



HMP/YOI EAST SUTTON PARK

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

1ST NOVEMBER 2014 TO 31ST OCTOBER 2015

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

Section	CONTENT	PAGE NO
1	Statutory role of the IMB	2
2	Contents	3
3	Description of the prison	4
3	Statistical Profile	5
4	Executive summary	6
5	Areas that must be reported on	8
6	Other areas of note	12
7	Work of the IMB	13
	Glossary	15

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.

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. 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 closed prisons having been risk assessed as being suitable for open 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 Employer Fairs have helped find work for the women. 12 ladies are currently in paid work, 8 of these commuting to London which is an hours train journey from ESP and the majority of the work is office based or in catering; 7 are in training and 13 are in voluntary jobs.

Under the Prisoner's 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 contributions have been deducted, towards Victim support. Initially this disadvantaged those who had to pay high fares to get to work but a Governor's discretion is now usually applied. In addition, the women are encouraged to save a portion of their earnings for when they are released

ESP is a highly successful and effective prison and staff are to be commended for the caring and positive way that they encourage the women to make the most of their time at East Sutton Park. In spite of budget restraints, staff cuts, and the continued threat of closure, the majority have continued to go the extra mile to ensure the welfare of the women and to support their colleagues.

3.2 STATISTICAL PROFILE

New receptions	142 this year	140 Previous year
Sending prisons	Bronzefield 93	Peterborough 21
Send 11	Holloway 4	Low Newton 3
Drake Hall 3	Foston Hall 2	Askham Grange 2
Styal 2	Eastwood Park 1	

Discharges	112 this year	126 last year
HDC 71	CRD 26	ARD 8
Lifer Parole 6	Deported 1	Deported 2

Transfers to other establishments	
2 transferred at own request	28 shipped out

Failure to return	1
Absconds	0

At end of reporting period pop included	
Lifers 10	IPP's 7

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, PARTICULAR ISSUES & QUESTIONS FOR THE MINISTER

4.1 The Chief Inspector of Prisons commented favourably on the Vision team and this was highlighted in last year's report. Vision 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 experiences of its team members who because of their own situations are well placed to address the needs of their peers. The Board again recommends that the Vision Team project becomes a model to be rolled out to all other establishments as an example of Best Practice.

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

4.2 As in previous years (4.4 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.

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

4.3 The Board is aware that the law has changed and offenders are no longer awarded Indeterminate Sentences. However, as this report shows, out of 7 Indeterminate Sentenced prisoners (IPP's) currently at ESP, all are over tariff including one lady who was given a 2 year sentence but has already served 9 years.

Will the Minister call for an urgent review of the situation?

4.4 Women at ESP, like many prisoners across the Prison Estate, do not have Internet access and it is suggested that a suitably secure and necessarily limited system is considered. All State Benefit claims and Local Authority Housing applications can only be completed online and most job applications are accessed and submitted in the same way. We are aware that local libraries offer computer access sessions and this is suitable for those on ROTL. However, sessions are limited and ROTL not frequent enough to deal realistically with this very important aspect of resettlement. Would it not be common sense to encourage some prisoners such as those deemed suitable for open conditions, to prepare for release ahead of time?

When will the Minister consider providing appropriately restricted Internet access for ESP women?

4.5 PSO 6300 provides for Childcare leave for ‘Sole Carers.’ (see p10 Families) but there has been some confusion over the interpretation of the term.

Will the Minister request a review of the PSO in order to clarify the term ‘Sole Carer’

4.6 We are aware that currently, prisoners are not required to follow educational courses. We are concerned that women serving Life or IPP sentences arrive at ESP with poor functional skills. 44% of these women did not have Level 2 Maths on arrival and 33% did not have Level 2 English.

When will the Minister ensure that prisoners are required to attend education courses as part of their Sentence Plan?

4.7 Summary of Report

- HMCIP comments favourable on Vision peer advice project.
- Community sentences for women who pose no threat to the public
- Concern regarding IPP’s over tariff
- Appropriately secure internet access for ESP prisoners
- Clarity of definition of ‘Sole Carer’ PSO 6300
- Women arriving at an open establishment with poor education functional skills.

4.8 Previous year’s concerns

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).

When will the Minister call for a review to reconsider the policy of sending non-violent women to prison?

4.9 The Full Healthcare/Mental healthcare contract between Oxleas and East Sutton Park has never been made available to Governor and IMB. Therefore, it is not possible to know exactly what should be delivered and indeed whether the contract has been fulfilled.

Would the Minister please ensure that Health Providers make any prison contract available to Governors and the IMB?

Section 5

5.1 Equality and Inclusion

Following the mothballing of Blantyre House, Video Link meetings were suspended and ESP has held its own equality meetings which are noticeably improved and more effective. The meetings take place monthly and have been well attended by both staff and resident representative. Residents bring feedback from their Offender Voice meetings. Issues have generally been of a minor domestic nature such as beds and bedding, the very poor quality mattresses and pillows and beds being too small for larger ladies.

Concerns were also raised about the very poor condition of showers, rotting window frames and the proliferation of broken and cracked tiles.

The women have been very keen to establish a Women's Institute branch at ESP and a meeting was held to discuss the feasibility. Nationally, the WI fees are over £30 per annum, a sum that would not be affordable for most prisoners so this is a major problem that would have to be resolved.

Use of the gym by both staff and prisoners has increased significantly since more frequent PEI (Physical Education Instructor) presence. Physical education staff have worked to encourage participation through developing a wider range of activities.

5.2 Reports from Diversity Managers indicate fewer diversity related issues. SMART (Systematic Monitoring and Analysing of Racial Equality). Diversity and Equality Action Plan updates have not raised any matters of serious concern, eg: there were far fewer BME (Black/minority/ethnic) resident in the middle of the year but numbers soon returned to levels more usual for ESP.

5.3 Equality Impact Assessments on ROTL's (Release on Temporary Licence) will be carried out once the new ROTL rules have been implemented. The aim of the new rule is to ensure that all temporary releases are for a specific reason that will encourage the individual's development however; the changes have resulted in some confusion. New ROTL will have to evidence targets written into Sentence Plans

5.4 Education and Learning Skills

The Education provider is Novus, part of Manchester College.

The Education Department continues to offer a range of basic and employment related courses. We have been impressed by the support given to the women both on arrival and

throughout their sentences at ESP. The educational needs of the women are addressed timeously through partnership working between the Education Department and OMU. Individual learning plans are set up and monitored through the recently re-introduced Sentence Planning Boards and Risk Boards. The IMB monitors these and regards them as well conducted and extremely helpful towards each prisoner's resettlement. We do, however, remain concerned that there is sometimes a waiting list for Assertiveness courses. We wonder if this could be addressed through closer working between OMU and Education and a more flexible approach to the education budget?

We are concerned at the low level of functional skills of many women arriving at ESP from other establishments. 44% of women serving Life or IPP sentences did not have Level 2 Maths on arrival and 33% did not have Level 2 English on arrival. However, all these women have now progressed.

We are aware that currently, prisoners are not required to follow educational courses.

5.5 Library

The library at ESP continues to be well used by the women as do the various activities on offer such as Story Book Mums and an active Reading Group.

Bookable sessions at a local library enable the women to access the Internet and these sessions are useful in developing ICT skills.

A lack of Internet access on site is a real obstacle to enabling the women to apply for jobs to support their resettlement. In our view, this type of environment, a women's open resettlement prison, it is unnecessarily constraining to be sending women on ROT to enable them to have access to the internet (completely unsupervised). The prison could do so much more in terms of effective learning and resettlement work if on site access was permissible. We understand that East Sutton Park has the equipment ready to be used, which incorporates the necessary IT security infrastructure to ensure it is not misused and an OLASS provider who has tutors to teach relevant courses.

5.6 Healthcare and Mental Health

1. A system to facilitate healthcare complaints, including confidential complaints, has recently been put in place, following the Board's concerns in last year's report.
2. There is still some lack of integration between GP care, mental healthcare and counselling because:
 - 2.1 GPs are not able to refer patients directly for Counselling, as would be the case in the wider community.
 - 2.2 There is a lack of integration between mental health and counselling because the mental health contract does not cover counselling. The provider is trying to source counselling through other channels but there are issues that still need to be resolved before this can be achieved.
 - 2.3 Notwithstanding the above issues, there has been a significant improvement over the past two years in mental healthcare available to the women at least partly as a result of pressure from the IMB.

-
3. Full copies of the physical and mental health contracts are not held by the prison, nor are available to the IMB. Therefore, it is not possible to know exactly what should be delivered and indeed whether the contract has been fulfilled.
 4. Recently established Saturday morning nurse sessions and extra GP support have proved popular, particularly with those women who go out to work during the week and those who need to see a doctor urgently. New Open Feedback sessions with the Healthcare Manager have proved to be a welcome initiative.

7. Farms and Gardens

7.1 East Sutton Park runs a farm rearing pigs, sheep and horses at livery. It also has extensive gardens requiring maintenance and a large area of land producing vegetables. The produce of this is sold in the prison shop partly staffed by the women which enables them to develop retail and customer service experience. Twelve women are completing their level 2 NVQ's in Horticulture.

7.2 The therapeutic effect of working in the gardens or on the farm clearly benefits the women in a number of ways. Self-esteem and self confidence are gained as the women work in the fresh air with plants, animals and staff gaining transferable skills. Women eligible for ROTL are able to work at the farmers markets that are held regularly in surrounding villages. By working with members of the public, whilst in a safe atmosphere, the women gain the confidence that will help them to re integrate when they are released

RESETTLEMENT

East Sutton Park is classified as D Resettlement Open Prison for Women and Young Offenders. The women who are transferred to ESP are serving the last part of their sentence.

The induction process is spread over several days and is organised by a prisoner orderly who will help the women to find their way around and to adjust to their new surroundings.

Women coming towards the end of a long sentence in closed conditions sometimes find the change to open difficult, particularly sleeping arrangements but there is plenty of support available from the orderly, staff and fellow prisoners.

The prison offers many opportunities for learning and the Education staff work with each woman to complete new training courses and those that were started prior to transfer to ESP.

The women are able to undertake training and obtain NVQ's in Hairdressing, catering and horticulture. Shorter courses throughout the year, offer qualifications in skills pertinent to the work place including, Health & Safety, Manual Handling, First Aid and Hospitality.

Voluntary placements in the community frequently lead to paid work during the women's time at ESP. National employers such as Timpsons and Sainsburys offer jobs after release, following a satisfactory period of paid work.

Vision

The peer led Vision Team has established links with external agencies including LHA's (Local Housing Authorities), organisations in the voluntary sector and employers. Vision will attempt to help individual women to identify placements/training and other issues written into their Sentence Plan. Sentence Plans are reviewed regularly to monitor progress.

Families

The importance of maintaining strong family ties is recognised as the key to not re offending and Personal Officers, Probation, Education and other staff have provided strong support in this area. Prisoners are able to keep in touch with their loved ones on a regular basis by telephone, letter and for those who have reached that stage in their sentence, ROTL Release on temporary Licence in the community. Sole carers are able to return home for 2-4 days to spend time with their children under 16. PSO 6300 permits women who are sole carers, to have Child Care Resettlement leave (CCR) This gives women the opportunity to spend quality time at home every 8 weeks with their children under the age of 16. We are concerned that the interpretation of the term 'sole carer' can cause perceptions of fairness among the women.

Family days have provided an opportunity for parents, children and siblings to spend quality time together in comfortable and relaxing surroundings.

Chaplaincy

Faith leaders from the community meet the women during their Induction programme and support is given as requested by the prisoner. In addition, the Chaplaincy runs a bereavement course, Living with Loss and one on decision making called Shine. These 6 week courses have been very well received by the women.

SAFER CUSTODY

Adjudications and return to closed conditions, bullying

The IMB are still not being informed of every adjudication although there has been a significant improvement since last year. The matter is raised with the Governor as appropriate. Safer Custody meetings have been reinstated and the IMB has been invited to attend.

There have been a number of prisoners who have had to be returned to closed conditions. When the IMB has been able to monitor the removal it has been conducted fairly and with respect. On one occasion the prisoner became violent and control and restraint procedures were employed. On that occasion the IMB was not present but from the reports received it was concluded that appropriate force was applied by the prison officers, several of who received minor injuries. This is the first time in eight years that force has had to be used in the prison and it demonstrated the effectiveness of ongoing officer training.

There have been a number of instances of bullying. Efforts have been made to contain this by moving a resident to another bedroom for example. Appropriate punishment has been given to individuals involved, with 2 residents being returned to closed conditions.

5.6 Separation and Care - Not applicable

ACCT's 11 opened and 11 closed.

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 £2.06. 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 prepared appropriate foods. On some of these occasions the women have volunteered to prepare particular dishes that all are invited to share.

Entries in the Food Comments book have been addressed individually by catering managers and the issues discussed at Offender Voice meetings. Comments are for the most part, very favourable.

Food supplier is currently Bidvest, in accordance with the Prison Service national contract. This contract does not allow the pork and lamb bred on the prison farm and sausages prepared in the establishment, to be 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 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.

6.2 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. Each woman also has a second Personal Officer who acts as a back up; a nominated Offender Supervisor and a nominated Case Administrator.

This successful structure supports 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 for 1 st November 14 to 31 st October 2015	
Recommended Complement of Board Members.	9
Number of Board members at start of period	8
Number of Board members at end of reporting period	8
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	2 x dual boarding
Number of members leaving within the reporting period	2
Total number of Board meetings	12
Number of attendances at Board meeting	86
Number of attendances other than Board meetings	152
Total number of visits to the prison including all meetings	238
Total number of written applications received	6
Total number of verbal applications recorded	11

Total number of segregation reviews	N/A
Date of Annual Team Performance Review	5 TH August 2015

Applications to the IMB							
Code	Subject	14/15	13/14	12/13	11/12	10/11	09/10
A	Accommodation	0	2	0	2	1	0
B	Adjudication	2	2	4	1	2	0
C	Diversity related	0	0	1	5	1	2
D	Education/training/employment	1	2	4	4	4	2
E	Family/visits	1	2	7	3	2	0
F	Food/kitchen	1	7	0	1	2	5
G	Health related	3	2	6	3	4	0
H1	Property (within current establishment)	0	2	0	0	0	0
H2	Property (during transfer from another establishment)	3	2	6	5	8	5
H3	Canteen, facilities, catalogue shopping, Argos	0	1	0	0	0	0

I	Sentence related	0	9	1	2	3	0
J	Staff/prisoner related	1	3	6	4	4	4
K	Transfers	0	1	0	1	1	1
L	Miscellaneous	5	6	12	5	4	10
	Total number of applications	17	39	47	36	36	29

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

ARD Automatic Release Date

CCR Child care resettlement

CRD Conditional Release date

HDC Home Detention Curfew

ICT Information, Communications Technology

IPP Indeterminate Sentence for Public Protection

LHA Local Housing Authority

IPP Indeterminate Sentence for Public Protection

NVQ National Vocational Qualification

OMU Offender Management Unit

PSO Prison Service Order