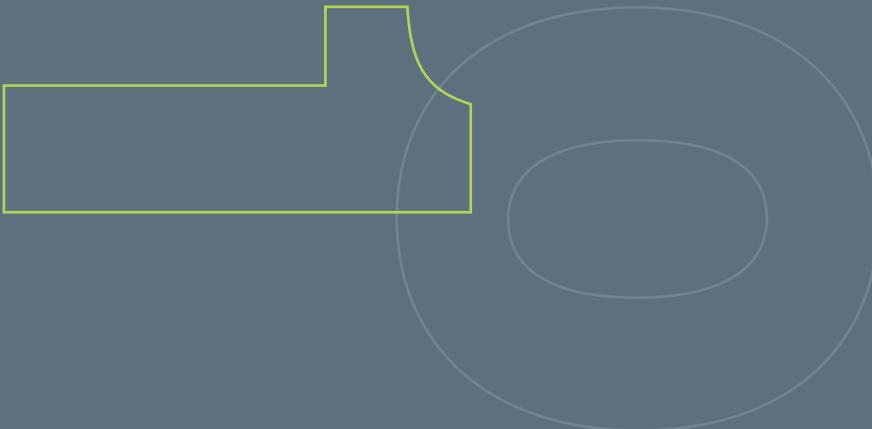




MAGHABERRY PRISON

Independent Monitoring Board's Annual Report for 2010/11



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Mission Statement

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

Statement of Purpose

Members of the Independent Monitoring Board for HMP Maghaberry were appointed by the Justice Minister under Section 3 of the Treatment of Offenders Act (NI) 1968 and under the Prison Act (NI) 1953.

The Board is required to:

- visit HMP Maghaberry regularly and report to the Justice Minister 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 Justice Minister; 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.

To enable the Board to carry out these duties effectively its members have free access at any time to all prisoners and to all parts of the prison to which they are appointed. The Board shall also have reasonable access to any of the records of the prison.

UK National Preventative Mechanism

On 31 March 2009, the Independent Monitoring Board became part of the United Kingdom National Preventative Mechanism (UK NPM) as required by the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT).

Chairperson's Introduction

I am pleased to introduce the report covering the period April 2010 - March 2011 for the Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) for HMP Maghaberry.

This is my second year as Chair and for this reporting period the Board commenced with seven members and ended with fourteen. At the beginning of the period, several experienced Board members were appointed to either Hydebank or Magilligan. In return this Board was reinforced by the appointment of three experienced members from the other two establishments and mid-year by the appointment of seven new members, two of whom went on immediate sabbatical due to work commitments. Another one failed to attend the mandatory training and mentoring and has not become an established member. The members of the Maghaberry Board are people from across Northern Ireland who, working on a voluntary basis, bring a wide and diverse range of skills, knowledge and experience from all walks of life from both the private and the public sector. I thank them for their time and positive approach to the monitoring task which demands diligence and a positive approach to the on-going commitment. As Chair I recognise that they are a dedicated and focused Board, well suited to the task of being independent monitors, which I fully acknowledge.

During the reporting period the Board responded to 219 requests from prisoners, discussed the issues with them and tried to resolve the associated problems. Every week Board members visited the Special Supervision Unit (SSU) to speak to prisoners being held under Rule 32. They also attended the associated case conferences. While in the SSU the opportunity was also taken to talk to prisoners being held on cellular confinement following formal action for proven indiscipline offences. Board members also observed adjudications held in the SSU to ensure that due process was followed.

Sadly, this reporting period saw two deaths in custody although neither happened within the confines of the prison. Mark Maginnis died on 25 October 2010 in the Belfast City Hospital after becoming ill in the prison and being transferred to the hospital for treatment. Francis McAlary died on 25 December 2010 after being released from Maghaberry only 4 days earlier. Both deaths are subject to an investigation by the Prisoner Ombudsman. Our thoughts are with both families.

For the first six months of the reporting period, the prison did not have a substantive Governing Governor. In June 2010, the acting Governor returned to NIPS headquarters and an experienced Governing Governor took up the posts. An experienced Deputy Governor was took up post at the same time. The new governing team have carried on and considerably expanded the work that was initiated by the previous incumbent. This has led to a new management model being designed for Maghaberry. This model includes a core day so now all staff are aware of their responsibilities and act accordingly to ensure that all daily tasks are completed in accordance with the specified time line. The introduction of this model is welcomed by the Board.

Carrying over from the end of the last reporting period until 9 April 2010 the Prison Officers' Association (POA) instruction that their members work within their terms and conditions – a move which could be interpreted as a "work to rule" - was a very unwelcome feature and distraction. Even this short period of non-cooperation added to the difficulties of managing the prison and sustaining the daily regime. This action impacted negatively upon the prisoners so was regrettable and unwelcome.

During the reporting period an average of nearly 4% of staff were off sick each month and, although the level reduced later in the year, the Board was very disappointed to note that the level reached 7.7% in mid summer. This compares very poorly to other organisations in both the public and private sectors. This had a significant impact upon the regime and the governing team was forced to curtail prisoners' activities to cope with the daily loss of staff through sick. The Board appreciates that this is a delicate and difficult issue, that has to be handled with sensitivity and care, but at the same time the high level of staff sickness must be tackled in order for the prison to function properly.

As a result of the devolution of policing and justice on 12 April 2010, the NIPS became part of the newly created Department of Justice. In July 2010, the new Justice Minister set up an independent review team to report on "the condition of detention, management and oversight of all prisons", with Maghaberry being the first prison reported on. An interim report was published in February 2011 which highlighted some persistent failings that must be addressed but also acknowledged the complex and difficult issues facing the governing team including historical problems such as the separated prisoner issue which is unique to Northern Ireland.

The separated prisoner issue, especially on the Republican side has been a constant problem since the morning of 4 April 2010, when the separated Republicans barricaded themselves in the Roe House dining room. This stand-off was eventually resolved the following evening, when the prisoners involved agreed to come out of the dining room and adhere to normal prison rules. Unfortunately, it was not until 12 August 2010 that the separated Republican prisoners accepted in main the proposals put forward by the governing team and a Joint Facilitation Group. This was an unwelcome period of turbulence and the disparity of the constant attention being paid to the separated Republicans, although necessary, was certainly noted and reflected upon by both the separated Loyalist prisoners and the integrated prisoners.

In conclusion I would like to thank the Governing Governor and all his staff for their co-operation and assistance in supporting the work of the IMB. The Board also appreciates the support provided throughout the year by the newly constituted Independent Monitoring Board Executive Council of Northern Ireland.

Finally, the work of the Board would not be possible without the support and daily assistance of the IMB Secretariat. I thank them for their dedication, work and guidance. The Secretariat staff are a major link between the prisoners' complaints received and the dissemination of this information to the Board members. This is a vital task and is appreciated by the Board who acknowledge the sound IMB Secretariat support afforded to all Board members.

Dennis Constable
Chairperson

Overview of Establishment

Maghaberry Prison is a modern high security prison which holds adult male long-term and short-term sentenced and remand prisoners, in both integrated and separated units. The regime in the prison is intended to focus on the balance between appropriate levels of security and the Healthy Prison Agenda – safety, respect, constructive activity and resettlement - of which addressing offending behaviour is an important element.

The prison was opened in 1987 and major structural changes were completed in 2003, when the separated paramilitary prisoners from Loyalist and Republican backgrounds were placed in Bush and Roe Houses respectively.

The majority of the prisoners are accommodated in six residential houses on the main site. Bann, which had been closed for refurbishment, opened again 7 March 2011 and now accommodates key workers, prisoners on committal and induction prisoners. The other houses are Erne, Foyle, Lagan, Bush and Roe. Since early March 2011 the vulnerable prisoners in Glen House have been transferred to Foyle House, together with the prisoners with poor coping skills from the REACH landing (Reaching out to prisoners through Engagement, Assessment, Collaboration working and Holistic approach). There is a separate Special Supervision Unit (SSU) and a Healthcare Centre incorporating the prison hospital. Three other houses - Martin, Wilson and Braid – are located within the Mourne complex across the road from the main site. Wilson House is used specifically to house life sentenced prisoners who are nearing the end of their sentences and have participated in all the essential programmes. This house is used as a stepping stone to the Prisoner Assessment Unit (PAU) located at Crumlin Road in Belfast.

Healthcare for all prisoners is provided through the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (SEHSCT). The drug and alcohol service for prisoners who are in need of consultation is provided by ad:apt (alcohol & drugs: empowering people through therapy) in partnership with SEHSCT and NIPS. Education and training is provided by local services.

Various charitable and voluntary organisations maintain a presence on the site - NIACRO provide guidance through the Jobtrack scheme for prisoners trying to obtain a job on discharge; CRUSE provides invaluable support in dealing with bereavement issues; Barnardo's support prisoners over family issues; and Housing Rights staff brief prisoners on the complexities of obtaining housing, housing benefits and associated grants. Finally, the Ulster Quaker Service is an essential team that welcomes the prisoners' families and visitors to the prison. The Quakers manage the refreshment facilities in two centres and provide the transport between the Visitors Centre and the prison.

Spiritual and religious matters are the remit of the prison Chaplaincy Team which aims to facilitate the practice of all faiths within the prison community. Additional spiritual help is provided by Prison Fellowship.

There are 832 prison grade staff in post, including 17 governor grades and an additional 139 civilian grades.

The Certified Normal Accommodation (CNA) is 725 and the maximum operational capacity is subject to operational demands. As at the end of March 2011 there were 880 prisoners on the roll. A breakdown of the population is provided at Appendix 1.

Summary of Recommendations

The Board recommends that –

1 Alcohol and Substance Abuse

- a) greater efforts should be made to move towards a drug-free prison including the introduction of increased enhancements for drug-free prisoners and the introduction and maintenance of drug-free landings (paragraph 2.2)

2 Catering and Kitchen

- a) NIPS explore and initiate the ways that prisoners working in the kitchen can receive accredited NVQ training (paragraph 3.1)
- b) serving of the evening meal be delayed to a later and more realistic time (paragraph 3.2)
- c) use of ready made products is monitored and the menu choices reflect more freshly-made dishes (paragraph 3.3)
- d) NIPS take steps to ensure that a Food Policy for prisons is devised and implemented (paragraph 3.3)

3 Education

- a) prison staff continue to improve the punctuality of prisoners attending classes (paragraph 5.6)
- b) steps are taken to ensure that prisoners are aware that through participation in the workshops, they can achieve NVQs (paragraph 5.11)

4 Equality and Diversity

- a) steps are taken to ‘strengthen’ the chairmanship and membership of the Equality & Diversity committee and to ensure that the committee members attend regularly (paragraph 6.6)
- b) a named manager should be made accountable for the promoting equality objective, assuming that this has not already been done (paragraph 6.7)

5 Healthcare and Mental Health

- a) the health of sentenced long term prisoners should be assessed on a regular basis and remedial action taken, with particular regard to alcohol, smoking and drug rehabilitation (paragraph 7.2)
- b) nurses’ expertise could also be utilised in providing programmes such as “well man” to help in some ways counter the health problems that exist among a majority of prisoners (paragraph 7.9)

6

Progressive Regime & Earned Privileges Scheme (PREPS)

- a) PREPS Coordinators continue to educate the Residential Managers and officers in the necessity to apply fairness to all decisions and to assist and encourage the prisoner in not only maintaining his level, but if below Enhanced, also in progressing (paragraph 11.5)
- b) prisoners and staff are given clear instruction on the possibility of a PREPS level being affected by the issue which has resulted in adjudication (paragraph 11.6)

7

Resettlement

- a) courses are made available based on the area of domestic violence and relationships, which is highlighted by the latest domestic statistics for Northern Ireland (paragraph 13.3)
- b) the use of supportive 'halfway houses' to bridge the release from prison to independent living would be of great benefit to such individuals (paragraph 13.4)

8

Safer Custody

- a) efforts are made to remedy the limitations in the closed regime, so that by default vulnerable prisoners are not prevented from achieving and progressing (paragraph 14.1)
- b) staff identified as having specific caring and nurturing skills and aptitudes should be deployed to work with vulnerable prisoners (paragraph 14.3)
- c) a wider and more comprehensive range of training opportunities are available to staff including the participation in courses run by Further and Higher Education Colleges (paragraph 14.4)

9

Special Supervision Unit (SSU)

- a) staff should receive more specialised training in coping with and understanding the challenging behaviours of some prisoners in SSU (paragraph 15.3)
- b) consideration be given to the installation of a second telephone box that would be sited on the ground floor (paragraph 15.7)

10

Tuckshop

- a) prices are monitored on a regular basis to check that all products are priced competitively for the prisoners who are on a low income and who are disadvantaged by their location (paragraph 17.1)

11

Visits

- a) the CCTV cameras in Visits be replaced / upgraded to digital standard to enable continuous surveillance in real time to be made at all points (paragraph 18.7)

1 | Accommodation

- 1.1** Residential accommodation in Maghaberry Prison is made up of the original “square houses” of Bann (now re-opened after refurbishment) Erne, Foyle and Lagan. Each house is made up of six units with 18 cells in each. Although originally planned for single accommodation the cells now normally accommodate two prisoners owing to the ever-increasing prisoner population.
- 1.2** Two linear houses were built in 1993 - Bush and Roe - each with single cell accommodation for 96 prisoners. The Loyalist and Republican prisoners are located in respective wings on the far side of each house. Glen House providing accommodation for 15 prisoners is also located within the main prison block. In addition to the cellular accommodation the main prison has a gymnasium, chapel, laundry, hospital, visits centre, kitchen, reception, a prison shop, administration, video link and education block.
- 1.3** Martin and Wilson Houses are now operational in the Mourne complex (formerly the women’s prison). Martin House was taken over by Security two years ago and is now used by that department as a unit for holding certain prisoners in secure accommodation. The twelve cell spaces available in Martin House were relocated to Wilson House, which now holds up to 33 prisoners. Braid House was also opened during the previous reporting year with accommodation for 120 prisoners the first of which have already moved across from the main prison. The gradual transfer of prisoners from Erne House did give rise to a number of complaints from the new prisoners in the house. Most of these complaints were in relation to visits and purposeful activity as being separated from the main prison site created difficulties for prisoners and staff alike, but these have now been corrected.
- 1.4** The Board appreciates that with any such moves there will be ongoing difficulties to overcome such as with Bann House and the numerous internal transfer of prisoners and the Board will continue to monitor the regimes, visits etc, as they affect prisoners in the new accommodation.

2 | Alcohol and Substance Abuse

- 2.1** There is no denying that Maghaberry, as with many other prisons, faces a huge challenge from drug and alcohol abuse within its walls. Previous IMB reports have repeatedly highlighted the attendant problems faced by both staff and prisoners.
- 2.2** While the Board fully acknowledges the efforts made by prison management and staff at all levels to cope with these problems it recommends that greater efforts should be made to moving towards a drug-free prison including the introduction of increased enhancements for drug-free prisoners and the introduction and maintenance of drug-free landings.

3 | Catering and Kitchens

- 3.1** The kitchen at HMP Maghaberry is a relatively new facility which was purpose built two years ago to cater for the growing number of prisoners now housed in the complex. Staffing in the unit includes at least ten prisoners who are employed on a daily basis as catering assistants. It is disappointing to note that these prisoners have not been able to avail of accredited training to achieve NVQ qualifications that would give them skills and help them secure employment upon release which is an essential part of their rehabilitation into civilian life. The Board recommends that the NIPS explore and initiate the ways that prisoners working in the kitchen can receive accredited NVQ training.
- 3.2** The quality of food is reasonable at the point of cooking, but quickly deteriorates and cools when transported to the houses, especially if the trolleys are delivered early to the houses and there is a holding period before the meals are served. The majority of prisoners still eat their meals in their cell in which there is an open toilet unit. This is not acceptable in terms of both health and safety and hygiene standards. It has to be noted that while effort is made to create an area to allow for dining in association while any repairs are taking place in houses, there has been minimal achievement in this area. In former annual reports it has been noted that the timing of meals in the prison, especially the evening meal, can be very early and do not reflect normal meal times. It is hoped that the introduction of the "core" day will ensure that meals are served at the correct time and that prisoners do not have an even more extended period between their evening meal and breakfast. The Board recommends that the serving of the evening meal is put back to a later and more realistic time.
- 3.3** The menu works on a three week selection cycle and contains various options for the main courses. The diet section of the kitchen copes with special dietary requirements for both religious and medical needs, however, given that foreign national prisoners now account for one in eight of the prison population it is difficult to reflect a wide range of ethnic foods to facilitate this. There is a reliance on the menu on ready-made foods such as burgers and pastry products which contain high proportions of fat and salt. Studies have shown these products can contain salt levels up to 93% higher than the recommended daily dosage. Prison food is inextricably intertwined with larger prison issues including health issues and behavioural problems. The Board welcomes the establishment of a Prisoner Forum, as these meetings give the prisoners a platform to comment about the food and discuss any issues with the Catering Manager. In recent years the Board has recommended that the NIPS should devise and implement a Food Policy for prisons. Although this suggestion has constantly been lukewarmly received, the Board once again makes the same recommendation. In addition the Board recommends that the use of ready-made products is monitored and that menu choices reflect more freshly-made dishes.

4 | Chaplaincy

- 4.1** The role of a Chaplain is essential to any prison establishment and the Chaplaincy team in Maghaberry is ably led and coordinated by a Lead Chaplain. The Chaplaincy team comprises many faiths - Church of Ireland, Free Presbyterian, Methodist, Muslim, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic. With the ever-increasing number of foreign national prisoners, the Chaplaincy team has been strengthened by the assistance of a Polish priest, a Lithuanian priest from Dublin and a Chinese pastor. The Board welcomes this.
- 4.2** As the prison population increases, the demands on the chaplains also increase. Because of the unique nature of Maghaberry as well as in the prison chapel, religious services are held in Bush and Roe Houses, where the separated prisoners are housed, and also in the Healthcare Centre. Because Braid, Wilson and Martin Houses are sited across the road from the main prison complex it is impractical for prisoners to attend services in the prison chapel. Prisoners can request to see their minister and meetings take place in the Visits area. The duty chaplain visits the induction landing every day to see newly-convicted prisoners and those on remand because it is in these prisoners that self-esteem is at its lowest and the risk of self-harm is at its peak.
- 4.3** The Board recognises and commends the chaplains for the essential role that they play in offering pastoral care, assisting the prisoners to cope with their confinement and in maintaining the prisoners' self worth and dignity.

5 | Education and Training

- 5.1** Education is an important part of many prisoners' daily routine and a structured curriculum has been set up to deliver a comprehensive range of activities. The main focus is to raise basic literacy and numeracy standards. Academic, cultural, recreational and social courses are provided to appeal to as many prisoners as possible. This is part of their overall resettlement programme and has been designed to break the spiral of habitual reoffending.
- 5.2** Every prisoner is tested on arrival for essential skills and deficiencies and is encouraged to participate in improvement classes. The NIPS target is to get 100% of those who enroll on the essential skills course to advance one level from their initial assessment within one year.
- 5.3** An atmosphere of enthusiasm and fellowship is immediately evident upon entry to this department. Each week a total of 180 classes are available to prisoners throughout the establishment. The classes are held in the Education block and also in the various houses. Staffing of the department consists of one Head of Learning and Skills, two senior teachers, eight full-time teachers, seven permanent part-time staff and up to ten temporary part-time staff.

- 5.4** The Essential Skills Curriculum for Northern Ireland has been running for some time now and embraces adult literacy, numeracy, English for speakers of other languages and information technology. This curriculum aims to ensure that a prisoner leaving prison can slot into any college environment. Diagnostic Testing ensures that prisoners' specific deficits are addressed. There are six levels ranging from below entry to Level 2. Twenty students are currently taking third-level courses and eight are studying for GCSE. The Unit Award Scheme is an excellent system that enables teachers to give their own internal accreditation of prisoners' progress which is then accredited by AQA (Assessment and Qualification Alliance). Last year 179 prisoners were accredited and a similar result is anticipated this year.
- 5.5** Two prisoners in particular must be commended for achieving excellent results. One gained a distinction in a degree course in Media Studies as well as first place in the autobiography class and third prize in the short story class at the Listowel Writing Awards. The other achieved first prize in the short story class and second in the autobiography class at the same event.
- 5.6** Unfortunately, during the first month of the reporting period, attendance at classes was disrupted due to industrial action by members of the Prison Officers' Association (POA). This led to delays in the movement of prisoners between the various houses and the Education Department. Additional teaching accommodation has been acquired in each house that can be utilised when the need arises. However, this will not fully overcome all the problems that can arise with the requirement for organised movement of prisoners from their individual houses to the education block. The Board recommends that the prison staff continues to improve the punctuality of prisoners attending classes.
- 5.7** The new Braid House in the Mourne complex opened late in 2009 and because of its location it presents particular challenges regarding the movement and management of prisoners who wish to attend classes. A second education facility has now been established adjacent to Braid House, with a full-time computer teacher plus literacy, numeracy and Braille classes, all in-house.
- 5.8** A past report by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons (HMIP) has made several recommendations in respect of this department, including the provision of a wider choice of courses and the provision of additional classes for remand prisoners. It is a challenge for the department, as classes must of necessity be kept small in order to provide a realistic and meaningful learning period for individuals who may have had little recent opportunity or desire to study in the past.
- 5.9** Maghaberry workshops provide a range of work and vocational training. During the reporting year, plastering and painting and decorating have remained the most popular, followed by bricklaying, furniture craft, the kitchen, industrial cleaning, the gardens and gymnasium. Braille production continues, now sited in the Mourne complex, offering translation for hymn books, prayer books, street maps, museum labels, calendars, music sheets. A blind person attends weekly to check the accuracy of the work produced. The Board considers this to be an excellent innovation which facilitates the promotion of best practice. The unit also produces music in Braille, which is a very specialised and rare skill. A book-binding facility completes the services provided in the workshops.

- 5.10** Wheelchair and bicycle refurbishment workshops continue as a community-type project in the Mourne complex. Unfortunately, occasional charity workshops have ceased and the Polish prisoners who mainly carried out this work do not now have the enjoyment of the association it facilitated. Workshops continue to be cancelled at short notice (due to staffing priorities) and this creates apathy, disappointment and pessimism amongst those prisoners involved.
- 5.11** Poor attendance at workshops still causes concern with the main problem being that the prisoners prefer to watch television in their cells. Participation in workshops can make a valuable contribution to successful reintegration on release and involvement in workshops can lead to nationally recognised qualifications such as NVQs. The Board recommends that steps are taken to ensure that prisoners are aware that through participation in the workshops, they can achieve NVQs.

6 | Equality and Diversity

- 6.1** The religious composition of prison staff at Maghaberry at September 2010 was as follows:

Catholic	73 (8.5%)
Protestant	682 (79.9%)
Non-determined	99 (11.6%)

For those deemed Catholic or Protestant the split was 9.7% Catholic and 90.3% Protestant.

The gender breakdown of prison staff at Maghaberry at September 2010 was 671 (78.6%) male and 183 (21.4%) female. To achieve gender parity would require 244 additional women and a similar reduction in the male workforce.

- 6.2** The religious composition of the prisoner population at Maghaberry at December 2010 was as follows:

Catholic	445 (52.9%)
Protestant	289 (34.3%)
Other/none	108 (12.8%)

For those prisoners deemed Catholic or Protestant the split was 60.6% Catholic and 39.4% Protestant.

- 6.3** The religious composition of the prisoner population in Maghaberry is at variance with the religious composition of the prison staff in which there is a marked under-representation of Catholics. Clearly the existing prison workforce does not reflect the Northern Ireland community that it serves. Realistically this imbalance will continue for the foreseeable future and any scope for remedial measures will be limited by the downsizing of the workforce required by the review of the NIPS.

6.4 Foreign national prisoners (FNP) continue to represent a significant proportion of the prisoner population in Maghaberry. For example on 10 March 2011 there were 100 FNP who represented 11.8% of the total population. On that date 26 different nationalities were represented with Polish, Lithuanian and Chinese highest in terms of numbers. During the reporting year, Irish Travellers continued to represent a significant minority group within the prisoner population in Maghaberry.

6.5 The Equality & Diversity committee in Maghaberry is scheduled to meet monthly but during the reporting year meetings were frequently cancelled or postponed. Equality monitoring statistics should have been provided for the Board's monthly meetings but this did not happen until ten months into the reporting year. Initially, the report on the monitoring of prisoner activities was broken down into 'RC' and 'Other' yet such a breakdown is meaningless in the context of Northern Ireland which requires a breakdown of 'RC', 'Protestant' and 'Other'. This matter was rectified with effect from March 2011.

6.6 Equality & Diversity appears to be given a relatively low priority by management in Maghaberry. For example the Equality & Diversity committee should be chaired by the Governing Governor or the Deputy Governor but in practice this did not happen. Membership of the committee should include the Residential Governor, the Head of Education, the Head of Vocational Training, the Head of Psychology, the Probation Manager, a representative from the Chaplaincy team, the Healthcare Manager, the Kitchen Manager and the Personnel Manager however none of these managers attended. The Board commends the active involvement in the committee of specialty managers from the NIPS Headquarters but recommends that steps are taken to 'strengthen' the chair and membership of the Equality & Diversity committee to ensure that local committee members attend regularly.

6.7 The Board understands that the Equality & Diversity committee has responsibility for eliminating discrimination from Maghaberry, but the Board is unclear how this is to be implemented or who is accountable for delivering this objective. The Board also understands that the committee has responsibility for promoting equality within Maghaberry, but has seen no evidence of promotion. The Board recommends that a named manager is made accountable for promoting this equality objective, assuming that this has not already been done.

7 | Healthcare and Mental Health

7.1 The Board fully supported the transfer of the delivery of healthcare within prisons to the SEHSCT in 2008. However, the Board has concerns regarding requests, complaints and the monitoring of this provision. Existing healthcare staff did not transfer to the National Health Service as was anticipated which could cause problems for the SEHSCT in exercising normal line management responsibility but the Board has been informed that this anomaly should be resolved in the near future.

- 7.2** Training is underway at present to ensure that all healthcare staff have the appropriate skills and awareness for attending to the needs of prisoners. The Board is hopeful that positive steps are being taken to ensure that all prisoners receive treatment in line with that afforded to the general population. This is essential because the general health of prisoners is historically lower than that in the outside population. It should be noted that this applies to the prisoner population in the United Kingdom as a whole and is not confined to Northern Ireland. The Board recommends that the health of sentenced long term prisoners should be assessed on a regular basis and remedial action taken, with particular regard to alcohol, smoking and drug rehabilitation.
- 7.3** There is currently 42 staff in nursing and auxiliary posts. In addition, there are 13 mental health nurses and appropriate professional cover is provided by psychologists and psychiatrists. This level of cover is essential, because unfortunately it is a fact that 70% of prisoners exhibit two or more of the five major mental health disorders – indeed 20% exhibit four of the five.
- 7.4** The new refurbished Healthcare Centre (HC) has been finished to a high standard and is indeed fit for purpose. It has ample consultation rooms for opticians, doctors and treatment facilities and there is also a plan to upgrade the garden area to further enhance the block surroundings. There are 14 beds in the HC, of which three are utilised by the orderlies. There are also three safer cells which can be monitored constantly by CCTV.
- 7.5** Addiction services are currently provided by ad:ept. There are also two discharge coordinators responsible for those prisoners who fall under the Promoting Quality Care Guidelines 2009. The Board welcomes the continuing provision of a discharge coordinator, as this is an essential role in trying to ensure that the released prisoner, who is often vulnerable, integrates back into society.
- 7.6** The drug dependency of prisoners is very high – in excess of 80%. This high number means that it is difficult to deliver medication on time efficiently. A plan is being considered that would make the dispensation of medication more user-friendly in that a comprehensive medicine cabinet could be kept on each house floor and medicine could be dispensed floor by floor, rather than each prisoner having to go to the treatment office on the admin floor. For a minority of prisoners medication such as Tramadol or Lyrica is administered by “supervised swallow”, but the majority (85%) of prisoners get blister packs to self medicate. Unfortunately the Board is aware of a number of complaints from the prisoners about the overall attitude of the medical staff towards them.
- 7.7** Work is underway to install a confidential pin-operated telephone system to enable prisoners to discuss medical problems directly with a nurse. The nurse will have sight of prisoners’ medical records so can make a decision as to the urgency of the matter and decide whether attendance at the next available surgery is appropriate. This is a major step forward in providing a medical consultation system that mirrors what is available to the general public and is preferable to the existing system in which privacy and confidentiality can be severely compromised while talking to the house nurse with other prisoners in earshot. It is envisaged that a room will be set up from which two nurses will serve all three prisons. Another welcome feature which has enhanced treatment for prisoners is the Tele Med link that has been established with the Ulster Hospital.

7.8 In an effort to reduce missed hospital consultations, prisoners will be apprised of their consultation in good time. Extra care must be exercised with Category A prisoners and a number of other prisoners identified by Security Information Centre (SIC) so a shortened but reasonable time scale is applied to ensure that security measures applicable to such prisoners can be maintained.

7.9 The Board welcome the new initiative in which a chronic disease management team monitors epilepsy, diabetes, coronary care and other debilitating diseases. The Board recommends that the team's expertise could also be utilised in providing programmes such as "well man" to help in some ways counter the health problems that exist among a majority of prisoners.

8 | Induction

8.1 After spending a few days on the committal landings, the new arrivals are moved to the induction landings, where the induction process takes place. The induction process normally takes a week, although it can over run that time period depending on staff availability. A new arrival will be interviewed by the landing staff, a chaplain, a teacher, a probation worker and a nurse. In addition, there will be an induction visit to the gym and a lecture on fire awareness, with further classes on the role of the Family Support Officer, Samaritans/Listeners and ad:ept, the addiction services. They will also be briefed on the Progressive Regimes and Earned Privileges Scheme (PREPS) and provided with a comprehensive induction handout.

8.2 The induction period is an essential time when the prisoners are also assessed for their literacy levels and educational requirements. Coupled to this, is at the same time the prisoner's initial sentence plan and resettlement plan are formalised. Only after the induction process has been completed are the prisoners transferred to other houses in the prison.

8.3 The Board recognises that the committal and induction staffs on the landings have an ongoing heavy responsibility and acknowledge their commitment to the task.

9 | Library

9.1 On average 22 prisoners visit the library every day and it is a place where they are made to feel at ease. A choice of several thousand books is available as well as a wide choice of popular reading material. To meet the needs of foreign national prisoners, books, magazines and newspapers in various languages are also provided. Library staff can meet any unforeseen demand for overseas newspapers etc by downloading from the Internet when necessary. Over 500 CDs and more than 350 DVDs are also available.

9.2 The library is also the centre for the Book and Tape Club. This enables fathers in prison to record stories to send to their children. The story and tape facilities are excellent and the software package allows the addition of background music etc to enhance the appeal to the listener.

10 | Life Sentenced Prisoners

- 10.1** Maghaberry is the only high-security prison in Northern Ireland. The majority of life sentenced prisoners are housed in Braid and Wilson Houses. Category A life sentenced prisoners are mostly held in Erne House with a small number held in different houses in the main prison complex. A number of life sentenced prisoners nearing the end of their sentences are housed in the Prisoner Assessment Unit (PAU)¹ in Belfast. Following the Transition into the Community inspection life sentenced prisoners can now be sent to the PAU 15 months prior to their Tariff Expiry Date (TED). This is the final step before life sentenced prisoners are fully released back into society and while at the PAU they can move to full time community living on a phased return basis.
- 10.2** Efforts are made to encourage life sentenced prisoners into the field of education at all levels. A variety of courses and work opportunities is also available, including wheelchair refurbishment, vehicle valeting, gardening and ground maintenance and woodworking. The aim is for all life sentenced prisoners to engage in some type of work.
- 10.3** As part of their sentence plans life prisoners can attend interventions such as enhanced thinking skills, anger management and cognitive self change but these courses are not mandatory. Life sentenced prisoners can also participate in the Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme (IDAP) and avail of the services of Relate.
- 10.4** The Board is aware that a high number of current life sentenced prisoners are due to reach the end of their tariff over the next three years and this will have implications in respect of resources and places available in the PAU. In this reporting period nine life sentenced prisoners have been released from the unit as compared with fourteen in the previous reporting period. Regrettably, five prisoners were returned to Maghaberry during this reporting period but none of them were included in the nine released this year which is encouraging.

11 | Progressive Regime & Earned Privileges Scheme (PREPS)

- 11.1** Following a review, the NIPS implemented a revision of the Progressive Regime & Earned Privileges (PREPS) scheme two years ago. The review was necessary to bring the scheme in line with the new Offender Management Model which includes sentence planning and home leave. With introduction of the new public protection sentences to replace automatic 50% remission prisoners have had to demonstrate that they have worked to address their offending behaviour and the PREPS scheme feeds into this. The starting point is a compact, or voluntary joint agreement, between the prisoner and the prison which sets out the behaviour and engagement expected and the range of privileges and incentives available in return. The Board welcomed the changes in the management of PREPS in so far as it shows more regard for the circumstances of individual prisoners

¹ All prison business at the PAU was suspended on 22 April 2011 and all prisoners returned to Maghaberry

- 11.2** The structure of the regimes remains unchanged. The entry point for all prisoners is Standard with the opportunity to be promoted to Enhanced or demoted to Basic. Good behaviour and performance is recognised in willingness to engage in relevant programmes, civility, cooperation, fair treatment and support of others, respect and due regard for health and safety of others. To progress in regime all prisoners must take and pass a Progression Drugs Test and agree to voluntary testing thereafter. Demotion in regime level can take place when a prisoner fails to engage fully in the activities outlined in his sentence plan, receives two adverse reports in a three-month period or fails or refuses to take a drugs test.
- 11.3** Residential officers continue to oversee prisoners' behaviour and make regular reports. Residential Managers oversee the scheme in their particular area of responsibility and endorse any promotion or demotion. Board members still receive complaints alleging that personality clashes exist in all houses between individual officers and prisoners and that adverse reports will be given as a result. Hopefully, with the oversight of Residential Managers such conflicts should be identified at an early stage and managed accordingly.
- 11.4** PREPS coordinators have the responsibility of organising case conferences and monitoring standards and decisions made to ensure fairness is applied. As the scheme now has an impact on the term of a prisoner's sentence the Board welcomes this but recommends that the PREPS coordinators continue to educate the Residential Managers and officers in the necessity to apply fairness to all decisions.
- 11.5** The Board also recommends that Residential Managers and PREPS coordinators continue to assist and encourage prisoners not only to maintain their level, but if below Enhanced, also to progress.
- 11.6** There is a degree of misunderstanding on the part of prisoners and indeed some prison staff about awards given at adjudications in relation to the loss of privileges and possible reduction in PREPS level. Some prisoners see this as "double jeopardy"- being punished twice for the same incident. Although the framework document states that "PREPS should not be referred to in an adjudication verdict" it should be made clear to the prisoner that the incident or action resulting in the adjudication may have a bearing on his progression report. This could be done either at the adjudication or in the process leading up to the adjudication. If there is to be a reduction then the reason should be made clear to the prisoner along with all the circumstances leading to the decision. The Board recommends that prisoners and staff are given clear instruction on the possibility of a PREPS level being affected by the issue that resulted in adjudication.

12 | Reception

- 12.1** The reception area is where the prisoners first arrive at the prison and for many being their first time they are nervous and apprehensive. Even for those returning, some are unsettled whilst others, as to be expected, are at ease and confident. The reception area itself is spacious and all the arrival procedures are carried out in a calm and competent manner by the staff, which itself helps to put the new arrivals at ease.
- 12.2** There is a set format that all the prisoners go through, which includes confirmation of the prisoner's identity, that personal details are correct and most importantly that next of kin details are correct also. After further procedures the prisoners are offered a shower and a meal or snack. Finally a nurse is on duty to examine each prisoner and assess their medication requirements. The prisoners are placed in holding cells and then finally transferred the same day to the committal/induction house.
- 12.3** The Board commends the staff in reception for their calm and professional manner in which they handle the new arrivals to the prison.

13 | Resettlement

- 13.1** Resettlement underpins the work of the whole establishment. It is supported by strategic partnerships in the community and informed by assessment of prisoner risk and need so as to minimise the likelihood of reoffending on release. The Board has an important role in monitoring the provision and delivery of the wide range of resettlement programmes.
- 13.2** The Resettlement Unit also relies on partnership agencies to engage with prisoners inside the prison setting with Probation (PBNI), ad:ept (Drug & Alcohol Counselling), NIACRO, Quaker Service Team, Housing Advice and Barnardo's as examples. Providing advice and information is part of the resettlement process and this is currently undertaken by NIACRO on one day per week. However, owing to increased numbers of prisoners coming into the prison system, it is becoming increasingly difficult for the work to be completed in the time allocated. This is disappointing.
- 13.3** Until recently the remit of the Resettlement Unit was to work with sentenced prisoners, but this has now been extended to include remand prisoners. Following committal, all prisoners are visited by a member of the resettlement team. Approximately 8 weeks after committal, to allow for appeals / bail hearings etc, prisoners are seen again and a resettlement plan is put in place. Prisoners can then avail of a range of programmes including literacy skills, computer skills and craft work and others, with cookery being the most popular course. Anger management and victim empathy courses are also offered to prisoners and input from psychology is available where necessary. The Board recommends that courses should be provided on the area of domestic violence and relationships as this area is unfortunately highlighted by the latest domestic violence statistics for Northern Ireland.

- 13.4** An issue that has been raised by prison staff, staff from partner agencies and indeed prisoners themselves, is the difficulties that some prisoners have on release from prison. Housing options are limited for single males with no dependents especially where there is no supportive family in the background. This inevitably leads to individuals falling back into the lifestyle with the same risk factors such as alcohol and drugs which led them to prison in the first place. The Board has spoken to prisoners who feel that prison is a supportive and safe environment and admit to reoffending in order to return. The Board recommends that the use of supportive 'halfway houses' to bridge the release from prison and independent living would be of great benefit to such individuals.
- 13.5** Family contact is an important area of the resettlement process. Child-centred visits and family work undertaken by the Family Support Team are both good examples of this. The Quaker Service should be commended for their support of families and friends of prisoners and for their work in the area of childcare. Unfortunately there are a number of prisoners who do not appear to have any contact with family or friends and serve their sentences without visits and this can lead to problems.
- 13.6** The Board previously reported as far back as 2007-08 on the fact that Resettlement staff were constantly being deployed to other areas of work within the prison. From the start of 2011 this practice has (in theory) been stopped. At time of writing, the unit was four staff down on establishment, but an internal trawl was underway to fill these positions. The Board commends the interest and enthusiasm of the resettlement staff.

14 | Safer Custody

- 14.1** Glen House cares primarily for prisoners who need to be segregated from other prisoners for their own safety. Others with enduring and intractable difficulties, linked with a mental health diagnosis, are often accommodated there as well. In general this landing works well, evidencing a happy atmosphere and is manned by staff who display good interpersonal skills. Staff generally appear to engage positively with the prisoners, are reasonably well acquainted with their family backgrounds and circumstances and are usually proactive in noticing, addressing and managing any potential difficulties before they escalate. Most prisoners placed here appear content. Unfortunately, there are limitations in the closed regime which militate against personal progress and development particularly in relation to work and education. With the restructuring of the prison the prisoners in Glen House have now been transferred to Foyle House. The Board recommends that efforts are made to remedy the limitations in the closed regime, so that by default vulnerable prisoners are not prevented from achieving and progressing.

- 14.2** The REACH landing, now in Foyle House, was planned and aimed at those prisoners described as “poor copers” or those who demonstrated symptoms commonly associated with personality disorder or other classifiable mental illnesses. Many of the prisoners housed in this landing have fluctuating levels of distress and have poor communication and interpersonal skills. Despite an auspicious start, the REACH landing has not sustained its original ethos, focus and intervention. More aspirational than reality, the programmes of activity and therapy are limited and often do not take place as planned. Whilst prisoners have reported to the Board of the benefits they gained from the yoga classes, gardening opportunities and occupational therapy activities, provision is all too frequently sparse and unimaginative.
- 14.3** Staff on the REACH landing must be highly motivated and display proactive engagement skills which are essential for identifying prisoners’ needs and helping them to articulate their fears, anxieties and worries. Preventative measures must be implemented by staff that are capable of recognising and responding appropriately. The Board recommends that staff identified as having specific caring and nurturing skills and aptitudes should be deployed to work with vulnerable prisoners.
- 14.4** To work effectively with vulnerable prisoners, who have a limited empathy and whose behaviour and presentation fall outside the norm, can also be emotionally challenging and draining for staff. Thus to work positively and therapeutically with vulnerable prisoners requires robust training, supervision akin to that provided in clinical settings, and the opportunity for reflective practice and debriefing. This can best be achieved by multi-disciplinary training and co-working and by ongoing monitoring and support from experienced and practised staff members. The Board recommends that a wider and more comprehensive range of training opportunities are available to staff including the participation in courses run by Further and Higher Education Colleges.

15 | Special Supervision Unit (SSU)

- 15.1** Maintenance of good order and discipline is an essential part of prison life and prisoners are transferred to the Special Supervision Unit (SSU) if they behave in a manner which threatens this. One of the primary functions of the SSU is therefore to deal with disciplinary breaches. It also accommodates prisoners who have been awarded periods of Cellular Confinement (CC) as a result of adjudication and those who it is hoped will benefit from a “cooling off” period following some altercation. The ethos of the SSU and its regime are designed to act as a deterrent and present a less attractive option to normal prison life. In addition to having a deterrent effect it is hoped that confinement in the SSU provides prisoners with an opportunity to reflect on their negative behaviours and to consider the need to address these on return to wider prison society.

- 15.2** The other principal function of the SSU is to house prisoners who require separation for their own safety and protection or for the protection of others, for example where bullying is involved, or a threat has been made to their life. Rule 32 of Prison Rules permits the restriction of a prisoner's association not only 'for the maintenance of good order or discipline' but where it is necessary in his own interests. Unfortunately, at times prisoners do not always accept that the confinement is in their own interest. Prisoners held in this way remain in the Progressive Regime and Earned Privileges (PREPS) system and continue to receive weekly reports and may progress or regress as necessary. This is in contrast to those prisoners serving CC or held under Rule 35(4) (which lasts no longer than 48 hours) who do not retain privileges appropriate to their regime level.
- 15.3** There is little doubt that at times SSU staff are presented with extreme and highly challenging behaviours and attitudes. Many prisoners in the SSU are those who find conforming to the usual prison regime more demanding and difficult than most. Indeed, many also display symptoms more commonly associated with personality disorders and specific learning and behavioural difficulties. Being faced with a disproportionate degree of non-compliance and aggression, requires staff to balance their duty of care with the need to control and protect. The Board recognises that to handle such individuals properly requires specialised training which goes beyond control and restraint techniques therefore recommends that staff should receive more specialised training in coping with and understanding these prisoners' needs.
- 15.4** As in past years, the Board continues to make the SSU a priority, with those members on rota duties being obliged to visit on a weekly basis. This gives prisoners a regular opportunity to speak with Board members and have their views and opinions listened to at first hand. Members are also able to closely monitor the living conditions and physical circumstances of prisoners. Feedback from staff is also encouraged.
- 15.5** The SSU is also where adjudications are held daily from Monday through to Saturday. Board members attend as many adjudication hearings as possible and seek to satisfy themselves that due process has been followed and that decisions to restrict association etc are reasonable and fair. A noticeable factor is that month by month the charges involving sentenced prisoners are always less than those of remand prisoners. It does appear that the sentenced prisoners are more settled as their future has been decided. Since early last year concern had been voiced by the Board to the Governing Governor and to the Director General of the NIPS of the Board's concern that a noticeable majority of charges were laid against Roman Catholics as compared to the total of charges laid against other religions. The problem of prisoner outcome disparities had been jointly identified by the NIPS and the Criminal Justice Inspectorate Northern Ireland (CJINI) in 2009 and a research proposal study was commissioned in October 2010. It is disappointing to note that it took an extended period before the study was initiated.

- 15.6** Throughout the year members have been impressed with the conduct of adjudications and the care and respect shown by officers to prisoners faced with Rule 32 charges. Board members attend the initial case conferences leading to the signing of Rule 32s and subsequent case conferences where extensions of the Rule 32 are considered. Where it is not possible to attend case conferences, as soon as possible thereafter, members must apply critical scrutiny and satisfy themselves that procedures have been followed and that the application of Rule 32 has been reasonable in the prevailing circumstances.
- 15.7** Overall the Board continues to note improvements and developments in the operation of the SSU both in the physical environment and in the interpersonal exchanges between staff and prisoners. The facilities available to the prisoners have been enhanced and the additional exercise yard, gymnasium and the family visit room, have made the SSU a more compact and workable unit. One problem that does exist is that there is only one telephone booth which is sited upstairs and since there cells both on the ground floor and upper floor, some prisoners have to move between floors which could lead to difficulties. It is recommended that consideration be given to the installation of a second telephone booth sited on the ground floor.

16 | Separated Prisoners

- 16.1** On 8 September 2003 the Government accepted the Steele Review recommendation that Republican and Loyalist prisoners with paramilitary affiliations should, on a voluntary basis, be accommodated separately from each other and away from the rest of the prison population within Maghaberry. During the reporting year 2010-11 the separated Republican prisoners were housed in Roe 3 and 4 and the separated Loyalist prisoners in Bush 1 and 2.
- 16.2** In April 2010, 28 separated Republican prisoners in Roe House commenced a protest by barricading themselves in the house recreation room after mass on Easter Sunday. The protest ended the next day when the prisoners opted to come out peacefully. Substantial damage had been caused to the recreation room during the protest action. The Board understands that the frequency of unscheduled lockdowns, the controlled movement of prisoners, mealtime problems and the frequency and nature of full-body searches had all combined to cause frustration and anger among the Republican prisoners that culminated in the action. It is noted that the separated Loyalist prisoners who are subject to the same rules and regulations did not protest.
- 16.3** Following the Easter Sunday protest, Republican prisoners blocked the observation flaps in their cell doors. On 7 May 2010 a prisoner was forcibly removed from Roe House and taken to the Special Supervision Unit (SSU). In protest the remaining prisoners in Roe 3 and 4 smashed the wash hand basins and lavatory bowls in their cells and the whole wing was flooded. Thereafter, the prisoners started to urinate in bottles and to defecate in plastic bags. Urine was poured under cell doors onto the landing in the evening. Conditions on the Roe 3 and 4 landings were unhygienic and the prison staff employed there were issued with protective clothing.

- 16.4** The Northern Ireland Prisoner Ombudsman (Ombudsman) investigated complaints received from separated Republican prisoners and the report of the Ombudsman's findings was published in June 2010. The report included 16 recommendations aimed at improving the regime for separated prisoners. The Board disappointingly noted that despite all the Ombudsman's recommendations being accepted by the NIPS, the separated Republican prisoners' protest continued.
- 16.5** It was not until July 2010 that a facilitation process commenced between the NIPS and the separated Republican prisoners with a view to ending the latter's ongoing protest. It was conducted by a joint facilitation group comprising representatives of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Creggan Enterprises and a Dialogue Advisory Group. The facilitation group met both parties over a period of several weeks and a detailed written agreement was published on 12 August 2010. The Justice Minister welcomed the ending of the protest. The agreement included the introduction of a new search facility and revised search policy for separated prisoners. This was indeed welcomed by the Board, but at the same time it was very disappointing to note the extended period that it had taken to formulate an agreement and all the adverse biased publicity it had created.
- 16.6** During September 2010 separated Loyalist prisoners expressed personal safety concerns through the Board and requested inter alia that a completely separate vehicle should be designated for separated Loyalist prisoners. The Board understands that provision of such a vehicle has been authorised and should be ready for introduction in April 2011. However, the Board is concerned that it took some seven months to deliver the vehicle and thereby help to allay the prisoners' real concerns.
- 16.7** In November 2010 the separated Loyalist prisoners raised serious concerns about the treatment of a prisoner who had applied three times for separated status without success. They were adamant that he met the criteria and feared for the man's personal safety while he remained within the general prison population. The Board notes that the prisoner concerned was eventually granted separated status and transferred to Bush House.
- 16.8** In December 2010 a separated Loyalist prisoner was given a few minutes notice by staff that he was to go to a hospital in the community for a medical appointment. He declined the opportunity because of the lack of prior notice. He said that he would have needed about 30 minutes advance notice to wash, shave and change his clothes. He emphasised that it was not a matter of him refusing medical treatment and that he did indeed wish to avail of medical consultation. It was he said, "a matter of preserving human dignity." A new appointment was made for him in January 2011 and the staff gave him just ten minutes notice to prepare for the trip to hospital. He again declined the opportunity for the medical appointment, because of the inadequacy of prior notice. It was the prisoner's understanding that he had been denied reasonable advance notice of the appointment for security reasons. The Board notes that there are often "hidden" security reasons why certain category prisoners cannot be advised too early of a medical appointment, but, at the same time, fairness, judgment and common sense must be applied to allow a prisoner adequate time to prepare for his appointment.

- 16.9** Separated Loyalist prisoners pointed out to the Board that during the reporting year they had conformed, unlike their Republican counterparts, and that their conforming behaviour had in their view been taken for granted by the NIPS. In the view of what has happened over the past year the Board accept their comments.

17 | Tuckshop

- 17.1** The prison Tuck Shop is a very necessary and essential facility where prisoners can purchase a suitable range of items to meet ethnic, cultural and religious requirements from an effectively managed shop at reasonable prices. A welcome new venture in one of the refurbished houses is the introduction of a small "in-house" shop with selected items for sale to facilitate new prisoners on the induction wing within 24 hours of arrival. This has indeed been a very welcome and long overdue facility. The employees working in the shop are augmented by prisoners who have daily work packing the requested orders. Prisoners still complain that some of the key items they use are priced too high and upon examination it does appear that there could be more competitive pricing on certain items. The Board will continue to monitor the price range and make recommendations where it feels it is necessary. The Board recommends that prices are monitored on a regular basis to check that all products are priced competitively for the prisoners who are on a low income and who are disadvantaged by their location.

18 | Visits

- 18.1** For someone who loses his freedom and becomes a prisoner within a penal institution it is essential that an acceptable level of contact / communication with the outside world should be maintained. There are various ways in which this can be achieved - through TV, radio and newspapers and through correspondence but much more importantly through direct contact with family and friends. Prison personnel are fully aware of the value of maintaining such meaningful contact and accordingly there is a conscious attempt to facilitate visits in a way that is reasonable and acceptable to prisoners and their visitors, given the security measures which have to be in place at all times.
- 18.2** In dealing with the welfare of prisoners, their families and their friends the NIPS works in close cooperation with NIACRO, the Ulster Quakers Service, the Prison Fellowship, Save the Children and Barnardo's. All of these bodies make a worthwhile and positive contribution to the recognition of the importance of visits in the lives of prisoners and their families.
- 18.3** Elaborate and complex systems are in place to plan, accommodate and monitor visitor arrangements within Maghaberry. The Visits regime comprises five main elements - the booking procedure, visitor reception, the visits area, the video link and the Quakers.

- 18.4** To support and facilitate visits, transport to Maghaberry is provided through NIACRO family links service (supported by PBNI) from most areas in Northern Ireland. The Quaker Service also assists families with transport to and from the prison and the Monica Barrett centre which is located in the visitors' car park 400 yards from the main entrance to the prison. The centre offers a friendly welcome to all visitors. It provides a range of services including information and advice, a café, childcare, a play room, child-centered visits and family-focus weeks. In addition, the Quakers Service provides a tea bar and crèche within the visits area in the prison.
- 18.5** Special efforts are made by the NIPS Family Support Officers and the Quakers Service to enhance visits at Easter, Halloween and Christmas, with themed events such as face-painting, family photographs, gifts for children, free tea / coffee / juice for adults and a carol service. Additional activities for children are organised within the crèche during the summer holiday period. The involvement of Family Support Officers is of great benefit and provides a valuable service in meeting with, advising and assisting visitors with concerns and issues surrounding family matters. There are currently three Family Support Officers in post who are available to deal with visitors in the office or by telephone. Meetings can also be arranged to accommodate family needs or concerns. Information and attractive leaflets have been produced as well as a child-focused DVD.
- 18.6** Visits operate on a sessional basis from Tuesday to Sunday each week and the computerised booking system allows all visits to be pre-booked. No visits may be booked without a unique booking reference so prisoners are provided with reference numbers (for the following two weeks) to give to intended visitors. Prisoners on remand are allowed two visits per week and sentenced prisoners are allowed one visit per week. Prisoners with enhanced status may have one additional visit per month. A visit normally lasts for one hour. There is an upper limit of three adult visitors per prisoner but there is no restriction on the number of children. In addition to this visits area, there is also a visits facility in the Mourne complex where the prisoners in Braid House can see visitors, although this is only available from Thursday through to Sunday. Each month nearly 2, 400 adult visitors and 1, 000 child visitors are recorded.
- 18.7** The visits area has to strike a balance between facilitating families and the need for security especially with regard to unauthorised items being brought into the prison. All visitors must undergo a passive drug dog test and there are always at least three prison officers supervising the visits hall. There is camera surveillance in place but the existing CCTV system is in urgent need of upgrading or replacement. The Board recommends that the CCTV cameras in visits be replaced / upgraded to digital standard to enable continuous surveillance in real time to be made at all points.
- 18.8** One of the most positive features within Visits is the child-centered visits. These enable fathers and children to have time together to bond in a way that is not always possible during a normal visit. These visits take place on a Sunday once every month and children up to the age of sixteen years can participate. During the reporting period 546 children and 351 fathers participated in the child-centered visits.

- 18.9** Also included in the total were 3, 287 foreign national visits. In recognition of the growing number of foreign national visitors the Quakers Service has introduced a range of languages to its information booklet. It is also anticipated that within the next reporting period that information signs displayed in the five major foreign languages will be erected within the area.
- 18.10** The part of the visits area where the visitors arrive is austere and an ongoing project is underway to redecorate the wall, ceilings and doors in pastel colours to give a softer image so that any children visiting are subject to a “child-friendly” décor. The Board welcomes this task.
- 18.11** The Quakers Service has also launched the Quakers Connection project which pilots two strands of a potentially-expanded volunteer scheme - one strand is focused on supporting families on visits within the prison and the other is focused on visiting prisoners who have no family or are not in contact with family. The Board welcomes these initiatives.

Appendix 1

Breakdown of Prison Population (March 2011)

Numbers by Location	Bann House (being refurbished)	174
	Erne House	133
	Foyle House	23
	Lagan House	177
	Glen Landing	0
	Bush House	90
	Roe House	102
	Braid House	102
	Wilson House	39
	Martin House	2
	Prison Healthcare Unit	18
	Special Supervision Unit	20
	TOTAL	880
By Status	Sentenced	417
	Remands	463
By Category	Category A	79
	Category B	129
	Category C	181
	Category D	28
	Unclassified	463

Appendix 2

Maghaberry Board Members 2010-2011

Mr Dennis Constable	Chair
Mr James McAllister	Vice Chair
Mr Alfred Abolarin	Appointed July 2010 - On sabbatical from October 2010
Ms Vicky Boland	
Mrs Sally Cunningham	Appointed July 2010
Mrs Myrtle Elliott	
Mr Amran Hussain	Appointed July 2010
Dr Ahmed Khamassi	Appointed July 2010 - On sabbatical from November 2010
Mr Phillip Lees	Appointed July 2010
Mrs Margaret McCauley	Appointed July 2010
Mr Jimmy McClean	
Mrs Valerie McConnell	Appointed July 2010
Mr Joe Mitchell	
Mr Gordon Ramsey	



