



**Annual Report**  
of the  
**Independent Monitoring Board**  
at  
**HMP Ford**

**November 2015 to October 2016**



*Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody*

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## A Sections 1 - 3

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### 1 STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

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The Prison Act 1952 requires every prison 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.

## 2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### **Main judgements**

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The Board believes that for the most part, HMP Ford is a well-run prison and that its prisoners are treated fairly and with respect. A new Governor was appointed in April 2016. He and his Senior Management Team have an approachable and responsive attitude both to the prisoners and to IMB members.

Prisoners are treated humanely, but the structure and upkeep of the prison continues to concern the Board. Much of the prisoner accommodation is ill-equipped for men who are supposed to be preparing themselves for an independent life outside prison (*section 7*). Many of the residential spaces consist of elderly, cramped prefab huts which are in a shabby condition and hard to maintain. The HMIP report in October 2016 described them as 'grubby and dilapidated'. Repairing defects is a task that has been made more difficult by the cumbersome budgetary and administrative procedures of the external works contractor Carillion. (*paras 7.2 and 8.5*)

The Board has been concerned this year by the reduction in opportunities for men to gain employment or work experience outside the prison (*para 11.2*) and is reassured that the Governor is strongly focused on trying to bring the numbers up again. Preparation for release gets high priority at Ford, but the Board believes that too much of the work available on site serves only to occupy a prisoner's day, rather than providing training that might enable him to find employment on release (*para 10.2*).

As in most prisons, drug abuse at Ford is extensive and a cause for concern because of the risk to stability that it can create. Securing a large, partly open site such as Ford is hard with current staffing levels. The process has not been helped by inadequate surveillance equipment (*para 4.4*).

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

### **Main Areas for Development**

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#### **TO THE MINISTER**

**Would the Minister please give serious consideration to replacing the run-down, cramped, hard-to-maintain accommodation for prisoners at Ford with buildings that provide facilities to support the resettlement of men coming to the end of long sentences?**

### **Improvements**

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The work of the Offender Management Unit has continued to improve during the year, which has benefited the stability of the prison through better communication with prisoners.

Geoffrey Archer  
Chairman,  
Independent Monitoring Board,  
HMP Ford

### **3 DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON**

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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 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 during this reporting year was 539 male prisoners, nearly half of whom are lifers, indeterminate sentence prisoners or MAPPA (Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements) cases. The prison does not house sex offenders.

The accommodation comprises a brick-built block with single rooms and a number of prefab billets, most of which have two-person rooms which were designed for single occupancy. Much of the accommodation dates from when Ford was a Royal Naval Air Station. All of it has shared washing and toilet facilities. There is accommodation for fifteen prisoners with some degree of disability. Prisoners have access to a large, well-equipped gymnasium.

Healthcare and the Drug and Alcohol Recovery Team (DART) are provided by the Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust. Resettlement assistance for low to medium risk offenders is offered by the Community Rehabilitation Company Seetec.

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

There are on-site opportunities for prisoners 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 with a farm shop open to the public, 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.

## Evidence sections 4 – 11

### 4 SAFETY

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4.1 The Board believes that HMP Ford is normally a safe place for prisoners. Incidents of violence and bullying are rare and prisoners who demonstrate an inability to comply responsibly with the less restrictive regime of an open establishment are returned to closed conditions. The Board is concerned however that pressure for space in the closed estate has resulted in a number of prisoners being sent to Ford with only weeks of their sentences left to serve who will not be at Ford for long enough to qualify for Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL). Such men may not have the same incentive to conform to the regime as men who come for longer periods and need to demonstrate their readiness for resettlement.

4.2 Prisoners arriving at Ford are processed well by Reception and assessed for their educational and resettlement needs. The Induction process is thorough and the IMB participates in it, explaining our role in the prison. The prison has set up a 'fast track' induction process for short term prisoners in an effort to make the best use of their time at Ford.

4.3 Twenty-five ACCT (Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork) documents were opened on prisoners deemed to be at risk during our reporting period, compared with seventeen in the previous year. The Board's monitoring of the relevant documentation has found that vulnerable prisoners were being well cared-for and that the paperwork was normally completed correctly.

4.4 Combating substance misuse is an important aspect of the safety regime, and Mandatory Drug Testing (MDT) plays a part in this. As an example, in October 2016, 41 Mandatory Drug tests were carried out, 14 of which proved positive. This failure rate is considered high by NOMS and an indicator of the prevalence of drugs within the prison. Contraband items, including drugs, alcohol and mobile phones, enter the prison via a variety of routes including through or over the perimeter fence. The site is regularly patrolled by the small security team and the Board believes they work hard at trying to contain the drug problem in what is a large and difficult area to monitor – half of the grounds are unfenced. For many years the IMB has commented on the lack of effective CCTV monitoring of the perimeter fence around the accommodation area of the prison which is closed at night. The Board welcomed the governor's intention at the end of our reporting year to request funding to improve the camera surveillance.

4.5 There were no deaths in custody at HMP Ford during our reporting year.

4.6 The Chaplaincy service plays a significant role in prison safety, offering pastoral care for those of faith and none, providing support for prisoners whilst at Ford and for those preparing to return to family life. The Chaplaincy works well in conjunction with other departments at HMP Ford.

## 5 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS

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5.1 The Board believes that prisoners normally receive fair treatment at HMP Ford, but has some concerns that when staff are sent on detached duty to other prisons it often results in the Equalities and Safer Custody departments being depleted, reducing their effectiveness in responding to issues.

5.2 Approximately 75% of prisoners at Ford are on the enhanced Incentives and Earned Privileges (IEP) regime, with around 23% on standard and less than 1% on basic. All prisoners' IEP levels are reviewed within two weeks of arriving at Ford. Between 15 and 20 prisoners are seen each month to review their IEP levels because of behavioural or disciplinary issues. The outcome of these reviews is documented and ethnic monitoring is applied. At present however there is no detailed analysis of IEP data being undertaken and no senior manager quality assurance process in place. We welcome the prison's commitment to a fresh focus on IEP review and quality assurance in the coming year and the Board will monitor this.

5.3 The HMIP report on Ford, following an unannounced inspection in June, found evidence of prisoners feeling racially discriminated against when applying for single rooms. Although this is not a matter that prisoners have raised with the IMB, we are pleased that the prison management are committed to improving procedures for monitoring such issues.

5.4. During this year there has been ongoing work within the establishment to improve equality and equalities monitoring. This has included setting up focus-group meetings and engaging with prisoners to run support sessions. Attendance at the meetings has been slow to take off, however. A number of Myth Buster posters have been designed by prison management to provide a factual counterbalance to prisoner perceptions of inequalities. The Board believes that these, combined with an increase in the number of information boards around the prison have been helpful to maintaining stability in the prison.

5.5. Only 10 Discrimination Incident Reporting Forms (DIRF) were received from January – October 2016. The process for responding to them has been improved during the year. Monthly strand meetings have been held, including race, religion, LGBT, veteran, disabled, traveller, foreign nationals and older men. The attendance at these meetings has been variable over the year. Each strand has its own Action Plan. There is also a Lifer Support Group. A disability register is in place.

5.6. At the end of October 2016 the prisoner population was 64% white & 36% BME

By age:	18-21	1%
	22-29	26%
	30-39	34%
	40-49	19%
	50-59	16%
	60-69	3%
	70+	1%

5.7. Prisoners at Ford tended to be paid less than at other equivalent prisons for the same work and we welcomed the review into pay scales this year which resulted in pay being increased.

5.8. There is good provision for religious observance across a wide range of faiths, although the chaplaincy team has faced difficulties this year in providing the regular attendance of an Imam for Muslim prisoners. This is disappointing in a prison in which 18% of the prisoners are Muslim. The purpose-built chapel and adjoining offices are part of a hub that provides support and advice services which are well used by prisoners including those with no faith.

5.9. Prisoners have easy access to the prison complaints system and in most cases they are responded to reasonably. The Board however has been asked to help in several cases where responses have been late, because of administrative failures at Ford or at a prisoner's previous prison.

5.10. HMP Ford has a welcoming and well-run visits centre. In addition to general visits there are a number of family days organised during the year which are well attended and contribute well to maintaining family links. This year some prisoners' families have had difficulty attending visits because of Southern Rail industrial disputes.

## **6 SEGREGATION/CARE AND SEPARATION UNIT**

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6.1. The "segregation unit" at HMP Ford is only used as a holding area for transfers back to closed conditions, which are usually conducted within hours. Prisoners are rarely kept in the unit overnight. Segregation reviews are never held. The Board considers it to be well managed.

6.2. Adjudications for misdemeanours are undertaken by the Governing staff three times a week and IMB members regularly attend as observers. On the whole, adjudications are observed to be managed fairly and consistently, although prisoners have not always been notified automatically of their right to appeal.

## **7 ACCOMMODATION AND COMMUNICATION**

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7.1. Most prisoner accommodation dates from the original 1950s Fleet Air Arm base. 'A' wing comprises two-storey, brick-built blocks with single rooms. 'B' wing has 22 huts with mainly shared rooms, which were originally designed for single occupancy. The prison accommodates 299 men in single rooms and 240 doubled up. The Board is disappointed that lockable cabinets for prisoners' personal property and medication have still not been installed. We consider such lockers to be important for prisoner decency, particularly in shared rooms.

7.2. Much of the overall estate is shabby and requires significant ongoing maintenance and repair. A number of billets are in poor condition with a lack of privacy in showers and bathroom areas. Progress on rectifying defects has been impeded by the national works contract with Carillion, which has been bureaucratic and inefficient in dealing with needs. Delays in supplying new parts for worn out equipment (several months in the case of residential water boilers) have often added to the time needed to fix a problem. In the kitchens, the Board was told, some replacement parts have taken up to 5 months to obtain. There seems to be no contingency plan in the event of kitchen equipment breakdown.

7.3. Several of the billets did have a limited refurbishment during the year. The work was done by prisoners from the team learning decorating skills. This was done largely outside the Carillion contract. The refurbishment programme is excellent work but very limited and cannot overcome the general problems of dilapidation across the wider estate.

7.4. The food in Ford is generally well received and all diets are catered for including those that are medically specified. 'Cook packs' which allow prisoners to create their own meals within the billets are very popular and on some days in excess of 150 meals are provided in this way. This provides opportunities for prisoners to club together and create a family-type dining experience.

7.5. The facilities for prisoners to do 'self-catering' are very limited however. Kitchens in the residential areas only contain microwaves and in much of the accommodation there are no sinks for washing up. The men have to use the shower rooms to clean dishes and cutlery. In the Board's view this does not fit well with Ford's role as a prison preparing men to be self-sufficient and to be able to look after themselves upon release.

7.6. Cleanliness in the overall prison campus remains a challenge. The Board is also very concerned about vermin control at Ford. The rat population appears to be significant despite repeated attempts

by specialist contractors and prison staff to overcome the problem. We welcome the close attention the Governor is giving to these issues.

7.7. The prison management team have made considerable efforts to ensure good channels of communication with prisoners. The Offender Consultative Committee (OCC), run by prisoners, meets weekly and the meetings are regularly attended by members of the Senior Management Team. We have noticed that many concerns which might previously have come to the IMB's attention are now being taken to the OCC for resolution.

7.8. Notice boards have improved, with additional boards put in strategic places and there is rolling information on a TV screen in the dining hall. A new prisoner induction book has been prepared and the Governing Governor or his deputy sees all new prisoners during their induction to HMP Ford. The SMT and other members of staff are approachable and minority group representation is a means of giving prisoners their voice.

7.9. On transfer in or out of Ford, prisoners' property is frequently left behind and sometimes mislaid or lost. The prison's complaints system is very much involved in trying to resolve such issues, with mixed results, partly because of poor responses from other prisons. 28% of applications from prisoners to the IMB also concerned property, an indicator of the inadequate resources within the whole Prison Service to resolve property issues.

## **8 HEALTHCARE**

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8.1. 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. Medical care consistently receives good feedback from prisoners. The DART team won a major award from their employing authority.

8.2. The department provides around 14,000 prisoner appointments a year. Waiting times for access to services are good and often better than services in the wider community. The service offers late night opening for users out at work or on community service during the day.

8.3. All prisoners arriving at Ford receive a health check within 24 hours. The department says it is seeing a growing increase in the complexity of cases and increased number of prisoners with long term conditions, including cases requiring referral to Social Care under the Health & Social Care Act.

8.4. Locally based Cognitive Behavioural Therapy services started this year. However, due to the low numbers meeting the primary care criteria a review of service needs was underway at the end of our reporting year.

8.5. Dental services have had some updates to equipment but the essential refurbishment which was announced a year ago had still not been completed. The project is being managed by Carillion, another example of the unacceptable delays this national works contract seems to have brought about within the prison estate.

## **9 EDUCATION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES**

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9.1. Education is provided at HMP Ford by NOVUS with some prison-run workshop training. On arrival at Ford all prisoners are assessed for their educational needs, including numeracy and literacy levels and appropriate courses are provided. These include English, mathematics, functional skills, art, information technologies, peer mentor training and employability courses.

9.2. In addition to in-house education, there were 31 prisoners in external education either at college or university in October 2016. Between January and July 2016, 108 prisoners accessed Higher Education (level 4 and above). This is more than the total for the two previous years.

9.3. The gym remains a well-equipped and popular feature of life at Ford. Imaginative ways of involving prisoners who are older or less familiar with gym activity are noteworthy. The large, open sports field is underused however. The staff needed to supervise sports are those who work in the gym and the gym takes priority.

9.4. There is a large community hall with snooker and games tables. In-room televisions are provided at a charge to the prisoners.

9.5. Prisoners have good access to the library provided by West Sussex County Council which is an excellent resource both for educational and recreational use.

9.6. One of the NOVUS teachers was given a national award this year for her work with literacy.

## **10 WORK, VOCATIONAL TRAINING and EMPLOYMENT**

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10.1. All prisoners with the exception of those beyond retirement age are obliged to participate in purposeful activity, either working on site, doing educational courses, taking part in community service work or doing work experience or paid work off-site.

10.2. The Board has some concerns that too much of the activity at Ford is designed to keep prisoners occupied, rather than developing their skills and qualifications in a way that might help them resettle in the community. The injection-moulding workshop making British Legion poppies, for example, provides no meaningful development towards resettlement that is perceptible to the Board, other than getting men used to turning up for work on time.

10.3. The prison provides over 350 places for on-site job activities which support the running of the prison. These include a laundry which serves Ford and other prisons, a DHL unit that provides the prisoner canteen service for Ford and elsewhere, the prison stores, food preparation and service, billet cleaning, and peer support posts such as health, chaplaincy and gym. There are also engineering and carpentry workshops, a recycling centre, and a large market-gardening enterprise whose farm shop developed in scope and ambition during the year. Some provide opportunities for vocational qualifications, but others like the engineering workshop still don't, because staff aren't yet trained to award qualifications.

10.4. Up to 51 offenders work in the catering department at HMP Ford. Training programmes provided are NVQ Levels 1&2 in Food Service & Hygiene. There is also a small training kitchen where prisoners cook food for an onsite 'coffee shop' used mostly by staff for lunches. The cafe is run by prisoners who are given Barista training.

10.5. One particular area of work has been very disappointing this year. A significant sum of money was spent by the Ministry of Defence setting up workshops at Ford for a tool packing contract, but the

work has not materialized. The only MoD work provided has been the assembly of camouflage nets. The Board hopes that the MoD can rectify this problem. It is a great pity that efforts by the Prison Service to improve prisoners' job prospects are negated by failures elsewhere in the public sector.

10.6. A valuable innovation this year was to hold practice job interviews for prisoners approaching their release date, conducted by external professional volunteers, to make them aware of what to expect when they search for work. HMP Ford is also holding employer engagement days to try to interest local employers in giving jobs to prisoners on day release from Ford and after their release.

## **11 RESETTLEMENT PREPARATION**

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11.1. Offender Management at Ford has improved considerably this year, thanks to concentrated efforts by staff. Better communication with prisoners has resulted in fewer complaints being lodged, both with the prison and with the IMB.

11.2. Once prisoners are eligible for ROTL (Release on Temporary Licence) they can progress towards working outside the prison. They begin with voluntary Community Service work, move on to work experience with local companies and eventually paid work. There has been a reduction in the daily numbers of prisoners going out, however. Whereas previously as many as 100 prisoners would be out at work or education the numbers have dropped to 70 – 80. The number of prisoners in paid employment has been as low as 7 or 8 at times during the year and at the end of the reporting period was still less than 12. The Board is pleased to note that the prison management is strongly focused on trying to bring these numbers up again.

11.3. The number failing to return from ROTL remains very low. With around 1,800 day releases per month, the abscond and failure to return rate has been averaging less than 1 per month this year. The prison claims a rolling 99.8% ROTL success rate.

11.4. The Board wishes to record that poor communication with the London Probation Service continues to be of concern both to prisoners and ourselves.

11.5. Following the privatization of 70% of the Probation Service in 2015, community resettlement assistance for most of Ford's prisoners is carried out by Seetec, a Community Resettlement Company that has had a high staff turnover. Twelve weeks before release, every prisoner at Ford should be offered an appointment to discuss his resettlement needs. Typically the main problems are accommodation and finance. In the period January to June 2016, 298 appointments were offered and 200 prisoners were given assistance. The outcomes do not appear to be well measured or monitored, however. The IMB became aware of three offenders who left the prison in October with no accommodation allocated.

11.6. The Chaplaincy department's links to bodies such as Relate and Cruse, continue to be well used in support of prisoners' issues with family and relationship matters.

11.7. The Chaplaincy has this year introduced the Sycamore Tree course which endeavours to make prisoners aware of the effect their crimes have had on their victims. The prison has also initiated a number of Restorative Justice sessions in conjunction with the Sussex Restorative Justice Partnership.

## B Section – Work of the Board

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The Board continues to enjoy a constructive working relationship with the management of Ford. Before every monthly Board meeting a member of the Senior Management Team (SMT) or other member of staff updates the Board on their area of responsibility. The Chair can attend SMT meetings and he and the Vice Chair have a monthly meeting with the Governor who also presents a monthly written report to the Board and briefs the Board at our monthly meeting.

Applications to the IMB from prisoners for assistance are heard twice a week. Applications have reduced by 20% this year which may reflect the work done by the Offender Management Unit and the more effective role of the Offenders' Consultative Committee this year.

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

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 continues to be the only prison 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 whilst 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, particularly in periods of recruitment.

Like all people working within the criminal justice system, Board members have struggled this year with the secure email system (CJSM) which we are required to use and which has become increasingly overloaded and unfit for purpose. We hope that the improvements scheduled for 2017 materialize.

**BOARD STATISTICS**

<b>1<sup>st</sup> November 2015 – 31<sup>st</sup> October 2016</b>	<b>Current Year</b>	
	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>
Recommended Complement of Board Members	14	14
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	13	11
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	11	14
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	0	4
Number of members leaving within reporting period	2	1
Total number of Board meetings during reporting period	12	12
Total number of visits to the Establishment	464	598
Total number of segregation reviews held	N/A	N/A
Total number of segregation reviews attended	N/A	N/A
Date of Annual Team Performance Review	12 <sup>th</sup> November 2014	11 <sup>th</sup> November 2015

## C Section - Applications

Code	Subject	Current reporting year	Previous reporting year
A	Accommodation including laundry, clothing, ablutions	0	3
B	Discipline including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	0	1
C	Equality	1	0
D	Purposeful Activity including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	2	2
E 1	Letters, visits, phones, public protection restrictions	1	2
E 2	Finance including pay, private monies, spends	2	6
F	Food and kitchens	2	1
G	Health including physical, mental, social care	2	8
H 1	Property within this establishment	3	1
H 2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	19	10
H 3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	1	1
I	Sentence management including HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	27	32
J	Staff/prisoner concerns including bullying	0	3
K	Transfers	5	8
L	Miscellaneous	2	4
	<b>Total number of IMB applications</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>82</b>