



Annual Report
of the
Independent Monitoring Board
at
HMP East Sutton Park

for reporting Year
1 November 2016 to 31 October 2017

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Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody

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1 STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

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.

Main judgements

It is the Board's overall judgement that the prison is well run with residents generally enjoying a good relationship with staff.

Are prisoners treated fairly?

The residents are treated fairly with an efficient Personal Officer Scheme operating. Residents are encouraged to make the most of their time at East Sutton Park (ESP).

Are prisoners treated humanely?

Residents are treated with great consideration in a disciplined environment. Staff offer support and encouragement in preparing the women for release into the community.

Are prisoners prepared well for their release?

Generally, residents are prepared well for release. However, some women arrive with very little time to serve and there is not enough time to prepare them properly. Those arriving with several months to serve go through a structured programme with emphasis on improving education, obtaining accommodation and gaining employment. They are encouraged to take responsibility for their sentence plans, which are settled at Sentence Planning Boards soon after arrival.

Main Areas for Development

TO THE MINISTER

To urge/direct the Prison Service to ensure that women coming to ESP have sufficient time to ensure that the greatest benefit in resettlement can be achieved and therefore getting value for money (11).

To ensure an increase in the amount of approved premises/supported accommodation in the southeast for women on release from prison (11).

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

To ensure that transferring prisons send sufficient medication for the resident to allow time for ESP to organise prescriptions. One day's worth is insufficient (8).

To ensure women transferring to ESP have sufficient time to serve in order to gain the maximum benefit from their stay (11).

TO THE GOVERNOR

To improve the communication to the Board when ACCT reviews are to take place (4).

To further reduce/eradicate room thefts and any associated bullying (4).

To engage an independent reviewer of DIRFs (5).

To consider the formation of focus groups for the residents to express any concerns they may have to their representative at the Equality meeting (5).

Improvements

The introduction of a Trauma Informed course (4).

The introduction of Young Offenders Voice, a forum at which the younger residents can air their concerns (5).

The expansion of age-based screenings (8).

The new wellbeing initiatives involving the Kitchen, Gym and Healthcare (8).

The introduction of new courses in Education (9).

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

3.1 Main Role

HMP/YOI East Sutton Park (ESP) is an open prison for 94 women (previously 92) and 6 young offenders, located six miles from Maidstone, the County Town of Kent. The main house is a Grade 2 listed Jacobean mansion set in 84 acres of ground. In 1954 the first and only open female borstal was established at East Sutton Park. The prison is the only female open prison in the south of England. Its aim is to prepare the residents in a structured manner for release into the community. On arrival, women are encouraged to take responsibility for their sentence plans and progress through education, projects and voluntary work to outside paid employment.

ESP is a working prison with a farm, extensive gardens and a profitable farm shop that is open to the public twice a week. Stalls are also taken at farmers' markets in the surrounding villages.

3.2 Living Accommodation

Accommodation is mainly in double or 3 bed rooms but there are a number of dormitories. Showers are in 2 blocks. There is a communal dining room and a large room with comfortable furniture for relaxation and meetings as well as an association and television room.

3.3 Training Facilities

In addition to the Education Department, there are opportunities to gain NVQs to level 3 in various spheres.

3.4 Providers of Main Services

The main service providers are:-

Healthcare - Oxleas

Mental Health - Inreach

Drug Programs - The Forward Trust (formerly RAPt)

Family Support - PACT

Education - Novus

Maintenance - Carillion

In addition to the prison chaplain, ministers of other faiths attend the prison.

B Evidence sections 4 – 11

4 SAFETY

All the women are transferred from closed prisons having been risk assessed as being suitable for open conditions.

Safer custody meetings have been monitored by the IMB. Courses such as 'Trauma Informed' have been held for staff and a shorter course held on Saturday mornings has been introduced for the residents. This can only help the residents understand their situation and that of the other residents and is to be welcomed. A representative from the Samaritans attends safer custody meetings and there is always a report on Listeners, their number and their training. Staff invariably seem aware of difficult times for residents, such as a family death or illness or issues over their children, and have made residents aware of the Listeners.

The IMB is not always informed when ACCT reviews are to take place. Only a few ACCT documents have been opened during the year but all staff have been reminded of their responsibility with regard to opening an ACCT document if necessary, including the IMB.

Room thefts have taken and are taking place and action has been taken to reduce it but further action is required. There may be an underlying issue of bullying relating to these thefts. There have also been arguments between residents sharing a bedroom and where possible these have been resolved by mediation.

5 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS

Meetings have taken place on a regular basis and have been well conducted and covered the areas as set out in the agenda. Very few racial or other incidents have been reported despite residents sharing rooms and about a third of the population at ESP being BME. Offender Voice Meetings have taken place on a fairly regular basis. An issue arose that young offenders were not having their voices heard despite having a representative at the voice meeting. The prison responded by setting up a separate Voice meeting for young offenders which has enabled them to be heard. There is a maximum of 6 young offenders at ESP but often there are only 2 or 3 and they tend to all attend. This has been a very positive and welcome development.

Although representative residents attend the equality meetings they have not identified any particular issues relating to equality. The IMB is unsure what, if any, dialogue takes place between the representatives and the rest of the residents. It may be that focus groups could be set up so that any issues the residents may have can be put to their representatives.

An independent monitor is required to be appointed to check all DIRF forms and the procedure that has been followed. The IMB has monitored the few DIRFs that there are and is not aware of any procedural defects. When a DIRF has been submitted, staff have responded appropriately by investigating the allegations, taking appropriate steps and reporting back to the complainer.

All major religious dates and festivals have been highlighted and appropriate observance put in place.

6 SEGREGATION/CARE AND SEPARATION UNIT

The prison does not have a unit for segregating problematic residents. If necessary, a Special Circumstances Risk Board (SCRB) is held and may lead to a resident being returned to closed conditions. 127 SCRBs were held in the reporting year resulting in 19 residents being returned to closed conditions. Some of the others led to less severe sanctions such as suspension of ROTL.

7 ACCOMODATION

There are double and 3 bed rooms and 2 dormitories housing 6-7 women. Priority for double rooms is given to women who go out to paid work. Some women find sharing a room difficult at first but usually, after a short time, they adjust.

Showers are in 2 blocks, one of which has been refurbished in the last year.

Meals (of a consistently high quality) are collected at the kitchen servery and are eaten in the communal dining room.

There is a large room with comfortable furniture for relaxation and meetings and an association and television room.

8 HEALTHCARE

Healthcare continues to provide a good service to the residents. Despite some technical difficulties, during the year, a greater number of age-based screenings has been offered.

Jointly with other departments, notably the Gym and the Kitchen, a number of wellbeing initiatives have been introduced. Examples are the walking competition and the initiative to reduce sugar intake.

Healthcare does not provide inpatient care, which has sometimes meant residents transferring temporarily to other prisons where appropriate facilities exist. An increasing concern is the arrival of new residents late in the week, sometimes with inadequate medical history or insufficient current medication - at least twice in the last quarter. Healthcare staff have stayed on after hours to deal with newcomers but the situation is unsatisfactory. The prison is seeking to resolve the issue with the feeder prisons.

Healthcare has mainly succeeded in separating the process of dealing with complaints from that of the prison system. Health complaints are now monitored by the provider (Oxleas) and the local Clinical Commissioning Group's Quality Board.

9 EDUCATION

During the year, the majority of women (50% of arrivals), came from HMP Bronzefield and had characteristically undertaken little education in the short time they had been there. The educational level of all new prisoners, (154), was assessed on arrival. 65% of all learners were found to be at Level 1 or below in English and 57% at Level 1 or below in Mathematics. All undertook the Pathways course, which enables them to take ownership of their opportunities for resettlement and provides the basis for their Sentence Planning Boards.

The learners' performance in literacy and numeracy improved in the year with 5% more passes than last. In literacy, 5 learners achieved Entry 3, 8 achieved Level 1 and 28 achieved Level 2. 3 of those advanced from Entry 2 to Level 2, 1 from Entry 3 to Level 1 and 4 went from Level 1 to Level 2.

In mathematics, 1 learner has achieved Entry 2, 1 Entry 3, 14 Level 1 and 29 Level 2. Of those learners 1 advanced from Entry 1 to Entry 2, 2 from Entry 2 to Level 1, 5 from Entry 3 to Level 1, 14 from Level 1 to Level 2 and 6 from Entry 3 to Level 2. ESP has also achieved a record number of residents, 15 this year, on college or university courses. During the academic year there were 1,177 starts and 991 (84%) completions and 933 (79%) passes.

Three times per year the Education department focuses upon a week of short courses specifically aimed at resettlement, i.e. food hygiene, budgeting and money management, health and safety in the workplace and assertiveness and decision making. In the latest round, all the learners passed.

ESP has to balance provision for a very variable roll of both young offenders and adult prisoners with a wide range of educational ability and sentence length. However, there are many courses of various lengths in preparation for release and future employment opportunities. New courses added this year include catering, a shorter 8-week hairdressing course and business enterprise. It is commendable that the department is working with a number of outside companies, e.g. Sainsbury's, who deliver some of the business enterprise modules.

The library at ESP is open each day from 8 am to 8 pm and stocks a range of non-fiction and fiction, plus books supporting education and vocational topics. The library is well used. There were 4,734 issues in 2016 a 10% increase over the previous year and 4,454 issues so far in 2017. There were 11,863 visits to the library in 2016 – an average of 988 per month.

A number of initiatives have been developed at the prison including Storybook Mums, Reading Ahead Challenge and thematic displays. The library has also helped a resident take on voluntary and then paid work with archives at Kent History and Library Centre.

The library has become a centre for those wanting to access daily newspapers and to use the two computers in the library although they are not connected to the Internet.

10 WORK, VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

All the women at East Sutton Park are expected to work or undertake education, unless they are retired either by age or medically. Since January 2017 more than 99% of the population have worked in some capacity.

The farm and gardens are a large source of employment at ESP. A number of women are currently undertaking, or have completed, NVQ qualifications in land based industries. Five women are currently enrolled in NVQ Level 2 livestock production, with three having completed the diploma in the last year. A further five enrolled on NVQ Level 2 production horticulture with two having completed the course in the last 12 months. There have been some issues for carrying out assessments due to a lack of assessor. However, some training has been undertaken and now five staff can assess the women's work.

The prisons chaplaincy also runs a number of courses some women are expected to attend, such as Shine (50 women attended), Living with Loss (20) and Victim Awareness (9).

ESP has a good relationship with a number of employers locally and employer fairs are held. For the first nine months of 2017 85% of the women who were deemed eligible to work by OMU had secured paid employment. Despite the number of women who work while at ESP, only 25% of women who left ESP over the last nine months left prison with full time employment. Since January, 55% of the women have left prison with no employment (excluding women who are retired, fulltime carers or in education). The prison is investigating the reasons behind these figures. Of the 15 women who left prison unemployed between July and September, 47% had their ROTL and HDC dates on or near the same day, meaning they were unable to work outside the prison prior to their release; 27% were not in the prison long enough to work outside (usually less than three months) and 13% had only completed their voluntary work or training prior to being released. This in-depth analysis shows that the women who stand to benefit most from the services provided by ESP are those who reside at the prison for a sufficiently long period to be able to work out in the community.

11 RESETTLEMENT

Resettlement is one of the primary functions of East Sutton Park. Much of the focus of the establishment is on preparing the women for release. Normally, within a few weeks of arrival, residents sit a Sentence Planning Board at which the issues to be resolved at ESP before release are identified, e.g. housing, education. This is a vital step in preparation for release and the IMB has been concerned that during the summer and since, boards have not always been held. Resettlement from ESP works best if the women are there for a sufficiently long time and can progress out of the prison on ROTL to undertake voluntary and then paid work, prior to their being released. At the end of the reporting year, 6 women were doing voluntary work and 17 were in paid employment.

Having a home is imperative to help the women resettle after they leave ESP. 87% of the women who were released, for the 9 months to September 2017, were able to return to permanent accommodation, with only 2% of the women going out to temporary residence. That said, for the women who need to live in supported accommodation or approved premises, there is still a scarcity of this provision in the South East.

C Section – Work of Board

Rota visits are carried out at least once a week and Sentence Planning and Risk Boards are monitored closely as they represent vital stages in the prisoners' time at ESP. In addition, meetings are monitored and targeted reviews are carried out.

The Governor or his deputy attends meetings of the Board to give a report on the prison and to answer questions.

BOARD STATISTICS	
Recommended Complement of Board Members	9
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	9
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	9
Total number of visits to the Establishment	273
Total number of Board meetings	12

D Section – Applications

Code	Subject	Current reporting year	Previous reporting year
A	Accommodation including laundry, clothing, ablutions	1	1
B	Discipline including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	1	0
C	Equality	2	6
D	Purposeful Activity including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	0	6
E 1	Letters, visits, phones, public protection restrictions	0	0
E 2	Finance including pay, private monies, spends	0	0
F	Food and kitchens	0	1
G	Health including physical, mental, social care	0	0
H 1	Property within this establishment	0	0
H 2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	5	1
H 3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	0	0
I	Sentence management including HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	6	9
J	Staff/prisoner concerns including bullying	1	11
K	Transfers	0	0
L	Miscellaneous	3	3
	Total number of IMB applications	19	38

GLOSSARY

ACCT Assessment & Care in Custody Teamwork

BME Black and Minority Ethnic

DIRF Discrimination Incident Report Form

HDC Home Detention Curfew

NVQ National Vocational Qualification

OMU Offender Management Unit

PACT Prison Advice and Care Trust

RAPt Rehabilitation for Addicted Prisoner Trust

ROTL Release on Temporary Licence