



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Ford

**For reporting year
1st November 2019 to 31st October 2020**

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Contents

Introductory sections 1 - 3	Page
1. Statutory role of the IMB	3
2. Description of establishment	4
3. Executive summary	6
Evidence sections 4 – 7	
4. Safety	9
5. Humane treatment	11
6. Health and wellbeing	16
7. Progression and resettlement	18
The work of the IMB	23
Applications to the IMB	24

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 IMB is part of the United Kingdom's National Preventive Mechanism.

2. Description of the establishment

HMP Ford is a category D open prison with an emphasis on resettlement.

It was converted to an open prison in 1960 from a former Fleet Air Arm station. It is situated in West Sussex, two miles from the coast and three miles south of Arundel. It covers an area of 110 acres bisected by a busy class B public road. Ford railway station is a mile away.

The open estate is required to cater for category D prisoners assessed as suitable for open conditions within the criteria agreed between the Governor and the prison group director for Kent, Surrey and Sussex prisons. Prisoners selected for transfer to HMP Ford should present a low risk of absconding and a low risk to the public.

The operational capacity is 544, however during COVID-19 this has been reduced by between 20 and 30 prisoners to enable new prisoners to self-isolate. 1144 prisoners spent time at the establishment during the reporting year (4% less than the year before). The prison houses male prisoners, a little over half of whom are lifers, indeterminate or extended determinate sentence prisoners or multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) cases. The prison does not take prisoners serving sentences for sex offences. All available spaces are offered to HMPPS's population management unit.

The accommodation comprises a brick-built block with 274 single rooms (A wing) and 20 smaller billets (B wing), mostly prefabricated, though two are brick built. The rooms in these billets were designed for single occupancy but are mostly shared between two. Much of the accommodation dates from when it was a military establishment. All of it has shared washing and toilet facilities. There is accommodation for 15 prisoners with some degree of disability.

In response to COVID-19, 40 individual "accommodation pods" were installed but not commissioned during the reporting year. Their purpose will be to improve the prison's defences against the transmission of COVID-19 by reducing some of the double occupancy of small rooms in the billets. It is also intended that they should house men going to work outside the prison.

The prison infrastructure is maintained by Government Facility Services Limited.

Healthcare and the Integrated Substance Misuse Service, (ISMS, formerly DAART) were provided by the Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust until 31st March 2020 when Care UK took over. Care UK subsequently rebranded to Practice Plus Group on 1st October 2020.

Resettlement assistance for low to medium risk prisoners is offered by the Kent, Surrey and Sussex Community Rehabilitation Company (KSSCRC, part of the Seetec group).

On-site academic education is provided by Weston College and vocational training by Chichester College. Both are supplemented by prison staff. COVID-19 has had a significant detrimental effect on education provision and opportunities.

On-site opportunities for prisoners to work or be trained include those at DHL (distribution warehouse for prisoners' "canteen"), waste management, bicycle refurbishing

and the IT Academy (formerly PICTA). The prison runs engineering, carpentry and injection-moulding workshops and has amalgamated a number of scattered workshops into the Chichester College Ford Campus School of Construction, officially opened in October 2020. Land-based activities supply HMP Ford and other prisons with plants and produce, which are also sold in the locally popular prisoner-run café/gift shop *Serving Thyme*.

Voluntary organisations providing support to prisoners include Prison Advice and Care Trust, Spurgeons, Samaritans, Citizens Advice, the Terence Higgins Trust, the Shannon Trust, the Gypsy and Travellers' Community Support Team, Cruse, Relate, the Sycamore Trust, the armed forces charity SSAFA and several other veterans' support organisations.

3. Executive summary

3.1 Background to the report

This report covers the 12-month period ending 31 October 2020, and tracks improvement and deterioration from year to year. This is not a one-off snapshot assessment of the prison.

The Board was not able to visit the prison after lockdown was first announced in March 2020 and monitored the prison remotely until May when four members returned to visit the prison once a week, initially attending prisoner forum meetings and latterly attending offender consultative committee (OCC - the prisoners' representative body) meetings and responding to applications in person.

3.2 Main judgements

How Safe is the Prison?

In the judgement of the Board the prison is safe though with certain reservations.

With the onset of lockdown in March, HMP Ford took on many of the characteristics of a closed prison but without any of the extra staffing which would be associated with a closed establishment. The staffing position was exacerbated by the fact that the 200 or so prisoners who would normally have gone out on Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) each day were in the prison thus nearly doubling the population.

The Board was concerned that for several months during COVID-19 restrictions mandatory drug testing (MDT) stopped altogether and drug use increased. "Throwovers" of contraband also increased significantly. Finally the need to restrict movement of prisoners between prisons meant that disruptive prisoners could not be returned to closed conditions and had to remain at HMP Ford.

The Governor and staff are to be commended for their management of this situation and particularly for the measures they took to keep the prison free of COVID-19. Nevertheless, some prisoners said they felt less safe in the last 7 months than they had previously. Although numbers are small, there has been a rise in recorded prisoner on prisoner violence (4.3.3).

How fairly and humanely are prisoners treated?

Within the context of COVID-19, prisoners at HMP Ford have been managed well. This is the twelfth year that the Board reports that the accommodation at HMP Ford is extremely poor. This situation is even more dire given the need to keep prisoners in their billets for long periods during the day. In the shared rooms on B wing men had to eat sitting on their beds. (5.1.1)

We have concerns over the imbalance of ethnicity of those accessing outside paid work. (5.4.2)

How well are prisoners' health and wellbeing needs met?

As in previous years, healthcare is well regarded by prisoners and received more positive comments than any other area in the Board's exit survey (7.5.5)

How well are prisoners progressed towards successful resettlement?

Before lockdown, around 400 of the prisoners were accessing ROTL for education, training, employment and to maintain family ties. This stopped on lockdown and has had a profound effect on the prisoners at HMP Ford.

Once the regime lifted, 84 prisoners were accessing education, work or work experience on ROTL. By the end of the reporting period an average of 12 prisoners a day were able to meet with family members outside the prison, subject to national and regional COVID-19 restrictions. (7.1.6, 7.2.6, 7.4.4)

3.3 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

Rehabilitation should be at the forefront of policy decisions relating to the open estate and your department's handling of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme ("furlough") was deplorable. Conflicting and misleading information has almost certainly led to some men leaving the prison system disadvantaged by significant amounts of money with which to re-enter the community at a time when they needed every penny to establish themselves in a life outside crime. (7.5.3)

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

1. For the second year running the Board comments on your service's apparent lack of understanding of Category D open prisons. The Prisons National Framework response to COVID-19 including the coloured Levels/Stages diagram and supporting text failed to mention ROTL, even at Levels 1 or 2 where it might be expected. The Board understands that the number one priority was the preservation of life but the omission of ROTL showed a complete lack of awareness of the vital part it plays in the resettlement of prisoners and in their sentence planning.
2. This is the 12th year running that we register our dismay at the parlous state of accommodation at HMP Ford. 50% of prisoners share rooms. Whilst this is bad enough during usual times, most prisoners are at least then engaged in education, training or employment during the daytime. During lockdown, however, men have been in their rooms for many more hours per day in close confined conditions. This has not been humane. (5.1.1)
3. You may remember that HMP Ford developed and extensively tested an innovative IT unit with limited and secure internet access which sat empty for two years. This unit could have been put to vital use during COVID-19 to enable prisoners to start the online registration for Universal Credit, search for employment in these trying times for the country prior to release as well as pursuing academic education. The Board would urge the Prison Service to reconsider this for the future as prisoners on release are faced with an "online" world. (7.1.5)

4. In June 2020 the Director General of Prisons wrote: 'We are making changes to improve the fairness of our processes and to improve the representation of ethnic minority people in our workforce'. HMP Ford continues to have a workforce which in no way mirrors the ethnic makeup of the prisoner community. The Board urges you to recruit more imaginatively in 2021 or find other ways to improve this situation. (5.4.1).

TO THE GOVERNOR

1. We are concerned with the unsettled atmosphere and increased tensions that have arisen as a consequence of COVID-19 and the impact on HMP Ford as a resettlement prison. (4.3.4, 4.1.2)
2. Respondents to the Board's exit survey and prisoners approaching Board members directly and through applications commented consistently on poor communication, especially between offender supervisors (OS) and prisoners. This caused particular frustration at a time when prisoners' movements were restricted. (5.3.5, 7.5.5)
3. The Board would like to see effective action to address the consistent ethnic imbalance in the profiles of men working outside the prison. (see paragraph 5.4.2)

3.4 Progress since the last report

The Board notes that a new No 1 Governor came into post in January 2020 little knowing what lay ahead. We him for maintaining his predecessor's positive relationship with us and facilitating our "remote monitoring".

The Board wishes to commend all members of staff for the commitment and innovative approach shown at all levels to keep both the prisoners and their own colleagues safe and well during lockdown. The planning involved in ensuring that ROTL and prison-led learning were restarted in a meaningful way at the earliest opportunity was also impressive.

It is impossible to compare the prison now with where it was this time last year. Daily life and the resettlement that was provided a year ago has been altered almost beyond recognition and it is not useful to try and draw parallels with provision during our previous reporting period.

HMPPS could not have been expected to have progressed long-term plans (for example on new accommodation) in the midst of a global pandemic. Unfortunately the Minister's response to our previous report, for example an acceptance of the inadequacy of the prisoners' laundry, has not led to any improvement. (5.1.2)

Evidence sections 4 – 7

Section 4 – Safety

As in the rest of the country, on 23 March prisoners' lives changed. Prior to then, nearly all the men were either working in the community or in the prison, involved in education or training or able to spend some time at home as they prepared for release. At a stroke, work outside the prison and all purposeful activity including face to face education stopped. Contact with families became via prison telephones, an innovative use of tablets and telephone calls with prisoners using their own prison approved mobile phones at set times.

HMPFS rightly wanted to keep both the prison and the prisoners safe from COVID-19 but an unintended consequence was rising tension within the prison with an increase of drug use, illegal use of mobile phones and the subsequent increase in bullying and intimidation. This has undoubtedly led to higher risks for safety within the prisoner community.

4.1 Reception and induction

4.1.1 Prior to the COVID-19 restrictions every new prisoner attended a one-week induction programme which provided information on how to make a success of their time at HMP Ford. Induction has since been limited to a handout given to each prisoner introducing the essential services and regime timetable at HMP Ford.

4.1.2 Between the start of COVID-19 restrictions and 31 October, 314 prisoners were received into HMP Ford. This means that by the end of the reporting period well over 50% of the population had not experienced the prison in its usual resettlement role.

4.2 Suicide & self-harm. Death in custody

4.2.1 There was one death in custody during the year. This occurred in the prison. The protocol for this situation was applied swiftly with a good degree of compassion. Support was offered both to staff and prisoners. There has been clear and supportive communication with the family from the time of death. The prison service and the Governor received messages of thanks from family and friends of the deceased. A documentary inquest is planned to be held in December 2020.

4.2.2 There were 3 recorded instances of self-harm in 2020. Each incident was managed through Assessment Care in Custody Teamwork (ACCT).

4.2.3 Absconds have doubled to 10 in the first 10 months of 2020 from five in the whole of 2019.

4.2.4 2020 has been particularly difficult for prisoners, with 18 ACCTS opened by the end of October as against 11 in the calendar year of 2019. ACCTS are managed with a wide range of services supporting the prisoner sensitively. The prisoner is always fully involved in review meetings and in decisions about their welfare and support needs.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction

4.3.1 During the COVID-19 pandemic there was a reduction in time spent on safer custody duty due to staff shortages, through self-isolation or indeed being assigned to other duties. As prisoners were not allowed to mix freely the regime could not support the deployment of violence reduction, equalities or induction orderlies from within the prisoner community. There was limited Samaritan support to the local Listeners.

4.3.2 Some new prisoners to HMP Ford commented to visiting Board members that they felt unsafe moving from the quarantined billets to the general billets.

4.3.3 Prisoner on prisoner assaults have increased in the year. In the period April to October 2020, 12 such assaults were reported compared with 9 in the whole of 2019. For the reporting year 1 November 2019 to 31 October 2020 there were 18.

4.3.4 The number of men transferred to closed conditions in the reporting year was 160, down from 170 in the previous year and 199 the year before that. Prior to lockdown on average 18 men per month returned to closed conditions. This dropped to 6 per month in the first 5 months of lockdown as all movements had to be authorised by Gold Command. The Board accepts that movements between prisons had to be kept to a minimum to restrict transmission of COVID-19, but this had a major effect on the Governor's ability to maintain good order and discipline. The inability to transfer unsuitable men to closed conditions saw an increase in illicit behaviour, prisoner on prisoner violence and prisoners stating that they felt unsafe. In September and October, a total of 36 men were returned to closed conditions.

4.3.5 Intelligence-led and spot searching found the following illicit material:

- 365 mobile phones compared to 312 the previous year, an increase of 17%.
- 183 drugs finds, which is almost 100% increase on the previous year, when there were 94 finds. No pattern has emerged as to the type of drugs used though cannabis remains the most popular. Anecdotally prisoners have told us that the increase in drug use is largely due to boredom under lockdown.
- the discovery of alcohol has risen from 8 finds to 23, almost a threefold increase year on year

4.4 Use of force

4.4.1 The use of force has increased year-on-year, although the numbers are low, which is a credit to the members of staff in some difficult circumstances.

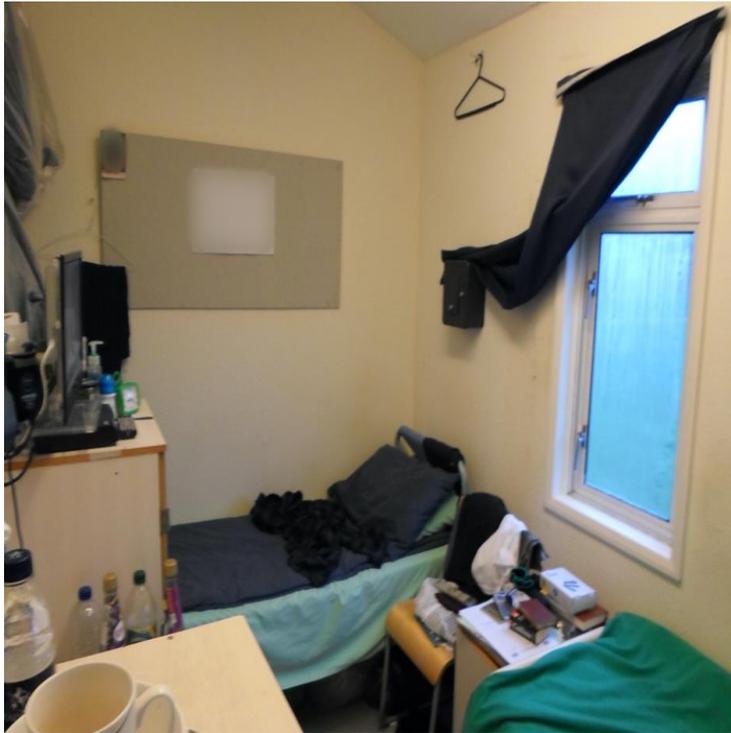
4.4.2 In October 2020 PAVA pepper spray was used for the first time at HMP Ford. A Board member monitored the internal review meeting in November. The review concluded that the use of PAVA was justified and proportionate.

4.4.3 Three staff members reported injuries requiring time off work. Handcuffs have been used on two occasions in transferring prisoners to the secure cells. Batons have not been used.

5 Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food.

5.1.1 For the twelfth year the Board reports that the accommodation at HMP Ford is still in a parlous state, with not only physical dilapidation but overcrowding by double manning in 7' x 12' rooms of B wing wartime billets - certainly not decent or humane. Two kitchen areas in A wing were upgraded before lockdown but that leaves the majority of the wing, as reported in previous years, cleaning dishes and cutlery in bathroom hand basins which is not hygienic.



A 7'x12' shared room on B wing

5.1.2 Many of the six washers and four dryers in the prisoners' laundry are regularly broken. This can mean prisoners going out to work and representing HMP Ford having no reliable source of clean, dry clothes - a less than humane or dignified situation. A capital bid for upgraded machines was unsuccessful.

5.1.3 At the onset of lockdown the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) prioritised the preservation of life by moving prisoners into the safest accommodation groupings. Those needing shielding stayed in one billet. Newcomers were isolated in one of two billets and each living area was regarded as a "household". These groups did their daily exercise and food collection as one household. When outside working resumed, those involved were moved into two billets to minimise the likelihood of any imported virus spreading to the wider prison population. Prisoners felt the organisation and communication regarding these moves was successful.

5.1.4 Prisoner complaints about the food were not without basis. The breakdown of the blast chiller in March meant that many of the menu options previously offered, particularly those containing lamb or beef, had to be withdrawn. A replacement blast chiller had still not arrived by the end of the reporting period and is now not expected

till January 2021. The Board believes that a delay of 10 months in the HMPPS procurement process is unacceptable. In addition two new cookers have been sitting idle for most of the current year as they cannot be connected to the prison's gas supply. Having been exposed to the elements it is unclear whether they will work if they are ever connected. This is the second year running that the Board has reported on kitchen equipment failures.

5.1.5 During the months of March to June two men from each billet delivered meals to the prisoners' accommodation. Extra food was included in the prisoner packs and lunches were always a hot meal. However, complaints about the quality, quantity and choice of food were persistent.

5.2 Segregation

5.2.1 Whilst HMP Ford, in common with other open prisons, does not have a segregation unit, it has four holding cells used to house prisoners who are to be returned to closed conditions. The conditions are adequate and the care meticulous. Transfer will take place the same or following day. On a few occasions these cells are used for the protection of a prisoner but on the whole they are used for prisoners who are not suitable for open conditions.

5.3 Staff / Prisoner relationships

5.3.1 The lockdown has without doubt caused tremendous strain within the prison and although there have been issues the management team and staff have coped admirably. In normal times, HMP Ford encourages prisoner representatives to be involved in functional meetings across a wide variety of areas such as safer custody and equalities.

5.3.2 From early March, when it became clear that COVID-19 would have a big impact on prisons, informal drop-ins were arranged three lunchtimes a week where prisoners could raise their concerns with key senior staff. The Board found these an excellent example of thoughtful communication in an uncertain period.

5.3.3 The SLT has continued to have regular meetings with the OCC. Throughout lockdown members of staff from all disciplines, notably healthcare, ISMS and chaplaincy, made themselves available for open discussion with prisoners during outside exercise periods.

5.3.4 After lockdown was introduced members of the management team held separate weekly prisoner forums for A and B wings with varying degrees of success. Communication was often difficult, as local management was dependent on decisions from Gold Command which could be delayed or changed (for example regarding eligibility for "furlough" - Section 7.5.3).

5.3.5 Unlike in the closed estate, prisoners are not in normal times confined to one area, so purposeful one-to-one communication can be a challenge for staff (who themselves are not static). The Board received a number of informal complaints and formal applications (see Section 8) alleging poor communication with their OS. In addition to their role progressing individuals towards discharge, the uniformed OS has

other duties, including night work which can limit their availability at other times. Returns from the Board's exit survey underlined these concerns.

5.4 Equality and diversity.

5.4.1 An enduring difficulty for promoting ethnic diversity at HMP Ford is its geographical location where 93% of the surrounding population is white, while approximately 44% of the prisoner population is from an ethnic minority (including Gypsy/Roma/Traveller). Only 2% of the staff describe themselves as Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME). The Board urges more imaginative officer recruitment.

5.4.2 The Board was concerned that in January 67% of prisoners in paid work were white, and this had risen to 74% by March. When paid work resumed in August there were only 4 BAME prisoners out of 47 working outside the prison.

5.4.3 The number of Discriminatory Incident Reporting Forms (DIRFs) submitted in this reporting year was up from 18 to 23. Of those where an outcome had been reached 30% were upheld. The Deputy Governor has introduced an independent quality controller to check on the workings of the system.

5.4.4 Although outside the control of local staff, decisions by HMPPS under the End of Custody Temporary Release scheme (ECTR see 7.3.3) were more favourable to BAME applicants. The 64 who were put forward were split equally between white and BAME prisoners. Of the 26 released 14 were BAME and 12 white. Positive decisions were also correlated with age. Although only 38% of the prisoners at HMP Ford were over 50, they made up 65% of those released under the scheme.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support.

5.5.1 The chaplaincy provides excellent pastoral care to those of all faiths and none. It offers support to prisoners affected by the ill health or death of family members. The chaplaincy produced 379 faith-based packs on a weekly basis for distribution to the men and held silent meditation groups that met weekly outdoors in the summer months. With the introduction of a tablet they were able to give important support to men in difficult circumstances such as streaming funeral services and talking to family members at a particularly difficult time.

5.5.2 The chaplaincy works through its network of contacts helping with mentoring, pastoral support and finding accommodation on release. In addition, the chaplaincy continues to work with the charity Ford Forward Community Chaplaincy to bring together resources to support men as they leave HMP Ford and to support men and women from prisons in other areas relocating to West Sussex. In March 2020 this charity received a High Sheriff's Award.

5.6 Incentives and earned privileges (IEP)

5.6.1 During the reporting year over one hundred prisoners were moved between IEP levels. Any who were moved to Basic were usually returned to closed conditions.

5.6.2 Enhanced prisoners subject to proven adjudications during lockdown have normally been downgraded to Standard. Outside lockdown they were normally sanctioned by having ROTL removed but this was not seen as a deterrent when all ROTL was in any case suspended.

5.6.3 Since 23 March 2020, in line with national advice no prisoner has been placed on Basic Level.

5.7 Complaints

5.7.1 Complaints within HMP Ford are handled well and more sensitive complaints, e.g. DIRFs, are personally reviewed by the Deputy Governor.

5.7.2 There were 135 complaints raised by prisoners who arrived at HMP Ford about property, wages or canteen that had not transferred correctly from a previous establishment.

5.7.3 As the Board has highlighted in previous years, there is no evidence of a measurable accountability within HMPPS for prisoner complaints when prisoners are transferred. This is neither humane or fair. Despite the efforts of the HMP Ford business hub some prisoners have had to wait more than six months for a resolution. For example: prisoner B raised a complaint highlighting that he was due wages for specific work that he had completed in his previous jail.

- Despite continual correspondence from business hub there was no response from the original prison for more than seven months.
- in month eight, the originating prison confirmed that prisoner B should have received wages for work completed
- eight days later, prisoner B raised a Comp1A (escalation) as he had not heard when he would receive the payment
- the money finally reached the prisoner's account 37 weeks after he first raised the complaint

5.8 Property

5.8.1 Property remains a problem. Prisoners are permitted some personal property but this is not consistently managed throughout the prison estate, resulting in issues when prisoners are transferred. Sometimes property has to be left behind at the sending or intermediate prison or gets put into storage on arrival at HMP Ford

5.8.2 There is also inconsistency on what prisoners are allowed to buy through the prison catalogue. This can result in prisoners arriving at HMP Ford and not being allowed property which was legitimately purchased at their previous prisons. Understandably this can give rise to complaints and a feeling that being sent to a Category D prison is not the improvement they had believed it would be.

5.8.3 It is troubling to the Board to see a lack of accountability in property handling. Complaints should be addressed within 20 days but in this reporting period the longest delay was 224 days in responding to and closing a complaint, which is

neither fair nor humane. The average delay was 25.85 days for property issues on transfer from another establishment.

5.8.4 IMB Ford has joined the Prisoners' Property Framework Consultation across the entire prison estate which aims to achieve accountability regarding the handling of personal property and raising the awareness of the importance to individuals of the safety of their property.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Physical healthcare

6.1.1 The service provider for the healthcare contract transitioned without problems on 1 April 2020, with Care UK subsequently rebranding to Practice Plus Group on 1 October 2020. The quality of service provided has appeared consistently high throughout the reporting year.

6.2 Primary Healthcare

6.2.1 In the early days of lockdown appointments inside the healthcare centre were only allowed for emergency needs. Staffing numbers on-site were reduced to help maintain social distancing and all visiting services were stopped. External appointments were cancelled as hospitals closed their doors to all non-urgent referrals. In difficult times for prisoners and staff the healthcare team started a weekend service with a general health and mental health nurse on-site Saturday and Sunday mornings.

6.2.2 Only one prisoner proved positive for COVID-19 and he made a full recovery. Isolation of him and the rest of his billet was effectively managed with healthcare and the prison teams working well together.

6.2.3 There have been some 12,650 appointments in the reporting year of which 1379 were seen within 24 hours of a request. Appointments for GP/ nursing accounted for 69% of these, 14% for mental health and 6% for the dentist (which is not part of the Practice Plus contract). Before COVID-19 the backlog of dental appointments was being reduced but during lockdown certain procedures had to be stopped altogether. To address the resultant backlog a mobile dental unit was due to start offering sessions shortly after the end of the reporting period.

6.2.4 A new 3 day per month on-site physiotherapy service was introduced by the new service provider in October 2020.

6.2.5 The bi-monthly health quality and local delivery board (QLDB) was suspended during the transfer to the new service provider and has not yet reconvened.

6.3 Mental healthcare

6.3.1 The team continues to provide an invaluable service managing on average 60 to 65 active cases per month, with some 60% of these being self referrals. Whilst referrals to the team were lower at the start of lockdown, an increase in numbers was seen in September and October. Engagement with high risk vulnerable prisoners was still offered during the lockdown period.

6.4 Social care

6.4.1 Approximately 5% of the prisoners are over 60 and they receive an additional assessment. Dementia care continues to be managed within the prison. Engagement with Age UK and West Sussex County Council to support older prisoners on release appears well embedded and effective.

6.5 Exercise, time out of cell, gym

6.5.1 The gym is adequate in providing an acceptable fitness regime. Timetabled access is provided with ring fenced slots for the older prisoners. During lockdown prisoners were given two daily slots for exercise, largely walking round a designated route in the extensive grounds. Some of the gym equipment was relocated to a controlled outside space.

6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

6.6.1 As in previous years, the Board acknowledges the invaluable activities carried out by the ISMS, including offering support for prisoners after release. Drug, alcohol and substance misuse remains a constant issue. Anecdotal evidence points to a further increase as a consequence of the unprecedented impact of COVID-19 lockdown restrictions. The suspension of MDT during this period was also a probable contributing factor.

6.6.2 New arrivals are seen by ISMS on completion of any quarantine period. The lockdown restrictions have meant visits from external agencies such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous have been suspended.

6.7 Soft skills

6.7.1 The Chaplaincy initiated outdoor meditation sessions over the summer months (see section 5.5.1).

6.7.2 Rejoining a family on release can be daunting and Spurgeons provides courses and workshops on everything from how to hold a baby through to group discussions on fatherhood. Additionally, they provide a link to home by printing Christmas and birthday cards with the prisoner's picture.

6.7.3 The SLT encourages the men to think of the wider community and the prisoners have raised money for charity throughout the year. One event in the summer raised over £2500 for Macmillan Cancer Support.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

7.1.1 Twenty percent of prisoners arrive at HMP Ford with literacy & numeracy recorded as below Level 1. Prior to lockdown, 91 prisoners attended academic learning with an additional 20 in the prison's IT academy studying for Microsoft or Cisco qualifications. Prisoners must pass Level 2 in both literacy and numeracy before being considered for outside work, vocational or academic education.

7.1.2 Education stopped as a result of lockdown. Weston College provided workbooks which were delivered to a targeted audience. By 25 May, 684 workbooks from entry level to Level 2 had been distributed and 14 prisoners had returned 49 packs for marking. Since that date 32 men have started working on updated packs and 15 out of 65 had been returned by the end of October. Classroom education did not restart as the prison did not reach HMPPS Level 2 status.

7.1.3 The IT academy reopened in June offering courses led by HMPPS staff, on a part-time basis to meet social distancing/cleaning regime needs. The virtual campus opened shortly thereafter.

7.1.4 Twenty-seven men were able to access Open University courses with reduced numbers and shorter sessions. Two prisoners continued with their degrees when ROTL recommenced by agreement with a local business using its internet connection.

7.1.5 In 2018 HMP Ford developed a separate IT unit with limited and secure internet access. The unit was to enable selected prisoners to apply for employment on release, access the benefits system, register with a GP etc. Despite extensive network security testing the project was scrapped as HMP Ford could not gain authority to proceed. During the lockdown this could have been extensively used to allow prisoners to start the online registration for Universal Credit before discharge as well as facilitating academic education.

7.1.6 Last year we reported 52 prisoners in outside education. Disappointingly, due to COVID-19 related restrictions, only five out of 60 applicants have been able to access an academic course outside the prison for the academic year 2020/21.

7.1.7 The library offered a select and collect service similar to other West Sussex CC Libraries. On average 500 books per month were borrowed as lockdown restrictions eased. The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) Prison Libraries Group presented its 2020 Excellence in Prison Libraries Award to HMP Ford for its "Well-being Through Creative Writing" project. The project was devised and is run by the Senior Library Assistant at HMP Ford.

7.2 Vocational Training and work

7.2.1 The Chichester College Group and HMP Ford opened the Chichester College Ford Campus School of Construction which will be the centre of skills training for

prisoners. The school has a number of purpose-built areas, designed to deliver training in brickwork, dry lining, carpentry and painting & decorating. In addition, horticulture training will be made available. Staff employed by the College led a small prisoner group throughout the lockdown to develop this facility. Due to COVID-19 restrictions it has not yet opened to students but a recently discharged HMP Ford prisoner is among the new teaching staff. The School has a capacity for 60 men and aims to deliver 180 qualifications a year, improving prisoner employability. HMP Ford and Chichester College have secured partnerships with a number of construction companies who have committed to employing men on release.



Shelagh Legrave OBE, CEO Chichester College Group
HMP Ford Governor Andrew Davy

7.2.2 The training kitchen is undergoing planned refurbishment which will facilitate social distancing. It is hoped to restart hospitality courses in the next year.

7.2.3 Waste management, engineering, the bike restoration shop, horticulture and the training kitchen are run by prison staff and lead to City and Guilds qualifications.

7.2.4 During lockdown 61 learning packs were distributed to enable continuation of courses leading to City and Guilds Level 2 as well as 30 packs to help others start courses. There was good feedback from this.

7.2.5 Four work/training areas continued, with social distancing, during lockdown: DHL, kitchens, waste management and a small cleaning team.

7.2.6 The reducing reoffending department organises work with mostly local employers. Six men were able to recommence work experience during May and continued communication with employers during lockdown enabled an easier return to paid work when restrictions permitted. By mid-August 28 men were in paid or unpaid work, rising to 77 by the end of October.

7.2.7 Despite all these efforts 270 men at HMP Ford have not worked in seven months due to the restrictions. The progression and rehabilitation for these men is of great concern.

7.3 Offender management and progression

7.3.1 Last year we commented on the increase in the number of prisoners able to access ROTL, giving them better opportunities to reintegrate into family life and to access paid employment which would facilitate getting jobs on release. All the staff involved are to be commended for the efforts made which enabled two hundred prisoners to leave the prison on a daily basis. This was complicated by the poor layout of the reception area which makes it difficult to organise so many returning prisoners without long delays and problems with security and (now) social distancing. The Board was disappointed that the management's application during the year for funding to re-design this space was turned down.

7.3.2 During lockdown, by contrast, the re-settlement work of the prison was severely curtailed. No prisoners were allowed to go to outside work with consequent implications for their employability and finances. Inside the prison the workshops were closed and there were very limited jobs for the prisoners with the rest having little to do. While most appreciated the exceptional circumstances, many felt they had been better off in a closed prison as they were now living in worse conditions at HMP Ford and not progressing towards employment during or after release.

7.3.3 The announcement of the ECTR in March (see 5.4.4) raised prisoners' expectations of qualifying for early release. In the event 64 prisoners were put forward for the scheme. Of these 24 were released plus two on Special Licence due to underlying health considerations. The administration of the scheme by HMPPS was in several cases chaotic with some prisoners expected to leave the same day as they were notified. Another prisoner, having packed his possessions and cleared his room, was told he had to stay an extra night as the decision had not been "signed off". By contrast the discharge arrangements made by HMP Ford worked well.

7.4 Family contact

7.4.1 Supporting family contact is an important part of the work of HMP Ford. The visits hall is a welcoming building, with a supervised children's play area and a café. Family days are organised in visits hall and by the ISMS team, with special events over various holiday periods.

7.4.2 Maintaining and developing prisoners' relationships with families is key to re-settlement but lockdown had an immediate impact on this as visits to and from the prison were halted. Those men approved for ROTL were allowed access to their mobile phones in the visits hall for a 30 minute call which was greatly appreciated. Six hundred sessions were booked every week until social visits recommenced. In addition, a new HMPPS video calling service (Purple Visits) was introduced in October though with some serious teething problems.

7.4.3 Social visits in the prison restarted in July, and visits were spread across more days of the week to compensate for reduced numbers. All food and drinks were provided through table service.

7.4.4 From late summer until October arrangements were in place to allow men to meet family on ROTL in a local town as long as the family was coming from the same COVID-19 tier. This was a very welcome opening up of family contact and benefitted an average of 12 men every day.

7.4.5 The Board has continued to comment on the very high cost of PIN phones at HMP Ford. Calls cost considerably more than in prisons with in-cell telephones. This, together with low wages for many internal jobs, leaves men at a disadvantage when planning for release. In many billets the phones are located in a communal space giving no privacy. These issues must be a strong reason for the very high use of mobile phones in HMP Ford and the consequent staff effort used to locate them.

7.5 Resettlement Planning

7.5.1 KSSCRC is responsible for assisting low risk offenders 12 weeks prior to release with accommodation, financial advice, bank accounts and Universal Credit. Prior to lockdown reducing reoffending introduced a monthly pre-release panel meeting to consider each man 12 weeks prior to release. This stopped during lockdown but the Board is pleased to see it has restarted as this area continues to give the Board considerable cause for concern. Staff covering the different areas work on different days and the number of prisoners approaching the Board for help suggests a lack of cohesion.

7.5.2 KSSCRC staff worked entirely from outside the prison during late March and April. They then returned to HMP Ford part-time to do paper-based assessments and used *email a prisoner* to update prisoners. Face to face assessments did not recommence until 18 September 2020. They did liaise with their housing partner Southdown to ensure that the HMPPS homelessness prevention task force accommodation funding was accessed for prospective No Fixed Address releases. This was not always reflected in the prisoner's formal release interview or indeed in their response to the Board's exit survey (see 7.5.5). Lack of face to face interaction also limited KSSCRC's ability to make sure men had financial advice and access to bank accounts and Universal Credit. Comprehensive information sheets were given to prisoners prior to release but these were long and complicated. Through the gate mobile phones were issued to men being released without mobile access.

7.5.3 Preparation for release includes reintegrating to a working environment and starting to save for the future. In the week of 16 March 107 men had outside paid work which then stopped abruptly, but many men had contracts of employment and expected to be eligible for the "furlough" scheme. The MOJ decided otherwise and communicated this to the SLT at HMP Ford causing dismay, anger and frustration. Some prisoners took legal advice. The MOJ then announced on the 9th June, 24 hours before the deadline for new furlough registration, that prisoners were after all eligible to join the scheme. This confusion had a potentially serious effect on the financial position of a number of prisoners coming up for release. By contrast, the business and community engagement manager at HMP Ford should be commended

for contacting every employer in that 24 hour period and we understand that a number of employers were able to apply for their prisoner employees to join the scheme.

7.5.4 The independent living unit was an initiative where one billet was converted to eight single rooms with a kitchen and laundry to allow men to live more independently, look after themselves and learn to budget and cook. Disappointingly this costly and valuable initiative was discontinued.

7.5.5 With the objective of finding new ways to access information directly from prisoners while monitoring remotely, the Board initiated a written exit survey on 20 July. This was part of an effort to achieve direct feedback of experiences of HMP Ford in a reasonably objective way from prisoners about to be released. Of 117 men discharged from then to 31 October there were 26 responses. (22%). Although this questionnaire cannot yet be widely representative of the prison population, there were several consistent themes. Healthcare had excellent feedback while advice on housing and finance was lacking. Communication with uniformed offender supervisors was cited throughout as inconsistent at best and at worst unhelpful. These are early day results from an ongoing survey but worth noting.

8. The work of the IMB

As a result of an IMB Management Board review, the Board complement at HMP Ford is 11 for the coming years.

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	11
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	14
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	12
Total number of visits to the establishment	225
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	1	3
B	Discipline, including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	1	1
C	Equality	1	1
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	11	2
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	0	5
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	8	3
F	Food and kitchens	0	0
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	9	4
H1	Property within this establishment	2	3
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	28	7
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	0	2
I	Sentence management, including HDC, release on temporary licence, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	31	12
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	1	3
K	Transfers	3	0
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system	7	2
	Total number of applications	103	48



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