 9.27 Hydebank Wood continues to have five Christian churches represented in its chaplaincy - Roman Catholic, Church of Ireland, Presbyterian, Methodist and Free Presbyterian. If a member of a faith tradition other than Christian is committed to Hydebank Wood, there is provision for a representative of their faith to be contacted.
- 9.28 The IMB acknowledges the vital role that chaplains play in the daily lives of prisoners at Hydebank Wood and the impact that their work can have on helping the women and young men cope with imprisonment and subsequently reintegrate into society. Increasingly, prisoners are availing of members of the chaplaincy as a source of general support, and the importance of this role should not be underestimated. Consequently the chaplains have a developed knowledge of the prison experience from the prisoner perspective and it is important that the IMB taps into that knowledge base through regular contact with the chaplaincy team.
- 9.29 The breakdown by religious denomination of the prisoner population at Hydebank Wood in April 2006 was as follows:-

	Male	Female	Total
Roman Catholic	114	19	133
Church of Ireland	17	8	25
Presbyterian	32	4	36
Methodist	4	2	6
Free Presbyterian	1	0	1
Other Protestant	0	1	1
Other religions	36	4	40
No religion	1	0	1
Total	205	38	243

9 | Activities

- 9.30 A review of chaplaincy services in Northern Ireland’s prisons was undertaken in 2005/06 with the purpose of bringing the work of chaplains into line with the future needs of the Northern Ireland Prison Service and to reflect best practice elsewhere. The report of the review was published in March 2007. It recommended that Hydebank Wood should have a chaplaincy team of three including a lead chaplain. It also recommended that chaplaincy appointments should no longer be based on a denominational headcount and that the work of the chaplaincy should be based on the total prison population. The Northern Ireland Prison Service visualises the future role of chaplains evolving with the potential for developing their work within a wide range of services and activities, particularly in the area of resettlement.

Out of Cell Activity Time

- 9.31 It is vitally important that out-of-cell time is maximised, with a range of activities available to inmates that reduce the potential for boredom, especially during evening and weekend periods. This is particularly dependent on staff creativity and positive engagement with the prisoners. Examples of positive staff interfacing have been noted and it is important that all staff receive the necessary training and support to ensure that productive engagement becomes the norm.
- 9.32 There appear to be some delays in identifying work and educational opportunities, especially for newly arrived prisoners. As this can be a time of particular stress, the availability of a stimulating daily routine is important and every effort should be made therefore to ensure that all prisoners are actively engaged in constructive and purposeful activity as early as possible.
- 9.33 The IMB was pleased to note a decision by the governor in February 2007 to delay prisoners’ return to their residential houses prior to lunchtime by 5 minutes and at the end of the working day by a further 15 minutes, which meant in effect that prisoners would benefit from an additional half hour’s vocational training, education, etc each day Monday to Friday.
- 9.34 During February 2007 the governor also issued a notice to his staff regarding their time-keeping.

10 | Good Order

Security

- 10.1** During the year there were two security incidents of note. For the first time ever, a young male inmate made a dash for the perimeter fence, scaled it, dropped to the ground and made his escape. The police recaptured him a few miles away. The second incident took place in the special supervision unit. A young male prisoner assaulted two prison officers who were escorting him to his cell. Both officers sustained serious injuries. The IMB wishes them a full and speedy recovery.
- 10.2** A passive drug dog was deployed to screen prisoners' visitors on 228 days out of the 238 days during the year when visiting took place. As a result, 65 visitors were refused an 'open' visit.
- 10.3** There were 48 assaults by prisoner on prisoner during the year - 46 by young men and two by women. There were nine assaults by prisoner on staff - five young men and four women.
- 10.4** During the year handcuffs were used on 27 occasions in respect of young male prisoners and on three occasions in respect of women prisoners. The Northern Ireland Prison Service's operational instructions and guidelines for use of force, paragraph 9.5 states 'The use of mechanical restraints is particularly undesirable and every effort must be made to avoid recourse to them'. Hydebank Wood's use of handcuffs on 30 occasions in a twelve month period would suggest that the advice in paragraph 9.5 was not followed. Prison rule 48 stipulates that the governor should inform the IMB when a prisoner has been put under restraint. The IMB has no record of being notified of any of the foregoing 30 cases. It recommends that arrangements should be put in place for it to be notified in future as required by prison rule 48.
- 10.5** To the lay observer, the year 2006/07 was a relatively quiet one for Hydebank Wood. However, control and restraint staff were deployed to deal with a disturbance on 30 occasions in respect of female prisoners (28% of total deployments) and on 76 occasions in respect of young male prisoners (72%). Bearing in mind the proportion of women prisoners (approximately 15% of the total population), the frequency of use of control and restraint techniques against women appears relatively high. The IMB recommends that this apparent discrepancy should be investigated.
- 10.6** The IMB considers it inappropriate for male prison officers, usually in a team of three, to use control and restraint techniques on a woman prisoner. It is a fact of life that a high proportion of women prisoners have suffered physical or sexual abuse at the hands of men. Control and restraint techniques are by definition a use of physical force. The IMB recommends that the exercise of such techniques by male officers on women prisoners should be discontinued, and should in future be undertaken by female officers.

10 | Good Order

- 10.7** The IMB has serious concerns about the use of normal control and restraint techniques in dealing with prisoners who have mental health issues and/or personality disorders. An example was the incident in September 2006 when a 20 year old woman had to be restrained by handcuffing her to the bed face down and leaving her in that position for some three hours. At the time the IMB had expressed the view that heavy handed control and restraint techniques were not really appropriate for dealing with a young woman who in her short spell in Hydebank Wood had already attempted suicide three times and had self-harmed on some twelve occasions. The governor had contended that the Prison Service had a duty of care to the young woman concerned, and control and restraint techniques had been used to prevent her from seriously harming herself. What this incident highlighted was the inadequacy of resources in Hydebank Wood for dealing with inmates with mental health issues and/or personality disorders, and the plain fact that prison placement for such inmates was totally inappropriate. Now that the NHS has assumed responsibility for prisoner healthcare, the IMB recommends that a healthcare rather than a security approach should be adopted for dealing with such behavioural outbursts by mentally ill and/or personality disordered prisoners. This might entail transferring the prisoner to a specialist hospital unit in the community.
- 10.8** In May 2006 a female prisoner alleged that she had been subjected to sexual assault in her cell by two other female prisoners. The allegation was reported to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), but the IMB understands that the alleged victim subsequently indicated to the PSNI that she did not wish them to proceed with her complaint. The governor initiated his own in-house investigation which highlighted a number of issues:
- In-cell association was permitted for women prisoners with enhanced status;
 - Staff did not regularly check prisoners in their cells while such association was taking place;
 - Some male prison officers admitted that they did not open women prisoners' cell doors or door flaps to check whether all was well, because they were concerned about allegations being made against them; and
 - Staff interaction with women prisoners was minimal.
- 10.9** These findings underline the limitations on the role male officers can play in caring for women prisoners. The sexual nature of the alleged assault highlights the need to house female inmates under age 18 in accommodation separate from adult prisoners (see recommendation in paragraph 7.37).

10 | Good Order

10.10 During the reporting year the Northern Ireland Prison Service published policy and guidance for the operational deployment of PAVA incapacitant spray. It intended conducting trials to assess the operational effectiveness of the spray as a tactical aid in safely resolving specific violent and potentially life threatening situations. The spray would only be used in serious incidents involving general disorder that presented a real threat to the health and safety of staff, prisoners or others in the vicinity; and exceptionally, for planned cell removals where significant violence was threatened, and there was a substantial risk to the health and safety of staff and/or others. The spray would not be used by or against females, nor would it be used against juveniles ie those under 18 years of age. The governor advised the IMB that he considered it most unlikely that PAVA spray would be used at Hydebank Wood.

Discipline

- 10.11** During the year IMB members continued to monitor the level and consistency of governor's adjudications on the women and young men who failed to conform to prison rules whilst being detained in Hydebank Wood.
- 10.12** Adjudications are carried out where the governor deems an offence to be serious, but not sufficiently serious to warrant involvement of the police and the courts. Sanctions can range from loss of earnings and prison shop privileges to loss of association or cellular confinement in the special supervision unit.
- 10.13** The governor, the deputy governor and other governor grades within Hydebank Wood may preside at adjudications. Normally, the deputy governor conducts the majority of adjudications. However, in the reporting year several governors were involved, as a result of promotions and transfers. Despite this, there was a consistency in the awards.
- 10.14** During the year 2006/07 there were 405 offences reported, of which 373 resulted in the use of the adjudication process. The breakdown of offences reported was 325 male and 80 female, and the adjudications were 304 male and 69 female, both showing significant reductions from the previous year when there were 564 adjudications of male inmates alone. There were 112 adjudications involving male sentenced prisoners, a marked reduction of 66% on the previous year (328). The 192 male remand adjudications represented a 19% reduction on the previous year (236). The IMB welcomes the reduction in the level of young male adjudications. Year on year there was a 7% reduction in women prisoner adjudications, from 74 to 69 (27 sentenced and 42 on remand).

10 | Good Order

10.15 Offences reported:

Involving violence	60 males	5 females
Damage to property	49 males	7 females
Trafficking in/Possession of prohibited articles	46 males	10 females
Breaches of Regulations (insubordination/abusive language)	319 males	80 females
Miscellaneous (indecenty, mutiny etc)	4 males	0 females
Escaping/Absconding)	1 male	0 females

10.16 Penalties awarded:

	Males	Females	Total
Total Penalties imposed	652	89	741
Number of inmates punished	232	44	276
Cellular confinement	138	17	155
Loss of privileges	420	47	467
Loss of earnings	1	0	1
Loss of books (excl Bible etc)	4	0	4
Excl from Assoc Work	8	3	11
Loss of all assoc	0	9	9
Loss of cigarettes & tobacco	19	2	21
Loss of notebooks, periodicals, radio, pers possessions etc	27	1	28
Warning/Caution	34	10	44
Totals	652	89	

10.17 The IMB feels that the punishments meted out at adjudication were too severe and that there was too much use of cellular confinement. The maximum period for cellular confinement is currently seven days, and that penalty was used liberally during the reporting year, including at least one boy aged 16. The IMB recently visited a young offender institution in Scotland where the maximum period of cellular confinement permitted was three days. The IMB considers that a more appropriate maximum penalty, and recommends that Hydebank Wood should reduce its seven days maximum to three days.

10 | Good Order

- 10.18** The report of the inspection in March 2005 by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons recommended that when cellular confinement was imposed, the assumption should be that no other privilege would be lost except in exceptional circumstances. The governor accepted this recommendation and confirmed in his action plan that reading material, radios and tobacco would be available at all times (subject to risk assessment). The IMB found during the reporting year that invariably this was not happening in practice. The IMB recommends that when cellular confinement is imposed, no other privilege should be lost, except in exceptional circumstances. Furthermore, the IMB recommends that reading material, radios and tobacco should be made available at all times to inmates in cellular confinement.
- 10.19** The IMB found evidence of informal group punishments sanctioned at officer level. For example, a hairdressing misdemeanour led to the withdrawal of the hairdressing service from all of the inmates on the landing concerned. Similarly, the blocking of a lavatory resulted in the imposition of chamber pot use for all inmates on the landing concerned, and this 'slopping out' was deliberately continued for two days after the blockage had been cleared, purely as a punishment or deterrent. The IMB is strongly of the opinion that properly constituted investigation and adjudication procedures should be followed in dealing with serious breaches of prison rules, and recommends that the practice of informal group punishments be discontinued.
- 10.20** In December 2006 a woman prisoner was transferred from Hydebank Wood to a mental hospital as an in-patient. The case raised important issues that need urgent attention by management at Hydebank Wood. The IMB found it difficult to comprehend how a few days earlier this woman could have been medically examined and deemed medically fit to undergo cellular confinement as a punishment for some contravention of the prison rules. Moreover, the IMB found it equally difficult to understand how the adjudicating governor had not noted the woman's mental state, bearing in mind that a few days later she was urgently referred to a psychiatrist by a community psychiatric nurse. The IMB recommends that a review be undertaken of the efficacy of the medical examination of prisoners at Hydebank Wood prior to the imposition of cellular confinement or loss of normal association. Furthermore, the IMB recommends that all adjudicating governors should receive mental health awareness training as a matter of urgency.
- 10.21** During the reporting year the IMB encountered other examples of prisoners with apparent mental illness or personality disorder, being locked up in cellular confinement or having lost normal association with their peers. To the lay observer, the imposition of such punishments on persons with mental illness or personality disorder potentially does more harm than good, and thus is counter-productive. A more therapeutic approach is needed to successfully rehabilitate these prisoners who present with anti-social behaviour and do not conform. The IMB recommends that a fresh strategy be devised for managing such prisoners, as an alternative to the current punitive measures.

10 | Good Order

Special Supervision Units

- 10.22** The special supervision unit for male young offenders is a stand alone facility located on the ground floor of Elm House. The unit has eight cells but only three of these have in-cell sanitation. A chamber-pot is provided in the other five cells and used at night for urinating and defecating. During daytime hours, if an inmate needs to go to the lavatory, he is supposed to summon an officer by knocking on his cell door. There is a bell in each cell but this is only to be used in emergencies. The IMB has reason for thinking that chamber-pots are sometimes used during daytime hours as well as at night. In any case, knocking on the cell door might not always be heard in the staff office because of distance. The IMB understands that there are plans to provide in-cell sanitation in all cells. Until that happens, the IMB recommends that inmates held in cells without in-cell sanitation should be allowed access to the lavatory 24 hours a day, and that they should be permitted to summon an officer for that purpose by using the emergency bell provided. The IMB considers that the use of chamber-pots at any time of the day is degrading and should be consigned to history.
- 10.23** The IMB welcomed the refurbishment of the adjudication room during the year. It now has the appearance of a miniature courtroom and provides a more professional ambience for the adjudication process. Prior to the improvements, the room was used regularly at lunchtime as a recreation area for staff to play cards.
- 10.24** During the year the IMB had reason to raise serious concerns about the living conditions in the male special supervision unit, in particular the poor ventilation in the cells and the cleanliness of the walls and floors of the cells. In some cases the IMB felt that the cells were unfit for use and might indeed constitute a health risk. In cells with no in-cell sanitation, conditions could be exacerbated by the presence of a chamber-pot containing urine and sometimes faeces, with no water to wash hands. The IMB recommends that (a) special supervision unit cells should always be examined by staff for cleanliness prior to occupation by a prisoner and (b) urgent action should be taken to improve the ventilation in the cells.
- 10.25** In October 2006 the governor expressed the hope of turning cellular confinement and Rule 32 detention into a more productive experience for the prisoners concerned. He envisaged the involvement of cognitive behaviour therapists, Opportunity Youth counsellors, psychologists, teachers, etc. During the reporting year the IMB was unaware of such valuable work being performed in any structured way. The IMB would strongly support the governor's aspiration to provide intensive one-to-one therapeutic and rehabilitative counselling for prisoners detained in the special supervision units. The fact that they were being held in solitary confinement away from the influence of their peers, would provide an ideal opportunity for meaningful engagement. The IMB recommends that a properly tailored counselling programme should be introduced for all prisoners held in the special supervision units.

10 | Good Order

Incentives and Earned Privileges

- 10.26** Hydebank Wood operates a progressive regime which gives those inmates who act responsibly the opportunity to better their conditions within the establishment. There are three levels of privilege: basic, standard and enhanced. The privileges attaching to the different levels range from differential rates of pay for work, to longer periods of association and greater visiting rights. Perhaps the most highly valued privilege that focuses the mind of many of the inmates is having television in their own cell.
- 10.27** Most inmates at Hydebank Wood appear to acquire an understanding of how the incentives and earned privileges scheme works. However, the IMB received prisoner complaints that the system was not being operated fairly by staff on the landings. The complaints concerned the interpretation placed on the rules as laid down or decisions made at staff discretion. Sometimes a named prison officer was blamed, and occasionally bias against Catholic inmates was alleged.
- 10.28** The IMB recommends that the incentives and earned privileges scheme at Hydebank Wood should be reviewed to ensure that it is being applied fairly, transparently and consistently.
- 10.29** Furthermore, the IMB recommends that the wording of the scheme be tightened up to minimise the need for staff discretion.

11 | Resettlement

Resettlement Strategy

- 11.1** In June 2004 the Northern Ireland Prison Service and the Probation Board for Northern Ireland jointly launched their strategy for the resettlement of prisoners, and then set about implementing the strategy over the period ended 31 March 2007. The IMB considered it most appropriate therefore that in February 2007 the Northern Ireland Criminal Justice Inspectorate undertook a thematic review of prisoner resettlement at all three prison establishments, including Hydebank Wood. The IMB does not have the resources to properly assess how successful the resettlement strategy has been in practice, and therefore looks forward to the publication of the inspection report.
- 11.2** Whilst not wishing to anticipate the inspectors' findings, the IMB feels that it should draw attention to two prerequisites for success stated in the resettlement strategy's original implementation plan:
- a distinct change in prison culture, particularly in the way in which staff engage with prisoners, and
 - the key role that personal officers would play in prisoner resettlement.
- As indicated in other parts of this report, at Hydebank Wood there is no personal officer scheme and in too many cases proactive interaction between staff and prisoners is lacking.
- 11.3** The Prison Service specialists in education, vocational training, healthcare, psychology, prisoner programmes and resettlement work along with personnel from the Probation Board, Opportunity Youth, Housing Rights Service, Social Security Agency and Barnardos. However, that is not enough. There is a real need for all managers and staff to have input to the resettlement of the prisoners in their care. Everyone employed at Hydebank Wood should be focusing on the common goals of effective rehabilitation and reintegration into society. The IMB recommends accordingly.

Importance of Finding Employment

- 11.4** Research has shown that finding employment on release is one of the most significant factors in reducing re-offending. The Home Office found that released prisoners were less than half as likely to re-offend if they were helped to find and keep a job. Prisoners themselves cite finding a job, alongside a home and a stable relationship as the three most important factors in preventing them from re-offending.
- 11.5** An IMB member's recent conversation with six male young offenders at Hydebank Wood corroborated the Home Office finding. The six prisoners indicated clearly that the single most important factor that would encourage them to go out and not re-offend, would be the prospect of employment.

11 | Resettlement

Housing Advice

11.6 Most prisoners have accommodation worries on either entering or leaving prison. At Hydebank Wood housing advice and information is provided by Housing Rights Service, an independent voluntary organisation. This important service helps to prevent loss of accommodation upon imprisonment and homelessness upon release. It is understood that the current provision at Hydebank Wood is one day every fortnight. The IMB considers this inadequate for an establishment with a fairly high turnover of prisoners, and therefore recommends that additional funding be provided to facilitate a more frequent attendance.

Prisoner Programmes

11.7 The prisoner programmes at Hydebank Wood were in the main delivered by external agencies, as the following list indicates:

Programme	Delivered by
Car Crime	Impact team
Parenting Skills	Barnardos
Welfare to Work	NIACRO
Alcohol Management	Probation Board and Opportunity Youth
Drug and Alcohol Awareness	Opportunity Youth
Cognitive Behaviour	Opportunity Youth
Anger Management	Probation Board and Prison Service
Enhanced Thinking Skills	Prison Service
Making the Most of Myself (for females)	Barnardos
Bereavement	Cruse

11 | Resettlement

11.8 In its report for 2005/06, the IMB recommended that, where possible, the Northern Ireland Prison Service should consider transferring the delivery of prisoner programmes at Hydebank Wood from external agency personnel to its own prison officers. In making the recommendation, the IMB felt that such meaningful work would enrich the job of the prison officer and help to establish a stronger working relationship between prison officers and inmates. In its response, the Northern Ireland Prison Service indicated that it would be unrealistic to hand over certain programmes in their entirety to prison officers; it also indicated that prison officers did largely deliver the remaining programmes. It is the IMB's understanding that during the reporting year only two prison officers were employed on a part-time basis on the delivery of prisoner programmes at Hydebank Wood. The IMB considers that more prison officers should be encouraged and trained to undertake this valuable therapeutic work, and recommends accordingly.

Drugs and Alcohol Use

- 11.9 In July 2006 the Northern Ireland Prison Service published its revised policy on alcohol and substance misuse. The underpinning principles of the policy were as follows:
- Zero tolerance would apply to all drug (illicit and prescription) and alcohol misuse in prison;
 - Prisoners would be continually encouraged, and challenged, to assume responsibility for their own substance misuse behaviour;
 - Prisoners experiencing drug and alcohol dependency, would be offered therapeutic interventions; and
 - Discharged prisoners would be offered ongoing rehabilitation and support on their return to the community.
- 11.10 The revised policy indicated the Northern Ireland Prison Service's intention to appoint an addictions service manager with an NHS background. The IMB welcomes this initiative and looks forward to the early establishment of an addiction team at Hydebank Wood to deliver an effective therapeutic service to prisoners from their arrival in prison right through to their release and beyond.
- 11.11 Hydebank Wood had in place a drugs and alcohol policy which it had published in October 2005, together with an action plan covering the two year period from 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2006. The IMB recommends that Hydebank Wood should now formulate its own fresh policy and action plan on alcohol and substance misuse, as stipulated in paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2 of the Northern Ireland Prison Service's revised policy document published in July 2006.

11 | Resettlement

- 11.12** Alcohol and substance misuse is a major problem for Northern Ireland society in that it is a causal factor in much anti-social and criminal behaviour. Consequently, many of those people who misuse alcohol or drugs, end up in prison. The determined efforts of inmates and their family members and friends to smuggle drugs into Hydebank Wood become more inventive by the day. Drugs can be brought in via visits, court appearances and home leave. This is a depressing reflection of the acceptance of drug abuse within some families.
- 11.13** Despite the measures currently taken by the Northern Ireland Prison Service to prevent illicit drugs entering Hydebank Wood, drugs do get in. Passive drug dogs are deployed at Hydebank Wood to screen prisoners' visitors prior to entering the visits area. The IMB feels that the Prison Service should now consider introducing the latest drugs detection technology at Hydebank Wood, as an eventual replacement for passive drug dogs, and recommends accordingly.
- 11.14** At Hydebank Wood, prison officers, administrative staff, agency workers, building contractor employees, etc are not searched prior to entering the establishment. The IMB recommends that searches of all such personnel should be introduced, albeit on a random basis.

Use of Rule 32

- 11.15** Throughout the reporting year inmates were placed in the special supervision unit for 48 hours as a consequence of a positive indication by a passive drug dog. Their association with other inmates was prohibited formally under Prison Rule 32. The IMB feels that Rule 32 was not designed for that purpose, insofar as the period of restriction was always set at 48 hours. In effect this meant that such detentions were never subjected to Rule 32's normal 48 hour review by the Secretary of State's representative. It could even be argued that this was an abuse or manipulation of Rule 32. It is understood that the objective of the 48 hour detention under Rule 32 was to recover the suspected drugs. The IMB considers that such a practice is potentially dangerous in that the prisoner is knowingly being put in a solitary confinement situation with the opportunity to consume the suspected drugs. The IMB recommends that inmates should not be held in the special supervision unit on the sole basis of an indication by a passive drug dog.

11 | Resettlement

Outside Work and Working from Home Schemes

- 11.16** Four prisoners participated in either the 'outside work' or 'working from home' scheme during the twelve months April 2006 to March 2007:
- Under the outside work scheme a woman prisoner was employed at the Northern Ireland Cancer Fund for Children between 5 and 20 April 2006. She then progressed to the working from home scheme, taking up employment with a shirt manufacturing company from 26 April until her release on 28 April 2006 when her position was made permanent.
 - Another woman prisoner worked at the Northern Ireland Cancer Fund for Children under the outside work scheme between 14 August and 19 September 2006. She was released on 21 September 2006, but unfortunately did not have a permanent job to go to.
 - A young male prisoner commenced a plumbing apprenticeship on 29 January 2007 under the working from home scheme. He continued the apprenticeship after his release on 27 February 2007.
 - Another young man worked as a warehouseman between 6 February and his release on 8 March 2007. This was under the outside work scheme, and the employment was made permanent following his release.
- 11.17** Employment was achieved in three of the foregoing cases. The IMB commends those who sourced these valuable external work experience placements, but would wish to see such opportunities provided for a greater number of prisoners.
- 11.18** The IMB understands that the high cost of employer's liability insurance cover for prisoner trainees acts as a disincentive for some companies that might otherwise offer training placements. To overcome this impediment, the IMB recommends that the Northern Ireland Prison Service itself should provide insurance cover in respect of prisoners on training placements with external employers.
- 11.19** The IMB commends the governor for providing a grass-cutting service for the Prison Service College at Millisle, using inmates from Hydebank Wood. It is understood that this work had previously been undertaken by contractors. The IMB feels that the governor deserves praise for facilitating this meaningful out of prison employment for the inmates and encourages him to seek out similar opportunities for extending this bold initiative. As well as saving money for the beneficiary organisation, such schemes give prisoners a taste of real work in preparation for their eventual release, as well as giving them job satisfaction and boosting their confidence and self-worth. The IMB recommends that further out of prison work opportunities should be identified within the Prison Service estate and/or elsewhere in the public and voluntary sectors, which are extensive in Northern Ireland.

12 | Services

Catering

- 12.1** The kitchen at Hydebank Wood always presents a scene of busy activity. Inmates pre-select their meals from multi-choice menus which offer a choice of three lunchtime and four teatime meals. Food is prepared in the kitchen and served on the landings in each residential house. The catering staff in the kitchen are assisted by a number of inmates taking NVQs in food preparation. A one hour essential food training programme is delivered to all inmates as part of their induction to teach the basics of food hygiene.
- 12.2** One thing that, regrettably, has not changed is the financial allowance for providing food, which remains at £2.34 per day per inmate. Notwithstanding the scale savings attained by bulk buying, the per capita daily allowance could not be considered generous by any standards. The IMB recommends that it should be reviewed, with the review including comparisons with the financing of large scale catering services in both the private and public sectors.
- 12.3** So far as accommodation is concerned, a changing room/rest room for kitchen staff is lacking and currently there is only one lavatory and shower to meet the needs of the five men and six women kitchen staff as well as eight to ten inmates employed in the kitchen. As regards equipment, a new freezer sited near the loading bay would increase storage and facilitate bulk buying of foodstuffs. The IMB recommends that these accommodation and equipment matters be addressed.

Laundry

- 12.4** Significant improvements were made in the laundry during the reporting year. New washing machines were provided and these, along with improved procedures, have resulted in far fewer complaints about damaged clothing. The provision of washing machines on most landings may also have contributed to the reduction in claims of damaged clothing.
- 12.5** Operating on a 12 hours-a-day basis, the laundry provides a valuable service, with four inmates employed there. The lack of a large pressing machine has meant that sheets and duvet covers have had to be sent to Maghaberry Prison's laundry for pressing. However, it is understood that Hydebank Wood is to get a pressing machine of its own.
- 12.6** The planned refurbishment of the laundry's accommodation had to be postponed because of more urgent needs in other parts of the establishment. The IMB recommends that this work receives attention during 2007/08, particularly the sorting room.

Video Link with Courts

- 12.7** The video link service is now available between Hydebank Wood and most courts in Northern Ireland. This avoids a great deal of inconvenience for prisoners and at the same time results in substantial savings for the Northern Ireland Prison Service in transport costs. The IMB welcomes the video link service for these two equally valid reasons. Consultations between inmates and their legal representatives can also be conducted by video link, as can inmate family link conversations in some circumstances.

13 | Board Business

Conduct of Business

- 13.1** The IMB continues to meet monthly and operate a rota whereby members visit the prison each week. The minutes of the IMB's monthly meetings are copied to the director of the Northern Ireland Prison Service and the governor of Hydebank Wood.
- 13.2** Traditionally, the governor of Hydebank Wood attends the IMB's monthly meeting. During the reporting year the governor attended seven meetings, and he was represented on three occasions by the deputy governor and on two occasions by a principal officer. At these meetings IMB members have the opportunity to put questions direct to the governor or his representative, and receive an answer.
- 13.3** Two IMB members make a rota visit to the prison each week. They check the IMB designated mail-boxes that are located at various points throughout the establishment to enable prisoners to raise issues in writing. Prisoners can also make representations in person to the IMB members as they walk around the prison. The prisoner applications are written up and faxed to the governor via the IMB secretariat, and a written response obtained to enable feedback to be given to the prisoner concerned. The IMB members also make a brief written report of their rota visit for sharing with their colleagues and the governor. The number of prisoner applications received during the reporting year showed a marked increase on the previous year.
- 13.4** Each IMB member is assigned an area or areas of special responsibility and is expected to make visits to the prison to acquire a degree of expertise and to take forward issues in their respective fields.
- 13.5** The chairman and vice-chairman of Hydebank Wood IMB are ex-officio members of the Northern Ireland Council of IMBs, and two further IMB members are nominated to Council membership by their peers. The Council meets every two months to discuss matters of mutual interest. At these meetings a senior manager from Northern Ireland Prison Service headquarters provides an overview of developments across the Northern Ireland prisons estate.

Issues

- 13.6** During the reporting year the Northern Ireland Council of IMBs had a number of meetings with senior officials from the IMB Secretariat and the Northern Ireland Prison Service aimed at improving the quality of secretariat support for the three IMBs.
- 13.7** Some 18 months ago Hydebank Wood IMB had raised the issue of personal injury or loss sustained in the course of IMB membership, but was still waiting for a definitive answer.

13 | Board Business

Access to Inmates

13.8 In its report for 2005/06, the IMB recommended that steps be taken to improve its members’ access to prisoners at lock-up times. In response, the Northern Ireland Prison Service stated that the matter had been addressed and IMB members were free to have access to inmates, as and when required. The IMB welcomed the reaffirmation of its right of access. However, the IMB feels that some staff on the ground at Hydebank Wood still do not appear to understand the IMB’s role and its freedom of access to inmates. The IMB was grateful to receive towards the end of the year a copy of Hydebank Wood’s daily routine for residential houses, which should help its members in planning their visits.

Professional Audits

13.9 The IMB does not have the resources to undertake in-depth analyses of the operational effectiveness of Hydebank Wood. Instead, it relies to an extent on the reports of professional audits carried out by various bodies for detailed information and comment. Publication is expected soon of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission’s follow-up report on the imprisonment of women in Northern Ireland, and the report of the Northern Criminal Justice Inspectorate’s thematic review of prisoner resettlement. HM Chief Inspector of Prisons is due to carry out an announced inspection of Hydebank Wood in October 2007.

Appendix
Hydebank Wood Prison and Young Offenders Centre -
Membership of Independent Monitoring Board 2006-07

- Mr Jimmy McClean - Chairman
- Mr Stephen Dickson - Vice Chairman
- Ms Kate Airlie
- Mr Reid Armstrong
- Miss Eva Bashford (appointed January 2007)
- Dr Lesley-Ann Black (appointed January 2007)
- Mr Michael Breslin (died 17 March 2007)
- Mrs Susan Bryson
- Mr James Craig
- Mr Ivan Gordon
- Mr Brian Higgins (appointed January 2007)
- Ms Sadie Logan
- Ms Olwen McConnell
- Mrs Christine McLaughlin
- Mr Ronnie Orr (appointed January 2007)

