



Annual Report
of the
Independent Monitoring Board
at
HMP/YOI Standford Hill

Sheppey, Kent

**for reporting year
1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017**

**Published
August 2017**



Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody

CONTENTS

- 1. STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB**
- 2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**
 - a. Main Judgements
 - b. Main Area for Development
- 3. DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON**
- 4. SAFETY**
- 5. EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS**
 - a. ISP and Lifers
 - b. Probation
- 6. SEGREGATION/CARE AND SEPARATION UNIT**
- 7. ACCOMMODATION AND COMMUNICATION**
 - a. Visits
- 8. HEALTHCARE**
- 9. RAPt**
- 10. EDUCATION AND TRAINING**
- 11. WORK, VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT**
 - a. The Working Out Scheme
 - b. Recycling
 - c. Print Shop
 - d. The Old Mill
 - e. The Café
 - f. Apiary
- 12. OTHER AREAS OF THE PRISON**
 - a. Staff
 - b. Adjudications
 - c. Grounds
 - d. Reception
 - e. Accommodation
- 13. RESETTLEMENT**
- 14. THE WORK OF THE IMB**
 - a. Induction
 - b. Evening Surgery
 - c. Board Statistics
 - d. IMB Applications Breakdown 2016/2017

1. STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

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

The Board is specifically charged to:-

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

To enable the Board to carry out these duties effectively its members have right of access to every prisoner and every part of the prison and also to the prison's records.

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Main judgements

Despite a year of substantial financial cutbacks and the impact of reductions in personnel it has been a positive year for HMP Stanford Hill. It is the opinion of the Board that the prison is safe, well managed and continues to offer a wide range of purposeful activities for all but it's most infirm or elderly residents. A new Governor was appointed in May 2016 and he and his Senior Management Team have maintained an approachable and responsive attitude to the IMB members and those residing within the prison.

Property – property mislaid or lost on transfer generates many complaints which are not easily resolved and must eventually be referred to the prison Ombudsman

One of our main concerns remains the growth in the use of drugs within the prison. NPS (New Psychoactive Substances), particularly 'Spice', generates great concern. The prison continues to implement a policy of 'zero tolerance' to the use of drugs, but this has failed to deter a number of prisoners, some of whom have displayed disturbing reactions to NPS

Nationally negotiated contracts do not always serve the prison well; Carillion, DHL and elements of 'outside probation' regularly give cause for concern where slow, unresponsive administration results in a poor service and unnecessary delay.

WOS (the Working Out Scheme) and the OMU (the Offender Management Unit) are worthy of mention for the positive contribution they have had upon the smooth running of the prison and in helping to fulfil two of its main objectives of resettlement and rehabilitation.

Main Area for Development

For some years now the provision of hot food to Standford Hill has depended upon the kitchens and workforce of the prisons which are its immediate neighbours. Promises were made about maintaining security as food was transferred from one prison to another and ensuring the reliability of the delivery and quality of the meals provided, yet food frequently arrives late and fails to meet the dietary requirements indicated by Standford Hill's prisoners. Would the Minister please consider releasing funds for the establishment of a kitchen and catering facilities within Standford Hill so that meals can be prepared on site, thereby ensuring that wholesome and satisfactory food becomes available to all, and late arrival of meals, lack of appropriate menus or the disappointment which this year accompanied the non-appearance of Christmas lunches, can be avoided.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

Standford Hill is an open prison (Category D/YOI) occupying over 300 acres of farm land with a very large perimeter. It is immediately adjacent to HMP Elmley (Category B Local/Dispersal) and HMP Swaleside and, though no longer part of a cluster, a small number of services are shared by the prisons.

There is accommodation for 464 male offenders categorised as suitable for open conditions by the source prison. Each offender is housed in a single room with access to communal toilet and bathroom facilities.

There are two conventional cell blocks. A and B wing each have 192 spaces with three landings and four spurs on each. In addition there is a 'Quick Build Unit' (C wing), which provides space for 80 residents.

Each wing has its own Servery which allows prisoners to take meals to their own rooms. Food is prepared at HMP Swaleside and brought to the prison by road.

The Governor undertakes responsibility for the prison's main objective of preparing prisoners for Resettlement and Reducing Reoffending upon release.

4. SAFETY

The Board believes that Standford Hill is a safe place for prisoners where incidents of bullying and violence are rare, although some prisoners find the responsibility of surviving in the less restrictive regime of an open prison challenging and so fall by the wayside to be returned to closed conditions.

Prisoners arriving at Standford Hill are processed efficiently by Reception and on arrival are quickly assessed for their health, resettlement and educational needs. Peer workers assist in the short Induction programme during which the IMB is able to meet new arrivals and explain the role of the IMB within the prison.

Throughout the reporting year only two ACCT (Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork) documents were opened on prisoners resident in Standford Hill which is a substantial reduction on the small number (6) of ACCT documents required during the previous year. Vulnerable prisoners are carefully monitored by staff and up to 10 offenders will be assisted by specialist staff in PERS which is located on site.

There were no deaths in custody during this reporting year.

The Chaplaincy team continue to provide their service without the services of an Anglican chaplain, a situation which has existed for some three years. The Chaplaincy team (multi faith support) continues to function well, addressing prisoners concerns where necessary, with sympathy and understanding and are available and very approachable. Regular mixed denominational church services are held throughout the

week with variable degrees of attendance by prisoners. Regular weekly sessions are provided for Hindu and Sikh representatives, however Jehovah Witness sessions are not held on a regular basis as a consequence of the representative being unable to attend because of injury. Buddhist and Jewish worship is made available as and when required.

5. EQUALITY and FAIRNESS

The Board believes that prisoners receive fair treatment and are not subject to discrimination. The Governors and officers dealing with Safer Custody and Equality respond quickly and efficiently to any issues raised. The most recent visit by HMP inspectorate highlighted concerns amongst some BME prisoners that they were not treated equally, especially where IEPs and adjudications were involved; the management immediately instituted measures to guarantee that this would not be the case.

In spring this year, out of 464 offenders, 8% were described as Asian, 27% Black African, Caribbean and 65% white. Enhanced IEP status applied to 93% of prisoners, the remaining 7% were subject to a 'Standard' regime.

There were 3 DIRF referrals this year, all relating to staff

The trends outlined a year ago have continued, with a further reduction in the number of Foreign National prisoners and the proportion of offenders over 50 years of age increasing, along with a concomitant rise in the number of prisoners subject to a PEEPs (Personal Evacuation Plan) notice

Steps have been taken to accommodate the needs of older prisoners, with discreet gym and swimming sessions for over-50s, though the peer led social activities fell into decline.

ISPs and LIFERS

A quarter of the prison population at HMP Standford Hill is a Lifer/ISP.

Bi-monthly meeting with Senior Management are held and greatly appreciated by the 'Lifer' population, enabling problems to be solved before they occur.

PROBATION

In House Probation has greatly improved and case-loads are at a more reasonable level, down from over 50 to 35 per officer.

Outside Probation is an entirely different matter; London, in particular, should be of serious concern. Its inability to keep in touch with prisoners and an apparent inability to retain staff, causes severe disquiet; for example, one prisoner has had eight Offender Managers during his sentence. The regular inability to answer telephones displayed by Probation staff further exemplifies a dysfunctional service which requires immediate attention.

6. SEGREGATION/CARE and SEPARATION UNIT

HMP Standford Hill has no Segregation Unit but a holding area is available in Reception where prisoners can be securely detained until transfer to HMP Elmley can be effected. Prisoners are not detained overnight. No Segregation Reviews are held.

Adjudication for misdemeanours are carried out by Governing Staff and IMB members regularly attend. Adjudications are seen to be managed fairly, consistently and follow the established protocol.

7. ACCOMMODATION and COMMUNICATION

VISITS

This area continues to function well and is open, light and comfortable. The uniformed staff on duty are sympathetic to the atmosphere of the area with prisoner/family meeting taking place and allow such visits to be conducted in a flexible way. The visits area is vulnerable to the exchange of drugs etc. between visitors and prisoners but uniformed staff on duty are vigilant to this.

8. HEALTHCARE

The staff in Healthcare provide a good and efficient service to prisoners. Healthcare operates a triage service for prisoners without an appointment who wish to see the Doctor or Dentist, and this has been found to operate well.

A User Voice group is in operation to obtain feedback from prisoners concerning the service provided by Healthcare which operates in four different section these are - The GP service (3 days /week), RAPT, IC 24 Ltd Primary Care Service and Oxleas (NHS Foundation for Mental Health) . A dentist visits twice per week and Podiatry problems are referred to the local hospital.

Staff continue to be vigilant as prisoners do, on occasion, try to receive unnecessary treatment, drugs or referrals.

9. RAPT

Prisoners are encouraged to interact with the external agency called RAPT which operates within the prison. They provide unstructured support and structured treatment.

50% of the prisoners who interact with the service receive structured treatment, based on one-to-one or group work. These meetings can be held from once a month to once a week. Courses are held in: Living Safely (Relapse prevention), MPS, Steroids, Crack and Cocaine.

The results of the work are fed into risk boards.

A key factor in reducing re-offending is the return to a supportive family environment so RAPT provides the family service: two support workers work with prisoners and families to regain and/or sustain contact with their families. This links in with other family initiatives supported by the prison and the successful family days run in the visits centre.

10. EDUCATION and TRAINING

Over the last twelve months there has been a change in OLASS with manager leaving in May 2016 and new permanent manager taking over in November 2016.

Progress has been steady this year with noticeable improvements to Functional Skills. Both English and Maths show an increase in outcomes with a possibility of exceeding national benchmarks before the end of the academic year. Vocational courses have shown steady enrolment.

Catering is taking on a different direction with focus on the newly improved Visits Centre.

New Pathways are planning to address the needs and quality of training for the men. NOVUS are working closely with the prison to identify areas that will benefit the men vocationally and have valid progression routes to outside provision of work.

Seven students trained in fine arts received Koestler awards. Regrettably their attendance at the awards ceremony was less than satisfactory because no packed lunches or food warrants were made available

Novus education staff at Standford Hill have shown continued commitment to their teaching and all have been graded 1 or 2 in Teaching and Learning (equivalent to OFSTED Good or Excellent).

The library is open from 9.30 am through to early evening and allows access for all prisoners. Two peer workers are available throughout the hours of opening and they are supported by part-time KCC librarians.

The gym is well equipped and benefits from its adjoining swimming pool. Regulated attendance at the gymnasium is available for prisoners between 8.30am and 7.30pm and the prisons swimming pool may be accessed between 3.00 and 4.00pm and 6.00 to 7.00pm. Senior Citizens from the local community access the pool on weekday mornings thereby permitting prisoners to undergo training as Lifeguards (Level III) and obtain Spinal Board Management qualification.

There is a football pitch next to the gym which allowed the prisoners' team to play in the local league and win promotion at the end of the season; the only drawback encountered was the number of play fines generated by the team.

Older prisoners are able to take advantage of discreet sessions in the pool, with separate sessions in the gym being made available for offenders responding to recommendation by RAPT.

11. WORK, VOCATIONAL TRAINING and EMPLOYMENT

THE WORKING OUT SCHEME

As a category D prison the prisoners who arrive at Standford Hill are reaching a stage where they may be considered for release. If they are released it is essential that they are properly prepared for the world outside. Many prisoners have been in prison for several years and we know how fast the pace of life is changing in the wider world.

One of the greatest successes of Standford Hill is the Working Out Scheme, which provides training, external community placements and paid employment outside the prison. This builds on the educational support given to prisoners to give them the skills to prosper on the outside world.

Re-introducing prisoners into the world of paid employment this gives them the best chance of not re-offending. As at 23rd April 2017 the following numbers were in the various stages of the working out scheme:

Community Placements: 119 (Approximately 220000 days are worked as free labour in the local community in a year)

Training: 20 (The aim is to deliver skills relevant to the current job market)

External Paid Employment: 60 (There is a separate wing where most prisoners in paid employment are based)

In addition 45 were awaiting placement and 99 applications were in progress. In total at that time the total number engaged in the Working Out Scheme was 343. This relates to a total maximum prisoner establishment of 464, a highly commendable performance. This success is achieved despite the relative geographic isolation of the prison and reflects the tremendous commitment shown by the staff of the department to facilitate prisoners taking their first steps into obtaining employment on release. There is no silver bullet: the success is based on focus and commitment and provides an excellent example of what can be achieved from a category D Prison.

RECYCLING

A successful year in Recycling apart from problems with payment of a water bill which saw prisoners and staff refilling water bottles which clearly state “not to be refilled”. Sales from recycled plastic and cardboard raised £34,373.85, an increase on last year of £7,436. On average 18 prisoners are employed, with 4 drivers provided by WOS.

Many items have been made from recycled wood and made available to the prison, including goods for Family Days, book cases, storage boxes, planters and a bird table.

PRINT SHOP

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

THE OLD MILL

Canterbury College provides courses in Multi Trades within the Old Mill and this engages with up to 11 prisoners. The aim of the course is to train in both the theory and practical skills required by construction trades.

THE CAFE

Located in what was once the Horticultural area the Cafe is a popular venue for prisoner’s families, prison staff and the public. ‘Work This Way’ now run this venture and have invested £20,000n the year 16/17. An extension boardroom has been added. Nine prisoners are employed Monday to Saturday training in hospitality and barista coffee making. Walk This Way also run a wildlife garden and ‘Welly Club’ where prisoner’s families can engage in nature watch. A hide and binoculars are on site.

APIARY

Parts of the old horticultural area are now employed by a conservation scheme run by Sheppey Honey whose objectives relate to the survival of the native honey bee (*Arismellifera mellifera*). Sales of queen bees, honey and hive products are intended. The team works with HMP in providing employment, education and training up to Level II in beekeeping. Buildings have been converted for workshops for honey extraction (£35,000 invested), with £7,000 equipment provided, with the hope of a yield of 35 – 800 jars of honey each year. Three prisoners are involved full time and assist with public training in bee keeping each Saturday morning.

12. OTHER AREAS OF THE PRISON

STAFF

The Board continue to enjoy a good relationship with staff. Despite pressures resulting from consistent under-staffing, uniformed staff remain co-operative and helpful and have maintained their efforts to treat prisoners with a polite, yet authoritative, approach.

ADJUDICATIONS

During the reporting period adjudications have been observed by Board members and found to be have been conducted by the adjudicating officer in a fair and professional manner with respect being shown to the prisoner who is the subject of the adjudication. During the reporting period no appeals were made by prisoners against adjudication awards for their Sentence Management and ROTL.

GROUNDS

The Board have had concerns about the Garden Department for some time. The gardens are now run by Carillion which, although the grounds in particular and the gardens to some extent have improved, it would appear to be despite the attention of the contractor, not caused by them. Rabbits cannot be the excuse for everything and our main concern continues to be the lack of any form of qualification undertaken by the prisoners.

RECEPTION

Reception is a well run, clean environment which deals with almost 50% of the prison population at the beginning and end of each working day. A small group of officers specialise in this area and though quite short staffed, manage to pull together to create an efficient and generally civilised department.

ACCOMMODATION

Throughout the winter months two of the Residential wings were one more surrounded by scaffolding as repairs to the roof were undertaken. The Board was frequently concerned with the cleanliness and degree of littering around the residential wings but, when raised as an issue the situation was quickly resolved.

13. RESETTLEMENT

Resettlement services are provided by SEETEC. They provide support to assist offenders in the following areas: Employment, Finance and Debt, and deliver specific support for any victims of domestic violence.

Accommodation support is provided by Nacro.

Support is given three to four months prior to release and offenders are offered three sessions in which an action plan can be formulated and support requested. This support is often essential in enabling offenders to deal with life once released from prison.

14. THE WORK OF THE IMB

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

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

INDUCTION

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

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

EVENING SURGERY

An Evening Surgery is held once a month to allow prisoners who are out of the prison during the day to speak face to face with a Board member should they wish to do so Varying attendance is recorded at the surgery but in general prisoners find the facility useful. The Board are grateful for the co-operation of the Chaplaincy in allowing the surgery to be held within an available chapel room.

BOARD STATISTICS

Recommended complement of Board Members	10
Number of Members at start of reporting period	8
Number of Members at end of reporting period	8
Number of new Members joining within the reporting period	0
Number of Members leaving within the reporting period.	0
Total number of visits to the prison	422
Total number of applications received	101
Total number of segregation reviews held	N/app
Total number of segregation reviews attended	N/app

IMB APPLICATIONS BREAKDOWN 2016/2017

CODE	SUBJECT	2016	2017
A	Accommodation	0	1
B	Adjudications	2	2
C	Diversity Related	2	3
D	Education/Employment	6	3
E	Family Visits	5	1
F	Food	3	0
G	Health Related	13	20
H1	Property Standford Hill	5	11
H2	Property Other Prisons	16	30
I	Sentence Related	16	9
J	Staff/Prisoner Related	8	6
K	Transfers	1	1
L	Miscellaneous	21	10
M	HDC	4	2
N	ROTL/Visits	10	2
TOTAL		112	101