



HMP STANDFORD HILL

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

YEAR ENDING 30 APRIL 2014

HMP STANDFORD HILL

CHURCH ROAD

EASTCHURCH

SHEPPEY

KENT ME12 4AA

STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

The Prisons Act 1952 and the Immigration and 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 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 also to the prison's records.

4 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 4.2 1 HMP Standford Hill has undergone a year of change, sometimes as a consequence of ‘benchmarking’. There have been wholesale changes in Management; a new Governing Governor, Deputy Governor, Head of Residential, Diversity, Resettlement, and Offender Management are all recently, (and sometimes temporarily), in post. ‘New Ways of Working’ was introduced in March, towards the end of the reporting period; the Board continues to monitor the impact of this closely.
- 4.2 2 A decision by the Ministry concerning prisoners enjoying Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) has had far-reaching, and sometimes unforeseen, consequences. Despite efforts to introduce extra personnel, thereby improving the efficiency and administration of OASys, the administrative burden and influence of this upon Resettlement Day Release (RDR) and ROTL continues to be felt.
- 4.2 3 The changing profile of the prison population, with increase numbers of ‘Lifers’ and Indeterminate Sentence Prisoners being accommodated, is also mirrored in the growing number of older prisoners, with two offenders being released immediately prior to dying as a result of terminal illness. This welcome and compassionate approach has mitigated against the need to comment upon Deaths in Custody.
- 4.2 4 A reduction in personnel resulted in one residential wing (C) being unsupervised after 9.30pm. Prisoners responded well to this extra responsibility and in one case intervened to ensure that, where unusually, an assault had occurred, officers and assistance were quickly available.

4.3 PREVIOUS YEARS CONCERNS

- 4.3 1 Poor quality and provision of food - marked improvement (Ref: 7.8 1 7.8 2)
- 4.3 2 Lifers and ISP prisoners – limited provision for older offenders (Ref: 5.2 5.3 5.4)
- 4.3 3 Security and reduced staffing levels - drugs and mobile phones still a problem
(Ref: 4.2 4 7.4 1 7.4 2)
- 4.3 4 Personal Officer Scheme – non-existent (Ref: 5.8)
- 4.3 5 Grounds are badly maintained – no improvement (Ref: 7.1)
- 4.3 6 Poor provision of vocational courses – not resolved (Ref: 6.5 3)

5 MAIN AREAS OF THE PRISON.

5.1 SAFER CUSTODY

Safer Custody meetings are held monthly and well attended although 'Benchmarking 'and' New Ways of Working' have seen a change in personnel and those attending the meeting

5.2 DIVERSITY

Changes in leadership and approach have hindered the effectiveness of this Department. A much reduced Foreign Nationals cohort is now housed within the prison and its attendant demands dealt with under the heading of Diversity. The differing needs of older prisoners have yet to be fully addressed. Bi-monthly meetings are held and complaints investigated and dealt with appropriately.

5.3 ISPs and LIFERS

A quarter of the prison population is an ISP. ISPs and Determinate prisoners are treated equally; in the Board's opinion there is a difference and it could be addressed in a more positive way. There has been one 'Lifer' meeting in the last twelve months which was poorly advertised and attended. This is hopefully about to be remedied.

5.4 OLDER PRISONERS

Almost 25% of the prison population is an 'older prisoner, the oldest being 84. There had been activities arranged last year by a Peer Worker, assisted by the Diversity Officer, but the Peer Worker was released and the Diversity Officer (new in post), now doubles up as Safer Custody Officer, so activities have ceased. The officer is attempting to start a programme again with a meeting arranged to establish what 'older prisoners' want

5.5 HEALTHCARE

5.5 1 Healthcare is now in the hands of S.E. Healthcare and continues to operate in a positive way for the benefit of the prisoners. Offenders are able to self-refer to a triage nurse who will advise and organise for an appointment with the G.P. on site.

5.5 2 Referrals for more specialist treatment or access to a Consultant as a day-care patient are usually dealt with by employing a SPL so offenders can access nearby hospitals/clinics. The immediate need to ensure that up-to-date OASys was in place created some difficulties.

5.6 STAFF

The Board continue to enjoy a good relationship with staff. Uniformed staff continue to be helpful to the IMB and with serving prisoners.

5.7 ADJUDICATIONS

Adjudications are attended regularly and appear to be dealt with fairly. Where appropriate, the services of the Independent Adjudicator is obtained.

5.8 PERSONAL OFFICER SCHEME

Reduced staffing levels continue to preclude the effective use of the Personal Officer scheme.

6 PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY

6.1 LAUNDRY

This provides useful employment for a small number of prisoners who display a good attitude to work. Last year we reported on the difficulties encountered by the Laundry owing to the poor quality of the machinery and its constant breakdown. Purchase of a more robust machine and greater attention to maintenance ensured that few, or no, complaints were received at the start of the year, but unreliability of equipment has resurfaced as an issue, and the number of complaints received has risen accordingly.

6.2 RECYCLING

A small number of prisoners have been employed at this plant throughout the year with occasional intervals where non-delivery of materials brought about a break in employment.

6.3 MOTORMEX

Motor mechanics was introduced at the start of the year, with offenders receiving accreditation for the work they completed. Lack of a vehicle hoist and compressor generated early difficulties but, once this equipment was installed, all progressed well with prisoners eager to access the work and training.

6.4 PRINT SHOP

The Print Shop continues to be a very busy Department with work being sourced from 131 Solutions in London. A full complement of 16/17 prisoners are employed there each day; all appear to enjoy their work.

6.5 EDUCATION

- 6.5 1 Manchester College has continued as the contractor for OLASS 4. The staff of the department comprise the manager, deputy manager, an administrator, 2 trainers, a learning support assistant and 9 part-time tutors.
- 6.5 2 The practice of testing all prisoners on induction has continued, with their educational needs taken into consideration by the Education Training and Employment Board before allocation of work. The number of prisoners with low English and Numeracy standards has reduced, making it no longer necessary to provide special coaching for them. Offenders follow courses in Literacy, Numeracy, ICT and Preparation for Work which provide the mainstay of the curriculum. The annual rate of attendance continues at 80%.
- 6.5 3 Despite the emphasis on resettlement there remains limited availability for vocational qualifications. BICS cleaning, courses for Optical technicians, ICT and Fork-Lift truck driving continue to be provided on site,

while a new course in Motor Mechanics has been introduced and has proved very popular and successful. Regrettably Carpentry is no longer available, whereas the fall in the Foreign National intake continues to be mirrored in the discontinuation of ESOL tuition. Evening classes are under review and may be introduced depending on establishment needs.

6.5 4 Virtual Campus is available, though prisoners still rely on Tribal for job searching and find submission of 'on line' CVs and job applications more easily carried out during ROTL. More recently Standford Hill has been the highest user of virtual campus in Kent and Sussex. Due to the redefinition of the physical boundary of the prison, some courses now take place 'off campus' so are technically not included in this report.

6.5 5 All courses currently being delivered in Education

Functional Skills Literacy (OCR)

Functional Skills, Numeracy (OCR)

Preparing to Learn (Induction) (NCFE)

Book-Keeping

Pre Tenancy

Healthy Living (NCFE)

Personal Money Management (NCFE)

Peer Mentoring (NCFE)

Certificate in Employability (NCFE)

Health and Safety (BSC)

Business Venture (OCR)

Customer Service (OCR)

Prep for Work (NCFE)

BICS (BICSs)

Motor Vehicle (IMI)

ITQ (OCR)

First Aid at Work (FAA)

PSD Employment Ready

7 OTHER AREAS OF THE PRISON

7.1 GROUNDS.

The grounds continue to be poorly maintained; some areas have a pretty border whilst other areas appear derelict. The area around Aviation House, (the administrative centre), is very poor and the rabbits would appear to have triumphed, despite an estimated 2000 rabbits having been killed. The vast difference between the grounds and gardens as displayed at HMP Ford Open Prison and Stanford Hill would seem unnecessary and with a little will, could be rectified.

7.2 RECEPTION

Despite occupying a poor building, Reception runs well, dealing with over 100 prisoners on weekend leave. The property situation has, in one way, been helped by the refusal of the carrier to bring more than two boxes with each prisoner, but has then become complicated when the rest of the property is forwarded. Losses can occur! Reception staff deal with prisoners professionally and courteously. On occasion the area around reception could be cleaner.

7.3 ACCOMMODATION

- 7.3 1 The Board have been, during the reporting period, concerned with the cleanliness and degree of littering around the residential wings. When raised as an issue the situation has been quickly resolved, only to manifest itself again within a few weeks.
- 7.3 2 Many prisoners whose work schedule precludes access to prison meals rely upon self-catering. Commercial microwave ovens and toasters were introduced into the residential areas to replace equipment which, probably because of misuse, regularly broke down. Despite the best efforts of the officers, self-policing and cleaning of this equipment by prisoners remains ineffective.

7.4 SECURITY

- 7.4 1 The import and distribution of drugs, alcohol and mobile phones has exercised Stanford Hill's officers and staff whose main focus is security. Intelligence led searches discovered a number of mobile phones, but a targeted search throughout the whole prison, saw only a small number of phones, SIM cards and drugs being discovered, though alcohol, phones and drugs was thrown from windows in the residential blocks. It is suspected that some prisoners, especially those new to the gaol, become the victims of bullying and, despite a zero are encouraged to smuggle contraband into the prison on return from RDR/ROTL.
- 7.4 2 The main drug threat encountered has been from NPS (New Psychoactive Substances), usually referred to as 'Spice'. These substances (formerly called legal highs) are readily available from shops in nearby towns, and have been the cause of a small number of prisoners being rushed to hospital following a severe reaction to the drug.
- 7.1 3 The installation of 'telephone blockers' has had mixed results, possibly reflecting problems with the technology and because the prison occupies such a large area.
- 7.4 4 Security meetings are held monthly and are generally well attended.

The latest Security Audit was Amber/Green.

7.5 OFFENDER MANAGEMENT UNIT (OMU)

- 7.5 1 The OMU staff administrate and regulate all movement of offenders into and out of the prison and therefore play a key role in ensuring that reception and release (whether temporary, conditional or permanent) is carried out efficiently.
- 7.5 2 An increase in the number of Offender Supervisors from 7 to 17 officers with a dual role and rise in the total number of case-workers (up to10) who undertake responsibility for sentence managing was unable to

alleviate the difficulties encountered when an urgent demand that each prisoners OASys be updated emanated from the Minister. Despite drawing in temporary assistance, the number of OASys requiring completion was slow to fall.

- 7.2 3 Weekly (now evening) ‘clinics’ are held to address prisoners’ queries and anxieties and have been instrumental in markedly reducing the number of applications made to the Board.

7.6 RAPT

RAPT took over the role fulfilled by CARATS, but from the outset, the workforce found that fewer prisoners ‘dropped in’ and availed themselves of this service. A change in location to a residential wing seemed to bring about significant improvement, but ‘benchmarking’ saw a change in the timings of the core day, so once again the number of self-referrals has shown a marked decline.

7.8 FOOD

- 7.8 1 One year ago we commented upon our worries about the quality, quantity and delivery of food. Food is now sourced from HMP Swaleside and has shown a marked improvement in quality, yet we continue to be seriously concerned that the Governor of one prison is responsible for the preparation and delivery of food to a nearby establishment which is controlled by a different Governor and management team.
- 7.8 2 Daily delivery of materiel from one Category B prison kitchen to prisoners operating food Serveries in a Category D prison has obvious implications for security, with constant vigilance being required to ensure that contraband is not smuggled between the two.

7.9 WORKING OUT SCHEME

- 7.9 1 Officers and peer workers have worked hard to extend the calibre and range of employment opportunities made available to prisoners whose risk assessment permits their travel to and from work outside the confines of the prison.
- 7.9 2 Successfully completing a period of community work (Stage I) may permit prisoners to undertake paid employment (Stage II) where minimal risk to security and reliability has been endorsed by Governors and officers. Access to such employment opportunities has increased slowly throughout the year. Over 100 prisoner are regularly be involved in Stage I employment each day, with over 30 offenders accessing Stage II employment.

7.10 RESETTLEMENT

- 7.10 1 Prior to release, prisoners are interviewed by resettlement staff and peer workers in order to give them assistance with accommodation, employment and medical facilities. Prisoners are also introduced to agencies and charities which are all aimed at reducing the risk of re-offending on release
- 7.10 2 This Department appears to function well with enthusiastic staff carrying out the work, however future plans are that the department is to change its administration and will be operated by a ‘commercial’ company’. The staff who are currently employed in the Department are disillusioned, because they have put in a considerable amount of effort in helping prisoners find work/accommodation et c. upon release and consider that the new company who will take over will operate purely for commercial gain.

7.11 CES

Clothing Exchange Stores continue to function effectively; at no time throughout the year was there a report of a shortage of materiel with consistent, though low, demand.

7.12 CHAPLAINCY

Numbers attending Sunday services are down since this time last year. Numbers were already in decline before the introduction of weekend RDR, but this innovation has not helped. Over the years numbers have always fluctuated but have never been as consistently low as they are at the moment. When a new Anglican chaplain is appointed the chaplaincy team will consider what other options are available to increase participation. Attendance at other faith services remains consistent.

7.13 LIBRARY

7.13 1 The library is open from 9.30 am to 11.15 pm to allow access for all prisoners. Mondays and Wednesdays appear to be the most popular days, an average of 100 – 150 prisoners attending each day. Two peer workers are available during these times with the addition of part time KCC librarians who also cover Elmley and Swaleside.

7.13 2 Prisoners have the opportunity to request copies of books that Standford Hill do not have. The environment is pleasant, quiet, all that you would expect from a library.

8 THE WORK OF THE IMB

8.1 1 The Board meets once a month to discuss the previous month's report from the Governor and members individual reports, notes and observations. There is an opportunity to raise issues with the Governor which requires response or action.

8.1 2 Each **week**day a board member will visit the prison and observe areas of interest and other areas identified for particular attention. The member makes a written report of the inspection which is available in a diary kept securely in the IMB office.

8.1 3 INDUCTION

Each Thursday of the week a member of the IMB attends the prison to take part in the Induction Programme for new prisoners to Standford Hill. The member explains the role of the IMB and how to make contact should a prisoner wish to talk to a member of the Board. In many cases, this is the first time prisoners would have had face-to-face information about the IMB.

8.1 4 During the past year the control of the Induction process has been greatly improved and attendance at these briefings is significantly better than before

8.2 EVENING SURGERY

The 'drop-in' evening surgery, held once a month for the benefit of those prisoners who are out of the prison during the core part of the day and are therefore unable to speak face-to-face with a member of the IMB, continues to prove helpful, with a number of prisoners making use of the facility, though sometimes to merely talk about social life, family and friends. The Board are grateful to the Chaplaincy of Standford Hill for their co-operation in allowing the surgery to be held within the quiet atmosphere of the prison chapel and adjoining rooms.

8.3 STATISTICS

8.3 1 BOARD STATISTICS

Recommended complement of Board Members	10
Number of Members at start of reporting period	9
Number of Members at end of reporting period	8
Number of new Members joining within the reporting period	1
Number of Members leaving within the reporting period.	2
Total number of visits to the prison	382
Total number of applications received	143
Total number of segregation reviews held	N/app
Total number of segregation reviews attended	N/app

8.3 2

The following table contains the statistics of applications to the Board:

Code	Subject	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
A	Accommodation	12	5	5	5	5	3
B	Adjudications	22	11	12	21	11	2
C	Diversity Related	2	2	6	1	2	3
D	Education/Employment	23	16	21	19	19	9
E	Family Visits	5	19	9	31	16	5
F	Food	6	8	4	33	11	6
G	Heath Related	29	8	21	26	15	11
H1	Property/Money S. Hill	19	17	11	8	10	9
H2	Property/Money Other	138	49	27	16	15	9
I	HDC/Parole	407	165	84	19	9	14
J	Staff/Prisoner Related	5	4	14	9	7	4
K	Transfers	11	20	17	8	0	2
L	ROTL/Town Visits	75	19	50	33	26	66
Total		754	343	282	229	146	143

APPENDIX

The Old Mill

For some years the Board has been a concerned that, for a prison amongst whose objectives are the facilitation of resettlement and the reduction of re-offending, vocational courses which provide training for employment and industrially recognised accreditation, have been few in number.

This criticism has in part been addressed by implementing an adjustment of the boundary fence to the South of the prison, thereby permitting the Old Mill and its adjacent grounds and buildings to be redefined as a 'Restricted Area'. Here, prisoners who have entered into a compact with the prison, may pursue courses provided by Canterbury College of FE and Mainstream Academy. Courses in Digital Media (Level II), CGSI (Level III), CISCO ICT Systems, and Construction (BTEC II) are available, as well as elements of HGV Driver training, and employment in the on-site cafe allows training in food and hygiene, whilst work with Bio-fuel recycling plant permits offenders to obtain WAMITAB qualification and then go on to find similar work after discharge.