



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

**For reporting year
April 2021 – March 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

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. The replacement of the original C wing with 80 individual accommodation pods has now been completed.

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 Standford Hill is the resettlement of prisoners and enabling them to avoid reoffending on release.

3. Executive summary

3.1 Background to the report

Despite the challenges that COVID presented as it continued to ravage the nation Stanford Hill was able to function effectively as a prison. When the period of this Report began in April 2021 the nation was still trying to cope with the Alpha variant, which originated in the exact area where Stanford Hill is situated, in a cluster of three prisons. The challenge for an open prison is that many of the prisoners work in the community and this poses an additional problem in trying to prevent the pandemic spreading in the prison. We were extremely impressed as a Board with the rigour with which the prison strove to contain the virus. There was an effective testing regime and COVID precautions were rigidly applied. This led to a very low infection rate among prisoners but the prison, like many others, was handicapped by regular staff absences.

We continue to believe that Stanford Hill is a well-run and effective prison. Our Board strived to keep links with the prison, during periods when we were unable to visit, through Zoom meetings, and although our numbers were reduced to six through the death of one of our team, and the sabbatical of another, we feel that we were able to mount an effective and extensive monitoring of the operation.

During the period under review the Governor changed, after a very enlightened and productive period in office. The new Governor has made an extremely progressive start, having had experience of the prison earlier in his career, and sharing the vision of what open prisons can achieve if the operation performs as a cohesive unit.

The new Governor was initially very concerned by the high staff sickness rate. When he took over the average annual time lost per member of staff through sickness was 28 days. The Governor has sought to reduce this through a variety of measures and the figure has come down to 18 days. We have been impressed by the willingness to tackle this issue.

Establishment	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	YTD
Stanford Hill	13.38	18.09	21.52	23.88	24.22	18.34	16.83	18.63	20.48	21.56	9.89	15.61	18.34
KSS Group	11.51	12.26	12.1	14.47	14.55	14.6	14.59	14.18	16.37	18.8	12.72	16.44	14.16

One real concern for us as a Board has been the performance of GFSL in providing services to the prison. We have found many examples of their lack of attention to detail and failure to rectify problems in a reasonable period of time. For example, the prison laundry has been beset with mechanical problems, with excessive delays in dealing with malfunctioning machines and the inability to sort out problems as and when they occur. Similarly, we were horrified to find that a raft of impressive machinery acquired for use in the Gardens Department was purchased without the appropriate warranties and in some situations was fundamentally unsafe to use. On more than one occasion we have heard the comment 'GFSL is Carrillion with another badge'. Our view is that the service provided by GFSL and its oversight of suppliers is woefully inadequate.

We also believe than an improvement in the technological support available would significantly improve the way the prison operates. Internet facilities are very sporadic inside the prison and this restricts the ability of prisoners to correspond with potential future employers, craft CVs and learn and develop the necessary technological skills

they will require on release from prison. Additionally, it would be a huge saving in staff resources, and much more efficient, if prisoners on ROTL or in work placements could be checked technologically. We believe that the technology exists to check on prisoners' whereabouts, which would save staff having to make long, time-consuming journeys to carry out basic checks on prisoner activity outside the prison.

The other key area of concern is that the state of several of the buildings is deteriorating and, in view of the fact the proposed expansion of the prison has been delayed, attention must be given to renovating parts of the estate. In some situations, for example the patio outside the Visits area, which is intended for use by young children, the building work is unfinished and potentially dangerous.

Despite these concerns the principles on which Standford Hill has operated in recent years have been effectively upheld and it continues to be an open prison with an excellent reoffending rate and a philosophy that provides prisoners with a vision, together with a variety of ways, in which to turn their lives around.

3.2 Main judgements

How safe is the prison?

Standford Hill IMB continues to have a strong sense that HMP Standford Hill has been a very well-run prison. During the current reporting period a new Governor was appointed, which might have been unsettling for both staff and prisoners. However, the new Governor established himself quickly, and morale remained good among prisoners and staff. The prison regime continues to focus strongly on the successful rehabilitation of prisoners. The Governor is clear in his expectations both of his staff and prisoners, resulting in a strong joint sense of purpose within the prison. The new Governor communicates effectively with staff and prisoners, and he has made himself freely available to us at IMB.

How fairly and humanely are prisoners treated?

Within the prison the treatment of prisoners is respectful and humane. The new Governor's regime continues to balance firm discipline with respect and understanding. Despite the very few inevitable complaints these are taken seriously by the prison as a whole, and the Board is satisfied that the culture at Standford Hill 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 considerably and was an added and unwanted stress on top of the normal challenges presented by providing appropriate healthcare priorities in a prison. The vaccination programme was pursued conscientiously but was frustrated to a certain extent by the reluctance of a number of prisoners to be vaccinated despite very strong encouragement by prison management.

The prison healthcare system, responsibility for which transfers to Oxleas Foundation Trust from April 1st, seems to work satisfactorily although our impression is that staffing levels are only just adequate and staff absences put services under strain. The healthcare staff appear committed and competent and provide a very satisfactory service to prisoners.

How well are prisoners progressed towards successful resettlement?

The key role of a Category D prison is to prepare prisoners for their release back into society. To that end the provision of skills and work experience is crucial. We have highlighted in previous years that Stanford Hill has performed well in this area and despite the challenges of COVID the performance has again been good. The Working Out Scheme (WOS), co-ordinates these activities.

The prison provides a good education service focussing on key skills required for life outside prison. (Please refer to separate Education section)

In order to help provide prisoners with employment skills the prison provides a range of training in sectors where employment is available on release.

For example, an outside employer provided training for work on the railways, which has now been converted into an 8-week course run within the prison by East Kent College. This results in a Personal Track Safety Certificate – a mandatory requirement for track work. There are many jobs available in this sector.

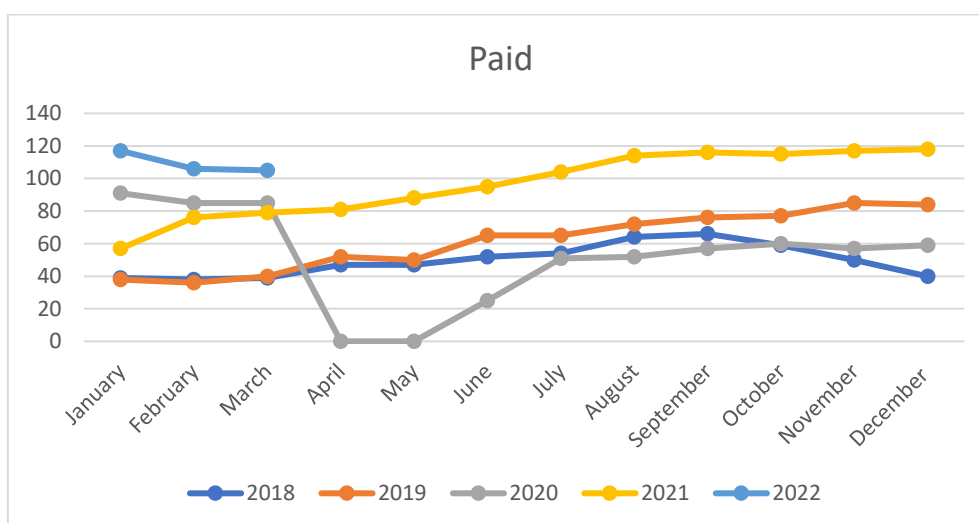
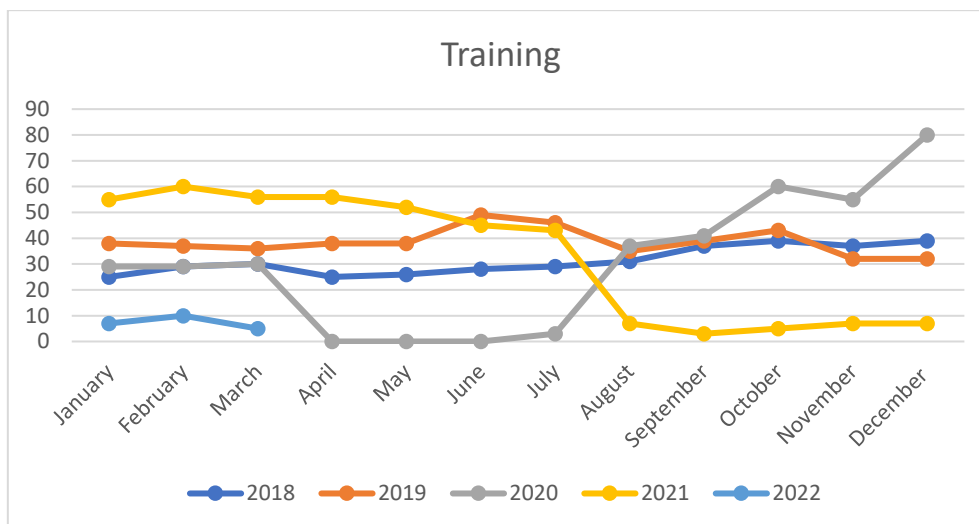
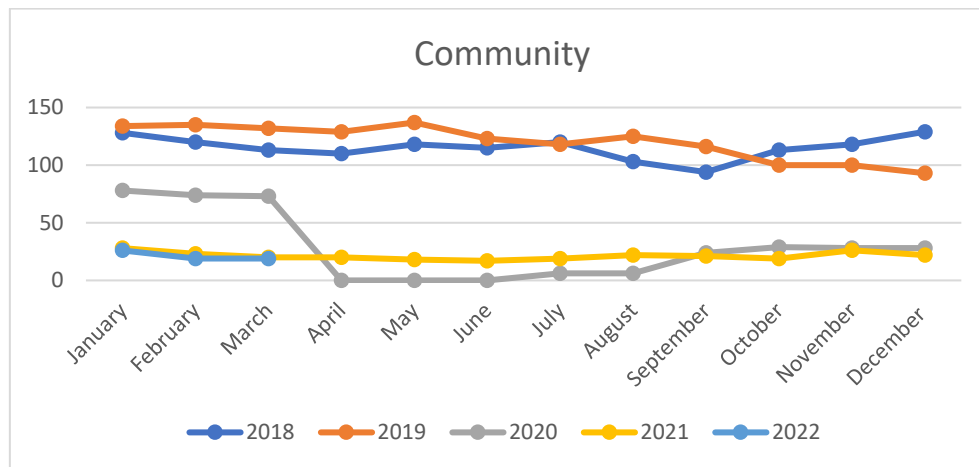
Other training includes:-

- Construction/Recycling
- Transport/Storage
- HGV Class 2
- Forklift/Dumper
- Vehicle Marshalling
- Streetworks
- Plumbing: Levels 1, 2 and 3
- Electrical installations: Levels 1, 2 and 3

Although WOS co-ordinates the process by which prisoners obtain work opportunities it is fundamentally the responsibility of the prisoner to find those opportunities.

During the COVID pandemic the focus was on paid work and this continued as much as possible during all the restrictions. However, WOS also holds discussions with outside employers to ensure a wide range of opportunities is available. For example, opportunities have recently been identified at DHL. Many employers are currently looking for workers and if these roles are able to be filled by prisoners, this can supply well-paid and stable work on release.

There has been a significant change in recent years, with the focus on moving Prisoners from In-Work Training and Community Work into paid employment, as shown in the following graphs.



As at March 2022 the numbers directly involved in the WOS were:

WOS ROTL Figures	
Community Work	20
Training at Paid Placement	11
Education	7
Paid Work	103
	141

These figures show that around 30% of the Prison population is directly involved in the WOS. This is a significant achievement and continues to improve.

It is worth mentioning that, for release to be successful, Prisoners must have accommodation on release. In the year under review no prisoners were released without outside accommodation.

The objective of all this work is to ensure prisoners do not return to prison and Stanford Hill has calculated re-offending after release as being:

Within 3 years of release: 7.09%

Within 2 years: 5.93%

These figures support the evidence that Stanford Hill's approach is very successful in preparing prisoners for life after prison.

3.3 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

We believe that Stanford Hill represents a good model for a Category D resettlement prison.

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

The proposed expansion of Stanford Hill, together with the successful introduction of the individual pods which replaced the old C wing, has helped, and continues to help Stanford Hill capitalise further on the very successful resettlement of prisoners. In order to continue this successful resettlement, we consider that the urgent refurbishment of the prison is a priority. With the new buildings, this may give rise to a perception of inequality of accommodation in various sections of the prison.

We continue to believe that the rehabilitation programme would be much enhanced by the creation of an Internet Room, which would enable prisoners to plan their futures independently, and to communicate more efficiently with future employers.

We continue to believe that, with the creation of a proper kitchen, prison life would be enhanced by the provision of a dedicated dining room.

We have not been at all impressed by the performance of GFSL throughout the prison. This has been particularly evident in relation to the prison laundry, where their oversight and maintenance of machinery has been lamentable. It appears to the Board that communications between GFSL and the prison needs to improve radically in order to ensure that those parts of the prison dependent on the work of GFSL are enabled to run smoothly.

TO THE GOVERNOR

3.4 Progress since the last report

During the pandemic the Prison was run effectively. Work on resettlement and prevention of reoffending, and the increased focus on results, is testament to the effectiveness of the measures taken by the prison to ensure the successful rehabilitation of prisoners on release. This is the biggest achievement of the prison.

It was gratifying to see substantial improvement in staff sickness levels, and we hope you are able to continue to improve this vital aspect of the prison's function.

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

4.1 Reception and induction

Reception is a busy part of the prison. Prisoners continued with outside employment during the pandemic, so numbers moving through Reception were not significantly reduced. Staff continue to deal with prisoners sympathetically and efficiently.

During lockdown, and whilst only able to carry out monitoring at a distance, Board members were not able to fulfil their commitment to the Induction process. Some delays were experienced during a period of increased staff sickness, but at the time of this Report the situation had improved significantly.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

For some prisoners who have spent many years in closed conditions, transfer and subsequent adjustment to the different regime of an Open prison can prove very difficult. Well aware of this, staff at Standford Hill staff are quick to recognise those prisoners who are in need of special attention and safe guarding.

There were no suicides during the reporting period. 2 ACCTs were opened and closed.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

It is commendable that, in Standford Hill, there were no reports of violent incidents throughout the reporting period.

4.4 Use of force

There were no instances where force was used inappropriately in the period under review.

A total of 137 prisoners were returned to closed between 1st April 2021 and 31st March 2022, for the following reasons:

1. IS91	4
2. Breach of ROTL/Licence	7
3. Assault and heroin find	1
4. Possession of mobile phone	24
5. Security Intelligence	2
6. Use/possession of drugs	50
7. Returned from RDR under the influence of alcohol for second time	10
8. Barricade in MDT suite/under influence	2

9. Immigration	2
10. Under threat	1
11. Own safety	1
12. Bullying	2
13. Further Charges	2
14. On ACCT and under threat	1
15. Multi-disciplinary	1
16. Temporary Release Failure on STEARS (System to Enable Accompanied ROTL)	1
17. Court Appearance for further charges	1
18. Deterioration of Behaviour, proven adjudications	1
19. Violent incident, trafficking	2
20. MDT failures	9
21. Medical reasons	1
22. Abscond from Standford Hill	1
23. Public Protection and Security Investigation	1
24. Non-compliance, proven adjudications	1
25. Found outside prison perimeter	1
26. Pending Investigation	2
27. Allowing himself to be photographed, accessing social media	1
28. Posting a letter to the home address of a member of staff from HMP Elmley	1
29. OASys incomplete: Payment Plus issues unresolved	1
30. Failed Meds check twice	1
31. Car search: found in possession of £700, tobacco, Viagra, large quantity of alcohol	1

4.5 Preventing illicit items

Mandatory Tests: 165

Alcohol Tests: 1,2978

Compact Based: 0 due to COVID

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

The buildings at Standford Hill, many of which are old, are in need of attention, and not all of them are all able to withstand the increasing prevalence of unusual weather conditions. The growing frequency of strong winds and storms sweeping across the Isle of Sheppey can be damaging, as evidenced this year when a roof was blown off one of the buildings. Fortunately, no one was injured, but the existing fabric of many of the buildings, including the gym, the Café and the shop, remains a concern, and renders them vulnerable to damage in the future.

Despite being of national and international significance because of its association with names such as Brabazon, the Wright brothers, the Short brothers and Charles Roll, who were connected with the beginning and building of flight, the hangar on the prison site continues to fall into disrepair, and if nothing is done to remedy this it will soon be beyond help. Over the years, various bodies have surveyed the building, but no action has been taken. Its total collapse cannot be far away unless something is done. The Prison Service and the Government will be shamed if such an historic building is allowed to disappear. As quoted by Historic England in the Report by the Ministry of Justice, Estates Directorate, published in January 2017, the hangar is “the most historically significant structure associated with the pioneering phase of powered flight to have survived anywhere in Europe or America.’

The patio outside the Visits area in its present, incomplete, state poses a serious risk of injury to both visitors and staff. As many of the visitors are children, who will doubtless be less aware of any potential danger, this needs to be repaired as a matter of urgency.

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 be in employment, have less than two years of their sentence remaining and have no adjudications on their record.

The first phase of this building was completed in 2021. There are currently 84 pods in use, of which 80 are used for prisoner accommodation and four are used as Prisoner Isolation Units. The men in C wing eat in their own common room or their individual pod. During Phase 1 of the proposed expansion of Standford Hill, due to begin in 2023 a further 80 Pods are planned, and a further 80 during stage 2, making a total of 240 Pods.

Standford Hill continues to have food brought from the kitchens at Swaleside. This system is far from ideal and there are concerns at both prisons about its efficiency. However, Swaleside Board does not believe this system works well for them. On occasion there are problems with transporting the food from one site to another, leading to a delay, but the Board have received no complaints from prisoners, who remain tolerant of the difficulties arising from the arrangement. There are few

complaints about the food. The proposed expansion of Stanford Hill, the provision of its own kitchen and a dining room should alleviate this on-going problem.

5.2 Segregation, special accommodation

Stanford 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.

5.3 Equality and diversity

The majority of prisoners at Stanford Hill are from London prisons, in which there are disproportionately high numbers of prisoners from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities. In contrast, the majority of staff at Stanford Hill are recruited from the Isle of Sheppey, and towns on the mainland, where the majority of the population is white. Despite this imbalance, relations between staff and prisoners are good. There are regular BAME meetings, which are routinely observed by IMB members, and recorded Minutes of the meetings confirm Stanford Hill continues to ensure all prisoners are treated with equal respect, regardless of ethnicity or religion.

5.4 Faith and pastoral support

During the past year one member of the pastoral team retired, but he has since been replaced. The team, which comprises representatives of the Catholic Church, Church of England and Muslim faith, remains strongly embedded in the culture of Stanford Hill, and there is always someone available for any prisoner who may need help. There are 19 different religions at Stanford Hill, of which the most numerous is the Muslim faith. Religious festivals of all faiths are appropriately marked.

5.5 Incentives scheme

The Board has not received any formal complaints or applications regarding the incentives scheme.

5.6 Complaints

In the first instance prisoners are asked to report problems through the normal channels, and to approach the IMB only if this appears to have failed.

5.7 Property

The Board has received two complaints about loss of property, both the result of transfer between prisons. This is a considerable improvement on last year's figure, confirming that Stanford Hill has addressed this issue as best and rapidly as it can.

In the majority of cases missing property does eventually find its way to Stanford Hill.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Physical healthcare

Providing Healthcare and Wellbeing facilities in a prison environment is particularly challenging without the added burden of a long and mutating pandemic. The relatively low number of COVID infections among prisoners in Standford Hill bears testimony to a very well managed set of disease protocols and good healthcare education. The prison, and especially its staff involved in the management of COVID are to be commended in this respect.

During the year Standford Hill experienced the following fluctuation of COVID:

June 2021: Stage 3 fully completed.

August 2021: Stage 2 implemented

October 2021: Stage 1 Day 1 approved and implemented

December 2021: Regression to Stage 2 on 14/12/21, and further regression to Stage 3 on 20/12/21/

January 2022: 13/1/22 New Outbreak Declared.

16/1/22 1 positive case since 13/1/22

February 2022: 23/2/22 Outbreak closed

March 2022: 27/3/22 Stage 1 Day 1 re-implemented

The prison made every effort to ensure all eligible prisoners were vaccinated. However, success was limited due to a widespread distrust of the reported effects of the vaccine, particularly the Moderna vaccination, which led to reluctance from some prisoners to have the vaccination, as evidenced in the table below.

Name	Count	%
Covid Astra Zeneca Vaccinations - Part 1	170	37.90%
Covid Astra Zeneca Vaccinations - Part 2	166	37.00%
Covid Moderna Vaccinations - Part 1	81	18.00%
Covid Moderna Vaccinations - Part 2	80	17.80%
Covid All Patients who have had Booster	183	40.80%
Covid vacs part 1 joined	251	18.00%
Covid vacs part 2 joined	246	
Miscellaneous covid figures not had 1 or 2	358	79.70%

The Healthcare staff at Standford Hill are dedicated and competent, and the system works effectively. This was especially evident when a prisoner, who needed medical treatment, barricaded himself into his cell. The nurse involved did an excellent job of caring for him until he could be transferred to hospital. During the reporting period there were 5,568 appointments booked, and 3,025 patients were seen, 16 of which were Emergency and Urgent cases requiring hospital treatment.

As this report ended the responsibility for the provision of Healthcare passed from ¹IC14 to the Oxleas Foundation Trust. It remains to be seen what impact this has.

6.2 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

6.3 Exercise, regime

Once COVID restrictions were lifted, the Gym re-opened, and the prisoners were able to make full use of the facilities, including the swimming pool. Prisoners are free to walk round the extensive grounds of Stanford Hill, and they make good use of the 'Long Walk', which is about a mile in length.

Prisoners 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 well-equipped gym, together with the open spaces available at Stanford Hill, is therapeutic and provides a welcome release for people denied the opportunity to leave the prison

¹ COVID vacs part 1 joined are those that had the 1st vaccine and includes Astra Zeneca and Moderna

COVID vacs part 2 joined are those that had the 2nd vaccine and includes Astra Zeneca and Moderna

These figures also include those who had the vaccine in another prison

6.4 Drug rehabilitation

Change, Grow, Learn, (CGL), formerly known as the Forward Trust, continues to provide help for those with problems of addiction. They operate an open door policy, and there is someone on site every weekday. Peer workers, who are trained by CGL, are always available to help prisoners should CGL not be present. CGL reported an increase in the use of drugs during COVID, especially the use of cannabis. There was also an increase in the use of illegal substances found inserted in Vapes.

6.5 Wellbeing

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 struggle with their mental health.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

Education

At the start of the reporting period the Education department was still closed to students but was supplying packs for prisoners to work from in their cells. These covered English and Mathematics at all levels. Help was available by arranging a visit to a window of the Education Building where teachers were able to speak to socially distanced students. These arrangements lasted until mid-June. During this period 132 packs were issued and 76 were returned as completed. This was an improvement on the return rate for the previous year. Preparations were also being made for the next stage of the return to normality.

From mid-June to the end of March 2022, classrooms were reopened but were restricted to 4 students and an instructor in each room. A full range of courses was available:

English
Mathematics
First Aid
Health and Safety
Art
Steps to the Gate

The results of examinations over this period were good with a return to the standards normally expected at Stamford Hill:

Overall	95.3% success rate
English	95.3%
Mathematics	92.3%
Health & Safety and First Aid	94.1%

Attendance to all programmes against allocated numbers was 79%.

Work continued to plan for a return to normal education numbers in full classrooms but this was not able to be implemented until the month after the end of this reporting period.

The year April 2021 to March 2022 was one in which the Education Department were able to move from full isolation with no classroom teaching through a steady reintroduction of small classes to, at the end of the year, a situation where they were ready to bring back a normal curriculum in normal classrooms.

7.2 Vocational training, work

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 in providing work opportunities through the working out scheme. The prison has developed excellent working relationships with a number of employers and as well has always facilitated work opportunities generated by prisoners.

This period has obviously been extremely difficult as they, along with the rest of society, have had to deal with the pandemic.

All outside activities were effectively stopped which, not surprisingly, caused some frustration amongst the prisoners and had a detrimental impact on morale. Although it was outside anyone's control, this did remove the hope of progression for the many prisoners involved in purposeful activity, and the possibility of leading to future employment. As a result there was some disappointing behaviour by a minority of prisoners.

September saw the restart of University study. Unfortunately further lockdowns meant only essential working out was possible provided a full risk assessment had been carried out. The protocol ensured that PPE and sanitation in the workplace were of a standard to ensure a COVID-secure environment.

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

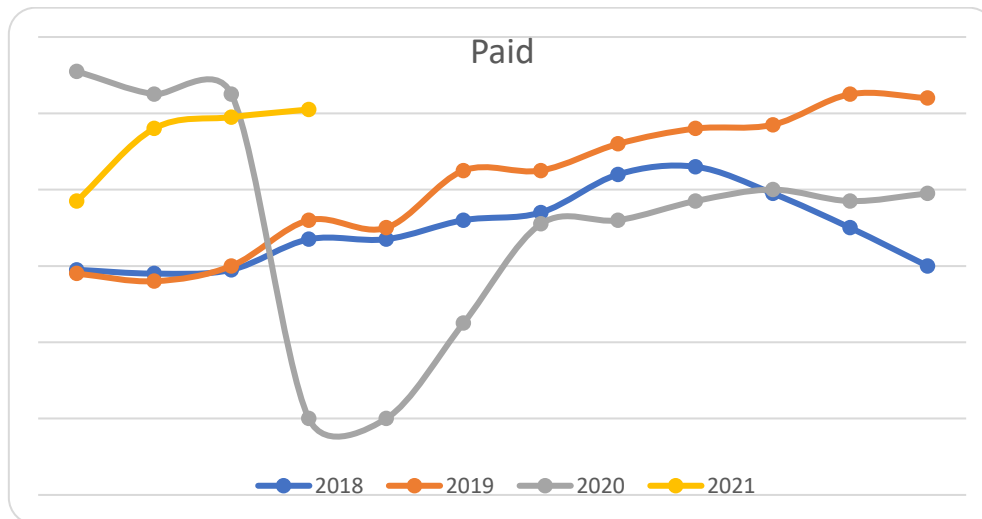
	March 2019	March 2020	March 2021
Community	132	73	20
Training	36	30	56
Paid	40	85	79

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.

Unfortunately, recent events have led to unavoidable disruption. For example, a building contractor was unable to provide employment because there were delays in completing contracts. A Tool Hire employer has also had to stop its involvement with the scheme. It is hoped that these opportunities will recommence in due course.

However, these disadvantages were compensated by paid work in the rail industry as discussed above. There are now 50 prisoners completing apprenticeships and training in the rail industry. There have also been new opportunities in a local dock company.

The prison is constantly looking for new opportunities, and facilitates these quickly when they arise. In a difficult situation the working out scheme has been adaptable and has ensured that opportunities are still available for prisoners.



7.3 Offender management, progression

The new Governor has maintained Stanford Hill's former regime of a strict, but understanding and compassionate attitude towards prisoners. The Governor is very clear in his expectation and treatment of prisoners. For men who must be returned to closed condition, for instance if caught in possession of, or using, drugs, a return to open prison is possible provided the prisoner is prepared to take part in the rehabilitation programmes available. The Governor's approach, together with that of the prison staff, is one of rehabilitation. Rules are clearly laid out, and consistently applied, and management of the prisoners is consistent. The Board believes these factors are the main reasons why Stanford Hill has successfully turned a number of prisoners' lives around.

7.4 Family contact

Family Visits, following the lifting of Coronavirus restrictions, were reintroduced which improved prisoner morale and well-being. The Prisoners were, however, very tolerant and appreciative of the arrangements made during the Pandemic, and understood that the Prison had ensured family contact was maintained as well as it could be in the circumstances.

At the beginning of the Reporting period Stanford Hill was still at Stage 3 of COVID restrictions, meaning family contact had to be conducted via Zoom through a secure link. However, once Stanford Hill was removed from Stage 3 restrictions in June 2021 families could once again visit the prison. Physical contact between families was allowed, and the wearing of masks was no longer mandatory, although they were available if required. The facility to undertake Zoom calls to relatives,

introduced during restrictions to allow two men to maintain contact with relatives in Australia, is still available but this is no longer regularly used.

7.5 Resettlement planning

The new Governor has continued with Standford Hill's core policy of rehabilitation. As part of a prisoner's rehabilitation Standford Hill takes care to ensure, so far as is possible, that prisoners have employment on release, and, crucially, that they have accommodation. Both factors have resulted in a very low reoffending rate. The latest figures, which are calculated from January 2021-December 2021, show that of the 259 men discharged, only nine prisoners, equalling 3.47% of those released, returned to prison.

Once COVID restrictions were lifted, prisoners who were employed outside the prison estate were able to resume work. Outside employment is a key element in the Standford Hill's resettlement planning, and the majority of men will continue to be employed in the same job on release. The latest figure available for this reporting period was that out of a prison population of 499, 50 men were not employed. Standford Hill endeavours to match jobs to prisoners who really want the job. As a result the reoffending rate is good, and few prisoners are sent back to closed conditions. Standford Hill works hard with prisoners to ensure they can remain at Standford Hill for the remainder of their sentence. However, there has been an increase to 25% of the percentage of prisoners arriving at Standford Hill being returned to closed conditions, mainly because they are deemed to be at risk of absconding. If a prisoner has transgressed they may remain at Standford Hill so long as they agree to work with the prison staff on rehabilitation.

The work of the IMB

It is unnecessary to detail the difficulties the IMB at Stanford Hill continued to face 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 continued 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 and, where appropriate, address 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, having 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.

IMB exists to monitor conditions, 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, it is to be hoped, 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	7
Total number of visits to the establishment	143
Total number of segregation reviews attended	0

Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions		1
B	Discipline, including adjudications, IEP, sanctions		
C	Equality		
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	1	3
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions		
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends		
F	Food and kitchens	1	1
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	1	3
H1	Property within this establishment		
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location		
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)		
I	Sentence management, including HDC, release on temporary licence, parole, release dates, recategorisation		6
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying		
K	Transfers		
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system		
	Total number of applications	4	13



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