



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP/YOI Stanford Hill

**For reporting year
1 APRIL 2020 – 31 MARCH 2021**

Published October 2021



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

2. Description of the establishment

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

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

Blocks A and B have space for 192 prisoners, each block having three landings and four spurs on each. C wing is currently being replaced with 80 individual accommodation pods.

A and B wings have their own serveries. In both wings, if space permits, prisoners can eat meals either in their rooms or together, on tables provided on the ground floor. There are also a number of microwave ovens in each cellblock, which gives prisoners the option to cook and prepare their own food.

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

3.1 Background to the report

Covid-19 preface

The move into lockdown because of the Covid-19 pandemic coincided almost exactly with the beginning of the reporting year. The impact of the pandemic and the steps that had to be taken by the prison management at Stanford Hill to contain and manage Covid-19 are by some distance the overriding theme of any analysis of prison activity in the period under review.

One factor exacerbating this process was the recurrence of the pandemic after a relatively benign first wave. During the first outbreak community transmission in the area around the prison was never significant and the area around the prison was in the less critical tiers.

In the first wave the prison recorded the following level of infections:

Prisoner cases:

3 positive prisoners between 30.03.20 and 19.04.20

The infection rate among prisoners during the first wave was low, and there were no staff cases. However, control of the prison regime was complicated because several members of staff had to self-isolate either because they had been in contact with someone who had Covid-19 or because they had Covid-like symptoms, but subsequently tested negative. Nevertheless, we were satisfied

that good control was maintained in the prison, a sound process to prevent infections was in place and staff tried to reassure and educate prisoners while infections were rising in the community.

When the first wave struck and infections began, we withdrew from active monitoring and tried to monitor remotely. We met weekly as a Board via Zoom and we were delighted that ultimately the Governor could join us on a regular basis although even prior to that time she had regularly informed us of any significant developments in writing and via telephone.

As infections reduced and lockdown measures were made less onerous, we moved back to active monitoring and in September we were able to meet as a Board in the prison, albeit on a socially distanced basis. Members of the Board were keen to be physically present in the prison because it was not possible to replicate the normal contact with prisoners remotely.

Unfortunately, the second wave brought with it much more profound challenges for the prison, not least because of much higher community transmission in East Kent and the discovery in late November of the 'Kent variant', (now renamed Alpha), which during December and January saw rates of infection in the area surrounding the prison rise to the highest in the country. This had a very significant impact on the prison and during the second wave the prison recorded the following statistics:

Prisoner cases:

32 positive prisoners between 16.10.20 and 06.02.21

Staff cases (directly and non-directly employed):

74 positive staff cases between 13.10.20 and 22.02.21

In November these statistics sadly included the Covid-related death of Mr Rahman on the prison premises following his release from hospital. Staff numbers were badly affected because of infections and a number of staff had severe complications following their infections, several of which continue at the time of writing. This severely impinged on the ability of the prison to function in the normal way and facilities such as release on temporary licence (ROTL), resettlement day release (RDR) and social visits had to be discontinued. This extended into Christmas and the situation was exacerbated by the exceptionally high community transmission prevalent in Sheppey (where large numbers of the prison staff live). The situation has eased over the last few months but Stanford Hill was classified as an outbreak site in October 2020 which still obtained at the end of the reporting period.

We moved to a system of remote monitoring in the late autumn, but our Zoom meetings continued as a permanent feature throughout the year and are something we have decided to continue as a feature of our on-going monitoring. Whilst remote monitoring is a very unsatisfactory way of following events in the prison it was unavoidable.

We have been reassured by the degree of communication we have been able to maintain with the Governor, the deputy governors and senior officers in the prison. Remote monitoring only works if the degree of disclosure by the prison management is extensive and they are committed to helping us continue our monitoring role. We are satisfied that this is what has happened and we would like to record our appreciation of the dedication which the staff have shown in running the prison during the pandemic and the transparency they have maintained in allowing us to monitor their management activities.

During our weekly meetings we have talked to all parts of the prison management and some prisoners, examined statistics relating to key activities and looked at the way in which the prison authorities are seeking to run the prison. The Board is convinced that it is being kept in touch with

all necessary developments. The Governor has continued to be available to us as a Board and we have been notified immediately of all major developments affecting the prison.

While the events of the last year relating to the pandemic are far from ideal and create major obstacles to full and efficient monitoring, we believe that the co-operation the Board has received from the prison has enabled it to carry out its duties effectively, albeit, inevitably, in a limited way.

3.2 Main judgements

How safe is the prison?

The Board, whilst retaining its independent role, has a strong sense that over the past year HMP 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 2020 HMIP report underlined that the regime was generally a good one with a strong and successful emphasis on rehabilitation, which, from the Board's observations during the past year, continues to be the case. 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 us at the IMB.

How fairly and humanely are prisoners treated?

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. Whilst accusations of bullying are rare, these are, nevertheless, taken very seriously by the prison, and we are satisfied that the institutional culture within the prison is healthy and fair.

How well are prisoners' health and wellbeing needs met?

The Covid-19 outbreak continued to test the healthcare capabilities of the prison as never before. Whilst we were concerned that, during the pandemic, 24/7 healthcare cover onsite would be necessary, both the prison management and the healthcare providers were, and continue to be satisfied with, the existing situation and the interaction with the 111 system for external healthcare. The prisoner surveys about healthcare provision have been shared with us and show an improving and significant level of satisfaction with healthcare provision among the prisoners. We believe that 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 is the most noteworthy aspect of life at Standford Hill and we believe it is 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 successful resettlement work, which is part of the preparation for life beyond prison for those leaving Stanford Hill.

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 men with appropriate skills to look for jobs, prepare CVs and maintain links with their families. We believe that harnessing technology appropriately is a prerequisite of any successful prison in an age of advanced digital communication.

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 Stanford Hill. The proposed expansion of Stanford Hill, together with the provision of its own kitchen facilities and the on-going replacement of the old C wing with individual pods, will help Stanford Hill to capitalise further on the successful resettlement of prisoners.

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

The proposed expansion of Stanford Hill is to be welcomed, particularly the provision of onsite kitchen facilities. 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 believe that, with the creation of a kitchen, prison life would be enhanced by the provision of a dining room.

TO THE GOVERNOR

The last year has inevitably slowed the focus on instituting an NVQ qualification for staff working in the gardens, but this is an objective we believe should be pursued.

Our main concern is over the death of Mr Rahman, the oversight by healthcare and whether such an incident could occur again. While we appreciate that prison management have to trust healthcare to supervise patients according to medical practice and protocols, the system clearly did not operate properly in this case and, though it is unclear whether this may have prevented his death, we believe he did not receive the requisite care following his discharge from hospital. This is also reflected in the PPO's initial report.

3.4 Progress since the last report

Given the impact of the pandemic, the decision to remodel and expand the prison and the lower capacity throughout the year, the main emphasis has been on managing the prison within the

constraints imposed by HM Prison Service. Nevertheless, the positive prison culture has not been diluted despite the impact of Covid.

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a substantial impact on the normal regime. It was to be anticipated there would be a significant increase in safety related issues due to loss of hope, steady structure, activities and all things normally in place to motivate prisoners during their progress through Stanford Hill.

Safer custody staff have been available at all times. This includes welfare checks, in particular for those residents identified as being at risk of self-harm or harm from others, those displaying poor coping skills and those who have medical conditions making them vulnerable to Covid-19.

4.1 Reception and induction

Reception at Stanford Hill is a busy area of constant activity with prisoners leaving and returning to the prison to fulfil work commitments and contractors and a range of visitors checking in at the prison. Just over 50,000 people passed through reception in the year, a reduction of around 10% on the previous year. Maintaining services in reception has been a challenge at times given the rates of staff Covid-19 infection.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

There was one death in custody. On 31 October 2020 Mr Rahman died as a result of a cardiac arrest and Covid-19 associated pneumonia. He had spent some time in hospital and died on his return to Stanford Hill.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

There were three prisoner on prisoner assaults, on 17 June, 18 June and 26 October 2020. These were recorded as minor incidents.

Fourteen use of violence reduction documents were issued. These documents are produced either for prisoners under threat, or those using threatening behaviour. The breakdown by ethnicity was as follows:

W1: White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British 11

B1: Black/Black British: Caribbean 1

A3: Asian/Asian British: Pakistani 1

4.4 Use of Force

1.	Police investigation	2
2.	Found in possession of mobile phones, memory sticks, Wi-Fi dongle (internet access, social media)	11
3.	Drugs: use and possession	25
4.	In possession of unauthorised items	3
5.	Use and possession of alcohol	10
6.	Behaviour: eg bullying, threats to staff	8
7.	Non-compliance with prison regime	1
8.	Immigration issues IS91	5
9.	Security	3
10.	Unsuitability for ROTL	1
11.	Child protection issues	1
12.	Deportation order	1
13.	Multiple unauthorised articles	11
14.	Possible further charges	1
15.	Other reasons:	
	(a) Further charges	
	(b) New or outstanding confiscation orders	
	(c) Located in healthcare	
	(d) Breach of work-based ROTL/RDR Licence	
	(e) Immigration Issues (IS91)	
	(f) Failure to comply with the regime in open conditions, managed via CSIP	

4.5 Substance misuse

Alcohol:	287 tests completed
Positive tests:	10
Random MDTs:	19 tests
Positive tests:	1
Suspicion MDTs:	51 completed

Positive tests: 11
Risk MDTs: 67 completed
Positive tests: 11

There are several different reasons for mandatory drug tests to be carried out, as outlined below:

1. Random test for the key performance target: usually 24 per month which are computer generated.
2. Suspicion testing based on intelligence received (MIR). The prison has 72 hours from processing the MIR to complete the test.
3. Risk testing as requested by the ROTL Risk Board, to prove compliance with regime or licence conditions.
4. Alcohol breath tests are carried out on prisoners returning from ROTL.

Overall the most frequent drug find was Cannabis.

CBDT testing remains suspended due to Covid-19 restrictions because the performance hub is suspended until at least September 2021.

The Forward Trust has remained available throughout the period for counselling and support.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

Overall the prison continues to be in a well-kept and presentable condition. Wings A and B are permanent, brick-built buildings, bright and airy and commendably clean. Both wings have a plentiful supply of hand gel. C wing is currently being dismantled, and replaced with individual pods, some of which have been completed, and are now occupied by prisoners. They are of a good size, light and airy with en-suite bathrooms and furniture comprising a cupboard, desk, chair, and bed. For prisoners to be allocated a pod they must:

- a) Be in employment
- b) Have less than two years of their sentence remaining
- c) Have no negative adjudications on their record.

It is hoped that the construction work will be completed by the end of June/beginning of July 2021.

Throughout the prison the grounds have generally been kept tidy, and horticulture now has several new tractors to help maintain standards.

The laundry has had two new 'Smart' driers installed, which has increased both capacity and efficiency.

Standford Hill continues to have food brought from the kitchens at Swaleside, which is next door. Although there have, inevitably, been some issues with timing, there appear to have been fewer issues with menu choice, and the system has worked as well as possible given the circumstances.

The proposed expansion of Standford Hill and the provision of its own kitchen and possibly a dining room should alleviate this on-going problem.

5.2 Segregation, special accommodation

Standford Hill has a single cell used as a temporary holding place for those being moved back to closed conditions. There are no other segregation facilities. No problems have arisen in this context.

Prisoners returned to closed conditions:

A total of 78 prisoners were returned to closed conditions, of which 66 were for security reasons and 12 for other reasons such as further charges, or court cases.

5.3 Staff-prisoner/detainee relationships, key workers

Despite the problems associated with Covid-19, which included a period of time with no ROTL, no outside work, and no education, relations between staff, key workers and prisoners remained good. Although some prisoners lost their jobs, and training schemes and education were discontinued, there was an acceptance by the prisoners that these difficulties were caused by the circumstances of Covid-19 and were not the fault of prison staff. To help alleviate the loss of income for those in work and the lack of ROTL the prison provided a weekly 'comfort pack' and £5.00 pin credit for prisoners.

Throughout the year Standford Hill has continued with the policy of rehabilitation at its core. The Governor's clear expectations have meant Covid-19 has not had a significant effect on release arrangements, and, with the exception of one prisoner, all had accommodation to go to on release. Standford Hill was somewhat disappointed that only 10 prisoners were allowed out on the Government's early release scheme, the provisions of which seemed somewhat confusing to all concerned.

A particular example of good relations between staff and prisoners occurred following the death in custody on 31 October 2020. Despite being seriously ill, the prisoner was discharged from hospital and returned to Standford Hill. Following a check on his welfare it was discovered his condition had deteriorated. The air ambulance service was called and the prisoner was moved on to the landing outside his cell so CPR could be effectively performed, but at 11.31a.m. the prisoner was pronounced dead and covered with a shawl. The prison staff informed the police and the Coroner's office of the death. Unfortunately, the police were particularly busy that afternoon and were unable to attend to certify death was from natural causes until 4.00 p.m., after which the Coroner was able to authorise the removal of the body. This meant the deceased, who had been covered with a sheet, was lying on the floor of the landing, visible to anyone who walked by. Mr Rahman was a Muslim and many of his friends, who were also Muslim, were distressed and concerned that the usual measures taken on the death of a Muslim could not be observed. The duty governor ascertained from the imam what would represent appropriate recognition of Islamic custom and it was arranged that several prisoners should stand watch over the deceased and say prayers, although they could not touch him. These were not ideal circumstances, and it was clearly distressing to all concerned to have the body, even though it was covered, in full view for

some hours. However, the duty governor and wing staff should be commended for the sensitivity they displayed in dealing with this situation.

5.4 Equality and diversity

Standford Hill is an inclusive prison, an attitude confirmed with the arrival this year of two transgender prisoners. Both have commented on the arrangements the Governor and staff have introduced to accommodate their needs, for example adapting the divisions between showers and lavatories to ensure full privacy for both prisoners. These prisoners have now been allocated individual pods.

A significant percentage of the prisoners at Stanford Hill are from the black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) community, as the figures set out below confirm.

Ethnicity	Number	Percentage
Asian/Asian British: Indian	62	13.5
Asian/Asian British: Pakistani	63	13.8
Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi	63	13.8
Black/Black British: Caribbean	62	13.5
Black/Black British: African	64	14.0

On 25 May 2020, following George Floyd's death, there was a good deal of animated conversation amongst the prisoners, which had the potential to develop into something much worse. In addition, the fact that the majority of prison staff are white could also have exacerbated the situation. This is not something over which the prison has any control. Staff at Stanford Hill are mostly recruited from the Isle of Sheppey, and the nearby towns on the mainland, where the majority of the population are white. Most of the prisoners at Stanford Hill come from London prisons, which have a high proportion of black, Asian and minority ethnic prisoners.

The prison staff are aware of this imbalance, but from the minutes of equality and diversity meetings it is clear that Stanford Hill continues to ensure all prisoners are treated with equal respect, regardless of ethnicity or religion. We discussed the mood of the prison during the most sensitive period of the Black Lives Matter protests and were struck positively by the Governor's awareness of the concerns of black, Asian and minority ethnic prisoners and staff. This is a sensitive, on-going issue, but one that we believe the prison has responded to positive.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

The pastoral team remain strongly embedded in the culture of Stanford Hill, and the pandemic means that there have been considerable demands on their time. There are 19 different religions at Stanford Hill, the most numerous of which is the Muslim faith. Significant religious festivals of all faiths are appropriately marked.

5.6 Incentives and earned privileges

The Board did not receive any formal complaints or applications regarding IEP.

5.7 Complaints

If they have a problem prisoners are advised that they may get a swifter response if they go through the normal channels. The IMB received only four applications from the March 2020 Report to April 2021. This supports the Board's opinion that the complaints system generally works well, with officers processing complaints without prejudice. We did institute an emergency regime with our IMB clerk to institute and process any applications, but this was not used by prisoners.

5.8 Property

In contrast to the last reporting year, there have been no complaints to the Board regarding missing property. However, from speaking with reception it is clear that there have, inevitably, been some instances of missing property, although these have usually been resolved quickly. There also continue to be some problems with X-boxes, but these are more to do with losing the place on games or not being able to access games rather than problems with perceived unfairness as to who could or could not use them.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Physical healthcare

It is difficult to imagine a more challenging environment for a healthcare resource than a prison although as an open prison with individual cells Stanford Hill is significantly better placed than many prisons.

Healthcare at Stanford Hill is provided both by Integrated Care 24 and the Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust. Levels of satisfaction with the service provided are high and our own observations as a Board are that 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 located in a prefabricated block. The security door is kept locked to ensure that prisoners cannot wander into the nursing area at will 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 is effectively provided under the current regime.

Inevitably it was a difficult year with the Covid-19 outbreak and many of the challenges remain as the pandemic continues. During the Covid-19 restrictions, the healthcare team at Stanford Hill continued to administer medication in healthcare with social distancing applying and masks worn at all times. Men with complex conditions, who were part of the clinically vulnerable group listed by Public Health England, were advised to shield. Welfare checks were conducted at room doors on

a weekly basis and medication was delivered to all those who regularly received it. A protected isolation unit was set up on B wing for symptomatic patients as well as a reverse cohort unit to receive transferring prisoners who needed to have their infection risk assessed during a 14-day quarantine period. Daily welfare checks on isolated patients were carried out by members of the healthcare team during the week and by officers at weekends, when there is no on-site healthcare. We have queried this on a number of occasions but it seems that the prison management are satisfied this does not present a problem and healthcare coverage is adequate. The rationale is that as Standford Hill is an open prison, prisoners can be sent to hospital without the security issues associated with sending a prisoner from closed conditions to hospital.

All medical staff have received both vaccine doses. No healthcare nurses caught Covid-19, which attests to the effectiveness of the PPE and the precautions used in the department.

One concerning situation arose with a death in custody of Mr Rahman on 31 October 2020, which is examined in more detail elsewhere in the report. The report by the PPO raised some criticisms of the way the incident was handled by healthcare. Certainly we feel there is some cause for concern that Mr Rahman was not seen by healthcare on his return from hospital.

At the beginning of July 2020, all dentistry clinics were stopped due to Covid-19 and phone consultation with the dentist was introduced for emergencies. Optician services were also stopped. GP services were reduced to six patients per clinic. Local hospitals stopped consultations on many non-Covid assessments. The Covid-19 situation impacted heavily upon these services.

Standford Hill went live with the vaccination programme with the Astrazeneca vaccine in February 2021. Advice on vaccine priority given on 30 December 2020 by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCV1) was followed as the advice specified. Many men have declined this vaccine due to media coverage about it possibly being the cause of blood clots. The vaccine hesitancy among black, Asian and minority ethnic groups was another factor in a low vaccination rate within the prison.

First Aid courses are run as and when required, but there is usually one at least every other month. At the moment Standford Hill has 53 staff trained in First Aid and use of defibrillators, from a variety of departments. All offender supervisors are trained First Aiders, meaning there is First Aid cover available 24 hours a day.

6.2 Mental healthcare

The Governor, together with the senior prison staff, is very well aware of the need to cater for the mental wellbeing of the prisoners. Both chaplains and the imam are also very engaged with prisoners and aware of the difficulties which may arise in a prison environment. A consultant psychiatrist attends the prison for half a day a month to help those with health problems. In the section on social care we discuss the protocols for helping prisoners who may struggle with their mental health.

6.3 Social care

The provider is Kent county Council Adult Social Services.

Residents can self-refer, 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
- To make use of his room/prison safely
- Maintain a habitable home environment
- Look after their 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 health care appointments

Referrals are made via e-mail to the occupational therapist who will attend the prison in order to make a formal assessment.

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

6.4 Exercise, time out of cell, gym

During the pandemic it has not been possible for prisoners to use the well-equipped indoor gymnasium. However, during the summer months, and periods of reasonable weather during the Autumn, Winter and Spring, equipment was moved outside to enable the prisoners to use it as and when they wished. The swimming pool has remained closed throughout the pandemic.

Many prisoners also take advantage of Standford Hill's extensive grounds. They are able to exercise by running or walking 'The Long Walk' round the prison site – a distance of about 1 mile – which provides ample opportunity to get, and/or remain, fit whilst in the prison.

They are thankful for the opportunity to exercise, and this was particularly helpful for those who are normally out working or on ROTL. There is an acknowledgement by both prison staff and prisoners that the ability to use the open spaces available at Standford Hill is therapeutic and a welcome release for people denied the opportunity to leave the prison.

6.5 Drug rehabilitation

This is an area where the prison works very hard to help prisoners to combat addictions. As in so many areas the pandemic has thrown up major challenges as prisoners combat greater levels of anxiety, isolation, confinement and the disruption to their resettlement plans. There is inevitably a temptation for many to alleviate the boredom and anxiety by the use of drugs.

For prisoners who have spent a long time in closed conditions, transfer to an open prison often proves challenging, and for some the answer to these difficulties may be the use of drugs. The emphasis in CSIP's approach to the use of drugs is to encourage the prisoner to take responsibility for his drug taking. There are weekly multi-disciplinary meetings, which involve staff from residence, safer custody, equalities, security, the OMU and Standford Hill's substance misuse partners, the Forward Trust. It is often at these meetings, when individuals are challenged about their drug taking, that issues over, for example, ROTL, family issues and relationships, come to light.

6.6 Soft skills

Standford Hill, under the leadership of its Governor, maintains a strict, but understanding and compassionate, attitude towards its prisoners. For example, should a man transgress, before sending the prisoner back to closed conditions the Governor will speak with him in order to gain an understanding of the reasons behind the transgression. If circumstances permit, the prisoner will return to Standford Hill as and when appropriate. This approach works because the Governor and the prison staff are united around a common vision of rehabilitation, rules are clearly laid out, and consistently applied, and the management of the prisoners is also consistent. The Board believes these factors are the main reasons why Standford Hill has successfully turned a number of prisoners' lives around.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

It was not possible to maintain the usual high level of education provision at Standford Hill in 2020-2021 as the education building was closed to prisoners for the entire year and only open to some staff for part of the year.

At the beginning of the year it was decided that, because of lockdown, all education staff had to work from home. Packs were prepared for induction, employability, health and safety and first aid. These were handed out to all new arrivals. Further packs were prepared for English and mathematics levels 1 and 2. No employed staff were furloughed, but one teacher, who was on an agency contract, had it terminated.

The return rate for packs was disappointingly low at 38%, despite measures to encourage their return, but the 21 packs that were returned were completed successfully. In the circumstances, the low return rate was not pursued by the prison.

The education staff were occupied in preparing the building for socially distanced classroom teaching and designing and producing the packs, as well as, from July onwards, dealing with students at the office window when they had queries and/or needed help.

A recent survey on literacy in prisons by Standford Hill in association with the Shannon Trust suggested 35% of prisoners are unable to read with any degree of fluency or comprehension. Education consider this figure a little high and that all prisoners have some reading ability at Level 1. Men at this level need help and support to increase their literacy to enable them to follow the educational programmes available at Standford Hill. The Shannon Trust, a reading scheme initially

developed by prisoners to help other prisoners, plays a significant role in helping prisoners become literate.

7.2 Vocational training, work

All vocational training was stopped and the working out scheme was halted at the beginning of the reporting period due to Covid-19.

7.3 Offender management, progression

The key role of a category D prison is to prepare prisoners for the world they will face on release. Standford Hill has an excellent record in both the training of prisoners and provision of work opportunities through the working out scheme.

This year has obviously been extremely difficult, as the prison, along with the rest of society, has had to deal with the pandemic.

From April to June 2020 all activity was effectively stopped and this has had a detrimental impact. Although it was outside anyone's control this did remove hope of progression when many prisoners were involved in purposeful activity that could provide future employment. This did result in some disappointing behaviour within the prison.

From June 2020 there was a phased return to activity, starting with paid work, followed six weeks later by training and six weeks after that by community work. September saw the re-start of university study. Unfortunately further lockdowns meant only essential working out was possible provided a full risk assessment had been carried out. The Covid-19 secure protocol ensures that there is PPE and sanitation in the workplace.

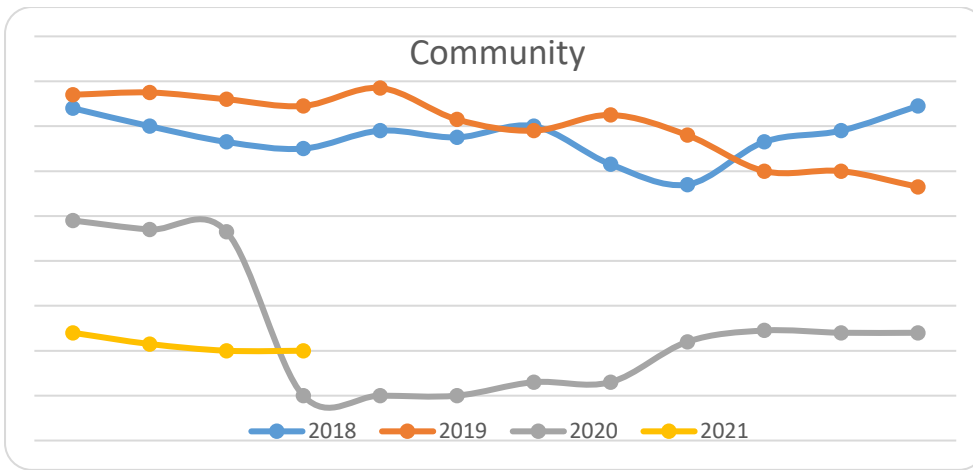
However the effect of the pandemic has had a considerable effect on the distribution of activity between community placements, training and paid work, as outlined below:

	March 2019	March 2020	March 2021
Community	132	73	20
Training	36	30	56
Paid	40	85	79

There has been a big loss of community placements because of the lockdowns and related restrictions and yet the scheme has managed to maintain high levels of involvement by changing the profile of activity undertaken.

Community placements have declined between 2020 and 2021 because of the lockdown but there has also been a reduction of prisoners, more of whom are now placed in training and outside paid work. Further community placements should become available as lockdown is withdrawn.

More generally there has been a move away from community placements to training and paid work as seen below:



7.4 Family contact

Covid-19 inevitably altered the arrangements concerning family contacts. At the start of the pandemic four computers were placed in the visits area. In order to arrange a visit a prisoner had first to apply to the activities department with details of the contact. The staff then sent an app for the visitor to download. This is similar to Zoom but conducted through a secure link. A specific time was given for the visit to take place, with the visitor using the app and the prisoner sited in the activities hub. In early 2021 family visits were resumed. The wearing of masks was mandatory, and no physical contact was allowed. This was inevitably difficult, particularly for the children and their fathers. Prison staff understood how hard this was for all parties, and maintained discipline through reminders rather than orders or instruction, an approach which worked well. There were three prisoners with relatives in Australia, and arrangements were made for these prisoners to maintain contact via supervised use of telephones.

One other opportunity valued by residents was the ability to book a one-hour slot to video call their family from the visits hall. This was facilitated with the use of prisoners' phones (which are usually kept in lockers). Residents emphasise missing family and friends especially, which is compounded by boredom and long periods of inactivity – which was said to distress people to varying degrees.

7.5 Resettlement planning

Covid-19 meant that for the majority of the reporting period it was not possible for prisoners to go out to work. To help alleviate loss of income the prison did credit each prisoner's account with £5 a month.

In the period 2020-2021 181 prisoners were released, all of whom had employment or places on training schemes, and all except one prisoner had accommodation. Under the early temporary release scheme, in which prisoners were allowed out with a tag, only ten prisoners out of the 20-30 hoped for by Stanford Hill, were judged eligible.

8. The work of the IMB

It is unnecessary to detail the difficulties faced by the IMB at Stanford Hill in carrying out its role during a pandemic. Every IMB has been impacted by the pandemic and indeed almost all areas of all aspects of life have been affected by the effective close down of society over a sustained period.

At Stanford Hill we have tried to be cognisant of some key issues:

Communications

We have been at pains to maintain regular contact with the prison authorities. While we have had less prisoner contact we have also tried to gauge the key concerns of prisoners.

Appreciating our role

The distortions caused by these unprecedented events have increased our focus on day-to-day prison activities, the study of data and, above all, our observations about how the prison management has adapted to running a prison which has spent many months in lockdown. It seems ironic that an open prison should be affected by restrictions on movement and external moves to resettle prisoners, but this has been, to a certain extent, inevitable. The fluctuations in the severity of restrictions have also proved challenging, but by and large, both the prison authorities and the prisoners under their care have adapted to this situation as well as we could expect.

The IMB exists to look at conditions and to ascertain if they are fair and applied in a clear and reasonable way. We are satisfied that Stanford Hill has discharged its responsibilities to the prisoners under its care fairly and reasonably in trying and, hopefully, unequalled circumstances.

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	8
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	8
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	8
Total number of visits to the establishment	xxx
Total number of segregation reviews attended	xxx

Applications to the IMB

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