

# **HMP FORD**

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

**OF THE**

## **INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD**

**November 2009 to October 2010**

**To the Rt. Hon. Kenneth Clarke QC MP  
Secretary of State for Justice**

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### **Statutory Role of the IMB**

#### Monitoring fairness and respect for people in Custody

The Prisons Act 1952 and the Immigration and the Asylum Act 1999 require every prison and IRC to be monitored by an independent Board appointed by the Home Secretary from members of the community in which the prison or centre is situated.

The Board is specifically charged to:

(1) satisfy itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in custody within its prison and the range and adequacy of the programmes preparing them for release;

(2) inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority, as it judges appropriate, any concerns it has.

(3) report annually to the Secretary of State on how well the prison has met the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have on those in its custody.

In order to enable the Board to carry out these duties effectively its members have right of access to every prisoner and every part of the prison and also to the prison's records.

## **Description of the Prison and its Role**

HM Prison Ford is a category D Open establishment with an emphasis on resettlement. It was converted to an open prison in 1960 from a former Fleet Air Arm station. It is situated 3 miles south of Arundel in West Sussex and covers an area of 110 acres bisected by a busy Class B public road.

The open estate is required to cater for all Category D prisoners assessed as suitable for open conditions within the criteria agreed between the Governor and the Area Manager. Prisoners selected for transfer to Ford should present a low risk of absconding and a low risk to the public. The operational capacity is 557.

The accommodation comprises single and two-person rooms. There are twelve rooms that specifically cater for prisoners with disabilities.

Healthcare is provided by the National Health Service (West Sussex) and Education and Training is provided by Manchester College and Tribal.

Contractors within Industries at Ford include DHL, Travis Perkins, LMB and BICS. Voluntary organisations providing assistance to prisoners include the Samaritans, The Citizens Advice Bureau, The Terence Higgins Trust, Positive Lunch, The Gypsy and Travellers Community Support Team and Relate

All available spaces at Ford are offered to the Prison Service's Population Management Section.

**Executive Summary of HMP Ford IMB's  
Concerns for the Minister**

Our concerns for Ford can basically be summed up in one word – resources. Of course we are aware of the financial situation and that the budget for the whole service has had to shrink but we have complained many times in the past about Ford's reputation as 'the cheapest prison' and the constraints that this has put on successive Governors. The achievements this year have been many and we would mention particularly the refurbishment of B Wing, the new perimeter fence, the plans for a new kitchen, the setting up of the farm shop and the introduction of the Hearing Dogs scheme. However, for people in prison the primary concern must be the efficient management of their sentence programme and their release on the first date possible subject to suitable risk assessment. Thus the work of the Offender Development Unit (particularly the HDC team), the Community Service team and the Indeterminate Sentence Planning team are absolutely vital. Now that holding prisons are encouraged to send as many offenders as possible to open establishments for the last part of their sentence, the workload of the departments has increased enormously. We are very appreciative of the work and dedication of the staff but the budget has been cut and though the Senior Management Team have done as much as they can with re-profiling we are deeply concerned that the uniformed staff in these departments, which are already overstretched, are not ring-fenced and are subject to being called away for other duties. Prisoners are remaining in prison for longer than is necessary at huge cost to themselves, their families and the taxpayer.

Charles Pinney  
Chairman  
Independent Monitoring Board  
HMP Ford  
Arundel

## **1.Social Inclusion**

Some four months ago the Social Inclusion unit was formed to amalgamate the two previously existing teams of Safer Custody and DREAT (Diversity, Race Relations and Disabilities etc.).

With the amalgamation of these two functions came a change of managerial roles, with the new personnel having to commence a very steep learning curve to keep the new scheme working correctly and effectively. In addition there have been frequent absences due to sickness, annual leave or other prison duties. The Board feels that the new concept of streamlining the two functions into one has not had sufficient time to prove its worth as yet and is concerned that merging the two areas may prove unwieldy with so many groups involved. However it is still too early to form a judgement.

The Board is happy with the areas for which the Social Inclusion Unit is responsible and which are reported on in more detail below

## **2 Diversity**

**2.1** All racist incidents are registered and any issue of concern is investigated and remedied. Meetings with the United Kingdom Border Agency are held twice monthly. Until the end of September the team who visited Ford were based at Portsmouth but the role has now been taken over by the Sussex Team based at Gatwick. It is too early to comment on the new arrangements but the Board anticipates that meetings will continue to be held fortnightly.

**2.2** We are currently receiving complaints that prisoners being issued with deportation orders are unable to pack their own belongings as they are placed in the Segregation unit before being handed their notice to avoid the risk of abscond. The Board would prefer to see them allowed to pack for themselves even if under supervision.

**2.3** A policy of non-tolerance of bullying is in place with an emphasis on returning bullies to closed conditions rather than sending back victims for their protection.

**2.4** During October a Black History Month was held with a library display, a musical evening and special menus.

## **3 Disability**

**3.1** The accommodation for prisoners with disabilities on the ground floor of C Wing is working well. It provides 12 wheelchair accessible rooms with emergency alarms. The facilities include four wet floor shower rooms, adapted toilets and kitchen areas with low worktops and sinks, and an association/TV room. The Board would like to see a full set of emergency evacuation procedures drawn up and promulgated.

**3.2** We commented last year that the Education Block and the Library were inaccessible to wheelchair users and those with mobility problems as they are sited on upper floors. The Board welcomes the provision of funding for a lift to the Library which we hope will be put in place in 2011.

#### **4 Safer Custody**

**4.1** The Safer Custody Team continues to demonstrate excellent work with those prisoners who are at risk of self harm.

**4.2** All departments within the establishment work closely with the Team in order to ensure that the prisoner receives maximum support and assistance with his underlying problems. The Board commends the excellent work done in this area.

**4.3** The establishment displays a zero tolerance approach to violence or any other form of anti-social behaviour and we believe that this is working well. Victims receive good support from Violence Reduction representatives, Listeners and Focus orderlies.

**4.4** The Board is pleased to report that the number of incidents continues to remain low.

#### **5 Healthcare and Mental Health**

**5.1** The healthcare centre is commissioned by NHS West Sussex and run by NHS West Sussex staff. Its aim is to run a practice similar to that of a GP practice in the community with an appointment only service for its Doctors, Nurses and Clinics. It is open daily Monday to Friday with out of hours cover provided by Harmoni, the Primary Care Trust's contracted service.

**5.2** The Healthcare Team run a busy and efficient service for the prisoners which is appreciated by them. During the year the Board received 6 complaints which were all resolved satisfactorily.

**5.3** During the year to end September 2010 there were 12437 appointments for healthcare services. Of these 9732 were to see the GPs or nurses (and of these 38% were booked on the day the patient was seen), 1053 related to mental health and 1002 were for the dentist. In addition the team screened 1360 new offenders as they arrived in Reception and arranged 939 outside hospital appointments.

**5.4** Liaison between Healthcare and the Kitchen is working better. The normal practice is for Healthcare to explain to the prisoner about his dietary requirements and notify the Kitchen and the prisoner then has a meeting with the Kitchen staff to plan how it will work in practice. If necessary there is then a discussion between the two departments.

**5.5** The centre is represented at scheduled prison meetings and liaises regularly with

representatives from Diversity, Kitchen, Drugs Strategy and Reception. The duty Governor, Orderly Officer and Chaplain visit the centre daily.

## **6 Segregation Unit**

**6.1** At Ford Prison, this unit is used mainly to hold men unsuitable for Open Conditions until they can be moved to another Establishment. It is a separate small building situated at the centre of the B wing area.

**6.2** The Board is satisfied that the conditions and facilities are satisfactory and that the prisoners are treated with respect and decency. The staff levels and security of the unit are also deemed satisfactory.

**6.3** The system of notifying the Board when a prisoner is put in the Segregation unit is now working much better. Given the short time most men spend there the Board normally visit only when the prisoner requests it but they visit as a matter of course if he is there for an extended period such as over a weekend as can occasionally happen.

## **7 Learning and Skills – Education**

**7.1** During the year Manchester College carried out a re-grading exercise which has led to some of the staff effectively being demoted. This has had an effect on morale and the Board is concerned that it may result in some of the better instructors leaving in 2011 and the quality of teaching declining. We are assured that Manchester College is resourced to supply the 13000 contracted hours of education but we note that in the past staff have also helped with supporting the prisoners who are engaged in outside courses and we are concerned that this level of support may not be available in future.

**7.2** Since the switch to Manchester College there has been a change to their national curriculum, resulting in a number of personal and social courses being dropped in favour of more vocational ones. 80% of courses are now geared to employment.

**7.3** The Board attaches great importance to Learning and Education and regards it as an essential part of the campaign to reduce re-offending and to enable the prisoners to find useful employment on release. We are concerned about the changes which have taken place and look to see progress in the current year.

## **8 Accommodation**

**8.1** The Board has consistently pointed out the inadequacy of the B Wing billets and our concerns remain that the huts are fundamentally unsound. However we would like to give full

credit for the work that has been done in terms of redecorating and refurbishing using the prisoner workforce to the greatest extent possible. This is something we had been encouraging for some years and we believe that the improvements have been appreciated by the prisoners. We are sorry that this work has now been abandoned due to budget cuts.

**8.2** The new cleaning regime instituted last year has continued to be a success and this, combined with the redecoration mentioned above has greatly improved the appearance in the huts resulting in many cases in better behaviour from the prisoners in terms of keeping the huts as decent as possible.

**8.3** One concern which has been raised relates to the bureaucracy of the prison procurement service. A piece of glass which could have been bought locally for £15 was transported from Yorkshire at a cost of £75 which makes no sense in the current environment.

## **9 Catering**

**9.1** We have commented before on the unsuitability of the kitchen and are pleased to note that the funding for the proposed new kitchen is still in place although the building of it has been pushed into 2011. We are concerned that the new kitchen and the dining area will be separated by a considerable distance and that the food will need to be transported by trolley between the two buildings. This will give rise to the need for more supervision from an already stretched staff and the risk that the quality of the food may be impaired.

**9.2** Although we have received complaints from prisoners as to the quality of the food we believe that it is very satisfactory in terms of both quality and quantity in the context of the budget and facilities available. The staff are to be commended for the efforts they make with regard to training, budgeting and hygiene in difficult circumstances. We are pleased to note that a new offender plate cleaning facility and a chilled water dispenser are planned for 2011.

## **10 Chaplaincy**

**10.1** The chaplaincy plays an important part in prison life and records show that in the period from January to October 2010 Chaplaincy/Focus dealt with 47,725 visits or enquiries. The Coordinating Chaplain has a first class rapport with Staff and Offenders.

**10.2** All faiths are well catered for with a Mosque, Hindu and Buddhist temples and a Synagogue well as a Christian chapel which serves Anglicans, Roman Catholics and free churches. Representatives from these faiths meet regularly.

**10.3** The FOCUS Group remains a key element in the prison headed up by the Chaplaincy orderlies who offer a much valued resource to help other offenders and their varied problems.

## **11 Security**

**11.1** As HMP Ford is an open establishment drugs, alcohol, mobile telephones and other illicit substances continue to find their way into the prison. Intelligence is continually being gathered to reduce the routes of supply. The perimeter fence is accessible to the public and it is impossible to police it adequately with the resources available. The Board is pleased to note that during the last year a large proportion of the fence has been renewed and is much more effective. We would like to see the rest of the fence upgraded to the same standard in the near future.

**11.2** The CCTV coverage has been improved but further upgrading is needed in our view.

**11.3** Our concerns regarding night staffing are reported regularly. Our main concerns are minimal staff on duty and junior staff, who are only trained to a low level, patrolling alone. Whilst there have only been minor incidents in the last year we do not consider that proper control is being exercised at night and are sceptical of the response received in the past that it must be adequate because there has not been a serious incident yet.

**11.4** The appointment of a Dog Handler with two dogs 3 years ago has been very successful and over this time they have found 360 mobile phones, 323 chargers, 115 SIM cards, £1221 in cash, 200 items of drug paraphernalia, 11 parcels and 51 litres of alcohol. We are delighted to hear that the dogs have been put up for a national award. However we believe that more use could be made of them if there were more staff available to support the searches

**11.5** Following some key incidents we are glad to note that the staff car parks have had barriers fitted to help improve key security.

**11.6** We have previously noted our concern about the state of the prison's fire alarm system and are pleased to report that the new system has been successfully installed and tested.

## **12 Community Service and Paid Work**

**12.1** Community Service is one of the main areas relating to Ford's resettlement mandate. It is currently manned in theory with five members of staff, including one clerk. However staff sickness and staff being frequently moved to other duties during the working day drastically limits the amount of offender job placements possible. Officers are required to attend new and existing employers' premises to ascertain suitability and that Health & Safety requirements are complied with. Some of the company premises are a considerable distance from HMP Ford so these visits are time-consuming and often have to be re-arranged due to staff being re-allocated to other duties. We are concerned that this in turn limits the willingness of local employers to take on prisoners.

**12.2** Currently there are approximately 60 offenders on Community Service and we would like to see this number considerably increased. However as things stand the department is fully stretched and unless further resources are provided it is hard to see how this can happen.

## **13 Industries**

**13.1** During the year the prison saw the closure of the Induction workshop. However this was very successfully counterbalanced by the new induction system which has been brought in and which we believe is a great improvement, giving new prisoners a full briefing on the regime and the opportunities open to them at Ford.

**13.2** The other workshops are all working well. The joint operations with DHL and Travis Perkins set up a year ago have been very successful. Injection Moulding produces a large percentage of the poppies sold for Remembrance Day each year. We are also very pleased with the work of the Laundry Department which at one time was running double shifts and where the manager has built an exceptional relationship with his workforce.

**13.3** The Board commends the pro-active approach at Ford to getting new industries into the system though without more instructors it is hard to see how this can be further extended.

## **14 Estates Department - Horticulture**

**14.1** The Estates Department gives employment to approximately 90 offenders and produces high quality trees, shrubs, plants and vegetables for sale to local councils and other prisons. The department is also responsible for the high standard of care of HMP Ford grounds. Several sales contracts have been lost due to the general downturn of the economic conditions. However the Board commends the opening of a new farm shop at Ford which will sell items produced, grown or made in the workshops.

## **15 Lifers & IPP Prisoners**

**15.1** The Indeterminate Sentence Planning Department (ISP) at Ford covers both those serving life sentences and those who are sentenced to imprisonment for public protection (IPP) for an unlimited period. It is staffed by 2 officers and 2 civilian case administrators and at the end of October was handling 45 lifers and 27 IPPs.

**15.2** At the end of October the Board was very concerned by reports of a proposal to extend the numbers of lifers and IPPs. However we are very pleased to hear that since the end of the reporting period there has been an agreement that the total numbers of these prisoners should be slightly reduced from the October level. The work of this unit is vital and each offender's programme has many strands to it. The uniformed staff are no longer ring-fenced and they are liable to be called away frequently when required for other duties. Even at current levels it is noticeable that some of the work is falling behind in spite of the dedication and quality of the staff. We believe that adequate ring-fenced staffing in this area is essential.

## **16 Resettlement**

**16.1** The Board has great concern relating to the resettlement work at Ford due to under-resourcing. The staff are dedicated and go to great lengths to minimise delays and keep the prisoners informed of progress but they face a huge workload.

**16.2** Home Detention Curfew (HDC) is an area of particular concern. The team has to cope with the arrival at Ford of prisoners from other institutions often without full paperwork or OaSys reports and in some cases they are already past their potential HDC dates. Indeed it is tempting on occasions to believe that the sending prisons are doing so in order to avoid sorting out the lack of preparation they have made. This coupled with the constant turnover of short term prisoners gives a huge workload and it is important to remember that for almost all prisoners there Ford will be their last prison prior to release, meaning the final responsibility lies with the Ford staff.

**16.3** The Board does not believe that because 'HDC is a privilege not a right' it excuses the prison and probation services from assessing each offender's position before the earliest date for release. The staff at Ford are doing an excellent job (which was confirmed in an independent review towards the end of the year under review) and we are very pleased to see the re-introduction of HDC clinics where prisoners can come to be briefed in advance of their HDC date as to how the paperwork is progressing. We also commend the way that the staff brief offenders as to how to prepare themselves for their HDC interview. However the fact remains that the team is understaffed and the environment is extremely stressful as they have to deal with prisoners who are understandably upset that they are missing their HDC date.

**16.4** The Offender Development Unit has been selected to pilot the Offender Layered Management scheme. This will involve all members of staff being expected to deal with all aspects of the cases of up to 100 offenders each (as opposed to the current system of specialised roles). It is to be welcomed that this will help with the problems of covering for absent staff but it will involve a major learning curve for staff members at a time when the workload is unsustainably heavy and we are concerned as to the effect this will have.

## **17 Applications to the Board**

**17.1** Set out on the next two pages is a summary of the Applications dealt with by the Board. Reflecting our comments above the greatest number by far relate to the Offender Development Unit with 28% concerning HDC, 10% Risk Assessment, 7% Transfers to other Prisons and 5% Release on Temporary Licence.

**17.2** 11.1% of claims relate to lost property but these almost all refer to property left behind in previous establishments

**17.3** There were 10 reports of bullying. Of these 7 were dismissed as not bullying. In one case the offender was returned to closed conditions and in the other two the men concerned were put on bullying watch. All complaints related to alleged bullying by other offenders. There were no reports of staff bullying offenders.

**Summary of HMP Ford Applications to The Independent Monitoring Board  
November 2009 to October 2010**

Date	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	TTL:	%
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HEADING														No:	HEADING	
Accommodation				1						1			2	1.0%	1	Accommodation
Adjudications	1	3		2			1		2			2	11	5.3%	2	Adjudications
Bullying	1	2					1			2	1	3	10	4.8%	3	Bullying
Cancellation								1					1	0.5%	4	Cancellation
Canteen															5	Canteen
Confidential						4		1	2				7	3.4%	6	Confidential
Com. Serv.							1						1	0.5%	7	Com. Serv.
Deportees															8	Deportees
Disabilities															9	Disabilities
Education															10	Education
Foreign Nationals															11	Foreign National
Food	1		1					1				2	5	2.4%	12	Food
HDC	3	7	2	1	10	5	6	7	2	8	3	4	58	28.0%	13	HDC
Home Domestic										2		2	4	1.9%	14	Home Domestic
IEPS															15	IEPS
Immigration															16	Immigration
Induction Unit															17	Induction Unit
Legal Problems												1	1	0.5%	18	Legal Problems
MDT															19	MDT
Medical Dental	1			1				3		1			6	2.9%	20	Medical Dental
Miscellaneous	4	3		1	1	2	5	4	1			1	22	10.6%	21	Miscellaneous
Monies / Cash				2	1				1				4	1.9%	22	Monies / Cash
P & C (IMB)															23	P & C (IMB)
Parole	1												1	0.5%	24	Parole
Police Cust Tm:						1							1	0.5%	25	Police Cust Tm:
Premier / Group 4															26	Premier / Group
Prison Pay															27	Prison Pay
Property	2	2	3	2				1	4	2	3	4	23	11.1%	28	Property
Racial															29	Racial
Reception															30	Reception
Religion															31	Religion
Reqsts & Comp:															32	Reqsts & Comp:

Resettlement		1									1	2	1.0%	33	Resettlement		
Rsk Assmnt:	2	4	2	3		2	2			2	3		20	9.7%	34	Rsk Assmnt:	
ROTL					1		2						7	10	4.8%	35	ROTL
Sentence Calcs		1	1		1									3	1.4%	36	Sentence Calcs
Sports / Gym																37	Sports / Gym
Tfn Cards						1								1	0.5%	38	Tfn Cards
Theft																39	Theft
Transfers Out		1		1		1	1	4	4		1	1	14	6.8%	40	Transfers Out	
Visits Problems																41	Visits Problems
VO's																42	VO's
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>207</b>			<b>Totals:</b>	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Nov</b>	<b>Dec</b>	<b>Jan</b>	<b>Feb</b>	<b>Mar</b>	<b>Apr</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>Jun</b>	<b>Jul</b>	<b>Aug</b>	<b>Sep</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>TTL:</b>				