



**HMP
East Sutton Park**

Independent Monitoring Board

Annual Report

1 November 2018 to 31 October 2019

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CONTENTS

Section	Page No.
1 Statutory role	3
2 Executive summary	3
2.1 Main judgements	3
2.1.1 Are the prisoners treated fairly?	3
2.1.2 Are the prisoners treated humanely?	3
2.1.3 Are the prisoners prepared well for release?	3
2.2 Main areas for development	4
2.2.1 To the minister	4
2.2.2 To the Prison Service	4
2.2.3 To the governor	5
2.2.4 Improvements	5
3 Description of the prison	5
3.1 Main role	
3.2 Living accommodation	5
3.3 Training facilities	6
3.4 Providers of main services	6
4 Evidence sections	6
4.1 Safety	6
4.2 Equality and inclusion	7
4.3 Reception and property	8
4.4 Accommodation	8
4.5 Laundry	9
4.6 Healthcare	9
4.7 Education, learning and skills	10
4.8 Care and separation	12
4.9 Work, vocational training and employment	12
4.10 Resettlement	15
5 The work of the IMB	16
5.1 Operation	16
5.2 Board statistics	16
6 Applications to the IMB	16
Glossary	17

1 STATUTORY ROLE

The Prison Act 1952 and the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 require every prison and immigration removal centre 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:

- 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
- inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority as it judges appropriate, any concern it has
- 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

This report presents the findings of the Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) at HMP/YOI East Sutton Park for the period 1 November 2018 to 31 October 2019. 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 prisoners.

2.1 Main judgements

It is the Board's overall judgement that the prison is well run, with prisoners, for the most part, enjoying a good relationship with staff.

2.1.1 Are the prisoners treated fairly?

The prisoners are treated fairly, with an efficient personal officer scheme operating. They are encouraged by staff to make the most of their time at the prison.

2.1.2 Are the prisoners treated humanely?

Prisoners are treated with great consideration, in a disciplined environment. Staff offer support and encouragement as prisoners prepare for release into the community.

2.1.3 Are the prisoners prepared well for release?

Generally, prisoners are prepared well for release. Few leave without accommodation to go to, and some receive paid work with the employer with whom they have worked during release on temporary licence (ROTL). However, some prisoners arrive with very little time to serve and thus there is insufficient time to prepare them properly for release. Those arriving with several months to serve undertake a structured programme with an emphasis on improving education, obtaining accommodation and gaining employment. They are encouraged to take responsibility for their sentence plans, which are discussed and agreed at sentence planning boards within two or three weeks of arrival.

2.2 Main areas for development

2.2.1 To the minister

Ensure that the Prison Service brings the refurbished flats on site into operation, thus enhancing the prospects of successful resettlement for the prisoners and allowing a further 20 prisoners to be transferred to open conditions.

Urge/direct the Prison Service to ensure that prisoners coming to the establishment have enough time left to serve, so that the greatest benefit in resettlement can be achieved and will therefore represent value for money.

Ensure that there is an increase in the amount of approved premises/supported accommodation in south east England for prisoners on release.

Ensure that the impact of the new ROTL policy on the prison is reviewed by the Prison Service.

2.2.2 To the Prison Service

Use the flats, refurbished at a cost of over £250,000, thus allowing up to 16 prisoners to live semi-independently in preparation for release.

Ensure that prisoners transferring to the establishment have enough time left to serve, in order to gain the maximum benefit from their stay.

Ensure that women's closed establishments progress prisoners to come to the establishment who are suitable for the resettlement regime.

Review the impact of the new ROTL policy on prisoner worker levels in the prison, such as in the kitchens, and farms and gardens.

Review the processes relating to the transfer of prisoner property between establishments, particularly between private and public sector prisons.

2.2.3 To the Governor

Ensure that the new ROTL policy is not having an adverse impact on prisoners' attendance levels at work in areas such as in farms and gardens.

Ensure that the use of the polytunnels is maximised.

Ensure that all laundry facilities function reliably.

2.2.4 Improvements

Attendance by prison staff at the health commissioner's meetings has improved.

The Board has been advised more regularly when adjudications, special circumstances risk boards (SCRBs) and assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) reviews are to be held.

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

3.1 Main role

HMP East Sutton Park is an open prison for 101 women and young adult women, located six miles from Maidstone, in Kent. The main house is a Grade 2 listed Jacobean mansion, set in 84 acres of ground. In 1954, the first and only open borstal for girls was established at East Sutton Park. The establishment is the only open prison for women in the south of England. Its aim is to prepare prisoners, in a structured manner, for release into the community. On arrival, prisoners are encouraged to take responsibility for their sentence plans and their progression through education, projects and voluntary work, to outside paid employment.

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

The prison shares a Governor with HMP Downview, although there have been recent changes because of demands at Downview which have resulted in the deputy governor taking the role of acting head of site at East Sutton Park.

3.2 Living accommodation

Accommodation is mainly in double or three-person bedrooms but there are also two dormitories. Showers are in two blocks. There is a communal dining room and a large room with comfortable furniture for relaxation and meetings.

In addition, there is the potential to use the refurbished flats, which would enable up to 16 prisoners to live semi-independently prior to release.

3.3 Training facilities

In addition to the education department, there are opportunities to gain higher qualifications such as national vocational qualifications (NVQs) to level 3 in various areas – for example, the kitchen, and farms and gardens, as well as in the well-appointed gym.

3.4 Providers of main services

The main service providers are:

- Healthcare – Oxleas
- Mental health – In-reach
- Drug programmes – The Forward Trust
- Family support – Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT)
- Education – Weston College
- Employment advice – Ixion

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

4 EVIDENCE SECTIONS

4.1 Safety

All the prisoners are transferred from closed prisons, having been risk assessed as suitable for open conditions. Of late, there have been one or two arriving with very short sentences to complete, which means that the resettlement regime at the establishment is unsuitable, as it has little time to have any impact for the prisoner.

Safer custody meetings are held bi-monthly and have been monitored by the Board. Courses such as Becoming Trauma Informed have been held for staff, with a shorter course, held on Saturday mornings, for prisoners. Staff invariably seem aware of difficult times for prisoners, such as a family death or illness, or issues surrounding their children; they support them appropriately and have made them aware of the Listeners.

The Board is now informed when ACCT reviews are to take place. Only a few ACCT documents have been opened during the reporting year and regular reviews are held. They are usually well conducted, demonstrating a good level of care. One criticism by the Board was that the record is held in Centre Office office and does not travel with the prisoner during the day. New ACCT forms were discussed at an equality meeting and the changes noted. Staff will be trained on the new procedure.

Most of the women state that they feel safe for most of the time. However, earlier in the year a survey by the prison found, for the first time, that some did not feel safe in their rooms. Staff felt that this was due to the presence of certain prisoners. Once they had left the prison, the problem was resolved. It was also felt that because the format of the survey had been based on a national model, it was not well suited to a women's open prison. The next time a survey is carried out, it should reflect the target participants. During the

reporting year, there have been occasional complaints of bullying, which have usually been dealt with by mediation by staff.

There has been no use of force in the reporting year. There has also been little violence or aggressive behaviour, but when this occurs it is dealt with through a combination of mediation, adjudication and incentives and earned privileges (IEP) procedures.

Testing for drugs is on a risk-based system, operating alongside the mandatory drug testing programme. There have been few occasions when these tests have been positive for anything other than prescription drugs. Alcohol testing is regularly carried out, and more intensively in the run-up to Christmas and the New Year.

4.2 Equality and inclusion

Meetings are held bi-monthly to review the position and to keep staff informed. They are attended by staff representatives from various departments, and prisoner representatives are also present for part of the meeting and are encouraged to contribute. The equality policy has been published during the reporting year.

The number of Listeners has fluctuated throughout the year as prisoners have been released. The number is regularly reviewed, and their names are published; most new Listeners have been trained at other establishments before their arrival at East Sutton Park.

The Board was concerned about a named member of staff allegedly bullying some of the prisoners. This was taken seriously by the Governor, and the matter has been dealt with in accordance with staff procedures.

During this reporting year, concerns were raised about prisoners from the Traveller community, with various discussions being held to try to encourage a better understanding of their needs. This included a special Travellers meal, and a meeting helped other prisoners to have a better understanding of the problems faced by the Traveller community, particularly in prison.

Black History Month was successfully celebrated, with a good display of information for all prisoners. During the reporting year, celebrations were also held to mark festivals in relation to all religions. This usually included a meal appropriate to the occasion.

Earlier in the year, some prisoners over the age of 50 complained that they had found it difficult to obtain work outside the prison. Initially it was thought this might be because of a bias by prospective employers. However, when the next employment fair was held, staff found that less than 50% of those in that age range attended. It was concluded that an action plan should be initiated. It was felt that anyone who was reluctant to work might not be suitable for the regime at East Sutton Park.

Although there had been no deaths at East Sutton Park in recent years, the prison accepted that the recommendations from the most recent Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons report should be implemented.

Staff are undergoing challenge, support and intervention plan training, although this process has not been used at the prison.

External speakers addressed the prisoners during the reporting year, including the local MP for Maidstone. Other topics that have been covered include 'Breast Awareness'.

4.3 Reception and property

Most women arrive at East Sutton Park from other prisons in the South-East after asking to be transferred there. The reception process is thorough, well documented and caters well for the needs of arriving prisoners, with meals being set aside for late arrivals and appointments made with healthcare staff either on the day of arrival or as soon as possible afterwards. Induction orderlies change regularly as these prisoners progress towards release, and there have been times when no orderly has been in post, which has meant that the quality of inductions has been patchy.

Prisoners' property within the establishment is well managed, with staff treating it with care and pragmatism. More problematic, however, is the transfer of property, including money, from other establishments. Although there have been only a few applications on this matter to the Board, the impact on prisoners of not having their belongings, which are sometimes personal or highly confidential, can be significant. Not having access to funds also has a detrimental impact on prisoners' settling in at the establishment.

4.4 Accommodation

There are double and three-person bedrooms, and two dormitories each housing six to seven women. Priority for double rooms is given to prisoners who go out to paid work. Some find sharing a room difficult at first but usually, after a short time, they adjust.

During the last reporting year, 2017/18, flats, previously staff accommodation, were refurbished, at a cost of around £250,000, with the intention that prisoners would occupy them and live semi-independently in preparation for release. It would give them, particularly those who had served long sentences, the opportunity to get used to living independently, albeit subject to some supervision. It is still a great disappointment to prisoners, staff and the Board that the Prison Service decided not to finance the extra staff needed for this, citing overcapacity in the estate. The Prison Service's decision makes a mockery of its stated policy of helping to resettle prisoners back into society, and it is hoped that it will reconsider its decision and get the flats into service as a matter of urgency.

There is a large room in the main house with comfortable furniture, for relaxation and holding meetings.

The accommodation has been maintained in a reasonable state of cleanliness. Showers broke down in summer 2019, when they were particularly needed, but they have all now been repaired. A new shower for disabled prisoners is being built.

A large number of favourable comments have been made about the food provided, both in the food comments book and when talking to the prisoners. Portion control of items on the menu is good, and they rarely, if ever, run out. Menus are changed regularly. Hygiene standards are well maintained in the kitchen and serving areas, with all staff in 'whites', and gloves are used when handling food. There is an appropriate range of work available in the kitchen, with regular rotas. All kitchen workers work four days during the week and one at weekends, equating to 10 sessions. The work develops skills to maximise employability on release, such as basic catering skills. Several women take NVQs in catering, in conjunction with the education department, and often use their skills to prepare lunches and teas for visitors as part of their training. The prison works hard to obtain employment for prisoners on release, aiming for employers with whom prisoners can transfer to their local branch or store on release.

4.5 Laundry

The prison has a large laundry, with ample facilities for washing and drying clothes and other items. It is of concern to the Board that, often, one or more machines are not functioning and there is frequently no defined timescale for their repair, leading to extensive delays.

4.6 Healthcare

Healthcare services are available equally to all prisoners, with medical assessment within 24 hours of reception. Women are regularly reminded of the healthcare hours at sentence planning boards because the service is only available until 4pm during the week. External dentist and optician appointments are arranged by special purpose licence (SPL). Outside hospital appointments take place under SPL or other ROTL applications.

When necessary, prisoners are referred in a timely fashion. If there is an emergency at the weekend or in the evening, the prison rings 111/999 as necessary. The observation book shows regular evidence of quick and sensitive management of out-of-hours care for the prisoners.

The medical services are provided in suitable accommodation, in a quiet, self-contained unit. Prisoners are treated with courtesy and appropriate privacy. During the reporting year, the unit introduced a bell system to gain entry for appointments.

Prisoners with mental health problems have regular professional care and support, and are suitably treated in the establishment, or transferred out within a reasonable time limit. In-reach provides mental health services. Psychological support services are generally available via the GP.

Good efforts are made to promote the physical and mental health of prisoners, such as the use of various health and gym options in the excellent prison gym.

The relationships between the prison, and the health providers and NHS commissioners have improved by attendance at all the relevant meetings in the last year. The prisoners

are generally positive about the standard of care and treatment they receive, and clear about the way that they can complain if necessary.

4.7 Education, learning and skills

The education department, previously operated by Novus, was taken over by Weston College in April 2019.

On arrival at the establishment, prisoners attend a mandatory Pathways course, which sets the scene for prisoners to take ownership of their sentence plan. There are seven elements to the course: accommodation; education, training and employment; drugs and alcohol; mental and physical health; finance and debt; relationships; and attitudes, thinking and behaviour.

The course is pastoral, rather than academic, so there is no formal assessment. Feedback from prisoners and teachers, however, is mostly positive because the main aim of the course is to prepare for life in the community.

The table below shows the number of attendees and percentage success rate across the previous three years, in English, mathematics and information and communications technology (ICT).

Academic Year	Number of attendees 2016/17	% success	Number of attendees 2017/18	% success	Number of attendees 2018/19 (up to 31/03/19)	% success Many students still learning	Number of attendees from 01/04/19 to 12/12/19
English level 1	17	89	23	100	14	50	11
English level 2	52	85	41	77	10	60	23
Mathematics level 1	33	82	24	100	24	100	24
Mathematics level 2	49	83	36	75	36	75	18

ICT level 1	24	100	64	93	27	84	39
ICT level 2	5		19	100	16	57	18

A major change for education delivery nationally has been the reform of functional skills. From September 2019, the assessment criteria have changed for English and mathematics. Most significant in mathematics is that there are now two exam papers, one of which will contain calculus. Currently, there are still prisoners on the old scheme, with all new prisoners following the new scheme.

Several initiatives have been developed that extend the prisoners' cultural education experience. For example:

- There is a monthly book club, attended regularly by prisoners.
- The prison has hosted visiting authors, such as Tracey Chevalier and Annie Holden.
- A poetry workshop resulted in the publication of a book of poems, written by prisoners for International Women's Day 2018.
- The library is a nurturing place, where prisoners can read several daily newspapers and make use of two computers, which are connected to the prison intranet only.
- The chaplaincy runs several courses, such as: Shine, Living with Loss, and Understanding Forgiveness.
- The Freedom Programme, run by trained members of the prison staff, is into its second year of delivery and has been developed to help prisoners recognise the triggers for domestic violence.

Owing to staff changes, it has not been possible to continue running the Certificate of Professional Butchery course in this reporting year. This is disappointing because those who worked in the butchery enjoyed excellent skills development and job satisfaction.

During this reporting year, probably the most significant change, which is having an impact across the overall running of the prison, is the introduction of the new ROTL policy. In the education, learning and skills department, this now means that prisoners have potentially less time 'behind the gate' to complete much-needed courses, which have often been identified at their sentence planning board. Although everyone, including the prisoner, recognises that they would benefit from achieving or improving in certain core subjects, the opportunity for going out of the prison and working can sometimes appear more important to the individual than long-term goals and planning for the future.

The introduction of a local policy, devised by prison managers, has proved to be very beneficial to prisoners; new prisoners remain within the confines of the establishment from arrival for the first 8–12 weeks. This period before ROTL is granted gives space to the prisoners, so that they can adjust from being in closed conditions, attend the Pathways course and attend their sentence planning board. They can also begin, and in some cases complete, any educational needs before going out to paid work.

Although the new policy brings challenges in trying to ensure that prisoners complete longer courses, the education department has found that, despite classroom efficiency dropping at times, courses are still being completed, and exams passed. Wherever possible, the prison has supported education, which is evident in the data that remains well above the national benchmark for success.

It is currently too early to make a judgement on the impact of the new ROTL policy on education. Some courses have been adapted to run partly in the community, and an extra ICT evening class has been introduced, to support prisoners who work during the day. Attendance at evening classes varies. It has been noticed that, with more prisoners out during the day, they are tired on their return to the establishment and often just want to sit quietly in the main house in the evenings. Classes are still interrupted by internal appointments (eg healthcare) during the day, although less so in the last few months of the reporting year.

The education manager has been working on progression by looking at each prisoner on their arrival at East Sutton Park and plotting their journey, from initial assessment of their mathematics and English, to 'where they are now' and working out in the community. This is an exciting piece of work that is proving extremely useful for resettlement meetings, and showing the impact of what is being delivered in the classroom.

4.8 Care and separation

The prison does not have a unit for segregating prisoners. If necessary, an SCRB is held, which may lead to a prisoner being returned to closed conditions. There have been 104 SCRBs in the reporting period, of which 14 resulted in a return to closed conditions (two of which were for the prisoners' safety/wellbeing). In determining the number of prisoners for whom there was no further action, the prison has taken a broad approach to the 'no further action' definition, in that there was no adverse outcome to the prisoner albeit that supportive or enhanced monitoring measures may have been put in place. On this basis, it identified that 34 SCRBs resulted in no further action; the remainder (56) resulted in a restriction or suspension of ROTL; a reinstatement of previously suspended ROTL or the removal/review of the restrictions; or were for circumstances unrelated to adverse developments – for example, reviewing risks to allow ROTL for a medical or compassionate SPL where a risk board had not been held.

4.9 Work, vocational training and employment

All of the prisoners 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 has worked in some capacity.

The learning, skills and employment team has excellent links with outside employers, as listed below:

- The prison hosts regular employment fairs.
- Mock interviews have been held as preparation for work.

- Their customer service training team has worked at the prison to help with the NVQ level 2 course in this subject.
- The customer service and catering courses have become less classroom-based because the tutor goes into the community to appraise and assess prisoners' work.

Longer courses meeting the employment needs of prisoners include catering, customer service, hospitality, hair and beauty, and ICT.

Short courses are useful to prisoners who are at the prison for a few weeks, or possibly one or two months. These include barista level 2; food hygiene level 2; assertiveness and decision-making, budgeting and money management; presenting well; mentoring; independent living such as cooking in a domestic kitchen; office skills; and Steps to the Gate, which provides opportunities for prisoners to build their CV.

The table below shows the number of attendees and their percentage success rate in vocational subjects.

Academic year	2016/17	% success	2017/18	% success	2018/19 up to 31/03/19	% success	From 01/04/19
Barista level 2	Not available	Not available			15	100	
Health & Safety in the Workplace level 2	32	88	39	74	13	92	Course no longer running
Food Hygiene level 2	10	100	30	97	18	100	18-100%
Academic year	2016/17	% success	2017/18	% success	2018/19 up to 31/03/19	% success	From 01/04/19
Mentoring level 2	7	100	9	88	6	80	7-100%
Business Start-up	15	36	14	98	N/A		10-100%
Cooking in a	4	100	18	100	10	100	8-100%

Domestic Kitchen							
Budgeting and Money Management	35	100	32	100	16	100	21-100%
Customer Service level 1	N/A		N/A		17	94	28-100%
Customer Service level 2	6	100	6	50	N/A		9 Complete Feb 2020
Assertiveness/ Decision-making	84	100	92	100	39	100	42-100%
Self-assessment Pathways	148	100	145	100	68	100	158 Ongoing
Family Learning	10	100	N/A		11	100	7-100%
Beauty Therapy	23	100	N/A				7-18%
Presenting Well	19	100	15	100	18	100	21-100%
Steps to the Gate	21	100	31	100	21	100	21-100%
Food Production	N/A		19	65	11	Ongoing	10 Ongoing

Office Skills	N/A		N/A		5	100	6–100%
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Work completed by the education manager and others has helped to identify gaps in the curriculum, and has been followed up with two prisoner voice meetings. Eighty-six per cent of the prison population responded to a survey, which was completed over a period of a week. The results were put up on a 'you said, we did' feedback in the education department. Over the coming months, any changes will be identified and put into place.

In addition, staff have developed additional (unaccredited) courses that add to the prisoner's skill set – for example, how to bleed a radiator; how to read the gas and electricity meter; developing, and budgeting for, healthy menus; and cooking in a domestic kitchen. These have proved instructive, and feedback from the monthly prisoner focus group has been very positive.

The farm, with an increase in the number of polytunnels, and the gardens are a substantial source of employment at the prison. The changing staffing levels this reporting year have meant that the polytunnels and gardens have not been kept as pristine as in the past, and not utilised to their full capacity. The prison has lost two long-established staff with considerable expertise this year, and this has had an impact on NVQs in butchery and horticulture. Currently, the prison is not back up to its full quota of paid full-time staff, and this has had a direct impact on the work of the farm and gardens. The prisoners, as a resource, have had a variable impact during this reporting year due to the new ROTL policy. Farms and gardens need to maintain an 80% employment rate to run efficiently and effectively, but currently this is running at 60%.

Vocational training is also provided in the gym, with three prisoners achieving at least a level 2 NVQ in gym-based exercise, leading to more advanced personal training qualifications. One of these prisoners has secured work experience in a gym in the community. Those with such qualifications are entrusted to open the prison gym and run various classes. An excellent selection of classes is offered, including yoga, cardiovascular work-outs and sessions specifically for the over-50s. Unfortunately, as with the farms and gardens, there has been a shortage of staff, resulting in only one PE instructor working at the prison, so that the gym has not been open as often as the prisoners would have liked. When the gym is open, many prisoners use these facilities.

4.10 Resettlement

The focus has been on the implementation of the new ROTL policy, the drafting of the local policy and moving existing prisoners across to the new policy. Prisoners have arrived at the establishment with the expectation that ROTL will be immediately available. Consideration has to be given to allowing the prisoners to settle into open conditions and also to cover the tasks in the main house, such as cleaning and the kitchen. Now that the policy is settling down, there has been a marked increase in the number of prisoners going into paid employment. In July 2019, for example, 20 prisoners went to

A	Accommodation	0	2	
B	Adjudication	2	0	
C	Equality/diversity/religion	2	2	
D	Education/training/employment	0	0	
E1	Family/visits	2	2	
E2	Finance/pay	0	0	
F	Food/kitchen		0	0
G	Health related		2	0
H1	Property (within current establishment)	0	1	
H2	Property (other prison/transfer)	6	7	
H3	Canteen/facilities/catalogue/Argos		0	0
I	Sentence related, incl. ROTL/parole/recat.		1	8
J	Staff/prisoner related, incl. bullying		4	1
K	Transfers	0	0	
L	Miscellaneous		2	3
Total number of applications			21	26

GLOSSARY

ACCT	assessment, care in custody and teamwork
BME	black and minority ethnic
CSIP	challenge, support and intervention plan
DIRF	discrimination incident report form
HDC	home detention curfew
IEP	incentives and earned privileges
NVQ	national vocational qualification
OMU	offender management unit
PACT	Prison Advice and Care Trust
ROTL	release on temporary licence
SCRB	special circumstances risk board

Chair of HMP East Sutton Park IMB Board
Peter Judges
December 2019

