



Independent Monitoring Board  
Annual Report 2011-12  
HMP MAGHABERRY

## **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**

The Independent Monitoring Board is 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).

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## **CHAIRPERSON'S INTRODUCTION**

I am pleased to introduce the report covering the period April 2011 - March 2012 for the Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) for HMP Maghaberry.

This is my third year as Chair and for this reporting period the Board commenced with twelve members and ended the period with eleven, as one member retired on time served. 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, energy and positive approach to the monitoring task which demands diligence and a proactive 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 189 requests from prisoners, discussed the issues with them and tried to resolve the associated problems. As is the norm the periods available to speak to the prisoners is limited, because of the prison daily timetable, both in the morning and afternoon. There are opportunities to speak to the prisoners in the evening, as long as there is not a lockdown for a required access to a certain house. Every week Board members visited the Care and Supervision Unit (CSU) to speak to prisoners being held under Rule 32. They also attended the associated case conferences on the prisoners held on Rule 32. While visiting CSU the opportunity is also taken to talk to prisoners being held on cellular confinement following formal action for proven indiscipline offences. Board members also observe adjudications held in the CSU to ensure that due process is followed.

Sadly, this reporting period saw two deaths in custody. Firstly, Aaron Hogg died on the 22 May 2011 in his cell. Secondly, Patrick Duffy was found dead in his cell on 23 June 2011. Both deaths are subject to an investigation by the Prisoner Ombudsman. Our thoughts are with both their families, friends and colleagues.

The new governing team has introduced a new management model and 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.

During this reporting period, a high number 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 11% in mid winter. This compares very poorly to other bodies 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.

Following the Interim Report by the Prison Review Team (PRT), a final report "Review of the Northern Ireland Prison Service" was published in October 2011. The report focused on conditions, management and oversight of all prisons in Northern Ireland, which was part of the Hillsborough Agreement of February 2010. The final report 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. In response to the interim report by the PRT, the NIPS launched The Strategic Efficiency and Effectiveness Programme (SEE) last summer, which is a four year change programme. It is focused on a far reaching programme that will deliver fundamental reform of the Prison Service by 2015 and the Board welcomes this initiative.

HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) inspected the prison in late March and initial feedback from the team has been favourable. The Board recognises that the inspection team acknowledged the challenges faced by the management and staff and recognised the progress that has been made since the last inspection two years ago.

The separated prisoner issue, especially on the Republican side has continued to be a constant problem even with the legal ruling that the full body searching of prisoners leaving and entering prison is lawful. Since May 2011 a majority of Republican prisoners have continued with a "dirty" protest and this has attracted media attention and support from associated parties in Northern Ireland. There has been intervention by many bodies, including the Joint Facilitation Group, but despite the best efforts of various organisations the "dirty" stand off continues. This is an unwelcome period of turbulence and tension. In addition, the disparity of the constant attention being paid to the separated Republicans, although necessary, is certainly noted and reflected upon by both the separated Loyalist prisoners and the integrated prisoners.

The Governor and staff at Maghaberry face a continuing challenge in that the prisoner population steadily increases, having broken through the 1000 prisoner population mark, but settling back to the very high 900's. This reflects an increase 12% over the past year. This is disturbing as shared cells can lead to difficulties and it is noted that approximately 50% of the prisoners are held on long remand periods. A positive step forward has been, since August, the introduction of unescorted movement for Category C and Category D prisoners. These prisoners have been permitted to walk unescorted to their work and other approved areas within the prison. In addition, the Category D prisoners are now permitted to work unescorted in nominated areas outside the prison.

In conclusion I would like to thank the Governing Governor, his Deputy and all the 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 based at Stormont. I thank them for their dedication, work and guidance. The Secretariat staff is a major link between the prisoners' requests 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. During this reporting period there was a female prisoner held in separated conditions. 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 House accommodates key workers, prisoners on committal and induction prisoners. The other houses are Erne, Foyle, Lagan, Bush and Roe. During the major part of the reporting period, the vulnerable prisoners in Glen House had been accommodated in Foyle House, but have now been moved back to Glen House. Foyle House also accommodates those prisoners with poor coping skills who are located on the REACH landing (**R**eaching out to prisoners through **E**ngagement, **A**ssessment, **C**ollaboration working and **H**olistic approach). There is a separate Care and Supervision Unit (CSU) and a Healthcare Centre incorporating the prison hospital. Furthermore, in July 2011 the New Learning and Skills Centre was opened and the co-located Donard Centre which was most welcome. 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 used to be used as a stepping stone to the Prisoner Assessment Unit (PAU) located at Crumlin Road in Belfast, but, unfortunately, since May 2011, all activity at the PAU has been suspended by the NIPS. There are two new units under construction, one a new 120 cell block and the other a witness protection unit, which are both due to be opened by the early autumn.

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



## **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Board recommends that –

### **1 ACCOMMODATION**

- a) plans should be drawn up to replace the “square” houses with more modern accommodation (paragraph 1.1)

### **2 ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

- a) the issuing of extended period medication needs to be reassessed (paragraph 2.1)

### **3 CATERING AND KITCHEN**

- a) prisoners who work in the kitchen should accredited training towards NVQ qualifications (paragraph 3.2)
- b) designated dining areas are set up in all houses (paragraph 3.3)
- c) a Food Policy is implemented for NIPS (paragraph 3.4)

### **4 CHAPLAINCY – no recommendations**

### **5 EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

- a) ensure that prisoners are encouraged to participate in workshops with a view to achieving NVQs (paragraph 5.7)

### **6 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY – no recommendations**

### **7 HEALTHCARE AND MENTAL HEALTH**

- a) a purpose built safe and secure facility is set up for prisoners with severe personality disorder (paragraph 7.6)
- b) a system is devised to speed up the provision of prisoners’ prescribed medication following committal (paragraph 7.7)

- c) the medication reduction model is revised to mirror that used in the community (paragraph 7.9)
- d) there is better communication between Healthcare and PECCS to ensure prisoners' hospital appointments are not missed (paragraph 7.10)

**8 LIBRARY – no recommendations**

**9 LIFE SENTENCED PRISONERS**

- a) another external prisoner assessment unit is set up and opened as soon as possible (paragraph 9.1)
- b) the possibility of selling goods produced by life sentenced prisoners in suitable outlets is explored (paragraph 9.4)
- c) more work is made available to life sentenced prisoners (paragraph 9.4)
- d) Braid House staff are not routinely used to cover shortages elsewhere causing excessive lockdowns (paragraph 9.5)

**10 PROGRESSIVE REGIME AND EARNED PRIVILEGES SCHEME (PREPS)**

- a) prisoners are encouraged by PREPS co-ordinators and Residential Managers to try to progress through the scheme (paragraph 10.4)
- b) prisoners and staff are clear that adjudication may affect PREPS level (paragraph 10.5)

**11 RECEPTION AND INDUCTION**

- a) all induction staff receive Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) (paragraph 11.3)
- b) prisoners are allocated to a specific staff member for their first week in prison (paragraph 11.3)
- c) induction lectures take place within the set time schedule (paragraph 11.4)
- d) Bann House should always be staffed to full complement (paragraph 11.5)

**12 RESETTLEMENT – no recommendations**

### **13 SAFER CUSTODY**

- a) engagement in work activities should be increased in Glen House (paragraph 13.2)
- b) all staff undergo comprehensive Supporting Prisoners At Risk (SPAR) training (paragraph 13.4)
- c) more should be done for prisoners who do not receive visits (paragraph 13.5)

### **14 SEGREGATION – CARE AND SUPERVISION UNIT (CSU)**

- a) CSU staff receive training in coping with and understanding the needs of difficult prisoners (paragraph 14.4)
- b) a phone booth should be installed on the ground floor of the CSU (paragraph 14.6)

### **15 SEPARATED PRISONERS**

- a) the introduction of scanners to replace full body searches is expedited (paragraph 15.4)

### **16 TUCK SHOP**

- a) prisoners who work in the Tuck Shop should get accredited NVQ training (paragraph 16.1)
- b) all products are competitively priced (paragraph 16.2)

### **17 VISITS**

- a) the CCTV system in Visits is upgraded to digital standard (paragraph 17.1)

## **Section 1 - ACCOMMODATION**

1.1 Residential accommodation in Maghaberry Prison is made up of the original “square houses” of Bann, 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. These four “square” houses are not really fit for purpose as they are of an old, cramped and limited design, difficult for the staff to work and monitor effectively the prisoners. The Board **recommends** that plans should be implemented for the four “square” houses to be eventually replaced by modern design houses.

1.2 There are two linear houses, 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. The accommodation will shortly be reinforced by the opening of a new 120 cell block within the main complex. Adjacent to this a new witness protection unit is being constructed. Both of these new units should be open by the summer of 2012.

1.3 Martin and Wilson Houses are operational in the Mourne complex, across the road from the main prison. Martin House is now utilised as a unit for holding certain prisoners in secure accommodation and the twelve cell spaces which were available in Martin House were relocated to Wilson House, which now holds up to 33 prisoners. Braid House was opened during the past two years and has accommodation for 120 prisoners.

1.4 A welcome feature of the prison has been the introduction of comprehensive and clear signs, at the entrance to the prison and within, which adds to the “normality” of life within. The Board acknowledges this initiative.

## **Section 2 - ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

2.1 In common with prisons everywhere the use and misuse of drugs, both prescription and illegal, continues to be a significant problem. Approximately 90% of prisoners are on medication in one form or another and this can lead to many problems. The Trust is trying to implement a policy where prisoners are treated the same as in the community by issuing anything up to one month’s supply of medication at a time to nominated prisoners. While in principle they may

aspire to making prisoners take responsibility for their own medication, it is a system that is open to abuse, specifically with the more vulnerable prisoners being bullied for their medication. Medication is a 'currency' and some prisoners 'owe' so many tablets to other prisoners that by the time they receive their prescription, they have to use most if not all of it to settle their 'debts.' This trading leaves many prisoners without their required medication and leads them back into the 'borrow and repay' cycle once again. In addition to this trading, there have also been instances of prisoners overdosing on their own medication. The Board **recommends** that the whole area of issuing extended period medication needs to be reassessed.

2.2 Illegal substances also continue to find their way into the prison and there are frequent finds either through visits, cell searches or prisoners returning from home leave. In some instances prisoners have been forced or threatened to bring them in. It is an ongoing problem for all the staff which requires continual monitoring and assessment. The Board is disappointed to note the lack of attendance by representatives of Security at the monthly Drug Strategy meetings. This means there is nobody to confirm the type and volume of finds.

2.3 The adept team has several programmes in place to address alcohol and substance abuse but waiting lists for attending are quite long. In addition, the Offender Management Unit (OMU) has ongoing difficulties in getting prisoners over to attend the programmes as scheduled. However the Prisoners Addressing Substance Related Offences (PASRO) programme is planned to commence again in late summer and Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) also runs programmes within the prison.

2.4 Throughout this reporting period the Addictions Team has been running with only two trained staff. With another due to leave under the SEE programme this will leave only one member to cover all three sites until another person is trained. This is totally unacceptable as there are currently between 40 and 50 prisoners waiting to be assessed for suitability for various programmes in Maghaberry alone. The Board has campaigned throughout the year for the Addictions Team to be given some administrative help so is pleased to note that from 1 April 2012 there will at least be part-time clerical help.

2.5 The prison authorities continue to discuss the possibility of a drug-free landing and the criteria for prisoners who would wish to avail of serving their sentence in a drug-free environment. This is a difficult wish as it could be construed that having a drug-free landing is admitting that the rest of the landings are not without drugs.

2.6 In February 2012 the NIPS and the Trust issued a draft of Maghaberry Prison Local Policy for the Management of Substance Misuse in Custody and an Action Plan and this is currently with various groups for any additional input. The Board welcomes this joint initiative and hopes that there will indeed be total support and that both parties will play an active role.

### **Section 3 - CATERING AND KITCHENS**

3.1 The kitchen at Maghaberry prepares a varied menu. The quality of the food served is reasonable and every effort is made to try and accommodate the dietary, cultural and religious needs of prisoners. Prisoners have the opportunity to raise any comments or complaints with the Catering Manager through the Prisoner Forum.

3.2 Ten prisoners, including some foreign national prisoners, work in the kitchen and clearly enjoy this work. It is very disappointing that they are still not able to avail of accredited training which would provide them with skills to help them secure employment upon release so the Board again **recommends** that prisoners who work in the kitchen should receive accredited training towards NVQ qualifications. Prisoners who attend the Donard Centre are also able to take cooking lessons and learn about healthy diet and food from a qualified tutor.

3.3 The NIPS is to be commended for setting up communal dining areas in the houses that have been refurbished but the majority of prisoners still have to eat their meals in their cells. This does not meet relevant hygiene regulations as there are open toilet units in cells. The Board **recommends** that there should be designated dining areas in all the houses.

3.4 In past reports the Board has recommended that a Food Policy for prisons be devised and implemented. This has still not happened so once again the **recommendation** is repeated. However the Board notes that the catering facility at Maghaberry has been subject to a catering review and that the recommendations from this will be released later in the year.

### **Section 4 - CHAPLAINCY**

4.1 The role of a Chaplain is essential to any prison establishment. The Chaplaincy team in Maghaberry comprises many faiths - Church of Ireland, Free Presbyterian, Methodist, Muslim, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic – and is ably led and coordinated by the Lead Chaplain. With the ever-increasing number of foreign national prisoners, the team has been strengthened by the assistance of a Polish priest, a Lithuanian priest and a Chinese Pastor. The Board

welcomes this. Even if a prisoner does not profess to a faith, the chaplains are always willing to see him.

4.2 Because of the unique nature of Maghaberry, religious services are not only held in the prison chapel. They are also held in Bush and Roe Houses for separated prisoners, in the Healthcare Centre and in the Mourne complex which is sited across the road from the main prison.

4.3 As the prison population increases, the demands on the chaplains also increase. Prisoners can request to see their minister at any time and meetings take place in the Visits area. The duty chaplain also visits the induction landing every day to see newly committed 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.

4.4 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.

## **Section 5 – EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

5.1 The Education Centre has now been relocated to the new Learning and Skills Centre (LSC). This centre 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 provide a range of knowledge-based and practical skills development and qualification in areas such as literacy, numeracy and information technology. 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. 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 enrol on the essential skills course to advance one level from their initial assessment within one year.

5.2 An atmosphere of enthusiasm and fellowship is immediately evident upon entry to this department. Each week a total of up to 180 classes are available to prisoners throughout the establishment. The classes are held mainly in the LSC and also in the various houses. Classes consisting of seven subjects are also held in the evening on two nights of the weekday.

5.3 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 five levels ranging from Pre Entry to Level 2, equivalent to GCSE standard. Prisoners are currently taking third-level courses and others 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 400 prisoners were accredited, 300 in Education and 100 in Workshops. In addition, currently there are 26 prisoners studying for Open University.

5.4 Because of its location outside the main prison, a second education facility was established adjacent to Braid House, with a full-time computer teacher plus literacy, numeracy - all in-house. Braille classes are now held in the Mourne complex, offering translation for hymn books, prayer books, street maps, museum labels, calendars. The unit also produces music in Braille, a very specialised and rare skill, which is commended. The Board considers this to be an excellent innovation which facilitates the promotion of best practice.

5.5 A past report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate 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 indeed, desire to study in the past.

5.6 Maghaberry workshops provide a range of work and vocational training. During the reporting year, plastering, tiling, painting and decorating have remained the most popular, followed by plastering, furniture making, soft craft, the kitchen, industrial cleaning, the gardens and gymnasium. Supplement to all these activities are the drama and music lessons. Wheelchair and bicycle refurbishment workshops also continue as a community-type project in the Mourne complex. Occasionally, workshops have to be cancelled at short notice, due to staffing priorities and this creates apathy, disappointment and pessimism amongst those prisoners involved.



5.7 Non-attendance at workshops still causes some concern with the main problem being that the prisoners prefer to watch television in their cells, although attendance has increased with the introduction of unescorted movement for certain prisoners. 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 encouraged to participate in workshops with a view to achieving NVQs.

## **Section 6 - EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

6.1 Foreign national prisoners continue to represent a significant proportion of the prisoner population in Maghaberry. By the end of the reporting period they represented around 8% of the total population and consisted of 25 different nationalities with Polish, Chinese and Lithuanian highest in terms of numbers. Irish Travellers also continue to represent a significant minority group within the prisoner population in Maghaberry. The Board also notes that 15 prisoners are recorded as having disabilities.

6.2 The religious composition of the prison staff in Maghaberry continues to be at variance with the religious composition of prisoner population in that there is a marked under-representation of Catholics. Clearly the existing prison workforce does not reflect the Northern Ireland community that it serves but realistically, this imbalance will continue for the foreseeable future. Any scope for remedial measures will be limited by the downsizing of the workforce which will be implemented with effect from April 2012 onwards. The gender breakdown of prison staff also shows an imbalance between male and female. To achieve gender parity would require the recruitment of a significant number of additional women and a similar reduction in the male workforce.

6.3 The Equality and Diversity committee has responsibility for eliminating discrimination from Maghaberry. The Board also notes that the committee has responsibility for promoting equality within Maghaberry and endorses the active steps that are being taken towards this. As a result of issues raised in last year's report, the Equality and Diversity committee is now being chaired by the Deputy Governor. Membership of the committee also includes a wide spectrum from all the various departments and supporting agencies who attend the monthly meetings. Equality and diversity is overseen by the newly established department of Prisoner Safety and Support Team (PSST). All of this is welcomed by the Board.

6.4 In previous reports the Board has raised with the appropriate authorities the fact that a noticeable majority of adjudication charges were laid against Roman Catholics as compared to the total of charges laid against other religions. Subsequently the NIPS commissioned an independent research project into this issue in October 2010 and while it has been in possession of its findings since May 2012 but it is unclear if any action has actually been taken to address the findings.

## **Section 7 - HEALTHCARE AND MENTAL HEALTH**

7.1 According to the Department of Health, every member of society is likely, at some point, to be a recipient of health and social care. The aim of the Prison Service is to provide prisoners with access to the same quality and range of healthcare services available to those within the general community. However a high proportion of prisoners come from a lower socio-economic background and as in the general population, those coming from such a background will present with higher than average physical health problems, mental health problems, addictions and poor coping skills. Addiction to alcohol and drugs – both illegal and prescribed – is rife and the added risk factors of smoking and poor diet are also prevalent. Many prisoners have also suffered punishment shootings and beatings at the hands of the paramilitaries.

7.2 Although the transfer of the delivery of healthcare within the prisons began in 2008 it will only be from 1 April 2012 that the Trust will assume total responsibility. Existing prison service staff will eventually be transferred over to the Trust. Changes in the line management structure should lead to greater accountability and a stronger emphasis on a nursing model of care but the Board acknowledges that the Clinical Nurse Lead will have a job of work to drive forward the change process and ensure that the culture moves from 'security' led to 'nursing' led. The Board will be supportive of all measures implemented to the betterment of prisoner welfare.

7.3 The Board has been supportive of the transfer and sees it as a positive move but constant short staffing, sick leave (during the year a sizeable number of bank and Agency nurses were needed) and staff unease about the transfer has unfortunately resulted in a decline in staff morale. The Board notes that at the time of reporting recruitment of nursing staff is underway and that additional permanent staff should be in post within the next months. It is also planned to create a list of bank nursing staff from this recruitment.

7.4 The Healthcare facility has recently been refurbished, which the Board welcomes. During the year short staffing has meant that attendance at clinics has been poor or that various clinics have not taken place. Dental and forensic psychiatric service appointments have also been affected. However, the Board notes that during the last quarter a less restrictive regime was introduced which allowed many prisoners to attend appointments / clinics unaccompanied by discipline staff. This has produced an improvement in attendance which the Board commends.

7.5 The Board supports the opening of the Donard Centre which provides a multi-disciplinary service to individuals with complex needs and severe mental health problems. The appointment of a specialist Personality Disorder nurse is also welcomed but there generally there is a staff shortage within the discipline which is of serious concern. There is a substantial backlog in mental health assessments and it is imperative that these assessments are carried out as a matter of urgency.

7.6 For many of these individuals neither the prison Healthcare facility, nor indeed the prison system is the correct setting, but in the absence of a secure and therapeutic unit for these most challenging individuals, the likelihood is that they will continue to move between the Healthcare setting and general prison population. The Board acknowledges the difficulties but **recommends** that consideration should be given to a purpose-built safe and secure facility for those prisoners identified as having severe personality disorder and whose behaviour requires a higher degree of professional therapy than is available either within the Healthcare or prison system.

7.7 By far the largest number of issues raised by prisoners to the Board in relation to Healthcare relate to medication – in particular the unacceptable length of time taken to access prescribed medication when they are initially committed to prison. There are instances where the withdrawal of medication or drastic reduction of medication prescribed by a prisoner's GP on committal has resulted in problems. The Board **recommends** that the Trust and the NIPS work together to devise a fast-track system to ensure that prisoners' prescribed medication is readily available on committal.

7.8 The Board is also concerned at the length of time taken to obtain prescribed medication while in prison. Often there can be a delay in the prescriptions being authorised by a doctor, which holds up the process of ordering the medication from the external pharmacy suppliers.

7.9 A snapshot of the prison population in December 2011 showed 79% of the population had current prescriptions, with a further 10% on see-to-take medication. This clearly demonstrates the extent of the required medication. While there is undoubtedly a high level of over-prescribing of certain medications in the prison eg Tramadol, diazepam etc and that there are prisoners who abuse prescription medication, it is the Board's view that swift reduction or total withdrawal of medication which has been prescribed by a prisoner's own GP on a long term basis at a time when the individual is at his most vulnerable gives cause for concern. The Board **recommends** that the NIPS review this policy and introduce the same reduction model as that which is applied in the community.

7.10 The Board remains concerned about the ongoing problems with the Prisoner Escorting and Court Custody Service (PECCS) in relation to prisoners accessing external hospital appointments. This is not a healthcare issue but one of systems and organisation within PECCS. It would appear that PECCS does not have the daily capacity to transport the number of prisoners who have external hospital appointments. For example, last quarter 17 prisoners were not able to attend their pre-arranged appointments due to lack of provision by PECCS. These prisoners were apparently regarded by the hospitals as being 'no shows' and treated accordingly. This is a cause for concern to the Board as it could result in prisoners not receiving prompt diagnosis. The Board **recommends** that a robust system for hospital appointments be put in place and greater communication between healthcare and PECCS.

7.11 The local Clinical Governance meetings take place on a quarterly basis but attendance has been sporadic and there is a lack of consistency in attendees. If those charged with the responsibility are not present and have not briefed anyone to deputise for them it makes it difficult to deal with action points and agenda items. The Board hopes that with the responsibility for Healthcare falling totally within the remit of the Trust, a greater emphasis will be in place on the importance of such meetings.

## **Section 8 - LIBRARY**

8.1 On average over 40 prisoners visit the library in a week. It is a place where they are made to feel at ease and to relax. A choice of several thousand books, fiction and non-fiction are available as well as a wide choice of other popular reading material. To meet the needs of the many foreign national prisoners, there are books, magazines and newspapers available in a wide range of languages. The Library staff can meet any unforeseen demand for overseas

newspapers etc by downloading from the Internet when required. Lastly, there is a comprehensive stock of over 500 CD's which are readily available.

8.2 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 young listener.

## **Section 9 - LIFE SENTENCED PRISONERS**

9.1 There are currently 164 life sentenced prisoners in Maghaberry with a further 19 on various pre-release schemes. The largest numbers of life sentenced prisoners are located in Braid and Wilson houses with the majority of Category A prisoners housed in Erne house but most, if not all, houses have at least one life sentenced prisoner *in situ*. Following the untimely closure of the Prisoner Assessment Unit (PAU) in April 2011 all the prisoners who were located there were returned to Maghaberry, from where they now continue with their associated pre-release programmes. The Board **recommends** that another PAU is opened as soon as possible at a site divorced from the prison.

9.2 As with all prisoners, a large number of life sentenced prisoners have quite low levels of numeracy and literacy so are encouraged to avail of the education facilities available. The Essential Skills Curriculum covers a range from very low educational levels up to the equivalent of GCSE and degree level. A special Duke of Edinburgh award has been specifically designed for delivery in prison and last year saw several life sentenced prisoners receive this award.

9.3 There are also several programmes to help life sentenced prisoners address their many issues including the PASRO programme for alcohol and drug abuse, the Sex Offender Treatment Programme (SOTP), Cognitive Self Change Programme (CSCP) and the Motivational Enhancement Group and Anger Management courses.

9.4 Currently life sentenced prisoners can avail of gardening, painting, woodwork, wheelchair repair, Braille translation, assembling pre-pack furniture for use in the prison, working in the kitchens, orderly work on the various landings, various art and craft classes. Furthermore, two prisoners are making handbags from recycled materials for charity. It is the Board's view that it should be possible to provide a suitable outlet such as the Quakers Centre where the goods produced by the life sentenced prisoners could be sold to the general public so **recommends**

that this is explored. While these work opportunities exist they are also available to prisoners serving shorter sentences so this can make it difficult for life sentenced prisoners to use their sentence in a constructive manner. For this reason the Board **recommends** that more work is made available to life sentenced prisoners.

9.5 It is a major concern that prisoners in Braid House have in the recent past been subject to more lockdowns than other houses resulting in loss of evening association. This is because staff have been moved to accommodate shortages in the remainder of the prison. The Board **recommends** that steps are taken to eliminate this inequality.

## **Section 10 - PROGRESSIVE REGIME and EARNED PRIVILEGES SCHEME (PREPS)**

10.1 The remodelled Progressive Regime & Earned Privileges Scheme (PREPS) has now been in place for an extended period of time. This remodelling was necessary to bring the scheme in line with the new Offender Management model which included 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 continues to welcome the changes in the management of PREPS in so far as it shows more regard for the circumstances of individual prisoners.

10.2 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.

10.3 Residential officers continue to oversee prisoners' behaviour, make regular reports, 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 have been given as a result. Hopefully, with the oversight of Residential Managers such conflicts should and can be identified at an early stage and managed accordingly.

10.4 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 **recommends** that Residential Managers and PREPS co-coordinators continue to assist and encourage prisoners not only to maintain their level, but if below Enhanced, also to progress to it.

10.5 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 the adjudication.

## **Section 11 - RECEPTION AND INDUCTION**

11.1 The Reception area is where the prisoners arrive at the prison. Over the past reporting period certain measures have been put in place to ensure that the arrival procedure is more streamlined and receiving area more congenial for the incoming prisoners. The Board commends this.

11.2 Those arriving for the first time can be nervous and apprehensive while of those returning, some are unsettled whilst others are at ease and confident. The Board commends the staff in reception for their calm and professional manner which helps put the new arrivals at ease.

11.3 When prisoners leave the Reception area they are taken to induction in Bann House where they will spend their first night(s) / weeks in prison. This can be a difficult and stressful

time for the prisoner especially if it is their first time in custody. It is during this time away from family and friends that prisoners are very vulnerable and because of this the Board **recommends** that all staff are trained in Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST). Because this is a daunting time and environment for many prisoners the Board also **recommends** that prisoners are allocated to a specific member of staff for their first week in the prison to make the transition period easier.

11.4 During induction the prisoners are given a leaflet which explains the various aspects of prison life. The Board has noted that sometimes the essential induction lectures do not take place within the set time schedule because staff have to deal with continually high levels of new committals and **recommends** steps are taken to rectify this. However the Board commends the efforts of the staff in Bann House and that although they have to deal with increasing number of committals they continue to achieve their task in a professional and competent manner.

11.5 The Board is concerned that the forthcoming exit programme will create more staff shortages so **recommends** that because of the importance of induction Bann House should always be staffed to its full complement.

## **Section 12 - RESETTLEMENT**

12.1 A successful and efficient resettlement programme minimises the risk of a prisoner reoffending on release so after committal all prisoners are seen by the Resettlement Team. The Team works with both sentenced and remand prisoners. Initial meetings will deal with immediate issues like rent or mortgage payments, outstanding debt etc and within in eight weeks all should have a resettlement plan in place. Prisoners can then avail of education or workshops and engage in courses but getting a placement is becoming more difficult given the large number currently being held. Another big problem is that lock and unlock times severely reduce the time available to carry out the programmes and with staff numbers reducing further in the new reporting year it is to be hoped that it will not decrease even further.

12.2 Family support is essential to successful resettlement so child-centred visits and the family work undertaken by the Family Liaison Team and the Quakers are invaluable. Some prisoners unfortunately never get visits so the Quakers have set up a scheme called "Quaker Connections" whereby volunteer prisoners will visit unvisited prisoners if the prisoner so wishes. The Board welcomes this initiative. NIACRO provides the previously mentioned Jobtrack



programme but also provides advice on benefits, finance, debt management and other areas in which prisoners may need support. The Board acknowledges the support given by all the associated agencies in trying to provide a focused and detailed resettlement package for prisoners.

12.3 The Resettlement Unit not only works with these various groups inside the prison, but it also relies heavily on working in partnership with outside agencies especially in respect of accommodation. One of the main difficulties on release can be finding suitable accommodation, especially for a single male, who has either no dependable family network, or who because of nature of his crime is unable to return to his home area. For such cases the Resettlement Team has contacts in various locations throughout Northern Ireland which can provide suitable properties. However this may involve the prisoner moving outside his home area so he will need support from agencies such as PBNi to ensure he does not return to the pattern of behaviour that caused him initially to offend. With no supportive network in place prisoners with poor coping skills frequently reoffend in order to return to prison which they regard as a 'safe' option or environment.

## **Section 13 - SAFER CUSTODY**

13.1 Glen House cares primarily for vulnerable prisoners who need to be segregated from other prisoners for their own safety. Others with enduring and intractable difficulties linked to a mental health diagnosis are often also accommodated there. In general this landing works well, evidencing a happy atmosphere and is manned by staff who display good interpersonal skills. . The staff, in general, engage positively with the prisoners and are reasonably well acquainted with their family backgrounds and circumstances.

13.2 For nine months of the reporting period the prisoners from Glen House were housed in Foyle where they did not have the same opportunities or freedom that was previously afforded them. Restructuring has now allowed these prisoners to return to Glen House and the regime to which they were previously accustomed. Engagement in activities such as the flat pack furniture making recently undertaken by them in Foyle the opportunity to use the Reach garden has been a positive experience for the prisoners in this house. The Board **recommends** that these types of work activities should be continued and increased as this will hopefully help reduce tension and break down barriers.

13.3 The REACH landing was set up for those prisoners described as 'poor copers' or those who demonstrated symptoms commonly associated with personality disorder or other classifiable mental illnesses. However to work effectively with prisoners who have limited empathy and whose behaviour falls outside the norm requires robust training. All too often small issues that could be dealt with when they arise are not noticed or taken on board by staff and it appears that only in crisis does the 'professional' become involved. For this reason the Board **recommends** that REACH staff are offered as wide a range of relevant and specially focused training both in-house and through outside colleges and agencies.

13.4 The SPAR (Supporting Prisoners at Risk) process is a means whereby staff can work together to provide individual care to prisoners who are in distress in order to help defuse a potentially suicidal crisis and help prisoners to better manage and reduce their distress. Statistics recently completed showed 27% of SPARS were opened at night and that 61% of all self harms also occur at night. This is obviously high risk times for prisoners and would indicate that officers need to be trained specifically to deal with situations that arise, whether on the day or night shift. The Board has reported mixed feedback on the SPAR document - in some cases there is no evidence that relevant issues had been identified or addressed by officers, but in many other cases there was evidence of very good practice. The Board **recommends** that all staff especially night staff undergo applicable and comprehensive SPAR training.

13.5 It has long been established that one of the main risk factors for self-harming and suicide is lack of visits and isolation. A high percentage of prisoners lose contact with friends and family when they enter prison but those who are visited by family are less likely to reoffend than those who receive no visits. The "Quaker Connections" volunteer project is now operating and should be of benefit to the many prisoners who fall into this category. The Board **recommends** that similar initiatives should be expanded and encouraged for prisoners who do not receive visits.

## **Section 14 - SEGREGATION - CARE AND SUPERVISION UNIT (CSU)**

14.1 Maintenance of good order and discipline is an essential part of prison life so if prisoners behave in a manner which threatens this they are transferred to the Care and Supervision Unit (CSU). As in past years, the Board continues to make the CSU 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.

14.2 While the CSU's primary function is to deal with disciplinary breaches it also holds prisoners who have been awarded periods of Cellular Confinement (CC) as a result of adjudication and those who need to "cool off" following an altercation. In such cases the CSU and its regime are designed to present a less attractive option to normal prison life and therefore act as a deterrent to inappropriate behaviour. In addition to having a deterrent effect it is hoped that confinement in the CSU provides prisoners with an opportunity to reflect on their negative behaviours and to consider the need to address these on return to the wider prison society.

14.3 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 so another principal function of the CSU is to house those prisoners who require separation for their own safety and protection or for the protection of others. Board members monitor all Rule 32s and apply critical scrutiny to all the relevant paper work to ensure that procedures have been followed and that application of the rule has been reasonable in the prevailing circumstances. Throughout the year the Board has been impressed with the care and respect shown by officers to prisoners faced with Rule 32 charges.

14.4 Unfortunately, at times prisoners do not always accept that confinement is in their own interest and there is little doubt that at times CSU staff are presented with extreme and highly challenging behaviours and attitudes. Most prisoners in the CSU find conforming to the usual prison regime more demanding and difficult than most and many 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 but even when these problems extended to some prisoners staging a "dirty protest" they were handled well by staff. The Board feels that to handle such individuals properly requires specialised training which goes well beyond control and restraint techniques, so **recommends** that staff should receive more specialised training in coping with and understanding these difficult prisoners' needs.

14.5 Adjudications are held daily in the CSU 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. The Board has been impressed with the way these proceedings have been conducted throughout the year. A noticeable factor in adjudications is that month by month the charges involving sentenced prisoners are always less than those of remand prisoners. It appears that sentenced prisoners are more settled as their future has been decided.

14.6 Overall the Board continues to note improvements and developments in the operation of the CSU 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 CSU a more compact and workable unit. One problem that does exist is that there is only one telephone booth which is sited upstairs. Since there are cells on both the ground floor and upper floor, some prisoners have to move between floors to use the phone and this can lead to difficulties. The Board **recommends** that consideration be given to the installation of a second telephone booth sited on the ground floor.

## **SECTION 15 – SEPARATED PRISONERS**

15.1 In 2003 the UK Government accepted the Steele Review recommendation that Republican and Loyalist prisoners with paramilitary affiliations should be accommodated separately from each other and from the rest of the prisoner population on a voluntary basis within Maghaberry Prison. Throughout the reporting year, the male separated Republican prisoners continued to be housed in Roe House, Landings 3 and 4 and the separated Loyalist prisoners in Bush House, Landings 1 and 2. The population throughout the year showed a continuing upward trend in the number of separated Republican prisoners and a continuing downward trend in the number of separated Loyalist prisoners.

15.2 In May 2011, the male separated Republican prisoners in Roe 3 and 4 commenced a dirty protest which entailed smearing their cell walls with human faeces and/or pouring a mixture of urine and faeces out under their cell door on to the landing. They also ceased shaving. Their action is in protest at what the prisoners perceived to be the NIPS reneging on the terms of a detailed agreement published in August 2010. This formal agreement had been the culmination of a protracted facilitation process between the NIPS and the separated Republican prisoners and had been welcomed by the Justice Minister. The agreement had included the introduction of a new search facility, incorporating technology in the form of a body orifice security scanner

(BOSS) chair and a revised search policy for separated prisoners. The main issue causing the dirty protest was the NIPS' insistence on full-body searching of separated Republican prisoners leaving and returning to the prison. The separated Republican prisoners felt that this was in contravention of the agreement as it had been their genuine understanding that the new BOSS chair was to be used for all body searches in Maghaberry Prison and that full-body searching was to be ceased altogether. For whatever reason, the agreement as drafted did not specify full-body searches for separated Republican prisoners leaving or returning to the prison. Sceptics have described this as 'creative ambiguity'. Another major issue is the degree of controlled movement to which separated Republican prisoners are subjected. They feel it is draconian and questioned the need for such tight control. The protest has continued without break and is still ongoing at the end of the reporting year.

15.3 The agreement had also stipulated the establishment of an effective prisoner forum to provide a meaningful mechanism at which to address issues of mutual concern and build trust. The separated Republican prisoners felt they had diligently participated in this prisoner forum for some nine months, but had achieved absolutely nothing from the process in return for their efforts. They felt that the NIPS had failed to reciprocate in a positive manner and claimed that frustratingly, all their requests and suggestions had been rejected by prison management on grounds of security.

15.4 The review of the NIPS which was chaired by Dame Anne Owers published an interim report in February 2011 and followed up with a final report in October 2011. The Review Team recommended that *"efforts should be continued to see whether there is an effective and less intrusive method than full-body searching of ensuring that prisoners leaving and entering prison are not bringing in contraband"*. That recommendation was made in the context of the dirty protest by separated Republican prisoners. The Review Team described full-body searching as a procedure that was intrusive and invaded the privacy of all prisoners. In February 2012 the Justice Minister announced that he was actively pursuing alternatives to full-body searching in Northern Ireland's prisons and said that his department was *"actively following up on what the alternatives are"*. Reportedly, the Justice Minister admitted that full-body searching was not a particularly pleasant experience for the prisoners or for the prison officers who had to carry it out. He said that the use of an x-ray system was one of the options being considered but confirmed that full-body searches were necessary until a suitable alternative was found. At the reporting year end and thirteen months after the Prison Review Team issued its interim report, the stand-off between the separated Republican prisoners and the NIPS continued with no apparent

prospect of resolution. For this reason the Board **recommends** that the NIPS expedites introduction of scanners to replace all full-body searches of prisoners in Maghaberry Prison.

15.5 On 15 May 2011, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland revoked the licence of a 57-year old female, former life prisoner who had been released from prison some 31 years earlier. As the only separated Republican woman prisoner in Northern Ireland, she had to be accommodated in high security Maghaberry along with up to 1000 male prisoners and was held in Glen House on her own. The Board visited her regularly and in September 2011 she indicated that she was finding it difficult to cope with the isolation. This was reported to the Deputy Governor at the Board's monthly meeting two days later but she remained in Glen House. The matter of her continued isolation was raised at every monthly Board meeting. In January 2012 she was visited by a Board member who noted that she was extremely distressed and her appearance had markedly deteriorated. At the Board's meeting the following week the Board member told the Governor that the solitary nature of the woman's long-term detention in Glen House was arguably questionable. The prisoner was subsequently transferred in February 2012 to the women's prison in Hydebank Wood which the Board welcomed. The NIPS stated that the decision to transfer her had been taken on professional clinical advice from the SEHSCT. The Board is disappointed that it took such an extended period for the NIPS and the Trust to act in unison and implement a positive action on this issue at a much earlier date.

16.7 The separated Loyalist prisoners in Bush 1 and 2 raised a number of issues during the reporting year. They complained repeatedly about the quality of food provided and the need for them to purchase foodstuffs from the Tuck Shop to substitute or supplement the prison food. They informed the Board that the food issue had been raised frequently at prisoner forum meetings but there had been no improvement and no-one from the prison kitchen had come to the landings to discuss the matter with them. They further complained about the high level of pricing in the Tuck Shop and the high cost of making telephone calls. Recommendations in respect of these issues are embedded in other areas of this report.

## **SECTION 16 – TUCK SHOP**

16.1 The Tuck Shop provides an essential service to all prisoners who order and receive a delivery every. The shop is well managed and carries a good range of stock items which is revised regularly to meet general prisoner requests and the needs of the large number of foreign national prisoners. Prisoners working in the shop indicate that they enjoy the work and usually

stay there for a considerable length of time. These prisoners would benefit from NVQ accredited training which could help them secure employment upon release. The Board **recommends** that the prisoners who staff the shop should be able to avail of accredited NVQ training.

16.2 As stated in previous reports prisoners sometimes consider that the prices in the Tuck Shop are too high when compared to major high street retail outlets so the Board continues to **recommend** that all products are competitively priced.

## **Section 17 - VISITS**

17.1 For someone who loses his freedom it is essential that an acceptable level of contact / communication should be maintained with family and friends in the outside world. The visits area has to strike a balance between facilitating families and the need for security. All visitors must undergo a test by a passive drug dog and there are always at least three prison officers supervising the visits area. The existing CCTV system is outdated so the Board **recommends** that the cameras be replaced / upgraded to digital standard to enable extended continuous surveillance in real time to be made at all points. In addition to the main visits area, there is also a visits facility in the Mourne complex where the prisoners in Braid House can see visitors.

17.2 The visitors' arrival area used to be austere but during the reporting period it was redecorated painted in pastel colours to give a softer image so that any children visiting are subject to "child-friendly" décor. The Board welcomes this change. Special effort is also made to enhance visits at Easter, Halloween and Christmas and additional activities for children are organised during the summer holiday period.

17.3 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 provides transport from the Monica Barrett Centre in the visitors' car park to the prison. The Centre offers a friendly welcome to visitors and provides a range of services including information and advice, a café, childcare, a play room, child-centred visits and family-focus weeks. In recognition of the growing number of foreign national visitors the Quakers Service now provides its information booklet in a variety of languages and has information signs in foreign language displayed within the area.

17.4 One of the most positive features is the child-centred visits which enable fathers and children to spend time together and bond in a way that is not always possible during a normal

visit. Children up to the age of sixteen years can participate. The Board commends this initiative.

17.5 Also to be commended are the Family Support Officers. Their involvement is of great benefit to families and provides a valuable service assisting visitors with concerns surrounding family matters. Information and leaflets have been produced as well as a child-focused DVD.

17.6 As mentioned in other areas of the report, the Quakers Service has also launched the "Quakers Connection" project which pilots two strands of a volunteer scheme - one strand focuses on supporting families visiting the prison and the other is focuses on visiting prisoners who have no family or do not get visits. The Board welcomes these initiatives.



## APPENDIX 1

### MAGHABERRY BOARD MEMBERS 2011-2012

Mr Dennis Constable	Chair
Mrs Margaret McCauley	Vice Chair
Mr Alfred Abolarin	Resigned in August 2011
Ms Vicky Boland	
Mrs Sally Cunningham	
Mr Amran Hussain	Appointment terminated in June 2011
Mrs Myrtle Elliott	
Dr Ahmed Khamassi	On sabbatical until November 2011
Mr Phillip Lees	
Mr James McAllister	
Mr Jimmy McClean	
Mrs Valerie McConnell	
Mr Joe Mitchell	Time served 23 January 2012
Mr Gordon Ramsey	

