



**INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD  
ANNUAL REPORT 2016 - 2017  
MAGHABERRY PRISON**

## **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 Maghaberry Prison are 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 Maghaberry Prison 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**

As Chair of Maghaberry IMB I am pleased to introduce the Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2017.

The members of the IMB are made up of volunteers from very different backgrounds, who together bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to their role. At start of reporting year we had thirteen members, but due to some members having to resign because of family commitments we have ended this year with nine members, however the dedicated group of core members have ensured that all our obligations have been met. Once again I wish to express my thanks and appreciation to all members for their work, professionalism, diligence and support.

Sadly there have been four deaths in custody during this reporting period and we wish to express our sympathy to the families and friends of the deceased.

There have also been two deaths of serving staff in Maghaberry during the year and we also wish to express our sympathy to their families, friends and colleagues.

Healthcare has again been a concern, particularly with regard to prisoners who have mental health issues. Yet again we question the suitability of prison for people with severe mental health issues and recommend that there should be a secure facility where they could receive treatment. We have specifically raised our concerns about prisoners with mental health issues who are housed long term in the Care and Supervision Unit (CSU).

During this reporting year CSU returned to its original location following refurbishment. Despite the huge amount that was spent, the Board were disappointed to note that it was left in a very 'unfinished' condition with very little noticeable improvement, and that working conditions for staff have actually worsened. We recommend that, should further refurbishments be proposed elsewhere throughout the prison, the views of the staff working there should be taken into consideration.

On a positive note the Board is pleased with the changes in the senior management team from appointment of new governor last July. We appreciate the fact that their doors are always open to us and we can approach them at any time with any issues that may arise or

any concerns we may have.

There has also been an obvious improvement in education within the prison with a much more structured approach, and also the provision of qualifications that will hopefully enable prisoners to apply for employment on release.

While drugs continue to be an issue in Maghaberry, as in every other prison, we are pleased that the management continue to take robust action with anyone suspected of bringing unauthorised items into the prison, regardless of whether it is prisoner, visitor or staff, and that they continue to work closely with PSNI to ensure perpetrators are prosecuted.

In conclusion I would also like to thank the IMB Secretariat for their support throughout the year.

**Patrick McGonagle**

**Chair**

## OVERVIEW OF ESTABLISHMENT

Maghaberry Prison is a relatively 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 majority of the prisoners are accommodated in seven residential houses on the main site. Bann, one of the 'square houses' accommodates mainly committal and prisoners on induction. Bush and Roe houses accommodate separated prisoners on two landings each, with the other two landings used for general prison population. Two of the three other original 'square houses' Lagan and Erne hold a mix of sentenced and remand prisoners. Quoile, a modern purpose-built house was opened approximately four years ago . This accommodates the Donard landing and also a regime where prisoners can progress to various landings within the house. There is also the new Shimna House which was built as a Witness Protection Unit, but given the rising population within the prison this new house now accommodates the workers landing which was previously based in Quoile. There is a separate Care and Supervision Unit (CSU) which was housed in the remaining 'square house', Foyle, until end of September 2016 during which the former CSU underwent a major programme of refurbishment. While the IMB welcomed this long overdue refurbishment - the conditions in Foyle were very poor – the Board is disappointed that despite the huge amount of money spent on the refurbishment, the conditions in the CSU have not improved greatly and is of the opinion that it has not been finished to an acceptable standard. There was no prior consultation with staff as to the changes being made and the working conditions for staff are worse than before refurbishment. The former Healthcare Unit is now renamed Moyola and is a normal landing within the prison housing prisoners who are increasingly presenting with complex medical needs. Martin, Wilson and Braid are located in the Moume complex across the road from the main site. Braid houses mainly life sentenced prisoners and Wilson is used to house prisoners who are nearing the end of life sentences and have participated in and completed all relevant programmes. Martin House and Glen House are at end of this reporting year unoccupied. Burren House (formerly the PAU- Prisoner

Assessment Unit) on Crumlin Road re-opened three years ago and houses life sentence prisoners who are on final phase of their sentence prior to release.

Work has commenced on a new house which should be completed in 2019 and will provide up to date accommodation and will hopefully mean the closure of some if not all of the 'square houses'. This will mean that most of the accommodation within Maghaberry will be of a fairly high standard.

Healthcare for all prisoners is provided by 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 and Drugs; Empowering People through Therapy) in partnership with the Trust and NIPS. Education and training is provided by Belfast Metropolitan College (BMC).

Various charitable and voluntary organisations maintain a presence on site and provide valuable support to the prisoners.

The Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO) now have a four week programme for short term prisoners who are not subject to supervision on release. This programme called POST (positive outcomes for short term prisoners) works through Learning and Skills and provides prisoners with cookery classes, employability skills and CV writing. They also provide benefit advice. Their Family Links programme involves seeing every new prisoner on committal to see if their families need support. NIACRO also run a bus from Londonderry via Strabane for prisoners' families on a Friday and Saturday which is very beneficial as there is no direct bus route to the prison

CRUSE Bereavement Care continue to provide support for prisoners dealing with bereavement issues, however this is now organised from their Belfast office as, due to funding cuts, they no longer have someone based on site.

Barnardo's support prisoners with family issues, and Housing Rights and Benefits Advice staff support prisoners in obtaining housing, benefits and grants when they leave prison. They are also involved in the running of the successful Family Matters Landing.



Extern i s responsible for the recycling in the prison and also does catering courses and electrical workshop in the Mourne complex.

The Prison Arts Foundation runs a therapeutic arts and crafts course.

It is very disappointing that Quaker Service no longer have the contract for the Visitor Centre which was awarded to People Plus NI two years ago. This has had a huge impact for prisoners' families as it has meant there are no longer hot meals available for families who may have travelled a long distance, often several hours, just sandwiches, snacks and tea or coffee. The bus from the Centre to Visitors Reception is no longer in place which causes difficulties for visitors with mobility problems, mothers with young children and elderly visitors especially in wet or cold weather. There are no longer childcare facilities at the Visitor Centre which can have a huge impact if not all the children that arrive have been booked on a visit; this may entail the visit having to be cancelled causing upset to both family and prisoner. Staff in the past ran seasonal events for the children and the budget for this has been drastically reduced. Advice for families is still available and crèche facilities and tea bar still running in main visits. Quaker Connections still run their befriending service for prisoners who have no visits.

Spiritual and religious matters are the remit of the prison Chaplaincy team who try to facilitate the practice of all faiths within the prison community and provide great support to prisoners and their families. Additional help is provided by the Prison Fellowship and also by St Vincent de Paul.

## **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Board recommends that –

### **1 ACCOMMODATION**

- a) While the Board is pleased that building work has commenced on a new 'house', it recommends that a rolling programme of maintenance and decoration is put in place until such time as the new building is completed and operational. (para 1.1)
- b) In the event of future refurbishment the input of staff who work in that environment is sought. (para 1.6)

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

- a) The Trust review the addictions service to ensure that it is capable of working with the numbers of individuals requiring the service (para 2.8)
- b) The Trust and NIPS review the issue of 'In Possession' medication, including safe storage and 'spot checks' (para 2.10)
- c) NIPS and The Trust jointly review the Drug Recovery Programme with a view to sourcing funding to establish a rolling recovery programme (para 2.12)

### **3 CATERING AND KITCHENS**

- a) The number of prisoners undertaking an NVQ Qualification be increased in order to facilitate employment on release (para 3.3)
- b) The prisoners from Donard have the opportunity to take lessons in basic cookery and learn about healthy food as part of the Learning and Skills Course (para 3.3)
- c) The practice of prisoners eating in cells is reviewed (para 3.8)

### **4 CHAPLAINCY**

- a) The Chaplaincy service is reviewed and the hours increased to the former level (para 4.4)
- b) The Chaplaincy are included in discussions regarding temporary compassionate leave (para 4.5)

- c) The system to enable prisoners to attend the service of their choice is reviewed (para 4.7)
- d) The checklist of people to be informed in the event of a death in custody is reviewed. (4.7)

## **5 EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

- a) The service agreement with BMC is reviewed as a matter of urgency (para 5.1)
- b) The staff from Training and Education visit the individual landings to encourage prisoners to participate in available courses (para 5.2)
- c) Steps are taken to ensure prisoners participate in workshops with a view to achieving NVQ's (para 5.3)
- d) Consideration is given to selling art, crafts, garden furniture, plants etc. produced by prisoners, and to finding an outlet for food grown in the garden (para 5.7 and 5.8)

## **6 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

No Recommendations

## **7 HEALTHCARE AND MENTAL HEALTH**

No Recommendations

## **8 LIBRARY**

No recommendations

## **9 LIFE SENTENCED PRISONERS**

- a) Courses should be available for life sentenced prisoners from commencement of sentence (para 9.3)
- b) More work and training is made available specifically for life sentence prisoners (para 9.5)

- c) Consideration is given to maintaining the family links for life sentenced prisoners (para 9.6)

## **10 PREPS**

- a) The existing PREP instructions be reviewed and superseded by one Standard Operating Procedure for HMP Maghaberry (para 10.4)
- b) That appropriate training in the operation of PREPS be provided as a priority to all relevant staff members (para 10.4)

## **11 RECEPTION AND INDUCTION**

- a) Bann House should always be staffed to full complement in order to ensure the safety of prisoners and staff (para 11.2)
- b) Where possible first time prisoners should not share a cell with an "experienced" prisoners (para 11.3)
- c) New staff get induction training to work in Bann (para 11.5)
- d) All induction staff are trained in Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) (para 11.6)

## **12 RESETTLEMENT**

No recommendations

## **13 SAFER CUSTODY**

- a) The matter of provision of social care for aging prisoners be resolved (para 13.5)
- b) Houses with higher number of SPARS are adequately staffed (para 13.7)
- c) Funding is sought for the Drugs Recovery Programme to run on a rolling basis (para 13.15)

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

- a) The Psychology Department are asked to become involved with individual prisoners in the CSU to support them in altering their behaviour (para 14.3)
- b) NIPS review the whole area of Rule 32 Case Conferences particularly in relation to the monitoring of the effects on the mental health of individuals

held in isolation. The UK National Preventative Mechanism (NPM) has issued, in January, new Guidance in Relation to Isolation in Detention. The Guidance provides a framework that NPM members (of which IMB is one) will apply when carrying out their monitoring role. (para 14.8)

- c) That exit strategies are put in place to ensure that prisoners are kept in CSU for as short a time as possible (para 14.9)

## **15 SEPARATED PRISONERS**

No recommendations

## **16 SPORT AND RECREATION**

No recommendations

## **17 TUCKSHOP**

- a) NVQ accredited training is made available to those prisoners working in the tuckshop (para 17.3)
- b) All products are competitively priced (para 17.4)
- c) The distribution of tuck shop on the landings is reviewed (para 17.5)

## **18 VISITS**

- a) The process of transferring items left at visits reception is reviewed to lessen the delay in reaching the prisoner (para 18.3)
- b) The visitors booking line is adequately staffed (para 18.4)
- c) There is a review of the service formerly provided by Quaker Service (para 18.6)

## **Section 1 – ACCOMODATION**

1.1 Several previous IMB reports recommended that the square houses of Bann, Erne, Foyle and Lagan be replaced. The Board are pleased that in this reporting year work has commenced on a new 'house' which should be completed by 2019. This will mean prisoners currently located in the 'square houses' will be rehoused in very modern accommodation, and hopefully the closure or demolition of the existing square houses. Prison numbers have stayed lower this year than in many previous years which does have a positive impact. Overcrowding impacts negatively on prisoners as there is little privacy in shared cells - particularly when there are lengthy periods of lock down.

**Recommendation: While the Board is pleased that building work has commenced on a new 'house', it recommends that a rolling programme of maintenance and decoration is put in place until such time as the new building is completed and operational.**

1.2 The two linear houses Roe and Bush accommodate (in respective houses, in specific wings) separated Republican and Loyalist prisoners. The two other landings in each of these houses accommodate normal prison population.

1.3 The Board welcomed the opening of two new houses in 2013 – Shimna and Quoile. Quoile House is a modern purpose-built house which can accommodate 120 prisoners in excellent conditions. Prisoners and staff have given very positive feedback on the modern facilities which are available. Shimna continues being utilised as accommodation for 'workers' which eases pressure on other areas of the prison.

1.4 Martin House in the Mourne complex was refurbished four years ago and became the Vulnerable Prisoner Unit (VPU) with prisoners previously accommodated in Glen House moving there. The refurbishment had created a relatively spacious unit which provided excellent accommodation and a much better regime with access to the

garden. However in last reporting year, Martin House and Glen House are unoccupied.

1.5 As previously stated the Healthcare facility is now being used as another landing (Moyola) within the prison, with mainly prisoners who have been transferred from VPU or older prisoners often with age related issues, e.g. mobility and personal care. Unfortunately given the small numbers that this landing can accommodate, and the wide range of ages, there is very little for the prisoners to do, although the Board are pleased that some effort has been made this year to provide some purposeful activity for those housed there, gardening and an outdoor gym. The Board will continue to monitor the situation.

1.6 The Board is disappointed to note that despite the large amount spent on refurbishing the CSU, there is no significant improvement in the conditions and the unit was left in a very 'unfinished' state. No consultation with staff was undertaken prior to the refurbishment and conditions for staff are worse than before work was undertaken.

**Recommendation: The Board recommends that in the event of future refurbishment the input of staff who work in that environment is sought.**

1.7 Most people would not expect a Category A prison to include in its environs an Area of Special Scientific Interest; beautifully mown green areas, hanging baskets, flower troughs, well-tended gardens, poly-tunnels and vegetable growing areas. At Maghaberry a lot of care and attention has gone in to creating areas of beauty in an otherwise drab and utilitarian site. The Area of Special Scientific Interest relates to an area of perimeter grasslands which are 'home' to around 30 pairs of breeding lapwings. These birds are becoming very rare in Northern Ireland thus Maghaberry is a very important breeding site. The NIPS must be given credit for recognising the importance of making the outdoor areas as pleasant as possible. Credit also has to go to the instructors, staff and prisoners who carry out the work and tend to the various outdoor areas. It is very heartening to see so many prisoners undertaking outdoor duties, from grass-cutting, to planting flowers and shrubs. Added to this is the signage which makes the prison estate much more user friendly.

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

2.1 "Prison does not just contain addiction, it creates it." (Centre for Social Justice, 2015 – 'Drugs in Prison')

2.2 Prescription drugs have a legitimate place in prisons. They can play an important role in treating illnesses such as depression and addiction. However, it is crucial that they are used responsibly; many are highly addictive and can have significant negative side effects.

2.3 Illegal substances are a continuing problem both in society in general and within the prison population. Many prisoners have used illegal substances for so long that it has become, for them, the 'norm'. Others are introduced to substance misuse when they come in; whilst some who have had their legitimately prescribed medication reduced on committal will go on to purchase this illicitly. A growing problem is also the use of 'legal highs'

2.4 IMB members are aware that prescription drugs continue to be 'diverted' onto a 'black market', and misused. Individuals are often bullied for their legitimately prescribed medication.

2.5 It is disappointing to yet again have to report that there is still a high volume of drugs (both illegal and prescribed) within the Maghaberry site.

2.6 It is, however, pleasing to note that there have been substantial seizures of illegal substances by prison staff. The Security Committee has been re-established and greater attention is being paid to the drugs issue. This would appear to have had positive results in the number of drugs seizures, be they as a result of intelligence led searches, routine searches on return from outside leave, or observation during visits for example. PSNI and NIPS joint initiative continues with both prisoners and visitors being prosecuted for bringing illegal substances into the prison.

2.7 Drug testing continues, and it is interesting that there has been a change in the most 'common' drug that has been showing up in the tests i.e. prescription medication (as opposed to cannabinoids which previously would have accounted for the most



common). There is also a rise in the use of synthetic cocaine and heroin. It is disturbing to note the high risks taken by prisoners in secreting large amounts of illegal substances on their person. Ingenious methods of secreting substances can often make it difficult to detect. Whilst it is still not an uncommon sight for IMB members to witness prisoners who are quite clearly under the influence of 'something', we feel that there has been a change in how staff view such occurrences. There is less of an 'acceptance' that this is just part and parcel of prison life, and more of a realisation that this is a problem.

2.8 Some Board members have talked to prisoners who have very serious addiction problems and who would be keen to get onto the Addictions Team Substitute Therapy programme. Unfortunately, at the time of writing, only those already on the programme, and individuals at committal stage who are already on the substitution programme prior to committal, are being offered this service. As a result, some prisoners have told us, quite frankly and honestly, that they will obtain their drug of choice illegally. We have concerns about the risks that such individuals take to their health when sourcing illegal substances. Our main concern is the risk prisoners take by smuggling drugs internally, often in large volumes.

2.9 There are long waiting lists for the services of Alcohol and Drugs: Empowering People through Therapy (AD:EPT). Although prisoners can be visited initially by an AD:EPT counsellor, there can be a long wait between the initial assessment and getting onto a programme of support.

**Recommendation: That the Trust reviews the Addictions service to ensure that it is capable of working with the number of individuals requiring the service.**

2.10 Prisoners can be subjected to bullying in relation to debts which they incur through their drug misuse. This can, as stated in previous reports, have repercussions on families. Bullying of prisoners to bring in illegal substances from home visits, or other external visits, is also an issue. Prisoners on legally prescribed medication can be bullied to hand over their supply, if they are not on 'supervised swallow'. The availability of prescription medication in Maghaberry stems, in the main, from medication dispensed as 'supervised swallow' being diverted – in some cases through bullying, and in others as a trade-off. There is clearly too much prescribed

medication falling into the wrong hands and for this reason we feel that the whole area of 'in possession' medication requires reviewed. Whilst we acknowledge that in society in general, individuals are prescribed medication for them to take as prescribed, within a prison medication is seen as a 'tradable commodity' and for this reason there needs to be a higher level of control of such substances. We are aware that NIPS are currently running a pilot scheme where stronger medication boxes are placed in cell, and we await the outcome of the pilot.

**Recommendation: That Trust and NIPS review the whole area of In Possession medication, including its safe storage, and spot checks.**

2.11 Drug Strategy Meetings have recommenced since March 2017 and the new Drugs Strategy will be rolled out mid-April 2017 after significant staff training. However, we do note that the Security Committee has extended their remit to include trends and analysis in relation to drugs.

2.12 Unfortunately, as at last report, despite a very positive evaluation, the Drugs Recovery Unit (Glen House), only ever ran one programme. The Board feel that this was a programme which worked, which was evaluated as having been successful, and which the participants valued. The staff were specifically trained, and with the lack of other services for those with substance misuse issues, we feel that this is an opportunity missed. We would hope that a joint effort between NIPS and the Trust could review this programme. However a new programme commenced in February called the Lagan Project. This is run jointly with the Trust and NIPS and its aim is to reduce the use of prescription medication. However sustainability after they leave the programme must apply to the Lagan Project.

**Recommendation: That NIPS and the Trust jointly review the Drug Recovery Programme with a view to sourcing funding to establish a rolling Recovery programme**

2.13 In common with most other Prisons, Maghaberry has seen Legal Highs added to the list of drugs of choice. It is difficult to identify these substances as there is no specific test to establish what substance an individual has taken. This is due to the fact that as soon as one 'named' legal high is banned, there is a slight change in its constituents and it is 'rebranded'.

2.14 Towards the end of the reporting year we have seen prisoners returning from

visits being taken directly from reception to Care and Supervision Unit if there is intelligence to suggest they may be trying to smuggle illicit substances into the prison. This worked very well over the Christmas period especially and led to a big reduction in the number of instances throughout the prison.

### **Section 3 – CATERING AND KITCHENS**

3.1 The catering facility at the prison is a recent build of approximately seven years old. The quality of the food served is reasonable and every effort is made with the menus to try and accommodate all diverse cultural and religious needs. Prisoners have an opportunity through meetings of the Prisoner Forum to address comments or complaints with the Catering Manager.

3.2 Staffing in the unit includes 24 prisoners who are drawn from across the population and reflect the various cultures in the prison. Prisoners clearly enjoy working in the kitchen and on the serving areas in the houses. Delivery of the meal trolleys from the kitchen to all the houses continues to be carried out by selected inmates who are given permission to work unaccompanied and this is working well.

3.3 The Board is pleased to note that a training programme is in operation where prisoners can avail of accredited training in Food Safety and Hygiene. The Board is pleased to note that currently six prisoners are availing of the opportunity to work towards an NVQ Qualification which will provide them with the skills to secure employment on release. During this reporting year six prisoners have already obtained this qualification and two prisoners from Donard help most days to prepare the breakfast packs. It is disappointing, however, that prisoners from Donard no longer have the opportunity to take lessons in basic cookery and learn about healthy diet as part of the Learning and Skills Course.

**Recommendation: The Board recommends that number of prisoners undertaking NVQ qualifications should be increased in order to facilitate employment on release.**

**Recommendation: Those prisoners from Donard have the opportunity to learn basic cookery and learn about healthy diet as part of the Learning and Skills Course.**

3.4 As reported many times previously, the timing of meals in the prison, especially the evening meal, can be very early and do not reflect normal meal times. It was hoped that when the NIPS established the new core day for staff this would be rectified and the Board is pleased that the timing of the evening meal is now later.

3.5 Towards the end of the last reporting year prisoners were given a 'breakfast pack' when the evening meal was being served. This is to enable them to have breakfast at a reasonable time in the morning as due to staff shortages breakfast was often delayed. This resulted in prisoners being late for classes, medical appointments and visits, often having to make a choice between breakfast and other activities. Since November prisoners are now being issued with a cold lunch pack with hot meal still being served in the evening. Over the winter months, soup was also served at lunchtime.

3.6 Last reporting year also saw the opening of Staff Canteen which was long overdue and which opens from 7.30am to 2.30pm Monday to Friday and from 9.00am to 2.30pm at the weekends. This is again staffed by six prisoners and kitchen staff and is a great opportunity for prisoners to train for catering jobs on release. There is a good selection of hot and cold food available at reasonable prices.

3.7 Prisoners also make tray bakes for sale in the canteen with the proceeds going to a charity of their choice. To date this year they have raised around £1000 for Children's Cancer Charity and St Johns Ambulance Service.

3.8 The NIPS are to be applauded for including communal dining areas in refurbished houses and in all new builds, however members regularly observe that prisoners are still taking their meals in their cells. The Board is aware that the prison is overcrowded and space is limited in the dining areas but find it unacceptable that prisoners have to eat in a confined space that also holds their toilet and washing facilities.

**Recommendation: That the practice of prisoners eating in cramped shared cells is reviewed.**

## **Section 4 – CHAPLAINCY**

4.1 The Chaplaincy team in Maghaberry is made up of the main faiths represented in the broader Northern Ireland community; Church of Ireland, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist, Free Presbyterian and occasionally a member of the Muslim faith. To facilitate the ever increasing number of foreign national prisoners' additional assistance is available with a monthly mass in Polish. Religious literature is available in eight languages.

4.2 Due to the complex nature of the prison and the various levels of security, Mass and weekly Services have to be held, not only in the prison chapel but also in Moyola (formally Healthcare) ,Bush and Roe House and in the Mourne complex.

4.3 As the prison population has risen over the years so also do the demands placed upon the work of the chaplains. Every prisoner, on committal, will have an opportunity to meet a member of the chaplaincy team and "register" with the chaplain of his desired denomination. This is a most important service because of the vulnerability of prisoners at this point.

4.4 The IMB firmly believe that to cut back the hours in the chaplaincy is to misunderstand and underestimate the importance of their role. They form a vital link in the life of the jail, speaking to vulnerable and needy prisoners, keeping regular contact with the staff and Prison Service management as well as other agencies involved with the welfare of prisoners. In addition to this they assist in the maintenance of family links and are used by the Prison Service to accompany prisoners on temporary release for funerals and other necessary occasions. They can also help defuse situations that arise on a regular basis and quietly sort out complaints and issues that prisoners may have. In practice if chaplains were to stop attending case conferences and meetings where their input is most vital, and simply concentrate their efforts on one to one contact with the prisoner then the Prison Service will be losing out on an extremely important contribution into the welfare and wellbeing of prisoners. The Board already see the impact of reduction in chaplaincy hours in attendance at case conferences where chaplains' knowledge of the prisoners' family can be vital. They also provide help and support to the prison staff themselves.

**Recommendation: The Board recommends that the Chaplaincy hours are reviewed and increased to former level.**

4.5 Chaplaincy staff are often able to accompany prisoners to funerals, hospital visits to seriously or terminally ill close family in areas where prison staff would be at risk, and as such their input should be included more when compassionate temporary release is being discussed and decided.

**Recommendation: That the Chaplaincy are included in discussions regarding compassionate temporary leave.**

4.6 This year has also seen the establishment of a choir comprising of approximately 15 core members with extras from time to time. The chaplaincy also organised several Carol Services for both staff and prisoners in the lead up to Christmas. An Alpha Course is currently being run between February and Easter with between 16- 20 attending. Chaplaincy are 'extending their reach' by the use of volunteers from the various churches. There was also a 3 day mission called KAIROS for Roman Catholic prisoners.

4.7 It has been reported to the IMB that some prisoners are experiencing difficulty being able to attend their particular church service or mass. The reasons given are not being called to go, not enough staff to escort them, lockdowns or names not registered on the system. We have also been informed that on occasions of a death in custody the relevant chaplain is not notified.

**Recommendation: That the system to enable prisoners to attend the service of their choice is reviewed.**

**Recommendation: That the checklist of people to be notified in case of a death in custody is reviewed.**

## **Section 5 - EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

5.1 Education is based in the new Learning and Skills Centre and since September 2015 is under the control of Belfast Metropolitan College (BMC). Their aim is to bring a much more structured and academic atmosphere to the learning and skills unit. The more 'social' aspects of learning and skills have been removed such as movement between classrooms and the removal of tea and coffee availability except during proper break times. Management believe this more structured atmosphere will also deter the use of drugs and drug dealing. However, the service level agreement between NIPS and BMC has limited the resources of the BMC and appears to be

causing some frustration with providing education services. The focus of BMC has been to engage more prisoners, retention and achievement.

**Recommendation: That service agreement with BMC is reviewed as a matter of urgency.**

5.2 The main focus is to provide a range of courses in areas such as literacy, numeracy and practical skills development. Each prisoner is tested on arrival for essential skills and is encouraged to participate in improvement classes as part of their overall resettlement programme. The Essential Skills course, which is funded by DEL, has been reduced to a more compact ten week course. While some of the more popular classes e.g. art, have long waiting lists. It is disappointing to note the poor attendance at some of the classes given the excellent facilities that are available in the new centre. This can be due to several reasons such as staff shortages or an incident occurring on the landing.

**Recommendation: Once again the Board recommends that staff from Training and Education visit the individual landings and encourage prisoners to participate in available courses.**

5.3 Maghaberry workshops provide a range of work and vocational training which can lead to nationally recognised qualifications, such as NVQs. Furniture-making and gardening are very popular but in the main non-attendance at workshops still causes some concern. NIPS also runs courses in bricklaying, painting, tiling and joinery. They have also started a new electrical workshop in the Mourne complex which will last for 27 weeks and prisoners will gain a Level 1 Diploma in Electrical Installation. Participation in workshops can make a valuable contribution to successful reintegration on release by giving prisoners the skills to enable them to seek employment. There are also thirty spaces available in the enhanced recycling facility.

**Recommendation: The Board recommends that steps are taken to ensure that prisoners participate in workshops with a view to achieving NVQs or some accredited qualification.**

5.4 The Board recognises the level of achievement since BMC have taken over the education in the prison. Since September 2015 there have been in excess of 1000 accreditations. 106 orderlies have gained a qualification in industrial cleaning. Since August 2016 there have been 150 accredited units in horticulture

5.5 The Mourne complex offers wheelchair and bicycle refurbishment workshops as well as having a Braille unit which teaches a very specialised and rare skill. We are pleased to note that an accredited electrical workshop opened in February 2017. The Board commends NIPS for setting this up. Education in Braid consists of courses in Essential Skills Literacy and Numeracy, ICT, Horticulture and Food Hygiene.

5.6 Other courses taking place throughout the prison include Essential Skills in Literacy, Numeracy and ICT as well as employability take place in Bush House. Horticulture has started in Moyola and there is now a polytunnel there. Recreational Maths had started but at end of reporting year is not currently running. Sixteen prisoners are currently enrolled on Open University Courses. Art is always a very popular subject and is currently available up to A level standard. There are also Driving Theory Classes. Lagan have cookery and art recreational, not accredited, classes. There are also non accredited music classes. NIACRO are running a programme for prisoners nearing release. This includes employability classes, CV writing and interview skills. NIACRO in conjunction with BMC have a programme for short term prisoners which includes First Aid, CV writing with education and employability provided by BMC. There is also housing advice.

5.7 The garden area in Maghaberry has always been run by very dedicated members of staff, and is an area which prisoners really enjoy working in, and seem to get a great deal of satisfaction from growing not only plants but also vegetables. However, it is very disappointing that often these vegetables are not used, and the board have raised the possibility if this food not going to be used within the prison, that it should be donated to either homeless charities or to some of the many food banks that are now in existence. It is very frustrating to see perfectly good food being 'dumped'.

**Recommendation: That an outlet is found for food grown in the garden.**

5.8 The Board has suggested on many occasions that there should be an outlet where the goods as crafts, garden furniture and plants produced by prisoners could be sold to generate money for the Governor's Fund. The reception centre for visitors is an obvious choice given the large numbers that use the facilities there over the course of a year.

**Recommendation: The Board again recommends that an outlet where crafts, garden furniture and plants can be sold should be considered.**



5.9 Each quarter BMC hold an award ceremony called a Celebration of Success for prisoners who have gained accreditation. The Board recognises the effort the new management of Education and Training have put into education within the prison and also the dedication of NIPS staff in the vocational courses. We also wish to acknowledge the fact that a full programme will continue to run throughout the months of July and August.

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

6.1 The Equality and Diversity Committee continues to meet on a monthly basis with at least 10 scheduled meetings each year. The meetings are chaired by the Deputy Governor and membership can include Chaplaincy, Healthcare, Security, Equality Commission, CJINI, and appropriate prison officers, Governors and IMB. There is also Prisoner representation on the Committee. With new committals arriving at HMP Maghaberry throughout the year recruitment of prisoner representatives is ongoing. Those selected to be involved are given appropriate training.

6.2 At the time of reporting the prisoner population in HMP Maghaberry was 841. A percentage breakdown of 50.19 percent Roman Catholics 27.08 percent Protestant and 16.75 others. Given the diversity of the prison population the role of the Equality and Diversity Committee is a challenging one as it strives to deal with the complexity of issues which arise regularly.

6.3 Data on complaints, Adjudications, regime level, use of force, home leave, searches, drug testing ,and opportunities for work and education are made available to all Governors and relevant individuals prior to the meeting, Where a disparity has been identified respective functional heads are required to provide evidence based explanations.

6.4 Those who enter custody are given the opportunity to disclose if they feel they have a disability as defined in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Disability Discrimination Order 2006. These disclosures are referred to healthcare for verification. A list of relevant medical markers has now been identified and the Trust and NIPS have agreed that this will provide a basis for review and provision of services.

6.5 There is a perception among some prisoners that Roman Catholic prisoners are treated less fairly than Protestant prisoners especially in adjudications. But great care is taken to ensure that all allegations of discrimination are thoroughly examined and reported on. The Board will continue to monitor this process. We as a Board are conscious of the need to be vigilant over the 9 identified categories within section 75 of the N.I Act 1998 and the work of the Equality and Diversity Committee is taken very seriously.

6.6 Foreign National prisoners continue to represent a significant proportion of the prisoner population. By the end of the reporting period they represented around 12 per cent of the total population and consisted of 22 different nationalities with Lithuanian, Chinese, and Portuguese highest in terms of numbers.

6.7 All Foreign National Prisoners entering prison now have an opportunity at committal to indicate if they require interpretation and translation services to allow them to participate in prison life. All key prisoner documents including job vacancies have been translated into six foreign languages.

6.8 The Big Word Translation Service is available in all the residential areas throughout the prison. It has been identified that while most Foreign National Prisoners have some English, they can experience difficulties in group session work, which can have a detrimental effect on essential courses that they need to partake in as part of their sentence and also in a healthcare setting. 49 prisoners are recorded on Prism as requiring face to face interpreters. At the time of reporting 38 prisoners are enrolled and attending ESOL classes. Seventy - six qualifications were awarded during the last year in reading and writing entry 1-3 and level 1. This has had a positive impact within the establishment and has undoubtedly contributed to the reduction in the use of the Big Word Translation Service in residential areas.

6.9 An event to mark the Chinese New Year was held in Maghaberry on 2 February 2017. A traditional Chinese meal was prepared by the prisoners for the group, the office of the Prisoner Ombudsman and NIPS. This was then followed by an open forum.

6.10 The Board welcomes the re-establishment of the general population prisoner forums within the prison which are being held bi-monthly. Residential forums have

also taken place and the minutes are displayed on the landing notice boards. A forum for older prisoners has been set up and it is hoped that a disability forum will be set up in the coming months.

6.11 During the reporting year a review of the Educational and workplace activities for older and vulnerable prisoners was carried out and a prospectus is currently being developed outlining the courses and vocational training offered by Belfast Metropolitan College. The prospectus will also be translated for foreign national prisoners.

6.12 Educational Assessments are now mandatory as part of education inductions and prisoners are placed in classes based on their assessed need. Names are added to waiting lists based on date of application. Learning and skills then look at the requirement for programmes including education and attainment. A new electrical workshop offering qualifications, opened in the Mourne complex in February 2017. Consideration is also being given to expanding the Braille facilities. On the main site a section of recycling will be set up as a low mobility work area for wheelchair users and those with poor mobility. In conclusion the work of the Equality & Diversity Committee is taken very seriously and the regime should be commended for its genuine efforts to ensure that fairness is afforded to all prisoners.

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

### **Context**

7.1 The World Health Organisation (WHO, 1999) states that: "Enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health is a fundamental human right. Prisoners, therefore, should have the same standard of medical care as people living in the community. The healthy prison concept reinforces the idea that the health and wellbeing of prisoners is not the sole responsibility of those providing healthcare in prison, but is also dependent on the regime and ethos of each establishment".

7.2 National Offender Management Service (NOMS, 2016) states that: "helping prisoners to recover from addictions and illness can significantly reduce reoffending and cut crime in local areas. It also helps tackle some of the most significant health inequalities in communities as offenders are more likely to smoke, misuse drugs and/or alcohol, suffer mental health problems, report having a disability, self-harm, attempt suicide and die prematurely compared to the general population".

7.3 In 2016 the Department of Justice and Department of Health and Social Services jointly undertook the development of a new policy and action plan; Improving Health within the Criminal Justice System. The policy commits both departments 'to improving the health and well-being of children, young people and adults in contact with the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland and in turn reducing the risk of re-offending and contributing to a safer community'. The policy further commits to provide equality of opportunity in access to services and that prisoners should not be disadvantaged.

7.4 IMB's were established to monitor all aspects of prison life and ensure fairness and accountability (National Monitoring Framework, 2016).

7.5 A CJINI report on their inspection of Maghaberry in September 2016 reiterated concerns around support for vulnerable prisoners and the availability and use of drugs, both illegal and prescription.

7.6 Following the fourth death in prison custody in November 2016 the Department of Justice and Department of Health and Social Services established a Joint Review of Vulnerable Prisoners. IMB will monitor closely the implementation of any changes proposed to ensure prisoners are kept safe.

### **Health and Health Services**

7.7 There is no current available data on the health status of prisoners in Northern Ireland, beyond the high reported incidence of mental ill-health (CJINI 2009, 2015, 2016). Given however that a large number of prisoners in Maghaberry come from socially deprived areas it is to be expected that the health inequalities which prevail in the wider community will be reflected inside prison. It is therefore necessary that health and care services inside prison should reflect, as far as possible, a range of initiatives and efforts to bear down on health inequalities, including developing and/or promoting health and well-being as well as the provision of clinical services for illness and conditions identified among individual prisoners.

7.8 Preventing ill-health has become an increasingly important focus of health service provision as it struggles to meet increased demand against a backdrop of

diminishing resources. Consequently, IMB will monitor to what extent Maghaberry prison promotes improved health and well-being among the prison population as well as the provision of health and social care services to ensure parity with service provision in the community.

7.9 Health and Social Care Services are provided by the Trust with additional service provision provided by some voluntary and private (social care) organisations. At Maghaberry, there is 24 hour nursing care on site while GP and Mental Health services are normally available 9.00—5.00 with an out of hours service for acute incidents.

7.10 IMB welcome the introduction of the Bowel Cancer screening programme to prisoners and note that its uptakes is broadly comparable to that of the general population. The annual flu immunisation is availed off by eligible prisoners while the appointment of a Health Development Officer whose initial focus on smoking cessation is a further positive development. The past year has also see the introduction of a nurse led blood borne virus's clinic. Other clinics include dental clinics, radiography, podiatrist and optician (monthly) as well as in-house physiotherapy.

7.11 In 2016, NIPS and the Trust developed the Lagan prototype which is focused on reducing the reliance/dependence on prescribed medication. This was rolled out in February 2017 and the IMB will encourage involvement and participation in it. Such initiatives are in keeping with health promoting activities and should help encourage prisoners to take responsibility for their own health, as far as possible.

7.12 Previous IMB reports have drawn attention to the changing demographic of the prison population with a greater number of older prisoners now being held than previously. This brings its own set of challenges including the need, in some cases, for social care provision. The Trust has recently appointed Healthcare Assistants and we are hopeful that this additional resource will enable trained care providers to deliver domiciliary care as required as well as assisting healthcare in a range of other duties such as housekeeping, administration, treatment room and acting as witness for nurses at subs clinic.

7.13 IMB welcomes the involvement of voluntary organisations working alongside prison service and health care services to deliver a range of opportunities in the field of addiction and mental health. We note from other initiatives in the community that there may be scope for extending this model e.g. through a Men's Health forum which could be modelled on some of the Personal and Public Involvement work in the community, as suggested in our report last year; Peer Support Mental Health based on the Improving Recovery Through Organisational change (IMROC), which has been introduced across Northern Ireland, as well as seeking volunteer mental health advocates to mentor those prisoners who are seeking to address mental ill-health. We recognise that all programmes and initiatives have a cost element, both in terms of staff time and financial resources.

7.14 We highlight as an example of good practice the work of the Prisoner Safety and Support Unit where both NIPS and the Trust engage professionally to share information and work out options for dealing with some very complex cases.

7.15 NIPS, in conjunction with the Trust, developed a marker process to identify the number of prisoners living with a disability. This should assist in better management of conditions as well as assisting NIPS meet its Section 75 Equality obligations.

### **Challenges**

7.16 There remain many challenges to the health of prisoners and the delivery of health care in prisons. These include the prevalence of drugs (prescribed, legal and illegal) which has negative implications for the personal safety and health of very many prisoners. This habit forming culture is widespread in the community and so prison reflects that real world. Breaking a lifetime of dependency on substance abuse is not easy. Building independence and responsibility taking among prisoners should be an integral part of policy, ethos and operations within NIPS as necessary to reducing offending and rehabilitation.

7.17 It would be remiss not to comment on IMB's continued concern at the both the frequency of the use of Rule 32 and the duration of time which some prisoners spend in isolation. The negative impact of isolation on the mental health of persons is well documented internationally. IMB members have an almost 100 per cent attendance at Rule 32 reviews to ensure that the proper processes have been adhered to. Our

concerns go beyond this. We would re-iterate our view that Rule 32 should be used sparingly and a 28 day detention therein should be the exception, not the norm. If the application of prison rules adversely impact on a prisoner's mental health and well-being then all the access to and availability of health and care services is effectively undone. In the context of equality legislation it should also be noted that if one designated Section 75 (NI Act 1997) identity group (e.g. race, political belief, religion, disability, sexual orientation etc.) is consistently over-represented in those so charged and detained then that would be a breach of the Prison Services Section 75 obligations.

7.18 As with the health service generally, major challenges exist in the area of staff recruitment and retention. Prison is no exception. Over the past year, recruitment exercises for GPs and nursing services failed to attract applicants. On average, in nursing, there are only three recruits per each recruitment drive which inevitability leads to some gaps in a comprehensive service. At present that gap is mostly felt in off-duty availability. The Trust's own review of needs indicated a need for more nursing posts. The consequence is an over-reliance on locum services, which are prohibitively expensive. We recognise the efforts undertaken by the Trust to recruit medical, nursing and social care staff over the past year and will continue to monitor the situation. Staff retention is a matter of both personal choice and personal development.

7.19 IMB have to report that on several occasions over the last twelve months prisoners have complained about poor attitudes expressed to them by professionals. We also note a Prisoner Ombudsman's report which suggested that the attitude of staff at a Trust hospital may have been less than professional because the patient was also a prisoner. IMB have raised such concerns with RQIA. Nevertheless, lower standards are not acceptable in service access or delivery because of the status of any individual.

7.20 It would be helpful to the general public if the Trust website contained a section on Health and Social Care in prisons. Its absence suggests a lack of respect to both the staff who undertake the work in a very difficult environment as well as the citizens being held there whose entitlement to health and social care services should be undiminished by their current status as 'prisoner'.

7.21 Finally we acknowledge the high degree of commitment shown by health care staff during the past year; there have been a number of very traumatic incidents to which Trust staff have responded in a timely, professional and caring manner. The Board wishes to thank them for their efforts and persistence to maximise the benefits of service provision in a non-therapeutic environment.

## **Section 8 - LIBRARY**

8.1 The library is a well-stocked facility with books supplied by NI Libraries and prisoners are made to feel at ease and relaxed. It provides a choice of several thousand books and magazines, in a wide range of languages to meet the needs of all prisoners, e.g. Russian, Polish, Lithuanian, Spanish, French, Chinese and Hungarian. Approximately 600 prisoners use the facility every month. The library also stocks Law Reference Books which enable prisoners to look up information regarding their own cases. A comprehensive stock of over 500 CD's is also available.

8.2 The library is situated on two sites, one in the main part of the prison which is open six days per week, and the other one in the Mourne Education Block which is open one day per week but may be increased in the near future. Both carry a similar amount of material. The library also supplies books to Moyola, CSU, separated prisoners in Bush and for new committals in Bann House.

8.3 The library is also the centre of the Book and Tape Club. This enables fathers in prison to record stories to send to their children and is very important in maintaining family links for young children. These can then either be posted out or collected. This facility is used by approximately 30 prisoners per month and is becoming more popular. Turning Pages run by the Shannon Trust is also run through the library. This is a project where a prisoner can become a mentor to help a fellow prisoner who has difficulty with reading or cannot read.

8.4 The staff print out information and designs on handicrafts for prisoners, pictures for art classes and for ceramics classes, information for Open University courses and also look up prices of items if necessary. They can print out legal information if any prisoner requires this.

8.5 Every quarter, prisoners who do not receive visits can order clothing



through a catalogue in the library. This is especially beneficial for foreign prisoners.

8.6 The library is hoping to run a training course on IPADs in conjunction with Libraries NI so that prisoners can download magazines (this will be strictly monitored.) The Board remains impressed with the library and commends the people who staff it.

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

9.1 The unit formerly known as (LMU) Lifer Management Unit is now known as the PDU, Prisoner Development Unit. It has been changed to include remand prisoners. The staff in the unit has doubled and includes a Family Officer who deals with child centered visits. The new Family Matters landing is based in Braid House.

9.2 There are currently approximately 150 life sentenced prisoners in Maghaberry with some others on various pre-release schemes. The largest number is located in Braid and Wilson with the majority of Cat A prisoners located in Erne House, however most other houses have at least one life sentenced prisoner. Burren House – formerly known as the PAU, houses approximately 20 prisoners on the final phase of their sentence prior to release. This unit operates very well with prisoners, whilst having the freedom to go to work or to hostels at the weekend, they are still closely monitored by the staff and frequent checks made to ensure prisoners are adhering to their agreed terms and conditions. Most are employed by Extern at their recycling plant with others working for various charities.

9.3 While in prison there are several programmes to help those prisoners serving a life sentence, to address issues regarding alcohol and drug abuse. Building Skills for Recover (BSR) is again running after a lapse of a year or more. The Sex Offender Treatment Programme while available is not currently running as at end of this reporting year. One of the programmes that is running is Building Better Relationships which is centered on the subject of domestic violence. Other programmes include Cognitive Self Change and Enhanced Thinking Skills. Unfortunately most of these courses only start within three years of release as this is when life sentence prisoners are first reviewed for possible release on parole.

**Recommendation: The Board recommends that there should be courses for life sentenced prisoners from commencement of their sentence.**

9.4 A large number of life sentence prisoners have quite low levels of numeracy and literacy skills and all are encouraged to avail of the education facilities available. The Essential Skills Curriculum covers basic educational levels to the equivalent of GCSE and prisoners can study to degree level. There is also a special Duke of Edinburgh award which is specifically designed to be delivered in prison. The majority of life sentenced prisoners are located in the Mourne Complex and we are pleased to note increase in the opportunities for education in last reporting year.

9.5 Given the large numbers of life sentence prisoners, it would be beneficial if there was more work available. Of nearly 300 jobs available in the prison, there are only around 40 available to the life sentenced prisoners so it can be difficult for them to use their lengthy sentences in a constructive manner. However, there is a new accredited electrical workshop which started in the Mourne Complex in February. This is in addition to wheelchair/bicycle refurbishment, internal works parties to maintain gardens and grounds, and a cookery class, which is run by Extern three or four days a week when prisoners cook for all of Wilson House. There is also an excellent Braille Unit which deserves recognition for the great work they do. Not only have they translated the Bible and Hymn Books into Braille, but they have created maps for some towns and also a great selection of children's books.

**Recommendation: The Board recommends yet again that more work is made available specifically for life sentenced prisoners**

9.6 Following the re-profiling of the prison, more life sentenced prisoners have moved to Magilligan where there are more programmes and work opportunities available. While the greater opportunities are to be welcomed, it can also make it more difficult for family contact to be maintained given the location of Magilligan.

**Recommendation: The Board recommends that consideration is given to maintaining the family links for life sentenced prisoners.**

## **Section 10 – PREPS**

10.1 The original PREPS was introduced to NIPS in 2000 and has undergone a number of reviews and amendments - the most recent being a policy review in 2012. Notwithstanding the policy review the scheme has not substantively altered since its inception.

10.2 There are three key aims for the PREPS system:

- To encourage and reward prisoner's commitment to the completion of their Offender Management Plan through participation in activities, such as education, offending behaviour programmes, training, work placements and other constructive activities in the course of addressing offending behaviour.
- To encourage pro-social behaviour within the prison and to contribute to a better controlled, safer and healthier environment for prisoners and staff based on mutual respect.
- To prepare prisoners for release on licence or otherwise and to develop improved citizenship qualities and self-worth for effective and safe reintegration into the community and to reduce the potential for further offending.

10.3 The scheme operates on three regime levels; Standard, Enhanced and Basic. All inmates join the scheme at Standard level and promotion or demotion are to be based on patterns of behaviour. Isolated incidents whether good or bad, will not generally impact on regime levels. An appeal process is available but it should be noted that for a sentenced prisoner to progress to enhanced they must fully accept responsibility for their offending behaviour. There is, however, a perception within the prison population that PREPS operates as a secondary punishment system rather than a scheme to encourage and reward good behaviour. Some prisoners have reported to IMB that they have received a double punishment in that they received a punishment when found guilty at adjudication and were subsequently reduced in regime level. The PREPS co-ordinator has informed that this not the case, and referred to NIPS PREPS Policy Document paras 34, 35 and 36;

- (34) While it is important to operate PREPS and the adjudication system separately, the two may come into close proximity due to loss of privileges associated with regimes making up many of the awards available to Governors.
- (35) PREPS will not be referred to in an adjudication verdict.
- (36) Reduction of regime levels will not be awarded as part of a Governor's adjudication.

There was no evidence identified to indicate the above had not been followed.

10.4 There appears to be confusion both with staff and prisoners as to how PREPS should be managed and operated. There are three relevant instructions Northern Ireland Prison Service PREPS policy 2012-2015, HMP Maghaberry PREPS Standard Operating Procedures implementation date 1 May 2012, and a

notice to prisoners dated 5 December 2014, titled "PREPS –Changes to Management of prisoners on basic regime". This document does not state what previous instruction it replaces so it would appear both are current.

10.5 A further notice to prisoners also causes concern in that it states; "after 28 days on basic regime the prisoner will be notionally returned to a standard regime. He will be given one week to commit to a programme addressing his behaviour. This will consist of -

- A commitment to take and pass a drug test
- A commitment to complete either The Stepping Stones or Goal programmes depending on the reasons for the demotion.
- A prisoner who is demoted for behavioural reasons will complete Goals.
- A prisoner demoted for drugs must complete both.

These programmes do not appear to be available

10.6 As in previous years there appears to be a religious disparity across regime levels with a higher percentage of basic prisoners coming from a Roman Catholic background.

**Recommendation: That the existing instructions be reviewed and superseded by one Standard Operating Procedure for HMP Maghaberry.**

**Recommendation: That appropriate training in the operation of PREPS is provided as a priority to relevant staff members.**

## **Section 11 – RECEPTION AND INDUCTION**

11.1 The Reception area is where the prisoners arrive at the prison. Those arriving for the first time can be nervous and apprehensive so the Board commends the reception staff for their calm and professional manner which helps put the new arrivals at ease. Prisoners are initially interviewed by staff at reception, searched and reviewed by a member of healthcare staff.

11.2 When prisoners leave the reception area they are taken to Bann House for induction which usually lasts a few weeks. For those in prison for the first time this can be a very vulnerable time, so staff need to be alert to these vulnerabilities and observe whether a prisoner leaves his cell and mixes with other prisoners or stays behind the door. However, staff also need to have time to talk to new prisoners but

increasingly Board members have seen that the reduction in staff numbers means they are just too busy and do not have time to speak to all those who may want to share concerns, or just want a listening ear. For this reason it is essential that Bann House should always be adequately staffed. As the population of this house is constantly changing staff need to be very vigilant as they do not have the time to get to know a prisoner in the way staff in the more 'settled' houses do. For first time prisoners, there are a lot of questions about everything from visits, phone, showers etc. and staff are constantly under pressure to answer a multitude of questions or sort out issues. As staff cuts become ever more stringent this is causing visible signs of stress to staff, and the Board are increasingly being approached by staff who are concerned they will miss something serious with a prisoner, which can in extreme circumstances lead to death of a prisoner/ serious incident and place staff careers in jeopardy.

**Recommendation: The Board recommends that there is sufficient staff detailed to work in Bann House to ensure the safety of prisoners and staff.**

11.3 Where possible the Board also recommends that first time prisoners are not doubled up to share a cell with an "experienced" prisoner. Those who have been inside before know the system and this can lead to a new prisoners getting into trouble with landing staff or to an increased likelihood of being bullied.

**Recommendation; The Board recommends that where possible first time prisoners are not doubled up with repeat offenders.**

11.4 The Board has concerns about the number of prisoners that are on SPAR (Supporting Prisoners at Risk) in Bann House. This takes up a large amount of staff time checking prisoner and associated paperwork to ensure the process is completed effectively. If there are several prisoners on SPAR at any one time it can fully occupy one member of staff, leaving insufficient staff to cover remainder of work on the landing, and can lead to a quiet vulnerable prisoner being overlooked as staff are so busy.

11.5 Experienced staff are desirable in this environment but with the arrival of new inexperienced staff it is now inevitable that many will be sent to Bann. For this reason the Board recommend that new staff get specific training to work in Bann. As so many of the experienced staff have left in the past few years it is quite common to see that

the most experienced person on the landing has only a few years' experience. This puts undue pressure on new staff who are being constantly faced with new situations with no-one to whom they can immediately refer.

**Recommendation: The Board recommends that staff get specific training to work in Bann**

11.6 At end of this reporting year the Board recognises that prisoner numbers have remained lower than they were a few years ago and as at end of reporting year two landings in Bann remain closed, although they were opened briefly during the reporting year, in order to keep Bann solely an induction house and also because of staff shortages. However the Board would have concerns as to how these two landings will be staffed in the event of large numbers of committals.

**Recommendation: The Board also again recommends that all induction staff are trained in Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST).**

11.7 Despite the problems raised above the Board commend the staff who work in Bann. Every new committal presents a challenge in a busy house with a lot of different demands and their professional manner is appreciated.

## **Section 12 - RESETTLEMENT**

12.1 A successful and efficient resettlement programme minimises the risk of a prisoner reoffending on release. With no supportive network in place on release prisoners with poor coping skills frequently reoffend in order to return to prison which they regard as a 'safe' option or environment. The Resettlement team in Maghaberry work with various groups within the prison, but also rely heavily on working in partnership with many outside agencies. The Board acknowledges the support given by all the associated agencies in trying to provide a focused and detailed resettlement package for prisoners.

12.2 The team works with both sentenced and remand prisoners, but given the number of prisoners currently held, spaces on programmes are limited.

12.3 Family support is essential to successful resettlement, so child-centered visits and the family work undertaken by the Family Liaison Team and the Quakers are invaluable. The Board commends the work done by the NIPS in setting up Family

Focus, which last year was moved from Quoile to Braid. Prisoners on this landing get longer visits with their children in the Donard Centre and the prisoners can prepare food for their family. These visits are very informal and are an excellent opportunity for children to spend time with their father in a more relaxed surrounding than the normal prison visit. Other support staff are on hand to talk to and support partners / wives.

12.4 NIACRO are also involved in programmes for prisoners nearing end of sentence and give advice with such areas as employability skills, CV writing, housing and are working with BMC in a four week pilot programme for prisoners nearing end of sentence.

### **Section 13 - SAFER CUSTODY**

13.1 The Justice Minister has written of Safe, Secure and Decent Custody, an aim shared by us, as members of the IMB.

13.2 The IMB recognizes that Maghaberry Prison, as a high security Category A prison, will have the security of the establishment as its major priority. However, with the increasing number of prisoners presenting with multiple needs and challenges, the Safer Custody side of the NIPS is becoming increasingly relevant.

13.3 Mirroring society in general, addictions, and in particular drug addiction (be it illegal drugs or prescription medication) are a major issue within the Prison. The issue of drugs and the abuse of prescription medication will be reported on separately in this Report. However, the impact on those individuals involved in the taking of such illegal substances is not restricted to the effects of the substances themselves, but it can often lead to bullying in order to acquire, for example, the prescribed medication of another, drug debts and prisoners requesting a move from a specific location to avoid paying their debts. It is a disturbing fact that approximately 80% of prisoners in Maghaberry continue to be on prescription medication during the reporting period.

13.4 A very high proportion of prisoners in Maghaberry suffer from mental health problems, substance misuse problems, and very often both. Such statistics place a heavy burden on support services such as Healthcare and the Prison Safety and

Support Team. Prisoners with Personality Disorders pose challenges to the Prison Service particularly in relation to the often impulsive and risk taking elements of their behaviour.

13.5 Add to the mix the increasing number of 'elderly' prisoners i.e. prisoners entering the prison system in advanced years and with increasing health and mobility problems; prisoners who have a range of learning disabilities; prisoners with physical health problems, and prisoners who are vulnerable due to the nature of their offence, and it is clear that the safety and support of such a wide variety of individuals is a challenge for both NIPS and the Trust. We, as a Board, have raised the issue with NIPS of the future provision of social care staff to give physical support to the small number of prisoners who may need a higher degree of 'care' than is currently available. However, it would seem that there is an unresolved issue between NIPS and the Trust in relation to the provision of the social care element of healthcare.

**Recommendation: That the matter of provision of social care for aging prisoners be resolved.**

13.6 Prisoner numbers have remained relatively stable this year compared to other years and overcrowding is not as major an issue as previously. However it is obvious to IMB members when they walk the various landings and talk to prisoners, that there is a significant degree of frustration around lack of work or recreational opportunities and a general lack of stimulation. We acknowledge the work done by the Senior Officers and staff on the landings who have managed numerous situations during the reporting period and it is to their credit that so many prisoners were kept safe.

13.7 Central to the prison's delivery of Safer Custody is its use of the Supporting Prisoners at Risk – SPAR- process to target additional interventions for prisoners presenting evidence of risk of depression, self-harm or thoughts of suicide or attempted suicide. Of the prison population of circa 850 around 20 prisoners are typically on a SPAR at any one time. It is important for the prison authority to impart clear leadership to establish that there is no acceptable level of self-harm within the prison and that staff do not trivialize incidents of self-harm by designating them as 'superficial' or 'just a scratch'. There has been a (slight) rise in the number of SPARS during the 2016 year, according to the Maghaberry PSST Safer Custody Report. Due



to pressures on other agencies working within the Prison Service, often the only attendees at a SPAR review are the Senior Officer, the prisoner and a member of the healthcare staff (where possible). The Safer Custody team has developed a new method of capturing and presenting statistics which can give a rolling comparison over the previous 12 months. In relation to the monitoring of prisoners under the SPAR process, IMB members have expressed concern at the low staff numbers on some landings. We have observed two staff, on occasions, running an entire wing and in addition to their other work, carrying out a number of 15 and 30 minute observations with all the associated recording. We would view such low staff numbers as a safety risk to both prisoners, and indeed staff. There is a daily review of the quality of SPAR recording and a review of closed SPARS by the PSST.

**Recommendation: Houses with a higher number of SPARs are adequately staffed.**

13.8 The Board has witnessed significant variations in the delivery and success of the SPAR process. One of the shortfalls is that they are often hurriedly convened when the relevant staff are available which can restrict IMB availability to attend. It can also be disorientating for prisoners to be brought to a review meeting at short notice when they are already at low ebb.

13.9 Members of the IMB been present at a number of the Strategic Safer Custody meetings. Whilst there is a very good reporting format demonstrated by the statistical information available, the attendance has not been as high as desirable. A representative from IMB has tried to attend as many of the weekly PSST meetings as possible, and has reported an enhanced input from Healthcare, particularly with an identified staff member attending weekly. In addition, the input from landing staff is more comprehensive and the meeting is more outcomes focused. Chaplaincy attend, when they can, and there is normally a representative from Ad:ept. However, other disciplines rarely attend, although on occasions there are written submissions. It would be remiss of us as independent observers not to highlight both the lack of input and attendance from other disciplines. It is clear that the NIPS staff are taking the 'lead' role in working with prisoners who challenge services. CJINI has suggested that perhaps joint chairing of PSST meetings would be advantageous and we see merit in this.

13.10 The Donard Centre is now is the mental health team base. They run

Assessment Clinic on a daily basis and make referral to the various programmes which are being run. The leader of each group meets with the client before commencement to screen for suitability. While most of the courses are group based in exceptional cases they can work on a one-to-one basis. The courses run include Music, Well Man Clinic, Stress Management, Relaxation, Stress Pack (anxiety management), Reader Group, Mindfulness, Depression Management, SHARE (Self harm assessment, reduction and education, Social Interaction Groups, Sensory Attachment Intervention, COOK IT programme, WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) and Gym class to build confidence to attend regular gym sessions. Action Mental Health and Positive Steps also attend to deliver their programmes

13.11 CRUSE bereavement counselling also continue to provide a service within the prison.

13.12 There have been four deaths in custody during the reporting year. IMB attended cold debriefs in both cases of deaths in custody. In addition, there have been a number of 'near misses' during the reporting period and several individuals died post release. As all of the cases are subject to an investigation by the Prisoner Ombudsman, we cannot comment further. IMB members are aware of the impact of deaths in custody on the families of the individuals concerned, fellow prisoners and staff members.

13.13 IMB members have also attended a number of Serious Case Reviews during the reporting period and have been impressed by the information sharing and the commitment by all present to support the individuals under review.

13.14 The Listener Programme is working well. The Listeners (all prisoners) are trained by the Samaritans and are a valuable asset to the Prison.

13.15 The Drug Recovery Programme (a pilot programme with the aims of tackling and addressing problematic substance misuse while promoting goals for recovery, thereby reducing offending behaviour), was initiated in August 2014. This programme was very successful and has been evaluated and found to have achieved its aims. Unfortunately a second programme has not been put in place at the time of writing which is very disappointing both for the prisoners who would benefit from undertaking the programme, and the staff, all of whom were specially trained to work in the unit. However in February the Lagan Project commenced which

is aimed at the reduction of prescribed medication.

**Recommendation: That funding is sought for the Drug Recovery Programme to run on a rolling basis.**

13.16 During the reporting period, we have become concerned at the short staffing in Healthcare. We have brought our concerns to the Trust directorate, and raised the matter at Board level. At the time of writing, we have been made aware that nurses employed as Mental Health nurses, are being deployed to general nursing to cover gaps in the service. This, in our opinion, reduces the service to vulnerable prisoners who benefit greatly from the input of the mental health staff.

13.17 Bullying unfortunately has always played a part in prison life. However, the bullying of individuals in relation to prescription medication and other substances is of concern. Prisoners have quite openly discussed the issue of 'being asked to hand over their prescription medication'. Most will not make any sort of complaint or identify the bullies due to fear of repercussions. Part of the weekly PSST meeting is devoted to discussing bullying incidents and the Bullying Incident Report (BIR) booklet being checked to ensure that staff have updated this. The Board will continue to closely monitor this element of Safer Custody.

13.18 As a Board, we would commend the work done by the dedicated staff who form the Prisoner Safety and Support Team. We have been able to observe the skills of the PSST when dealing with highly troubled individuals. It is heartening to see the profile of PSST being raised in all areas of the Prison. We acknowledge the personal input of the team members and are aware that their case load is an ever increasing one.

13.19 As independent monitors we can see on a regular basis, the effects of short staffing. The lack of stimulation increases low mood in prisoners and we are unhappy with prisoners having to eat all their meals in their cells - usually two in a cell - where there is a toilet. Prisoners have brought this issue to us, and have raised the question of hygiene. In addition, the question of showering has been frequently raised i.e. some prisoners have stated (and staff have confirmed) that they have only been allowed one shower a week. When this has been queried with staff, the IMB have been advised that Prison Rules state that this is all that is required. We will keep monitoring this issue, particularly coming into the summer period.

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

In a foreword to a 2015 report into segregation units on behalf of the Prison Reform Trust, Lord Woolf, Chair of the Prison Reform Trust and a former Lord Chief Justice, said: "The complexity of segregation brings many challenges to already beleaguered prison staff and prisoners who for whatever reason, cannot manage or be managed in, the main body of an establishment. Segregation, though it may sometimes be necessary, must not be prolonged or indefinite."

The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules on the Treatment of Prisoners, known as 'The Mandela Rules' were revised in 2015, and for the first time clearly define solitary confinement. Under Rule 44, it states: "for the purpose of these rules, solitary confinement shall refer to the confinement of prisoners for 22 hours or more a day without meaningful human contact. Prolonged solitary confinement shall refer to solitary confinement for a time period in excess of 15 consecutive days."

14.1 The Care and Supervision Unit (CSU) exists to hold prisoners apart from their normal location within the prison, for a variety of reasons. For example, the placement under Prison Rule 32 (mainly for the good order and discipline within the prison, or for a prisoner's own safety based on security information), or following an award of cellular confinement through the adjudication process. In addition to the 'accommodation' side of the CSU, all the adjudications and rule 32 Case Conferences are held there. It is a busy and constantly changing environment.

14.2 The IMB have, as part of their role, made a weekly visit to the CSU. We have achieved a 100% visit rate during the reporting year. Members will, accompanied by CSU staff, call at the cell of each prisoner. However, it is entirely up to individual prisoners whether or not they wish to communicate with us. There have been relatively few complaints from this area of the prison since the move back to the refurbished CSU and mainly relate to issues surrounding the transfer of their personal items from the various wings when they are brought to this specific area. However, we received many complaints about accommodation deficits when the CSU was decanted to the old Foyle House. These complaints were brought to the attention of senior management. The relationship between staff and prisoners in the CSU is good.

14.3 As a Board we feel we need to make comment again on the small number of prisoners who have chosen to foul their cells for no apparent reason. Such individuals are accommodated in the CSU under the Faecal Contamination Policy. Board

members have talked to all of the individuals concerned over the past year to try and establish why they are making this lifestyle choice, and if there was anything we could do to resolve any issues. However, in all cases we could not establish any reason for the individuals choosing to live in this manner, nor any resolution to the problem. In all cases the Board have been advised there are no mental health issues pertaining to the individuals concerned, nor physical health issues and therefore the problems are being regarded as behaviour related. As a Board we would query whether there is scope for the involvement of the psychology department. We commend the staff that have to work in these very unpleasant conditions.

**Recommendation: That the Psychology Department are asked to become involved with individual prisoners in the CSU, to try and support them in altering their behaviour**

14.4 We are pleased to report that the CSU have moved back into their previous 'revamped' accommodation. Unfortunately this took a lot longer than anticipated and the move only took place in September 2016. The Board highlighted at a senior level their concern at the accommodation in Foyle House. It was substandard, unhygienic, and totally unfit for purpose. It was an unpleasant environment in which to be housed; to work, or to visit. From the IMBs observations there did not appear to be any great urgency displayed by those tasked with the refurbishment of the CSU, in its completion. The new furnishings and sanitary ware appear to be more robust than that previously in situ. However, we will monitor this aspect of the new refurbishment, as time elapses. The Board expresses surprise that those who work in the CSU, at all levels, were not asked for their input when the unit was undergoing refurbishment. From our (almost) daily attendance at Rule 32 Case Conferences, Board members do see where input from regular staff would have been helpful.

14.5 The Board finds itself once again having to highlight the same health and safety issue that has been raised previously, namely the blocking of the cell bells. The IMB have had to raise this issue on several occasions during the reporting year, which is disappointing. This habit has been part of the culture of the CSU over several years and has been highlighted to senior management on many occasions, without the practice being eradicated. Hopefully with the refurbishment of the CSU, this practice will not continue.

14.6 Two IMB members carried out a night visit (a 'first' for the Board) in early 2017.

During this visit, the members visited the CSU and found it to be settled and working well. The only issue was one which the staff raised and that was the quality of the CCTV pictures. IMB members were able to view the footage for themselves and verified that this was not of an acceptable quality. This issue was raised by IMB to management.

14.7 The CSU has been at full occupancy for a high proportion of the reporting period. There have been 29 individuals housed in the CSU at times. There are several 'long term' residents who have been accommodated there for a variety of reasons. However, the greater number of prisoners have been there for relatively short periods. Of concern to the IMB is the high number of prisoners held under Rule 32. For some time now there have been Rule 32 Case Conferences virtually every working day of the week. This puts a high burden on the staff, senior officer, duty governor and IMB members who attend each Case Conference. IMB members have attended a total of 422 case conferences during the reporting period. At times there have been as many as 9 Rule 32 Case Conferences in the one afternoon, which does not give an appropriate amount of time to devote to each case. There have been a few occasions when IMB have not been informed of Rule 32 case conferences having been arranged, or when times have been changed. However, the vast majority of case conferences have been notified in advance and at roughly the time specified.

14.8 The Board feels that the Rule 32 Case Conferences have changed considerably over the past 5 years. Due to short staffing there is rarely any input from Healthcare, and the majority of Rule 32s are attended only by a Senior Officer, Duty Governor, a member of the IMB, the prisoner and sometimes a representative from Security. Of concern is the lack of healthcare input, particularly where the individual concerned has been held in isolation for a considerable period of time. The monitoring of the effect on the mental health of individuals held in the CSU for even relatively short periods would not appear to have been given any degree of importance. We continue to raise this issue with NIPS management at every opportunity.

**Recommendation: That NIPS review the whole area of Rule 32 Case Conferences, particularly in relation to the monitoring of the effect on the mental health of individuals held in isolation. The U.K. National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) has issued, in January, new Guidance in relation to Isolation in Detention. This guidance provides a framework that NPM members (of which IMB is one) will apply when carrying out their monitoring role.**

14.9 The Board does acknowledge the steps that the NIPS have taken to provide some kind of a regime for several of the longer term prisoners in the CSU. However, for most prisoners held in the CSU there is little to break the monotony of 22 hours+ spent alone in a cell. There is no association and little social interaction. There are no clear pathways in place to encourage those individuals who, for their own reasons want to stay in the CSU, to move, perhaps on a staged basis. This is particularly the case for those 'long term' residents.

**Recommendation: That exit strategies are put in place to ensure that prisoners are kept in CSU for as short a time as possible.**

14.10 IMB members have sat in on a number of Adjudications during the reporting period and can report that these are carried out according to prison rules. One comment that we would make is that the Board feel that too many relatively minor charges are being brought that could have been dealt with more appropriately by individual senior officers.

14.11 We are aware that for a period during late December/early January, there were a number of prisoners being held for longer than average periods due to suspicions of their concealing illicit items. IMB accept that holding such individuals apart from the general population was beneficial to the welfare of the population in general. However, we will continue to monitor the application of Rule 32 to ensure that the 28 day extension is the exception rather than the rule.

## **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.

15.2 The Board notes that separated republican and loyalist prisoners continue to benefit from a more stable regime than the remainder of the prison population. This can understandably cause friction and resentment with other prisoners. Staffing levels are always maintained in the separated wings sometimes to the detriment of the remainder of the prisoners. It is particularly frustrating for the normal prison population

on the other landings in Roe and Bush to see the disparity in the regime in two different sections of the same house.

15.3 Prisoners have limited educational opportunities but several are completing Open University courses and can avail of guitar lessons and arts and crafts.

## **Section 16 - SPORT AND RECREATION**

16.1 Over the last year the sport and recreation facilities have continued to be used extensively by all prisoners. The Board commends the increase in these facilities with the building of additional football pitches some time ago. The gym facilities are also very good. There is also exercise equipment in some houses and an outdoor gym for Moyola.

16.2 The Board receives few complaints with regard to sport and recreation. This is due to the high quality of diverse programmes on offer, which are designed to cater for all inmates irrespective of age or fitness level. It is also a testament to the commitment of the PE staff.

## **Section 17 - TUCK SHOP**

17.1 The tuck shop provides remains a crucial and integral part of the prisons operation. It provides prisoners with extra products of their choosing by way of a weekly delivery. 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 foreign national prisoners with different religious and cultural needs. Additional seasonal food items are available at Christmas and Easter.

17.2 There is also a small tuck shop facility in Bann House to facilitate new committals. While it does not carry a large stock of goods it has items like flasks, basic additional food items, toiletries and tobacco for prisoners who have just arrived into prison and these items are then charged to them.

17.3 Staffing in the facility includes around 6 -8 prisoners who assemble orders. Prisoners employed in the shop enjoy the work and usually stay for a long time. The Board has said over the past few years that these prisoners would benefit from NVQ



accredited training which could help them secure retail employment upon release.

**Recommendation: The Board recommends that NVQ accredited training is made available to those working in the tuck shop.**

17.4 As stated in previous reports prisoners feel that tuck shop prices are high and they have had the opportunity to bring this to the Prisoner Forum meetings for discussion. The Board has been advised that prices are subject to contract which is reviewed annually but continues to monitor the situation.

**Recommendation: The Board recommends that that all goods in the tuck shop are priced competitively.**

17.5 All items are checked as thoroughly as is possible before they leave tuck shop however, one issue that tuck shop staff have brought to attention of the Board, is the significant amount of shortages between goods leaving tuck shop and being distributed on landings. This is an issue that needs to be resolved.

**Recommendation: The Board recommends that distribution of tuck shop on landings is reviewed.**

17.5 One issue that will give cause for concern in the incoming year is the change in EU law from May 2017, although this is out of the control of NIPS. From May 2017 tobacco cannot be sold in amounts under 30grams and cigarettes will no longer be available in packs of ten. Currently prisoners can buy tobacco in 12 ½ grams but new amounts will put financial pressure on some prisoners who are managing on very small amounts of money each week. Reception also issues small amounts of tobacco to new committals if required until they receive their first tuckshop order so this is an area that will have to be looked at going forward as it will inevitably cause some issues.

## **Section 18 – VISITS**

18.1 For those who lose their freedom, family ties are important and many studies have shown the value to prisoners of regular family visits. Several voluntary organisations support families' visits in various ways. Visits are held six days a week with several sessions per day. There are thirty-two tables in integrated visits, which can hold a maximum of three adults plus two children per table if full to capacity. Separated prisoners have their own visits area. This equates to a huge volume of visitors over the

year.

18.2 For many coming to visit Maghaberry, transport can be a problem. NIACRO (supported by Probation Board for Northern Ireland) runs a minibus service from Londonderry via Strabane to the prison on a Friday and Saturday although previously they ran from several areas but reduced funding has caused service to be reduced. Currently the prison also runs a free taxi pick-up service from the local train station to and from the prison on a twice daily basis.

18.3 A Family Support Officer is available at the reception area where families who have concerns or issues about their relative can talk to them in private. However this is now normally manned by only one person where formerly there were up to three staff and this puts pressure on staff member and limits their availability. Visitors can leave in money, cards, clothing etc. at the reception area, but there are times when it takes a considerable amount of time to reach the prisoner they are visiting. The Board has noticed over the past reporting year that there are increased complaints about the time taken for parcels to get from reception to prisoner, and also for personal belongings to get to reception when a prisoner is being released. The officer who should be on duty is often taken off to do other duties but this creates difficulties for prisoners who are frequently left without their own clothes for 5/6 days.

**Recommendation: The Board recommends that the process of items left at reception for prisoners is reviewed to lessen the delay in a prisoner receiving them.**

18.4 Visitors complain frequently about the difficulty in getting through to the visits booking line. Given the large volume of calls received the Board recommends that staffing in this area is improved. Families have raised the issue at the Visitors Centre that they must give at least 24 hours' notice if they wish to amend visit details, this can cause difficulties if childcare or transport arrangements change for them.

**Recommendation: That the booking line is adequately staffed**

18.5 All visits in Maghaberry now take place in the main visits area. The visits areas must strike a balance between facilitating families and the need for security. The Board have continued to notice an increased number of 'passes' of often significant amounts of illegal substances being caught over the past year, and recommend the vigilance of staff and also the joint NIPS/PSNI scheme with regard to prisoners and

visitors being charged if detected. All visitors are subject to testing by a passive drug dog and at least three prison officers supervise the area. In previous years, the Board has recommended that the CCTV system in Visits was upgraded, so were pleased to see that new surveillance cameras had been installed in both the segregated visits area and ordinary visits area. Despite the secure setting, the visitors' arrival area endeavours to present a "family friendly" image and during the summer holiday period additional activities are organised for children. The Board is also aware that there are plans to look at the further at upgrading the visits area in the future.

18.6 Child-centered visits operate throughout the year, enabling fathers and children to play in a supported, supervised manner and bond in a way that is not always possible during a normal visit. Since inception, these visits have been jointly delivered by the Quaker Service, Barnado's and prison staff. For prisoners on the Family Focus landing, extended visits with their children are arranged on a monthly basis and held in the Donard Centre. These are made possible by the prison Visits team, Family Officers and the Quakers. This is an example of different organisations working together for the benefit of prisoners and their families and the Board commends these initiatives.

18.7 As detailed earlier in the annual report the Board is disappointed that the excellent support service at the visitor service formerly provided by the Quaker Service is no longer available. This has had a huge impact on visitors to the prison, many of whom have travelled long distances, often with children. Hot food is no longer available, just sandwiches and snacks, and there is no longer transport to main the gate which although not a huge distance, can impact on the elderly, those with mobility problems and mothers with young children. This is especially noticeable in wet or wintry conditions.

**Recommendation: Review of service formerly provided by Quakers.**

18.8 While many prisoners receive regular visits from friends and family, there are a significant number who serve their sentence with little or no contact with anyone outside. As previously mentioned the Quaker Service operates the "Quaker Connections" which provides visits to these prisoners.

18.9 In conclusion, the NIPS and the agencies and organisations which provide visit services should be commended for the help and support given to visitors on a daily

basis.

### MAGHABERRY BOARD MEMBERS 2016-2017

			Appointed
1.	Patrick McGonagle	Chair	20/05/13
2.	Margaret McCauley	Vice Chair	05/07/10
3.	Phillip Lees	No change	02/07/10
4.	Valerie McConnell	No change	05/07/10
5.	Bernadette McCollum	No change	20/07/10
6.	Lynn Nevin	Temp transfer from	10/06/13
7.	Andrew Heyes	No change	10/06/13
8.	Ian Hackney	No change	01/04/16
9.	Mary McMahan	No change	01/04/16
10.	John Denvir	Transfer from	01/04/16
11.	Kathleen Murdock	resigned	01/04/16
12.	Jane McGeary	resigned	01/04/16
13.	Graeme Rice	resigned	01/04/16