



HMP/YOI EAST SUTTON PARK

ANNUAL REPORT OF

THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

1ST NOVEMBER 2012 TO 31ST OCTOBER 2013

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.
- (4) 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.

Section 2

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Section 3

3.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

HMP/YOI East Sutton Park (ESP) is an open prison for 92 women and 8 young offenders, located six miles from Maidstone, the County Town of Kent. The main house is a Grade 11 listed Jacobean mansion set in 84 acres of ground

In 1954 the first and only open female borstal was established at East Sutton Park which is 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.

Accommodation is mainly in double rooms but there are a number of dormitories and priority for double rooms is given to women who go out to paid work.

Women 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 40 women are currently in voluntary or paid work, 4 more are in training before commencing jobs and 2 are at college. (For this period last year 25 women were in paid or voluntary work.) Some of the women work in London which is easily accessible from ESP. Women eligible to go out to paid work are encouraged to save a portion of their earnings for when they are released

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.

Education supplier - The Manchester College.

Healthcare provider - Oxleas

PSO 6300 permits women who are primary carers to have child care resettlement leave (CCR) This gives women the opportunity to spend quality time at home with their children under the age of 16, every eight weeks.

3.2 The Closure of East Sutton Park was announced just before end of the reporting period. It was expected that the process would take around 12 months. The closure of ESP and Askham Grange will mean that there will be no female open establishments in the UK but that resettlement units will be attached to closed establishments, with the objective of housing women nearer to their homes. However, the reality is that of the 121 women resettled during the reporting period, only a handful were resettled north of Birmingham so this totally contradicts the government's reasoning behind the directive. (see 3.7 on page 5) The Board is very concerned that the new units will not be able to offer anything approaching the excellent and highly effective resettlement regime at ESP.

At closure prisoners will be transferred to one of the new resettlement units and ESP staff will be offered employment at other establishments.

ESP IMB is taking account of reports from prisons that have already closed to use that knowledge to encourage best practice and to monitor that the women will not be disadvantaged by subsequent transfers.

3.3 Statistical profile:

Over the reporting period there were:

146 new receptions (previous year 94)

121 releases (127 previous year)

7 of the released were Lifers, 3 IPPs and 1 Parole

At the end of the reporting period there were 14 Lifers, 10 IPPs and 7 Foreign Nationals

Over the reporting period 121 women were discharged and to the following areas

Kent	25	London	19	Surrey	10	Essex	9
Northants	9	Middx	7	West Midlands	6	Hants	6
Bucks	5	Beds	4	Leics	3	Norfolk	2
East Sussex	2	Cambs	2	Herts	2	Berks	2
Somerset	1	W Sussex	1	Dorset	1	Cheshire	1
Ayrshire	1	Warwickshire	1	Oxon	1	Lincs	1

Section 4

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

4.1 Closure of East Sutton Park was announced just before end of the reporting period. It was expected that the process would take around 12 months. The closure of ESP and Askham Grange will mean that there will no female open establishments in the UK but resettlement units will be attached to closed establishments, with the objective of housing women nearer to their homes. However, during the reporting period only a handful of the 121 women were resettled north of Birmingham so this contradicts the reasoning given by the Government for the closure of ESP. Leading up to closure the women will be transferred to one of the new resettlement units and ESP staff will be offered a transfer to another establishment. The Board is concerned that at the start of closure procedures, there is no in-house probation provision, following recent retirements.

4.2 The IMB hopes that that the excellent and effective resettlement opportunities and dedicated care provided at ESP will be replicated at the new units and to that end the Board will be monitoring the transfer process.

4.3 IDTS has only been used by two women since it was introduced 4 years ago at a cost to ESP & BH of £300,000. The IMB had raised concerns about the justification for this large investment in an open prison that only accepts women suitable for open conditions.

4.4 The Chief Inspector of Prisons commented favourably on the Vision team which has continued to provide realistic and practical help for the women in finding accommodation, paid and voluntary work and dealing with personal 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.

4.5 Only secretariat provided training for IMBs is approved and expenses for any other is not reimbursed. The Board proposes that this policy be amended to cover reasonable costs for members attending other training deemed to be of particular benefit to the IMB role.

4.6 As in previous years (4.1 previous report) 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.

4.7 Will the Minister consider the policy of sending women to prison? (Corston Report paras 5.17 to 5.20).

4.8 Summary of Report

- Closure and the future for prisoners and staff
- IDTS waste of resources
- HMCIP comments favourable on Vision peer advice project.
- Community sentences for women who pose no threat to the public
- Facilities list disadvantages workers.
- Training expenses for IMBs.

4.9 PARTICULAR ISSUES REQUIRING A RESPONSE FROM THE MINISTER

4.9.1 The Vision team at ESP is peer lead and was commented on favourably by the Chief Inspector of Prisons. Vision is recognised by Local Housing Authorities as a referral agency and has been instrumental in finding accommodation for women about to be released.

Will the Minister consider setting up similar Vision teams in the new resettlement units being created at a number of women's prisons?

4.9.2 The new national Facilities List severely restricts the number of articles of clothing an individual prisoner may have. In the case of women in open conditions who are working outside the establishment, this is having a detrimental effect as the number of items permitted does not allow for suitable work clothes as well as leisure wear. However, it is hoped that local decisions will be made to address the issues. (5.1.5)

The Board asks that the problem be addressed by giving local managers discretion in applying the policy.

4.9.3 Previous year's concerns

(Previous report 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. (Corston Report and paras 5.17 to 5.20).

Will the Minister reconsider the policy of sending non-violent women to prison?

4.9.4 (Previous report 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 two women to date have used the facility at ESP. Dedicated IDTS nurses employed at Maidstone attend when needed. (Para 5.27)

Why was IDTS imposed on this prison?

4.9.5 (Previous report 4.5) There has been a major improvement over the past year in the psychotherapy counselling available to the significant proportion of women who need these services. There are no longer extensive waiting lists to access the service. The IMB has played a significant role in pressing for this improvement.

4.9.6 The meat produced on the prisons farm cannot be used in the prison kitchen as the prison is tied into national procurement contracts for food purchasing.

Why could not costs to the public be reduced by relaxing the prison's adherence to these contractual arrangements ?

4.9.7 Prisoners going out to voluntary and paid work have no employment rights. The IMB is concerned that this could leave women vulnerable to exploitation.

Would the minister insist that prisoners working in the community are afforded the same legal protections as members of the public?

Section 5

AREAS THAT MUST BE REPORTED ON

5.1 Equality and Inclusion

5.1.1 Joint Equalities meeting by video link with Blantyre House have been held regularly this year but there should be more input from ESP. Blantyre House has far greater staff and offender representation. ESP has only had offenders' representation for the past 2 months.

5.1.2 Prisoner Voice meetings at ESP are held regularly and are always well supported. Few problems were raised throughout the year although this does not necessarily indicate that there were none. However, offenders report that they are not afraid to raise matters of concern because they feel that staff will consider any complaints.

5.1.3 The number of older prisoners has increased over the reporting period. Two designated officers are responsible for their welfare.

The establishment holds an up to date PEEPS (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans) at the gate. The Fire Officer, Healthcare and Equalities officers hold information on those with disability issues. Offenders have voiced concerns over accessibility of showers which are situated next to the gym and approached over very slippery and uneven cobbles so that older and disabled prisoners are at risk of falling.

5.1.4 Records showed that a disproportionately smaller number of BME prisoners were released on temporary licence (ROTL) over the last two months. However, earlier this year the situation was the opposite when the percentage of BME ROTLs was very high. With such a small number of prisoners these numbers may be less statistically relevant and there is no anecdotal evidence to support the view that unlawful discrimination is taking place, however

the IMB continues to monitor the situation closely. Low staff numbers have meant that few officers are able to attend these monthly meetings

5.1.5 The new national Facilities List severely restricts the number of articles of clothing and other property individual prisoners may have. In the case of women in open conditions who are working outside the establishment, this is having a detrimental effect as the number and type of items allowed does not allow for suitable work clothes as well as leisure wear. It also means that prisoners with limited funds cannot take advantage of resettlement day release opportunities to budget shop.

Why cannot the problem be addressed by giving local managers discretion in applying the policy?

5.2 Education and Learning Skills

The educational needs of the women are assessed shortly after arrival. The Education Department provides an induction to the pathways programme and the women are supported, in partnership with the Offender Manager, to develop an individual learning plan. Plans are agreed at an IRB and progress reviewed at later boards. A member of the Education Department usually attends the boards.

The Education Department offers a range of courses: basic education including literacy, numeracy, IT skills and budgeting, money management and practical courses such as hairdressing, beauty therapy and employment skills such as business enterprise and presentation skills.

A range of behavioural courses are also on offer dealing with such issues as alcohol, drug importers, domestic abuse. Thinking skills and anger management courses are accessed outside ESP through the Kent Probation Service and other third sector providers. The IMB is concerned that there is no dedicated Probation officer situated at ESP.

A range of National Vocational Qualifications including Agricultural, Horticultural, Retail and Catering are offered through other parts of the establishment although staff shortages continue to impact on delivery.

A number of residents continue to attend colleges outside the establishment and some women work at the Timpsons' Training Academy at Blantyre House.

Continuity of studies following transfer from other establishments remains patchy. One resident was able to continue with her distance learning Business Studies A level. In contrast, another resident had not received her Horticultural course certificate and coursework several months after transferring to ESP.

5.2.1 Library

- The library continues to provide good access – 8am to 8pm seven days a week. It provides a good selection of fiction and non-fiction (including foreign language sections). Kent Libraries also provide a book ordering service which is well used.

- A range of activities is organised through the library – for example, story book mums, a monthly book club and six book challenge.
- This year has seen the re-instatement of computer access in the library. Two PCs are regularly used by residents as word-processors for letter writing and coursework as well as for accessing PSOs and PSIs through the intranet.
- Residents do not have access within the prison to the internet. Internet ‘taster sessions’ continue to be provided through a local library to support residents in their search for accommodations, training and employment but this only applies to those licenced to go out.

5.3 Healthcare

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.

5.3.1 Psychotherapy

There has been a major improvement over the past year in the availability of psychotherapy counselling for the significant proportion of the women at ESP who need these services. There is now no long waiting list to access these services, whereas before many of the women had a long wait, which meant that many had left ESP before they could have their psychotherapy needs addressed. The IMB has played a significant role in pressing for this improvement.

5.3.2 IDTS

IDTS has only been used by two women since it was introduced at a cost of £300,000. This is no surprise to the IMB, who had raised concerns about the justification for this large investment in an open prison that only accepts women suitable for open conditions.

5.3.3 Effects of impending closure

There are initial indications that the recently announced closure of ESP is causing some stress, particularly to lifers and to women recently transferred from other prisons. Civilian and prison staff are already understandably anxious about their futures and are already under huge pressures of extra workloads due to budget cuts.

5.3.4 Farms and Gardens

The farms and gardens continue to provide a therapeutic environment for the ladies as well as opportunities to obtain NVQs. The value to the women of being able to work under supervision and to have some personal space out in the fresh air where they can reflect and develop cannot be underestimated. Some of the vegetables grown in the gardens supply the kitchens at both East Sutton Park and Blantyre House and the remaining produce is sold in the prison shop and at farmers’ markets.

The farms and gardens have a shop on site and a pitch at local farmers' markets where under supervision, the women can gain confidence by engaging with the general public in a safe environment. This experience is particularly important for women serving long sentences, as a stepping-stone in their resettlement.

5.4 RESETTLEMENT

A great deal of effort has gone into increasing the number of work placements for the residents and despite the current economic situation more women have found employment. This is to be welcomed but it is recognised that more effort is needed to identify further work programmes.

During the course of the year a number of women have been employed by Timpsons, following a period of training. The Timpson workshop is just outside HMP Blantyre House and provides opportunities for both male and female prisoners and is a very valuable resource. A number of issues have arisen that have been of concern to the IMB. We understand that the prison worked with Timpsons to investigate the allegations of wrongdoing. The Governor in charge of the review has kept the IMB informed of developments but we have yet to see a written report. The Governor has offered his assurance that the women are now safe in this placement, even though for a time some had declined to work there. We will continue to monitor the situation closely.

A number of issues arose:-

What employment rights do prisoners have? Eg. Can they be made to work in excess of 40 hours?

Do all prisoners have contracts of employment and are they robust enough to protect the prisoners' rights?

We understand that Timpsons have reviewed their practices and the IMB awaits with interest the report commissioned by the Governor, detailing Timpson's own investigation.

The IMB asks to be informed of any issues arising from employment to monitor that treatment in the workplace is appropriate.

5.4.1 Families and children

Staff have organised a series of family days throughout the year. These have been very much enjoyed by all and have been invaluable in strengthening family ties. It has been reassuring for the children to see where their mothers are living as this helps to allay fears and preconceptions about prisons, fuelled by media interpretation of life in custody.

5.5 SAFER CUSTODY

Adjudications and return to closed conditions.

In previous reports, the IMB have complained that we are not informed when adjudications are to take place. In spite of the fact that there are so few at ESP, it is important that the Board is informed but for most of the reporting year this has not happened.. This came to a head with one particular woman who had an adjudication and was found guilty and returned to closed conditions. She had just returned from hospital where she had been for several weeks. The IMB was not able to monitor the fairness or otherwise of the decision as we were not informed and despite the fact that a member of the IMB was in the prison at the time. The IMB are currently reviewing the paperwork of this hearing but feel it is a poor substitute for attending. Since this incident the IMB have been informed when adjudications take place but this practice should be embedded in the procedure.

5.6 Separation and Care

Not applicable

RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

5.7 Catering

The kitchens employ 2.5 civilian staff & optimum work party of 12 prisoners with 7 of these on duty at any one time. Food allowance per prisoner per day remains at £1.96. Menus are pre-select and rotate over a 4 week cycle. Generally, 5 choices of main course are provided to meet the needs of women from diverse cultural backgrounds; special health needs diets are catered for as required.

During the year the main religious festivals have been celebrated and acknowledged by serving specially appropriate foods. On some of these occasions the women have volunteered to prepare particular dishes that all are invited to share.

6 Women have attained Level 2 NVQ Catering.

Entries in the Food Comments book have been addressed individually by catering managers and the issues discussed at Prisoner Voice meetings.

Food supplier is currently 3663, according to the national contract. This contract prohibits the supply of pork and lamb bred on the prison farm and sausages prepared in the establishment being supplied to the kitchens. These meats are sold at local farmers' markets and in the prison shop which is open to the public.

Section 6

OTHER AREAS OF NOTE

6.1 Farms and gardens

The farms and gardens continue to provide a therapeutic environment for the women as well as providing opportunities to study for National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs). The vegetables grown supply the kitchens at both East Sutton Park and Blantyre House and some of the produce grown is sold in the prison farm shop and at farmers' markets in the area. These activities are particularly beneficial to women serving long sentences as the interaction with members of the public helps to prepare them for release.

6.2 Systems delivered by officers

Staff and officers at ESP have continued to be supportive of the women. One example is the officer who has set up a clothes lending scheme. Women going to interviews and to work are able to borrow clothes that are smart and appropriate for the occasion and serve to give the women the self confidence that is vital if they are to succeed.

6.3 Personal Officer Scheme

Designated officers are responsible for typically eight women and the scheme has continued to be highly effective in helping the women to prepare for release. The success of the programme has been due to the dedication of each officer in working on a one to one basis with the women in building the confidence that will help them to make a fresh start and turn their lives around.

Section 7

THE WORK OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

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	1
Number of members leaving within the reporting period	1
Total number of board meetings during the reporting period	12
Number of attendances at Board meeting during reporting period	86 (av 9.6)
Number of attendances at meetings other than Board meetings	114
Total number of visits to the prison including all meetings	200 (av 22.2)
Total number of written applications received	18
Total number of verbal applications received	21
Total number of segregation reviews	N/A
Date of Annual Team Performance Review	7 th August 2013

	Applications to the IMB							
Code	Subject	6/7	7/8	8/9	9/10	10/11	11/12	12/13
A	Accommodation	1	1	0	1	2	0	2
B	Adjudication	0	0	0	2	1	4	2
C	Diversity related	1	0	2	1	5	1	0
D	Education/training/employment	5	0	2	4	4	4	2
E	Family/visits	7	0	0	2	3	7	7
F	Food/kitchen	3	0	5	2	1	0	0
G	Health related	2	0	0	4	3	6	2
H1	Property (within current establishment)	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
H2	Property (during transfer from another establishment)	5	4	5	8	5	6	2
H3	Canteen, facilities, catalogue shopping, Argos	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
I	Sentence related	0	0	0	3	2	1	9
J	Staff/prisoner related	2	4	4	4	4	6	3
K	Transfers	1	0	1	1	1	0	1
L	Miscellaneous	7	9	10	4	5	12	6
	Total number of applications	33	18	29	36	36	47	39

Conclusion

It is the Board's opinion that prisoners have and 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.

Chair Clare Hudson

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

PSI Prison Service Instruction

ROTL Released on temporary licence

SIR Security Intelligence Report

YOI Young Offender Institution