



Criminal Justice Inspection
Northern Ireland
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Report on an unannounced inspection of the
imprisonment of women in Northern Ireland

Ash House Hydebank Wood Prison

by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons and the
Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice in
Northern Ireland

28–30 November 2004

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HYDEBANK WOOD PRISON

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ASH House Action Plan

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Introduction

Nearly three years ago, HMI Prisons inspected Northern Ireland's only women's prison, Mourne House, a purpose-built women's unit managed as part of Maghaberry prison. We made nearly 50 recommendations for change: principal of which were that Mourne House should become a discrete women's facility, managed separately from the men's prison; and that the Northern Ireland Prison Service should draw up a policy and strategic plan for the treatment of women in custody.

Virtually none of our recommendations, including those fundamental ones, were put into effect. Indeed, the treatment of and conditions for women at Mourne House became worse, following the separation of male paramilitary prisoners at Maghaberry: both the regime available to women, and the relationship with prison officers deteriorated. There were two self-inflicted deaths, and an extremely critical report by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission.

A decision was taken by the Northern Ireland Prison Service to move women from Mourne House to a unit within Northern Ireland's Young Offender Centre at Hydebank Wood, which holds young men aged 15 to 21. There was considerable opposition to this move, which was implemented very swiftly, following growing criticism of conditions and treatment in Mourne House. At the invitation of the Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice, we therefore agreed to undertake a short unannounced inspection of the Hydebank Wood women's unit, Ash House. Because of the nature of our, and others', previous concerns, we focused upon the key issues of safety and respect.

This inspection found that relationships between staff and prisoners had improved since the move from Mourne House. There was also a much higher proportion of women officers, and a female principal officer. But the report records some significant concerns: about safety, principally in relation to the management of vulnerable and damaged women and girls; and about the extent to which Ash House can provide a suitable environment for women. This is not primarily the fault of staff and managers; most of whom genuinely wanted to do a good job, and felt very exposed to criticism. It was the consequence of a poorly implemented decision to move women from a purpose-built environment, which was not being managed or operated as it should have been, to a much less suitable facility – without providing staff with sufficient specialist training, management or support to ensure that they could properly look after the women and girls in their care.

The problems of Ash House were at their most acute in seeking to manage some extremely damaged, and sometimes disruptive, young women and girls. On our arrival, we found two of them, one a juvenile, being held in 'anti-suicide suits' in unfurnished and cold cells. Examination of 'prisoners at risk' documentation revealed an imperfect understanding of the motives, and management, of self-harming women. We also found that disciplinary measures, such as cellular confinement and demotion under the incentives scheme, were used to punish self-harming behaviour. In general, punishments, including for children, were very severe. We did not believe that this was because staff deliberately wished to treat their charges badly; rather it was because they genuinely did not know how else to manage these young women, and were above all extremely anxious, by any means available, to prevent another self-inflicted death.

Child protection procedures, for the under-18s held at Ash House, were seriously deficient: this required urgent senior management attention, and effective liaison with social services outside the establishment. More fundamentally, we do not believe that Ash House was, or can be, a suitable environment in which to hold girls. Their educational and developmental, as well as safeguarding, needs were not being met, and could not be, within such a mixed and constricted environment.

The difficulties at Ash House were compounded by the fact that there was not enough for women to do. It was welcome that they were out of their cells for significant periods; but overwhelmingly they complained to us of boredom. This was likely to compound feelings of depression and anxiety. Children suffered particularly from an absence of sufficient education. The physical environment of Ash House was also inferior to Mourne House: women had lost open access to the fresh air and grounds, and they had no in-cell sanitation. The latter meant that pregnant women, for example, were forced to use 'potties' if they needed urgent access to a toilet.

In summary, the move had succeeded in breaking up some of the negative culture that had infused Mourne House. But it had also lost the principal advantage that the Northern Ireland Prison Service had – the existence of a purpose-built, separate women's facility – without tackling the underlying and fundamental issues that were identified in 2002. There was still no Northern Ireland Prison Service strategy, policies or procedures to deal with the specific needs of women and girls; and no separate, properly trained, management of the women's prison.

The Northern Ireland Prison Service urgently needs to seek the help of prison services in other jurisdictions that have developed policies and practices to meet the specific needs of women; and to train and support a separate manager for the women's unit at Ash House. But, in the longer term, given the increased number of women and girls in custody, it needs to plan for a discrete and suitable separate location in which they can be held safely and purposefully.

Anne Owers
HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

January 2005

Kit Chivers
Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice in Northern Ireland

Fact page

Task of unit

To accommodate all female prisoners within Northern Ireland.

Brief history

Ash House opened as a female unit on 21 June 2004 following a major refurbishment programme. Upgrades on the electric locking system were made to provide for future expansion of the regime.

Number held

32.

Cost per place per annum

No cost per prisoner place for the women at Ash House was available, nor was there a cost per prisoner place for Hydebank Wood overall. The Northern Ireland Prison Service cost per prisoner place for the whole service was £81,426.

Certified normal accommodation

56.

Operational capacity

56.

Last full inspection

Not previously inspected.

Description of residential unit

Ash House is a stand-alone houseblock adjacent to the male accommodation. There are four self-contained wings, each with ablutions, dining and association areas. There are three mother and baby-type units, one being equipped for disabled access. The ground floor has been converted into a reception area with a medical facility adjacent. There are also offices on the ground floor as well as a multi-use classroom.

Healthy prison summary

Introduction

- HP1 Inspection reports include a summary of an establishment's performance against the model of the healthy prison. The four criteria for a healthy prison are:
- Safety – all prisoners are held in safety.
 - Respect – prisoners are treated with respect as individuals.
 - Purposeful activity – prisoners are fully and purposefully occupied.
 - Resettlement – prisoners are prepared for their release and resettlement into the community with the aim of reducing the likelihood of their reoffending.
- HP2 Conditions for women prisoners in Northern Ireland were last inspected as part of the inspection of HMP Maghaberry in May 2002 when women were held at Mourne House, managed as part of that prison. Usually, the recommendations made at that inspection would be followed up at a subsequent inspection of the same establishment. However, Mourne House was closed in June 2004 and the women prisoners transferred to Ash House at Hydebank Wood Young Offender Centre. This meant that it was not possible to report directly on progress made at Mourne House. However, as all women prisoners in Northern Ireland are held in one establishment we were able to make some assessment of progress in relation to the imprisonment of women in Northern Ireland in general.
- HP3 At our earlier inspection of Mourne House in May 2002, we found that insufficient attention was paid to the specific needs of women and girls in prison in Northern Ireland. Mourne House had good physical accommodation and had the potential to offer high quality provision. However, too many of the staff were men, security was too restrictive, the care of women at risk of self-harm and suicide was poor, healthcare facilities shared with men were unsatisfactory and in spite of extremely high staffing levels, the regime available to women and resettlement opportunities were inadequate.
- HP4 We made a number of recommendations to improve these deficiencies both at strategic and operational level. Little, if anything was done to take forward the recommendations and when inspectors made an informal visit to Mourne House in May 2004 it was acknowledged that there was no action plan to implement the recommendations and that in some areas, such as regular access to purposeful activity, things had got worse.
- HP5 In March 2003, the Northern Ireland Prison Service management board commissioned a feasibility report on transferring women prisoners from Mourne House to Hydebank Wood. This concluded that Hydebank Wood was a more suitable location, could offer an improved regime and would be more cost effective. An equality impact assessment was published in November 2003 and a formal decision was taken to go ahead with the move in April 2004. There was no public consultation on other options and whether any alternative location for women prisoners in

Northern Ireland would better. The move to Ash House took place in June 2004, giving managers and staff at Hydebank Wood very little time to prepare.

- HP6 Among our main recommendations were that Mourne House should be a discrete facility for women prisoners, managed by its own governor; that the Northern Ireland Prison Service should draw up a policy and strategic plan for women in custody; that all staff should receive specific training to work with women; that security levels should be reduced with consequent lower staffing levels; that healthcare for women prisoners should be delivered either in Mourne House or the community; and that resettlement links particularly in relation to healthcare and working in the community should be made. None of these recommendations had been implemented before the transfer to Hydebank Wood took place.
- HP7 In a short unannounced inspection such as this, an in-depth assessment cannot be made across the full range of the Inspectorate's published *Expectations*, which set out our criteria for assessing the treatment of and conditions for prisoners. We had the benefit of a full prisoner survey but during the inspection we examined some areas in more detail than others. Given the particular concerns raised by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission about the treatment of vulnerable women prisoners in Northern Ireland in their report 'The Hurt Inside'¹ and our own previous concerns, we focused particularly on safety issues. As Ash House at Hydebank Wood, like Mourne House at Maghaberry, held girls under the age of 18, we also looked closely at the treatment of children. We were not accompanied by the Adult Learning Inspectorate so did not assess education and training provision against the professional standards and framework within which they were delivered.
- HP8 Based on documentary evidence, our observations and discussions with staff, prisoners and others, the following is our assessment, based on the four tests of a healthy prison.

Safety

- HP9 Many women said they felt unsafe at Ash House, and that they were subject to victimisation by other prisoners or staff. In the absence of a service-wide policy for dealing with suicidal or self-harming women, staff were struggling to provide support for some very vulnerable children and adults. Procedures for managing suicidal or self-harming women were inadequate, and sometimes unacceptable, and may have increased risk. Prisoners could be disciplined for self-harming; adjudications were unsatisfactory and punishments excessive. There were no policies, or risk assessment procedures, for managing the mixed population of children and adults, some of whom were Schedule One offenders.² Ash House did not have the skills or resources to deal with very troubled adolescents and was not a suitable place for girls to be held.
- HP10 Very few respondents to our survey considered the escort vans in which they were brought to Ash House at Hydebank Wood to be clean. Few thought that sufficient attention was paid to their health needs and significantly fewer than the benchmark for other women's prisons considered that they were well treated by escort staff.

¹ The Hurt Inside, The Imprisonment of women and girls in Northern Ireland. Professor Phil Scraton and Dr Linda Moore, Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, October 2004.

² Prisoners convicted of an offence listed in schedule one of the Children Act 1989 against a child or young person under the age of 18 years.

- HP11 A high proportion of prisoners said that they had had problems when they first arrived but relatively few said that they had been given help and support at that point. There was a small but adequate reception but only 25% of respondents (against a benchmark of 68%³) said that they had been treated well or very well in reception. Most women had the opportunity to shower on the day of arrival. There were no formal first night procedures, little information was given and there was no proper induction programme for new arrivals.
- HP12 Significantly more respondents to our survey than the benchmark from women's prisons in England reported that they had been victimised by other prisoners – 42% compared to 25%. And significantly more said that they had felt unsafe in the prison – 50% compared to 31%. However, most prisoners we spoke to did not suggest that bullying was a big problem. There was no specific separate anti-bullying strategy for women prisoners and no one was on the formal anti-bullying monitoring procedures. A high proportion of prisoners, 48% against a benchmark of 18%, said that they been victimised or insulted by staff. Only six Ash House staff had received training in anti-bullying procedures.
- HP13 The Northern Ireland Prison Service self-harm and suicide prevention policy did not recognise some of the particular needs of women and girls, such as the high incidence of sexual abuse in the past and the way this might be manifested in self-harm. Some staff had been trained in self-harm and suicide awareness and prevention but there had been no training in the Northern Ireland Prison Service self-harm and suicide prevention policy adopted in March 2004 because a national roll out had not been delivered.
- HP14 In the absence of specific guidance, staff were struggling to deal with some very distressed women and girls. Those at risk of self-harm were often placed in anti-suicide suits (non-tearable gowns) in unfurnished cells within the punishment unit, as a first resort and without proper records or monitoring. This may have inhibited some women from disclosing vulnerability. The quality of entries in the documentation for prisoners at risk was poor and did not display understanding of the reasons for self-harm. Women who self-harmed could be punished for behaviour associated with their self-harm, or demoted under the incentives scheme. There was no Listeners scheme, or effective therapeutic support, using key workers, counsellors, peer supporters or a care suite, and very limited free access to the Samaritans.
- HP15 The segregation unit was a mixture of a punishment unit at one end and a special support unit at the other. There was a lack of clarity about its purpose and a need for the two distinct functions to be separated. Three of the four safer cells were in the punishment end and that was where vulnerable prisoners tended to be held. The cells were unacceptably cold. Relatively high percentages of respondents to our survey said that they had spent a night in the segregation unit or had been physically restrained but there was no overall managerial monitoring. The written records of adjudication showed no evidence of inquiry. We were told after the inspection that adjudications were recorded on audio tape and kept for two years. These were not supplied to us at the time so we were unable to check the extent of inquiry. Punishments were severe, with too much use of cellular confinement combined with a blanket loss of all privileges, even for children. Security was unnecessarily tight for most, and all women and girls were given a 'full body-search'⁴ after visits, even after closed or legal visits. This involved her removing all clothes from the top half and the

³ The benchmark figure is calculated by aggregating all survey responses together and so is not an average across establishments.

⁴ The Northern Ireland Prison Service terminology for what we would normally refer to as a strip-search.

lower half of the body in turn. Although women were not completely naked at any stage, this frequent searching was unacceptable and degrading.

- HP16 All staff had pre-employment checks but the child protection policy was that used for the male young offenders and took no account of child protection arrangements for women and girls. No one from Ash House had attended a child protection meeting. Staff were not trained in child protection and there was no information about child protection procedures. There was a need to establish better formal links with outside agencies. There was no coordination with self-harm and suicide and no overall safeguarding approach to child protection. Searching policy and procedures did not take account of the child protection implications of searching a child using force. Girls sent to Ash House tended to be those whom the juvenile justice centre had failed to manage.
- HP17 There was no specific policy for managing girls under the age of 18, and juveniles, young adults and adults mixed freely. There was no clarity about what was expected of staff to look after these children safely and no risk assessments for managing the different groups together.
- HP18 There were detoxification policies in place but it was not possible to tell how many were completed for women at Ash House as separate statistics were not kept. We were told that the main problem was alcohol detoxification rather than dealing with withdrawal from drugs but there were no appropriate facilities.

Respect

- HP19 Staff-prisoner relationships were generally reasonable but distant. Prisoners had very negative views about some staff. The prison was clean and there was a good well-kept outside environment. There was no integral sanitation and although there was an electronic unlock system at night the lack of immediate access to washing and toilet facilities was inappropriate for women. There was little awareness of race relations and foreign national issues. No monitoring by religion was taking place.
- HP20 Although 40% of respondents to our survey (against a benchmark of 10%) said that staff had made insulting remarks to them, prisoners to whom we spoke either in groups or individually were generally positive about staff. However, only 57% (against a benchmark of 72%) said that most staff treated them with respect and only 59% (against a benchmark of 77%) said that they had a member of staff they could turn to for help. A high proportion of staff had transferred from Mourne House. There were some indications that these relatively poor perceptions of relationships reflected a negative response to a minority of staff. Unlike most women's prisons, first names were not generally used and officers referred to and addressed women mainly by their surnames. There were no personal officers or key workers, even for juveniles.
- HP21 The building had recently been renovated and was in good condition. The rooms were small but kept in good order and all were singles. There was no integral sanitation in the rooms apart from in three rooms designed for mothers with babies. The electronic unlocking system to use the toilet and washing facilities at night was inappropriate and particularly difficult for women who were menstruating or pregnant. The grounds of the prison were spacious and well kept but prisoners had little access to them.

- HP22 Prisoners at Ash House had good social interaction with each other, with 70% of respondents (against a benchmark of 49%) reporting that they had association more than five times a week. Lock up in the evening was early at 7pm except for some on the enhanced level of the incentives scheme who were able to remain out of their rooms until 9pm. There was little interaction between staff and prisoners during association and there were few facilities to keep women occupied. Most simply sat chatting round the dining tables.
- HP23 The incentives scheme was the one used for boys and young men in the rest of Hydebank Wood with no adaptations for women. Some women prisoners commented that they were 'treated like children'. Managers understood the need for a new incentives policy and we were told that one was in draft form. Only those on the enhanced level had televisions and most prisoners on enhanced had extra association. Prisoners could spend a long time on the basic level and there was no structured support to help them progress. In our survey, only 28% (against a benchmark of 51%) felt that they were treated fairly in the incentives scheme.
- HP24 There was no routine monitoring of applications and complaints for patterns and trends. Replies to applications and complaints were not addressed personally to the prisoner but were written in the third person. However, prisoners said that governors were helpful and often able to sort out issues without the need to use the formal procedures.
- HP25 The chaplaincy was providing good support to individual prisoners but women prisoners could attend Christian religious services only on Wednesdays. Services for young men in Hydebank Wood and for men in other prisons in Northern Ireland were held on Sundays so women were not receiving equal treatment.
- HP26 There was only a small number of black and minority ethnic prisoners at Ash House. Although all staff had completed equal opportunity training, there was no race relations policy and no real promotion of equal opportunities and diversity issues. There were also very few foreign national prisoners and no policy or procedures despite the fact that Ash House held immigration detainees. We were told there were some links with the Refugee Action Group and the Belfast Law Centre.
- HP27 The prison was not undertaking any routine monitoring by religious affiliation. A snapshot check of those allocated to activities revealed an under-representation of Catholic women. The numbers involved were small, and without regular monitoring it was not possible to detect whether this reflected a pattern.
- HP28 Healthcare had made some changes to meet women's needs but there had been no formal health needs assessment. There were combined waiting lists but separate sessions for the women prisoners and the young men. A woman GP provided three sessions each week. Prisoners told us that they found the nurses unsympathetic and this was reflected in our survey, where there was significantly less satisfaction with the healthcare provided by the nurses than the benchmark. There were some poor prescribing practices and some problems with the administration of drugs.

Purposeful activity

HP29 Time out of cell was reasonable but there was insufficient purposeful activity. There was a need to develop education and training. Some good work had been done by the physical education (PE) department to cater for women prisoners.

HP30 Prisoners on the standard level of the incentives scheme were unlocked for approximately eight hours each weekday and those on enhanced for 10. Prisoners reported that they were not getting regular exercise in the open air and when they were offered the opportunity, it sometimes clashed with other activities such as education.

HP31 There was limited education provision, with waiting lists for more popular courses. Education was not compulsory or regular for sentenced juveniles, which we would have expected. No prisoner from Ash House had gained any educational accreditation at the time of the inspection. Training was limited to gardens and computers, with a maximum of 16 training places, but this was not leading to accreditation.

HP32 There were insufficient activity places for the number and make-up of the population. Other than the 16 places available in the gardens and computers, all jobs were domestic. Most women did not have enough to do and complained of boredom. The lack of activity was likely to exacerbate anxiety and depression.

HP33 Access to the library was poor and only 10% of prisoners (against a benchmark of 43%) said that they could get there once a week.

HP34 The PE department had planned well for the transfer of women from Mourne House and had visited there before the move to consult prisoners and staff and to assess need. There was good PE provision, with two sessions for more vulnerable prisoners and two other general sessions each week. Some activities led to local certificates and some to formal awards. The gym also organised some social activities as well as first aid and manual handling courses.

Resettlement

HP35 There was no local resettlement policy specific to women, and residential staff were not involved in resettlement planning and reintegration issues. Better family support was needed. Some improvements were needed to public protection systems.

HP36 The Northern Ireland Prison Service resettlement policy had been agreed only in June 2004 and contained no reference to the specific resettlement needs of women. There was no local resettlement policy based on the needs of prisoners at Ash House but the establishment was beginning to do a needs analysis.

HP37 Resettlement plans were being completed for prisoners at Ash House, although there were some arrears. It was good to see that plans were being completed for remand as well as sentenced prisoners. However, there were few clear targets in the plans and prisoners were not involved in the reviews.

- HP38 There were two life-sentenced prisoners and two identified potential lifers. Potential and sentenced lifers were informed by trained lifer staff of what they could expect during a life sentence. Satisfactory lifer work was being carried out but the potential for progress and development for female life-sentenced prisoners in the only establishment for women prisoners in Northern Ireland was very limited. Of necessity, decisions about management of the life-sentenced women had to be based on individual cases.
- HP39 The visits room was temporary but it was too small and was affecting prisoners' opportunities to have social visits. There were no refreshments and no toilets for visitors, which was a particular problem for young children. Security was very tight and, as well as all prisoners being full body-searched after each visit, closed visits were imposed on a single drug dog identification without any additional intelligence. There were no special children visits, family support arrangements or family liaison officers. Visits were about to move into a new purpose-built building with a proposal that women prisoners would share visits sessions with young men. Some prisoners were very apprehensive about this.
- HP40 Reintegration work was seen almost solely as a matter for probation officers who dealt with cases on an individual basis. Officers working on the residential unit were not generally engaged in ensuring that prisoners' integration needs were met.
- HP41 The drugs strategy was being rewritten to reflect the needs of women and to bring alcohol use within the strategy. There were good links with Opportunity Youth, which had done a needs assessment for women prisoners and, as a result, had employed a woman. Prisoners on the scheme received six months' mentoring after their release. Some accredited drugs programmes were being run.
- HP42 The draft public protection policy was still to be agreed. The prison was identifying Schedule One offenders but the risk assessment procedures for allocating them to particular landings in the prison needed to improve.

Main recommendations

- HP43 The Northern Ireland Prison Service should draw up a policy and strategic plan for the treatment of women in custody in Northern Ireland based on a full assessment of their specific needs. In the meantime the expertise from other UK jurisdictions should be used to advise and assist urgently in key safety areas such as caring for women who are at risk of self-harm and suicide, or who have substance use problems.
- HP44 A separate prison should be provided for women in Northern Ireland, which would allow women more opportunities for freedom of movement in less restrictive conditions than on a shared site. Until then, Ash House at Hydebank Wood should be regarded as a temporary facility for women.
- HP45 Girls under 18 should not be held in Ash House.
- HP46 Ash House should be managed directly by a governor grade with sole responsibility for women prisoners.

- HP47 Separate policies specific to women at Ash House should be developed for all major policy areas including anti-bullying, self-harm and suicide, resettlement, substance use and equality.
- HP48 All statistics collected at Hydebank Wood should differentiate between women, girls, young men and boys.
- HP49 Alternative and more therapeutic responses to self-harm for women and girls, other than the use of strip-conditions, should be developed as a matter of urgency. Staff should be available to interact with prisoners deemed at high risk of self-harm, in an environment that provides good observation and promotes feelings of well being.
- HP50 There should be a clear policy underpinned by written procedures about the management and supervision of a mixed population of women prisoners, including children, at Ash House.
- HP51 The conduct of adjudications should be reviewed to ensure that: adjudicators make a full written account of the evidence on the record and demonstrate that full inquiries are made; charges are not brought against women and girls for acts of self-harm or associated with self-harm; and punishment levels are reduced.
- HP52 Sufficient activity places should be provided to keep all women who are able and willing actively involved in useful occupation.
- HP53 Integral sanitation should be provided for all women prisoners, and until then other methods of allowing genuine 24-hour access to lavatories should be explored such as allowing free access to locked down spurs.

Section 1: Arrival in custody

Courts, escorts and transfers

Expected outcomes:

Prisoners travel in safe, decent conditions to and from court and between prisons. During movement the individual needs of prisoners are recognised and given proper attention.

- 1.1 Prisoners' experience between court and prison was poor. No information was provided about what to expect at Ash House to help ease initial anxiety.
- 1.2 Our survey indicated that prisoners' experience between court and prison was poor. Many felt that not enough attention was paid to their health needs and that escort vans were dirty. Fifty per cent of respondents (against a benchmark of 72%) said that they had been treated well or very well by staff.
- 1.3 Most women had travelled to prison in the same van as men going to Maghaberry or with young adult men sent to the young offenders' centre. This was unsatisfactory and left the women open to verbal abuse. One first-time prisoner was unaware that women prisoners were now being held at Hydebank Wood and had expected to go to Mourne House. Prisoners were not given information at court about where they were being taken and what to expect.

Recommendations

- 1.4 Women should be transported in clean vehicles separate from men and young male offenders and attention should be paid to their individual needs.
- 1.5 Women should be provided with information about Ash House while at court.

First days in custody

Expected outcomes:

Prisoners feel safe on their reception into prison and for the first few days. Their individual needs, both during and after custody, are identified and plans developed to provide help. During a prisoner's induction into the prison he/she is made aware of prison routines, how to access available services and how to cope with imprisonment.

- 1.6 The reception was small but adequate. There were no formal first night procedures to ensure that prisoners' immediate needs and anxieties were addressed. There was no induction programme and generally insufficient information to help prisoners through the first days in custody.

- 1.7 We did not see the reception process but were told that three or four prisoners were received each week. Most arrived during the core working day. The reception area was small but adequate. In our survey, 59% of respondents said they were seen by a member of healthcare staff on arrival compared to a benchmark figure of 89% in other women's prisons. The prison assured us that all committals were seen on the day of their arrival. Anyone arriving on a Friday waited until Monday to see a doctor unless it was considered an emergency. Only 25% of respondents to our survey (against a benchmark of 68%) said that they were treated well or very well in reception, although 77% (against a benchmark of 38%) were able to shower on the day of arrival.
- 1.8 New arrivals were given a free reception pack to the value of £2 and a £1 telephone credit. Most were able to make a telephone call on their first night.
- 1.9 Cell-sharing risk assessments were not done as prisoners did not share cells.
- 1.10 In our survey, 91% of respondents said that they had had problems on arrival but only 36% had received any help or support with these. None of the respondents said that they had received any information about support available for prisoners feeling depressed or suicidal.
- 1.11 Most new arrivals were located on A3. No formal first night procedures were in place and we found little evidence in house files that prisoners' needs were identified. A number of prisoners said that they had been given little or no information about the operation of the night sanitation system when they arrived. Others said that they were not told what would happen to them on the day following their arrival. This was supported by our survey.
- 1.12 Officers completed an induction interview. This covered self-harm and drug use but generally revealed little about any worries or concerns.
- 1.13 Prisoners were interviewed by the duty governor on the day after arrival. There was no specific induction programme. Staff from various disciplines visited new receptions individually. In our survey, 3% of respondents (against a benchmark of 66%) said that they had been on an induction course within the first week.

Recommendations

- 1.14 The prison should ensure that all prisoners are seen by a member of healthcare on their day of arrival.
- 1.15 A formal first night procedure should be developed. Staff should identify any immediate concerns and record what action has been taken to address these. They should also confirm that prisoners have had the opportunity to make a telephone call.
- 1.16 An induction programme should be developed.

Section 2: Environment and relationships

Residential units

Expected outcomes:

Prisoners live in a safe, clean and decent environment within which they are encouraged to take personal responsibility for themselves and their possessions.

- 2.1 Ash House was clean. The night sanitation system was unsatisfactory. There were no facilities for private interviews on the landings. Access to telephones was satisfactory and prisoners had good access to showers. Provision for physically disabled women was poor.
- 2.2 Ash House could accommodate 56 prisoners and 30 cells were occupied on the first day of this inspection. The unit was divided into four landings and staff could see along each of these from a central 'bubble'. A1 landing was both the punishment and the special support unit, A2 accommodated prisoners on the standard and enhanced levels of the incentives scheme, A3 was the committal landing where all prisoners spent their first night and also housed some prisoners on the basic level, and A4 was the enhanced landing.
- 2.3 Only three cells had integral sanitation. At night and during lock up periods, prisoners had to ask to be unlocked to use the toilet. Some staff were concerned that this presented an opportunity for bullying. The system sometimes failed and prisoners were delayed in getting to the toilet. They were provided with pots for emergencies and one pregnant prisoner suffering from nausea said that she had to use hers often because she could not rely on being released from her cell in time.
- 2.4 None of the cells was fitted with a privacy lock.
- 2.5 On three of the landings, two cells had been knocked into one. These rooms were used for prisoners with babies (see section on mothers and babies below) and prisoners whose medical condition required frequent access to the toilet.
- 2.6 Prisoners had good access to clean showers and a bath on each landing. The serveries were also clean and each landing had a large dining room where prisoners ate communally. A4 landing had kitchen facilities. Landings 2 and 4 had laundrettes and each landing had a telephone. There were no private interview or treatment rooms.
- 2.7 All the living accommodation was above the ground floor but a Stairmate wheelchair lift allowed access to the upper floor, though not all staff were aware of its existence.

Recommendations

- 2.8 Until integral sanitation is provided, privacy locks should be fitted to some cells to allow prisoners who are low and medium security risk, access to the landings to use the lavatories after general lock up.
- 2.9 Private interview rooms should be provided.

Mothers and babies

- 2.10 Arrangements for mothers and babies were rudimentary with no policies and no special accommodation other than a larger cell with integral sanitation in which babies would be locked with their mothers.
- 2.11 There was one pregnant prisoner. She had been seen by a midwife since her arrival and arrangements had been made with both the local maternity ward and midwife and the woman's own local maternity department in case she went into labour. Such comprehensive arrangements, particularly given the short sentence the woman was serving, were to be commended.
- 2.12 There were no babies with their mothers during the inspection and no policies and procedures for when there were. Three cells had been converted to accommodate mothers and babies. One of the rooms was being used for a woman who needed regular access to a toilet. We looked at one of the others, which had been used for a mother and her baby but was empty and being used as a storeroom at the time of our inspection. The room was cold. It contained a screened toilet, a fridge and storage facilities as well as a bed and a cot. We were told that the room was appropriately furnished when occupied. When babies were held in the cells, the arrangements were that they were locked in with their mothers.

Recommendations

- 2.13 Policy and procedures for mothers and babies should be developed, including child protection arrangements and links with social services.
- 2.14 Pregnant women should be able to use the 'mother and baby' cell if it is not already occupied.
- 2.15 Babies should not be locked in cells.

Staff–prisoner relationships

Expected outcomes:

Prisoners are treated respectfully by staff, throughout the duration of their custodial sentence, and are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions and decisions. Healthy prisons should demonstrate a well-ordered environment in which the requirements of 'security', 'control' and 'justice' are balanced and in which all members of the prison community are safe and treated with fairness.

- 2.16 Our survey indicated that relations between staff and prisoners were poor, although prisoners subsequently suggested that this was due to negative perceptions about a minority of staff. Good efforts had been made to achieve an appropriate staff gender balance and a one-day introductory training on working with women had been delivered.
- 2.17 In our survey, 40% of respondents (against a benchmark of 10%) said that staff had made insulting remarks. However, prisoners to whom we spoke in groups or individually were generally positive about staff. We had comments like '90% [of staff] do their best' and 'the

majority of officers help you'. Others said that 'one or two will help you, others make your life hell'. Being treated inconsistently was a common complaint.

- 2.18 Only 57% of respondents (against a benchmark of 72%) said that most staff treated them with respect and 59% (against a benchmark of 77%) said that they had a member of staff they could turn to for help. There was some suggestion that these relatively poor perceptions reflected the poor attitudes of a minority of staff. A number of staff had transferred from Mourne House.
- 2.19 Unlike in most women's prisons, first names were not generally used and officers mainly referred to and addressed prisoners by their surnames. Only 10% of respondents to our survey (against a benchmark of 29%) said that officers spoke to them most of the time during association.
- 2.20 Prisoners who had previously spent some time at Mourne House were generally more positive about relationships with staff, which they said were better. Efforts had been made to ensure a good gender balance among staff and almost three-quarters (28) of the 38 staff in post were female. This compared favourably with the situation at Mourne House, where 80% of the staff had been men. Some training had taken place and 20 staff had been involved in a one-day introductory training session on 'understanding and working with women in custody'.

Recommendations

- 2.21 Senior managers should hold regular meetings with prisoners to discuss how to improve relationships and should feed back regularly to staff and prisoners on action points.
- 2.22 Officers should make active efforts to engage positively with prisoners during association and at other times.
- 2.23 All staff at Ash House should receive more in-depth training on the special issues involved in working with women.

Personal officers

Expected outcomes:

Prisoners' relationships with their personal officers are based on mutual respect, high expectations and support.

- 2.24 There was no personal officer scheme and residential staff had little input into key decisions about prisoners.
- 2.25 There was no personal officer scheme and therefore no named individual member of staff to whom prisoners could go for help. This meant that there was little engagement by residential staff with individual prisoners about their personal circumstances and they did not generally get involved in helping to deal with prisoners' resettlement needs. We were told that many prisoners stayed such a short time that assigning a personal officer was pointless but this overlooked the benefit of support that a named key worker could provide to both short and longer-term prisoners.

Recommendation

- 2.26 A personal officer scheme should be introduced.

Section 3: Duty of care

Bullying

Expected outcomes:

Everyone feels safe from bullying and victimisation (which includes verbal and racial abuse, theft, threats of violence and assault). Active and fair systems to prevent and respond to bullying behaviour are known to staff, prisoners and visitors, and inform all aspects of the regime.

- 3.1 The anti-bullying strategy was that developed for young male offenders. The need to develop a separate strategy for women had been considered at meetings of the anti-bullying committee. Our survey indicated relatively high levels of victimisation by staff and other prisoners, which needed to be examined. Prisoners felt confident in reporting victimisation to staff.
- 3.2 The anti-bullying strategy was that developed for young men and a single anti-bullying committee covered women and young male offenders. Minutes of the meeting of May 2004 indicated that the committee had acknowledged the need to consider changes in the strategy in the event of women being moved to Hydebank Wood but no progress had been made. The minutes of the November 2004 meeting showed that the 'need to review the policy on bullying for females' had again been raised. Minutes of the meetings did not suggest an understanding of the different ways that bullying behaviour might manifest itself among the small group of women. The views of women prisoners on bullying were not represented at the meetings.
- 3.3 Questions about safety were included in the interviews by a governor with all new arrivals but there was no confidential survey of the extent and nature of bullying. In our survey, 42% of respondents (against a benchmark of 25%) said that they had been victimised by other prisoners and 50% (against a benchmark of 31%) said that they had felt unsafe. We were concerned that 48% of respondents (against a benchmark of 18%) said that they had been victimised by staff and we believed that this might have reflected poor behaviour by a small number of staff.
- 3.4 Many women appeared to be confident about reporting victimisation. In our survey, 36% (against a benchmark of 13%) said that they had reported being victimised. During the inspection, a senior officer was investigating an allegation of bullying of prisoners by a member of staff.
- 3.5 Few of the prisoners to whom we spoke reported bullying, which was perhaps not unusual in such a small community where a few dominant prisoners might have significant influence over others. Some younger women did say that they had been bullied by older prisoners. We witnessed some shouting from windows at night. This was mainly between units, which was a concern as it meant that women could be subjected to abuse and insults from young men or vice versa.
- 3.6 No separate records were kept of incidents of bullying in Ash House. Seven incidents of bullying by five women had been investigated by the house manager and recorded on the anti-bullying register. Once investigated, incidents were referred to the chair of the anti-bullying committee, who convened a meeting to decide what, if any, further action would be taken. The register did not make clear when decisions had been made and what action had been taken

when incidents were 'substantiated'. No woman had been placed on anti-bullying monitoring. There was some evidence from the minutes of meetings that bullying was more likely to be dealt with informally. No records were kept on victims of bullying or what had been done to help them.

- 3.7 Only six Ash House staff had been trained in anti-bullying procedures and anti-bullying training did not feature in planned training over the coming months.

Recommendations

- 3.8 An independent safer custody committee for Ash House should be established focusing specifically on anti-bullying, the prevention of suicide and the reduction of self-harm.
- 3.9 A confidential survey should be conducted to establish prisoners' perceptions of safety and their experience of bullying by prisoners and staff.
- 3.10 All staff should be trained in identifying and responding to bullying. Specific attention should be given to the impact on victims of bullying within such a small community.

Housekeeping point

- 3.11 The anti-bullying register should be improved and include details of victims and the outcomes of investigations.

Self-harm and suicide

Expected outcomes:

Prisoners at risk of self-harm or suicide are identified at an early stage, and a care and support plan is drawn up, implemented and monitored. Prisoners who have been identified as vulnerable should be encouraged to participate in all purposeful activity. All staff are aware of and alert to vulnerability issues, and appropriately trained and have access to proper equipment and support.

- 3.12 The specific needs of women were not recognised either in the central Northern Ireland Prison Service policy or locally. Staff had to care for some very difficult and damaged women and girls with high levels of mental health needs and traumatic histories. We found some evidence of inappropriate care with little therapeutic focus. Women prisoners did not have the support of Listeners. There was a need for more specialist care and training for staff.

- 3.13 Since our last inspection of women in prison in Northern Ireland (inspection of HMP Maghaberry in May 2002), there had been two self-inflicted deaths, both of which had occurred at Mourne House. These had generated considerable publicity, not least because of the publication of research by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission into conditions at Mourne House.

- 3.14 A self-harm and suicide prevention policy document had been launched by the Northern Ireland Prison Service in March 2004 but this contained no reference to the specific needs of women who self-harm. There was no local suicide prevention policy to describe how the central Northern Ireland Prison Service policy would be implemented at Hydebank Wood and specifically for women.
- 3.15 A single suicide prevention committee was responsible for the whole establishment. The committee met monthly and attendance at the last three meetings had been poor. A meeting in October 2004 had been attended by only three members with six others offering apologies. The highest attendance had been five members. There were no prisoner representatives.
- 3.16 The healthcare manager acted as the suicide prevention coordinator which reflected a tendency to medicalise the response to self-harm. The coordinator provided the committee with statistics relating to self-harm. All injuries including self-inflicted injuries were also recorded on 'IMR12 record sheets'. A further record was kept of methods used to self-harm. Records for Ash House were not kept independently of the young offenders' centre.
- 3.17 Since the transfer from Mourne House, 41 incidents of self-harm involving nine women had been recorded. Three women accounted for 33 of these incidents. These and other statistics demonstrated the significant difference in the frequency and nature of self-harm by women compared to young men. In the three months before this inspection, another set of figures (the 'suicide statistics') recorded that there had been 13 self-harm incidents out of a population of less than 30 women and only three incidents among about 200 young men. However, there was little evidence in the meeting minutes of any discussion about the very different needs of women and the implications for their care.
- 3.18 The policy required any member of staff who considered a prisoner to be at risk of self-harm to open a PAR1 (prisoner at risk form). Twenty-five PAR1s had been opened on 14 women prisoners during this period. Three prisoners had accounted for 12 of these. It was not possible to establish from the PAR1 register why these forms had been opened, which could have been following an act of self-harm or because there was active concern that a prisoner was at risk.
- 3.19 Reviews of prisoners on PAR1s took place regularly and at least weekly. Most were multidisciplinary in that they included psychology and healthcare staff, although there was less representation from chaplaincy, education or training staff. Prisoners did not routinely attend their PAR1 reviews, although the Northern Ireland Prison Service policy stated that they should attend where appropriate. There was little evidence from the PAR1s or house files of families or friends of the prisoner being contacted to help support prisoners at risk.
- 3.20 We looked at a number of PAR1s in detail and found some evidence of inappropriate treatment of young women at risk, some of whom were children. Some were held in unfurnished cells for long periods with few personal possessions. Some of the forms described in detail women's problem behaviour which was being managed through punishment. There was a lack of coherent therapeutic plans to address the underlying problems. One PAR1 form noted, "remained [locked in her cell] for her own health and safety. She was reminded that bad behaviour will not be rewarded, and spoken to very firmly."
- 3.21 Three of the four safer cells were on the punishment unit. These cells were bare, cold, devoid of personal possessions or normal bedding and were used routinely to accommodate very vulnerable girls and women.
- 3.22 There was too much reliance on anti-suicide suits as a first response to prisoners who had self-harmed. Some were required to wear these whenever they were locked up, sometimes without underwear. One young woman had been in such a gown for over seven weeks.

- 3.23 The healthcare centre maintained a central record of the use of strip-clothing for prisoners held there. This included the length of time prisoners were held in such conditions and, in most cases, the reasons. There were no similar records for Ash House.
- 3.24 Some of the difficult behaviour of disturbed and distressed women was characterised as 'bad' behaviour to be punished. One woman on a PAR1 was unofficially punished by being refused permission to go to the gym. She had been required to wear an anti-suicide suit for three weeks whenever she was locked up and was 'not allowed the use of the toilet over lock up periods until further notice'.
- 3.25 Another PAR1 form recorded that a prisoner with a colostomy bag was 'banging door, says she needs slop out bucket but told she would not be getting one (re PO's instruction)'. Just hours earlier, an officer had recorded discovering the same woman 'lying on her back, plastic bags tied tightly around her neck and her face was black. I cut the bags with the knife and her breathing and colour returned to normal'. She had then been located in the separation and support unit on Elm House, a unit used for young male offenders. We found no evidence to indicate that this location was used regularly for women prisoners, but we saw evidence of it being used on other occasions.
- 3.26 One woman explained that prisoners were inhibited from disclosing feelings of vulnerability by fears about how staff would respond. This increased the risk. Vulnerable and depressed prisoners did not want to be placed in an anti-suicide suit in bare cold cells in the punishment unit, which they feared was the likely outcome of admitting to feeling depressed.
- 3.27 Most staff had received some previous training in self-harm and suicide awareness and prevention. Some mental health training for staff was planned but staff had not been trained in the new PAR1 process.
- 3.28 There were no routine investigations into incidents of serious self-harm.
- 3.29 A number of prisoners spoke very highly of the support from the chaplaincy. One registered mental nurse provided some counselling. One psychologist worked with women and young men across the establishment. A further psychologist was planned but was not in place. There were generally insufficient specialist resources to respond to the needs of women.
- 3.30 There was little counselling provision for victims of physical or sexual abuse. Opportunity Youth provided some counselling support for those with substance abuse problems (see substance use section). However, there was little help for prisoners who had left their children in the care of others and those with mental health problems who would have benefited from the services of social workers and mental health-trained staff.
- 3.31 There was no Listeners scheme or other formal peer support. It was suggested that prisoners were not at Ash House long enough to be trained to work as Listeners. Many prisoners were supported informally by other women.
- 3.32 The Samaritans visited Ash House weekly. One cell on A1 landing was equipped with closed-circuit television and a direct telephone line to the Samaritans. Prisoners using the landing telephones to contact the Samaritans were charged for the call. There was no care suite and no opportunity for prisoners in crisis to share cells.
- 3.33 Ligature cutters were held in the central 'bubble'. They were not carried by all staff, although night staff did so.

Recommendations

- 3.34 The members of the suicide prevention committee or a representative should attend all meetings.
- 3.35 A Listener scheme or similar peer support scheme should be developed in consultation with the Samaritans.
- 3.36 A free 24-hour direct telephone link to the Samaritans should be available to all prisoners.
- 3.37 Prisoners at risk of self-harm should have the opportunity to share cells, subject to the usual risk assessments.
- 3.38 Prisoner representatives from Ash House should attend the suicide awareness and prevention team meetings.
- 3.39 Statistics on the incidents of self-harm and the opening of PAR1s (prisoner at risk forms) should be improved and be specific to Ash House.
- 3.40 Additional safer cells should be provided outside the punishment unit.
- 3.41 Women identified as being at risk should be encouraged to participate in PAR1 reviews and offered the opportunity to provide a written contribution. Other disciplines should be invited to participate, including chaplaincy, education and training staff.
- 3.42 Where appropriate, the contribution of families and friends to the care of prisoners at risk should be actively considered.
- 3.43 All staff should be trained in the PAR1 process.
- 3.44 Formal investigations should be conducted into incidents where prisoners nearly die to establish what, if anything, the prison could do to prevent a recurrence.
- 3.45 A needs analysis should be completed to identify the specialist resources required to support prisoners at Ash House.

Equality, race and foreign nationals

Expected outcomes:

All prisoners experience equality of opportunity in all aspects of prison life, are treated equally and are safe. Diversity is embraced, valued, promoted and respected.

Foreign national prisoners should have the same access to all prison facilities as other prisoners. All prisons should be aware of the specific needs that foreign national prisoners have and implement a distinct strategy, which aims to represent their views and offer peer support.

- 3.46 There were very few black and minority ethnic or foreign national prisoners. Although the prison held immigration detainees, there was no specific policy for them and no foreign national prisoners or race relations policy. There was no monitoring of access to activities by religious affiliation.
- 3.47 There were only three black and minority ethnic prisoners at Ash House. Two were on remand and the other was an immigration detainee. There was no policy for immigration detainees, although it had been agreed that a separate policy would be developed in the Northern Ireland Prison Service response to the consultation document on the equality impact of the move from Mourne House⁵. There was no race relations policy or race relations management team and no real promotion of equal opportunities and diversity issues. However, all staff had completed equal opportunity training. There were no formal opportunities for black and minority ethnic prisoners to meet and have their voice heard. They did not raise any serious concerns about race issues but did feel that they had been discriminated against and disadvantaged in their access to appropriate hair products. These arrived during the inspection but after a wait of over five months.
- 3.48 Despite holding immigration detainees, there was no policy for foreign national prisoners. Senior managers adopted an ad hoc approach and said that any prisoner could have access to them. All the current prisoners could speak English but some translation services were available and the prison had access to FLEX (the Foreign Languages Exchange at the University of Ulster). We were told that there was good liaison with the Liverpool office of the Immigration Service, which dealt with the cases of detainees in Northern Ireland. The Belfast Law Centre and the Refugee Action Group provided an advice service to prisoners.
- 3.49 There was no regular monitoring by the establishment to satisfy itself that prisoners were being treated fairly in regard to their religious affiliation. The overall numbers were very small so it was difficult to draw any conclusions. An ad hoc check on allocation to activities, suggested that Catholics may have been under-represented. Without regular monitoring, we were unable to tell whether this was so and, more importantly, neither was the establishment.
- 3.50 As noted in the residential unit section (paragraph 2.7) while there was access for wheelchair users to the residential accommodation there was little other adaptation for women prisoners with physical disabilities.

Recommendations

- 3.51 Policies for immigration detainees, race relations and foreign national prisoners should be agreed.
- 3.52 Regular monitoring by religion and ethnicity should take place.
- 3.53 An equality and diversity committee should be established to oversee race relations, foreign national, religion and other diversity issues, and an equality and diversity officer should be appointed.

⁵ The Northern Ireland Prison Service, Transfer of Women In Custody, Maghaberry to Hydebank Wood, Results of Consultations Process. NIPS Website – 19.10.04.

Family and friends

Expected outcomes:

Prisoners are encouraged to maintain contact with family and friends through regular access to mail, telephones and visits.

- 3.54 Contact with family and friends was good from the beginning of custody. The temporary arrangements for visits were poor and security was too tight. There were concerns about the future arrangements to share visits with the young offenders' centre when the new visits complex opened.
- 3.55 In our survey, 55% of respondents (against a benchmark of 33%) said that they had been able to have a visit in their first week. Visits did not have to be pre-booked in the first week of custody. However, many prisoners believed that they were not given the opportunity to have all the visits to which they were entitled in terms of number and length. In our survey only 39% said that this was so compared to a benchmark of 69%.
- 3.56 Some prisoners complained that it was difficult for their families to book visits. This problem was accepted by the prison and more telephone booking lines were planned.
- 3.57 The visits room was an unsatisfactory temporary facility. The room was too small and only two visits could take place at the same time. The acoustics were poor, there were no refreshments and no toilets for prisoners or their visitors. We were told that some visits had to end early when visitors required the toilet. This was a particular problem for children.
- 3.58 In our survey, 39% of respondents said that they had children. However, there were no special children's visits or formal arrangements for family support such as a qualified family liaison officer to help prisoners maintain contact with their children and offer help with care and adoption issues. We were told that probation officers would pick up any urgent matters to do with children when they interviewed new arrivals and would ensure that relevant social workers were informed so that appropriate contact could be maintained. There had been occasions when the prison had arranged inter-prison visits or visits with relatives held in the young offenders' centre.
- 3.59 Security at visits was too tight. Closed visits were imposed on a single drug dog identification without any supporting intelligence. There had been nine closed visits for women since June 2004. This was particularly traumatic for children of prisoners on closed visits. The practice of full body-searching all women before and after visits was degrading and unacceptable (see security section).
- 3.60 A new visits building for the whole of Hydebank Wood was physically complete but its opening had been delayed. Once opened, the plan was for there to be joint visits with those held in the young offenders' centre. A number of women and girls were anxious about this because visits were often emotional and they believed the presence of young men would inhibit their visits. Others had acquaintances or co-accused in the young offenders' centre whom they wished to avoid but believed they would have no way of knowing whether they had visits booked on the same day.

Recommendations

- 3.61 Women should be able to have visits at separate sessions from the young men at Hydebank Wood and all mixed visits should be individually risk assessed.
- 3.62 Special family and children's visits should be arranged.

Applications and complaints

Expected outcomes:

Effective application and complaint procedures are in place, are easy to access, easy to use and provide timely responses. Prisoners feel safe from repercussions when using these procedures and are aware of an appeal procedure.

- 3.63 Information about how to make an application or complaint was inadequate. Prisoners were not satisfied that their applications or complaints were dealt with fairly and few knew how to appeal. There was no central tracking system and no routine monitoring of patterns or trends. The frailties of the formal systems were mitigated by the regular attendance and helpful approach of senior managers at Ash House.
- 3.64 In our survey, prisoners were asked about their knowledge of the applications and complaints system, their views on ease of access and the fairness and timeliness of the systems. Responses were lower than the benchmark in almost all these questions and significantly so in some areas.
- 3.65 Prisoners reported difficulties in getting application or complaint forms and had a less positive experience of the application system than of the formal complaints procedure. The majority did not feel that applications and complaints were dealt with fairly and responses were below the benchmark. Only 10% of prisoners (against a benchmark of 30%) knew how to appeal against a decision. Many prisoners knew nothing about the Board of Visitors and only 21% of respondents (against a benchmark of 37%) said that it was easy or very easy to contact it. Twenty-three per cent (against a benchmark of 13%) said that they had been encouraged to withdraw a complaint.
- 3.66 There was no written information for prisoners setting out how the applications and complaints systems worked and no formal induction programme or other process to explain to prisoners how to make applications or complaints. Most prisoners said that they found out about such things by asking other prisoners.
- 3.67 Prisoners told us that the governor visited the wing regularly and the director of custody visited every day. Several prisoners said that both were very approachable and helpful. Many issues were sorted out informally in this way. While prisoners were confident they could get access to the governor, none we spoke to were aware of any formal system of confidential access. A general application or complaint form was used for confidential access and prisoners had to ask for an envelope.
- 3.68 Written applications and complaints were logged on the wing in central registers. These recorded the prisoner's name, the general nature of the application or complaint, the date it was issued, the date it was resolved and the staff member who had resolved it. Completed

application and complaint forms were kept in individual wing files. There was no central tracking system and no routine analysis of complaints or monitoring of patterns or trends.

- 3.69 We examined some applications and complaints that had been dealt with. The forms set out the stages of the process but there was no personal reply to the prisoner and therefore no opportunity for an apology to be made when appropriate. Prisoners were informed about the progress and outcome of the application or complaint and shown the documentation.
- 3.70 A prisoner consultative committee had recently been introduced. Meetings were scheduled monthly and two representatives from each landing had the opportunity to raise concerns with staff. Only two meetings had taken place and it was too soon to assess the effectiveness of this forum.

Recommendations

- 3.71 Prisoners should be given full information in a format they are able to understand about how to make an application or complaint.
- 3.72 A formal system to allow prisoners to make confidential complaints and applications to the governor should be introduced.
- 3.73 Responses to complaints should be addressed to the prisoner.
- 3.74 Applications and complaints should be analysed and monitored for patterns or trends.

Child protection

- 3.75 All women prisoners and children were located together without a formal risk assessment of the implications of mixing. The child protection policy had not been updated to take account of the different and specific needs of women and girls. There was no over-arching strategy to coordinate anti-bullying, self-harm and suicide and child protection. There was too much reliance on the director of custody to implement all aspects of the child protection policy and insufficient involvement of residential staff. Some of the establishment's own policies, such as frequent and routine full body-searching, sometimes using force, did not take account of child protection considerations. Ash House was unsuitable for children.
- 3.76 Eight young women under the age of 21, including two children under the age of 18, were being held at Ash House. One 20 year-old was an immigration detainee. All women prisoners and children were located together and mixed freely in all aspects of their regime. The Northern Ireland Prison Service response to the consultation about the move said that girls under 18 would be held on separate landings. This was not the case, but given the very small numbers involved, would have been very isolating.
- 3.77 We received complaints from the younger prisoners that the older prisoners were intolerant of them, and complaints from the older prisoners about the immature and irresponsible behaviour of some of the younger women and children. The tension between them was not immediately obvious but prisoners and staff told us that the younger prisoners had a tendency to play their music loudly after evening lock up to the annoyance of the older prisoners.

- 3.78 There was no assessment of the risks associated with mixing the different age groups together, including Schedule One offenders. Staff demonstrated an extremely limited understanding of the child protection considerations associated with mixing children with adults.
- 3.79 The children who were sent to Ash House tended to be those who had been too difficult to manage at the Juvenile Justice Centre at Rathgael. The two juveniles currently held there and another who had just turned 18, were all prolific self-harmers. Two of these girls had also been subjected to periods of cellular confinement because of behaviour problems. Since the complex needs of these children had not been able to be met at Rathgael within the resources and specialist provision there it was not surprising that Ash House with fewer resources was not able to meet those needs.
- 3.80 All staff working at Ash House had been security checked through the appropriate external agencies to work with children.
- 3.81 There was a child protection policy but no staff had received specific child protection training, nor were they familiar with the establishment's own policy or procedures. It was not surprising, therefore, that the staff to whom we spoke did not have a clear understanding of what they should do if a child made a disclosure to them or if they identified concerns relating to a child protection issue.
- 3.82 Staff were clear that concerns should be passed on but suggested a variety of different routes of referral, including the psychology department or the security department. They did not demonstrate an understanding of the wider issues of a child protection referral, in particular with regard to historic abuse and the implications for potential victims. There had been no formal child protection referrals to the child protection coordinator from residential staff at Ash House since the women had arrived.
- 3.83 In contrast, the child protection coordinator, who was also the director of custody, demonstrated a very good understanding of child protection on a number of levels and had himself made child protection referrals that had been dealt with by the local child protection team. He had worked hard to develop good relationships with the local child protection agencies but there were no protocols or working agreements, and arrangements were mostly informal.
- 3.84 The director of custody had produced the child protection policy and chaired the child protection committee meetings. The meetings were poorly attended and no one from Ash House had attended since the arrival of women.
- 3.85 There was a lack of coordination with anti-bullying, self-harm and suicide and child protection and no overarching strategy incorporating all three strands. The policy had not been reviewed or updated since the women and children had arrived and the different and specific child protection considerations applicable to women and girls had not been considered despite the fact that this had been promised in the Northern Ireland Prison Service response to the consultation process. Some of the establishment's own policies, such as frequent and routine full body-searching, did not take account of child protection considerations.

Recommendations

- 3.86 There should be comprehensive risk assessments before locating prisoners and children within Ash House to ensure their safety.

- 3.87 Representatives from Ash House should attend the child protection committee meetings.
- 3.88 A safeguarding committee should be introduced to coordinate child protection, self-harm and suicide and anti-bullying in relation to girls under 18 years.
- 3.89 The child protection policy should be reviewed to take account of the different and specific child protection considerations applicable to women and girls.
- 3.90 The safeguarding committee should routinely monitor all three aspects of safeguarding to ensure that any concerns regarding the location of children with adult women are identified and acted on.

Section 4: Healthcare

Expected outcomes:

Prisoners should be cared for by a health service that assesses and meets their needs for healthcare while in prison and which promotes continuity of health and social care on release. The standard of healthcare provided is equivalent to that which prisoners could expect to receive in the community.

- 4.1 There had been some planning to meet the specific healthcare needs of women but a documented health needs assessment had not been undertaken. A woman general practitioner (GP) attended Ash House and prisoners could see the dentist and optician in the healthcare centre. Only 25% of respondents to our survey (against a benchmark of 40%) rated the overall quality of healthcare services as good or very good. There were problems with prescribing and administering medications.
- 4.2 The healthcare facilities were on the ground floor near the reception room. They were small but adequate. Resuscitation equipment and an emergency maternity pack were available but not all healthcare staff knew it was there or had been trained in how to use it. Information about the health needs of individuals was written on notice boards in the main treatment room, making it accessible to other prisoners. Clinical records were kept in a filing cabinet in one of the rooms.
- 4.3 Two female nursing staff undertook the majority of duties but other healthcare staff occasionally had to cover the duties due to vacancies. Only 32% of women surveyed (against a benchmark of 58%) rated the nursing staff as good or very good.
- 4.4 New arrivals were seen by a member of the healthcare team, who completed a standard health screening form and a short health promotion form that was not specific to women. There was no written information about the healthcare services available.
- 4.5 Prisoners completed an application to see the GP and were assessed by a nurse using written triage algorithms. If the nurse could not deal with the problem, an appointment was made to see the GP at the next available clinic. A woman GP attended Ash House on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings.
- 4.6 In our survey, 42% of respondents rated the doctor as good or very good. However, prisoners complained that the doctor either reduced their dosages of drugs when they arrived or changed the prescription, which was potentially unsafe. We found some examples of poor prescribing practices.
- 4.7 Staff had devised a comprehensive well woman questionnaire and had begun to implement it as part of a well woman clinic. It included details of chronic diseases and questions specific to women's health such as cervical smear history and mammography. Only a few prisoners had been seen it and most were unaware of the initiative.
- 4.8 The GP allowed medications in possession following a risk assessment. Otherwise, medications were administered three times a day. The nurse put each prisoner's medication into a separate named bag before putting the bags in a lockable case. The nurse then went to each wing and administered the medications from the desk. This practice was neither safe nor legal.

- 4.9 The waiting lists for specialist consultants and other health professionals, such as the dentist and optician, were integrated with the main Hydebank Wood lists. The waiting time to see the dentist was approximately nine weeks and we were told that waiting times had recently increased following a reduction in the number of dental sessions.
- 4.10 Prisoners needing to see a dentist or optician went to the main healthcare centre in the young offenders' centre but finding staff to escort them was a problem and we were told that there were often delays. There was only one waiting room, so women could not be taken there until all the young male offenders had left. Visiting consultants saw their patients in the medical room at Ash House.
- 4.11 The inpatient facilities in the healthcare centre consisted of two observation cells with safer cell furniture and closed-circuit television, two three-bed dormitories and a single cell where the (male) hospital orderly lived. Any woman admitted to the healthcare centre therefore occupied one of the two observation cells. The beds in the healthcare centre were not part of the prison's certified normal accommodation.
- 4.12 The one woman in the healthcare centre was not, we were told, a patient but was there because there was no suitable accommodation for her at Ash House. It was not clear why. She had one discipline officer allocated to her and told us that she had come straight to the healthcare centre on arrival. She spent most of the day in her cell with nothing to do, so she lay curled up under her strip-blankets. She ate alone in her cell and could come out only when no clinics for the young men were in progress or when the male inpatients were locked in their cells. She had spent some periods of association in Ash House.
- 4.13 A female clinical psychiatrist provided two sessions a week, usually split equally between Ash House and the rest of Hydebank Wood.

Recommendations

- 4.14 A specific health needs assessment should be undertaken for the prisoners at Ash House to ensure that the correct range of services is provided.
- 4.15 The healthcare centre should be adapted so that both men and women can be cared for in suitable separate accommodation.
- 4.16 All healthcare staff should have resuscitation training, including emergency childbirth, at least annually.
- 4.17 The well woman clinic should involve and be open to all women at Ash House.
- 4.18 Secondary dispensing of medications should end and medications should be administered from a secure environment.

Housekeeping points

- 4.19 Notice boards displaying information about individuals should be out of sight of other patients in order to maintain medical confidentiality.
- 4.20 The health promotion topics discussed on arrival should reflect the needs of women.

Section 5: Activities

Education and library provision

Expected outcomes:

Education and skills training meet the requirements of the Adult Learning Inspectorate's common inspection framework (separately inspected by ALI). Prisoners are encouraged and enabled to learn both during and after sentence, as part of sentence planning; and have access to good library facilities.

5.1 We were not accompanied by the Adult Learning Inspectorate so did not make an assessment about the professional delivery of education. The education curriculum was limited and there were waiting lists for classes. Prisoners could gain basic skills accreditation only in education. Access to the library was poor.

Education

- 5.2 The overall prisoner population at Hydebank Wood had tripled over the previous four years and the establishment had not managed to increase constructive activities in education, training and work to keep pace with the increased level of demand. The arrival of the women in June 2004 without extra resources had exacerbated the problem. There was little evidence of the enhanced regime which had been promised.
- 5.3 A new learning and skills centre had opened with increased classroom spaces but there were not enough teachers to utilise the centre to its full capacity. The arrival of the women and the requirement to keep them separate from the young men had also resulted in a reduction of activity places for the young men.
- 5.4 The head of inmate activities had recently proposed the provision of three additional workshops, including specific provision for the women. This proposal involved substantial capital costs and there were no firm plans to increase the existing provision. A resettlement needs analysis of the female population was planned for January 2005. In the meantime, the type of education, work and vocational and skills training on offer was dependent on what was deliverable rather than what was needed and no prisoners were able to be employed full time.
- 5.5 New receptions (committals) were generally located on A3 landing for a period of assessment. There was no prescribed induction programme, neither was there any written information setting out what education, training or employment opportunities were available. Staff told us that the committal period on A3 was used to inform prisoners of the opportunities but most prisoners said that few formalities were undertaken during this time and that they found out what they wanted to know from other prisoners.
- 5.6 Monday was assessment day and all prisoners (apart from fine defaulters on very short sentences) had to undertake the basic skills assessment (BSA) test within two weeks of their arrival. Inevitably, there was some delay in carrying out BSA tests as formal assessment was a once-a-week event.

- 5.7 Education was limited to essential (basic) skills in literacy and numeracy. A recent analysis of initial assessments indicated that the number of women achieving level one or below was increasing and the existing provision (four sessions each week of literacy and numeracy) was inadequate.
- 5.8 There were also 'recreational' classes in cookery, art, craft and leathercraft. Other than the possibility of gaining basic skills accreditation, there were no opportunities to gain accreditation in any of the other subjects. There were two education sessions each day, most of which could take only between six and eight students. Consequently, there were waiting lists.
- 5.9 Prisoners gave mixed views about the quality of the education. Some who attended classes said they enjoyed what they did but the majority complained about the very narrow curriculum and insufficient access to classes. They also complained about the lack of parity with what they perceived was on offer to the young men at Hydebank Wood, particularly the lack of opportunity to gain qualifications. One long-term prisoner was undertaking a considerable amount of private study following an Open University course and was also employed in the gardens. She was fully occupied and satisfied with her personal allocation to activity but her case was unrepresentative. In our survey, 31% of respondents (against a benchmark of 50%) said that their education would help them on release.

Library

- 5.10 Access to the library was included in the education timetable on Monday afternoons. However, staff and prisoners told us that it was not always possible to take groups across to the library when there were staff shortages. In our survey, only 10% of respondents (against a benchmark of 43%) said that they could go to the library at least once a week. This was a pity because many prisoners spoke highly of the service they received from the qualified librarian when they were able to get there. Weekly access to the library was insufficient, particularly considering the overall lack of purposeful activity available.

Recommendations

- 5.11 The range of activities should be linked to a resettlement needs analysis.
- 5.12 There should be a more varied educational curriculum.
- 5.13 Access to the library should be at least twice a week.

Work

Expected outcomes:

Prisoners are engaged in safe work and are treated fairly. Work should prepare prisoners for employment on release and help to reduce offending.

- 5.14 The majority of prisoners were employed in domestic tasks and there were waiting lists for work. No accredited employment or training was taking place.

- 5.15 Other than wing work, there were only 16 employment or vocational training places available: 10 in the gardens and six in information technology (IT). This was insufficient to meet the level of demand.
- 5.16 None of the prisoners working in the gardens or IT had the opportunity to gain any accreditation, although plans were in hand to offer the CLAIT (computer literacy and information technology) certificate. Some of the prisoners working in the gardens had been working towards City and Guilds certification at Mourne House but the process of internal verification had not been completed at Hydebank Wood. Prisoners working in the gardens were supported by an excellent officer who had transferred from Mourne House and whom they clearly related to very well. Despite the lack of accreditation, prisoners working in the gardens were producing Christmas table decorations and gaining a great deal of personal satisfaction from the work.
- 5.17 The majority of prisoners had been allocated some form of wing work such as orderlies/cleaners, servery or laundry workers. Even in this category of work, there was insufficient to occupy everyone. Those employed as cleaners pointed out the small areas for which they were responsible and where the borders of other prisoners' cleaning areas were.
- 5.18 In our survey, 22% of respondents (against a benchmark of 34%) said that their job would help them on release and 26% (against a benchmark of 34%) said the same about their vocational or skills training.

Recommendation

- 5.19 Education, work and vocational skills training should provide prisoners with opportunities to gain useful qualifications.

Physical education and health promotion

Expected outcomes:

Physical education and facilities meet the requirements of the Adult Learning Inspectorate's common inspection framework (separately inspected by ALI). Prisoners are also encouraged and enabled to take part in recreational PE, in safe and decent surroundings.

- 5.20 Physical education (PE) staff at Hydebank Wood had made good efforts to ensure that they catered for the specific needs of women. They had sought the views of the women before their arrival at the establishment and provided a range of suitable activities.
- 5.21 PE staff at Hydebank Wood had visited the women prisoners at Mourne House before the move to seek their views about what gym facilities they wanted. When the women arrived, staff took them on a tour of the facilities and gave them a talk about the way they should behave when using the gym and facilities. A member of the PE staff saw new arrivals to Ash House individually.
- 5.22 The women could use the PE facilities at four sessions each week. Two of the sessions were specifically for women and girls who were considered vulnerable.

- 5.23 Prisoners could do a variety of activities including using a trampoline, table tennis, football and aerobics. They were also able to use the gym facilities, which included cardiovascular equipment and weights. Illustrated instructions about how to use the equipment included pictures of women rather than just men.
- 5.24 The women were encouraged to work towards various targets and were given certificates for achievement, for example in weight-training. One woman had successfully completed her YMCA gym instructor's course, which had encouraged other women and two had signed up to do the same course. Prisoners were also encouraged to take part in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme and two were presented with their silver endeavour awards during the inspection.
- 5.25 The changing and showering facilities for women prisoners who had used the gym were clean and included individual shower cubicles with curtains. However, staff told us that most of the women preferred to return to Ash House to shower and change.
- 5.26 PE staff offered some other courses such as manual handling and a first aid course, which 10 women had successfully completed. Some health promotion posters were displayed showing the harmful effects of a variety of substances on women.
- 5.27 Other activities organised by the PE department included preparing leaflet packs for the Northern Ireland Cancer Fund for Children. PE staff had also organised social events for the women.

Faith and religious activity

Expected outcomes:

All prisoners are able to practise their religion fully and in safety. The chaplaincy plays a full part in prison life and contributes to prisoners' overall care, support and resettlement.

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| 5.28 | Women prisoners could attend the chapel but not on Sundays. A member of the chaplaincy team visited Ash House daily, which was appreciated. |
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- 5.29 In our survey, 60% of respondents said that their religious beliefs were respected. Seventy-one per cent were able to speak to a religious leader of their own faith in private if they wanted to do so. Fourteen prisoners were recorded as Roman Catholic, 17 as other Christian denominations and one as a Muslim.
 - 5.30 The chaplaincy team were all part-time members of staff, led by a Roman Catholic chaplain. The team included Presbyterian, Church of Ireland and Methodist ministers and a Free Presbyterian chaplain. The team was also able to contact ministers of other faiths and religions when required and had previously done so for a Muslim prisoner. One woman who said she was a Mormon said she was unable to see a minister of her religion.
 - 5.31 Prisoners particularly appreciated the daily visits to Ash House by a member of the chaplaincy team and several told us how helpful this individual had been. We were also told that the team would assist prisoners on immediate release from prison by, for example, taking them to the local train station.

- 5.32 Prisoners could use the chapel on Wednesdays but not on Sundays when services were provided for the young men. There was a Roman Catholic, a Free Presbyterian and an ecumenical service. While the quality of the services was good, attending chapel on a Wednesday meant that some prisoners could miss other purposeful activities. We were told that prisoners played an active part in the services, including reading and taking part in open prayers. In their response to the consultation process on the transfer of women from Maghaberry to Hydebank Wood the Northern Ireland Prison Service said that it did 'not accept that there will be an adverse effect on women in custody. Access to church will be provided to all denominations and will be complemented with Saturday evening and accommodation-based services'. This had not happened.

Recommendation

- 5.33 Prisoners should be able to attend services on a Saturday evening or a Sunday if they wish to do so.

Time out of cell

Expected outcomes:

All prisoners are actively encouraged to engage in out of cell activities, and the prison offers a timetable of regular and varied extra-mural activities.

- 5.34 Time out of cell was reasonable but there was insufficient purposeful activity. Opportunities for exercise in the fresh air were inadequate.

- 5.35 The majority of prisoners told us that they mostly had very little to do during the day. While we were pleased that they were not locked in their cells during periods of inactivity, they spent much of their time in the association rooms, sitting at the tables talking to each other which was dispiriting. Prisoners on the standard level of the incentives scheme were unlocked for approximately eight hours each weekday, while those on the enhanced level were unlocked for 10 hours.

- 5.36 Evening association was rarely cancelled and prisoners associated freely with each other during the day in the absence of sufficient purposeful activity. In our survey, 70% of respondents (against a benchmark of 49%) said that they had association more than five times a week.

- 5.37 Access to exercise in the fresh air was not regularly available and was subject to cancellation due to lack of staff. Prisoners said that when exercise was offered it was usually just in the caged yard at the end of A1, which they referred to as the 'hamster cage', as this was more convenient for staff. They were very frustrated by the unpredictability of outdoor exercise and told us that this led to competition to take the rubbish bins outside simply to get some fresh air.

Recommendation

- 5.38 Prisoners should have exercise in the fresh air every day.

Section 6: Good order

Security and rules

Expected outcomes:

Security and good order are maintained through positive staff–prisoner relationships based on mutual respect as well as attention to physical and procedural matters. Rules and routines are well publicised, proportionate, fair and encourage responsible behaviour. Categorisation and allocation procedures are based on assessment of a prisoner’s risks and needs; and are clearly explained, fairly applied and routinely reviewed.

- 6.1 Physical security was too restrictive for many prisoners and freedom of movement of low risk women was unduly inhibited by sharing the site with young men. The practice of full body-searching all prisoners before and after visits was demeaning and unnecessary. The rules of the prison were not well publicised.
- 6.2 There were no obvious weaknesses in physical and procedural security. All prisoners, whatever their individual risk factors, were subject to the same level of security. This meant that very low risk prisoners such as fine defaulters were held in the same conditions as those regarded as high risk on remand for serious charges. Too many prisoners were therefore held in over-restrictive conditions. In other jurisdictions, many would have been in open prisons. The fact that the site was shared with young men meant that it was not possible to offer women prisoners free access to the grounds.
- 6.3 Since their arrival at Hydebank Wood, women prisoners had all been required to undergo a full body-search before and after a visit. We were told that this was because there was a temporary visits facility and it was not possible to search visitors. This was an unacceptable reason for subjecting women to such frequent and demeaning searches, which unaccountably were even undertaken when prisoners were having official or closed visits.
- 6.4 Staff and prisoners had relatively distant relationships so there was little evidence of dynamic security and the relative lack of purposeful activity did not help.
- 6.5 There was no evidence that the rules and routines of Ash House were prominently displayed. Prisoners said that they mostly learned what was expected of them from each other.
- 6.6 As there was only one prison for women in Northern Ireland, for all practical purposes all were effectively held in the same security categorisation. Some were categorised as high or low risk but this made little difference to their daily lives in the prison.

Recommendations

- 6.7 Routine full body-searching of prisoners entering and leaving visits should stop. Full body-searching of prisoners should take place only for sound security reasons based on an individual risk assessment.

- 6.8 All prisoners at Ash House should be provided with an individual copy of the rules and procedures, and these should also be displayed on each landing.

Discipline

Expected outcomes:

Disciplinary procedures are applied fairly and for good reason. Prisoners understand why they are being disciplined and can appeal against any sanctions imposed on them.

- 6.9 Records of adjudications showed little evidence of enquiry, and punishments were very severe with too much use of cellular confinement combined with a blanket loss of all privileges, even for children. Charges were brought against women and girls who were self-harming. There was a lack of clarity about the different functions of support and punishment on the segregation unit. There was no analysis of trends of use of force or special accommodation.

Disciplinary procedures

- 6.10 Some prisoners told us that officers sometimes imposed unofficial group punishments. In one of our prisoner groups, we were told that officers sometimes used the 'loss of night toilet' as an unofficial punishment, which meant that prisoners had to use the pots in their cells rather than being unlocked to use the toilets. It was not possible to corroborate this during this short inspection.
- 6.11 We reviewed the records of a number of adjudications and were surprised to see how little was entered. The Northern Ireland adjudications manual stipulated that adjudicators were required to 'inquire into a report that an offence has been committed under Rule 38. It is for the adjudicator to ascertain the facts by questioning the accused, the reporting officer and any other witnesses...' It went on to say that 'from the record it should be possible to reconstruct the course of the hearing and to identify whether decisions were made and the grounds for these decisions, including the ultimate findings'. In almost all the records we saw, the only detail included was the charge, the preliminary formalities entered on the form and the reporting officer's statement. Even when a prisoner pleaded not guilty, we saw no evidence of inquiry and questioning. We were told later that all adjudication records were tape recorded. While this would provide a good record of an adjudication in the event of a challenge, the absence of a written record which recorded the salient points of an adjudication meant that it would be difficult for adjudicators to check quickly what had been said earlier in a hearing, or for new adjudicators to bring themselves quickly up to speed with adjourned hearings. The absence of a written record would also make it more difficult for a governing governor to quality check adjudications. And there was no immediate record which could be given to the young prisoner on request. Children under 18 years were subject to exactly the same procedures as adults with no independent person present to represent their interests.
- 6.12 We were very concerned that disciplinary charges had been brought against a child under 18 years who was self-harming. Again, the adjudications manual stipulated that 'disciplinary charges should not normally be brought either in respect of deliberate self-harm or preparation for self-harm' but this advice appeared not to have been followed. A number of charges were brought against the same individual who was repeatedly self-harming. As it appeared to be having little effect on her pattern of behaviour, it was hard to see why the prison was taking this extreme, exceptional action.

- 6.13 Punishments in general were severe and with no evidence on the records that any mitigating circumstances were taken into account. Cellular confinement was used regularly for long periods with a loss of all other possessions and privileges. This effectively meant that women and children were being subjected to virtual sensory deprivation held in bare cells for long periods. As an example, we saw a punishment of 28 days loss of all association and 17 days cellular confinement and loss of all facilities for swearing at and insulting an officer.

Use of force

- 6.14 In our survey, a significantly higher percentage of respondents than the benchmark reported having been subject to the use of force by physical restraint. The records we saw were appropriately documented but it was not possible in the time available to analyse the extent of its use. No management information was being produced to analyse numbers, locations and trends in the use of force.

Segregation unit

- 6.15 The segregation unit was on A1 landing and divided into two sections by a gate. The first section was the special support unit for prisoners at risk of self-harm, while the cells at the end of the unit were the punishment cells for those serving periods of cellular confinement. The unit was very clean and well ordered but the special support unit was very stark.
- 6.16 One of the four safer cells was on the support end of the landing with an observation camera but the other three were at the punishment end of the landing. Vulnerable prisoners were often held there, adding to a lack of clarity about the purpose of the landing, which was fulfilling two very distinct functions. The cells were unacceptably cold. It was not clear how and when the decision had been made that individual prisoners not held on the landing for punishment should be held in unfurnished cells. There was no overall monitoring of use.
- 6.17 It was apparent from segregation unit records that prisoners on cellular confinement were not allowed to attend religious services. We were told that prisoners would still be allowed to have visits.
- 6.18 In our survey, a significantly higher percentage of respondents than the benchmark said that they had spent some time in the segregation unit.

Recommendations

- 6.19 Girls under 18 years should be represented at adjudications by an independent advocate.
- 6.20 Punishments of cellular confinement should not be accompanied by a loss of all privileges.
- 6.21 The punishment and care functions currently on A1 landing should be entirely separate.
- 6.22 Cells on A1 should be heated to an acceptable level and the temperature checked regularly.
- 6.23 Accurate collated records should be kept of all occasions when women and girls are held in unfurnished cells and in anti-suicide suits. These should be used only in extreme and exceptional circumstances.

- 6.24 Prisoners on A1 should have access to most regime activities, including library, education, work and religious services, unless there are overriding security issues.
- 6.25 Senior managers should receive and analyse regular monitoring information about patterns of the use of the segregation unit, use of force and use of special unfurnished accommodation, which should be authorised at an appropriate managerial level.

Incentives and earned privileges

Expected outcomes:

Incentives and earned privilege schemes are well publicised, designed to improve behaviour and are applied fairly, transparently and consistently within and between establishments, with regular reviews.

- 6.26 Prisoners at Ash House were subject to the same incentives scheme as that used in the young offenders' centre. This was inappropriate for adult women, some of whom found it demeaning. A new scheme was being developed.
- 6.27 The incentives scheme used was designed for young men and had last been reviewed in September 2003 before women arrived at Hydebank Wood. On reception, women signed the young offenders' centre compact. Some women complained that some staff treated them 'like children'.
- 6.28 Women could progress to the enhanced level after achieving 'good reports' for four consecutive weeks. This required them to achieve over 55 points a week based on their behaviour, hygiene and activities. Some complained that staff applied the system arbitrarily. Only 28% of respondents to our survey (against a benchmark of 51%) said that they felt fairly treated.
- 6.29 Only those prisoners on enhanced were entitled to have a television, which meant that prisoners new to custody did not have the helpful diversion of a television in their room. Many prisoners stayed only a short time and would never be able to achieve enhanced level. Two consecutive weeks of less than 18 points could lead to demotion. One entry in a house file read 'zeroed as refused to dress in safety suit after suicide attempt'. Once demoted, prisoners could spend long periods on the basic level. In some cases, this could be up to eight weeks if they had previously been demoted. It could take a further four weeks to achieve enhanced.
- 6.30 Extra association was a welcome privilege and incentive for those on the enhanced landing (A4) but this was not available to enhanced-level prisoners on A2.
- 6.31 Fifteen prisoners were on the enhanced level, 12 were on standard and four were on basic. One prisoner was designated 'special basic'. There was no reference to this level in the published scheme and it had been developed in response to the perceived special needs of one prisoner who self-harmed prolifically.
- 6.32 A new incentives policy was being developed.

Recommendations

- 6.33 A new incentives scheme appropriate to meet the needs of prisoners at Ash House should be introduced.
- 6.34 Prisoners on the standard level of the incentives scheme should have televisions.
- 6.35 Prisoners on the same incentives scheme level should have access to similar privileges regardless of location.
- 6.36 Prisoners at risk of self-harm and suicide should not be placed on the basic level of the incentives scheme and should be managed according to their individual care plans.

Section 7: Services

Catering

Expected outcomes:

Prisoners are offered varied meals to meet their individual requirements and food is prepared and served according to religious, cultural and prevailing food safety and hygiene regulations.

- 7.1 Women had the same menu choice as that provided in the young offenders' centre. There had been no specific survey of women's dietary needs. There were few complaints about the catering provision.
- 7.2 Meals were prepared in a central kitchen and taken to Ash House on heated trolleys. Lunch was served at noon. The evening meal was served at 5.30pm on weekdays but at the considerably earlier time of 3.45pm at weekends. We were told that there were plans to change this to 5.30pm.
- 7.3 The kitchen prepared meals for prisoners with special diets usually on the advice of a doctor. It had not routinely been required to provide diets for black and minority ethnic prisoners, although it could do so at short notice through local purchase orders.
- 7.4 Women had the same meal choice as that provided in the young offenders' centre. This was on a three-week cycle and was chosen from a pre-select menu. Low fat, healthy option and vegetarian meals were included every day. Breakfast was pre-packed and included cereal and toast. A cooked breakfast was provided at weekends. The catering manager monitored daily choices, which gave an indication of items that were becoming less popular.
- 7.5 Prisoners' views of catering were established through an annual survey, although no formal survey of women's views had been undertaken. Catering had not been raised by prisoners at the two meetings with management since the move. In our survey, 27% of respondents (against a benchmark of 33%) rated the food as good or very good. The next catering survey was due in January 2005.
- 7.6 The landing serveries were clean. Servery checks were done by kitchen staff and a 'weekly servery hygiene audit' was completed. Castlereagh Borough Council analysed the quality of food twice a year. Women working on the servery completed a one-hour basic food hygiene course.

Recommendations

- 7.7 Surveys should consider the specific dietary needs of prisoners at Ash House.
- 7.8 Catering and tuck should be a standing agenda item at the meeting between prisoners and senior managers responsible for Ash House.

Prison shop

Expected outcomes:

Prisoners can purchase a suitable range of goods at reasonable prices to meet their ethnic, cultural and gender needs, and can do so safely, from an effectively managed shop.

7.9 We heard few complaints about the shop. The prices and product range were set centrally and reviewed quarterly. Prices were reasonable. Profits were shared equally with headquarters, with profits received by the establishment put in a governor's fund that was used for the benefit of prisoners.

7.10 Prisoners had good access to the shop and could usually make a purchase from it within 24 hours of reception. A canteen order could then be made weekly. Purchases were bagged and delivered to the unit along with a printed receipt. Any mistakes in the order were confirmed with an officer. Catalogue purchases could also be made. Prisoners' families could make arrangements to supply newspapers and magazines through a local newsagent.

Section 8: Resettlement

Resettlement strategy

Expected outcomes:

Resettlement underpins the work of the whole establishment, supported by strategic partnerships in the community and informed by assessment of prisoner risk and need so as to minimise the likelihood of reoffending on release.

- 8.1 A resettlement strategy for the Northern Ireland Prison Service had been published in June 2004 but it contained little about the particular needs of women. The resettlement team met regularly but there was no strategy specific to the needs of prisoners at Ash House.
- 8.2 The Northern Ireland Prison Service resettlement strategy had been published in June 2004. It was based on a strategic review of resettlement services by the Probation Board for Northern Ireland in 2003. It contained almost nothing about the specific needs of women prisoners, with only three brief references to women, one in relation to resuming responsibility for the care of children. The others referred to women along with other minority groups such as foreign national prisoners and people with disabilities whose resettlement needs might differ.
- 8.3 There was no written local resettlement strategy for Hydebank Wood and no specific strategy for the prisoners at Ash House. The head of inmate activities was the resettlement lead and chaired the resettlement group, which usually met monthly. Key staff usually attended the meeting, including representatives from education, vocational training, probation, psychology and the Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO). Residential staff from Ash House did not attend.
- 8.4 Minutes of the meetings suggested that there had been a lack of strategic approach in the past. The October meeting, which had been attended by the new head of resettlement policy from the Northern Ireland Prison Service headquarters, had recognised this and had discussed how to make the meeting more focused on achieving policy objectives. However, there had been no discussion about the particular resettlement needs of prisoners at Ash House and little differentiation in the reports to the meeting between adult and young women and the young men in the rest of the establishment.

Recommendation

- 8.5 There should be a specific local resettlement strategy for women and girls, based on a needs analysis, with an action plan to ensure that all staff at Ash House are aware of their resettlement responsibilities.

Sentence and custody planning

Expected outcomes:

All prisoners have a sentence or custody plan based upon an individual assessment of risks and needs, regularly reviewed and implemented throughout and after their time in custody. Prisoners, together with all relevant staff, are involved with drawing up and reviewing plans.

- 8.6 Individual resettlement plans were prepared for all categories of prisoner. There were no separate arrangements for women and girls and little ownership of the process among Ash House staff.
- 8.7 Sentence and custody planning was based on a resettlement plan that had replaced what were previously known as personal development plans. The plans covered all prisoners, including short-termers and unconvicted. An 'inmates' initial resettlement plan' was completed for most prisoners within two weeks. More detailed reports were then commissioned in order to complete the full resettlement plan which included education, resettlement and probation action plans.
- 8.8 There was a target of five weeks, after which formal resettlement boards were held weekly for all prisoners at Hydebank Wood. There were no separate arrangements for the women and girls. Not all plans were up to date and the head of inmate activities said that 50% remained to be allocated. Completed plans that we looked at did not contain much detailed information and there were few clear targets. Reviews were planned to take place every three months but we were told that these were not always happening.
- 8.9 The families and carers of those under 18 years were invited to take part in the process. Managers had considered extending this to all prisoners at Ash House but felt this would be difficult as the same would also have to be done for all the young adult men.
- 8.10 A final review of the resettlement plan took place about two weeks before discharge and all relevant departments were asked to contribute. However, residential staff from Ash House were not involved. The head of inmate activities was confident that these pre-discharge reviews took place for all women but it was not always possible to ensure that all needs were met. Finding appropriate housing was particularly difficult.

Recommendations

- 8.11 Separate resettlement plan arrangements and reviews involving residential staff from Ash House should be put in place for women and girls.
- 8.12 Resettlement plans should have clear achievable targets and identified staff, including Ash House officers, should be involved in helping to ensure that targets are met.

Offending behaviour programmes

Expected outcomes:

Effective programmes are available to address identified prisoner risk and need, to allow timely progression through sentence.

- 8.13 There were no accredited offending behaviour programmes and extra resources for women had not yet been provided. One psychologist for the whole establishment worked with the most vulnerable women.
- 8.14 A single psychologist provided psychological services to the whole establishment. Extra resources had been promised with the arrival of the women but had yet to become a reality. No accredited offending behaviour programmes were offered to the women but the psychologist had been working individually with some of the most vulnerable.
- 8.15 The psychologist was aware of the difficulties of providing group work to such a small, transitory and disparate group of women. She therefore intended to introduce a modular living skills programme that would be responsive to the differing needs of the women. Plans were in place to conduct a needs analysis of the female population and staff training sessions were scheduled to take place to raise awareness of issues including self-harm, substance use, vulnerability and mental illness.

Recommendation

- 8.16 A full analysis of the offending behaviour needs of women prisoners in Northern Ireland should be undertaken, with an assessment of how those needs would best be met.

Reintegration planning

Expected outcomes:

Prisoners are supported to return to the community in safety and dignity, using community and family links and appropriate licence and curfew arrangements to meet their practical needs and maximise the prospects for avoiding reoffending on release.

- 8.17 Reintegration services were insufficiently adapted for women. Probation services helped individual women, but few prisoners knew who to contact in the prison to get help for their successful return to the community.
- 8.18 The resettlement planning system (see sentence and custody planning section) aimed to identify reintegration needs and all prisoners had a review of their resettlement plan to check on outstanding needs before discharge. Housing was identified as the biggest issue facing those leaving prison and almost a third of the prisoners were regarded as homeless.
- 8.19 As in most other areas, the women at Ash House were reliant on the pre-existing reintegration services for young male offenders at Hydebank Wood. These included a weekly half-day benefits advice and links with NIACRO (Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders) services for guidance on employment. For those prisoners with

substance abuse problems, there was good support through Opportunity Youth, which provided mentoring services for up to six months or helped with referrals to appropriate agencies. Opportunity Youth was originally designed to meet the needs of young men in Hydebank Wood but, despite its name, offered services to women of all ages and had adapted some of its provision to take account of the needs of women.

- 8.20 Most reintegration issues were identified by the probation department dealing with individual cases. There was no overall systematic measurement of outcomes. As with other resettlement work, and in the absence of any personal officer system, prison officers were not involved in this area of work. Our survey showed that significantly fewer prisoners than the benchmark knew how to get help in the prison across the whole range of resettlement issues, including employment, benefits, finances, drugs, healthcare and education.
- 8.21 There was little planned use of release on temporary licence to help with reintegration. Since June 2004 only three prisoners had been given any home leave.

Recommendations

- 8.22 An analysis of the reintegration needs of women prisoners in Northern Ireland should be undertaken and appropriate services provided.
- 8.23 Information on how to get advice on housing, benefits, employment and other reintegration matters should be provided and advertised to all prisoners.
- 8.24 All eligible prisoners, subject to a suitable risk assessment, should have a period of home leave as part of their planned preparation for release.

Life-sentenced prisoners

Expected outcomes:

Life-sentenced prisoners should receive equal treatment in terms of their treatment and the conditions in which they are held. These expectations refer to specific issues, which relate to the management of life-sentenced prisoners.

- 8.25 There were two life-sentenced prisoners. Satisfactory lifer work was being carried out but the potential for progress and development for female life-sentenced prisoners was very limited.
- 8.26 There were only two life-sentenced prisoners. One had completed seven years of a 12-year tariff and the other was over three years into a 15-year tariff. Two prisoners on remand facing possible life sentences had been identified as potential lifers. The life sentence system had been explained to them and they were invited to attend quarterly lifer meetings.
- 8.27 Once a prisoner had been sentenced to life, a multi-agency panel was held to assess risk. These panels were attended by the lifer officers, investigating police officer, police liaison officer and the assigned probation officer. The lifer manager was a principal officer and in addition there was a senior officer and three lifer-trained officers, all of whom were women. These lifer officers acted as personal officers for the lifers and contributed to their reports.

- 8.28 There was a comprehensive life sentence planning system and full reviews of all lifer cases in Northern Ireland took place annually in addition to individual local annual reviews. Life sentence plans were appropriate for the individual prisoners. As there was only one prison in Northern Ireland holding women, there was no scope to progress to lower security establishments. There was therefore a need for some careful thought to be given about how best to ensure life-sentenced women prisoners could achieve more responsibility for their own lives as they began to move towards release.
- 8.29 No special lifer days had been held but we were told that the establishment intended to provide some family-centred visits once the new visits building opened.

Recommendation

- 8.30 Life-sentenced prisoners should have the opportunity to have family-centred visits including the opportunity to show their families where they live.

Public protection

Expected outcomes:

Arrangements are in place to assess and manage the risks presented to the public by prisoners during sentence and after release. Clear systems operate to ensure that all affected prisoners are fully informed of the arrangements, the implications for them individually and the avenues available to them for challenge.

- 8.31 The public protection policy was in draft and did not adequately cover procedures for women and girls. There were no clear arrangements for protecting vulnerable prisoners in a mixed environment. The responsibility of all staff for public protection was not well established.
- 8.32 There was a draft public protection policy for the whole of Hydebank Wood. It was dated April 2003 but had yet to be formally agreed. It formed a reasonable basis for setting out the strategy and procedures for identifying and managing prisoners subject to public protection procedures but there was no specific section on women prisoners.
- 8.33 The draft policy made it clear that every member of staff was responsible for public protection but in practice residential staff played little part. The active management of public protection procedures was mainly carried out by local probation staff in conjunction with the police liaison officer.
- 8.34 The probation officer responsible for Ash House acted as the public protection coordinator. She was able to identify immediately those prisoners who were subject to public protection procedures and ensured that the relevant agencies were kept informed. Three prisoners were subject to public protection arrangements. All were Schedule One offenders. There were arrangements for multi-agency sex offender risk assessment management procedures but release for those involved was some way off.
- 8.35 Officers at Ash House were not actively involved in the management of Schedule One cases. Although the individuals were identified, it was possible for a Schedule One offender to mix with children without any specific risk assessment. Public protection cases were reviewed quarterly but there was no guidance for staff about how they should supervise potentially risky

cases and how to report to those reviews. The draft public protection policy did not cover procedures for protecting child visitors.

Recommendations

- 8.36 A local public protection policy should be agreed that covers the specific arrangements for women and girls at Ash House, including allocation procedures and visits.
- 8.37 Clear guidance should be issued to all staff making them aware of their public protection responsibilities and the arrangements for reporting to reviews of public protection cases.

Substance use

Expected outcomes:

Prisoners with substance-related needs are identified at reception and receive effective support and treatment throughout their stay in custody, including pre-release planning. All prisoners are safe from exposure to and the effects of substance use while in prison.

- 8.38 Some detoxification policies were in place but facilities were inadequate to meet the needs of prisoners. There were good links with the drug counselling service, Opportunity Youth, which provided accredited drugs courses, mentoring and counselling services. The drug strategy was being rewritten to include the needs of women prisoners.
- 8.39 The Northern Ireland Prison Service drugs formulary included detoxification policies and a section for the detoxification of pregnant women. The policies were in the process of being written to reflect the introduction of substitute prescribing to Northern Ireland in April 2004. Two members of the healthcare team and the GP had undertaken a short course in addiction services in light of the changes to prescribing practices.
- 8.40 The healthcare centre staff did not keep statistics about the number of women who had undergone detoxification. We were told that alcohol misuse was a particular problem and one woman had had to be admitted to the local hospital because of her alcohol abuse so that she could have detoxification medication. In our survey, 30% of respondents (against a benchmark of 12%) thought that they would have a problem with alcohol on release.
- 8.41 Women were referred to their local addiction services and women who were already having maintenance therapy had this continued while at Ash House.
- 8.42 The drugs steering committee met monthly and there were minutes of the meetings. Staff were rewriting the drug strategy document to reflect the needs of women and girls and to include alcohol.
- 8.43 The drugs counselling service, Opportunity Youth, worked at Hydebank Wood and provided services for the young men and women. It had undertaken a needs assessment of the female population, which revealed that over half had committed offences while under the influence of substances. Nine women admitted to using drugs (prescription and/or illegal) before committal. The greatest need was identified as counselling and the organisation had therefore employed a full-time counsellor.

- 8.44 Opportunity Youth ran an accredited drugs programme called 'positive steps'. Ten women had undertaken the course, each of whom had a key worker who saw her regularly while she was in prison. They then followed them up for six months after release or, referred to other relevant services for further support.
- 8.45 There were two active and two passive drug dogs. Target drug searches were conducted as a result of intelligence. If a drug dog indicated that a visitor might be carrying drugs, the prisoner and her visitor met in closed conditions for that visit. We were told that the majority of drug finds were prescription drugs such as benzodiazepines.

Recommendations

- 8.46 There should be adequate healthcare facilities to care for women requiring detoxification.
- 8.47 A separate drug strategy relevant to the needs of women and girls at Ash House should be developed.
- 8.48 Separate statistics should be kept about the number of women who undergo detoxification.

Section 9: Recommendations and housekeeping points

The following is a listing of recommendations and housekeeping points included in this report. The reference numbers at the end of each refer to the paragraph location in the main report.

Main recommendations To the Director General Northern Ireland

- 9.1 The Northern Ireland Prison Service should draw up a policy and strategic plan for the treatment of women in custody in Northern Ireland based on a full assessment of their specific needs. In the meantime the expertise from other UK jurisdictions should be used to advise and assist urgently in key safety areas such as caring for women who are at risk of self-harm and suicide, or who have substance use problems. (HP43)
- 9.2 A separate prison should be provided for women in Northern Ireland, which would allow women more opportunities for freedom of movement in less restrictive conditions than on a shared site. Until then, Ash House at Hydebank Wood should be regarded as a temporary facility for women. (HP44)
- 9.3 Girls under 18 should not be held in Ash House. (HP45)
- 9.4 Ash House should be managed directly by a governor grade with sole responsibility for women prisoners. (HP46)

Main recommendations To the Governor

- 9.5 Separate policies specific to women at Ash House should be developed for all major policy areas including anti-bullying, self-harm and suicide, resettlement, substance use and equality. (HP47)
- 9.6 All statistics collected at Hydebank Wood should differentiate between women, girls, young men and boys. (HP48)
- 9.7 Alternative and more therapeutic responses to self-harm for women and girls, other than the use of strip-conditions, should be developed as a matter of urgency. Staff should be available to interact with prisoners deemed at high risk of self-harm, in an environment that provides good observation and promotes feelings of well being. (HP49)
- 9.8 There should be a clear policy underpinned by written procedures about the management and supervision of a mixed population of women prisoners, including children, at Ash House. (HP50)
- 9.9 The conduct of adjudications should be reviewed to ensure that: adjudicators make full inquiries into all charges with the evidence of the inquiry set out on the record; charges are not brought against women and girls for acts of self-harm or associated with self-harm; and punishment levels are reduced. (HP51)
- 9.10 Sufficient activity places should be provided to keep all women who are able and willing actively involved in useful occupation. (HP52)

- 9.11 Integral sanitation should be provided for all women prisoners, and until then other methods of allowing genuine 24-hour access to lavatories should be explored such as allowing free access to locked down spurs. (HP53)

Recommendations

To the Director General Northern Ireland

Offending behaviour programmes

- 9.12 A full analysis of the offending behaviour needs of women prisoners in Northern Ireland should be undertaken, with an assessment of how those needs would best be met. (8.16)

Reintegration planning

- 9.13 An analysis of the reintegration needs of women prisoners in Northern Ireland should be undertaken and appropriate services provided. (8.22)

Recommendations

To the Governor

Courts, escorts and transfers

- 9.14 Women should be transported in clean vehicles separate from men and young male offenders and attention should be paid to their individual needs. (1.4)
- 9.15 Women should be provided with information about Ash House while at court. (1.5)

First days in custody

- 9.16 The prison should ensure that all prisoners are seen by a member of healthcare on their day of arrival. (1.14)
- 9.17 A formal first night procedure should be developed. Staff should identify any immediate concerns and record what action has been taken to address these. They should also confirm that prisoners have had the opportunity to make a telephone call. (1.15)
- 9.18 An induction programme should be developed. (1.16)

Residential units

- 9.19 Until integral sanitation is provided, privacy locks should be fitted to some cells to allow prisoners who are low and medium security risk, access to the landings to use the lavatories after general lock up. (2.8)
- 9.20 Private interview rooms should be provided. (2.9)

Mothers and babies

- 9.21 Policy and procedures for mothers and babies should be developed, including child protection arrangements and links with social services. (2.13)
- 9.22 Pregnant women should be able to use the 'mother and baby' cell if it is not already occupied. (2.14)
- 9.23 Babies should not be locked in cells. (2.15)

Staff-prisoner relationships

- 9.24 Senior managers should hold regular meetings with prisoners to discuss how to improve relationships and should feed back regularly to staff and prisoners on action points. (2.21)
- 9.25 Officers should make active efforts to engage positively with prisoners during association and at other times. (2.22)
- 9.26 All staff at Ash House should receive more in-depth training on the special issues involved with working with women. (2.23)

Personal officers

- 9.27 A personal officer scheme should be introduced. (2.26)

Bullying

- 9.28 An independent safer custody committee for Ash House should be established focusing specifically on anti-bullying, the prevention of suicide and the reduction of self-harm. (3.8)
- 9.29 A confidential survey should be conducted to establish prisoners' perceptions of safety and their experience of bullying by prisoners and staff. (3.9)
- 9.30 All staff should be trained in identifying and responding to bullying. Specific attention should be given to the impact on victims of bullying within such a small community. (3.10)

Self-harm and suicide

- 9.31 The members of the suicide prevention committee or a representative should attend all meetings. (3.34)
- 9.32 A Listener scheme or similar peer support scheme should be developed in consultation with the Samaritans. (3.35)
- 9.33 A free 24-hour direct telephone link to the Samaritans should be available to all prisoners. (3.36)
- 9.34 Prisoners at risk of self-harm should have the opportunity to share cells, subject to the usual risk assessments. (3.37)

- 9.35 Prisoner representatives from Ash House should attend the suicide awareness and prevention team meetings. (3.38)
- 9.36 Statistics on the incidents of self-harm and the opening of PAR1s (prisoner at risk forms) should be improved and be specific to Ash House. (3.39)
- 9.37 Additional safer cells should be provided outside the punishment unit. (3.40)
- 9.38 Women identified as being at risk should be encouraged to participate in PAR1 reviews and offered the opportunity to provide a written contribution. Other disciplines should be invited to participate, including chaplaincy, education and training staff. (3.41)
- 9.39 Where appropriate, the contribution of families and friends to the care of prisoners at risk should be actively considered. (3.42)
- 9.40 All staff should be trained in the PAR1 process. (3.43)
- 9.41 Formal investigations should be conducted into incidents where prisoners nearly die to establish what, if anything, the prison could do to prevent a recurrence. (3.44)
- 9.42 A needs analysis should be completed to identify the specialist resources required to support prisoners at Ash House. (3.45)

Equality, race and foreign nationals

- 9.43 Policies for immigration detainees, race relations and foreign national prisoners should be agreed. (3.51)
- 9.44 Regular monitoring by religion and ethnicity should take place. (3.52)
- 9.45 An equality and diversity committee should be established to oversee race relations, foreign nationals, religion and other diversity issues, and an equality and diversity officer should be appointed. (3.53)

Family and friends

- 9.46 Women should be able to have visits at separate sessions from the young men at Hydebank Wood and all mixed visits should be individually risk assessed. (3.61)
- 9.47 Special family and children's visits should be arranged. (3.62)

Applications and complaints

- 9.48 Prisoners should be given full information in a format they are able to understand about how to make an application or complaint. (3.71)
- 9.49 A formal system to allow prisoners to make confidential complaints and applications to the governor should be introduced. (3.72)
- 9.50 Responses to complaints should be addressed to the prisoner. (3.73)
- 9.51 Applications and complaints should be analysed and monitored for patterns or trends. (3.74)

Child protection

- 9.52 There should be comprehensive risk assessments before locating prisoners and children within Ash House to ensure their safety. (3.86)
- 9.53 Representatives from Ash House should attend the child protection committee meetings. (3.87)
- 9.54 A safeguarding committee should be introduced to coordinate child protection, self-harm and suicide and anti-bullying in relation to girls under 18 years. (3.88)
- 9.55 The child protection policy should be reviewed to take account of the different and specific child protection considerations applicable to women and girls. (3.89)
- 9.56 The safeguarding committee should routinely monitor all three aspects of safeguarding to ensure that any concerns regarding the location of children with adult women are identified and acted on. (3.90)

Healthcare

- 9.57 A specific health needs assessment should be undertaken for the prisoners at Ash House to ensure that the correct range of services is provided. (4.14)
- 9.58 The healthcare centre should be adapted so that both men and women can be cared for in suitable separate accommodation. (4.15)
- 9.59 All healthcare staff should have resuscitation training, including emergency childbirth, at least annually. (4.16)
- 9.60 The well woman clinic should involve and be open to all women at Ash House. (4.17)
- 9.61 Secondary dispensing of medications should end and medications should be administered from a secure environment. (4.18)

Education and library provision

- 9.62 The range of activities should be linked to a resettlement needs analysis. (5.11)
- 9.63 There should be a more varied educational curriculum. (5.12)
- 9.64 Access to the library should be at least twice a week. (5.13)

Work

- 9.65 Education, work and vocational skills training should provide prisoners with opportunities to gain useful qualifications. (5.19)

Faith and religious activity

- 9.66 Prisoners should be able to attend services on a Saturday evening or a Sunday if they wish to do so. (5.33)

Time out of cell

- 9.67 Prisoners should have exercise in the fresh air every day. (5.38)

Security and rules

- 9.68 Routine fully body-searching of prisoners entering and leaving visits should stop. Full body-searching of prisoners should take place only for sound security reasons based on an individual risk assessment. (6.7)
- 9.69 All prisoners at Ash House should be provided with an individual copy of the rules and procedures, and these should also be displayed on each landing. (6.8)

Discipline

- 9.70 Girls under 18 years should be represented at adjudications by an independent advocate. (6.19)
- 9.71 Punishments of cellular confinement should not be accompanied by a loss of all privileges. (6.20)
- 9.72 The punishment and care functions currently on A1 landing should be entirely separate. (6.21)
- 9.73 Cells on A1 should be heated to an acceptable level and the temperature checked regularly. (6.22)
- 9.74 Accurate collated records should be kept of all occasions when women and girls are held in unfurnished cells and in anti-suicide suits. These should be used only in extreme and exceptional circumstances. (6.23)
- 9.75 Prisoners on A1 should have access to most regime activities, including library, education, work and religious services, unless there are overriding security issues. (6.24)
- 9.76 Senior managers should receive and analyse regular monitoring information about patterns of the use of the segregation unit, use of force and use of special unfurnished accommodation, which should be authorised at an appropriate managerial level. (6.25)

Incentives and earned privileges

- 9.77 A new incentives scheme appropriate to meet the needs of prisoners at Ash House should be introduced. (6.33)
- 9.78 Prisoners on the standard level of the incentives scheme should have televisions. (6.34)

- 9.79 Prisoners on the same incentives scheme level should have access to similar privileges regardless of location. (6.35)
- 9.80 Prisoners at risk of self-harm and suicide should not be placed on the basic level of the incentives scheme and should be managed according to their individual care plans. (6.36)

Catering

- 9.81 Surveys should consider the specific dietary needs of prisoners at Ash House. (7.7)
- 9.82 Catering and tuck should be a standing agenda item at the meeting between prisoners and senior managers responsible for Ash House. (7.8)

Resettlement strategy

- 9.83 There should be a specific local resettlement strategy for women and girls, based on a needs analysis, with an action plan to ensure that all staff at Ash House are aware of their resettlement responsibilities. (8.5)

Sentence and custody planning

- 9.84 Separate resettlement plan arrangements and reviews involving residential staff from Ash House should be put in place for women and girls. (8.11)
- 9.85 Resettlement plans should have clear achievable targets and identified staff, including Ash House officers, should be involved in helping to ensure that targets are met. (8.12)

Reintegration planning

- 9.86 Information on how to get advice on housing, benefits, employment and other reintegration matters should be provided and advertised to all prisoners. (8.23)
- 9.87 All eligible prisoners, subject to a suitable risk assessment, should have a period of home leave as part of their planned preparation for release. (8.24)

Life-sentenced prisoners

- 9.88 Life-sentenced prisoners should have the opportunity to have family-centred visits including the opportunity to show their families where they live. (8.30)

Public protection

- 9.89 A local public protection policy should be agreed that covers the specific arrangements for women and girls at Ash House, including allocation procedures and visits. (8.36)
- 9.90 Clear guidance should be issued to all staff making them aware of their public protection responsibilities and the arrangements for reporting to reviews of public protection cases. (8.37)

Substance use

- 9.91 There should be adequate healthcare facilities to care for women requiring detoxification. (8.46)
- 9.92 A separate drug strategy relevant to the needs of women and girls at Ash House should be developed. (8.47)
- 9.93 Separate statistics should be kept about the number of women who undergo detoxification. (8.48)

Housekeeping points

Bullying

- 9.94 The anti-bullying register should be improved and include details of victims and the outcomes of investigations. (3.11)

Healthcare

- 9.95 Notice boards displaying information about individuals should be out of sight of other patients in order to maintain medical confidentiality. (4.19)
- 9.96 The health promotion topics discussed on arrival should reflect the needs of women. (4.20)

Appendix I: Inspection team

Anne Owers	HM Chief Inspector of Prisons
Kit Chivers	Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice in Northern Ireland.
Brendan McGuigan	Deputy Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice in Northern Ireland.
Michael Loughlin	Inspection team leader
Fay Deadman	Team leader for juveniles
Paul Fenning	Inspector
Louise Falshaw	Inspector
Elizabeth Tysoe	Healthcare inspector

Appendix IIa:

Prison population profile: Adults and young women (18-21)

Population breakdown by:

(i) Status	N° of adult women	N° of young women 18-21	%
Sentenced	13	1	47
Convicted but unsentenced	0	0	0
Remand	9	3	40
Civil prisoners	3	0	10
Detainees (single power status)	1	0	3
Detainees (dual power status)			
Total	26	4	100

(ii) Sentence	N° of sentenced adult women	N° of sentenced young women 18-21	%
Less than 6 months	3	0	21
6months to less than 12 months	2	1	21
12 months to less than 2 years	2	0	14
2 years to less than 4 years	2	0	14
4 years to less than 6 years	1	0	8
6 years to less than 8 years	0	0	0
8 years to less than 10 years	0	0	0
10 years and over (less than life)	1	0	8
Life	2	0	14
Total	13	1	100

(iii) Length of stay	N° of adult women	N° of young women 18-21	%
Less than 1 month	9	0	30
1 month to 3 months	8	1	30
3 months to 6 months	6	3	30

6 months to 1 year	0	0	0
1 year to 2 years	1	0	3
2 years to 4 years	1	0	3
4 years or more	1	0	3
Total	26	4	100

(iv) Main offence	N° of adult women	N° of young women 18-21	%
Violence against the person	12	0	40
Sexual offences	2	0	6
Burglary	0	0	0
Robbery	0	1	4
Theft & handling	0	0	0
Fraud and forgery	2	0	6
Drugs offences	3	1	14
Other offences	3	2	16
Civil offences	3	0	10
Offence not recorded/ Holding warrant	1	0	4
Total	26	4	100

(v) Age	N° of adult women	N° of young women 18-21	%
18 years to 20 years	0	4	13
21 years to 29 years	5	0	16
30 years to 39 years	11	0	36
40 years to 49 years	8	0	27
50 years to 59 years	1	0	4
60 years to 69 years	1	0	4
70 plus years	0	0	0
Please state maximum age	69		
Total	26	4	100

(vi) Home address	N° of adult women	N° of young women 18-21	%
Within 50 miles of the prison	14	1	50
Between 50 and 100 miles of the prison	9	3	40
Over 100 miles from the prison	0	0	4
Overseas	1	0	0
NFA	2	0	6
Total	26	4	100

(vii) Nationality	N° of adult women	N° of young women 18-21	%
British	23	4	90
Foreign national*	3	0	10
Total	26	4	100

*1 x Tunisian
2 x Ghanaians

(viii) Ethnic group	N° of adult women	N° of young women 18 -21	%
White			
British	23	4	91
Irish			
Other White			
Mixed			
White and Black Caribbean			
White and Black African	1		3
White and Asian			
Other mixed			
Asian or Asian British			
Indian			
Pakistani			
Bangladeshi			

Other Asian			
Black or Black British			
Caribbean			
African	2		6
Other Black			
Chinese or other ethnic group			
Chinese			
Other ethnic group			
Total	26	4	100

(ix) Religion	N° of adult women	N° of young women 18 -21	%
Roman Catholic	11	2	43
Other Christina denominations	14	2	53
Muslim	1		4
Total	26	4	100

Appendix IIb:

Prison population profile: Juveniles

Population breakdown by:

(i) Status	Number of juveniles
Sentenced	1
Convicted but unsentenced	0
Remand	1
Detainees (single power status)	
Detainees (dual power status)	
Total	2

One was sentenced as at the age of 17 (as a juvenile). She is currently serving a sentence on 'Warrant of Committal on sentence of Imprisonment/Detention' under the Magistrates Court (NI) Order 1981 and the Criminal Justice Order 1996.

The other was held on a 'Warrant of Commitment to Young Offenders on Remand' under the Magistrates Act 1964.

Length of sentence

Sentence	4 mths	6 mths	8 mths	12 mths	18 mths	24 mths	Total
Age							
15 years							
16 years							
17 years							
18 years		1					1
Total		1					1

Length of stay for unsentenced by age

Length of stay	<1 mth	1-3 mths	3-6 mths	6-12 mths	1-2 yrs	2 yrs +	Total
Age							
15 years							
16 years							

17 years			1				1
18 years			1				1
Total			2				2

(v) Main offence	Number of juveniles
Violence against the person	
Sexual offences	
Burglary	
Robbery	
Theft & handling	
Fraud and forgery	
Drugs offences	
Driving offences	
Other offences	
Breach of community part of DTO	
Civil offences	
Offence not recorded/ Holding warrant	
Total	

Age	Number of juveniles
15 years	
16 years	
17 years	1
18 years	1
Total	2

Home address	Number of juveniles
Within 50 miles of the prison	2
Between 50 and 100 miles of the prison	
Over 100 miles from the prison	

Overseas	
NFA	
Total	2

Nationality	Number of juveniles
British	2
Foreign nationals	
Total	2

Ethnicity	Number of juveniles
White	
British	2
Irish	
Other White	
Mixed	
White and Black Caribbean	
White and Black African	
White and Asian	
Other Mixed	
Asian or Asian British	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Other Asian	
Black or Black British	
Caribbean	
African	
Other Black	

Chinese or other ethnic group	
Chinese	
Other ethnic group	
Total	2

Religion	Number of juveniles
Roman Catholic	1
Other Christian denominations	1
Total	2

RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM CJINI/HMCI REPORT ASH HOUSE, HYDEBANK 2005

REC NO	DRIVER	RECOMMENDATIONS	ACCEPT YES/NO	FOR ACTION BY	ACTION	DATE FOR ACTION	DATE FOR REVIEW
9.1	HQ	The Northern Ireland Prison Service should draw up a policy and strategic plan for the treatment of women in custody in Northern Ireland based on a full assessment of their specific needs. In the meantime the expertise from other UK jurisdictions should be used to advise and assist urgently in key safety areas such as caring for women who are at risk of suicide and self harm, or who have substance use problems. (HP43)	Yes	Director General	A high level strategy for women prisoners will be drawn up with the assistance of an expert in female prisoner policy from HM Prison Service who begins in May 05. Agreement in principle has been given by HM Prison Service to second 2 members of staff, with experience of female imprisonment, to Northern Ireland. One, a Governor to lead the development of the regime for Ash House, and the other a policy lead to develop policies for female prisoners.	Recruitment underway	
9.2	HQ	A separate prison should be provided for women in Northern Ireland, which would allow women more opportunities for freedom of movement in less restrictive conditions than on a shared site. Until then, Ash House at Hydebank Wood should be regarded as a temporary facility for women. (HP44)	It is accepted that Ash House is now a temporary facility; the long term provision will be the subject of a wider estate review.	Director General	Hydebank Wood Prison can accommodate 54 female prisoners in single cell accommodation. The current population is expected to continue to grow. Alternative accommodation will be considered as part of a wider strategic assessment of the Service. It is anticipated that CJINI, HMCIP and other interested parties will be consulted as part of the review.	Strategic review to be completed by autumn 2005	

REC NO	DRIVER	RECOMMENDATIONS	ACCEPT YES/NO	FOR ACTION BY	ACTION	DATE FOR ACTION	DATE FOR REVIEW
9.3	HQ	Girls under 18 should not be held in Ash House. (HP45)	Yes In principle	Director General	The incarceration in prison of girls under the age of 18 is outlined in legislation which in turn is the responsibility of the NIO. We understand that consideration is being given to a change in legislation which would allow youth courts discretion in sending vulnerable offenders to a juvenile justice centre. The numbers of young girls under the age of 18 in custody is very small and to make alternative arrangements for them in custody could lead to isolation. However, the Service will consider all the options open to them for making alternative provision, within a prison setting, with the YJ Agency, CJINI, HMCIP and other interested parties.	On-going consultation underway	
9.4	HQ	Ash House should be managed directly by a Governor Grade with sole responsibility for women prisoners. (HP46)	Yes	Director General	A Governor with experience of managing female prisoners is being seconded from HM Prison Service. A female Governor from the Northern Ireland Prison Service was transferred to manage Ash House w/c 25 April 2005.	Recruitment process underway	

REC NO	DRIVER	RECOMMENDATIONS	ACCEPT YES/NO	FOR ACTION BY	ACTION	DATE FOR ACTION	
9.5	Gov	Separate policies specific to women at Ash House should be developed for all major policy areas including anti-bullying, self-harm and suicide, resettlement, substance use and equality. (HP47)	Yes	Policy manager / Hydebank Management Team	Work has already commenced in this area and advice has been sought from the Women's Policy Unit in the Home Office. Visits have already taken place to a number of establishments in England, to Mountjoy in Dublin and a visit has been arranged to Scotland. Additionally, expertise is being brought in from E&W to assist in the development of female specific policies. The individual will be directly accountable to the Director of Operations and progress on policy development will be subject to formal monthly review from date of appointment.	Policy development is on-going. Recruitment process underway	Progress will be monitored on a monthly basis
9.6	Gov	All statistics collected at Hydebank Wood should differentiate between women, girls, young men and boys. (HP48)	Yes	Hydebank Management Team	The suggested differentiations will be made within the statistics already collected.	Implemented Mar 05	
9.7	Gov HQ	Alternative and more therapeutic responses to self-harm for women and girls, other than the use of strip conditions, should be developed as a matter of urgency. Staff should be available to interact with prisoners deemed at high risk of self-harm, in an environment that provides good observation and promotes feelings of well being. (HP49)	Yes	Governor Healthcare / Healthcare Trust/ DHSSPS	A project group comprised of Prison Staff, a psychologist and representatives of the local Healthcare Trust, has been established to develop a therapeutic approach to dealing with disturbed females. The local trust has already provided training in Mental Health Awareness and Management of Aggression for 25 staff. Additionally, NIPS is in discussion with the DHSSPS and others regarding healthcare provision for female prisoners. These discussions are on-going.	Project Group Inaugural meeting held in April 05 Two psychiatric nurses have been recruited to work primarily with female prisoners and are expected to take up post in June 05.	

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9.8	Gov	There should be a clear policy underpinned by written procedures about the management and supervision of a mixed population of women prisoners, including children, at Ash House. (HP50)	Yes	Policy Manager / Hydebank Management Team	A schedule for the development of policies effecting women prisoners has been drawn up and is being taken forward. This process will be expedited with the appointment of a policy lead.	Recruitment process underway	Progress to be monitored monthly
9.9	Gov	The conduct of adjudications should be reviewed to ensure that: adjudicators make a full written account of the evidence on the record and demonstrate that full inquiries are made; charges are not brought against women and girls for acts of self-harm or associated with self-harm; and punishment levels are reduced. (HP51)	Yes	Hydebank Management Team	The conduct of adjudications across the NIPS will be reviewed and amendments made to the adjudications manual and standards as required Charges will not be brought against women and girls for acts of self-harm or associated with actos of self harm. Punishment levels have been reduced. The Governor reviews the adjudication register each month.	To be reviewed by Autumn 05	
9.10	HQ	Sufficient activity places should be provided to keep all women who are able and willing actively involved in useful occupation. (HP52)	Yes	Director of Operations	A review of activity places for women began 14 March 2005. In the interim, it has been agreed to appoint 3 additional full time teachers and 2 VT instructors for Hydebank Wood and recruitment is taking place. The exact number of extra places is not yet known. However, we hope to be able to quantify this after the review is completed in May.	Review to report by May 2005.	

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9.11	HQ Estate Mgt	Integral sanitation should be provided for all women prisoners, and until then other methods of allowing genuine 24 hour access to lavatories should be explored such as allowing free access to locked down spurs. (HP53)	Yes	Estate Management/ Ash House Manager	<p>A feasibility study to identify options and costs has been completed. This will facilitate the design and procurement of the works. It is likely this will encompass a range of upgrades and alterations (integral sanitation; safer cells; anti-ligature fittings) which will be delivered at the earliest opportunity (circa spring 2006).</p> <p>In the interim, suitably risk assessed prisoners can utilise privacy locks.</p> <p>The privacy locks are an integral part of the locking system fitted in Ash. All cells are fitted with these privacy locks. They are not currently in use. They will be used as a regime enhancement. They are operated by a key fob that can be programmed to only open one room.</p>	Feasibility study completed – the extent of the works and existing infrastructure will determine duration – delivering circa spring 2006.	
9.12	HQ Gov	A full analysis of the offending behaviour needs of women prisoners in Northern Ireland should be undertaken, with an assessment of how those needs would best be met. (8.16)	Yes	Psychology Services	A gender specific needs analysis began on 7 March 2005. Questionnaires have been drafted and interviews have begun	Needs analysis to be completed by June 2005.	
9.13	HQ Gov	An analysis of the reintegration needs of women prisoners in Northern Ireland should be undertaken and appropriate services provided. (8.22)	Yes	HQ Resettlement Branch / Hydebank Inmate Services Governor / Probation	Work to analyse the reintegration needs of women commenced in April 2005 and full implementation of its accepted findings is expected by September 2005	Implementation by Sept 2005	

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9.14	HQ (PEG)	Women should be transported in clean vehicles separate from men and young male offenders and attention should be paid to their individual needs. (1.4)	Under review	Governor PEG	The schedule for cleaning vehicles has been amended. Vehicles are now cleaned each afternoon. Where practicable females will be transported in separate vehicles. The longer term arrangements are due to be reviewed over the summer.	Implemented Jan 05	
9.15	HQ (PEG)	Women should be provided with information about Ash House while at court. (1.5)	Yes	Ash staff/PCPU	A leaflet providing general information for prisoners at court is in production and will be distributed in May 05. A further document, providing information specific to Hydebank Wood Prison is in preparation.	To be available May 05	
9.16	Gov	The prison should ensure that all prisoners are seen by a member of healthcare on their day of arrival (1.14)	Yes	Healthcare	Procedures have been reviewed and all women are seen by a member of healthcare on their day of committal. An extensive health screening form is completed and placed on their medical file. Committals arriving on Fridays after the GP has finished are seen on the Saturday morning by a GP.	Review completed Mar 05	
9.17	Gov	A formal first night procedure should be developed. Staff should identify any immediate concerns and record what action has been taken to address these. They should also confirm that prisoners have had the opportunity to make a telephone call. (1.15)	Yes	House Manager / Policy Manager	Revision of first night procedures began in March 05. Consultation groups within the prisoner population are being set up and advice has been sought from other UK jurisdictions. All female prisoners and inmates are given the opportunity to make a telephone call on their first night and this action is recorded.	First night procedure review to report May 05	
9.18	Gov	An induction programme should be developed. (1.16)	Yes	House Manager / Policy Manager	Work on an induction programme for females at Hydebank Wood commenced in March.	Due to report May 05	

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9.19	Gov	Until integral sanitation is provided, privacy locks should be fitted to some cells to allow prisoners who are low and medium security risk, access to the landings to use the lavatories after general lock up. (2.8)	Yes	House Manager	All cells are equipped with privacy locks that can be enabled/disabled. Prisoners will be permitted to use privacy locks subject to successful risk assessment. Consultation has started with staff and unions.	On-going	
9.20	HQ Estate Mgt	Private interview rooms should be provided. (2.9)	Yes	Estate Management/ Governor	Additional provision will be made.	To be provided by Jun 05	
9.21	Gov	Policy and procedures for mothers and babies should be developed, including child protection arrangements and links with social services. (2.14)	Yes	Policy Manager / Hydebank Management Team	Expertise in the development of female specific policies is being brought in from HM Prison Service. The individual will be directly accountable to the Director of Operations and progress on policy development will be subject to formal review each quarter from date of appointment.	Recruitment process underway	
9.22	Gov	Pregnant women should be able to use the 'mother and baby' cell if it is not already occupied. (2.15)	Yes	House Manager	Implemented.	Mar 05	
9.23	Gov	Babies should not be locked in cells. (2.16)	Yes	Policy Manager / Hydebank Management Team	Implemented.	Mar 05	

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9.24	Gov	Senior managers should hold regular meetings with prisoners to discuss how to improve relationships and should feed back regularly to staff and prisoners on action points. (2.22)	Yes	Director of Custody	Regular meetings are now held with both staff and prisoners and minutes are circulated to all landings and to staff in the house. Action points are allocated to managers and staff and a system is in place to ensure these are followed through.	Meetings are held monthly	
9.25	Gov	Officers should make active efforts to engage positively with prisoners during association and at other times. (2.23)	Yes	House Manager / Training Manager	A notice to staff, reminding them of their obligations to prisoners, has been issued by the Governor and positive engagement with prisoners is monitored by managers. Training focuses on positive engagement between staff and prisoners in Ash House.	Notice issued Feb 05 – kept under review	
9.26	Gov	All staff at Ash House should receive more in-depth training on the special issues involved in working with women. (2.24)	Yes	Training manager	Gender specific training, including Dealing with Aggression, Mental Health Awareness and Working with Women with Personality Disorders, has now been delivered to 27 of the 44 Ash House staff and further training is scheduled	Gender specific training began in Dec 04 and is expected to be completed by September 05. Refresher training is on-going.	
9.27	Gov	A personal officer scheme should be introduced. (2.27)	Yes	Senior Mgt Team	A personal officer scheme will be introduced	To be In place by summer 05	
9.28	Gov	An independent safer custody committee for Ash House should be established focusing specifically on anti-bullying, the prevention of suicide and the reduction of self-harm. (3.8)	Yes	Director of Custody	A safer custody committee for Ash House is being constituted.	Inaugural meeting expected May 05	
9.29	Gov	A confidential survey should be conducted to establish prisoners' perceptions of safety and their experience of bullying by prisoners and staff. (3.9)	Yes	Director of Custody	Survey scheduled for June 2005.	Jun 05	

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9.30	Gov	All staff should be trained in identifying and responding to bullying. Specific attention should be given to the impact on victims of bullying within such a small community. (3.10)	Yes	Director of Custody / Training Manager	See 9.5 Staff will receive anti-bullying training as part of their personal officer training.	Summer 05	
9.31	Gov	The members of the suicide prevention committee or a representative should attend all meetings. (3.34)	Yes	Committee Chair Person	All committee members and House Managers are now required to attend all meetings.	Implemented Mar 05	
9.32	Gov	A Listener scheme or similar peer support scheme should be developed in consultation with the Samaritans. (3.35)	Yes	N/A	A Listener scheme has been considered in consultation with the Samaritans but due to the small number of female prisoners in custody, none would currently meet the criteria. However this will continue to be monitored and when a sufficient number of suitable prisoners are available they will be trained by the Samaritans. In the interim, a mobile phone linked directly to the Samaritans is available to all prisoners during periods of lock up.		
9.33	HQ Estate Mgt	A free 24-hour direct telephone link to the Samaritans should be available to all prisoners. (3.36)	Yes	HQ Estate Management	Implemented	Installed Apr 05	
9.34	Gov	Prisoners at risk of self-harm should have the opportunity to share cells, subject to the usual risk assessments. (3.37)	Yes	Suicide Prevention Coordinator / House Manager / HQ Estate Management	Mother and baby facilities currently exist on each landing. These will be adapted to provide a shared cell facility by summer 2005. Managers will actively consider prisoners sharing cells based on individual needs and assessment.	To be completed summer 2005	

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9.35	Gov	Prisoner representatives from Ash House should attend the suicide awareness and prevention team meetings. (3.38)	Yes	N/A	Prisoners now attend all suicide awareness and self harm prevention meetings but are required to leave when matters of a confidential personal nature are to be discussed.	implemented Mar 05	
9.36	Gov	Statistics on the incidents of self-harm and the opening of PAR1 forms should be improved and be specific to Ash House. (3.39)	Yes	Suicide Prevention Coordinator	A monitoring system, specific to Ash House, is in place but will be improved to incorporate quarterly a table/graph which indicates the specific trends in self-harm/self-abuse. Analysis will be carried out by suicide prevention committee and BoV.	Wef Apr 05	
9.37	Gov/ Estate Management	Additional safer cells should be provided outside the punishment unit. (3.40)	Yes	Estate Mgt	Work has begun on the provision of 3 additional safer cells which will be available in Summer 2005. (The progression of actions at 9.11 will include the provision of safer cells in the broader context within Hydebank).	Summer 05	
9.38	Gov	Women identified as being at risk should be encouraged to participate in PAR1 reviews and offered the opportunity to provide a written contribution. Other disciplines should be invited to participate, including chaplaincy, education and training staff. (3.41)	Yes	House Manager	This will be included in a full revision of the Service's Suicide and Self Harm policy	Implemented at Hydebank Mar 05	

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9.39	Gov	Where appropriate, the contribution of families and friends to the care of prisoners at risk should be actively considered. (3.42)	Yes	Estate Mgt	Families are now routinely offered the opportunity to attend PAR1 reviews. A confidential line for use by prisoners' families has been installed within the Healthcare Centre and is designed to allow families to disclose specific medical and other confidential mental health information both at the point of committal or where they feel inhibited in disclosing such information in front of others.	To go live in May 05	
9.40	Gov	All staff should be trained in the PAR1 process. (3.43)	Yes	Training Manager	26 managers within the establishment have been trained in PAR1 and cascaded this information to staff. To quality assure and extend the developmental programme a training intervention was prepared and is available on every computer workstation to enable all staff to refresh or upgrade their knowledge or skills gap. See also 9.27	Training for 26 managers completed in Apr 05. Training of other staff ongoing.	
9.41	Gov	Formal investigations should be conducted into incidents where prisoners nearly die to establish what, if anything, the prison could do to prevent a recurrence. (3.44)	Yes	Suicide Prevention Committee	Reviews will be carried out into such incidents across the Service. In Hydebank such incidents are a standing agenda item on the monthly Suicide Committee meeting. To be included in the Suicide & Self Harm policy currently under review.	Implemented Mar 05 review to be completed Jul 05.	
9.42	HQ	A needs analysis should be completed to identify the specialist resources required to support prisoners at Ash House. (3.45)	Yes	Director of Operations	A needs analysis will be carried out. See 9.12	June 05	

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9.43	HQ	Policies for immigration detainees, race relations and foreign national prisoners should be agreed. (3.51)	Yes	Director of Operations	NIPS policies will be developed	Target date for public consultation before 2006. Target date for implementation by Apr 06	
9.44	HQ	Regular monitoring by religion and ethnicity should take place. (3.52)	Yes	Senior Mgt team	Implemented	Mar 05	
9.45	HQ	An equality and diversity committee should be established to oversee race relations, foreign nationals, religion and other diversity issues, and an equality and diversity officer should be appointed. (3.53)	Yes	Policy lead	A local diversity committee has been established. The Law Centre and the Refugee Action Group have been asked to nominate representatives. Additionally, the Law Centre has offered assistance in staff training that is being pursued.	Inaugural meeting scheduled for Apr 05	
9.46	Gov	Women should be able to have visits at separate sessions from the young men at Hydebank Wood and all mixed visits should be individually risk assessed. (3.61)	Under review	Governor	A new visits complex has been opened. While all visits are mixed, some tables are specifically designated for visits to female prisoners and a separate family room is also available. Risk assessments are carried out on an individual basis where factors that might affect the good conduct of a visit or individual safety are known. Separate sessions for females are under consideration.	Opened Dec 04 - new arrangements in place since then	
9.47	Gov	Special family and children's visits should be arranged. (3.62)	Yes	Inmate Services Governor	Arrangements for special family and children's visits in Ash House are now in place. To date 7 special visits have taken place, 6 more are booked and there are 6 outstanding applications	Implemented Feb 05	

RECN O.	DRIVER	RECOMMENDATIONS	ACCEPT YES/NO	FOR ACTION BY	ACTION	DATE FOR ACTION	DATE FOR REVIEW
9.48	Gov	Prisoners should be given full information in a format they are able to understand about how to make an application or complaint. (3.71)	Yes	Services	With the introduction of the Prisoner Ombudsman, information material has been circulated to all prisons regarding making complaints and requests.	Implemented Apr 05	
9.49	Gov	A formal system to allow prisoners to make confidential complaints and applications to the governor should be introduced. (3.72)	Yes	N/A	A formal system is now in place and is enshrined in Prison Rules. However, prisoners will be reminded of the request and complaints procedure as above.	Implemented Apr 05	
9.50	Gov	Responses to complaints should be addressed to the prisoner. (3.73)	Yes	N/A	Prisoners are now given personal copies of the formal response to their complaints addressed specifically to them.	Wef Mar 05	
9.51	Gov	Applications and complaints should be analysed and monitored for patterns or trends. (3.74)	Yes	Deputy Governor / House Manager	Applications and complaints are monitored separately. The House Manager will analyse patterns and trends and provide relevant statistics to management on a quarterly basis.	First report to be considered in Jun 05	
9.52	Gov	There should be comprehensive risk assessments before locating prisoners and children within Ash House to ensure their safety. (3.86)	Yes	Child Protection Officer	Subject to any change in legislation, the House Manager in conjunction with the Duty Governor will determine the location of children on committal. A full risk assessment of continuing location will be completed on a multi-disciplinary basis within 72 hours of committal.	Implemented Apr 05	
9.53	Gov	Representatives from Ash House should attend the child protection committee meetings. (3.87)	Yes	Child Protection Officer	See 9.31	Implemented Mar 05	

RECN O.	DRIVER	RECOMMENDATIONS	ACCEPT YES/NO	FOR ACTION BY	ACTION	DATE FOR ACTION	DATE FOR REVIEW
9.54	Gov	A safeguarding committee should be introduced to coordinate child protection, suicide and self-harm and anti-bullying in relation to girls under 18 years. (3.88)	Yes	Child Protection Officer	Membership of a Safeguard Committee has been agreed.	inaugural meeting to be held on 26 May 05	
9.55	Gov	The child protection policy should be reviewed to take account of the different and specific child protection considerations applicable to women and girls. (3.89)	Yes	Child Protection Officer	The Child Protection policy is currently being reviewed to take account of the different and specific child protection considerations applicable to women and girls and has been given a high priority.	Review of policy began Feb 05	
9.56	Gov	The safeguarding committee should routinely monitor all three aspects of safeguarding to ensure that any concerns regarding the location of children with adult women are identified and acted on. (3.90)	Yes	Child Protection Officer	See 9.53 The chair of the Safeguard Committee will attend risk assessments. The committee will specifically review safeguarding with regard to female prisoners. Terms of reference will be agreed at inaugural meeting	Wef May 05	
9.57	HQ Healthcare Directorate Gov	A specific health needs assessment should be undertaken for the prisoners at Ash House to ensure that the correct range of services is provided. (4.14)	Yes	HQ Healthcare Directorate	This will be carried out in the current financial year. Consideration is being given to the method to be used	To be completed by Mar 2006	
9.58	HQ Estate Mgt Gov	The healthcare centre should be adapted so that both men and women can be cared for in suitable separate accommodation. (4.15)	Yes	HQ Estate Management	Plans have been drawn up to provide separate accommodation for men and women in the Healthcare Centre.	Project completion estimated by 31 Mar 06	

RECN O.	DRIVER	RECOMMENDATIONS	ACCEPT YES/NO	FOR ACTION BY	ACTION	DATE FOR ACTION	DATE FOR REVIEW
9.59	Gov	All healthcare staff should have resuscitation training, including emergency childbirth, at least annually. (4.16)	Yes	Training Manager / Healthcare Manager	All Healthcare staff are trained in Basic Life Skills including resuscitation. Training is refreshed at least annually. Contact has been made with the Director of Women and Child Health at a local Trust Hospital and she has undertaken to take forward provision of the training for emergency childbirth/baby resuscitation.	On-going	
9.60	Gov	The well woman clinic should involve and be open to all women in Ash House. (4.17)	Yes	Healthcare Manager	The clinic has been extended to include all females.	Dec 04	
9.61	Gov	Secondary dispensing of medications should end and medications should be administered from a secure environment. (4.18)	Yes	Healthcare Manager	Implemented	Dec 04	
9.62	Gov	The range of activities should be linked to a resettlement needs analysis. (5.11)	Yes	HQ Inmate Services Manager / HQ Resettlement Manager	This will form part of the new induction process and be integrated into resettlement planning	Jun 05	

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9.63	Gov	There should be a more varied educational curriculum. (5.12)	Yes	Inmate activities	<p>At the time of the inspection the following classes were being provided to women in Ash House:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy • Numeracy • ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) • ICT • OU short courses • 'A' Level Psychology • Cookery • Craft • Leathercraft • Art • Music <p>Further additional classes in the following are now offered :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aromatherapy & massage • Oriental dancing • Poetry • Drama • Duke of Edinburgh Award • Art Therapy • FOCUS (Level 2 gym instructor) • Star awards (weightlifting) 	commenced Mar 05	

RECN O.	DRIVER	RECOMMENDATIONS	ACCEPT YES/NO	FOR ACTION BY	ACTION	DATE FOR ACTION	DATE FOR REVIEW
9.64	Gov	Access to the library should be at least twice a week. (5.13)	Yes	N/A	Access to the library is now available more than twice a week. A full audit of access will take place.	Audit commenced Apr 05	
9.65		Education, work and vocational skills training should provide prisoners with opportunities to gain useful qualifications. (5.19)	Yes	Activities Branch	<p>The majority of education, work and vocational skills training already provide qualifications.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential skills (Lit./Num. & ESOL) are accredited at the appropriate level through CCEA. • ICT CLAIT is accredited through OCR. • From w/c 14 March Horticulture includes City & Guilds Skills testing. <p>We will consider how this might be extended to other activities.</p>	Delivery of NVQs in Horticulture will be available in 2006	
9.66	Gov	Prisoners should be able to attend services on a Sunday or Saturday evening if they wish to do so. (5.33)	Under review	N/A	The Chaplains fully consulted with female prisoners prior to and following their transfer. The female prisoners were offered a service on a Saturday evening or Sunday but preferred to have an extended service on a Wednesday. In addition pastoral visits by Chaplains do take place on a Sunday. This matter was also discussed and sanctioned by the Heads of all Churches. This has recently been reviewed and will continue to be kept under review by the Chaplains and Headquarters.	On-going	

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9.67	Gov	Prisoners should have exercise in the fresh air everyday. (5.38)	Yes	House Manager	Prisoners have exercise in the fresh air and work in the gardens on a daily basis. A new exercise yard is being built that will provide additional opportunity for exercise in fresh air. Detailed records will be kept.	New yard to be completed by Jun 05	
9.68	Gov	Routine full body-searching of prisoners entering and leaving visits should stop. Strip searching of prisoners should take place only for sound security reasons based on an individual risk assessment. (6.7)	Yes	House Manager	Routine full searching ceased 14/12/04 once the new visits complex opened; our current search procedures are in line with NIPS Search Strategy which applies to all prisoners across all establishments.	Routine full searching ceased 14/12/04	
9.69	Gov	All prisoners at Ash House should be provided with an individual copy of the rules and procedures, and these should also be displayed on each landing. (6.8)	Yes	House Manager	Individual copies of the rules have been given to each female prisoner. Additional copies are available both in Ash House and the library.	Mar 05	
9.70	HQ	Girls under 18 years should be represented at adjudications by an independent advocate.(6.20)	Yes	Governor	A Governors instruction to the affect that ll adjudications involving girls or juveniles under 18 should be held in the presence of an independent advocate. Such advocates should be members of the Visiting Committee, chaplain or other responsible adult available to attend.	Mar 05	
9.71	Gov	Punishments of cellular confinement should not be accompanied by loss of privileges	Yes	N/A	Awards should be appropriate and proportionate to the offence committed. Cellular confinement will not automatically be accompanied by loss of privileges. Adjudications are carried out according to the Adjudication Manual and the published standard	Review of Adjudication Manual by Nov 05	

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9.72	Gov	The punishment and care functions currently on A1 landing should be entirely separate. (6.22)	Yes	Estate management	See 9.37. The provision of 3 safer cells in Ash House will reduce the use of such cells on A1. The progression of work on 9.11 will also have a bearing.	Summer 2005 (safer cells in Ash). Wider work to be delivered Spring 2006.	
9.73	Gov	Cells on A1 should be heated to an acceptable level and the temperature checked regularly. (6.23)	Yes	Trades Governor / House Manager	Trades will carry out regular inspections. House manager will insure that any faults are recorded and reported immediately.	On-going	
9.74	Gov	Accurate collated records should be kept of all occasions when women and girls are held in unfurnished cells and in anti-suicide dresses. These should be used only in extreme and exceptional circumstances. (6.24)	Yes	House Manager	Prisoners will only be held in unfurnished cells and in anti-suicide dresses in extreme and exceptional circumstances where they pose a risk to their own safety. The House Manager will maintain a register that will be reviewed by the Governor and Visiting Committee on a monthly basis	Feb 05	
9.75	Gov	Prisoners on A1 should have access to most regime activities, including library, education, work and religious services, unless there are overriding security issues. (6.25)	Yes	N/A	Prisoners on A1 now have access to activities, library, education and religious services.	Implemented Jan 05.	
9.76	Gov	Senior managers should receive and analyse regular monitoring information about patterns of the use of the segregation unit, use of force and use of special unfurnished accommodation, which should be authorised at an appropriate managerial level. (6.26)	Yes	Director of Custody	Monthly statistics are now produced for the Governor and BOV and reviewed and analysed by the Senior Management Team on a monthly basis	Wef Apr 05	

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9.77	Gov	A new incentives and earned privileges scheme appropriate to meet the needs of prisoners at Ash House should be introduced. (6.34)	Yes	Director of Custody	A review of the PREPS Scheme has commenced.	To report May 05	
9.78	Gov	Standard level prisoners should have televisions. (6.35)	Yes	N/A	Implemented.	wef Feb 05	
9.79	Gov	Prisoners on the same incentives scheme level should have access to similar privileges regardless of location. (6.36)	Yes	N/A	Prisoners do have access to similar privileges regardless of location, unless the risk assessment directs otherwise. The IEP scheme will be standardised throughout the Service.	Wef: May 2005	
9.80	Gov	Prisoners at risk of self-harm and suicide should not be placed on the basic level of the incentives scheme and should be managed according to their individual care plans. (6.37)	Yes	N/A	Prisoners at risk of suicide and self-harm will not lose earned privileges unless it is to protect their own safety e.g. provision of a TV where the cable might be used as a ligature.. This will be included as part of the review reporting in May.	Wef: May 05	
9.81	Gov	Surveys should consider the specific dietary needs of prisoners at Ash House. (7.7)	Yes	HQ	A survey has been completed and menus will change to reflect the outcome of the survey	Survey completed Apr 05	
9.82	Gov	Catering and tuck should be a standing agenda item at the meeting between prisoners and senior managers responsible for Ash House. (7.8)	Yes	Management Team	Catering and Tuck is now discussed at every monthly prisoner/management meeting. However, it is now included as a formal standing item on the agenda.	Mar 05	

REC NO	DRIVER	RECOMMENDATIONS	ACCEPT YES/NO	FOR ACTION BY	ACTION	DATE FOR ACTION	DATE FOR REVIEW
9.83	Gov	There should be a specific local resettlement strategy for women and girls, based on a needs analysis, with an action plan to ensure that all staff at Ash House is aware of their resettlement responsibilities. (8.5)	Yes	Resettlement Manager	A Resettlement Strategy specific to women and girls will be developed. In the meantime, the current Resettlement Strategy will be revised to take account of the needs of female prisoners	Revision to be complete by May 05	
9.84	Gov	Separate resettlement plan arrangements and reviews involving residential staff from Ash House should be put in place for women and girls. (8.11)	Yes	N/A	See 9.84 Residential staff will be included in resettlement plans and reviews put in place for women and girls	Wef: Apr 2005	
9.85	Gov	Resettlement plans should have clear achievable targets and identified staff including Ash House officers should be involved in helping to ensure that targets are met. (8.12)	Yes	Resettlement Manager / Ash Manager	Resettlement Policy Review will include the need to have clear achievable targets	Wef: April 2005	
9.86	Gov	Information on how to get advice on housing, benefits, employment and other reintegration matters should be provided and advertised to all prisoners. (8.23)	Yes	Resettlement Manager	Staff training on providing housing advice took place in Mar 05. In addition, the Service will be installing touch-screen computers to provide prisoners with on-line access to information on employment, benefit and accommodation.	Jul 05	
9.87	Gov	All eligible prisoners, subject to a suitable risk assessment, should have a period of home leave as part of their planned preparation for release. (8.24)	Yes	Resettlement Manager	There are currently 4 different types of temporary release that prisoners can benefit from including pre-release home leave. However there are currently no qualifying prisoners for pre-release home leave. Applications from qualifying prisoners will be considered.		

REC NO	DRIVER	RECOMMENDATIONS	ACCEPT YES/NO	FOR ACTION BY	ACTION	DATE FOR ACTION	
9.88	Gov	Life-sentenced prisoners should have the opportunity to have family-centred visits including the opportunity to show their families where they live. (8.30)	Yes	N/A	It is agreed that life sentenced prisoners should have the opportunity to have family centred and child centred visits within a secure location. These types of visits have been introduced. If the necessary risk assessment and Child Protection issues can be addressed, we could look to provide prisoners with the opportunity to show their families where they live.	first visit in Feb 05 - one further visit since. Monthly visits available on request	
9.89	Gov	A local public protection policy should be agreed that covers the specific arrangements for women and girls at Ash House, including allocation procedures and visits. (8.36)	Yes	Director of Custody	A draft policy has now been drawn up and will be the subject of public consultation.	Consultation scheduled Jul 05	
9.90	Gov	Clear guidance should be issued to all staff making them aware of their public protection responsibilities and the arrangements for reporting to reviews of public protection cases. (8.37)	Yes	Director of Custody / Training Manager	Once the public protection policy has been agreed there will be clear guidance given through training.	Jul 05	
9.91	Gov	There should be adequate healthcare facilities to care for women requiring detoxification. (8.46)	Yes	N/A	Detoxification advice is contained in the NIPS Formulary and a substitute prescribing policy has been agreed.	Policy agreed Jan 05	
9.92	HQ Gov	A separate drug strategy relevant to the needs of women and girls at Ash House should be developed. (8.47)	Yes	HQ Drugs Coordinator	A separate policy is being developed.	Expected by 1 Sep 05	
9.93	Gov	Separate statistics should be kept about the number of women who undergo detoxification. (8.48)	Yes	Healthcare	A statistical analysis is produced by Healthcare.	Implemented Dec 2004	

REC NO.	DRIVER	RECOMMENDATIONS	ACCEPT YES/NO	FOR ACTION BY	ACTION	DATE FOR ACTION	
9.94	Gov	The anti-bullying register should be improved and include details of victims and the outcomes of investigations. (3.11)	Yes	Director of Custody	Under review	To be implemented Jun 05	
9.95	Gov	Notice boards displaying information about individuals should be out of sight of other patients in order to maintain medical confidentiality. (4.19)	Yes	Healthcare / Trades	notice boards relocated.	Mar 05	
9.96	HQ H/care Director/ Gov	The health promotion topics discussed on arrival should reflect the needs of women. (4.20)	Yes	HQ / Healthcare Directorate	Full implementation will await the completion of the health needs analysis. In the meantime, all new committals other than fine defaulters are screened and offered access to the well-women clinic. Fine defaulters are offered a shortened version – see 9.57 & 9.60 above.	Dec 04	