



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

**For reporting year
APRIL 2019 – MARCH 2020**

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Introductory sections 1 - 3

1. Statutory role of the IMB

The Prison Act 1952 requires every prison to be monitored by an independent Board, appointed by the Secretary of State from members of the community in which the prison is situated.

Under the National Monitoring Framework agreed with ministers, the Board is required 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 authority has been delegated 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.

The Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT) is an international human rights treaty designed to strengthen protection for people deprived of their liberty. The protocol recognises that such people are particularly vulnerable and aims to prevent their ill-treatment through establishing a system of visits or inspections to all places of detention. OPCAT requires that states designate a National Preventive Mechanism to carry out visits to places of detention, to monitor the treatment of and conditions for detainees, and to make recommendations for the prevention of ill-treatment. The Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) is part of the United Kingdom's National Preventive Mechanism.

2. Description of the establishment

HMP/YOI 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, 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, and block B more established prisoners; most of the occupants of block C work outside the prison and return there to sleep. Their working 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 cell block, which gives prisoners the option to cook and prepare their own food.

The main priority for the establishment is the resettlement of prisoners and enabling them to avoid reoffending on release.

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3.1 Background to the report

As a Board, we have a strong sense that over the past year HMP/YOI Standford Hill has been a very well-run prison. Morale is good among prisoners and staff in circumstances that have, particularly recently, been stressful. The positive report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons last year underlined that the regime was generally a good one and that there was a strong and successful emphasis on rehabilitation. In our liaison with prisoners, there are occasional minor concerns about the prison regime in relation to the style of roll call and the confiscation of X-boxes, but the majority value the culture of the prison and the opportunity they have to reintegrate into society after release. We are aware of a strong, joint sense of purpose among prison staff, driven by a well-organised and determined Governor who communicates effectively with staff and prisoners and who is also always available to the Board.

We mentioned last year that not every prisoner is able to adapt to conditions in an open prison, and this situation is often exacerbated by the length of time spent in a closed environment. This is a more general observation than one that is particularly directed towards Standford Hill.

The establishment continues to be handicapped by the lack of its own kitchen facilities, which restricts further development of an otherwise very expandable category D prison.

We are also supportive of the Governor's desire to introduce an internet room. This is a very practical prerequisite for any establishment looking to prepare prisoners to move into the outside world. In a controlled environment, the ability to use digital communications effectively will help to equip prisoners with appropriate skills to look for jobs, prepare CVs and maintain links with their families.

3.2 Main judgements

How safe is the prison?

The prison is a safe environment. The assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) system for those at risk of suicide or self-harm continues to help protect and monitor vulnerable prisoners who are more likely to be bullied and victimised.

The Board looks closely at health and safety matters, first-aid training 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 and attend all regular meetings which review safety within the prison.

No prison can be claimed to be totally safe, but there is an absence of serious or violent incidents at Standford Hill, and the atmosphere in the prison is generally calm and stable. We also believe that the policy towards drug use through the challenge, support and intervention (CSIP) system, in association with the Forward Trust, is both enlightened and pragmatic, and aids the development of a constructive relationship with prisoners who have drug problems. Our contacts with prisoners suggest that the majority feel safe within the prison.

How fairly and humanely are prisoners treated?

The treatment of prisoners within Standford Hill is respectful and humane. One of the most important aspects of the regime at the prison is the ability to balance firm discipline with respect and understanding. This has continued over the last year. There have been occasional accusations of bullying, which are taken very seriously by the prison, but we are satisfied that the institutional culture within the prison is healthy and fair.

How well are prisoners' health and wellbeing needs met?

As we write, the COVID-19 outbreak has tested the healthcare capabilities of the prison as never before. While we were concerned that, during the pandemic, 24/7 healthcare cover on-site would be necessary, prison managers and the healthcare providers alike are satisfied with the existing situation at the moment, and also the interaction with the 111 system for external healthcare. The prisoner surveys about healthcare provision have been shared with the Board, and show an improving and significant level of satisfaction with healthcare provision among the prisoners. We believe that their healthcare needs are adequately catered for in every respect.

How well are prisoners progressed towards successful resettlement?

The emphasis on resettlement, and the ability and desire to rehabilitate prisoners, are the most noteworthy aspects of life at Standford Hill, and we believe are the main contributor to the exceptionally low reoffending rate at the prison. Given the number of prisons that a typical prisoner may experience during his sentence, no one prison can claim complete credit for low reoffending rates. However, the startlingly good rate at Standford Hill, which has been maintained over several years, bears testament to the insights into successful resettlement that are part of the preparation for life beyond prison for those leaving the establishment.

3.3 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

We would again commend the work done on resettlement and its success in reducing reoffending after prisoners leave Standford Hill. We believe that the prison has the physical potential for expansion, so that this work could be capitalised on; however, the prison desperately needs its own kitchen facilities and the upgrading of cell block C before this can be achieved.

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

The provision of on-site kitchen facilities is long overdue and would enable the prison to be expanded. We also believe that the effectiveness of the prison and its rehabilitation programme would be enhanced if an internet room could be created, for prisoners to plan their futures and communicate with future employers. We also suggest a review of property rules which should be consistent across all establishments with new rules issued to staff and copied to prisoners.

TO THE GOVERNOR

The development of the national vocational qualification for prisoners working in the gardens has been painfully slow, and we are not satisfied that the oversight of this area by Government Facility Services Limited is as effective as it could be. We have also been disappointed that funding constraints have halted, and in some cases reversed, the initiatives begun in the educational area over recent years, and restricted the educational options available to prisoners.

3.4 Progress since the last report

The modifications suggested for the healthcare area have been largely implemented and have been very necessary, given the need to distance socially because of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

4.1 Reception and induction

Reception

This is a very busy part of the prison, with 55,894 passing through its doors during the reporting period – including prisoners going to work, in education, on home leave, in hospital and on special licences.

Prisoners are dealt with efficiently and sympathetically in reception. Property is logged in and out, and kept in a store behind the reception area. Loss of property is dealt with separately in this report.

Induction

There is a routine induction system. Prison orderlies play a major part, and a lifer orderly assists incoming lifers. A Board member is part of the induction process, and prisoners have a book to be signed to indicate that all parts of the induction have been undertaken.

Self-isolation

Under normal conditions, and as an open prison, there were no self-isolations.

There were some isolations in March 2020 under government guidelines for the COVID-19 virus. The prison was able to create an area which allowed them to isolate potentially infected prisoners, to prevent more widespread infections. Some prisoners who were deemed to be vulnerable or who were concerned about catching the infection were keen to isolate themselves, and the prison was able to facilitate this.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

There were no suicides during the reporting period. Eight ACCT documents were opened, of which two were for minimal self-harm. For their own safety, four of the eight prisoners concerned were returned to closed conditions.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

No violent incidents were reported during the reporting period, and these would not be expected in a prison such as HMP/YOI Stanford Hill. There were two unsubstantiated reports of bullying but no action was deemed to be necessary after investigation.

4.4 Vulnerable prisoners, safeguarding

As previously mentioned, the prison was able to accommodate the isolation of potentially infected prisoners at the start of the COVID-19 crisis. While there is not a strong culture of bullying within the prison, the staff are able to recognise those prisoners who may need special attention and safeguarding. Occasionally, some prisoners find it difficult to adjust to life in an open prison. This may be because of spending many years in a closed environment. In some situations, the only solution is a return to a closed prison but the culture within Standford Hill is geared towards helping prisoners to adapt to their new situation.

4.5 Substance misuse

Drug testing is done on a regular basis. During the period of this report there were:

- 363 mandatory drug tests
- 2,013 alcohol breath tests
- 365 compact-based drug tests

The Forward Trust interviews all prisoners on arrival, to discuss substance abuse and any need for support they may have.

The prison has developed a specific approach to drug use in the prison, which we detail in section 6.6.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

The fabric of the prison remains, generally, in a well-kept and presentable condition. A and B wings are of solid construction, and in good condition for their age. Refurbishment work on shower facilities has been undertaken, and has been completed satisfactorily. C wing is a temporary building that has far outlived its projected lifespan.

While in reasonable repair, despite the ongoing and serious problem with rats, it is fair to say that a review of continued investment in repair and maintenance costs would be a useful exercise – particularly if any expansion of facilities at the establishment is anticipated. The visits/coffee bar area is well maintained, providing a vital communications link and venue for the very popular family days. It has also played an important role in facilitating communications during the COVID-19 lockdown.

The prison grounds are generally kept tidy, although there is some sense that good practice in horticulture is being sacrificed to contractual change, with a regrettable loss of emphasis on horticulture as a purposeful activity for prisoners.

Laundry facilities suffered a major outage in the summer of 2019, due to failure of essential plant elements. Much of the plant is obsolete, with spare parts hard to come by. Again, we would suggest a review of the costs of replacement versus ongoing maintenance, as serious problems could arise if prisoners were unable to maintain personal cleanliness. The current COVID-19 situation clearly underlines the importance of good hygiene in the prison. Additionally, the Board has worked with prison managers to successfully resolve the issue of prisoners being asked by their fellows to pay for extra laundry using food items. We understand that this practice has now ceased.

There have been ongoing issues with the timely and appropriate supply of food at Standford Hill, as the prison is without a kitchen of its own. Instead, food is brought from the kitchens at nearby HMP Swaleside. Breakdowns in service have occurred in two areas: first, there was an issue with menu choice – prisoners were served only the vegetarian option for more than a week. Secondly, during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, the food van driver was found to be infected with the virus. Clearly, this was a risk to the health and wellbeing of all prisoners, emphasising that a single point of failure could compromise many of those in the safekeeping of Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). The Board strongly supports investment in kitchens for Standford Hill. This would bring additional benefits, in terms of work plus training opportunities – especially if capacity at the prison is permanently expanded.

5.2 Segregation

Standford Hill has a holding area for those being moved back to closed conditions. There are no other segregation facilities. No problems have arisen in this context.

5.3 Staff/prisoner relationships, key workers

Key staff/prisoner relationships remain largely good. There was an accusation of bullying by one staff member, which has now been dealt with by prison managers. No further complaints have arisen.

There is one area which continues to present problems – that of external probation links. While it is difficult to establish the facts, it seems that there are administrative issues arising, which can create serious delays in clearance for release on temporary licence (ROTL). This leads to frustration for prisoners, who are left with the impression that their efforts to move into outside work are being obstructed.

Although the new rules for ROTL are being effectively deployed at Standford Hill, there is also much frustration that prisoners who have had ROTL at their previous establishments are denied it – sometimes for extended periods – after arrival at the prison. Indeed, some prisoners have, as a result, expressed a preference for returning to category C establishments.

5.4 Equality and diversity

Work to tackle the inequalities that people feel they are experiencing in working out opportunities for black, Asian and minority ethnic prisoners is ongoing and appears successful. The Board has maintained a presence at many of the meetings focused upon equality and diversity issues. Prisoners are well represented at these, and it is now clearly accepted by the prisoners that efforts are genuinely being made to ensure equality, and that such efforts are, by and large, successful, although we have no recent statistics to verify that.

One remaining issue has been that of equality of opportunity to move into C wing accommodation. The relevant statistics have been examined by the monthly focus group, and no bias found. The report concluded that allocation is based on a fair and equal system, open to all those who meet the criteria. Although the figures show lower numbers of black, Asian and minority ethnic prisoners, there is no evidence of discrimination in the allocation of places on the wing. No particular reason was discovered as to why this imbalance has occurred, other than the self-grouping of individuals, which allowed a larger population of Gypsy, Romany and Traveller prisoners to be present on the wing, with allocation carried out using the correct procedures. There appears to be a perception among prisoners that a place on C Wing is particularly desirable and lower numbers of BAME prisoners did initially cause concern.

It is the opinion of the Board that the prison continues to be receptive to black, Asian and minority ethnic concerns and is proactive in dealing with them, and is supportive of ongoing cultural programmes that celebrate diversity.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

The pastoral team remains strongly embedded in the fabric and culture of Standford Hill, with the chaplain taking an active interest in many of the meetings which take place, and keeping in touch at both personal and institutional levels. Respect and cooperation between the managing chaplain and Muslim chaplain ensure the appropriate marking of significant festivals. It should be noted that practising Muslims are now the largest religious group at the prison.

5.6 Incentives and earned privileges (IEP)

The Board has not received any formal complaints or applications regarding the IEP system, and has received only one adverse comment, which the individual concerned did not wish us to follow up on.

The Governor has initiated discussions that propose the provision of limited internet access for prisoners, provided that technology can be provided that will prevent criminal, illegal and other undesirable consequences. Considering the stance of the present government, that fast internet access should be available to all as a basic right, it is clearly appropriate that the Board strongly supports these efforts. Internet access will enhance opportunities in employment, education and vocational learning, and should additionally support family cohesion – all of which are likely to add significant value to the rehabilitation programme.

5.7 Complaints

Board members generally ask prisoners to report problems through the normal channels at the first advice, and to approach the Board only if this appears to have failed. The Board monitors normal complaint channels closely in the usual course of work, and is highly sensitive to complaints that may not have been dealt with appropriately. The modest number of applications (and their nature) to the Board supports our opinion that the complaints system generally works well, with officers processing complaints without prejudice.

Worth noting, because of the general level of comment upon it, is the dislike of the current roll call system, which requires prisoners to go behind their doors for counting. Several prisoners complain that they find it demeaning.

5.8 Property

Issues connected with property comprise the largest number of applications received by the Board. These may be divided into two categories: property lost within the prison system, and retention of property upon arrival at Standford Hill.

In the first case, there is little that the Board can do, other than to ask the prison's complaints clerk to investigate. The excellent work done by this individual is worthy of note, as she has located items missing at other prisons for many months. While there are obvious problems with both the tracing and security of prisoners' property, they are almost without exception not at Standford Hill.

The retention of property upon arrival at Standford Hill is another matter entirely, and is responsible for much frustration and annoyance for prisoners – to the degree that it has the potential to undermine progress towards rehabilitation. This is because prisoners feel they are being unfairly punished for the good behaviour which has led to their arrival at Standford Hill. It should, of course, be noted that for much of the time Standford Hill is following HMPPS protocols or responding to information received.

Two items are of concern, both likely to have been purchased through proper channels at previous prisons, and approved for use by the authorities there. These items are music systems and games machines (mostly X-boxes). The rules appear to change regularly, and every time the issues seem settled, they inevitably arise again within a few weeks. In addition, some current prisoners are alleged to have property within their cells that is now not allowed for new receptions. While such issues may seem relatively trivial, their impact can be extremely negative, and shows HMPPS in a poor light as rules are perceived to be applied in a haphazard manner, and sometimes illogically. May we suggest a review of such property rules, and a new issue of instructions to staff, copied to prisoners, in some form that makes things transparently clear and fair to all? We believe that this would be helpful both to staff and prisoners, who should not be denied similar or identical property that may be in possession of those residing a few cells away.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 COVID-19

This report covers the period up to 31 March 2020, which was a critical period in the pandemic and consequently a time when the prison had to make significant changes in its modus operandi and procedures.

We have not visited the prison as Board members since the middle of March but keep in close contact with the Governor, her senior officers and the IMB clerk, all of whom have been extraordinarily helpful and communicative in these extraordinary circumstances.

Our sense, as a Board, is that the prison has responded very professionally and conscientiously to the challenges facing it and the need to safeguard prisoners and staff. The prison has remained calm and stable in what could be a potentially fraught situation, and communications to prisoners have been clear and informative. We have regular contact with the Governor and other key personnel, and feel that we are kept aware of all important developments at the prison as they occur. We are conscious that in this situation the Board needs to respect the pressures that the Governor and her staff have on them, and to ensure that our enquiries are proportionate and appropriate.

Thankfully, there have, at the time of writing this report, been only three cases of the virus among prisoners, all which have resolved satisfactorily, and the provision of personal protective equipment for officers has been adequate. We are satisfied that the response of prison managers to the crisis has been impressive.

6.2 Physical healthcare

Healthcare services are provided by Integrated Care 24 and the Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust. Looking at recent surveys undertaken among the prisoners, the level of satisfaction with the service provided is high, and our own observations as a Board are that the healthcare staff are dedicated and professional. Some prisoners can be very demanding of the staff, who operate a triage system to prioritise who is provided with care first.

The health centre is an unprepossessing prefabricated block but some improvements have recently been carried out to the waiting room, where chairs have replaced the benches, to ensure safer social distancing, and the floor has been replaced. The security door is now kept locked, to ensure that prisoners cannot wander into the nursing area, and security procedures have been tightened because of the COVID-19 outbreak. We still believe that the lack of soundproofing prevents discreet and confidential discussion when drugs are being dispensed, but our overall impression is that healthcare services are provided effectively under the current regime.

We discussed the COVID-19 preparations with healthcare staff for some weeks before the outbreak, and were satisfied that they were well aware of the threats they would be facing, and able to put appropriate security measures in place.

The department is open during normal working hours, and between 8am and 8pm 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 services 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. Prison managers believe that the healthcare cover provided is sufficient to protect prisoners, even with the extra challenges posed by COVID-19.

Under normal circumstances, dentistry services ensure an appointment within six weeks (the agreed service parameter is eight weeks). During the COVID-19 crisis, emergency dental treatment is still available and is overseen by the usual dental specialist, who will refer prisoners in emergency situations to a special dental hospital. Podiatry is taken care of by the local hospital.

Our impression is that prisoner satisfaction with the healthcare service provided continues to increase from a lower point a couple of years ago. We have had sight of internal surveys which present a generally favourable picture of the service provided, and in discussing the range of issues with the senior healthcare staff, we find them approachable, keen to discuss the issues we raise and professional in their approach.

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

There was one death in custody during the period of this report. A prisoner passed away from a longstanding, ultimately terminal illness on 1 July 2019. He had been sent on ROTL to a local hospice while waiting for his release notification. The Prisons and Probation Ombudsman report made a couple of HCC recommendations but had no significant concerns. The prisoner's dying wish was to visit a zoo and the prison facilitated, and paid for, this with a visit to Howlett's Zoo.

6.3 Mental healthcare

The Governor is very well aware of the need to cater for the mental wellbeing of the prisoners, as are the senior staff. The chaplain and his colleagues are also very engaged with prisoners and aware of the difficulties that can arise in a prison environment. A consultant psychiatrist attends the prison for half a day a month to help those with mental health problems.

6.4 Social care

Standford Hill has a robust system for social care referrals. The provider is Kent County Council Adult Social Services.

Residents can self-refer, and are also screened on the first night by HCC or by the safety team.

Eligibility for referral

An adult may be eligible for care and support services if he has had involvement from adult social care outside prison or needs arise from a physical or mental impairment or illness. Consideration will be given when two or more of the criteria are failed and there is an inability to:

- manage and maintain nutrition
- maintain personal hygiene
- manage toilet needs
- dress or be appropriately dressed
- make use of his room/prison safely
- maintain a habitable home environment
- look after the cell and keep it clean
- develop and maintain family or other personal relationships
- access and engage in work, training, education or volunteering
- make use of necessary facilities or services in the local community
- attend healthcare appointments.

Referrals are made via email, and the occupational therapist will pick these up and then attend the prison to assess them.

There is a monthly safeguarding, social care and health partnership meeting, chaired by the head of residence or a Deputy Governor.

6.5 Exercise, time out of cell, gym

There is a large, well-equipped gym, and a swimming pool available for use. On average, 62% of the prisoners use the gym every month. The time of year tends to dictate how many people use the pool. It opens in the morning for visiting groups, and in the afternoon and evening for prisoners. On average, about 15 prisoners attend per session.

The gym is open from 8.15am until 11.30am, and then 1.30pm until 4.30pm every day. There is also an evening session on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 5.15pm until 7.30pm. As Stanford Hill is an open prison on a large site, a number of prisoners can also exercise by running around parts of the site, and a

number of them also regularly walk around the site, so that there is ample opportunity to get and stay fit while in the prison. There is also a football pitch within the grounds of the prison but the prison football team, which played league matches (very successfully) in the area, has been disbanded.

First-aid courses are run as and when required, but there is usually at least one every other month. At the moment, Standford Hill has 59 staff trained in first aid and defibrillators. The staff trained are from a variety of departments, and all offender supervisors are trained as they all work at night. This means that there is a trained first aider in the establishment 24 hours a day.

6.6 Drug rehabilitation

The CSIP process is an intervention that is mainly used in other prisons to address those who are the perpetrators of violence towards others. However, as Standford Hill was keen to embed CSIP, they decided to use it in an innovative way, for those prisoners located in open conditions who, unfortunately, for whatever reason, decide to use illicit substances. Open conditions present a number of different challenges and pressures to prisoners who transfer from closed conditions, so the CSIP process provided an opportunity to use an alternative strategy from the usual approach of immediately returning those individuals to closed conditions, and put more emphasis on addressing and talking about the issue and taking positive steps to address substance misuse and the associated risks.

The key principles of CSIP use at Standford Hill are that the individual is actively involved, the responsibility for tackling their use of drugs is placed upon them, and the actual meeting is multidisciplinary. This has proved to be an effective strategy, and these principles are adhered to consistently, with representatives from residence, safer custody, equalities, security, the offender management unit (OMU) and the prison's substance misuse partner, Forward Trust, attending the meeting. The purpose of the multidisciplinary team is that, often, when an individual is challenged, a number of other issues come to light – for example, concerning ROTL, and family and relationships – so this strategy allows staff from different departments to be involved in putting protective factors in place to help address and resolve those issues.

The CSIP system provides an opportunity to give prisoners a second chance, and to underline their support network. This has become apparent on a number of occasions, particularly with prisoners serving a life sentence or an indeterminate sentence for public protection, as a return to closed conditions can cause significant issues, not only with parole, but also with their relationship with their family and with the challenge of maintaining hope.

From August 2019 until the present day, 45 prisoners have been subject to the CSIP system, 37 of whom had failed a drug or alcohol breath test. Traditionally, those 37 prisoners would have been transferred back to closed conditions. However, through utilising CSIPs, these individuals were given a second chance and referred to engage with Forward Trust's four-step programme, for which they have to sign a compact.

CSIP boards are held every Tuesday morning, and since August 2019, when the prison started collecting data, over 120 separate boards have been held.

The average period that a prisoner remains on a CSIP is approximately 6–8 weeks, and this is relatively closely linked to the length of the Forward Trust programme. Prison staff work closely with them throughout, to ensure that all appointments are adhered to.

However, despite the success achieved through CSIPs, 11 prisoners had to be returned to closed conditions following a second failed drug or alcohol breath test. This is often an extremely difficult decision to make. However, the prison tries to uphold all of its principles ('hope, learn and succeed') in every meeting, and if prisoners are unable to address these issues, prison managers have to consider their suitability to remain in open conditions.

The CSIP process is an extremely valuable tool for identifying prisoners who need additional support, and has helped to deliver a cultural change whereby prisoners know they have a second chance. This is something the prison is determined to push on with when the COVID-19 pandemic is over. However, in the interim, the team is working closely with its colleagues in security and the Forward Trust to identify those using substances and highlighting potential support networks for them.

The Forward Trust opened the first intensive abstinence-based treatment programme in a UK prison at HMP Downview in 1992, and its drug and alcohol programmes were the first to be independently accredited by the Ministry of Justice for reducing reoffending. The CSIP programme dovetails neatly and effectively with the approach adopted by the Forward Trust, and we have been particularly impressed by the multidisciplinary approach that the prison has adopted in concert with the charity, and the enlightened way in which prisoners with drug problems receive support and advice. Having spoken with representatives from the Forward Trust, it is clear that they believe that the support network that has been created is positive and effective, and that prisoners with drug issues respond to the sort of help they receive in Stanford Hill.

Stanford Hill's approach to drug rehabilitation, using a modified version of the CSIP programme to that used in other prisons, is, we believe, a genuine differentiator for the establishment, and an indication of the willingness of managers to innovate in their approach to offender management.

6.7 Soft skills

In a 'macho' environment like a men's prison, it is tempting to try to adopt robust policies to deal with the prison population. While Stanford Hill has a strict environment, prisoners are treated with understanding and compassion, and the prison atmosphere engenders hope, which is a major part of the mantra, 'hope, learn and succeed'. This forward-looking approach is one that can only work if prison managers unify around a common vision, and we believe that the ability to do this is one of the main reasons why the prison has been successful in turning a number of prisoners' lives around.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

The provision of education of a high standard has always been regarded as a matter of great importance at the establishment, to enable the preparation of prisoners for release into the community. This has been particularly successful over the years, with consistent achievement of results above the national benchmark in English and mathematics.

The department was run for some years by The Manchester College, later rebranded as Novus, up to March 2019. This changed in April 2019, due to a Ministry of Justice decision at a national level, and the system for tendering for new contracts also changed. This had an unfortunate consequence; while the core provision for subjects including English and mathematics was awarded in the old way on a national basis, and went to Weston College, a different system, called the dynamic procurement system (DPS), was used to enable individual prisons to tender for subjects for which funding was most needed and best value for money could be obtained. The DPS took some time to implement, through no fault of the prison staff, and had the effect of leaving Stanford Hill without provision for art, customer services and business for the first six months of the reporting year. This had a bad effect on morale, as two people were made redundant and prisoners were left without some very popular courses. An outstanding teacher also felt compelled to resign.

However, the provision of English and mathematics started as planned in April 2019, and the results followed the outstandingly good pattern of previous years:

English

	<u>Stanford Hill</u>	<u>National Benchmark</u>
Level 1	85.42%	80.40%
Level 2	44.44%*	65.80%

* Claims are still awaited for level 2, which will bring the success rate to 85%+

Mathematics

Level 1	74.55%	62.50%
Level 2	66.67%	59.30%

The DPS contracts were finally awarded in September 2019, and after the late start the classes gained momentum and popularity, although, obviously, the COVID-19 situation brought the whole department to a halt in March 2020.

It was feared that changes to the ROTL policy would lead to prisoners being more focused on opportunities for work rather than education in the subjects offered by the DPS suppliers. However, although uptake of some classes was low to begin with, this has levelled out and these classes are now full.

After the outstanding results for 2018/19 at the Koestler awards for art from prisons, there was nonetheless a positive result for 2019/20, in that, from 84 entries from Stanford Hill, there were 13 awards, of which three were chosen for the exhibition of works regarded as outstanding.

It should also be mentioned that the art teacher, who had to resign from Standford Hill due to the length of time taken for the implementation of the DPS system, was recognised by being presented with the Butler Award for her excellent work as an education tutor at Standford Hill.

7.2 Vocational training, work

The main role of a category D prison is to facilitate the reintroduction of prisoners into society at the end of their sentences. This is achieved by the provision of education but also, very importantly, by the provision of support and preparation for the world of work.

Specific training courses are provided for skills for which there are qualifications or skills that can be used to gain employment after release.

As at 20 February 2020, the following training courses were taking place, with the following numbers attending:

Plumbing	11
Electrical	13
Information technology	10
Job club	4
Gym instructor	5
Personal trainer	7
Music technology	10
Total	60

Preparation for the world of work is an area in which Standford Hill has an excellent record. As a Board, we have in the past praised the establishment for its work. This is coordinated through the working-out scheme (WOS), and the aim is to facilitate working out before release by assisting prisoners in finding work opportunities.

The prison has developed excellent relationships with local and regional employers, despite its relative physical isolation on the Isle of Sheppey. In many cases, prisoners are directed toward these employers. However, it is made clear to prisoners joining the WOS that it is primarily their responsibility to find appropriate work opportunities. When found by the prisoner, each situation is thoroughly checked and, if deemed unsuitable, is rejected by the prison.

At the end of the reporting period, the WOS was not in operation due to the COVID-19 restrictions. Immediately before this, in March 2020, the numbers in the WOS were:

Prisoners risk boarded and cleared for WOS: 72

Prisoners awaiting placement on Commercial Vehicle Safety and Enforcement-only parties: 0

Prisoners currently in community work placements: 73

Prisoners in training: 30

Prisoners in paid work: 85

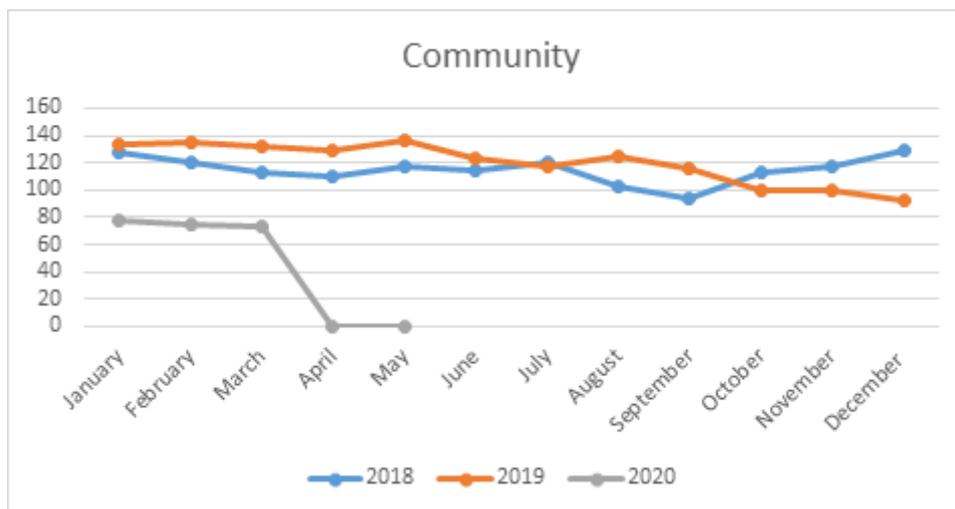
Prisoners in external education: 11

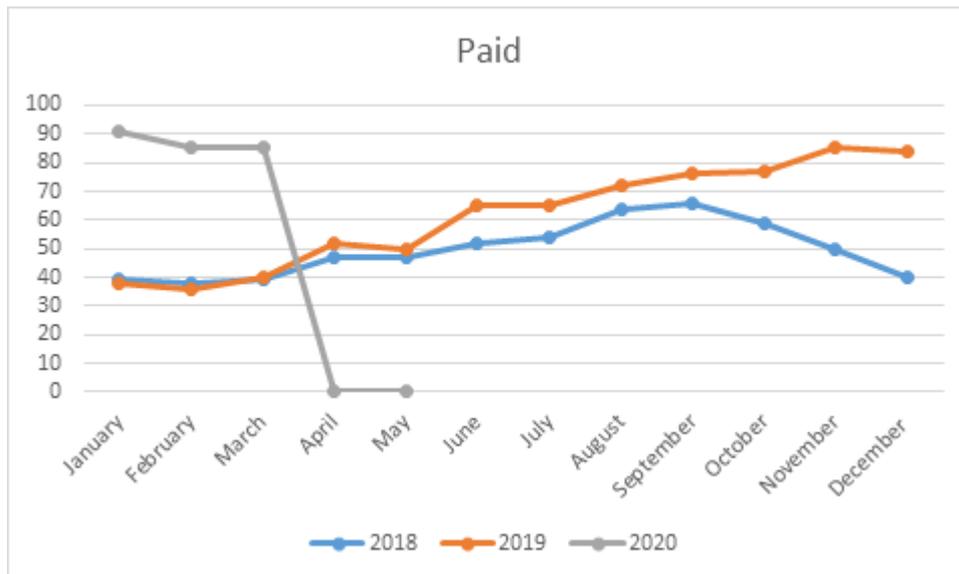
Totals: in training, community or paid work = 199

Whereas the numbers are roughly consistent with those in previous years, there have, in fact, been some significant changes in the reporting year. The latest ROTL changes have altered the nature of the work being carried out. Previously, after gaining risk board approval, there had to be a minimum of 28 days' community work before paid work could be undertaken. Now, prisoners can go straight into paid work after gaining risk board approval. This has had the result of reducing the number of community-based placements but increasing the amount of paid work.

This is, unfortunately, not helpful to local community organisations. However, it does mean that more prisoners are obtaining paid work, which increases the possibility that prisoners will find work immediately on release.

The change is clearly seen in the following graphs.





Prior to COVID-19, the number of prisoners in paid work was 85, nearly an all-time high.

In the last year, the prison has added four national firms to the list of its employers, and also gained its first placements in the Civil Service. These provide additional routes to good, long-term work opportunities for released prisoners.

The prison has a target of 60% of prisoners being employed on release, and the current level is 59%.

The overall objective of the WOS scheme is that by providing a route to employment on release, the reoffending rate will be reduced. In this respect, the prison's performance is significantly better than the national prison average:

Reducing reoffending rate

One year after release: 1 November 2018 – 30 November 2019

317 discharges, 14 reoffended = 4.41%

Two years after release: 1 November 2017 – 30 November 2019

645 discharges, 60 reoffended = 9.30%

The prison is very successful in obtaining post-release employment, thereby ensuring that the rate of reoffending is low.

7.3 Offender management and progression

The philosophy of managing prisoners at Standford Hill is to work within the overall ROTL framework to tailor a resettlement framework for each prisoner to the individual and to try not to be unnecessarily rigid. There is a very good liaison between the OMU and those running the WOS, and a strong emphasis on using

ROTL constructively and maintaining the use of resettlement day release and resettlement overnight release to support the ROTL system.

Great care is taken over developing a risk management plan, and parole releases have shown very good results. The ROTL results for the period under review are as follows:

1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020

Total number of ROTL events = 55,705

Broken down as follows:

- **Level 5 resettlement overnight release = 3,004**
- **Level 4 resettlement day release = 6,935**
- **Special purpose licence = 1,798**
- **WOS resettlement day release = 43,968**

1 April – 31 March 2020

Total parole = 62 applications

Total indeterminate sentenced prisoner releases = 47

7.4 Family contact

The maintenance and strengthening of family ties are conducive to the successful rehabilitation of prisoners. The prison puts considerable effort into this area.

Regular family days are held, and in previous years investment has created a bright and welcoming atmosphere for all ages. Food is available, as well as play facilities and entertainment for children, and these are well appreciated. The prison has the assistance of a worker from Spurgeons, the national charity, to help plan and manage these activities.

One of the results of the changes to ROTL is that attendance at family days has reduced, as prisoners are spending more time at home with their families. The prison is having to work harder to ensure that these days are fully booked.

The worker from Spurgeons also works on other family-related activity within the prison, such as baby bonding and involvement with homework.

The prison also has a worker from the Forward Trust, who is engaged with work relating to family relationships.

7.5 Resettlement planning

In addition to helping to provide employment on release, a key factor in successful rehabilitation is that prisoners have accommodation on release. This is a priority for the prison.

In the period from April 2019 to March 2020, only one prisoner was classified as being of no fixed abode on release. This is apparently a much better result than for prisons in general.

8. The work of the IMB

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	10
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	9 (one on sabbatical)
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	8
Total number of visits to the establishment	343 (March visits reduced, no April visits)
Total number of segregation reviews attended	N/A

Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	4	0
B	Discipline, including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	5	4
C	Equality	0	1
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	5	5
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	0	1
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	1	1
F	Food and kitchens	0	1
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	6	4
H1	Property within this establishment	4	3
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	6	9
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	1	1
I	Sentence management, including home detention curfew, ROTL, parole, release dates, recategorization	18	10
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	2	5
K	Transfers	0	1
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system	0	1
	Total number of applications	52	47



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