

# HYDEBANK WOOD YOUNG OFFENDERS' CENTRE AND PRISON

VISITING COMMITTEE AND  
BOARD OF VISITOR'S

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE  
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR  
NORTHERN IRELAND

2004 / 2005



## CONTENTS

### Mission Statement and Statement of Purpose

#### 1. Chairman's Introduction

#### 2. Overview

#### 3. Summary of Recommendations

#### 4. Committee Business

Conduct of Business  
Rota Visits and Applications  
Committee Powers

#### 5. Women Prisoners

#### 6. Hydebank Accommodation

#### 7. The Regime

Reception  
Induction  
Visits  
Remand Issues  
Inmate Incentive and Earned Privileges  
Scheme  
Personal Officer Scheme  
Absenteeism  
Resettlement Planning

#### 8. Control and Discipline

Disciplinary Procedures  
Special Segregation Units  
Inmate Allegations  
Access to Inmates

#### 9. Drugs Awareness and Strategy

#### 10. Juvenile Issues

Juvenile and Continuous Assessment Unit  
PECS Vetting  
Anti-bullying Initiatives

#### 11. Suicide Awareness and Prevention

#### 12. Welfare

Healthcare  
Chaplains

#### 13. Constructive Activities

Education  
Vocational Training  
Physical Education  
Kitchen

#### 14. Probation Board for Northern Ireland

## Mission Statement

**“To enhance the quality of prison life, working to ensure fairness and accountability in prison.”**

## Statement of Purpose

Members of the Visiting Committee and Board of Visitors at Hydebank Wood Young Offenders' Centre and Prison 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 Committee 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 Committee;
- report matters of concern to the Governor or, in serious cases, the Secretary of State;
- exercise certain powers that are given under the Prison and Young Offenders Rules (NI) 1995.

The Prison Rules further require the Committee/ Board to satisfy itself as to

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



### 1. Chairman's Introduction

As the Chairman of Hydebank Wood Young Offenders' Centre and Prison, I am pleased to present the report of the Committee and Board for the period April 2004 to March 2005.

Hydebank Wood is one of the three prisons in Northern Ireland - the others being Maghaberry and Magilligan. At the start of the reporting year Hydebank was solely a Young Offenders' Centre but in June 2004, with the transfer of women prisoners from Maghaberry, also became a Women's Prison. This move resulted in the Visiting Committee also becoming a Board of Visitors in relation to women prisoners. For the purpose of this Report the nomenclature used will be that of "Committee". The Committee has a maximum membership of 15 persons, representative of the general public, appointed by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

Members of the Committee are all volunteers who give freely of their time with the objective of helping to ensure that prison conditions and the treatment of prisoners are satisfactory. This is effected by the involvement of members in meetings, working parties and prison committees and, most importantly, regular visits to Hydebank to meet with and speak to inmates and respond to issues which may be raised. The amount of time needed in meeting these requirements can be considerable and members- especially those who are in full-time employment or are self-employed- can find that they have difficulty in maintaining the highest level of attendance. Some members, indeed, find it impossible and this is reflected by resignations which occur each year. Although new members are subsequently appointed there is an unavoidable hiatus between members resigning and new appointments being made and this inevitably results in pressure on

remaining members. My predecessor in the Chair expressed the hope that some review be taken of the conditions under which we operate as well as recruitment practices and I would endorse and repeat that hope.

Thanks and acknowledgements are due to a number of people, not least to my Vice-Chairman and to all members of the Committee for the dedication and work that has been undertaken in striving to achieve our objectives. Our previous Chair, whose resignation from the Committee was received with regret by all members at the end of the year, had provided leadership of the highest calibre and I owe her a personal thanks for the benefit of her guidance and experience.

The Governor has always been diligent in informing the Committee about developments within the prison, as well as responding promptly to the many questions that are put to him at meetings. He has been helpful and approachable during a year when changes within the prison placed considerable pressure on his time. Additionally, members of the Hydebank management are always willing to help members and throughout the year were uniformly courteous.

The support from the Northern Ireland Prison Service has been valuable and thanks are due there also to all levels, from Headquarters to secretarial personnel within Hydebank. In future, secretarial and other services for the Committee will be undertaken by the Prisoner Ombudsman's Office and there has been much valuable preplanning carried out to that end in the latter part of the reporting year; for that we are also very grateful.

**Chairman, Visiting Committee/ Board of Visitors, Hydebank Wood Young Offenders' Centre and Prison**

## 2. Overview

The reporting year was one of considerable change and controversy relating to Hydebank Wood, with the arrival of women prisoners in June being a major contributor to the overall impact on the Prison as a whole. While planning for the move had been ongoing in the previous year and the Visiting Committee had been involved in discussions to that end, the inexperience of members in interfacing with women prisoners was a problem which arose and which will continue for some considerable time. There had been warnings that the needs and demands of women prisoners were different in many respects from those of male offenders and this certainly proved to be the case.

The arrival of the women also meant that the Visiting Committee became also a Board of Visitors in relation to the women prisoners. However the cumbersome duality of titles is something which should disappear in the year ahead when legislation is enacted to rename the boards/ committee to the three Northern Ireland Prisons as Independent Monitoring Boards.

Industrial action by prison officers in the latter half of the year created considerable problems for management and an inevitable increase in the periods during which inmates were locked in their rooms. This in turn resulted in increased complaints by inmates to members of the Committee. Nonetheless management are to be commended for the professional and sensible way in which the effects of the dispute were addressed to ensure that the day-to-day running of the Prison was affected as little as possible.

Indeed, the year was marked by relative calm within Hydebank as far as the security situation and the regime as a whole was

concerned. However critical reports relating to the treatment of women prisoners and the accompanying publicity which followed meant that the public perception of prison life was in stark contrast to the experience within the prison.

Numbers at Hydebank continued to increase over the year. In the previous year, more than 200 inmates represented peak numbers, but during the reporting year the Hydebank population exceeded 250 at times, which could not be accounted for alone by the influx of women prisoners. However the re-opening of Beech House meant that at no stage was there a need for inmates to share accommodation. However if the trend of rising numbers continues an accommodation problem could arise in the not-too-distant future.

The provision of health services, and particularly of psychiatric services, continued to be a problem. A not inconsiderable number of inmates suffer from personality disorders and behavioural difficulties and there are occasions when it appears to members that some inmates should be receiving treatment in an appropriate institution rather than being committed to prison. However a review of the provision of mental health services in Northern Ireland is under way and may have a helpful impact on prisons in the Province.

Membership of the Committee fluctuated during the year, with three members resigning and four new appointments being made towards the end of the reporting year. The continuing resignations reflect the time demands which arise and the difficulties which some members face in meeting those demands.





### 3.Summary of Recommendations

This summary of recommendations is intended as a pointer to issues raised in the Report and reference should be made to the specific areas concerned in the body of the document.

Paragraph

#### 5.7

In-cell sanitation should be provided for women prisoners in Ash House.

#### 5.10

The provision of a new exercise area outside Ash House should be carried out as soon as possible.

#### 5.11

Early consideration to be given to the provision of a custom-built women's prison for Northern Ireland.

#### 6.3

Consideration be given to a prison-wide anti-littering campaign.

#### 7.1

The introduction of PRISM (Prison Records and Information System) be expedited.

#### 7.4

Refurbishment of the Reception area be effected as soon as possible.

#### 7.16

The Personal Officer Scheme should be reviewed and re-introduced.

#### 7.19

Staff absenteeism targets be made more realistic and stretching to achieve.

#### 8.7

Inmates held in the male Special Segregation Unit should be allowed 24-hour access to lavatories.

#### 8.8

The use of the male SSU to house inmates during periods of over-crowding be discontinued.

#### 8.11

A contingency plan be drawn up to provide emergency heating.

#### 8.12

New arrangements be made to accommodate women inmates considered at risk of self-harm.

#### 9.7

Visits staff should exercise common sense when drug dogs identify visitors as possible drug carriers.  
The competence of the drug dogs should be reviewed on a regular basis.

#### 10.2

Child protection training for Juvenile Unit staff be provided as soon as possible.

#### 10.4

More regular involvement with Opportunity Youth be provided.

#### 10.8

The specific needs of women prisoners be addressed as part of the anti-bullying policy.

#### 11.4

Suicide awareness training be given priority.

#### 12.3

Consideration be given to changing health care services by introducing a much closer relationship with the Health Service in Northern Ireland.

**12.4**

The garden area at the rear of the Healthcare Centre be reinstated.

**13.7**

One person be given responsibility for all education and training activities within Hydebank.

**13.9**

A substitute should normally be employed for all teacher and vocational training instructor long-term absences.  
Consideration be given to out-sourcing all teaching and training staff.

**13.12**

Refurbishment to be made to areas of the Physical Education Centre.

**13.18**

Efforts be made to speed up the provision of new items in the tuckshop.

**4. Committee Business****Conduct of Business****4.1**

The Committee meets monthly and also operates a rota whereby two members visit the Centre each week. Each member is also assigned a number of areas of special responsibility and each makes visits to the Centre to familiarise themselves with the operation of these areas and to take forward any issues of concern.

**4.2**

The Chairman attended the weekly briefing meeting with heads of departments and team leaders within Hydebank, providing continuing contact with the operation of the Centre. Additionally the Chairman attended the annual strategic planning exercise, thus giving an insight into future planning for and developments at the Centre. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman also represented the Committee at the quarterly meeting of the Chairs of Boards of Visitors/ Visiting Committee held at Headquarters: this meeting plays an important part in garnering information about the Prison Service as a whole as well as facilitating liaison between the Boards/ Committee.

**Rota Visits and Applications****4.3**

During the week rota visits by Committee members deal with applications or representations made by inmates, as well as informing themselves generally about any broad issues of concern.



### 4.4

An application is a written request made by an inmate to meet a member of the Committee to discuss a problem or complaint. Although in the past such applications were made through Hydebanks staff who recorded them in a book for members' attention the more usual approach is now made by use of letterboxes which have been placed throughout the Prison. Use of the letterboxes has the advantage that inmates' confidentiality is assured and appears to be more popular than the previous system. Taken as a whole, the number of written approaches made to members has decreased in recent years and attempts have been made to draw the attention of inmates to the letterboxes by the use of posters publicising the facility. At the same time, it is worth recording that during the year under report there were relatively few issues which caused major dissension among inmates - at no time, for instance, was there a major incident, which makes for an encouraging comparison with the situation of a few years ago.

### 4.5

Apart from written requests, direct approaches are often made by inmates to members when they visit Hydebanks. Such requests can often raise relatively trivial matters which can be fairly easily resolved but on such occasions more serious issues are raised and have to be addressed in more depth.

### Committee Powers

### 4.6

The Committee no longer participates in the decision-making role formerly necessary under Prison Rule 32, which laid down the procedure for restricting association of an inmate to ensure his safety, the safety of others or the security of the prison. This is

welcomed, since the Committee felt that its independence from prison authorities could be seen as compromised by its former role. The involvement of the Committee now takes the form of monitoring the exercise of disciplinary procedures.

## 5. Women Prisoners

### 5.1

The decision to transfer women prisoners from Mourne House, Maghaberry, to Hydebanks Wood was announced in April 2004 and put into effect on 21 June 2004 when 17 women arrived to take up the accommodation which had been prepared in Ash House, Hydebanks. Planning for the move had been under way for some time and necessary alterations to Ash House effected in an attempt to provide suitable accommodation for women in a building which had been designed and built for male young offenders.

### 5.2

Earlier, in November 2003, the Prison Service had issued an Equality Impact Assessment into the proposed transfer of women to Hydebanks in the form of a consultative document. The Hydebanks Visiting Committee had responded and registered concerns about the move, particularly in relation to the possible effect on the regime at Hydebanks and the deficiencies of facilities at Hydebanks in comparison with Mourne House. However it was concluded that, given appropriate support and resources, the Hydebanks management and staff could provide an acceptable environment and regime for women prisoners.



### 5.3

During the time before the move, members of the Hydebank Committee had visited Mourne House and had a meeting with the Maghaberry Board of Visitors (who in turn visited Hydebank). It was noted that the Maghaberry BOV were opposed to the move, with the grounds for their opposition including the inadvisability of siting a women's prison within a male young offenders' centre and the perceived unsuitability of Ash House as accommodation for women - the lack of in-cell sanitation being pointed up in that regard. It was also stressed that the needs of women prisoners were significantly different in many respects from those of male prisoners and doubts were voiced about the ability of a regime based at Hydebank to meet those needs.

### 5.4

During 2003 the NI Human Rights Commission had decided to conduct research into the human rights of women in prison in Northern Ireland and the end result was a highly critical report, written by Professor Phil Scruton and Dr Linda Moore, which the Commission published in October 2004. This covered, inter alia, the transfer of women prisoners from Mourne House to Hydebank. Reference was made to safeguards which HM Inspector of Prisons had identified when a women's unit was sited within a male establishment and stress placed on the need for separate facilities to be provided for women.

### 5.5

Against this background Hydebank Committee members were hardly looking forward to the arrival of the women prisoners. While it was felt that the Governor and his staff would be making every effort to establish an appropriate and humane regime, there was concern that the

inherent problems associated with the geography of a female/ male prison and any shortcomings of the Ash House accommodation might defeat that effort.

### 5.6

In the event, the arrival of the women prisoners took place smoothly and efficiently. When speaking to the new arrivals Committee members were certainly made aware of unfavourable comparisons with the Mourne House facilities, but such criticisms tended to be voiced by a relatively small number of prisoners and as time wore on there appeared to be a more general acceptance of Hydebank as the new location for women prisoners. Problems of course arose and could not be addressed immediately and, at the time of writing, some await necessary action.

### 5.7

The in-cell sanitation issue is one which has been highlighted by various parties (including some prisoners). The main problem is that of access to lavatories during times when prisoners are locked in their cells. However an electronic unlocking system is provided in Ash House whereby prisoners can be let out of their cells individually to have access to lavatories and washrooms. The drawback to this is that only one cell door at a time can be unlocked on each landing, which means that when more than one prisoner wishes to have access to a lavatory she must wait until the first prisoner has returned and is re-locked - indeed a "queue" can develop if several prisoners are involved. Although it is held that such waiting times are relatively short it would obviously be preferable for all prisoners to have immediate access to facilities. While the cells in Ash are not large and some prisoners have understandable reservations about occupying a cell which includes a lavatory at relatively close



proximity **the Committee considers that in-cell sanitation should be provided and so recommends.**

### 5.8

Healthcare was another area of concern which was highlighted at an early stage of the proposal to transfer women prisoners to Hydebank, it being pointed out women had different requirements in that respect to young males and that shared healthcare facilities were undesirable. Another complication was that it proved difficult to provide medical personnel to cater for women and early assurances that additional personnel would be available proved to be over-optimistic.

### 5.9

The organisation of education and vocational training for the women was complicated by the timing of the move to Hydebank towards the end of June. The work on the new Learning and Skills Centre had not been completed, while education staff were entering into a holiday period. Nonetheless education and vocational training staff responded to the demand and 12 courses were immediately made available for women, with a further eight courses coming on line during the course of the year. One of the success stories of the year was the rejuvenation of the greenhouses and the "polytunnels" which had fallen into virtual disuse and which were taken over by the women prisoners. An important factor in that regard was the transfer from Maghaberry to Hydebank of the prison officer who had been responsible for organising gardening activities there and whose experience and knowledge of the area of activity largely contributed to its success.

### 5.10

While provision was made for exercise areas for women at Hydebank, these were less than satisfactory. One small area leading off the Special Supervision Unit in Ash proved most unpopular, while another larger area in playing fields at the top of the hill was neither convenient nor attractive to women prisoners.

**The Committee welcomes plans for the provision of a new exercise area immediately in front of Ash House and recommends that this work be carried out as soon as possible.**

### 5.11

While only 17 women arrived at Hydebank on 17 June 2004, by the end of the reporting year this number had almost doubled. Staff have commented that along with the higher numbers there has been a quicker turnover of prisoners, caused by an increase in prisoners with shorter sentences. Informed opinion appears to indicate that the numbers of women prisoners may continue to rise and in such circumstances the availability of accommodation within Ash House may eventually become limited. **Taking into account the additional problems already identified with respect to the use of Ash House it would appear sensible for early consideration to be given to the provision of a custom-built women's prison for Northern Ireland and this is recommended.**

### 5.12

During the year HM Inspector of Prisons made an unannounced inspection of Ash House and although publication of the Report post dated the reporting period the omens were not favourable for a good Report. In the event the Report was critical and its recommendations and the necessary aftermath will be watched with interest by the Committee and commented on in next year's Annual Report.

## 6. Accommodation

### 6.1

For several years now inmate numbers have been rising at Hydebank and this was the case during the year of this report. The total population could of course be expected to rise because of the influx of the women prisoners but during the year total numbers exceeded 250 on occasion - it is not many years since inmate numbers at times fell below 100. With one of the five residential houses - Ash House - now occupied by women it is possible that if inmate numbers continue to increase an accommodation problem may arise.

### 6.2

Building projects carried out during the year included the following: -

The refurbishment of Ash House to accommodate female prisoners was just one of the major projects undertaken by Estates Management in the last year. Over a span of eight months Ash House was renovated with a new reception area on the ground floor; the construction of three mother and baby units on landings, the conversion of all toilets; development of one safer cell and the creation of an exercise yard. Ash House was completed on time for the June move of the women from Mourne House.

The Visitors Centre was constructed over a nine month period and now provides a new reception and search area. The visits area includes new closed visits and family friendly visits.

The Learning and Skills Centre opened in September 2004 and while the structure of the building limits natural light, heating and ventilation controls are continuously monitored to ensure a healthy and efficient working environment.

A Video Link facility was constructed in Cedar House providing three video link court rooms and a consultation room for solicitors and clients. This is a state of the art facility which results in time and cost efficiencies for the Prison Service.

Other estate projects over the year included smoke extractor systems in all houses and a new sprinkler system in Willow and Elm.

Outdoor improvements included splitting the sports field to accommodate female inmates and the upgrading of the greenhouses to bring them back into use, with the addition of a polytunnel for horticultural work.

### 6.3

Green policies in Estates Management continue to develop and include the purchase of a baler machine for recycling cardboard. Other recycling activities provide additional interesting work and increases activity hours for the inmates. Littering does occur in some ground areas of Hydebank and **the Visiting Committee recommends that management give consideration to prison-wide anti-littering campaign.**



## 7.The Regime

### Reception

#### 7.1

Young offenders are taken directly to Reception on arrival at the Centre. They generally spend less than one hour there, however at busy times it can be longer. Their details are processed, which is done by filling in a great number of forms. This is time consuming for the officers who can be under pressure especially if there are several committals at the one time. **The Visiting Committee has noted in the past that the introduction of PRISM (Prison Records and Information Systems) could streamline the reception process and ease the administrative burden, making prisoner records available in all departments of the Centre. It was expected that this system would be operational by autumn 2004. To date this has not happened - it is recommended that this be expedited.**

#### 7.2

Officers in Reception have the responsibility of identifying those prisoners who may be at immediate risk of suicide or self-harm. A young person at risk who does not show obvious signs of distress may only be recognised after a comprehensive assessment. It may happen that the follow-on interview by the health care staff, which follows reception, may not immediately take place, so there is a particular onus on reception staff to be aware of potentially at-risk inmates. Particular care should be exercised in the choice of these officers. The inmate may not always appreciate kindness and sympathy, however it is worth taking time to evaluate the risk factors especially for the first time offenders who may be feeling vulnerable and uncertain of what lies ahead.

#### 7.3

The officer conducting the reception interview outlines the information regarding what will be happening in the next few days. An information sheet is given to the inmate along with their bedding and a first night pack, which includes radio and batteries.

#### 7.4

The general décor of Reception has continued to improve; it has been repainted in brighter more cheerful colours. The changing cubicles are very small and are unsuitable for anything other than changing. They should not be used as a holding area. **The Committee was informed some time ago that the Reception area was to undergo a complete and, in our view, a necessary refurbishment: we would recommend that this be done as soon as possible.**

### Induction

#### 7.5

The induction programme provides inmates with information covering all aspects of what they can expect during their time at the Centre.

#### 7.6

All inmates go through "day one" programme. This involves 12 topics including the role of their Personal Officer, Prison Rule 38 which covers offences against prison discipline, adjudication procedure, visiting regulations, fire awareness, HIV/AIDS, anti-bullying strategies and the availability of Chaplains, Samaritans volunteers and the Visiting Committee/ Board of Visitors. Those on remand, and all sentenced inmates serving more than 30 days will be involved in the full resettlement planning process.



**7.7**

The range of activities is outlined:- prison rules, daily regime, the earned privilege system are all covered and the opportunity is taken to encourage an acceptable level of behaviour. Educational opportunities are explained without any pressure. Inmates are encouraged and assured that their needs will be assessed and they can work out a suitable plan.

**7.8**

We understand that the Induction Programme is shortly to be updated.

**Visits****7.9**

The new Visitors' Centre at Hydebank Wood finally opened for visitors on 14 December 2004. The main visiting room has 18 tables, and three legal and two closed visit rooms cater for both male and female inmates, with a separate area for family-centred visits.

**7.10**

The Centre operates a full biometric verification system for visitors and inmates with a finger scan and photograph used to confirm identity of persons entering and leaving the visits area. All visits are booked using a computer system.

**7.11**

The family-centred visits started on 22 February 2005 and provide for a morning or afternoon visit for parents with their children in a child-friendly area away from the main visiting room.

**7.12**

A crèche managed and staffed by NIACRO (Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Prisoners), is situated in

the main visiting room and provides activities for children visiting Hydebank. It has been very successful and 840 children have used the facility so far.

**7.13**

There is an issue regarding the length of visits. Enhanced female prisoners get 1½ hour visits as opposed to 1 hour for the males. However, a review is planned of inmates' earnings, incentives and privileges schemes and it is hoped that any anomalies will be addressed.

**Remand Issues****7.14**

At the end of the year, the percentage of inmates on remand was just below fifty percent. Until the recent change in Maghaberry, Hydebank was unique in housing remand and sentenced inmates together. All remand inmates are now included in the Inmate Incentive and Earned Privileges Scheme and Resettlement Planning.

**Once again the Committee deplores the length of time inmates currently spend on remand.**

**Inmate Incentive and Earned Privileges Scheme****7.15**

A review of the IIEP scheme is taking place and a working group is presently looking at ways to improve the scheme. At the moment wages are paid according to the inmate's status, Basic, Standard or Enhanced. The review will consider adding to this the location in which the inmate works. In response to a recent HMCI report the review will also look at the marking methodology used. The appeal procedure will be reviewed



for those who are demoted from their compact level and the six-week period required to get back to that level may be reduced to four weeks. The use of independent advocates for juveniles has been suggested.

**The Visiting Committee/Board of Visitors recognises the need for this review and while concerned that suggestions such as "Independent Advocates" should be carefully considered and with input from the Committee, we are happy to see the various appeal procedures examined and would welcome a reduction from six weeks to four weeks in the period required to move up in compact level.**

### Personal Officer Scheme

#### 7.16

The POS was introduced over three years ago in an endeavour to promote a closer relationship between an inmate and a staff member who would be specifically designated to undertake the supervision and care of that inmate. The scheme has run into difficulties and does not operate as originally envisaged. One difficulty was that inmates were moved with compact changes, resulting in movement from a house where the designated officer was located. **Review and reintroduction of the scheme is recommended.**

### Absenteeism

#### 7.17

It was surprising to note that one of the key performance targets incorporated in Hydebanks Wood's published business plan for the year 2004/05 was to reduce the rate of absenteeism to an annual average of no more than 19 days per head. By any standards this was a high target and far too easy to meet. According to a recent Confederation of British

Industries survey, the average private-sector worker in the UK was absent for 6.4 days in 2004 and the average public-sector employee for 9.1 days. **The Committee recommends that in future the absenteeism target for Hydebanks Wood should be more realistic and more stretching to achieve.**

### Resettlement Planning

#### 7.18

The resettlement plan which replaced sentence planning is up and running but is presently under review. Due to staffing problems, particularly at the start of this year, many of the programmes contained in the plan were not carried out. These programmes include Anger Management, Car Crime and Enhanced Thinking Skills, as well as Opportunity Youth's programmes, namely Drugs and Alcohol Awareness and Cognitive Behavioural Change. This latter programme is aimed at sentenced inmates who want to change from their drug habits etc.

#### 7.19

"Reach Out" is an eighteen-month project to acquaint some 300 employers Province-wide of the potential employability of ex-offenders and to address any discriminatory practices.

#### 7.20

A Parenting Programme for the female inmates has been set up in partnership with Barnardos. Originally this started in Mourne House and has continued at Hydebanks. Various other programmes have resulted from this such as "Making the most of myself" and "Confidence and Assertiveness" which are helping build up a rapport with inmates. Latterly male inmates with families have benefited from help in "Pre-School Parenting" and "Staying in Touch".

### 7.21

Presently there is an effort being made to combine Drugs Awareness, Suicide Awareness, Anti-bullying and Resettlement into one policy document so that each department has fuller information and is able to be of more benefit to inmates.

### 7.22

The new Learning and Skills Centre was opened in September 2004 and has been a great benefit. While appreciating staffing difficulties during the year, the Visiting Committee would like to see the various activity providers being able to fulfil their commitments in the year ahead.

## 8. Control and Discipline

### Disciplinary Procedures

#### 8.1

One of the roles of the Committee is to monitor the level and consistency of Governor's adjudications on women and young men who commit an offence against prison rules while being held in Hydebank Wood.

#### 8.2

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 tuck shop privileges to loss of association or cellular confinement in the Special Supervision Unit.

### 8.3

The Governor, the Deputy Governor and other governor grades within Hydebank Wood may preside at adjudications. In practice, the Deputy Governor conducted the majority of adjudications heard during the reporting year. This concentration of the adjudicating role on one person enhances the professionalism of the officer concerned and helps to provide consistency. The use of award guidelines is also aimed at consistency.

### 8.4

In the year 2004/05 there were 784 adjudications of male young offenders, compared with 844 during the previous year (a 7% reduction). The offences and penalties awarded can be summarised as follows:-

### Offences

Violence	117
Damage to property	123
Trafficking or possession of prohibited articles	124
Other breaches of regulations (mainly insubordination and using abusive language)	420
<b>Total offences</b>	<b>784</b>

### **Penalties**

Cellular confinement	201
Loss of privileges	686
Loss of earnings	36
Warning /caution	136
<b>Total penalties</b>	<b>1059</b>
<b>Number of inmates penalised</b>	<b>784</b>

**Note:** Figures for penalties include suspended penalties and enforced penalties. The number of offences committed and the number of penalties awarded do not necessarily agree, as it is practice in some cases to award more than one form of penalty for the same offence.



### 8.5

There were 115 adjudications of female prisoners in the 10 months from their arrival at Hydebank Wood in June 2004 to 31 March 2005. The disruption caused by the transfer from Maghaberry Prison (Mourne House) might well have been a contributory factor in some breaches of discipline and, if so, the Committee would expect to see an improvement in the year 2005/06.

### 8.6

During the year 2004/05 the Committee received no complaints of unfair adjudication decisions.

## Special Segregation Units

### Male Units

### 8.7

The segregation 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 summons an officer by knocking on his cell door. There is a bell in each cell but this is to be used only in emergencies. The Committee considers that the use of chamber-pots at any time of the day is degrading and should be consigned to history. **The Committee 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.**

### 8.8

On at least one occasion during the year the segregation unit was being used to house new committals when apparently there was no space available elsewhere. **The Committee would be strongly opposed to the use of the segregation unit at any time as a remedy for over-crowding at Hydebank Wood, and recommends accordingly.**

### 8.9

There was some evidence to suggest that inmates being held in the segregation unit did not always get their daily period of exercise in the fresh air, although in some instances the offer of such exercise periods might have been refused by the inmate.

### 8.10

It was noted in October 2004 that some cells in the segregation unit had no bed and inmates had to sleep on a mattress on the floor.

### 8.11

On one visit to the segregation unit, the Visiting Committee found that there was no heating due to the replacement of pipework and that inmates were having to live in unacceptably cold conditions. **The Committee recommends that a contingency plan for back-up heating be drawn up to cater for breakdowns in the normal supply. In this particular case, the heating system work was planned.**



## Female Unit

### 8.12

Ash House has its own Special Segregation Unit for female prisoners. It is located on A1 landing and is divided into two separate sections by a gate. The nearer section is for prisoners at risk of self-harm. The cells at the far end of the unit are the punishment cells for those prisoners serving periods of cellular confinement. It appears illogical to locate prisoners on punishment alongside prisoners at risk of self-harm and in need of support and constant care. **The Board of Visitors recommends that these two disparate prisoner groups be housed and managed separately.**

## Inmate Allegations

### 8.13

During the reporting year the Committee received some inmate allegations of assault and harassment by Prison Officers. These complaints were passed on to the Governor for investigation. The Board of Visitors/ Visiting Committee is not privy to the extent or nature of such investigations, or indeed the findings of the investigations. It does not know whether there was any police involvement in such investigations.

### 8.14

The Committee is currently devising a documented system for processing all inmate complaints, requests and queries it receives, which crucially will require a written response from the Governor.

### 8.15

The Committee welcomes the recent appointment of a Prisoner Ombudsman for Northern Ireland, who will have his own investigation staff to enquire into any serious allegation, which presumably would encompass a review of the Northern Ireland Prison Service's own internal investigation of the allegation.

## Access to Inmates

### 8.16

Members of the Board of Visitors/ Visiting Committee should have access to inmates at any time to enable them to fulfil this role. In practice, access has been restricted to the periods 0830 to 1200 hours and 1400 to 1600 hours, when inmates were not locked up. Recent industrial action by members of the Prison Officers Association exacerbated matters, with inmates locked up for prolonged periods. The Committee has expressed dissatisfaction with the current level of access and the Governor has agreed to look into the matter.

## **9. Drugs Awareness and Strategy**

### 9.1

In last year's Report the Committee commented on the improvement in the execution of the drugs strategy, reversing the trend of previous years. In this reporting year there has been further and significant improvement - to the point where, at the end March 2005, there were 200 drug-free inmates out of a prison population of 225 at that date.



### 9.2

At the end of the year there were six drug-free landings (the four landings of Cedar House and two landings in Ash House) and plans were in hand for an additional four such landings. The only drawback to this system is that as the number of drug-free landings increase there is an increased concentration of inmates with drug problems on remaining landings.

### 9.3

All inmates are drugs tested when they arrive at Reception. If an inmate volunteers to be classified as drugs free under the Strategy programme he or she is immediately given Standard grade - if the drugs test is failed at that time a month's grace with regard to the grade is given and if, after the month, drugs prove to be out of the inmate's system then Standard grade is confirmed. Any failure at that stage results in reduction to Basic grade.

### 9.4

Laboratory testing of samples taken from inmates started towards the end of 2004, replacing the in-house procedure previously used. This new procedure identifies the nature of the drug involved and can stand up as evidence in court. If an inmate is taking prescription drugs he or she can agree that the relevant medical report accompanies the sample to the laboratory so that no test failure can be attributed to genuinely prescribed drugs.

### 9.5

There are now two passive and one active drug dogs at Hydebank. Cannabis and prescription drugs remain the main finds, with no evidence that hard drugs are gaining ground with inmate abusers. The main ways in which drugs are brought into the prison are by inmates returning from home leave, during visits and when inmates attend court. The attempts by visitors to pass drugs to inmates is a depressing reflection of the acceptance of drug abuse within families.

### 9.6

The Drugs Steering Committee, chaired by the Head of Security, met monthly during the year, co-ordinating the anti-drug steps taken by management. The degree to which these efforts were successful is reflected by monitoring carried out by Queen's University, which show not merely that drug use has fallen significantly but that at the same time knowledge of drug education among inmates has greatly increased. A recent census will provide further detail in due course.

### 9.7

There were some complaints from prisoners about the drug dog identifying their visitors as possible drug carriers and as a consequence only being allowed a closed visit. Such examples included an 88-year-old lady and a social worker who had come to visit a client. Clearly, in such circumstances there is a need for common sense to be exercised by visits staff, unless there is additional and reliable intelligence to support the dog evidence.

**We recommend accordingly. Such examples also prompt us to recommend that the competence of the drug dogs be reviewed on a regular basis.**

## 10. Juvenile and Child Protection

### Juvenile Unit

#### Juvenile and Continuous Assessment Unit

##### 10.1

A Juvenile and Continuous Assessment Unit was established in Elm 1 during 2003 to accommodate any committals under 18 years. Children under 17 can transfer from the Juvenile Justice Centre under the provisions of the Criminal Justice (Children) NI Order 1998. This happens when they are deemed to be at risk to themselves or of harming others or where a court orders that they serve the unexpired portion of the Juvenile Justice Order in a YOC. Those who are under eighteen and are committed directly from court are normally committed under Children's Order (NI) 1995 legislation. All these young people are legally considered as children and are subject to child protection procedures.

##### 10.2

Elm 1 housed a maximum of 14, which was inadequate. The unit has since been moved to Willow 1 and 2 and currently houses 26 young people. Staff within this unit are required to have training in Child Protection, which takes place in England. At present there are no trained staff on these two landings and it has been claimed that there are insufficient staff to allow for the shortages that time off for the training would entail. **The Committee would strongly recommend that this training take place as soon as possible.** It has been suggested that Northern Ireland may have facilities for this training in the future. This is

a specialised caring unit, but there are not extra staff available, in fact at present there are barely enough officers to cover posts.

##### 10.3

The staff in the Juvenile Unit are to be commended for the level of care they provide in difficult circumstances. They are understaffed and at times have difficulties in providing the necessary stimulation. In spite of this, they do encourage the young people to reach an enhanced level before they have to be moved on to mix with other inmates.

##### 10.4

**The Visiting Committee would recommend more regular involvement with Opportunity Youth.** They used to provide twice weekly drama sessions, which staff have found to be very successful in the past.

### PECS Vetting

##### 10.5

All staff have now been vetted by the Pre-Employment Check. Twelve staff have been trained in Child Protection. Many of these will in turn become trainers and each staff member in the Centre will receive training in a two day programme on Child Protection.

### Anti-bullying initiatives

##### 10.6

The Anti-Bullying policy, which became operational in November 2003 continues to apply. As well as dealing directly with incidents of bullying, the aim of the policy is to promote within Hydebank a climate free from all types of harassment and victimisation.



### 10.7

Bullying can be reported by a variety of means such as letter, telephone, verbal report, with the policy stressing the importance of providing protection to inmates reporting concerns. All reported incidents are recorded and followed by an investigation by the unit manager of the house where the alleged incident took place. If the bullying is substantiated the perpetrator is charged and referred to the anti-bullying committee.

### 10.8

The Committee stresses the importance of continuing to foster a climate within Hydebank which does not tolerate bullying at any level. **As the Anti-Bullying policy predates the move of female prisoners to Hydebank Wood, it is recommended that the specific needs of female inmates should be addressed.**

## 11. Suicide Awareness and Prevention

### 11.1

The Suicide Awareness Committee has been reconstituted within the last year. It is chaired by a Deputy Governor and has representatives from Probation, Healthcare, Psychology, BOV/VC, Samaritans, the Director of Custody and the Custody Manager. Recently it has included a representative from both the male and female inmates.

### 11.2

Although there have been no suicides in Hydebank for five years, nobody is complacent. The number of self-inflicted injuries fluctuates, although it has been low with only one attempted suicide within the

last year. This has been in no small way due to the vigilance of the staff. The most vulnerable are those at the early stages of their custody and particularly those who are first-time offenders and inmates charged with offences of a sexual nature.

### 11.3

It is considered that isolation is not the answer to dealing with inmates who are suicidal: what is required is time and space given to them to express their suicidal feelings. With this in mind a free phone line to the Samaritans has been installed on landings. The need for privacy and confidentiality will be met by the use of a mobile phone, which can be used only for the Samaritan number available on each landing.

### 11.4

There has been no Suicide Awareness training for much of last year, due to staff having other commitments. It was suggested that outside organisations be brought in to help with training. **The Committee recommends that Suicide Awareness Training be given priority.** There is also a need to improve the transfer of information from GPs and other informed parties. It would also be of benefit if staff in Reception and Healthcare were given more time to assess each new inmate.



## 12.Welfare

### Healthcare

#### 12.1

During the year the arrival of the women prisoners at Hydebank created new healthcare demands. These were not related merely to the increase in inmate numbers but also the fact that women prisoners present particular problems and needs. The necessary increase in medical staff proved difficult to achieve, despite considerable efforts to that end by the Associate Director of Healthcare. In fact no local medical practice was willing to provide services for women inmates and although short-term cover was achieved, by the end of the reporting year the situation had not shown signs of long-term improvement.

#### 12.2

An additional complication is that mental health services, for both male young offenders and women prisoners, have proved to be inadequate. The number of inmates with personality disorders and mental health problems creates a need which present resources cannot meet.

#### 12.3

When Committee members have visited prisons in other parts of the UK it has been noted that recourse to the Health Service is often made rather than an in-house arrangement. Taking into account the healthcare problems that have arisen at Hydebank during the year **it is recommended that consideration be given to changing the way in which health services are provided in Hydebank by introducing a much closer relationship with the Health Service in Northern Ireland.**

#### 12.4

Throughout the reporting year it was disappointing to note that the garden at the rear of the Healthcare Centre remained overgrown and unused. The original purpose of this garden had been to provide a quiet space for in-patients to have some time in the fresh air. **The Committee recommends the reinstatement of this useful facility and the addition of fencing to provide privacy for the patients using it.**

### Chaplains

#### 12.5

There are five Christian chaplains working the Centre - Roman Catholic, Church of Ireland, Presbyterian, Free Presbyterian and Methodist. They meet once a quarter in the Centre and more often if necessary. If a member of a faith tradition other than Christian is committed to the Centre, there is provision for a representative of their group to be contacted.

The Chaplains make a very valuable contribution into the life of the Centre, and their commitment to the welfare of inmates is very much welcomed by the Committee.



## 13. Constructive Activities

### Education

#### 13.1

The staff in Education continue to deal with the challenge of elevating numeracy and literacy skills levels in the prison population. The focus on literacy and numeracy skills reflects the basic education needs, particularly represented in the 70% of the male population which functions below Level 1. Inmates also participate in GCSE Maths and English and in the Computer courses such as CLAIT.

#### 13.2

In the last year 103 inmates completed the 15 weeks by four hours Essential Skills programme at the various entry levels and the 15 weeks by two hours programme at Level 1. Due to the withdrawal of goodwill during industrial action the Education Centre was unable to provide consistent and continuing education and as a result lost some students who would have completed Essential Skills programmes.

#### 13.3

The move to the Learning and Skills Centre in September 2004 provided new classrooms, computer rooms, staff offices and library. A qualified librarian was employed in September 2004 and now staffs the library for six hours per week, though the library is open at various times during the week and on Tuesday evenings. The library shows increased usage resulting from the larger more appealing space, the greater number of opening hours and from the arrival of the women prisoners, who would tend to demonstrate a greater interest in books than their male counterparts.

#### 13.4

Special programmes were offered in Parenting, which was attended by 21 male inmates. Also offered are classes in music and craft, including leathercraft, cookery and fine art.

#### 13.5

Courses from Open University are also being offered, with one female inmate engaged in a Social Science Degree programme, another about to begin a short course in the study of mammals and a third female involved in A Level Psychology through correspondence.

#### 13.6

The Education staff continue to explore opportunities in drama and art which will enhance the educational skills and stimulate creative development of the personal talents of individual inmates at Hydebank.

#### 13.7

Currently, the Education Officer reports directly to the Governor and the Head of Vocational Training reports to the Director of Inmate Services. The Committee cannot understand why these functions are managed as separate entities **and recommends that one person, a Head of Education, be given responsibility for all education at Hydebank Wood, including vocational training and library services.**

### Vocational Training

#### 13.8

With the professional leadership of the prison officer concerned, gardening for female prisoners continues to stand out as a benchmark of good practice.

### 13.9

No bricklaying vocational training had been provided for the last three months of the reporting year due to the instructor's absence on sick leave. Similarly, the computer skills vocational training instructor had been on long-term sick absence for the last eight months of the year 2003/04. Again, no cover had been provided for his absence. **The Committee recommends that a substitute should normally be found to cover long-term absences. It also recommends that the Northern Ireland Prison Service seriously considers out-sourcing all teaching staff (including vocational training instructors) from a local college of further education.**

## Physical Education

### 13.10

The PE Department offers inmates an excellent programme of activities and an expanding range of opportunities to acquire qualification which are recognised in the leisure industry. The dedication of the staff is notable, and is reflected in the way in which they operate as a team.

### 13.11

The sports complex includes a sports hall with a rock climbing wall and a weight training and fitness suite with an excellent range of aerobic and weight lifting equipment. It also has treatment rooms and a fitness assessment suite. Outdoor facilities include two grass soccer pitches, a floodlit all-weather pitch and an athletics track. Courses offered during this year were: Mini Soccer Leaders Award, Junior Team Leaders Award, Sport for All Leaders, First Aid, NVQ Level 2 gymnasium and canoeing 1 and 2 star Awards.

### 13.12

**The leisure and fitness activities and reception areas of the Physical Education Centre are in need of refurbishment and the Committee recommends that this be undertaken as soon as possible.**

## The Kitchen/ Catering

### 13.13

Between six and ten male inmates work in the Kitchen on a daily basis and during the year five prisoners were registered for NVQ level 1 Food Preparation and Cookery: three have received their certificates and the other two are nearing completion. Hygiene courses have also been made available ie the Essentials of Food Hygiene and the Food Safety 2000 Certificate with more than 230 certificates issued since the programme started.

### 13.14

The financial allocation for catering is £16.39 per inmate per week, and has stayed at that level for five years. Although it is a credit to catering staff that they have managed to achieve this a modest increase would mean that inmates could have bigger quantities, as well as some additions such as yoghurt (which the women prisoners have requested).

### 13.15

The issue of whether women prisoners should also have the opportunity to work in the Kitchen is one which should be addressed, although it is recognised that it raises with it considerable logistical problems.



### The Tuck Shop

#### 13.16

The arrival of women prisoners understandably created additional demands for the tuck shop - in fact the sales list has doubled.

#### 13.17

During the year three inmates worked in the tuck shop, which opens on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. A new computer system is being installed which will not only be more efficient but will allow for immediate refunds (which has not been possible up to now).

#### 13.18

There have been complaints about the length of time taken to get certain items (CDs, DVDs and games) but this is usually because an item is out of stock rather than a failure in the system. Hydebanks and the other two Northern Ireland prisons are supplied by contract with an English distributor. Complaints arise about the range of goods available but it is impossible for every individual request to be met. If enough inmates ask for certain items a request can be made for the shop to be stocked with these items.

**However this process can take months and it is recommended the efforts be made to speed it up.**

### Laundry

#### 13.19

The Laundry provides three to four jobs for male inmates and appears to be able to handle the increased workload created by the arrival of women prisoners. There is however, an urgent need for another industrial tumble-dryer.

## 14. Probation Service for Northern Ireland

### 14.1

Objective and Performance targets for the Probation team are set out each year in the Service Level Agreement between PBNi and the Governor. For the period 2004/05, targets included

- 95% of all committal/induction interviews to take place within two working days. 1314 interviews (an increase of 30% on the previous year) were completed within agreed time scales.
- Inmates referred to Probation through the request system to be dealt with within two working days. Despite having to respond to an increase in requests by 9%, this target was achieved.
- Contribution to the delivery of group work programmes in partnership with other providers. During the past year four Car Crime, three Anger Management and one Enhanced Thinking Skills programmes were delivered with a total of 60 inmates completing the programmes. Industrial action within the prison caused some disruption as, for example, on some occasions prison officers were not available to co-work group work sessions.
- Contribution to the completion of multi-disciplinary risk assessments for those applying for Home Leave, Compassionate Temporary Release, Special Privilege Status and the Working Out and Working from Home Schemes. 176 risk assessments were provided to the Home Leave Board, with probation staff attending weekly Home Leave meetings.



- Probation staff, in conjunction with other Departments, contributed to the identification and management of high risk, listed, vulnerable and disruptive inmates.

## 14.2

Particular achievements during the year have included the accreditation of both the “Anger Management” and the “Your choice Car Crime Programme”. In addition the IMPACT project was awarded the Inside Out Restorative Justice Butler Trust Award.

## 14.3

Probation staff are to be commended for their ongoing commitment and professionalism at a time when due to an increased prison population and increasing numbers of custody-probation orders, the teams resources have been stretched.

