



HMP FORD

Independent Monitoring Board

ANNUAL REPORT

November 2014 to October 2015

**To the Rt. Hon. Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State for Justice**

Section 1

Statutory Role of the IMB

Monitoring fairness and respect for people in Custody

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 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 right of access to every prisoner and every part of the prison and also to the prison's records.

Section 2**Contents**

<u>Section 1:</u>	Statutory Role of the IMB	Page 2
<u>Section 2:</u>	Contents	Page 3
<u>Section 3:</u>	Description of the Prison	Page 4
<u>Section 4:</u>	Executive Summary	Page 5
<u>Section 5:</u>	Mandatory Topics	
	Equality & Inclusion	Page 6
	Safer Custody	Page 6
	Education Learning & Skills	Page 7
	Healthcare & Mental Health	Page 7
	Purposeful activity	Page 8
	Resettlement	Page 8
	Segregation	Page 9
	Residential Services	Page 9
<u>Section 6:</u>		
	Induction, Reception, First Night and Property	Page 10
	Adjudications	Page 10
	Night State	Page 10
	Security	Page 10
<u>Section 7:</u>		
	Work of the IMB	Page 11
	Board statistics	Page 12
	IMB Applications	Page 13

Section 3**Description of the prison**

HM Prison Ford is a Category D Open establishment with an emphasis on resettlement. It was converted to an open prison in 1960 from a former Fleet Air Arm station. It is situated 3 miles south of Arundel in West Sussex and covers an area of 110 acres bisected by a busy Class B public road.

The open estate is required to cater for all Category D prisoners assessed as suitable for open conditions within the criteria agreed between the Governor and the Area Manager. Prisoners selected for transfer to Ford should present a low risk of absconding and a low risk to the public. The operational capacity is 524 male offenders, nearly half of whom are lifers, indeterminate sentence prisoners or MAPPA (Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements) cases.

The accommodation comprises single and two-person rooms. There is accommodation for fifteen prisoners with some degree of disability.

Healthcare is provided by the Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.

Education and Training are provided by NOVUS and the National Careers Service.

There are also opportunities for offenders to work or be trained with DHL, LMB Recycling, British Institute of Cleaning Science and the Ministry of Defence. Also the prison runs a large market-gardening enterprise, engineering, carpentry and injection moulding workshops and a laundry.

Voluntary organisations providing assistance to prisoners include the Samaritans, The Citizens Advice Bureau, The Terence Higgins Trust, The Shannon Trust, the Gypsy and Travellers Community Support Team, Cruse and Relate.

All available spaces at Ford are offered to the Prison Service's Population Management Section.

Section 4.**Executive summary**

This has been a challenging year for HMP Ford, particularly in relation to the nationwide changes to the system of Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) that were finally published in March and fully implemented in July. The changes considerably increased the workload in the Offender Management Unit (OMU) and for a number of months that department struggled to cope. Consequently this had a very unsettling effect on offenders. The Governor and his Senior Management Team went to commendable lengths to keep offenders informed about the implications of the ROTL changes. The Board is pleased to report that the administration of the new rules had improved by the end of the reporting period with a consequent reduction in the number of complaints from prisoners.

Personal property is still the cause of much anxiety to many offenders. On transfer, property is frequently left behind and sometimes mislaid. Despite assurances from the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) that this problem is being investigated, no significant progress seems to be made. It is our view that something needs to be done, and this should not wait until the contract with the transport company is re-negotiated.

The maintenance and upkeep of the prison has given the Board a great deal of concern this year. It used to be undertaken by the prison service, but is now in the hands of an outside provider, Carillion. The contract started on June 1st 2015, and although we accept that there will be teething problems, we are perturbed that even the most basic maintenance tasks are proving to be very difficult to perform because of Carillion's control of the budget and its cumbersome administrative processes. Delays seem to be endemic and the bureaucracy very wasteful of time and money. Of particular concern is the remedial work needed in some of the accommodation areas and the onsite dental premises. The Board is very concerned and believes this is having an adverse effect on prisoner welfare. We will continue to monitor the situation closely.
(See 5.34)

The Board is pleased to be able to report that, albeit at a lower level than previously, the establishment is almost fully staffed.

Drugs are a problem throughout the prison estate, and HMP Ford is no exception. NPS (New Psychoactive Substances) cause most concern because of the difficulty in detection and the unpredictable effects on the user. The Board is pleased that legal restrictions have been placed on shops selling legal highs, with the consequent reduction in availability. However, drugs and alcohol continue to find their way into the prison.
(See 6.7)

Areas worthy of mention as being particularly good at HMP Ford are Healthcare, drug and alcohol rehabilitation services and catering.

Andrew Isaac

Chairman,
Independent Monitoring Board,
HMP Ford

Section 5

Equality and Inclusion

5.1 The Board hears comments from prisoners about racial rivalries at Ford, but has not found evidence of significant racial tension in the prison, nor of discrimination by staff.

5.2 An Equalities & Inclusion Audit led to two significant actions in the second half of the year: Equality and Inclusion matters are now a standard agenda item at monthly Senior Management Team meetings. And there has been an improvement in the system for processing DIRFs - Discrimination Incident Reporting Forms

5.3 Multi-disciplinary Equality and Inclusion meetings are held every other month where representatives of relevant offender groups (disabled, ethnic, religious, sexual orientation) have an opportunity to air concerns. Issues are openly discussed and agreed actions are monitored by staff.

5.4 Ford's population in August 2015 was:
 57% white British
 43% BME (black and minority ethnic)
 17 Foreign Nationals
 10 former Armed forces

5.5 Age profile in August 2015
 0.8% offenders aged 18 to 21
 25% offenders aged 22 to 29
 31% offenders aged 30 to 39
 22% offenders aged 40 to 49
 15% offenders aged 50 to 59
 5% offenders ages 60 to 69
 0.4% offenders were over 70

Safer Custody

5.6 This department has had an uneven year again, dogged by staffing issues. At one point prisoners told the Offenders Consultative Committee they were deterred from approaching a Safer Custody Officer because of the expectation they would receive an unsympathetic hearing. At the end of the reporting period steps were again being taken to bring safer custody practices up to standard, but the Board fears that without greater continuity of staffing the processes may slip again.

5.7 Monthly multi-disciplinary Safer Custody meetings are held where an offender representative is invited to contribute. Issues are openly discussed and agreed actions are monitored by staff.

5.8 There were no deaths-in-custody at Ford during the year.

5.9 17 ACCT (Assessment, Care in Custody Teamwork) documents had been opened during the past year. Most of these cases appeared to have been processed correctly and handled

sensitively although there was one instance of a failure to follow the correct review procedure.

5.10 Two Violence Reduction offender representatives have recently been recruited. Violence is relatively rare at Ford, as would be expected in an open prison, but not all incidences in their many forms are reported to staff and it is hoped that offender representatives may produce better information. These representatives will also attend the monthly meetings. The Violence Diagnostic Tool provides a monthly report on “hot spots” within the prison.

Education, Learning & Skills

5.11 This aspect of the prison plays a pivotal role in preparing offenders for release by equipping them with the skills needed in the modern computer-orientated world they will be entering, a world very different, in some cases, from the one they knew before imprisonment. Much effort in 2015 has gone into revitalising the department following the abrupt closure of the Prisons Information Computer Technology Academy (PICTA) on security grounds last year.

5.12 PICTA is now up and running again. Additionally the Virtual Campus caters for up to 12 offenders at a time and offers courses at various levels.

5.13 Education services are provided by Manchester College which rebranded as Novus in September. In addition to a range of classroom based activities, training in several construction skills is available and qualifications in Industrial Cleaning, Waste Disposal and Horticulture can now be earned. Training is also available in carpentry and engineering to make offenders eligible for employment in those fields on release, although NVQ standard is not currently achievable in the engineering workshop because of insufficient staff training. .

5.14 Illiteracy and innumeracy, which affects to varying degrees some 20% of new arrivals, is an important part of the 'skills for life' programme using Shannon Trust techniques involving peer support.

5.15 The Library is well used and offers books for all levels of literacy and also a 'Storybook Dads' facilities for recording stories for offenders' children on CDs. DVD recordings are not permitted for security reasons.

Healthcare and Mental Health (including Drug and Alcohol Recovery)

5.16 Healthcare and Drugs and Alcohol Recovery Team (DART) services are provided by the Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (SPFT). The healthcare service is primary care based, there being no inpatient facilities. Healthcare has around 13,000 offender appointments a year. During 2015, a new Mental Health Care team was formed, led by a full-time specialist Mental Health Practitioner. The Social Care Act has been implemented in liaison with Healthcare and a part-time Occupational Therapist has been appointed to the prison. We are pleased that a new locally based Cognitive Behavioural Therapy service is due to start soon.

5.17 Healthcare has been affected by the new ROTL restrictions introduced in the summer because of an increase in the number of prisoners having to be accompanied by staff at outside hospital appointments. (Up from 5% of appointments to 46%.)

5.18 The onsite dental facility failed an audit towards the end of the reporting year. It requires urgent technical modernization. The facility was threatened with closure from December 2015 if improvements weren't under way.

5.19 Healthcare services continue to receive positive feedback from prisoners.

Purposeful Activity

5.20 All offenders are involved in a purposeful activity of some kind, education or work, the prison aiming to provide every offender with a structured day similar to that which he would experience in the community.

5.21 The work opportunities within the prison include, catering in Kitchens and Coffee shop, Injection moulding (poppies for the British Legion), carpentry, engineering, laundry, horticulture (items sold to local authorities, schools and general public via the prison shop), waste management and recycling, industrial cleaning. Some of these workshops also service other prisons. The prisoners' Canteen service is run by DHL which provides skilled work. Many of these opportunities can lead to a formal qualification.

5.22 A new tool-packing contract was obtained with the MoD and although workshops were modified and equipment installed there is frustration that this new facility is under used.

5.23 The Works Department uses offenders to help with some redecorating and other maintenance jobs around the prison. For example, in March this year offenders completed 333 reactive repairs and 473 planned maintenance jobs.

5.24 Several offenders work in the kitchen helping prepare the meals and acquiring some of the skills they would learn if they were training outside. Some can train for NVQ levels 1 and 2 within the education department training kitchen. The food produced there is sold in the coffee shop where further training in service and barista skills is provided.

5.25 On most weekdays close to a hundred offenders are out on day release, doing Community Service work, education, and work experience that can lead to paid employment, or paid work.

Resettlement

5.26 Preparing offenders for re-integration into the community is a Category D prison's primary role and we believe that HMP Ford performs this function reasonably effectively within the limits of its resources, by providing prisoners with work and education opportunities inside and outside the prison.

5.27 After months of uncertainty, the new rules surrounding ROTL were published in March. At the same time much of the resettlement process was privatised and passed to a Community

Rehabilitation Company. These changes created considerable difficulties for the OMU but the Board is pleased to note that by the end of the reporting period, the whole process was being managed much more efficiently.

5.28 Prisoners arriving at Ford now have to draw up their own resettlement plan and when applying for ROTL must state how their day out from the prison will contribute to that plan. The Board considers the intention behind this change to be sensible, but is aware that the effective monitoring of it puts a strain on staff resources.

5.29 The monthly total of ROTLs decreased significantly during the year, primarily as a result of the problems implementing the new rules. In September 2014 ROTLs stood at 2,451, but by September 2015 they had fallen to 1,987. By the end of the reporting year the figures were on the up again, as ROTL processing stabilized.

Segregation Unit

5.30 This is a short term holding unit where offenders are usually kept for only a few hours. Some are transferred back to their billets but most are returned to closed conditions. The Unit is well managed and the Board has received no complaints from offenders or staff. It is clean and well maintained with the exception of the exercise yard that is never used.

Residential services

5.31 The Board has reported many times on the inadequacy of the B Wing billets. There is movement in the wooden structures which can cause problems with the plumbing. Cleanliness is also a problem, particularly in the shower areas. Many years ago the huts were converted to single rooms but with the overcrowding of the prison system they are now almost all used as double rooms some of which have been criticised by HMIP as too cramped to be suitable.

5.32 A welcome development has been the redecoration of some of the B Wing billets which has been achieved with very little cash, using the labour of offenders who are training as decorators. This has slowed up as funds for materials has become scarcer. The Board regrets this as it was practical work and achieved a great deal for the appearance of the huts and for the morale of the residents at a minimal cost. We hope that further progress can be made this year.

5.33 Urgent remedial work is also needed in some of the 'A' wing facilities where paint and plaster peels from shower room ceilings, creating conditions that cannot be described as 'decent'.

5.34 During the year the Works Department was contracted out to Carillion. In our view this is not a success, with unacceptable delays in the processing and approval of contracts and a generally poor level of communication with the offenders as to progress. One billet was without hot water for 6 weeks. We are told that the delays in getting repairs undertaken are due to teething problems with the Carillion contract but we suspect the new arrangements are seriously flawed and

will be keeping a close watch on the situation.

5.35 The kitchen continues to impress with meals of a high standard given the budget available. The manager has a monthly meeting with prisoner representatives to discuss and resolve any catering issues.

Section 6

Induction, Reception, First Night and Property

6.1 The Reception department manages the movement of more than one hundred prisoners a day, men going out or returning from release on temporary licence and offenders being discharged at sentence-end or arriving from another prison. On the whole this is a smooth operation, although Reception staff and prisoners have been frustrated this year by delays in the processing of ROTL applications. Many prisoners have arrived at Reception first thing in the morning to be told their day release cannot start because their licence paperwork had not been finalized. By the end of the reporting year the instances of this had considerably reduced.

6.2 Prisoner induction at Ford has worked reasonably smoothly through the year with particularly good presentations being delivered to new arrivals by Healthcare and Drug Rehabilitation representatives. Twice a week IMB members have given a brief talk to new arrivals about the Board's work.

6.3 In the second half of the reporting year we were aware of plans to realign the induction process in order to integrate it more effectively with resettlement procedures and 'Through the Gate' services. We shall be monitoring it in the coming year.

6.4 The transfer of a prisoner's property from one prison to another remains an issue of national concern. HMP Ford's performance in dealing with property issues seems no better or worse than the national average.

Adjudications

6.5 The process of dealing with offenders who are alleged to have broken prison rules is monitored regularly by the IMB and we consider it to be professionally handled by all concerned.

Night state

6.6 Staffing levels at night are low, but considered by the Governor to be adequate for all normal circumstances. During the year however there were instances of illegal items being passed over or through the perimeter fence. CCTV coverage of the fence is minimal. Although better CCTV monitoring is not seen as being necessary in a Category D establishment, the Board finds it surprising that improvements haven't been made.

Security

6.7 The artificial cannabinoid known as Spice continues to be the biggest substance abuse problem although other drugs and alcohol are also finding their way in. Given the numbers of movements in and out of Ford each day and the fact that many offenders work on the large prison estate, searches when they return to the more secure part of the prison tend to be the most effective method of tackling it. Drugs and alcohol are found, but the largest element of illegal finds remains mobile phones, sim cards and chargers.

6.8 Absconds, failures to return from ROTL, and the numbers returned to closed conditions are all lower than in the previous year.

Section 7

The work of the Independent Monitoring Board

7.1 A Memorandum of Understanding between the IMB President and the NOMS Chief Executive clearly states that prisons must provide the IMB with 'A Board Clerk'. HMP Ford is the only prison establishment in the Kent and Sussex region that has been unable to provide clerking services from a single named individual. The Board receives services from the prison's Business Hub and while we are grateful to the several members of staff who are deputed to do work for us from time to time, it is inevitable that they cannot have the understanding of the Board's work that a single individual would be able to develop. This lack of focused support has impacted on the effectiveness of the Board because time has had to be spent by members doing work that would normally be undertaken by a dedicated Clerk.

7.2 Despite this the Board continues to enjoy a constructive working relationship with the management of Ford. Before every monthly Board meeting a different member of the Senior Management Team (SMT) updates the Board on their area of responsibility. The Chair attends the SMT meetings and he and the Vice Chair have a monthly meeting with the Governor who also presents a monthly report to the Board.

7.3 Applications from prisoners for assistance are heard twice a week. Applications to the IMB have reduced by one third this year which may reflect the considerable efforts made by management to keep prisoners informed about the changes to the ROTL process.

7.4 A regular induction talk is given to new arrivals, and also to new staff, explaining the role of the IMB. Two Board members make visits to the prison each week on rota and attend adjudications for prisoner misdemeanours on an ad hoc basis.

7.5 Segregation reviews are not undertaken, because offenders are rarely held in the Unit for more than a few hours before being returned to closed conditions or back to their billet.

7.6 Members are allocated Areas of Special Interest and attend relevant staff meetings.

Board statistics**November 2014 – October 2015**

Recommended Complement of Board Members	14
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	13
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	11
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	NIL
Number of members leaving within reporting period	2
Total number of Board meetings during reporting period	12
Total number of visits to the Establishment	464
Total number of segregation reviews held	NIL
Total number of segregation reviews attended	NIL
Date of Annual Team Performance Review	12 November 2014

IMB Applications**November 2014 – October 2015**

Code	Subject	
A	Accommodation	3
B	Adjudications	1
C	Equality & Diversity (inc religion)	0
D	Education/employment/training inc IEP	2
E 1	Family/visits inc mail & phone	2
E 2	Finance/pay	6
F	Food/kitchen related	1
G	Health related	8
H 1	Property (within current establishment)	1
H 2	Property (during transfer/in another establishment)	10
H 3	Canteen, facilities, Catalogue shopping, Argos	1
I	Sentence related (inc. HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-cat etc)	32
J	Staff/prisoner/detainee concerns inc bullying	3
K	Transfers	8
L	Miscellaneous	4
	TOTAL NUMBER OF IMB APPLICATIONS	82