



Annual report
of the
Independent Monitoring Board
at
HMP/YOI STANDFORD HILL

For reporting year ending

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Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody

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A Introductory sections 1 – 3

1 Statutory role of the Independent Monitoring Board

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 Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) 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 they have 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

Over the last year, we have been convinced that HMP/YOI Stanford Hill continues to be well run, where prisoners receive appropriate and fair treatment. In fact, we would go further and contend that the prison model at Stanford Hill is a highly effective, first class template for a rehabilitation prison.

The prison has, in our view, moved on smoothly during the transition between leaders as Jim Padley left as Governor and has been replaced by Dawn Mauldon. The two Governors have inevitably put an emphasis on different aspects of the prison's work. For instance, Ms Mauldon felt that some of the ancillary industries, such as recycling, were not helpful to the overall work of the prison and closed them down. She has also begun the important process of introducing challenge, support and intervention plans (CSIPs), which endeavour to help prisoners learn from, and make amends for, their misbehaviour, a robust, creative response to tackling the use of drugs in prison and which enables them to avoid a return to closed conditions.

Drug use is a continual challenge, with several different drugs being introduced. However, the prison's focus on the rehabilitation of prisoners at the end of what, for many, is a long prison journey, has been followed unwaveringly.

No institution as complex and multi-faceted as a category D prison runs smoothly in every respect. Last year we noted that forums had been set up to address the issues

facing black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) prisoners. While these forums continue, our sense is that some of the challenges integrating these prisoners into the environment at Standford Hill are still there. This is a vital work in progress and, whilst we feel that constructive improvements have been made, more needs to be done.

There has been an improvement in the maintenance work within the prison since GFSL took over the contract following the demise of Carillion. While there are still inevitable glitches in some respects, there appears to be a sense that problems are easier to isolate and deal with without the long delays that characterised the Carillion era. This is an area we are watching carefully and in some areas, most notably the prison gardens, we note a willing, well-managed and well-motivated workforce hamstrung slightly by delays in obtaining appropriate machinery, cuts in budgets, tensions in senior management and a lack of timely contractual agreements.

One theme of this report is that we believe reports on category D prisons, which are primarily concerned with rehabilitating prisoners prior to release, should reflect different considerations from standard IMB reports. For example, there is relatively little bullying and violence within the establishment and there is no permanent segregation unit in the prison because prisoners who misbehave and merit punishment are removed to closed conditions. This difference is an important one to recognise because it means that the vast majority of activity within Standford Hill is concentrated constructively on helping prisoners to gain skills that will help them on release rather than imposing restrictions on them and enacting punishments for negative behaviour within the prison. We believe this needs to be recognised by looking at category D prisons as a distinct element of the prison system and adapting reports accordingly.

One of the key challenges in integrating prisoners into life at Standford Hill is enabling them to orientate themselves to such an open environment after, often, many years spent in closed conditions. The significance of this change should not be underestimated. Integration is generally achieved effectively and prison officers do a good job in assessing new arrivals, ensuring problems do not arise between prisoners, so that they can rapidly become aware of the different emphasis that Standford Hill applies. Most prisoners who have worked their way into a category D prison are reluctant to jeopardise their progress and are cognisant of the need to engage constructively with the way in which Standford Hill operates. There are occasional instances of prisoners absconding and finding difficulty in adjusting to the atmosphere and relative freedom that a category D prison offers. They are carefully managed and most problems that do occur tend to arise from prisoners' shortcomings in decision making.

One continuing concern is the lack of kitchen facilities on site. Food is cooked in the kitchens at Swaleside and transported by lorry to the three wings where it is distributed. Delays often occur, leading to some variability in mealtimes, and food cooked elsewhere cannot be as fresh as if it was cooked on site. We believe this is a problem that should be rectified because it will increase the efficiency, morale and cohesion of the prison. In addition, we have seen occasional examples of trafficking in drugs and mobile phones under cover of the food transport arrangements.

Main judgements

Safety

The assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) system for those at risk of suicide or self-harm continues to help protect and monitor more vulnerable prisoners who are more likely to be bullied and victimised. We periodically look at health and safety guidelines and fire policy and the governor shares all documents relating to prison safety with us as they are written and implemented. We have open access to all the officers who are tasked with ensuring and maintaining safety within the prison.

We are satisfied as a Board that safety is an aspect of prison life that is taken very seriously at Standford Hill.

Respect

It is a noticeable aspect of the ethos within Standford Hill that prisoners are treated with appropriate courtesy and respect by prison officers. A good balance appears to be achieved between maintaining requisite discipline and interacting collegially with prisoners.

Purposeful activity

There is a strong emphasis on equipping prisoners with skills that will help them upon release and will enable them to build livelihoods. The prison continues to encourage prisoners to obtain certified qualifications and look for areas where they can work on new start-up businesses. This entrepreneurial emphasis is a particularly strong aspect of the prison.

Resettlement

In the section on resettlement we underline how important this aspect of prison life is. The prison aims to ensure that all prisoners are ready by the end of their sentence to re-enter the community, equipped with employment skills and job opportunities that will anchor them in society and help turn their lives around.

Main areas for development

To the Minister

The work that Standford Hill has done in reducing reoffending is outstanding. We suggest that serious consideration is given to the reasons why the reoffending rate is so low and a template is created focusing on the key elements of the prison's strategy.

To the Prison Service

Standford Hill needs its own kitchen facilities for reasons of security, morale and convenience. The current arrangements are unsatisfactory and inefficient.

The achievements in educational attainment are being compromised by uncertainties over funding, which are leading to cutbacks, with a consequent reduction in staff and prisoner morale. More certainty needs to be provided about funding levels so that planning can be stabilised with greater confidence.

To the Governor

The healthcare block needs to be upgraded with a better waiting room, a confidential acoustic hatch at the dispensary and a secure door to ensure privacy for prisoners and staff undertaking confidential consultations.

A national vocational qualification (NVQ) needs to be provided in gardening to increase the number of opportunities for prisoners working in this area and wishing to follow it as a career path after prison.

To the provider (of healthcare/education/maintenance etc)

The employees, who are key to the successful running of the maintenance department, in our opinion do an excellent job, but have still not been given contracts of employment and this has impacted on morale.

3. Description of the prison

Standford Hill is one of a group of three prisons near Leysdown in Kent. Two prisons adjoin it – HMP Swaleside (a category B training prison) and HMP Elmley (a category B local prison). It is sited on 300 acres of farmland and was originally a Royal Air Force camp in the Second World War.

Standford Hill is an open prison and classified as a category D prison and young offender institution. It provides accommodation for 464 male prisoners who have been categorised as suitable to be held in open conditions. Each prisoner has his own cell in one of three blocks. Block A normally houses new prisoners, more established prisoners occupy block B and most of the occupants of block C work outside the prison and return to sleep. Their work hours are often flexible and they may work through the night.

Blocks A and B have space for 192 prisoners and block C accommodates 80 prisoners. The two larger blocks have three landings and four spurs on each. C wing was constructed as a 'quick build unit' and is much smaller. Throughout the prison each prisoner has his own room with access to communal bathroom and toilet facilities. This can cause concerns among prisoners who have moved from prisons with more modern, en-suite facilities.

Each wing has its own serveries and prisoners can eat their meals in their own rooms or together, if space permits, in blocks A and B on tables. There are also a number of microwave ovens in each cellblock, which gives prisoners the option to cook and prepare their own food.

The main priority for HMP/YOI Standford Hill is the resettlement of prisoners and enabling them to avoid reoffending on release.

4. Safety

HMP/YOI Standford Hill is in a relatively isolated position near the Kent coast on the Isle of Sheppey. It is adjoined by open farmland creating obvious security challenges, which are compounded by the fact that a large percentage of the prisoners leave the site regularly to work.

The ethos of an effective category D prison has to be based on trust. Prisoners have made progress towards freedom and, beyond that, a future with productive employment, and most realise that to jeopardise this would be an immensely retrograde step. The prison has to place trust in the prison population but overlays this with sensible security procedures. Vigilance is exercised in searching prisoners and visitors to the site with a view to locating any items of contraband that may be brought in. Reception procedures are thorough and professional. Although breaches do occur, they are relatively rare and usually minor.

Arriving at the prison, prisoners are quickly assessed to ascertain their health status and to develop a plan to meet their resettlement objectives and address any potential problems. An extensive induction course is held in the first few days after arrival and the IMB plays a part in this, along with a range of peer workers, to explain the role of the IMB and the way in which Board members can be contacted. This session is interactive and informal, allowing prisoners to ask questions and address concerns individually and collectively.

Our Board believes that Standford Hill is a safe resettlement prison, with constructive goals and a supportive atmosphere. Violence and bullying are relatively rare and most prisoners adapt eventually to the open conditions, which are a major culture shock to most new arrivals.

There is a strong emphasis on health and safety within the prison and records are kept of accidents and serious incidents within the prison.

There is also a comprehensive and effective first aid course, which all prison officers must undertake and as part of this, they are required to be able to use the defibrillators, which are placed around the prison.

The biggest threat to prisoners' safety is undoubtedly drugs. This is a growing threat in prisons and one that is altering in nature and variety as new types of drugs are manufactured and distributed. The most commonly confiscated drugs are cannabis, alcohol and spice – the last is becoming a more frequently used and growing threat. New drugs such as pregabalin, tramadol and gabapentin, some of which are stronger variants of their predecessors, are emerging and there are not yet tests in place to detect all of them. The situation is exacerbated by the open boundaries of the prison and the possibility of using drones to send drugs into the prison or transferring them from other prisons at mealtimes with the food. There have also been attempts to smuggle in

alcohol. The prison is alert to this and remains particularly vigilant, given that many prisoners spend time outside the prison.

Every new prisoner undergoes drug testing within 24 hours of arrival. In addition, 23 prisoners are randomly tested once a month. Results are reassuringly good and positive tests are rare. The prison works very effectively with the Forward Trust, which runs extremely effective drugs programmes for the prisoners. They interact with any prisoners who produce a positive test, with the aim of continuing rehabilitation and ensuring a positive test is a 'blip'. A drug strategy meeting is held every month, involving management throughout the prison. It takes on board intelligence about trends in drug use and distribution based on intelligence from police and other prisons.

The arrival of the new Governor at the end of 2018 saw a change in approach in managing bad behaviour. Previously there was a zero-tolerance approach towards those found with mobile phones or who had failed a second mandatory drug test. Her view was that prisoners were being returned to closed conditions because they had broken prison rules, not because they presented an increased risk to the public. This was a particularly serious situation for prisoners with indeterminate sentences for public protection who were over tariff.

The prison has developed the CSIP policy to support men who previously would have been returned to closed conditions. The CSIP process involves a multidisciplinary meeting with the prisoners and the development of a risk reduction plan. While still evolving at Standford Hill, the Board feels it has been very successful. The policy is to be reviewed in September 2019. She is using the CSIP process to avoid an immediate return to closed conditions.

Adjudications are carried out to deal with all misdemeanours and IMB members attend these from time to time in a neutral capacity. Our focus is on ensuring that the proceedings are conducted fairly and in line with protocol.

	Adjudication	Dismissed	Remanded
April	25	5	3
May	28	4	10
June	43	11	6
July	30	4	2
August	41	9	2
September	25	3	1
October	30	15	5
November	35	12	2
December	48	8	0 Dealt with quickly
January	44	12	16
February	34 2 not proceeded with	11	3
March	34	10	0 Dealt with quickly
April	48	12	4

The largest number of recorded adjudications was in December 2018 and April 2019, with the lowest being April 2018 and September 2018.

The highest dismissal rate was in October 2018 and the lowest in September 2018.

January 2019 had the highest rate of remanded adjudications, with December 2018 and March being the lowest.

The safer custody meeting is to be held bi-monthly and includes several prisoner representatives who are encouraged to give their impressions of prison life and the conditions and treatment of prisoners. Their insights are helpful in framing prison policy on this issue. Among the external groups who are actively involved in this meeting is the Samaritans, which is concerned with the mental and emotional welfare of the prisoners.

5. Equality and fairness

Since the previous inspection report, which identified the concerns of some BAME men, there have been regular focus group meetings with the Governor and deputy governor. The biggest problem that was identified in the inspection report was the ability of BAME men to become fully involved in the working out scheme (WOS). We were concerned as a Board about the under-representation of BAME men progressing to WOS level 2.

To address this concern, the prison initially employed a BAME peer advisor whose primary responsibility was to connect with the group of BAME men and with employers. Subsequently, staff from the Working Out Scheme have conducted further focus groups to try to identify the key issues that appear to be barriers to employment. This is leading to the development of a new release on temporary licence (ROTL) policy, which took effect in late summer 2019. One element of the scheme will be to drop the insistence on a period of community service prior to employment, which was one of the major issues identified.

The prison regularly held social inclusion meetings, but has decided to separate that agenda into two separate meetings, which will now be held regularly. One will look at safer custody and the other will look in detail at equality issues under the supervision of a specially appointed equality manager. The Board regularly attended previous meetings and will be attending the revised meetings, looking closely at the issue of equality and diversity, which is a key concern of the board. The new approach to equality underlines its importance to the management in the prison and the realisation that specific adjustments need to be made despite the fact that the prison did not report or sense any serious incidents of racial tension. The equality team has an effective discrimination complaints procedure by means of a discrimination incident reporting form log, which is independently reviewed by an IMB. It is analysed and relevant information is used to inform action, in accordance with the Lammy Review, an independent review into the treatment of, and outcomes for black Asian and minority ethnic individuals in the criminal justice system (2017:p54).

The management also recognises that men from the same ethnic or cultural background do not have the same experiences or needs, either where health, social problems or accessibility are concerned. A long-standing forum gives men a safe space to raise concerns and discuss needs with the senior management of the prison.

Standford Hill is gaining an increasing population of people who identify themselves as Gypsy, Roma or Traveller. A forum has therefore been set up to tackle the treatment of and outcomes for this group, especially around education, to ensure they are as good as they can be and not just compliant with legal obligations.

Over the next year, the prison will be holding monthly focus groups, which will also look in detail at equality data, and there will be a programme of cultural events that reflect and celebrate diversity. The equality team will also include peer representatives. Our sense is that, while there are clear concerns among BAME prisoners about education and equal employment opportunities, the prison has been receptive to their concerns and proactive in addressing them.

The table below shows the percentage of BAME men engaged with the WOS and their progression:-

	Total no. of men engaged with the WOS	BAME men engaged with the WOS at stage 1 (%)	BAME men engaged with the WOS at stage 2 (%)
April	392	19	12
May	426	20	8
June	413	21	13
July	429	22	9
August	404	19	12
September	428	20	11
October	429	26	12.9
November	447	23	8
December	424	14.4	12.6
January	421	9.7	13.7
February	415	18.9	15.7
March	333	10.20	16.4

(Figures for August were not available)

Between December 2018 and March 2019, there was a gradual increase in the number of men progressing from stage 1 to stage 2.

BAME prisoners still feel a little disadvantaged where the WOS is concerned; there is a designated officer to address this issue.

The pastoral team is strongly embedded into the fabric and culture of Stanford Hill. The chaplain retains an active interest in all prison affairs and in addition to the regularly held services he attends all the major prison meetings. There is respect and co-operation between the chaplain and the Imam, who looks after the spiritual needs of the Muslim prisoners. At certain times of year, like Christmas or Ramadan, this co-operation works effectively to ensure that the festivals are marked appropriately. Men are able to apply for ROTL and extended licence times so that they can celebrate their respective religious festivals with their families.

6. Segregation/care and separation unit

Not applicable.

7. Accommodation (including communication)

Gardens/horticulture

The grounds of the prison are kept attractive and well maintained, employing in the region of 20 prisoners. Since the departure of Carillion, which appeared inefficient and inadequate, things have progressed and in the future prisoners will attain NVQs and thereby assistance in obtaining jobs on release. This will give a necessary impetus to this area of the prison and make jobs in this area a more interesting prospect for prisoners.

Food

As reported in our last annual report, meals are brought from HMP Swaleside so it is not freshly cooked. Whilst not appalling, the quality of the food could be much better.

A kitchen for Standford Hill would be a great step forward and could involve training in catering for prisoners and, as a result, more job creation.

Buildings

A and B wings are solid buildings. Cleaning is ongoing; deep cleaning appears to have been missed in the last few years and is playing catch up.

C wing is a prefabricated building which was meant to last five years about 20 years ago. Bits fall off from time to time and are reattached. Rats are a serious problem, nesting under the building and also entering the building. Staff report seeing about 200 large rats at night. Rentokil appear to have been defeated.

Visits

The visits hall is attractive and well maintained with a coffee bar also serving food. Visits are booked either online or by telephone and take place four days a week. Family days are also run. They are themed, well attended and immensely popular

Gym

About 100 prisoners a day spend time in the gym, morning, afternoon and evening. Two courses are run by staff to NVQ level with gym Instructors and lifeguards which are both necessary for the running of the gym. It is worth noting that neither course is in the staff's job description.

The gym serves the wider community, and various groups from the local community come into the prison, including a 69-90 age group. There is also a day centre for those with special needs.

8. Healthcare (including mental health and social care)

Healthcare is provided by Integrated Care 24 and Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust. We have found the staff in the healthcare department to be dedicated and conscientious and to provide a good service to prisoners, often in the light of quite forceful pressure applied by some prisoners to be seen quickly. A triage system operates for those who do not have an appointment and who feel they need to see a doctor or dentist.

The health centre is a prefabricated block which, although modern, is not soundproofed and staff would like a better security door to prevent prisoners getting into private areas of the centre. There is a concern, which we share, that the current facilities are not appropriate for prisoners who want to discuss their medical issues in privacy.

The department is open during normal working hours, and between 8pm and 8am prisoners are able to access under escort the services at the newly built Sheppey Community Hospital, which has facilities for treating accidents, emergencies and minor injuries and also provides ambulance services. Prisoners also have access to the NHS 111 emergency service. Dentistry and optometry are provided by external suppliers. All prescriptions are processed by the health providers.

If prisoners need to be transferred to hospital for treatment, the prison provides escorts and bed watches while they are there.

Looking at the different elements of the healthcare package, dentistry provides an appointment within six weeks (the agreed service parameter is eight weeks). Podiatry is taken care of by the local hospital and a consultant psychiatrist attends the prison for half a day a month to help those with health problems.

We were interested to see that the reduction in the number of concerns about healthcare, which we noted last year, has continued and there appears to be much more satisfaction with the service provided. Some prisoners suggested at a recent induction course that they are likely to see a doctor more quickly than people outside the prison because of the pressures on the NHS.

We are unable to show more detailed statistics (which are kept by the prison's medical services) because of medical confidentiality.

One prisoner died this year of cancer. He was very reclusive and opted to stay in prison long after he should have ideally been given palliative care in a special unit. This was a major concern for the healthcare team in Standford Hill, who were concerned that they could not give the right level of nursing care in an open prison environment, even where prisoners have individual cells.

9. Education and other purposeful activity

The provision of education of a high standard has always been regarded as a matter of great importance at Standford Hill to enable prisoners to prepare for release into the community with a good chance of avoiding reoffending.

To start everyone off on the right foot, each prisoner receives a detailed assessment and diagnostic test.

As soon as they have finished their initial induction, they complete a structured introductory course covering such items as health and safety, food hygiene, first aid and how to write a disclosure letter and CV when applying for a job. This is known as the Step to the Gate programme. At the end of the six days, they have examinations in each subject, which enable a tailored plan to be drawn up for each prisoner, which concentrates initially on their levels in English and mathematics. The attendance, retention and pass rate figures for these courses are high. The table below shows the Standford Hill results compared with the national benchmark in English and mathematics:

English

	Standford Hill	National benchmark
Basic E1	100%	80.40%
Basic E2	100%	83.27%
Basic E3	100%	80.20%
English level 1	95.77%	66.70%
English level 2	85.70%	65.80%

Mathematics

	Standford Hill	National benchmark
Basic E1	100%	84.30%
Basic E2	100%	86.80%
Basic E3	100%	84.30%
Maths level 1	70.76%	62.50%
Maths level 2	100%	59.30%

These introductory courses are followed by feedback, voluntary engagement meetings and quiz nights, which are extremely well supported.

Later, prisoners have the opportunity to take more job-orientated courses, such as electrician training, plumbing and IT, which are very popular. Others who are not targeting the employment market for reasons such as age or mental health issues can attend art or music classes.

The success of the art classes is illustrated by the outstanding results achieved by the art department in 2018 – 2019. In August 2018, 121 submissions were made to the Koestler awards, of which 43 received an award; nine were selected for an exhibition at

the South Bank Centre in London, In early 2019, 21 artworks from Stanford Hill were selected for exhibition at the Turner Contemporary Gallery in Margate.

The education department up to March 2019 had been run for some years by The Manchester College, later rebranded as Novus. However, it became known that, due to a Ministry of Justice decision at a national level, the process for tendering for these contracts and selecting the organisations to run education departments would change with effect from April 2019. This became known to staff and prisoners, with unfortunate consequences for morale due to the uncertainty of future employment for individuals and concerns that they might not be able to continue with courses. It is not appropriate to expand on this because most of the consequent problems only became apparent after 1 April, after the period covered by this report.

10. Work, vocational training and employment

Category D open prisons are the last stage in the journey through prison for many prisoners. They are generally approaching the end of their sentences, although around 20% are life sentenced prisoners and 8% are indeterminate sentenced prisoners.

As a category D prison, there is, rightly, a particularly strong focus on preparing prisoners for life outside. Without work on release the possibility of leading a useful and productive life is diminished. The IMB congratulates the management of the prison on the efforts put into this key area. The great majority of the prisoners are involved in meaningful activity.

The recent changes to ROTL are to be welcomed. This should mean that more prisoners will be employed more quickly. As the changes have only just been introduced, we shall be able to report next year on whether this has turned out to be the case.

However, returning to the world outside prison also means that prisoners are aware of their own responsibilities; these will be crucial on release if they are to build meaningful futures. Stanford Hill provides the tools and support to succeed, but insists on commitment and dedication to making the most of the opportunities offered. To repeat what the prison's incentives and earned privileges policy states:

‘Our men are expected to demonstrate a commitment to their rehabilitation, engage in purposeful activity (for example attend work and/or education and recovery focused interventions and services), reduce their risk of reoffending and be well behaved.’ This requirement is actively managed.

The first stage of activity is often through education (see separate section) or via general prison work. Internal prison work is allocated and is undertaken in association with education courses. The key areas of prison work are in the print shop, recycling, library, wing cleaning, peer support, gym orderly work, gardening and prison works. Work is allocated after an offender management unit (OMU) risk board is held, and in general allocations take place on a timely basis after the risk board.

Prisoners are then able to progress to training and work opportunities that are attuned to the requirements of the world outside. This is provided by the WOS, a dedicated service provided by prison staff with support by prisoners.

Excluding internal prison work, a snapshot of the figures as at 10 April 2019 shows the following levels of engagement:-

Working Out scheme

Community jobs	134
Stage 1 training	38
External education	9
Training for paid work	11
Paid work	38
Awaiting community jobs	11
Awaiting placements	75
Total WOS	215

Vocational training

Electrical	23
Job club	16
IT/CISCO	21
Plumbing	26
Hospitality	6
Total vocational training	92

This is a total of 307 prisoners involved in the WOS and vocational training. Out of a possible prison population of 464 this represents 66% who are directly involved in vocational training and the WOS, an increase from 62% last year.

Other prisoners are involved in prison work and education. As a result of all these different initiatives, the great majority of prisoners are involved in purposeful activity.

Vocational training is constantly reviewed to ensure that the training offered can equip prisoners with skills that can give them a good chance of obtaining employment on release. Electrical, plumbing and IT training have been offered for some time and these are all areas where job opportunities exist. Hospitality is now also offered, as this is a major area of employment. Qualifications up to level 3 (industry level) are offered, providing skills that are recognised in the workplace.

The WOS provides skills training and progression through outside community jobs and paid work in the community.

It is up to the prisoners to find their own work placements outside the prison. They are provided with support to achieve this, but it is clearly their responsibility. Despite the relative geographical isolation of the prison, Standford Hill has good links with a number of potential employers and many prisoners work in those organisations. The prison is continually looking for new employers to participate in the scheme. Prisoners can work for other organisations, but only after the organisation has been thoroughly checked. If the opportunity is not suitable, authorisation will not be given.

A wide range of work is carried out, from manual to skilled and higher level roles.

In addition to the other wings, C wing is occupied purely by prisoners working out, who leave to work and return after work. This considerable relative freedom is a privilege that represents a transition to work on release from prison.

A sign of the success of the WOS is that in 2018 54% of the prisoners were employed on release. The prison has an objective of a 60% rate of employment on release.

The prison also attempts to monitor the rate of reoffending. It measures those who were released in the previous three years and from prison data it is able to identify those who have returned to prison. As at November 2018, of the rate of return to prison was 4.7%, down from 9.7% in November 2017. This is not an absolute measure of reoffending, but is nevertheless a significant achievement.

The considerable effort that the prison puts into the development of skills and supporting those seeking work is to be commended. It is another example of the fact that Stanford Hill is a well-run prison.

11. Resettlement preparation

There are six category D prisons in the UK. They run along very different lines to other prisons and the focus in their annual reports should be on very different issues to prisons in other categories. Category D prisons are defined as prisons that have minimal security and allow eligible prisoners to spend most of their day away from the prison on licence to carry out work or education or for other resettlement purposes. Open prisons only house prisoners who have been risk-assessed and deemed suitable for open conditions.

The willingness to give a degree of latitude and trust to convicted prisoners is an important aspect of the prison system and it is behind the ethos at Stanford Hill. There is sometimes a concern among the general public that convicted prisoners, many of them lifers or prisoners given very long sentences, can interact with the public or leave the geographical confines of the prison before the end of their sentences.

Staff at Stanford Hill would refute this and would point to the success of their work over the last few years as evidence that they have developed a formula that is working.

The reoffending rate is strikingly low. Given this massive disparity between the Stanford Hill figure and the national average, it is clear that the approach at Stanford Hill bears considerable scrutiny. The key element of Stanford Hill's strategy is trying to ensure that prisoners are released with a place to live and a job, which enables them to support themselves financially. Allied to this is significant preparation for release undertaken in the prison, where there is a strong emphasis on providing education that will equip them with life and employment skills that will stand them in good stead when they leave prison.

The preparation for life after prison which takes place at Standford Hillis carefully thought out and is geared to helping prisoners develop a work ethic, which will facilitate a fresh start in their lives.

Qualifications

There is a strong emphasis on enabling prisoners to gain relevant qualifications and skills that provide access to a range of opportunities for prisoners. Standford Hill works in partnership with the East Kent College IntoWork scheme, which, with community and voluntary groups across East Kent, provides accessible and flexible opportunities for individuals, families and households to engage in formal and informal learning within their communities. As these qualifications are obtained, prisoners can often see a new path for the first time, which enables them to navigate the considerable challenges they face on release.

Probation

Staff now work under a dedicated senior probation officer, having previously shared with another prison. The workload is enormous with a caseload of over 40 per officer and staff are, in the Board's view, overstretched.

The work is not helped by the 'irredeemably flawed' (Chief Inspector of Probation) nature of outside probation. MPs, after investigation, have said it is 'underfunded, fragile and lacking the confidence of the courts.' The annual reports of the prison have frequently commented on this matter.

Occupation

It is vital that if a prisoner is going to reintegrate into society after leaving prison he must have a job to go to as part of the framework he will need to build a stable and positive lifestyle. The financial situation of many Standford Hill prisoners prior to release is unusual in that rather than being supported by their families, they can contribute to the family budget from inside prison before release and can build on this financial foundation upon their release.

Residence

All prisoners need suitable and adequate accommodation to give them a home base, which will in turn provide them with security and self-respect. This aspect of the work at Standford Hill is key to the Resettlement Strategy and everyone leaving the prison goes to stable accommodation.

Challenges

There are many elements that combine to make it hard for prisoners to settle into the community on release.

Antecedents – they have strong criminal connections, which they find hard to shake off. Peer pressure is extremely difficult to resist and requires willpower and resilience.

Habits – their lives have often been lived very differently before they were imprisoned and it is easy to slip back into the same mind-set on release.

Education – many prisoners have had disrupted, inadequate or unsatisfactory educational experiences and this has left them without the skills they need to forge a career after prison.

Confidence – it is almost inevitable that, after a long spell in prison, prisoners will lack the social confidence to develop a satisfactory career path after release without support and guidance.

Hope – prisoners must bring a positive mind-set to their post-prison lives and see a way ahead that they can believe in. Providing this is a strong part of the work that is done at Stanford Hill.

Respect – this is a key aspect of post-prison life. Prisoners need to feel respected and accepted. Prison preparation, including positive interaction with the IMB at induction and during their stay in the prison, is an important part of this.

HMP/YOI Stanford Hill works with a number of partners to provide training and employment that helps prisoners to gain self-respect, the discipline of employment and above all a sense that they have a future that will not inevitably be behind prison bars.

C The work of the Independent Monitoring Board

The IMB at Standford Hill meets on the second Wednesday of each month to receive a monthly report from the governor and to discuss the operation of the Board and our observations over the previous month concerning the prison. IMB members also raise their concerns with the governor or ask questions and we hear regularly from senior officers in the prison about things such as the WOS, measures to reduce reoffending, industries and activities within the prison and diversity. This supplements the information we pick up at the regular meetings within the prison, which IMB members try to attend. These include reducing reoffending, social inclusion, BAME forum, drug strategy and finance meetings. We try to ensure that members attend a range of meetings to give them a widespread view of the activity within the prison and to meet the leading officers.

Our chair strives to attend the area meeting with the IMBs at other prisons in the area to discuss issues of general concern and to look at common challenges.

We have recently recruited two new members and are keen to ensure that they are actively mentored by accompanying members on different days, attend a range of prison meetings and have access to more experienced members of the Board to ask questions and observe different approaches to carrying out their duties. We have organised our timetable so that at least one IMB member visits the prison on each weekday and one member tries to visit occasionally at weekends. Members record their observations in a diary, which is maintained in the IMB office. This office is always locked when not in use.

Induction

The IMB plays an active role in the induction process in the prison. We meet new prisoners in the education block every Thursday after lunch to explain the role of the IMB, how we may be able to help them during their stay and to answer any questions or concerns they may have. The informality of the session provides the IMB with a very good opportunity to interact with the prisoners and to give them an understanding not only of what the IMB does but why the members do it. This latter aspect gives them an appreciation of the value of the IMB and increases their willingness to approach us for help. We have significantly improved the induction process in recent times and average attendance rates have increased.

Evening surgery

We hold an evening surgery once a month in the chapel to allow prisoners who are not in the prison during normal working hours to meet with the IMB. It is also an opportunity for some prisoners to discuss issues at greater length or in greater privacy than might be the case normally. Prisoners seem to find the facility useful and appreciate the opportunity to interact in this way.

Board statistics	
Recommended complement of Board members	10
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	8
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	9 (one on sabbatical)
Total number of visits to the establishment	374
Total number of segregation reviews attended	N/A

D Applications

Code	Subject	Current reporting year	Previous reporting year
A	Accommodation including laundry, clothing, ablutions	4	0
B	Discipline including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	5	3
C	Equality	0	3
D	Purposeful activity including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	5	1
E1	Letters, visits, phones, public protection restrictions	0	0
E2	Finance including pay, private monies, spends	1	8
F	Food and kitchens	0	0
G	Health including physical, mental, social care	6	11
H1	Property within this establishment	4	6
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	6	14
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	1	1
I	Sentence management including home detention curfew, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	18	14
J	Staff/prisoner concerns including bullying	2	2
K	Transfers	0	0
	Total number of IMB applications	51	63