



# **HMP East Sutton Park**

## **Annual Report**

**November 2015 - October 2016**

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## **Section 1**

### **STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB**

The Prison Act 1952 and the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 require every prison and IRC to be monitored by an Independent Board appointed by the Secretary of State from members of the community in which the prison or centre is situated.

The Board is specifically charged to:

- (1) Satisfy itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in custody within its prison and the range and adequacy of the programmes preparing them for release.
- (2) Inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority as it judges appropriate, any concern it has.
- (3) Report annually to the Secretary of State on how well the prison has met the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have on those in its custody.
- (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**

### **DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON**

HMP/YOI East Sutton Park (ESP) is an open prison for 94 women (previously 92) 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.

Employer Fairs have helped find work for the women. 18 ladies (12 last year) are currently in paid work and 19 (13) are in unpaid work. Broken down to voluntary jobs 11, further education 3 and training 6. One woman is doing 2 activities.

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.

### **Section 3**

#### **STATISTICAL PROFILE**

##### **New Receptions.**

141 this year; 142 previous year

Sending prisons: Bronzefield 80, Peterborough 14, Send 19, Holloway 21, Drake Hall 1, Foston Hall 2, Downview 4

##### **Discharges**

106 this year; 112 last year

HDC 41, CRD 35, HR 23, HU 1, Lifer Parole 6, Deported 0

##### **Transfers to Other Establishments**

Transferred at own request 0,

Returned to closed conditions 29

##### **Other**

Failure to return 0

Absconds 0

##### **Lifers and IPPs**

At end of reporting period, the population included 10 Lifers and 5 IPP's.

##### **Re-offending**

We are advised that a recent snapshot of those released in the last three years shows that, of 364 released, 6 are currently in custody, a re-offending rate of less than 2%. This does not include any women that have been recalled and then re-released.

## **Section 4**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, PARTICULAR ISSUES & QUESTIONS FOR THE MINISTER**

ESP underwent an unannounced inspection by HMCIP during the course of the year. The full report was published in December with the prison being awarded the highest rating possible in each category. The Board endorses the HMCIP view (Section 7.3). Management and staff are to be congratulated.

In view of the HMCIP report, endorsed by the Board and the low level of re-offending (see Section 3), it is inconceivable that ESP should be closed when many other prisons come nowhere this standard.

#### **4.1 Current Concerns**

As in previous years, we continue to be concerned that so many women, who do not pose a threat to society, are given a custodial sentence risking the woman losing her children and her accommodation. The Board is aware of the Government's review and would encourage the Minister to make the appropriate change in policy.

Although law has changed and offenders are no longer awarded Indeterminate Sentences, all the IPP prisoners at ESP are over tariff, including one lady who was given a 2 year tariff but has already served 10 years. Again, the Board is aware that the situation is under review but considers that urgent action is needed to resolve the situation.

Women at ESP, in common with prisoners across the Prison Estate, do not have Internet access. The Board considers it essential 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. It is unreasonable for the women to be handicapped at this late stage.

The Board is aware that nationally, prisoners are not currently required to follow educational courses. We remain concerned that over 50% of women arrive at ESP with poor functional skills (See section 5.2).

#### **4.2 Previous year's concerns**

The full Healthcare/Mental Healthcare contract between Oxleas and East Sutton Park has still not 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.

### **4.3 Questions for the Minister**

In view of the HMCIIP report and the low rate of re-offending, will the Minister revisit the issue of closing ESP?

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

When will there be action to address the continued imprisonment of IPP prisoners, long over tariff?

Will the Minister now consider providing appropriately restricted Internet access for ESP women?

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

Will the Minister address the high cost of phone contact with families?

### **4.4 Questions for the Governor.**

Can more computers be provided to the library?

## **Section 5**

### **REPORTING AREAS**

#### **5.1 Equality and Inclusion**

Diversity and inclusion issues are taken seriously by the Senior Management Team. A monthly Equalities meeting is chaired by a Governor with representatives from across prison departments. Prisoner representatives also attend and bring issues raised at Prisoners' Voice meetings. They are encouraged to contribute - and do so! Their contributions are valued and respected. Statistics are reviewed against prison policies, considering the needs of various groups such as older women.

In conjunction with the Education Department, a number of events have been held throughout the year to raise the profile of different religions and cultures, often including special meals. These included Eid, Ramadan, International Women's Day and the Queen's birthday. Residents are encouraged to participate in the organisation of these events.

It is pleasing to note that there have been very few Discrimination Incident Report forms submitted during the year and this reflects the low level of incidents that take place, a fact confirmed by residents at Diversity meetings.

## **5.2 Education, Learning and Skills**

The Board remains concerned at the high number of women arriving at ESP lacking literacy and numeracy skills. In the academic year ending in July, 56% arrived at literacy level 1, 12% were entry level 3 and 4% were entry level 2. Similarly with numeracy, 56% arrived at level 1, only 26% were at level 2. It is a measure of the women's engagement with education, that during the year, 3 women achieved an entry I qualification in literacy, 20 achieved level 1 and 31 achieved level 2. In numeracy, 3 achieved entry level 3, 21 level 1 and 27 level 2.

In addition to literacy and numeracy, a wide range of courses and classes are provided to the residents. Needs are identified at Sentence Planning Boards to address past behaviour and to prepare for life outside prison. Work related courses and education have been focussed on identified need after an evaluation to ensure that the work aspiration of the resident is realistic and achievable. Women participated in ICT and other employment oriented courses. Of 266 started, 169 (83%) were successfully completed with a further 16 awaiting their results. 702 women attended PSD courses and all successfully completed them.

In all, there were 1173 starts in courses (full courses or units) of which 986 (94%) were successfully completed.

The standard of teaching, reflected in the women's achievements, appears to be of a high calibre. One group session observed had one of the residents addressing the class on the subject of tattooing. The resident was encouraged to speak about a range of issues including the business aspect and health and safety issues. The class was encouraged to and did ask questions.

A lot of coursework requires the use of a computer for writing up. There are only two computers in the library and although access can be gained to computers in the classroom when they are not in use, there are insufficient computers for the number of residents.

The library is well stocked with diverse and interesting books. It is well used with an average of 1,000 visits per month. Hard copies of PSIs and PSOs are available but some appear to be out of date. It may be appropriate to withdraw the hard copies and rely on the Intranet which is mostly up to date but does require constant updating. For example, the PSI for ROTL needs to be updated.

## **5.4 Resettlement**

The women who are transferred to ESP are serving the last part of their sentence. Their stay at ESP may range from a few weeks to over a year.

Resettlement is covered by a wide range of activities and services within the prison. It is not something only addressed at the end of a woman's sentence but is embedded throughout the establishment and is the ethos of this prison. The prison has analysed the various needs of the women and conducts regular reviews of the services required to support them during their stay and in preparation for their eventual release. Women arriving with at least a year and a half to do are best placed to take advantage of ESP's services.

### **5.4.1 Induction**

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.

In the first few weeks after arrival, a sentence plan is produced for a resident based on her needs and the time available. It is stressed that it is the woman's plan and that is her responsibility, supported by staff, to see it through.

### **5.4.2 Purposeful Activity**

The sentence plans are regularly reviewed by the resident and her Personal Officer. Courses and classes are usually well attended, although there were a few instances earlier in the reporting year when a resident was required to work in the house for e.g. kitchen work and as a result was unavailable for education.

In addition to those taking up education opportunities, residents are employed on site before progressing, on ROTL, to work on voluntary projects and eventually to paid employment. The women can make an appointment with a representative from the National Careers Service, who will assist them with writing their CVs and disclosure statement, so they can explain to their prospective employers the reason for their time in prison.

However, only around 20 per cent of the women are released with a job. Although this figure is disappointing, it points to the difficulties that many of these women face in being able to secure employment whilst managing the caring responsibilities they resume once they are released from prison.

Risk Boards are held to assess residents' suitability to progress. Both Sentence Planning Boards and Risk Review Boards are monitored to ensure that they are achievable and achieved. Risk reviews are carefully managed and have enabled the prison to deal with a number of difficult situations, sometimes resulting in the return of the woman to closed conditions or suspension of her ROTL.

ESP continues to provide a range of jobs for those working on site. The tasks range from working in the house to keeping the extensive grounds in excellent condition, to working in the market garden producing vegetables and flowers for the local farmers' markets and the farm shop and to caring for a range of animals including horses, pigs, cows and hens. Some of the animals are bred for meat processed in the on-site butchery. Some of the produce is used by the kitchen.

For many women, the outside environment is not one to which they are accustomed. From discussions with both staff and women, it is clear that many find the environment therapeutic allowing them time and space to work through problems and plan for the future. The work is manual but also requires planning, organising and dealing with animals, which do not always cooperate. There is an opportunity to gain NVQ qualifications (residents obtained 3 Level 2 NVQs in horticulture and 5 in agriculture (livestock) and learn skills in operating machinery and butchery. Staff show skill in helping the women both in their learning and emotional development. For example, a governor made sure that he spent time with the group that looked after the horses when one had to be put down.

There are groups that meet in the evening and these are well attended and various social events are organised.

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

#### **5.4.3 Vision**

Vision is a peer led service that is available to all the residents of ESP from the moment they arrive. The women are encouraged to drop in and the Vision workers mainly deal with issues relating to debt and finding work, either paid or voluntary. They work closely with the CRC who take over as the women come to the last 12 weeks of their sentence.

Many women come into prison with large amount of debt. The Vision workers can refer the women to Step Change, a debt charity, which can help them. They help the women apply for a credit check so that they can get a full picture of the outstanding debt and assist them in calling or writing to their debtors to explain their situation and make the debt more manageable for when they are released.

#### **5.4.4 Families**

Many of the women at ESP have young children and families. ESP has a Family Engagement Officer from the Prison Advice and Care Trust who works with the women to assist them in maintaining those family bonds while they are in prison. Four times a year the prison hosts a family day where the women's families can come into the prison to spend a structured day with their mothers. These days are run in conjunction with a parenting course, run by the Education Department, to assist the women in their parenting skills.

The cost of telephone calls has tended to increase, particularly as many people do not have landlines and use only mobile phones. This has resulted in some women spending more than their earnings to maintain contact with their families.

ROTL allows women to be rehabilitated with their families through a progression of day and home release periods. There is also provision for sole carers to spend time with their children.

#### **5.4.5 Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs)**

As part of transforming rehabilitation, a large portion of the probation service has been privatised and the CRCs were created. At East Sutton Park the CRCs manage all the non MAPPAs prisoners. All the women will be assisted by the CRC in the final 12 weeks of their sentence and will be supervised for 12 months in the community on release. The CRC runs a women's programme which deals with a variety of issues the women might encounter upon their release, such as managing the terms of their licence and negotiating relationships. They also offer the women assistance with housing.

#### **5.4.6 Lack of Internet Access**

There is no internet access in the prison and although they can and are allowed to access the internet at the local libraries, it is only possible if a resident is eligible for ROTL. This disadvantages the residents as most applications for jobs and housing have to be submitted online.

### **5.5 Healthcare and Mental Health**

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 or whether the contract is being fulfilled. That said, Healthcare appears to provide a good service to the residents.

Breast awareness sessions have been held recently. Women over the age of 50 are invited for Health Screening checks. This has been introduced in stages, with the offer being made to progressively younger age bands. All women are eligible for cervical smear tests and mammograms in line with the outside world.

Of special note this year is the wellbeing programme encouraging women of all ages and abilities to participate in physical exercise. This has led to an increase in numbers using the gym and walks being arranged for the less fit/older residents. Staff and residents participated in the Race for Life and an ESP walking competition.

Healthcare continues to promote the Health Trust's complaints process, intended to separate it from that of the prison.

Women who are or have had addiction issues are referred to RAPt.

## **5.6 SAFER CUSTODY**

Safer Custody meetings are monitored by the Board.

### **5.6.1 Adjudications**

There has been a continued improvement in notification to the Board of adjudications.

### **5.6.2 Return to Closed Conditions**

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.

### **5.6.3 Use of Force**

There has been no use of force in the reporting year.

### **5.6.4 Bullying/Self harm**

There have been few of instances of bullying. However, efforts have been made to contain those that have occurred; for example, by moving a resident to another bedroom. Appropriate punishment has been given to individuals involved.

ACCTs: 3 opened and 3 closed.

## **Section 6**

### **OTHER AREAS OF NOTE**

#### **6.1 Catering**

The kitchen is well run and employs 2.5 civilian staff & an optimum work party of 12 prisoners with 7 of these on duty at any one time. The women who work there show pride in their work. Food allowance per prisoner per day remains at £2.06. Menus operate on pre-select basis and rotate over a 4 week cycle. Generally, 5 choices of main course are provided. The standard of food is excellent as evidenced by most comments in the food book, which are extremely favourable and by comments made by the HMCIP inspectors during their recent visit.

Care is taken to ensure that all diets are appropriately dealt with and that religious festivals are not only adhered to but celebrated. This year, there has been an effort, in conjunction with Healthcare and the Gym to link menus to healthy eating. Flexibility is shown for those residents, who might return late from outside work or leave early, ensuring that food is available for them.

#### **6. 2 Systems Delivered by Officers**

Staff and officers at ESP have continued to be supportive of the women. There is a successful 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. Each woman also has a second Personal Officer who acts as a backup; a nominated Offender Supervisor and a nominated Case Administrator. The Board has been impressed by their knowledge and support when women are attending Sentence Planning and Risk Boards. This successful structure supports the women in building the confidence that will help them to make a fresh start and turn their lives around.

#### **6.4 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 another on decision making called Shine. These 6 week courses have been very well received by the women.

An annual carol service is held in the local church.

## Section 7

### THE WORK OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

#### 7.1 Board Statistics

Recommended Complement of Board Members 9  
 Number of Board members at start of period 10  
 Number of Board members at end of reporting period 9  
 Number of new members joining within the reporting period 5  
 Number of members leaving within the reporting period 6  
 Total number of Board meetings 12  
 Number of attendances at Board meeting 98  
 Number of attendances other than Board meetings 211  
 Total number of visits to the prison including all meetings 309  
 Total number of written applications received 22  
 Total number of verbal applications recorded 16  
 Date of Annual Team Performance Review 6<sup>th</sup> July 2016

Code	Subject	Applications to the IMB		
		15/16	14/15	13/14
A	Accommodation	1	0	2
B	Adjudication	0	2	2
C	Equality/Diversity/Religion	6	0	0
D	Education/training/employment	6	1	2
E1	Family/visits	0	1	2
E2	Finance/Pay	0	n/a	n/a
F	Food/kitchen	1	1	7
G	Health related	0	3	2
H1	Property (within current establishment)	0	0	2
H2	Property (other prison/transfer)	1	3	2
H3	Canteen/Facilities/Catalogue/Argos	0	0	1
I	Sentence related inc ROTL/Parole/Re-cat	9	0	9
J	Staff/Prisoner related inc bullying	11	1	3
K	Transfers	0	0	1
L	Miscellaneous	3	5	6
<b>Total number of applications</b>		<b>38</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>39</b>

The level of applications regarding staff, etc. is distorted as a result of one prisoner making the same complaint to different members of the Board.

### **7.3 Overall Judgement**

Prisoners have been and are being treated fairly and with respect.

It is the Board's opinion that 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 there. Given the length of their stay at ESP, they have been given the best opportunity to prepare for life after release.

**Graham Maple**  
**Chair**

### **GLOSSARY**

ACCT Assessment & Care in Custody Teamwork  
CCR Child care resettlement  
CRC Community Rehabilitation Company  
CRD Conditional Release date  
HDC Home Detention Curfew  
HR Home Release  
HU Unconditional Release  
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  
PACT Prison Advice and Care Trust  
PSI Prison Service Instruction  
PSO Prison Service Order  
RAPt Rehabilitation for Addicted Prisoner Trust  
ROTL Release on Temporary Licence