



# **HMP/YOI EAST SUTTON PARK**

## **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD**

**1<sup>ST</sup> NOVEMBER 2010 TO 31<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER 2011**

## Section 1

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### STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

The prisons Act 1952 and the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 requires every prison and Immigration Removal Centre (IRC) and Short Term Holding Room (STHR) to be monitored by an independent Board appointed by the Minister 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 establishments and, in prisons, the range and adequacy of programmes preparing them for release.
- (2) Inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority, any concern 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.

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 the prison's records, with the exception of prisoners' medical records, unless the individual's permission has been given.

Section 2

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### Section 3

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## DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

### **EAST SUTTON PARK PROFILE**

HMP/YOI East Sutton Park is an open prison for 94 women and 6 young offenders, located six miles from Maidstone, the County Town of Kent. In 1954 the first and only open female borstal was established at East Sutton Park which is today the only female open prison in the south of England. The main house is an imposing Jacobean mansion set in 84 acres of grounds with magnificent views over the Weald of Kent. The original building dates back to the 11th century and was on a moated site which can still be seen in the lower fields.

ESP is a working prison with a farm, extensive gardens and an increasingly profitable farm shop. Accommodation is mainly in dormitories with a number of double rooms available to those working outside the prison.

All the women are transferred from other establishments having been risk assessed as suitable for open resettlement conditions. They are encouraged to prepare for release and return to the community by gaining qualifications, skills and confidence through work and study. Links with the local community are good and over 25 women are currently in voluntary or paid work with plans to increase this to 50. Women eligible to go out to paid work are required to save 50% of their earnings for when they are released. A large percentage of the women are mothers with about 25% being eligible for Primary Carer Leave which allows them to spend 2/3 days every couple of months, at home looking after their children. This is very effective in strengthening the family ties and therefore reducing re-offending.

**East Sutton Park prisoners in paid work have built up an excellent reputation for professionalism with local employers in areas such as catering, care work and office based administration.**

## Section 4

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

(a) Particular issues requiring a response.

#### **Question for the Minister.**

4.1 Why are prisoners with only a short sentence left to serve, sometimes as little as two weeks, still being sent to a resettlement prison? The practice is unnecessarily costly and disruptive, serving no purpose other than 'warehousing' because there is insufficient time to undertake any useful resettlement work. This question has been raised over a number of years without any resolution. (Para 5.10).

4.2 We continue to be concerned that so many women, who do not pose a threat to society, should be given a custodial sentence when a community sentence would be more appropriate as it would address the offence but not risk the woman losing her children and her accommodation. The value of encouraging families to stay together is that the children are less likely to become involved in criminal activities.

4.3 The Board again expressed concern at the imminent implementation of the Integrated Drug Treatment System (IDTS) at great cost and without apparent consideration of the fact that it would be of little benefit to women at ESP. The prison is virtually drug free and our understanding is that the women do not want such an intervention, particularly those who have worked long and hard to address their substance misuse problems. Our observations are that the programme is misguided in its aims at a global delivery and that in the case of IDTS, one size does not fit all.

#### **Questions for the Deputy Director of Custody**

4.4 What can be done to reduce the technical nature of D&EAT meetings so that the average person can understand and follow them? (Para5.5).

#### **Questions for the Governor**

4.5 Why do some staff fail to attend D&EAT meetings they are required to? (Para5.2).

4.6 How can prisoners be encouraged to attend meetings? (Para5.3).

(b) **Other issues of concern or excellence not requiring a response.**

4.7 Funding cuts have had a direct effect on volunteer placements as charities have been less able to afford to fund volunteer's expenses and the Prison service reduced budgets has had a similar effect. (Para 6.1).

4.8 **The Vision team** continues to provide realistic and practical help for the women in finding accommodation, paid and voluntary work and dealing with issues such as debt. The success of the project is largely due to the professionalism, skills and life experience of its

team members who because of their own situations are well placed to address the needs of their peers. The Board recommends that the Vision Team project becomes a model to be rolled out to all other establishments as best practice. (Para 6).

4.9 Two of the women attended the Annual Conference of AMIMB, the Association of Members of Independent Monitoring Boards, at Glaziers Hall in London and gave excellent presentations on Prisoners Taking Responsibility. They outlined the positive rewards of regaining some sort of personal autonomy by working with the Vision team and advising others on plans for the future; one of the presentations talked about particular considerations for older prisoners. The women's interaction with the audience highlighted the benefits of encouraging and enabling serving prisoners to take part in this type of event in order to raise awareness of the realities of life in custody and what is really effective in reducing re-offending.

Section 5

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**AREAS THAT MUST BE REPORTED ON.**

**Diversity & Equality**

5.1 The monthly meetings have identified a number of areas where there has been over representation, usually of BME prisoners. These have been ROTL, gym and education. Investigations have taken place including an impact assessment where this was found to be appropriate. No concerning underlying causes have been identified.

**IMB concerns of the monthly meeting.**

5.2 Lack of staff attending. This may be due to the number of meetings that staff are expected to attend or it may be that D&EAT meetings are given insufficient priority.

5.3 Lack of prisoners attending the meetings. Several of them will be out at work or college. The OVM is attended by more prisoners and a similar encouragement to attend D&EAT meetings should be put in place including altering the time of the D&EAT meetings if appropriate.

5.4 The video link, whilst important in saving staff time, inhibits a proper discussion of concerns.

5.5 Some of the meetings are too technical for prisoners and sometimes IMB, to follow.

**Positives**

5.6 The prisoners' forum where they can openly discuss issues and draw attention to matters of concern.

5.7 The Diversity Manager who always has his door open and prisoners are free to and actually do see him and put any concerns to him. This is very valuable and issues are often dealt with in this way before they escalate.

5.8 The response to RIF and now DRIF forms that are submitted. Few are submitted but those that are, are dealt with in accordance with the laid down procedures as to time and process and the conclusions reached are in accordance with the evidence.

5.9 An over 50s club has been set up to cater for the increasingly older population at ESP.

5.10 Attitudes, Thinking and Behaviour courses have continued to be provided as and when necessary. Prisoners coming to ESP with little sentence still to complete, are being put at a complete disadvantage as there is often insufficient time to attend any course.

5.11 The Freedom Course continues to encourage women affected by domestic violence to understand better the complexities of the problem and thereby to find the confidence to take charge of their own lives.

5.12 The Personal Officer Scheme has remained one of the most important factors in the women's preparation for release as it focusses on the individual and her needs and those of her family.

### **Learning & skills**

5.13 The Education Department has continued to produce very good results. The number of prisoners taking Open University courses has greatly increased during the year.

5.14 There will be a new literacy and numeracy qualification to replace the old Basic Skills –this will be more flexible. Levels 1 & 2 are well catered for.

With greater numbers of women 50 and over in the establishment there has been a need to provide appropriate courses to address pension entitlements etc.

5.15 There has been an increase in the provision of practical courses such as Hairdressing, Knit and Stitch and an introduction to Beauty Therapy. These courses are instrumental in helping women to gain confidence in themselves when they learn a skill and particularly if they achieve a qualification, often for the first time in their lives.

### **5.16 Employment focused courses are available and very popular. These include:**

- Employment law
- Preparation for work.
- Business Studies Enterprise
- Level 2 Award in Food Safety in Catering.
- ICT
- Gym Instructor
- First Aid
- Budgeting and Money Management

5.17 There have been concerns recently that prisoners are sent to ESP before they have completed a particular course at the sending prison. As an example, two women were sent to ESP, close to completing an accountancy course (SAGE). We do not provide that course at ESP which was a great disappointment to the women (despite being told that ESP would provide the course) It is a great waste of funds which had been provided to the sending prison an (the funding was not transferable to another establishment) The Board strongly hopes that consideration is given to courses being completed before moving prisoners.

5.18 Manchester College contract will end shortly and bids will be made for a new provider.

5.19 Congratulations to the staff and prisoners who contributed to and organised ESP in house magazine The Trumpeter which this year won a Koestler award for its high quality of editorial content, artwork and photography.

### **Health Care Report**

5.20 HMP East Sutton Park does not have a 24 hour Health Care department but all prisoners received at the prison are seen within 24 hours of arrival by a member of the health department and an appointment is made to see a doctor at the next clinic. The Health Care clinic is held in a separate building adjoining the prison and is well equipped and clean. The waiting area ensures that privacy and confidentiality are maintained for the women during their consultations.

5.21 Appointments to see a dentist for routine check ups can take up to 6 weeks but women can be seen within a week if necessary and 24 hours in an emergency.

5.22 There are very few serious self harm incidents at East Sutton Park and few ACCTs are opened but those that have been opened have been appropriately managed within the time frame set out by the prison.

5.23 Various aspects of health promotion have been addressed throughout the year including smoking cessation and breast awareness. However the number of women using the gym is low and varies as over the year the gym has been inadequately staffed.

5.24 Many prisoners still suffer the effects of childhood abuse or domestic violence and counselling services have made a valuable contribution to their mental health and wellbeing over the past year. The Health Care Provider is changing to Oxley in November but it is unlikely that new budgets will allow for continuation of counselling services.

### **SAFER CUSTODY**

#### **Segregation/Separation & Care Units**

5.25 There are no segregation facilities at ESP and any women needing this provision would be transferred immediately to closed conditions.

5.26 There were 3 ACCTS (Assessment Care Custody Team) documents opened during the reporting period. There were 6 in the previous reporting period and 10 in the year before that. The incidence of self harm has always been low at ESP. The reason for this is that staff are very experienced and caring in their interaction with the women and treat each person as an individual. As has been already mentioned under heading of Healthcare, many of the women have experienced abuse at some time and have led chaotic lifestyles and to spend a period of time in a small establishment where there is calm, order and encouragement is a key factor in their making life changes and not re-offending.

### **SECURITY**

5.27 Number of adjudications 70. The Board has attended when possible and is confident that the hearings have been conducted correctly and fairly.

5.28 Number of SIRs 537 there were 377 in the previous reporting period and 329 before that.

5.29 We have attended a significant number of the weekly risk boards –IRBs- and have been impressed by the attention to detail regarding security and practical issues and also to the sensitive manner in which emotional issues have been handled.

5.30 There were 3 absconds and two were returned by the end of the reporting period.

## SECTION 6

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Other areas of the prison regime on which the Board has issues to report.

### **Vision**

6.1 This peer run team continue to work hard on behalf of the residents in planning for their release. As part of their resettlement programme, towards the end of their sentences, the women are required to complete 13 weeks of voluntary work before they are eligible to find paid employment. It is becoming increasingly difficult in this time of recession for the Vision team to obtain voluntary and paid work for the women and so extra efforts have been made to interest employers in taking on women from ESP. On 5th October an open day was organized for representatives of many employers and organisations, it was particularly good to have representatives from major National stores. They spoke with the residents and with the Vision team and it is very encouraging that many of the national stores are willing to offer paid employment to ESP residents. Sainsburys gave short term contracts to a number of women for work over the Christmas trading period and there will be opportunities for permanent employment on release at stores near to the women's home areas. The majority of the women do not live in the SE of England but this has not proved to be a problem as employers/managers agreed that it will be fairly straightforward for a woman to be transferred to a store near to where she will be released to. This decision illustrates clearly how communication with local/national commercial enterprises can result in the sort of positive outcome that will help to reduce re-offending.

6.2 With few exceptions the ladies nearing release have been able to find somewhere to live and this could be with family if the relationship has been maintained but some will be located in hostel accommodation (although hostels for women are few and far between) whilst others will, with the help of vision find rented accommodation.

6.3 Family ties are greatly encouraged with home leave and primary Carer Leave available to women who are eligible and the main carer for children up to 16. These visits are very effective in strengthening family ties and therefore reducing re-offending. Prisoners are entitled to apply every 3 months for an inter prison visits where there is a partner, son or daughter serving a sentence in a Kent prison.

### **Chaplaincy**

6.4 The spiritual needs of the woman are well provided for and I am pleased that recently a new CE chaplain has been appointed. The RC, Salvation Army and Muslim leaders are in regularly and other religions are catered for on request. The chaplaincy will soon be starting to think about the Christmas Carol service held in the local church. Licences have to be obtained by the women who want to take part and attend this event. It is encouraging to see how many of the ladies do apply to attend, as also the number of staff and local residents who come.

## **Farms and gardens**

6.5 The farm manager is now responsible for both East Sutton Park and Blantyre House. Work party numbers were higher than last year because of the increased population.

6.6 More NVQs than last year were achieved because there were more long term prisoners who therefore had time to complete the courses. The following courses were run:

- NVQ's: Horticulture Level 1
- Commercial Horticulture Level 1
- Agriculture Level 2
- A Retail NVQ is currently being developed together with Hadlow College.

6.7 The prison shop sells home grown lamb, pork and produce, and is increasingly popular with local people and now shoppers who are coming from further a field. There are now four Farmers' Markets held in surrounding villages. This was a record year for sales at over £100,000. Prisoners report that working with the animals has proved challenging in practical terms but that it has been very rewarding in their responsibility. Interestingly, women who have been the victims of physical abuse find the tactile nature of the work has a calming therapeutic effect.

## **CATERING**

6.8 The meals at ESP have been nutritionally well balanced, well cooked, varied and plentiful. The Food Comments book is easily available to all in the dining room and virtually all remarks are complimentary. Should there be an adverse comment then this has been followed up and answered swiftly by the catering manager.

6.9 The cost of meals per prisoner per day has averaged £1.85 per day, reduced from £1.90 over the previous reporting period and again this price has been achieved without sacrificing quality. Healthcare has advised on individual special dietary requirements and small quantities of particular ingredients required have been purchased locally.

6.10 Those women who are undertaking NVQs in catering have been able to practice their culinary skills but the majority of the women have not had the opportunity to do this. It would be a great benefit to their resettlement if all the women were able to learn/improve the skills needed in cooking and budgeting for themselves and their families.

## Section 7

## THE WORK OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

|  |          |
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| <b>Board Statistics</b>  |          |
| Recommended complement of Board Members                        | 9        |
| Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period   | 9        |
| Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period     | 8        |
| Plus one member on long term sick leave                        |          |
| Number of new members joining within the reporting period      | 0        |
| Number of members leaving within the reporting period          | 0        |
| Total number of board meetings during the reporting period     | 12       |
| Number of attendances at Board meeting during reporting period | 78 (6.5) |
| Number of attendances at meetings other than Board meetings    | 165      |
| Total number of visits to the prison including all meetings    | 243      |
| Total number of written applications received                  | 24       |
| Total number of verbal applications received                   | 12       |
| Total number of segregation reviews                            | N/A      |

| Code | Subject                       | 2006/7 | 2007/8 | 2008/9 | 2009/10 | 2010/11 |
|------|-------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| A    | Accommodation                 | 1      | 1      | 0      | 1       | 2       |
| B    | Adjudication                  | 0      | 0      | 0      | 2       | 1       |
| C    | Diversity related             | 1      | 0      | 2      | 1       | 5       |
| D    | Education/training/employment | 5      | 0      | 2      | 4       | 4       |
| E    | Family/visits                 | 7      | 0      | 0      | 2       | 3       |
| F    | Food/kitchen                  | 3      | 0      | 5      | 2       | 1       |
| G    | Health related                | 2      | 0      | 0      | 4       | 3       |

|   |                              |    |    |    |    |    |
|---|------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|
| H | Property                     | 5  | 4  | 5  | 8  | 5  |
| I | Sentence related             | 0  | 0  | 0  | 3  | 2  |
| J | Staff/prisoner related       | 2  | 4  | 4  | 4  | 4  |
| K | Transfers                    | 1  | 0  | 1  | 1  | 1  |
| L | Miscellaneous                | 7  | 9  | 10 | 4  | 5  |
|   | Total number of applications | 33 | 18 | 29 | 36 | 36 |

Members have attended courses on Security, PNOMIS, the Prison Service Intranet system, Serious Incidents and WASP, Women's Awareness Staff training.

One member attended a Foundation course and two the IMB Conference. One member attended an AMIMB training day at HMP Durham and also HMP Frankland.

A visit to HMP Peterborough was particularly useful in establishing contacts with the IMB and in enhancing our understanding of that regime as women are regularly transferred from this establishment.

A Performance Review meeting was held at Blantyre House.

Areas of Special Interest have been re-allocated.

It is the board's opinion that prisoners are being treated fairly and with respect and that as far as is possible given the length of their stay at ESP, they have been given the opportunity to prepare for life after release.

**Chairman Graham Maple.**