



HMP/YOI EAST SUTTON PARK

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

1ST NOVEMBER 2011 TO 31ST OCTOBER 2012

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Section 1

STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

The Prison Act 1952 and the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 require every prison and IRC to be monitored by an independent Board appointed by the Secretary of State 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 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, and have had, right of access to every prisoner and every part of the prison and also to the prison's records.

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Section 2

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Section 3

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

HMP/YOI East Sutton Park (ESP) 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 prison is amalgamated with HMP Blantyre House as the Weald of Kent Resettlement Estate.

The main house is an imposing Jacobean mansion, a listed building, set in 84 acres of grounds with magnificent views over the Weald of Kent. Accommodation in the main house is in shared rooms.

ESP is a working prison with a farm, extensive gardens and a profitable farm shop that is open to the public twice a week and also goes out to farmers markets in the surrounding villages.

All the women are transferred from other establishments having been risk assessed as suitable for open resettlement conditions. They are encouraged to prepare for their release and return to the community by gaining qualifications, skills and confidence through work and study.

Links with the local community are good and 30 of the women are currently undertaking voluntary work in retail, administration, library, museum, support work, construction training, housing advice and equine care. Following 10 weeks in voluntary work the women are expected to find employment and at the end of the reporting period 8 were working in catering, care work and administration.

Under the Prisoners' Earnings Act (September 2011) each woman working outside the prison and earning more than £20 a week, must pay 40% of her earnings, after income tax and national insurance have been deducted, towards Victim Support. Initially, this disadvantaged those who pay high fares to get to work but discretion is now applied to those paying high fares.

National companies including Sainsburys and Timpsons have been actively interested in employing serving prisoners and offering them a transfer to a store in their home area when they are released.

At the end of the reporting period 15 women out of 96 were eligible for Primary Carer leave which allows them to spend 3 or 4 days every 8 weeks at home, looking after their families. This is very effective in strengthening the family ties and therefore giving women the incentives they need not to re-offend.

Staff are to be commended for the caring and positive way they have encouraged the women to make the most of their opportunities during their time at East Sutton Park. In spite of the severe constraints of staff cuts the majority have repeatedly gone the extra mile to ensure the welfare of the residents and to support their colleagues.

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OVER THE REPORTING PERIOD THERE WERE 94 NEW RECEPTIONS & 127 DISCHARGES

At the end of the reporting period 94 of the current residents were from areas listed below.

Berkshire	17	Kent	9	West Midlands	7	Lancashire	4
Hampshire	4	Leicestershire	4	Hertfordshire	3	Tyne & Wear	2
Cambridgeshire	2	Sussex	1	Bedfordshire	1	Devon	11
London	7	Essex	4	Gloucestershire	4	Wales	3
Northamptonshire	3	Somerset	2	Surrey	2	Buckinghamshire	2
Norfolk	1	Cheshire	1				

Ethnic classification of 95 of the residents at the end of the reporting period

A1 Asian Indian	3
A2 Asian Pakistani	5
B1 Black Caribbean	9
B2 Black African	7
B9 Other black background	6
M3 Mixed white & Asian	1
W1 White British	61
W2 White Irish	1
W9 Other white background	2

Over the reporting period 127 women were discharged and to the following areas

Hants	27	Berkshire	13	Surrey	9	Wales	8
Hertfordshire	8	Rutland	6	Kent	6	Norfolk	6
London	5	Bedfordshire	4	Cambridgeshire	3	Leicestershire	3
Staffordshire	3	Buckinghamshire	2	Middlesex	2	West Midlands	2
Warwickshire	2	Overseas	2	Nottinghamshire	2	Essex	2
Merseyside	1	West Sussex	1	Devon	1	East Sussex	1
Oxfordshire	1	Lincolnshire	1	Wiltshire	1	Cornwall	1
Suffolk	1	Northamptonshire	2				

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Section 4

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- (a) Particular issues requiring a response.

Questions for the Minister

4.1) As in previous years we continue to be concerned that so many women who do not pose a threat to society, should be given a custodial sentence. In many cases a community sentence would be more appropriate and effective as it could address the offence but not risk the woman losing her children and her accommodation. By enabling a family to stay together the woman is less likely to re-offend and her children will have a greater chance of staying crime free in the future. Will the Minister reconsider the policy of sending women to prison? (Corston Report and paras 5.17 to 5.20).

4.2) Yet again, we bring to the Minister's attention IDTS. This initiative has proved a waste of money and effort. Cost was £300,000 to set up for Blantyre House and East Sutton Park. Just one woman has used the facility at ESP and yet there are dedicated IDTS nurses. The same amount spent on providing professional counselling (this has been cut) would have considerably helped in improving the quality of life of vulnerable women and reducing re-offending. Why was IDTS imposed on this prison? (Para 5.27)

4.3) Why was funding for counselling cut? (Para 5.26).

4.4) By putting healthcare departments to outside contractors there seems to be a general feeling that there is no accountability, no ownership by the prison and that governors are just babysitting the establishment. The Minister is asked to consider giving the Governor more control over outside contractors. (Paras 5.26 and 5.27).

4.5 Why is it that the meat produced on the prisons farm cannot be used in the prison kitchen? (Para 5.42).

Questions for the Governor.

4.7 Why are the IMB not informed when an adjudication is to take place? (Para 5.32).

4.8 Why are employers/work placements not always informed when a resident is going to be absent from her job as this can cause great disruption to a service being provided, particularly in small organisations? It is appreciated that this is the employee's responsibility, as part of her preparation for release but could this be addressed so that employers do not lose confidence in ESP workers and jeopardise other placements? (Para 6.4).

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4.9 Why have equality meetings not been held regularly and why have those meetings that have taken place been so poorly attended? (Para 5.4).

4.10 What can be done to ensure that prisoners transferring to ESP can complete their educational courses started at their previous prison? (Para 5.13).

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Section 5

AREAS THAT MUST BE REPORTED ON

EQUALITY & INCLUSION

D&REAT

5.1 We regret that the diversity manager who operated across both sites has now retired. He offered an open door policy which enabled residents to have immediate access to discuss their concerns when they occurred.

5.2 The officer who now has responsibility for D&REAT is frequently unavailable because of night duties and residents have found it more difficult to report or discuss incidents and concerns promptly.

5.3 Earlier in the year it was decided to revert to separate meetings for Blantyre House and East Sutton Park.

5.4 Meetings have not always taken place when scheduled, owing to responsible officers not being available. When meetings did take place they were, with the exception of two, poorly attended.

5.5 East Sutton Park is committed to consulting and involving all residents with an emphasis on the inclusion of residents from the minority groups in the management of equality issues. Appointing a prisoner equalities representative is one of the best ways of achieving this but this has not happened to date.

5.6 The Offender Voice Meeting (OVM) has generally been well attended however, numbers dropped off towards the end of the reporting period. Input from residents at both the OVM and the D&REAT meetings is important and efforts should be made to provide for this.

5.7 Older residents have specific needs and previously a representative group was formed to address their concerns; reintroduction of the group would be useful.

5.8 During the next year it was hoped that dates of meetings would be fixed and not subject to cancellation at a moment's notice as has been the practice. Residents should be actively encouraged to nominate their representative so that she could take forward their views and concerns.

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EDUCATION LEARNING & SKILLS

5.10 The educational needs of the women are assessed shortly after arrival, usually within a week. The Education Department works closely with OMU to identify individual learning needs. There are a range of courses on offer. The Education Department offers a range of basic education, practical courses and employment skills courses. Behavioural courses are delivered by OMU. A range of NVQs – Agricultural, Horticultural, Retail and Catering through other parts of the establishment but reduced staffing levels can cause a problem with assessment.

5.11 A small number of residents attend college outside the establishment and are supported in obtaining funding through Vision. Additionally, there are a few places on offer to residents at the new Timpsons' training facility at Blantyre House.

5.12 Although learning plans are tailored to suit individual needs, there can be waiting times for some of the courses. This can cause tensions when 'short term' residents are given priority over those at ESP for a longer term.

5.13 There have been some issues around continuity when residents transfer from other establishments – for example, obtaining certificates for courses completed at a previous establishment.

5.14 Individual learning plans are agreed at an IRB and progress is reviewed at later Boards. A member of the Education Department normally attends these boards.

LIBRARY

5.15 There is good access to the library which is open from 8am to 8pm, seven days a week. It provides a good selection of fiction and non-fiction (including Black writers fiction and foreign language sections) with the additional provision of a reservation service from other libraries.

5.16 A range of activities are organised through the library, for example, story book mums, local history events, six book challenge and more recently internet taster sessions to support residents in their search for training, education and accommodation.

FAMILIES & CHILDREN

5.17 Regular visits can be made to ESP each Saturday and Sunday- three to four family days are held on a Saturday from 11am to 3.30pm. These long hours enable families who live further away to have quality time together. There is much beneficial interaction as the families work together in games and handicraft sessions. The families bring packed lunches and can buy hot and cold drinks.

5.18 In good weather they visit the farm and the children love to see the pigs and livery horses. They also visit the farm shop in some cases to see 'where mum works' and this is a happy positive picture for them to take away.

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5.19 Family photos of the day are taken and visitors are given a booklet about the history of the house. At the end of the day families form teams and play bingo before they leave for home; the prison driver provides transport to the station as needed.

5.20 Few of the women have Kentish links and so during the year they are encouraged to make contact with their families by telephone, letters and cards. If a woman has young children then she will be encouraged to record a story with Story Book Mums and the disk is sent to HMP Dartmoor where sound effects are added and a personal CD cover designed and posted to the child. Staff are to be commended for their caring attitude and efforts in making sure that contact with families is as good as it can possibly be.

FARMS AND GARDENS

5.21 East Sutton Park continues to have a successful Farms and Gardens unit.

5.22 The farm breeds pigs and has a livery for 20 retired horses. Vegetables and plants are grown in the gardens and greenhouses, and the produce sold at the prison farm shop. The farm, gardens and shop are successfully staffed by the women. East Sutton Park provides four local farmers markets with pork, sausages butchered at the prison, and plants. The women are licensed to work on the stall. This provides very valuable experience for serving prisoners and is helpful with their resettlement especially for prisoners serving life sentences as this may well be their first experience out in the community for many years.

5.23 Because of religious sensitivities, the farm is the only area where women can decline to work. They can request to work in the farms or gardens and to study for NVQs if their sentence time allows.

5.24 The therapeutic effect of working with animals or in the gardens with plants cannot be over emphasised. For many women this is their first experience of rural life. Working outside with livestock or plants gives them space to reflect in a way they may never have been able to before. It is not infrequent to hear women express how helpful this work has been to them.

HEALTHCARE & MENTAL HEALTH

5.25 HMP East Sutton Park does not have a full time 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. Out of hours urgent cases are dealt with as in the local community by contacting doctor on call.

5.26 We are concerned that women requiring psychological therapy are having to wait an average of 6-8 months, so are either not receiving timely treatment or are being released before they have the chance to start. We are advised that 8 weeks would be a more acceptable level of delay.

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5.27 IDTS has been introduced into ESP at significant capital and ongoing cost. In our view this was unnecessary and counter productive. The view is borne out by the fact that it has only been used once since it was set up at a cost of £300,000.

RESETTLEMENT

5.28 New receptions are interviewed by probation staff to establish what has been achieved at the sending prison and to draw up a plan for new goals in preparation for release. The resident will attend a risk board which will be attended by representatives from probation and other departments and maybe her personal office. Great care is taken to look at not only any possible risk to the community with ROTL (release on temporary licence) or on release but the woman's individual needs. The boards are an excellent example of best practice and conducted in a sensitive and constructive way, looking at the whole picture of family, accommodation, employment and health problems or addiction history. Each woman is given enough time to discuss her needs and to take part in discussing her future.

5.29 Women are able to attend courses that address:

Drug importation

Alcohol & drugs

Anger management

Thinking skills; these last two are accredited courses.

5.30 Counselling was withdrawn because of lack of funding provision. We are very concerned as many of the women have suffered violent or sexual abuse in their childhoods and in relationships; counselling in prisons for these victims may be the one chance to make a difference to them and subsequently their families.

5.31 The problem is, we are told, being addressed and we understand that 2 or 3 women will shortly be referred for counselling in the community. Many of the women at ESP have been identified as needing counselling but because the waiting list is so long they may have finished their sentence before or during their course.

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SAFER CUSTODY

SECURITY

5.32 There was one abscond as well as 2 failures to return and 33 adjudications in the period of this report. It has been the general practice at ESP for adjudications to be heard on an ad hoc basis, making it difficult for the IMB to attend. Those that were attended have been conducted fairly for example, when a prisoner was accused of being in a prohibited area in the evening. Her defence, which was accepted, was that she had only been in open conditions for a short while and was unaware of the restriction. Since then notices have been put up so prisoners know the areas that are out of bounds in the evening. This is indicative of a caring regime by the staff. Despite frequent requests, the IMB are still not notified when an adjudication is to take place.

5.33 21 prisoners have been returned to closed conditions and the IMB have monitored the removal when we have been available. Most of these women were removed without incident but one became violent and had to be restrained. This was an extremely rare occurrence and the actual removal was witnessed by the IMB. The prisoner was treated with as much respect as was possible in the circumstances. She was dealt with in an appropriate way with healthcare being in attendance. The prison officers were able to eventually engage her in conversation and she calmed down despite being double handcuffed. The Governor in attendance and the prison officers were able to professionally apply their training in dealing with the situation.

5.34 The number of life prisoners has increased to 23% of the population. This type of prisoner is ideal for the facilities offered by East Sutton Park. The IMB are aware however of the increased work for staff involved with lifers and are also aware that no extra resources have accompanied the increase in their number.

5.35 ACCTs (Assessment Care Custody Team) have been opened appropriately albeit on only a few occasions as self harm at the prison is fortunately very low. One ACCT has remained open for longer than would normally be expected as the prisoner was clearly emotional and the anniversary of her mother's death was approaching. Staff have been able to give this prisoner a lot of support

5.36 The changes being introduced by Fair and Sustainable are having a significant impact on staff morale. Vacancies are occurring and not being filled and a lot of staff are on the move and this has led to a fall in morale. The IMB will continue to monitor the situation with regards to any effects it may have on the prisoners.

SEGREGATION, CARE & SEPARATION

5.37 Not applicable

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RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

5.38 Accommodation is in the main house and in shared rooms, with between 2 and 5 women. Consideration is given to privacy with half screens for each bed. There are several shower rooms and privacy is afforded with curtains. Ventilation in ground floor showers is very poor and the ceiling is covered with green mould. There is one bath available.

5.39 Women coming from closed conditions often find it difficult to adjust to sharing a bedroom after having had the privacy of a single cell, especially if with en suite toilet and shower. However it is explained that this is part of the resettlement preparation that teaches consideration for others.

CATERING

5.40 Meals are generally acknowledged, by the residents and by the IMB, as being plentiful and of a very high standard. A Food Comments book which is available in the dining room, bears this out as the majority of the entries are very complimentary and there are few complaints.

5.41 Cost per prisoner per day is £1.95 and credit is due to the catering team for their hard work and ingenuity in providing nutritionally balanced meals that are well cooked and varied.

5.42 Food is sourced from 3663, the provider under the national contract. Halal and non halal meat is ordered from the contractor but the excellent lamb and pork from the prison's farm shop cannot be used. Fruit and vegetables grown on the prison farm can be supplied to the kitchens. Menus are pre-select and changed regularly. Special diets such as vegan, gluten or dairy free are catered for as needed.

5.43 Special food is cooked for the religious festivals in the calendar and women of a different faith or no faith are given the opportunity to enjoy the celebratory fare if they wish and most enjoy trying something different. This also encourages positive interaction with the other women.

5.44 Consumer views are sought from a food sub group of the Offender Voice meetings. It is agreed by catering management staff that face to face discussions are more effective than written surveys.

5.45 There is now no requirement to keep food samples; the last Environmental Health report was good. Catering staff are copied in to the Area Catering Manager reports.

5.46 All kitchen workers must achieve Level 1 Food Hygiene before they start and Level 2 within 8 weeks.

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Section 6

OTHER AREAS OF NOTE

INDUCTION

6.1 The reception area is small but bright and welcoming and the women are provided with an information booklet about East Sutton Park. Over the first few days they will visit each department and learn about the rules. The IMB endeavours to speak to each new intake soon after they arrive. The main challenge for new receptions who are coming from closed establishments is the fact of having to be responsible for getting to roll checks, work and appointments on time without being told or reminded.

PERSONAL OFFICER SCHEME

6.2 The Personal Officer scheme at ESP is run sensitively and effectively and is a good example of best practice. The one to one contact between prisoner and the staff member helps to build trust and confidence and to repair the damaged self esteem suffered by so many women offenders. The personal officer is generally responsible for 8 women and when she or he is not available a named back-up officer should be available and for the most part this works satisfactorily.

VISION

6.3 The peer led team provides advice and guidance in dealing with any debts and rent arrears the woman may not have addressed before coming to ESP. They can facilitate calls to outside agencies, solicitors or work placements. Vision's Housing Adviser is recognised by a number of local authorities and is well equipped to help find accommodation on release. The team works with Women in Prison, Job Centre Plus, Prisoners' Advisory Service and Citizen's Advice Bureau. They may also advise on obtaining appropriate clothes for interview or court appearances, driving lessons and applying for funding to learn a new skill or to set up a business. Vision is a Best Practice project that has been well tried and tested and could benefit other establishments.

6.4 During the year the team invited local employers to ESP to explore the benefits of giving work to serving prisoners. Sainsburys and Timpsons are now regular employers of ESP residents, several of whom have continued to work for the companies on release.

CHAPLAINCY

6.5 The spiritual needs of the women are well provided for with Roman Catholic, Anglican and Muslim leaders attending the prison regularly and other faiths catered for on request to local ministers.

Section 7

THE WORK OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

7.1 Visits to HMP Send and HMP Styal were particularly useful in establishing contacts with the IMB and in understanding those regimes as women are regularly transferred to ESP from these establishments.

7.2 A Performance Review meeting was held at Blantyre House.

7.3 Areas of Special Interest have been re-allocated.

7.4 The IMB attended Quantum training.

Board Statistics	
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	9
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	96 (av 10.7)
Number of attendances at meetings other than Board meetings	184(av 20.4)
Total number of visits to the prison including all meetings	280 (av 31)
Total number of written applications received	28
Total number of verbal applications received	19
Total number of segregation reviews	N/A

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Applications to the IMB							
Code	Subject	2006/7	7/8	8/9	9/10	10/11	2011/12
A	Accommodation	1	1	0	1	2	0
B	Adjudication	0	0	0	2	1	4
C	Diversity related	1	0	2	1	5	1
D	Education/training/employment	5	0	2	4	4	4
E	Family/visits	7	0	0	2	3	7
F	Food/kitchen	3	0	5	2	1	0
G	Health related	2	0	0	4	3	6
H	Property	5	4	5	8	5	6
I	Sentence related	0	0	0	3	2	1
J	Staff/prisoner related	2	4	4	4	4	6
K	Transfers	1	0	1	1	1	0
L	Miscellaneous	7	9	10	4	5	12
	Total number of applications	33	18	29	36	36	47

Conclusion

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 best opportunity to prepare for life after release.

Chairman Graham Maple.

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GLOSSARY

ACCT Assessment, Care in Custody & Teamwork –

BME Black & minority ethnic group

CARATS Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice & Throughcare Scheme

CSU Care and Separation Unit (segregation)

ESOL English for Speakers of Other languages

D & EAT Diversity & Equality Action Team

DIRF Discrimination Incident report Form

HMP Her Majesty's Prison

HMCIP Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons

IDTS Integrated Drug Treatment Service

IMB Independent Monitoring Board

IRB Induction Resettlement Board

LSC Learning and Skills Council

NTA National Treatment Agency

NVQ National Vocational Qualification

NOMS National Offender Management Service

OLASS Offender Learning and Skills Service (part of LSC)

OMU Offender Manager Unit

OVM Offenders voice meeting

PASRO Prisons Addressing Substance-Related Offending

PCT Primary Care Trust

PSO Prison Service Order

[Type text]

PSI Prison Service Instruction

ROTL Released on temporary licence

SIR Security Intelligence Report

YOI Young Offender Institution

[Type text]