



Annual Report
of the
Independent Monitoring Board
at

HMP East Sutton Park

for reporting Year
1 November 2017 to 31 October 2018

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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 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.

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of the IMB at HMP/YOI East Sutton Park ("ESP") for the period 1 November 2017 to 31 October 2018. The Board's conclusions are based on observations made on Rota Visits, examination of records and documents, attendance at meetings, and conversations with staff and residents.

2.1 Main Judgements

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

2.1.1 Are the prisoners treated fairly?

The residents are treated fairly with an efficient Personal Officer Scheme operating. Residents are encouraged by staff to make the most of their time at ESP.

2.1.2 Are the 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.

2.1.3 Are the prisoners prepared well for release?

Generally, residents are prepared well for release. Few, if any, leave without accommodation to go to and some continue with the employer with whom they have been released on temporary licence (“ROTL”) for paid work. However, some women arrive with very little time to serve and thus there is insufficient time to prepare them properly. Those arriving with several months to serve undertake 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.

2.2 Main Areas for Development

2.2.1 To the Minister

To ensure that the Prison Service brings the refurbished flats into operation, thus enhancing the prospects of successful resettlement for the residents and allowing a further 20 residents, 16 of whom would live in the flats, to be transferred to open conditions (7).

To urge/direct the Prison Service to ensure that residents coming to ESP have sufficient time left to serve so that they can achieve the greatest benefit before their release. (11).

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

2.2.2 To the Prison Service

To bring into service the flats, refurbished at a cost of over £250,000, thus allowing up to 16 residents to live semi-independently in preparation for release (7).

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

2.2.3 To the Governor

To improve the communication and engagement between Healthcare and the rest of the prison (8).

2.2.4 Improvements

Better notification of ACCT reviews (4).

The appointment of an independent DIRF auditor (5).

The creation of the facility to provide semi-independent living for 16 residents (7).

The introduction of the Freedom Programme (8).

The introduction of non-certificated life skill courses for independent living (9).

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

3.1 Main Role

ESP is an open prison for 95 women 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 their progression 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.

The prison shares a Governing Governor with HMP/YOI Downview.

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, a 'pool room' containing sofas for watching television and a large room with comfortable furniture for relaxation and meetings.

In addition, there is the potential to use refurbished flats, which would enable up to 16 women to live semi-independently prior to their release and a further 4 in the house (see 7).

3.3 Training Facilities

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

3.4 Providers of Main Services

The main service providers are:-

Healthcare - Oxleas

Mental Health - Inreach

Substance Misuse Programs -The Forward Trust

Family Support – PACT
Education – Novus
Employment Advice - Ixion

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

4 EVIDENCE SECTIONS

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 Becoming Trauma Informed have been held for staff with a shorter course, held on Saturday mornings, for the residents. 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 now being informed when ACCT reviews are to take place. Only a few ACCT documents have been opened during the year and regular reviews are held.

5 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS

Meetings have taken place on a fairly 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 BAME. Offender Voice meetings have taken place on a fairly regular basis. Until the middle of the year, a separate Voice meeting was held for young offenders. These meetings were well attended and were vibrant and productive. However, as the age of residents moved out of the young person range, the meetings were poorly attended and eventually it was agreed by all to combine them with the general Voice meetings. The option remains to reinstate the separate young persons meetings at the behest of the residents.

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.

An independent monitor has now been appointed to review all DIRF forms and to see that the procedure that has been followed. The IMB has monitored the few DIRFs that there have been 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 CARE and SEPARATION

The prison does not have a unit for segregating problem residents. If necessary, a Special Circumstances Risk Board (“SCRB”) is held which may lead to a resident being returned to closed conditions. 92 SCRBS were held in the reporting year resulting in 21 residents being returned to closed conditions. Some of the others led to less severe sanctions such as suspension of ROTL. In 15 cases, there was no further action.

7 ACCOMMODATION

There are double and 3 bed rooms and 2 dormitories housing 6-8 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.

During the year, flats, previously staff accommodation, were refurbished at a cost of some £250,000 with the intention that up to 16 residents would occupy them and live semi-independently in preparation for release. It would give them, particularly those that had served long sentences, the opportunity to get used to running their own lives, albeit subject to some supervision. It was a great disappointment to the residents, staff and the Board when the Prison Service decided not to finance the extra staff required citing over capacity in the estate. At the time of its authorisation, capacity in the women’s estate was acutely tight and the project would have provided space for an extra 20 spaces in open conditions. The Board wrote to the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State and to Ms Helen Whately, the local MP. Both visited the prison and saw the flats. Ms Whately has consistently supported the project for which the Board is grateful. The Prison Service decision flies in the face of the stated policy of aiding resettlement of prisoners back into society and it is hoped that it will reconsider its decision and get the flats into service.

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.

8 HEALTHCARE

Healthcare at ESP provides an efficient service with on-site, nurse-led, primary and mental health services and acts as a gateway for outside services and health screening. The service works closely with other prison services including the gym, chaplaincy and Forward Trust to help maintain the health and wellbeing of residents. There are very few complaints.

Complaints are managed by the NHS through the bi-monthly Quality Board which the IMB attends. Unfortunately, representation from the prison management at these meetings has been poor and is indicative of the poor engagement between the prison and Healthcare.

The service is finishing the year with a number of reviews. The take-up of late afternoon GP appointments, (put in place for outworkers) has been very low at 19% and only 6% of those were for working residents. Accordingly, the continuation of the evening appointments is now under review. As outworkers are qualified for ROTLs, there should be limited impact. An ongoing review is in place to monitor the relatively high number of DNAs, (did not attend), across a number of services including GP, nurse-led clinics, optician and dentist. In particular, usage of the 'Special Sick' clinic, (an emergency clinic for sudden onset of illness or injury), is exceptionally high for the size of the population - 100+ appointments per month – and is also subject to an ongoing review by Healthcare and the User Voice Health Council. During the year there has been increased monitoring of the use of the 111 service, the level of prescribing and overall sickness levels. Whilst these have been of a higher level than expected, no adverse connotations have been detected.

The Health Council reported some confusion amongst the residents regarding Healthcare procedures, e.g. the collection of medicines when working and the procedure to book a GP appointment. The prison is in the process of putting in place Healthcare resident representatives to provide the necessary assistance.

Healthcare continues to offer mental health and psychological services alongside the usual screening and testing services and provides a gateway to outside dentistry, optician and other health services. Whilst there have been some negative comments regarding the delay to see a dentist, these delays are typical of those in the outside community.

A newly appointed Discharge Facilitator is in the process of developing a Health and Wellbeing strategy including a 12 month rolling health promotion schedule.

9 EDUCATION, LEARNING and SKILLS

On arrival at ESP, learners attend a mandatory Pathways course, which sets the scene for learners to begin to take ownership of their sentence plan. Feedback has been positive in that the tutor had pointed them to various interventions as well as preparing them for their Sentence Planning Board.

The success rates of qualifications were high at 96%. In 2017-18, ESP had 1324 different qualifications started (some learners had started more than one qualification). There were 14 residents who were unable to complete their courses, mainly because they were transferred back to closed conditions or released on HDC. 1152 qualifications were completed, and 1117 qualifications were achieved. The retention was 99% and the success therefore was 96%. Functional skills were also well served with 61 learners achieving a level two in Maths and 41 in English. Only 5 learners withdrew from the

classes and did not pass; of those, 4 were transferred back to closed conditions and the other was given early discharge at short notice.

ESP's Learning, Skills and Employment team has excellent links with outside employers (with regular employment fairs at the prison) and training providers and they are tirelessly involved in finding new placements and providing the forum for fairs when needed. Local employers have then come into the classroom to support ESP as the residents complete their qualifications. ESP has been fortunate enough to build upon its links with employers such as Sainsbury's, who have staged mock interviews for preparation for work as well as bringing in Sainsbury's local customer service training team for the Customer Service NVQ Level 2 learners. Over the last 2 years, the NVQ Level 2 Customer Service course, as well as the NVQ Catering course, has become less classroom-based delivery and more in the work place. For the Customer Service course, the tutor goes out into the work place to assess learners, e.g. the Co-op and Maidstone Borough Council. This not only meets the needs of the residents but also those of the prison in that learners remain in the workplace. Longer courses, which meet the employment needs of the residents include Catering, with a recently revamped teaching area, e.g. Customer Service, Hospitality, Hair and Beauty, ICT. These may lead to residents gaining accreditation and work in Retail, Catering and Hospitality.

The timetable and curriculum offered by the Education Department is reviewed quarterly with the prison Learning and Skills Manager, Regional Learning and Skills Manager and Education Manager identifying any data and work trends in the community. Finding the balance of developing and managing a programme which is fit for purpose and adheres to the Resettlement Strategy here at ESP is a priority.

Some courses are short, such as Barista Level 2 award, Health and Safety in the Workplace Level 2, Food Hygiene Level 2, Assertiveness and Decision Making, Budgeting and Money Management. For example, in 2017-18 ESP delivered Budgeting and Money Management to 32 residents. As well as supporting learners as part of the overarching sentence plan, these short courses are useful for residents who are only at ESP for a few weeks or couple of months, allowing them to gain accreditation. In addition, ESP has developed the Independent Living courses, which meet needs, not necessarily with substantial certification, which upskill residents including how to 'bleed a radiator', 'find out about Oyster cards', reading the gas meter, cooking in a domestic kitchen, wall papering and decorating. These have proved very informative and feedback from the monthly learner focus groups has been positive.

Although nationally the MOJ ended the National Careers Service contract, a member of staff from the service continues to visit ESP on a voluntary basis to provide careers guidance for the residents.

Since the end of the reporting year, the education contract has been subject to tender nationally and from April 2019, there will be a new provider, Weston College.

The library at ESP is open each day and stocks a range of newspapers, non-fiction and fiction books, plus books supporting education and vocational topics, some 4,250 items in all. Use of the library has reduced over the reporting period. This is attributed to the

loss of an exceptional orderly during the year. Nevertheless, there were over 4,100 issues 2017-18. There were 13,150 visits to the library in 2017-18, an average of 1,096 per month.

Several initiatives have been developed at the prison including a monthly book club, attended by up to 18 residents, with visiting authors on occasion, most recently Tracey Chevalier and Annie Holder. A creative writing course was held over a 10 week period, with four residents completing the course. The library has become a centre for those wanting to access the daily newspapers and to use the two computers in the library. Although linked to a locally developed intranet, they are not connected to the Internet.

The prison's chaplaincy also runs a number of courses some women may attend, such as Shine (83 women attended), Living with Loss (23) and Understanding Forgiveness (26).

A new course, the Freedom Programme, has been introduced helping those attending to recognise the triggers for domestic violence. The course has been run twice by prison staff with 17 residents attending.

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 2018 more than 99% of the population have worked in some capacity.

ESP has excellent relationships with a number of local employers. Each month an employment fair is held. This is typically attended by such companies as Sainsbury's, Co-op, Transport for London, Pen Optical and Maidstone BC. There are on average 8 job offers made to the residents from these events. For the first ten months of 2018, 66% of the women who were deemed eligible to work by the Offender Management Unit had secured paid employment. Despite the number of women who work while at ESP, only 21% of women who left ESP over the last ten months left prison with full time employment, with a further 29% going into part time work, education or being self-employed. Since January 2018 the number of women who have left ESP with no employment (excluding women who are retired, full-time carers or in education) has fallen to 38%. The prison now investigates the reasons behind these figures. Of the 41 women who left prison unemployed between January and October 2018, 49% 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 or had been in the prison for less than 3 months so there was insufficient time to get them out to work, while 17% had to go into supported housing and so had to give up their work to be eligible for housing benefit as the cost of the supported housing is otherwise too expensive. 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.

The farm, with an increase in the number of poly-tunnels, and the gardens are a substantial source of employment at ESP. A number of women are currently undertaking, or have completed NVQ qualifications in land based industries, although this has been somewhat constrained by the absence of key staff. 3 women have trained in butchery, 2 of whom are now working for Sainsbury's.

11 RESETTLEMENT

Resettlement is the primary function 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 attend a Sentence Planning Board at which the issues to be resolved at ESP before release are identified, e.g. housing, education. 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 undertaking voluntary work and 13 were in paid employment.

Having a home is imperative for successful resettlement for the women leaving ESP. For the ten months to October 2018, 86% of the women who were released were able to return to permanent accommodation. The remaining 14% of the women were obliged to be housed in a mixture of temporary accommodation, supported housing and approved premises. There is still a scarcity of provision of supported accommodation and approved premises in the South East. This can mean that women who are required to live in these types of accommodation can be forced to wait until a place is secured. Moreover, the rents on supported housing are prohibitively high, forcing women who have found employment whilst residing at ESP to give up these roles prior to release, in order that they can receive housing benefit to pay for the cost of this accommodation.

THE WORK OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

Operation

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 residents' time at ESP. In addition, meetings are monitored and targeted reviews are carried out.

The Governor or Deputy Governor 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 start of period 9
Number of Board members at end of reporting period 9
Number of new members joining within the reporting period 2
Number of members leaving within the reporting period 2
Total number of Board meetings 12
Number of attendances at Board meeting 88
Number of attendances other than Board meetings 232
Total number of visits to the prison including all meetings 320
Total number of applications 26

APPLICATIONS TO THE IMB

Code	Subject	Current reporting year	Previous reporting year
A	Accommodation including laundry, clothing, ablutions	2	1
B	Discipline including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	0	1
C	Equality	2	2
D	Purposeful Activity including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	0	0
E 1	Letters, visits, phones, public protection restrictions	2	0
E 2	Finance including pay, private monies, spends	0	0
F	Food and kitchens	0	0
G	Health including physical, mental, social care	0	0
H 1	Property within this establishment	1	0
H 2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	7	5
H 3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	0	0
I	Sentence management including HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	8	6
J	Staff/prisoner concerns including bullying	1	1
K	Transfers	0	0
L	Miscellaneous	3	3
	Total number of IMB applications	26	19

Madeleine Hughes
Acting Chair

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

ROTL Release on Temporary Licence

SCRB Special Circumstances Risk Board