



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

**For reporting year
1 November 2020 – 31 October 2021**

Published January 2022



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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

HMP East Sutton Park (ESP) is an open prison with a normal operating capacity of 101 women and young offenders and is located six miles from Maidstone, the county town of Kent. Capacity has been reduced to 90 as a result of the pandemic and fire safety issues. 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, voluntary work and when possible, to outside paid employment.

ESP 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. It was rated the top performing prison when the last performance tables were published.

Living accommodation

Accommodation in the house 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 three blocks. The flats that were converted in spring 2018, which stood unused for some while, are now housing 16 prisoners. During 2020, 20 pods were installed. Built on the old tennis courts, these provide additional single-room accommodation and reduce the numbers housed 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.

Training facilities

In addition to those obtainable through 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 – Oxleas
- 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. At the time of writing all the services are still not fully functioning as they were prior to the pandemic

3. Executive summary

3.1 Background to the report

This report presents the findings of the Board at ESP for the period 1 November 2020 to 31 October 2021. The Board's conclusions are based on observations made on rota visits, daily briefing reports, examination of records and documents, attendance at some internal meetings (though this was limited 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 key worker 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 within 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 too little time to serve, allowing insufficient time to prepare them properly for release. 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 were run on a much-reduced basis since the beginning of the pandemic, losing the benefit of group discussion of the prisoners' needs. We are pleased to note that they are now operating as in the past.

3.3. Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

To urge/direct the Prison Service to continue to ensure that prisoners coming to ESP 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 ensure that closed female establishments progress women, who are suitable for the resettlement regime, to come to East Sutton Park.

To approve an application the prison has made for a further 24 pods.

TO THE GOVERNOR

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

To make greater use of the incentives and earned privileges (IEP) scheme for prisoners who are disruptive or whose behaviour falls short of the standards expected by the prison.

3.4 Progress since the last report

Occupation of the flats and pods has allowed prisoners to gain a measure of self-sufficiency, which should stand them in good stead at their release. It has also given those resident in the house something to aspire to.

The success of the jobs fairs has led to potential new employers for those prisoners in outside paid employment.

The return of full sentence planning boards allowing full discussion of the prisoner's needs.

It is pleasing that the maintaining of Prison Service Orders and Instructions has been resolved.

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

4.1 Reception and induction

Most prisoners arrive at ESP from other prisons in the southeast 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.

With the Covid-19 crisis and the cessation of transfers during lockdown, no prisoners came to ESP, and numbers dropped. However, from mid-2021, prisoners began arriving in larger numbers and the population is now generally in the low to 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 ESP. The independent living flats were brought into use in 2020, which meant that there were fewer prisoners sharing rooms in the main building. Numbers in the main building have dropped to around 48.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

The bi-monthly safer custody meetings continued to be held throughout the lockdown at the beginning of the year; although it was not possible to attend in person until July. The minutes were provided to the IMB. Representatives from the various departments were normally present and the prisoners' representatives were present for all of the equalities meetings and for part of the safer custody meetings.

The IMB is regularly informed when assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) reviews are to take place. Only a few ACCT documents have been opened during the year and regular reviews are held. They are usually well conducted, demonstrating a good level of care. There was a slight increase in opening of ACCTs when Covid restrictions were at their most stringent but they have returned to the normal low level. Members of the Board inspected the open files periodically and found the quality of the documentation to be good. There have been no deaths in custody in the past year.

The Board received a presentation on the new documentation when it was first introduced in May 2021. Staff found the process of filling in the new ACCT document far more onerous in the early weeks after its introduction, but this now seems to be running more smoothly.

The number of Listeners has fluctuated throughout the year as residents were released. It has been recognised that new Listeners will need to be trained during the winter as most of the current ones are due for release in early 2022. Traditionally, ESP has relied on women having been Listeners at a previous prison.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

As ESP is an open prison, there are no specific facilities for self-isolation.

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

4.4 Use of force

There has been virtually no use of force in the reporting year and any violence, of which there has been very little, or aggressive behaviour is dealt with through a combination of mediation, adjudication and use of the IEP scheme procedures. One incident, when a long-term prisoner was returned to closed conditions due to her behaviour over a number of weeks, required some skilful planning by the officer overseeing her departure to ensure the situation did not deteriorate.

4.5 Preventing illicit items

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 provided in the main house in shared rooms of two or three residents. There are also four flats (the Willows) and 20 single-occupancy units (the Oaks) within the grounds housing up to 36 residents. Difficulties can arise in the main house between residents sharing a room but there is an effective mediation scheme which usually resolves problems. Sharing a bedroom has its downside but also its positives. Residents have been observed getting to know each other and supporting each other, for example when facing an adjudication. This support has been particularly noticeable when a resident has faced a personal crisis such as a bereavement. It is also beneficial for residents to get used to the give and take that they will have to exercise when they leave prison and return to their families. Negotiations between prisoners have to take place, e.g. when the television is on and which channel to watch.

Residents in the Willows and the Oaks have repeatedly told the IMB what a sense of privilege they feel living in this more relaxed environment where they have to take a lot more responsibility for themselves. This involves keeping their area clean and tidy and taking more responsibility for getting themselves out to work and sorting out their laundry. Residents are assessed before moving to this accommodation and most go out to work in the community. It replicates more what it will be like for them on release.

It is to be hoped that the application the prison has made for more pods will be successful. This will enable the operational capacity of the prison to be increased, giving more women the opportunity to adjust to life outside prison before the end of their sentence.

Food is monitored by the IMB and is of a consistently high standard in quality and quantity. Dietary requirements for health and religious needs are met. There have been complaints that residents returning to the prison from work after the evening meal have not been receiving the food they ordered, or the quantity expected. Action has been taken to rectify this matter. There have been occasional inappropriate substitutions by suppliers, for example pork instead of halal sausages.

5.2 Segregation

The prison has no facility for segregation. Prisoners are returned to closed conditions in the event of serious breaches of prison discipline, usually following a special circumstances risk board. The exception would be where there was any immediate risk to prisoners or staff. Ten prisoners were returned to closed conditions in the reporting year.

5.3 Staff/prisoner relationships, key workers

Although some concern was raised by HMIP that relationships were not as good as in the past between residents and staff, the Board believes that, generally, staff are extremely supportive to the prisoners, encouraging them to work positively towards their release. Restrictions due to Covid did cause considerable frustration among prisoners, and staff absences did not help. Since a return to a more normal regime, relationships have improved and appear nearer to those in the past.

5.4 Equality and diversity

Black History Month was again successfully celebrated. There was a very good display in the library of useful reading material for those wishing to explore the subject more deeply. During the year, celebrations are held to mark festivals in relation to all religions/beliefs, including Holocaust Memorial Day, Chinese New Year and Stephen Lawrence Day. This will often include a meal appropriate to the occasion.

As usual, during Ramadan, appropriate arrangements were made to save meals for those women who are practising Muslims.

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.

The prison chaplain resigned unexpectedly for personal reasons in the autumn with the result that many of the forums had to be cancelled, although the race forum was held. A new chaplain is due to be appointed in the near future.

5.6 Incentives and earned privileges (IEP)

The IEP system provides for prisoners to be on enhanced, standard or basic regime with the level of privileges differing accordingly. As one might expect in an open prison, the majority of prisoners have enhanced status. At the end of the reporting year, 74 prisoners were enhanced and two were standard. One prisoner remained enhanced for a long time despite being a major disruptive influence before being reduced to basic. Another was still enhanced at the end of the reporting year despite having several guilty findings at adjudications relating to her behaviour. The Board believes that greater use of the IEP system could be made to deal with disruptive behaviour and encourage harmony between prisoners.

5.7 Complaints

Complaints rose by just over 100 in the reporting year, mainly in the categories 'other' and 'confidential access'. The rise in confidential access complaints was due to one prolific prisoner, who submitted 31, plus 10 other, in a three month period despite being limited to one a day, rationing that followed her from her previous prison. The quality of responses to complaints was monitored regularly at senior management team meetings.

5.8 Property

Prisoners' property within ESP 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 again 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 Healthcare general

Healthcare is provided by Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust. It was assessed as good in a recent report by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) published March 2019. There is no formal assessment of its performance at ESP. The healthcare team is managed from HMP Maidstone.

Staffing comprises one Registered Nurse and one Band 4 Nurse who work full time. Administration staff work shifts each Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. A GP attends on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The dentist is on site in a mobile unit on Thursday every other week. Opticians are on site the first Tuesday of the month. A podiatrist is present every two months. The healthcare department is open 08:30-15:30 Monday to Friday.

6.2 Physical healthcare

On arrival at ESP, prisoners have a medical assessment within 24 hours. At their sentence planning board, both physical and mental wellbeing is discussed, and targets are set appropriately. Newly transferred prisoners are informed about healthcare by the reception orderly. There is always a healthcare professional in attendance at an ACCT.

When necessary, prisoners are referred to 111/999 in good time. Entries in the observation book show regular out-of-hours interventions that are timely and sensitively handled by staff. Prisoners are risk assessed prior to attending an appointment and will attend on their own or will be escorted.

The healthcare department is in suitable accommodation separate from the main residential area of the prison. Prisoners request medical appointments via an application and requests are normally met within one or two days. The department is kept locked so there is a bell to gain entry for appointments. Medications are administered at set times in the day. It is possible to get an on-the-spot appointment from 08:15-09:00; pre-booked appointments are from 09:00-12:00.

The administering of medications at the weekends is presenting ongoing problems. At a recent Voice meeting, staff and residents discussed the possible use of lockers to store their medicine. This system is problematic for a number of reasons; supervision of the lockers when staff are already stretched, ad-hoc times of day for those women at work and also those who work night shifts. This remains an issue.

There were previously issues with waiting times for the dentist while a new mobile dental unit took longer than anticipated to materialise, arriving on site mid-2021. At the time of writing there is no waiting list.

In the event of a pregnancy the healthcare team refers patients to the perinatal team at Northumberland Court Surgery. Midwife and neonatal support services are also available, as well as smear tests. All appointments have to be booked in advance and there is currently no-one on the waiting list. Northumberland Court is also a venue for planned staff training.

In early 2021, the number of Covid cases rose quite steeply. However, as residents began to receive the Covid jab, things slowly came under control with vigilance from staff and the

use of weekly testing and mask wearing.

6.3 Mental health

This year the mental health team have completed six mental health awareness drop-in sessions for residents. In March, four training sessions were run by residents, which were very successful. A virtual conference for HMPPS on neurodiversity in October, the title of which was 'What Good Looks Like', included presentations from two residents from ESP, who described their personal mental health journey. In both cases the women were not adequately diagnosed until they were in custody. It was after they were transferred to ESP that the prison put together a constructive and effective care plan. Their presentation was very well received. Staff take opportunities regularly for their continuing professional development: for example, one-day training on managing complex behaviour, mental health and nature and social prescribing.

6.4 Social care

The prison organizes assessments for social care, learning disability and section 117 of the Mental Health Act.

6.5 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

Forward Trust works within the prison to help with drug and alcohol dependence.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

Education provides an essential element in rehabilitation of residents and their return to society; education needs are identified at sentence planning boards soon after a resident's arrival at ESP.

The education provider is Weston College.

Education providers must be aware of and respond positively to the widely differing needs of residents, whose abilities range from semi-literate to high degree level; and some of whom suffer from physical or psychological barriers to educational achievement. Awareness of these barriers and the ability to offer different teaching styles are demonstrated at ESP: a special keyboard for a resident with limited finger mobility and bite-size information packages for one with limited attention-span.

A problem in accessing education is the conflicting priorities between outside paid employment and being available during normal working hours in ESP. Working for outside employers on ROTL and earning a normal wage is a very important element in rehabilitation, both for social development and also to save money prior to release, but the resident is then not able to attend classes in ESP. In addition, some residents have time-critical jobs within ESP so cannot always be released at times which coincide with some lesson subjects. Prison staff are aware of these conflicts and make efforts to minimise them.

The education manager uses a system to track student progression, starting with each resident on their arrival at ESP and plotting their journey, from initial assessment of their mathematics and English, to 'where they are now' and working outside in the community.

Between 24 March 2020 and 12 April 2021, only non-accredited learning could be offered to residents.

With the easing of Covid restrictions and detailed risk assessments already completed, teaching spaces were reorganised to facilitate safe social distancing, permitting the education department to resume face-to-face classroom teaching on 12 April 2021, though with reduced numbers in any one room. Accordingly, accredited learning and qualifications were again available.

The reporting data below covers 12 April 2021 to 22 November 2021.

Accredited learning data table

Course name	Starts	Completed	Awaiting Results
Award in Barista Skills	34	30	12
Award in Food Safety in Catering	26	26	16
Award in IT User Skills (ITQ)	20	7	2
Award in IT User Skills			

(ITQ)	15	10	2
Desktop Publishing Software	2		
Functional Skills qualification in English	6	2	
Functional Skills qualification in English	11	4	1
Functional Skills Qualification in English (Entry 3)	3		
Functional Skills qualification in Mathematics	6	1	
Functional Skills qualification in Mathematics	4	2	1
Functional Skills Qualification in Mathematics (Entry 3)	6	3	
Introduction to the principles of setting up a business	9	9	
Introductory Certificate in Customer Service	36	33	3
Presentation Software	3	2	
Presentation Software	1	1	
Spreadsheet Software	1		
Understanding	32	32	

assertive behaviour			
Word Processing Software	7	4	
Word Processing Software	1		
	223	166	38

The (written) learner packs that were the focus for 2020/21 have still been used where appropriate as a supplement for students keen to do further learning outside teaching times. Students have been keen to sit both functional and vocational exams, learning new skills and preparing thoroughly for work in the community.

The data below are the non-accredited courses that have been either delivered or a few learner packs handed out where the prison has ordered it from 12 April 2021.

Non-accredited learning data table

Course name	Unique Learners	Starts	Completed
Assertiveness Single Use Pack	4	4	2
Barista L2 Single Use Pack	9	9	2
English EL Course	2	2	
English L1 Course	1	1	
M/Personal Fin L1 Single Use	1	1	1
Managing Personal Finance L1	2	2	
Maths EL Course	1	1	
Maths L2 Course	1	1	
Pathways Course	48	48	48

Presenting Well	7	7	7
Steps to the Gate Part 1	41	41	41
Steps to the Gate Part 2	44	44	44
WCP 1 (ESP)	1	1	1
WCP 3 (ESP)	1	1	1
	68	163	147

Some of the classes may not have an accredited outcome but serve the purpose of meeting the needs of the students, supporting them for release. The Pathways course delivers a vital role for students in their first few weeks of being at ESP and preparing them for their sentence planning board. The tutor leading the course signposts and sets the focus for the learners to begin to access the support given for the different HMPPS pathways including accommodation, education, training and employment, drugs and alcohol, mental and physical health, finance and debt, relationships and attitudes, thinking and behaviour. Since April, 48 residents have been transferred into ESP and 100% completed the Pathways course.

The 'Steps to the Gate' modules 1 and 2 teach students to build their own CV, practise developing interview skills in a safe environment and increase self-confidence. Assisting residents to create their CV early after arrival at ESP encourages them to look outwards and consider resettlement and as they gain qualifications and experience, they can add to their existing CV.

Modern technology and digital skills have become a priority across the prison estate and ESP has been working on developing its own short workshop for residents unconfident in using electronic devices, including mobile phones. For long-term residents, these are essential skills to help them when they start going out on ROTL. Moving into 2022, Weston looks forward to embedding essential digital skills across its curriculum in both functional and vocational areas.

Distance learning

During lockdown, the number of those involved in remote learning increased. However, although the numbers have reduced in 2021/22 as residents have been able to look for outside work on ROTL, those engaged still remain at more than a quarter of the current prison capacity. There have been some exceptional achievements this academic year and one student obtained her Open University BSc with honours. Others have successfully completed their first-, second- or third- year studies with the Open University. All students who handed in their full number of assignments have this year passed.

Library services are provided by Kent County Council (KCC) with a librarian attending two days a week, supplemented by a library orderly. A broad range of book subjects is on offer, ranging from leisure through personal development to employment. KCC will also order books requested by residents and the normal booking fee is waived. Newspapers are also available in the library and main building.

The book club had proved very popular during lock-down but was not operating at the time of reporting. Covid restrictions had prevented outside authors coming in to give lectures, as had happened in past.

An initiative which is proving very popular is Storybook Mums where residents are able to make video (or voice only, according to personal choice) recordings of them reading children's stories, which they are able then to send home to families.

The library also has computers connected only to the prison intranet where residents can write papers for their education, topical cultural projects, CVs etc.

The library is responsible for maintaining copies of Prison Service Orders and Instructions. Hard copies of the 'top ten' were kept updated and any others were provided by residents asking East Sutton Park officers or the KCC library at HMP Maidstone for copies.

7.2 Vocational training, work

Residents at ESP are expected to work or undertake education, unless they are retired, either by age or medically. Virtually all residents are engaged in education or work in some capacity.

The learning, skills and employment team has excellent links with outside employers and some two-thirds of residents are working with external employers on standard rates of pay. Most are employed in retail or administration, but some have jobs in hospitality, catering and horticulture-related posts. Most jobs are within reasonable reach of ESP but a few residents commute to London.

An initiative not previously reported is a wardrobe of clothes residents can borrow for interviews, if they lack these personally.

Unfortunately, employment fairs – where local employers set up publicity stands to encourage residents to apply for posts with them – had to be cancelled because of Covid, but despite reduced employment opportunities in the community and furloughs, residents from ESP have still been in demand by quality employers. The fairs have now resumed.

Weston also provides vocational training (except for agriculture/horticulture, gym and first aid covered by in house training).

Many residents have been keen as part of their sentence plan to complete the Level 2 award in barista skills. To date, 34 students have passed the barista with a 100% success, 26 students have completed the Level 2 food safety with catering and a further 36 have passed the customer service that is embedded in the barista. All three courses are accredited with City and Guilds.

The Presenting Well initiative helps prepare learners for the etiquette of the workplace and a number of residents have observed how much this course has given them confidence to step out into the world of work. Despite the difficulties of Covid, the year has been relatively successful for the education department.

The farm, with an increase in the number of polytunnels, and the gardens are a substantial source of employment at the prison. One example has been Growing for Good, with a contract with the Glasshouse to use the greenhouses to grow and pot house plants for sale.

The Glasshouse is a small organisation whose aim is to assist prisoners by employing them to grow plants that are subsequently sold in their shop. They rent glasshouses 1 and 2 at ESP from the Ministry of Justice and currently have two residents working for them. Plants

are sold in their shop locally and they have contracts to supply flowers to offices in London and to look after them. The residents are involved and go to London if required. The Glasshouse also facilitates NVQs. One of the employed residents told the IMB recently that she was very grateful for the opportunity to gain a qualification and the support she is receiving.

As Covid-19 continued and the prison had fewer and fewer residents, the numbers available for farms and gardens work diminished considerably, creating problems keeping on all the jobs. An example of a fall-out from this was the decision to end livery services on the farm.

Some prisoners have expressed frustration with Ixion, due to the length of time it takes to access them.

7.3 Offender management, progression

Despite Covid restrictions, newcomers' sentence plans were produced. In the past, all interested parties attended the sentence planning board, but due to Covid, the sentence plan was produced by the prisoner with her offender manager, with others contributing remotely. The Board welcomes the recent return to the former method, which was more advantageous for the prisoner in that she was able to speak to the group and any appropriate discussion could take place.

ROTL restrictions due to Covid had a considerable effect on prisoners. Whilst some prisoners were able to go out to their work, others could not and social ROTLs were suspended. Prisoners were allowed FaceTime and Purple Visit calls to keep in touch with their families. The improving situation has allowed resumption of ROTLs.

During the year there were five residents serving indeterminate sentences for public protection. All were 10 years beyond their tariff expiry dates. Two were released (one has been recalled), two are now in closed conditions and one is still at ESP awaiting the Parole Board's decision.

7.4 Family contact

There is a family engagement manager and a family engagement worker. The former works principally with the new receptions in order to gain evidence to support childcare release. This enables a resident who was the main carer for a child before coming to prison to have ROTL with that child to maintain the relationship. The manager liaises with social services and schools as necessary and supervises contact on FaceTime if required. The manager also provides a 'dignity bag' for residents on release which contains toiletries and other necessities. This is a vital role in assisting the residents. Visits to the prison by children are an important part of maintaining the family tie and often include the children visiting the prison farm. This makes the visit even more of a happy occasion for mother and children.

7.5 Resettlement Planning

A lot of effort is put in by the prison to ensure that residents leave with accommodation and, if appropriate, a job to go to. A lot of support is offered by the resident's key worker and at the sentence planning meetings.

Resettlement meetings have now recommenced monthly as the pandemic has eased. Reports are submitted to the meeting on accommodation, resettlement, education, debt and finance and drug misuse.

The prison has maintained its commitment to getting residents into outside employment, despite adverse consequences for servicing internal tasks.

A recent employment fair held in the prison for prospective employers to meet the residents was oversubscribed. It was anticipated that up to 20 prospective employers would apply to attend but more applied and could not be accommodated. A majority of work is at supermarkets in Kent. One supermarket employs the majority of those who work. They are pleased with the standard of employee and also appreciative of the support that the residents receive from the prison. Some of the work is overnight. The prison is seeking a wider range of employment opportunities to give residents a greater choice of employment.

Prospective workplaces are checked before a resident can work there and checks are made from time to time by prison staff to ensure the residents are where they should be. Support is given in writing a CV and also the letter for the employer disclosing that they are a serving prisoner and what their offence is. There have been one or two instances where other employees have found out that they are working alongside serving residents and this has caused the resident some embarrassment. Prison staff have provided support in such cases.

Some residents have been so successful at work that they have been promoted and are now managers.

Travel to and from work is organised by the resident. A prison minibus can be booked to take them to a nearby railway station or nearby town.

Employers with multiple outlets are often able to offer employment to the resident in an area close to their resettlement home. This provides continuity for the resident and an income on release.

8. The work of the IMB

Normally 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 the residents' time at ESP. In addition, meetings are monitored, and targeted reviews are carried out. However, from Christmas until mid-February, monitoring was done remotely with reliance mainly on the daily briefing reports and telephone calls to governors.

During that period, Board meetings were held by conference call or Zoom. There has been little or no monitoring of risk and sentence planning boards due to revised arrangements for their conduct due to Covid.

The Governor, Deputy Governor or an alternate attends meetings of the Board to give a report on the prison and to answer questions.

Board Statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	9
Number of Board members at start of period	8
Number of Board members at end of reporting period	7
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	1
Number of members leaving within the reporting period	2
Total number of Board meetings	12
Number of attendances at Board meeting	74
Number of attendances other than Board meetings	99
Total number of visits to the prison including all meetings	143
Attendance at Zoom board meetings	30
Total number of applications received	44
Date of Annual Team Performance Review	5 March 2021

Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Current Year	Last Year
A	Accommodation	3	2
B	Adjudication	1	0
C	Equality/Diversity/Religion	0	2
D	Education/training/employment	2	0
E1	Family/visits	6	2
E2	Finance/Pay	2	0
F	Food/kitchen	4	0
G	Health related	3	0
H1	Property (within current establishment)	2	1
H2	Property (other prison/transfer)	3	7
H3	Canteen/Facilities/Catalogue/Argos	0	0
I	Sentence related inc ROTL/Parole/Re-cat	6	8
J	Staff/Prisoner related inc bullying	7	1
K	Transfers	0	0
L	Miscellaneous	5	3
	Total number of applications	44	26



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