



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

**For reporting year**

**1 November 2019 – 31 October 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 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 East Sutton Park is an open prison, with a normal operating capacity of 101 women and young offenders, located six miles from Maidstone, the county town of Kent. Capacity has been reduced to 96 as a result of the pandemic. The main house is a Grade 2 listed Jacobean mansion, set in 84 acres of land, and there is additional accommodation in the form of four refurbished flats and 20 individual units. In 1954, the first and only open female borstal was established at East Sutton Park. The prison is the only female open prison in the south of England. Its aim is to prepare the 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, when possible, to outside paid employment.

East Sutton Park is a working prison, with a farm, extensive gardens and a profitable farm shop that is open to the public twice a week.

The prison shares a Governor with HMP Downview.

### **Living accommodation**

Accommodation is mainly in double or three-person rooms but there are two dormitories. There is a communal dining room and a large room with comfortable furniture for relaxation and meetings. Showers are in two blocks in the main house. The flats that were converted in spring 2018 and stood unused for some while are now housing 16 prisoners. During the reporting year, 20 pods were constructed. Built on the old tennis courts, these provide additional single-room accommodation and reduce the number of prisoners in the larger dormitories and room-sharing, while allowing some rooms to be used for the quarantine of new arrivals. They have proved immensely popular and are used for workers in paid employment outside the prison. A disabled bathroom was added to the house during the reporting year.

### **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, such as the kitchen, farms and gardens, as well as in the very well-appointed gym.

### **Providers of main services**

The main service providers are:

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

The pandemic led to the temporary withdrawal of the education service, Weston College, Ixion and PACT staff.

## **3. Executive summary**

### **3.1 Background to the report**

This report presents the findings of the Board at East Sutton Park for the period 1 November 2019 to 31 October 2020. The Board's conclusions are based on observations made on rota visits, daily report sheets during lockdown, examination of records and documents, limited attendance at some internal meetings (due to COVID-19 restrictions), and conversations with staff and prisoners.

### **3.2 Main judgements**

### **How safe is the prison?**

It is the Board's view that the prison is a safe place to be. Overall, the Board judges that the prison is well run, with prisoners, for the most part, enjoying a good relationship with staff and each other.

### **How fairly and humanely are prisoners treated?**

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

### **How well are prisoners' health and wellbeing needs met?**

Healthcare works very well with the limitations of the Monday to Friday service. Staff work very closely with the residents picking up and dealing with any wellbeing issues quickly and efficiently. There is a fully supportive professional service in place to deal with mental health issues.

### **How well are prisoners progressed towards successful resettlement**

Generally, prisoners are prepared well for release. Few leave without accommodation to go to, and some continue with the employer with whom they have been released on temporary licence (ROTL) for paid work. However, although much improved, some prisoners still arrive with little time to serve, so there is insufficient time to prepare them properly. Those arriving with several months to serve undertake a structured programme, with an emphasis on improving their 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. Sadly, these boards have been running on a much-reduced basis since the beginning of the pandemic

## **3.3 Main areas for development**

### **To the Minister**

To urge/direct the Prison Service to continue to ensure that prisoners coming to East Sutton Park have enough time left to serve, in order to ensure that the greatest benefit in resettlement can be achieved, and therefore representing value for money.

### **To the Prison Service**

To continue to ensure that prisoners transferring to East Sutton Park have enough time to serve to gain the maximum benefit from their stay.

To ensure that closed female establishments progress women to come to East Sutton Park who are suitable for the resettlement regime.

### **To the Governor**

To continue with the prompt and careful steps taken to combat COVID-19.

## **3.4 Progress since the last report**

The use of the refurbished flats is much appreciated by all, allowing up to 16 prisoners to live semi-independently in preparation for release.

The development of the new pods for another 20 prisoners, allowing more independent living, has also been a valuable addition.

A disabled bathroom has been constructed in the main house.

The Board has been advised more regularly when assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) reviews are taking place.

The Governor has been able to attend some Board meetings, following the meetings being moved to a Friday, when she is at East Sutton Park.

## **Evidence sections 4 – 7**

### **4. Safety**

#### **4.1 Reception and induction**

Most prisoners arrive at East Sutton Park from other prisons in the south east after either asking to be transferred or being advised to do so. The reception process is normally thorough and well documented. It caters well for the needs of the arriving prisoners, with meals being set aside for late arrivals and healthcare appointments made either on the day of arrival or as soon as possible afterwards. Induction orderlies change regularly because of prisoners progressing towards release, and there have been several times this year when no orderly has been in post, so the quality of inductions has been patchy. Since lockdown, it has been particularly difficult to induct prisoners until they have left the reverse cohorting unit (RCU).

Prisoners' property within the establishment is well managed, with staff treating property with care and pragmatism.

With the COVID-19 crisis and the cessation of transfers during lockdown, no prisoners came to East Sutton Park, and numbers dropped to around 60. However, from September, prisoners began arriving in larger numbers and the population is now generally in the mid-80s.

All the prisoners are transferred from closed prisons, having been risk assessed as being suitable for open conditions. The halt in transfers once lockdown was introduced was a deliberate policy designed to reduce the chance of infection, as, unlike at most establishments, there are very few single rooms at East Sutton Park. The independent living flats were brought into use soon after the start of lockdown, followed by occupation of the pods, which meant that there were fewer prisoners sharing rooms in the main building.

There has been an outbreak of bed bugs in one of the rooms. The room is currently being monitored over a period of weeks, and no bugs have been found since the treatment.

#### **4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody**

Safer custody meetings were held bi-monthly, to review the position and to keep staff informed, until the start of lockdown. From March onwards, these meetings were suspended, as were all meetings, for a time, across the prison. Representatives from various departments, including the chaplaincy, attended these meetings; prisoner representatives were also present for part of the meeting, and were encouraged to contribute.

The Board is now being informed when ACCT reviews are to take place. Although there are relatively few ACCTs opened, there have been more this year, which has been attributed to the restrictions caused by the pandemic. We feel that they are usually well conducted, demonstrating a good level of care. One prisoner arrived on an open ACCT. In this instance, the ACCT document was held by the RCU and was unavailable for inspection by the Board. Where it has been possible to audit the document, the reviews were well conducted.

The number of Listeners fluctuated throughout the year as prisoners were released. There have been no serious incidents but there has been an increase in the use of Listeners due to the restrictions caused by the pandemic,

#### **4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation**

There have been no serious incidents in the reporting year.

As East Sutton Park is an open prison, there are no specific facilities for self-isolation. The RCU was created early in the outbreak, to allow new arrivals to isolate for 14 days. Initially, the admission of new arrivals was suspended until the RCU was ready for use. In the last few weeks of the reporting year, it was in use, as new arrivals were being admitted again.

During the year, there have been occasional complaints of bullying, which have usually been dealt with by mediation by staff. When it is considered necessary, prisoners can change their rooms.

#### **4.4 Vulnerable prisoners, safeguarding**

During the latter part of the reporting period, a senior member of staff was suspended from the prison and arrested by the police. Police investigations are currently still ongoing. The incident resulted in one prisoner being returned to closed conditions straight away. Steps were immediately taken to ensure that any effect on the individual's important role in the establishment was kept to a minimum.

#### **4.5 Use of force**

Violence and the use of force in the prison are rare. There were, however, two instances of use of force during the year. The first took place in February in reception, and the Board was aware of this at the time. A prisoner had attempted to push past an officer. She was distressed as her friend was about to be transferred out of the establishment. The officer restrained her by placing his hand on her forearm and holding her back. There was no injury and the prisoner apologised to the officer later for her behaviour.

On the second occasion, the prison, without any warning, was instructed to return a prisoner to closed conditions. She was not allowed to return to her room to collect her belongings, and was, not unsurprisingly, extremely upset. She was placed in handcuffs before leaving the prison. Two staff from East Sutton Park accompanied her and were able to offer her support during the journey. A use of force meeting was held. After reviewing both incidents, it was concluded that both matters were conducted in a lawful and appropriate manner and did not suggest a recurring pattern of behaviour. The last time that such a meeting had been held was in 2015.

#### **4.6 Substance misuse**

Prisoners are routinely breath tested on their return from ROTL, and they may also be subject to drug tests.

Testing for drugs is on a risk-based system, operating alongside the mandatory drug testing programme, which was suspended nationally during the pandemic. There have been very 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.

### **5. Fair and humane treatment**

#### **5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food**

Accommodation is normally in double or three-person rooms, and there are two dormitories. There is a communal dining room and a large room with comfortable

furniture for relaxation and meetings. Showers are in two blocks in the main house. In addition, there are also individual pods for 20 prisoners, constructed to thin out the population in the main house during the pandemic. There are also flats that were converted in the spring of 2018 and are now housing another 16 prisoners. The new accommodation has reduced the numbers of prisoners in the larger dormitories and room-sharing.

The prisoners are expected to arrange or do their own laundry. At various times throughout the year, one or more machines were out of action, sometimes for a protracted period. However, there was little detriment to the prisoners. At the end of the year, all machines were functioning.

The kitchen had staffing problems during the year, with the long-term absence of two members of staff and the need to reduce the number of prisoner workers to four at any one time. Social distancing has been impractical in the kitchen because of its size. Food quality throughout the year continued to attain the normal high level, despite the difficulties. Various items were sourced from the gardens.

With one exception, all kitchen workers doing NVQs completed their courses before lockdown. The one with outstanding modules worked on them with one of the chefs. No new courses were started pending the return of education staff.

## **5.2 Segregation, special accommodation**

The prison does not have a unit for segregating problem prisoners. If necessary, a 'special circumstances risk board' (SCRB) is held, which may lead to a prisoner being returned to closed conditions.

There have been 110 SCRBS in the reporting period, of which 10 resulted in a return to closed conditions (one of which was for the prisoner's medical 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 prisoners, albeit that supportive or enhanced monitoring measures may have been put in place. On this basis, it has been identified that 28 boards resulted in no further action. The remainder of the boards resulted in a restriction or suspension of ROTL, were for reinstating previously suspended ROTL or removing/reviewing the restrictions or were for circumstances unrelated to adverse developments – for example, reviewing risks to allow ROTL for a medical or compassionate special purpose licence (SPL) where a risk board had not been held, or for reviewing the prisoner's welfare needs.

The number of boards is far more than last year, generally due to welfare needs assessments, or medical or compassionate SPL (50). This was due to the fact that normal ROTL and review boards were not being held because of the COVID-19 restrictions.

### **5.3 Staff/prisoner relationships, key workers**

East Sutton Park is the only female open prison in the south of England. Its aim is to prepare the 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. Each prisoner has a personal officer and a back-up, who work closely with her to achieve the best from her time at the establishment. Much time is taken to work with prisoners on an individual basis.

### **5.4 Equality and diversity**

Black History Month was successfully celebrated. During the year, celebrations are held to mark festivals in relation to all religions. This will usually include a meal appropriate to the occasion.

One prisoner self-shielded, and provision was made to ensure that this was not compromised. During Ramadan, one Muslim prisoner was shielding; arrangements were made to ensure that her food was delivered to her at sunset.

This year has seen the construction of a well-appointed disabled bathroom.

### **5.5 Faith and pastoral support**

The chaplaincy runs several courses, such as Shine, Living with Loss and Understanding Forgiveness. In addition to the prison chaplain, ministers of other faiths attend the establishment.

### **5.6 Incentives and earned privileges (IEP)**

Upon arrival at the establishment, prisoners spend the first eight weeks settling in. This involves a variety of induction sessions and being placed with one of the work groups. These groups include cleaning, the kitchen, the gardens, the farm, the farm shop and prison driving. There is an agreed amount of pay for the various positions, with a review taking place during the year.

### **5.7 Complaints**

The prisoners have access to the official prison complaints system. The quality of responses is monitored by the senior management team at its monthly meetings. The Board receives a monthly breakdown of the complaints figures and asks questions of the Governor as required. The Board receives few complaints.

### **5.8 Property**

Prisoners' property within East Sutton Park is well managed, with staff treating property with care and pragmatism. More problematic is the transfer of property, including money, from other establishments. There have been very few issues with property this year. This is due, in part, to the vast reduction in the number of prisoners coming in and going out of the prison because of the COVID-19 restrictions.

## **6. Health and wellbeing**

### **6.1 Physical healthcare**

Healthcare services are available equally to all prisoners, with a medical assessment within 24 hours of arrival. Prisoners are regularly reminded of the healthcare department hours at sentence planning boards because the service is only available during the week until 4pm. Outside dentist and optician appointments are arranged by SPL. Outside hospital appointments occur under SPL or other ROTL applications. During lockdown, risk boards continued to meet, to allow prisoners to leave the prison to receive the treatment required.

During the year, the dental practice terminated its contract with the prison. A mobile service is due to take its place but at present has not materialised. The departing dentist is continuing to treat legacy patients, and arrangements are made by the prison for anyone needing emergency treatment.

When necessary, prisoners are referred to an accident and emergency department in a timely fashion. If there is an emergency at the weekend or in the evening, staff ring 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 provided are managed remotely from Maidstone. They are housed in suitable accommodation in a quiet, self-contained unit. The prisoners are treated with courtesy and appropriate privacy. The bell system to gain entry for appointments is working well.

During lockdown, appointments have continued. There has been only one application regarding issues with healthcare provision.

During the year, there have been one or two issues with dispensing prescriptions and the time taken for drugs to arrive in the prison. This is to do with the delivery process across the Kent area.

### **6.2 Mental healthcare**

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 in-prison services for the prisoners. Psychological support services are generally available via the GP.

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. 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.

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.

## 6.4 Exercise, time out of rooms

Good efforts are made to promote the physical and mental health of prisoners, using various health and gym options in the excellent prison gym. However, since the end of March, the gym has been closed to prisoners. Instead, outdoor activities have been established, such as a well-signposted running route around the prison grounds. The gym has reopened in recent weeks. A prisoner studying for a gym-related qualification was mentored by the gym staff throughout lockdown.

## 6.5 Drug rehabilitation

On arrival, prisoners are assessed by Forward Trust as part of the induction process. Where appropriate, a program of treatment and /or support is established.

## 6.6 Soft skills

On arrival at the establishment, prisoners attend a mandatory Pathways course, which sets the scene for them to take ownership of their sentence plans. 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 sets the tone for prisoners to get the absolute best out of their time at the establishment.

## 7. Progression and resettlement

### 7.1 Education, library

The education provider is Weston College.

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 Subject	Number in attendance 2017/18	% Success	Number in attendance 2018/19	% Success	Number in attendance up to 24/03/20	% Success
English level 1	23	100	14	81	18	86
English level 2	41	77	10	78	27	89
Maths level 1	24	100	18	77	26	79
Maths level 2	36	75	29	83	24	79

Academic year Subject	Number in attendance 2017/18	% Success	Number in attendance 2018/19	% Success	Number in attendance up to 24/03/20	% Success
ICT level 1	64	93	27	84	54	87.5
ICT level 2	19	100	16	57	30	100

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

- There is a monthly book club, attended regularly by prisoners.
- The prison has hosted visiting authors.
- A poetry workshop resulted in the publication of a book of poems, written by prisoners for International Women's Day.
- The library is a nurturing place, where prisoners can read daily newspapers and make use of two computers, which are connected to the prison intranet only.
- Since lockdown began, prisoners have been encouraged to express themselves creatively, by showing how they have been affected by COVID-19. There are many excellent examples of poetry and prose.

The library and book club remain popular and have proved to be a powerful outlet in lifting the mood of prisoners during lockdown. It reopened in late May for access to the intranet, so that prisoners could continue to work on their education, develop CVs and write letters.

The introduction of the new ROTL policy last year affected the education, learning and skills department; this has meant that prisoners had potentially less time 'behind the gate' to complete much-needed courses, as identified at their sentence planning board. Although the new policy brought challenges in trying to ensure that prisoners completed longer courses, the education department found that, despite classroom efficiency dropping at times, courses were still being completed, and exams passed, up to lockdown.

The education manager developed, and is using, a system to track student progression. It starts with each prisoner on their arrival at East Sutton Park, and plots their journey, from an initial assessment of their mathematics and English skills to 'where they are now' and working out in the community.

Overall success rates: 1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020:

Subject	% Success
Functional skills mathematics	79%

Subject	% Success
Functional skills English	89.8%
Vocational	94%
IT	91%
Non-accredited	100%

## Lockdown

At the end of March, the Prison Service, Weston College and the Ministry of Justice informed all prisons nationally that education departments, teaching staff and administrators would no longer be providing courses face to face. In the event, remote delivery was set in place. The local policy devised by prison managers, whereby newly transferred prisoners remain within the prison confines for the first eight to 12 weeks, continued to work well up to lockdown. It allowed new prisoners time to settle in and complete the Pathways course.

## Remote delivery

The education manager has produced detailed risk assessments for returning to face-to-face teaching in classrooms. Subsequently, all teaching spaces have been reorganised to facilitate safe social distancing. This includes complete reorganisation of the NVQ kitchen and salon, reduced workstation numbers in all classrooms and the installation of monitors in IT. Wall-mounted screens for DVDs, which play new resources created by tutors of IT, barista and office skills, are in most classrooms.

East Sutton Park remains at stage 3 of the National Framework for regime restrictions at the time of writing and there is, as yet no prospect of a move to stage 2, which is when face-to-face teaching can resume.

All four main providers for offender learning have developed learner packs. These have given prisoners the opportunity to do in-cell work, and, although not accredited, they have ensured that basic knowledge is learnt. This can later be completed to examination level, when face-to-face delivery resumes.

The regime at East Sutton Park has been successful, with learners engaging particularly well from March until end of July. More recently, learners have become distracted by opportunities to go out to work. Those that have gone out to work have become better equipped to cope with self-financing and life 'beyond the gate'.

The learner packs have best suited those who have achieved level 1 or 2 in English and mathematics, whereas entry-level learners perform best from face-to-face delivery and a hands-on approach (experiential learning). Consequently, only 18% of learners who were entry-level 3 and below engaged in this type of learning. A recent learner focus group confirmed this.

The learner packs (87% were handed in and marked) have now been analysed. Learners who self-declared learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) are included below.

### **Taster packs:**

Six learners were given taster packs – Self-employment. One had LDD.  
Six learners were given taster packs – Business administration. One had LDD.  
Two learners were given distraction packs.

### **Self-employment:**

Seven learners were given two packs – 14 in total, all returned marked.  
Two learners self-declared LDD.

### **Business administration:**

Eight learners were given two packs – 16 in total, all returned marked.  
Two learners self-declared LDD.

### **Assertiveness:**

One learner took one pack – returned marked.

### **Peer mentoring:**

Ten learners were given 57 packs – 52 returned marked.  
Eight out of 10 learners completed the course.  
Two learners self-declared LDD.

### **Food and catering:**

Eight learners were given 19 packs – all returned marked.  
Two learners self-declared LDD.

### **Barista:**

Eight learners were given 12 packs – all completed the course. Four were returned marked.

### **Mathematics:**

Thirteen learners were given 65 packs – 61 returned marked. No learner did less than four packs.  
Six engaged in level 1.  
One engaged in entry-level 3,  
Six learners self-declared LDD.

### **IT:**

One learner was given one pack – returned marked.

**Customer service:**

Three learners were given 21 packs – 19 returned marked. All completed the course. Two learners self-declared LDD.

**English:**

Nine learners were given 71 packs – 68 returned marked. Five learners completed the entire course. None did fewer than five packs. Three learners self-declared LDD.

**Budgeting:**

Four learners were given 10 packs – all returned marked.

**Distance learning:**

Distance learning increased during lockdown. At the start of this academic year, there were nine learners accessing Open University and other awarding body courses. At mid-October 2020, there were 37 learners studying or beginning new courses. One is close to finishing her BSc in Sport and Fitness. Sport and Fitness continues to be a popular course; other courses include Equine Studies and Floristry. Another learner has access to the internet in the Visits Hall once a week for a one-to-one tutorial with her tutor. The prison is exploring trying to install WiFi in the prison, to enable prisoners who are distance learning to be able to access the internet, but because of the restrictions imposed by the security department, this is proving to be very difficult to implement.

**7.2 Vocational training, work**

Prisoners are expected to work or undertake education, unless they are retired, either by age or medically. Prior to lockdown 96% of prisoners were engaged in education or work in some capacity.

Before lockdown, the learning, skills and employment team had excellent links with outside employers. Some of the initiatives that have happened this year include:

- hosting regular employment fairs
- mock interviews being held as preparation for work
- the OCR Customer Service Training Team working at the prison to help with the NVQ level 2 course in this subject
- the customer service and catering courses becoming less classroom based because the tutor goes into the community to appraise and assess prisoners' work
- longer courses meeting the employment needs of prisoners, including 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.

Everyone at the prison expects, and looks forward to, the return of these initiatives, once it is safe to do so. During lockdown, prisoners working at supermarkets were accorded key worker status. Since lockdown began in March, there were originally 13 and at present in October, 23 prisoners who have remained in employment as key workers.

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

Academic year Subject	2017/18	% Success	2018/19	% Success	2019/03-20	% Success
Barista level 2	N/A	N/A	15	100	28	100
Health and safety in the workplace level 2	39	74	13	92	n/a	n/a
Food hygiene level 2	30	97	18	100	18	100
Mentoring level 2	9	88	6	80	9	100
Business start-up	14	98	15	92	12	100
Cooking in a domestic kitchen	18	100	24	100	12	100
Budgeting & money management	32	100	16	100	28	100
Customer service level 1	N/A	N/A	17	94	28	75.68

Academic year Subject	2017/18	% Success	2018/19	% Success	2019/03-20	% Success
Customer service level 2	6	50	6	67	6	100
Assertiveness/decision-making	92	100	39	100	57	100
Self-assessment pathways	145	100	112	100	117	100
Family learning	N/A	N/A	18	100	11	100
Beauty therapy	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Presenting well	15	100	34	94	36	92
Steps to the Gate	31	100	32	100	17	94
Food production	19	65	11	85	17	82
Office skills	N/A	N/A	12	100	4	100

The farm, with an increase in the number of poly tunnels, and the gardens are a substantial source of employment at the prison. This year, the polytunnels have produced enough vegetables to sell to HMPs Elmley and Downview, bringing in an excellent revenue source. The 'soft costing' sales to East Sutton Park, Downview and Elmley kitchens came to £12,819. These figures are the equivalent price that kitchens would pay from the external contract with Bidvest. Another source has been Growing for Good, with a contract to use the glasshouses to grow and pot house plants for sale. The farm shop came into its own during lockdown, with many local people using the shop as a source of meat and vegetables. On one day, nearly £2,000 was taken in the shop. The cash income for this year is in the region of £60,960 from farm activity, the farm shop and retirement horse livery.

Staff levels on the farm and gardens for much of the year were acceptable. However, the butcher position has not been filled, and since August there has been only one staff member on the farm, rather than two. This has had a direct impact on the work of the farm and gardens, with staff having to cover for the role not filled alongside their own positions. The NVQ in butchery is no longer available because of the

absence of a butcher. The current qualifications on offer and current/predicted claims for the year are as follows:

- NPTC practical horticultural skills level 1 – one candidate
- NPTC practical horticulture skills level 2 – one candidate
- City & Guilds livestock production level 2 – two candidates
- City & Guilds production horticulture level 2 – five candidates
- City & Guilds production horticulture level 3 – one candidate.

The team has also introduced NPTC machinery skills tests, after 12 months on hold, with certification for aspects of farm and garden work. The value of these courses is that they are short term and quickly achieved by prisoners who are not in the establishment for a long period. The prisoners, as a resource, have had a variable impact this year. As COVID-19 took hold, and the prison had fewer and fewer prisoners on roll, the numbers available for farms and gardens work diminished considerably. Currently, there are 25 prisoners working on the farm and gardens. The attendance hours running total is currently at 43%; it is interesting that during lockdown in June, with restricted outside activity, it was 128%. The national target for farms and garden attendance is 80%.

### **7.3 Offender management, progression**

The introduction of the new ROTL policy last year did affect the education, learning and skills department. Although everyone, including prisoners, 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.

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

### **7.4 Family contact**

Everything is done with the family in mind, and family dynamics are considered when putting together sentence plans and agreeing ROTL. There are usually four family days a year, which are open to children up to 18 years of age; almost everyone who applies is allowed to come, although priority is given to prisoners' own children and those who are not yet on ROTL. The family engagement manager sits on sentence planning boards. She helps prisoners interpret school reports and will attend the family courts and meetings at schools if necessary. Social visits have been much curtailed during the COVID-19 crisis. This has led to the increased use and facilitation of Facetime, which had been much appreciated by the prisoners.

During lockdown, all visits were suspended but prisoners have been allowed to use Facetime to have family contact, and have been given increased telephone contact. This has proved difficult for prisoners, particularly those with children. The prison has done all it can to facilitate family contact, given the difficulties with lockdown. In recent weeks, some visits have taken place.

## **7.5 Resettlement planning**

Extra accommodation has been provided during lockdown, in flats, known as The Willows, that had been prepared many months ago but had not been able to be used because of a ruling from the Prison Service. In addition, 20 pods, known as The Oaks, have been quickly erected in the grounds. This has enabled more single-room space to be available, and reduced the chance of infection. This has given some of the prisoners who are approaching release more autonomy. They have had to do more for themselves, and this can only benefit them on release. It is to be hoped that the benefits of this extra accommodation can be calculated, so that future prisoners can take advantage of the responsibilities that it offers. It would be most unusual for the women to leave ESP without accommodation and a job. Many women often transfer their workplace position to a local branch of the employer upon leaving ESP.

## **8. The work of the IMB**

Rota visits are carried out at least once a week, and sentence planning and risk boards are monitored closely as they represent vital stages in prisoners' time at the prison. In addition, meetings are monitored, and targeted reviews are carried out. Monitoring was seriously disrupted during the summer, with no visits to the prison from April to the end of June. The first rota visit after the break was on 1 July. Monitoring was carried out remotely by receipt of the daily briefing reports and telephone calls to governors and healthcare staff. Board meetings were held by conference call. The Board resumed meetings face to face in the prison in September. Provision was made for applications to be sent to the Chair, but only one was received.

The Governor, or an alternate, sends a detailed monthly report and attends the monthly meeting of the Board, to give a report on the prison and to answer questions. The Governor has been able to attend a few Board meetings this year because of the decision to move the Board meeting day to a Friday, when she is at East Sutton Park.

## Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	8
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	7
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	6
Total number of visits to the establishment	94 (reduced due to COVID-19 restrictions)
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	0	0
B	Discipline, including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	2	2
C	Equality	2	0
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	0	6
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	2	1
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	0	1
F	Food and kitchens	0	0
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	2	1
H1	Property within this establishment	0	1
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	6	2
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	0	0
I	Sentence management, including home detention curfew, ROTL, parole, release dates, recategorisation	1	2
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	4	0
K	Transfers	0	0
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system	2	3
	Total number of applications	21	19

## GLOSSARY

ACCT Assessment & Care in Custody Teamwork

IEP Incentives and earned privileges

NVQ National Vocational Qualification

PACT Prison Advice and Care Trust

RCU Reverse cohorting unit

ROTL Release on temporary licence  
SCRB Special circumstances risk board  
SPL Special purpose licence



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