



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

**For reporting year
1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024**

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Introductory sections 1 – 3

1. Statutory role of the IMB

The Prison Act 1952 requires every prison to be monitored by an independent board appointed by the Secretary of State from members of the community in which the prison is situated.

Under the National Monitoring Framework agreed with ministers, the Board is required to:

- satisfy itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in custody within its prison and the range and adequacy of the programmes preparing them for release.
- inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom authority has been delegated as it judges appropriate, any concern it has.
- report annually to the Secretary of State on how well the prison has met the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have on those in its custody.

To enable the Board to carry out these duties effectively, its members have right of access to every prisoner and every part of the prison and to the prison's records.

The Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT) is an international human rights treaty designed to strengthen protection for people deprived of their liberty. The protocol recognises that such people are particularly vulnerable and aims to prevent their ill-treatment through establishing a system of visits or inspections to all places of detention. OPCAT requires that states designate a National Preventive Mechanism to carry out visits to places of detention, to monitor the treatment of and conditions for detainees and to make recommendations for the prevention of ill-treatment. The 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 464¹ 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 usually 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. Block C has 80 individual pods (self-contained housing units).

A and B wings have their own serveries. In both wings, prisoners can eat meals either in their rooms or, if space permits, together on tables provided on the ground floor. There are also several microwave ovens in each cell block, which gives prisoners the option to cook and prepare their own food. C wing has a servery, and meals are taken into the prisoners' individual pods.

The main priority for HMP/YOI Stanford Hill is the resettlement of prisoners and enabling them to avoid reoffending on release. This encompasses education, training, work and preparation for resettlement.

¹ Figures included in this report are local management information. They reflect the prison's position at the time of reporting, but may be subject to change following further validation and therefore may not always tally with Official Statistics later published by the Ministry of Justice.

3. Key points

Background to the report

From its observations, the Board believes that HMP/YOI Stanford Hill is a well-led and well-run prison, which, in many areas, provides an excellent example of how a rehabilitative prison can be run.

The prison provides education, training and resettlement work of a high standard that gives prisoners the best possibility of leading fulfilling lives on release. The prison continues to release over 100 prisoners every day to paid work. The importance of this reintegration into the world of work cannot be underestimated.

In the Board's view, the healthcare and education appear to be good.

The key indicator of the effect of the work done at Stanford Hill is the reoffending rates. As of December 2023, the percentage of prisoners who were recorded as reoffending were:

- Over 2 years: 8.06%
- Over 3 years: 10.65%

We do not have information from other prisons to compare these figures, but they are indicative of the good work carried on within the prison.

The Board is unhappy with the condition of some of the buildings on the estate. Some show signs of subsidence and the response to deal with this has been, in our opinion, lamentably slow. This is in addition to our dissatisfaction with the provider of maintenance on site, Gov Facility Services Limited (GSFL).

As a result of population pressures on the whole Prison Service, a number of what may be called early release protocols have been established. We fully understand the need for these, but there are effects being felt within the prison. Workload to facilitate these protocols is significant and has put the offender management unit (OMU) under considerable strain.

Fundamentally, our concern is that if the establishment becomes a holding prison for several prisoners prior to their release, this will diminish the effectiveness of the prison in its key objective of rehabilitation. This will be a key focus of our monitoring in the coming year.

3.1 Main findings

Safety

- The management of illicit items is ongoing.
- The failure to install scanning equipment, as we have previously suggested, does not help with maintaining security within the prison, given the open nature of the site.
- Despite this, there are very low levels of violence.

Fair and humane treatment

- From the Board's observations, the regime is good and relationships between staff and prisoners are generally good.

- The condition of several of the buildings in the prison are not of an acceptable standard and we consider the response from the Prison Service in dealing with this to have been too slow.
- Telephony provision is poor and this is inconsistent with the need to enhance prisoners' contact with their families, which is at the heart of what an open prison should do.

Health and wellbeing

- In the Board's view, healthcare provision continues to be good.
- It is, therefore, disappointing that non-attendance at booked appointments continues to occur.
- The service has been significantly enhanced by the appointment in the reporting year of a neurodiversity support manager (NSM). The work being done is transformational.

Progression and resettlement

- From the Board's observations, Standford Hill provides an excellent rehabilitative service to prisoners.
- Family support, personal support and resettlement work is excellent.
- The working out scheme (WOS) provides an excellent pathway to work after release. Continuing focus needs to be put on prisoners finding their own work rather than relying on opportunities provided by the prison.
- We continue to believe that a technological solution could significantly improve the control of prisoners outside of the prison.

3.2 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

- While the Board understands the need for the early or additionally supervised release of prisoners, we are concerned that this can result in open prisons being under capacity and could diminish the rehabilitative role of the prison. The impact of this on the open estate needs to be considered.
- The Board continues to be extremely dissatisfied with the performance of Government Facility Services Ltd (GFSL). When the service provider model is reviewed, it is essential that we do not see the same poor level of service under another name.

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

- The performance of GFSL continues to be slow and unacceptable.
- The unsafe buildings within the Standford Hill estate need to be made safe and additional facilities made available. We consider the response to this possible health and safety situation so far to have been unacceptable and, indeed, too slow.
- Scanning equipment needs to be installed to enhance the security of the site.
- Technological solutions to monitor prisoners when outside the prison should be investigated.

TO THE GOVERNOR

- We are unhappy with the equipment in the laundry and funding for replacements is essential.
- As in previous years, we remain dissatisfied with the performance of GFSL.
- The condition of some of the buildings on site is not good and additional funding needs to be obtained to ensure this is addressed.

3.3 Progress since the last report

Issue raised	Progress
GFSL: concerns about performance.	No discernible improvement.
Temporary presumptive release scheme, or TPRS (a measure designed to facilitate the presumptive recategorisation of prisoners from category C to category D to make the best use of the prison estate): will a review of the impact be carried out?	An ongoing issue and we understand this will take time.
Scanning equipment needs to be installed.	Not implemented.
Technology for monitoring prisoners on release on temporary licence (ROTL).	Not implemented.
Prison Service to facilitate formal sharing of best practice among open prisons.	Not implemented.
Improve staff sickness.	Continued improvement.

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

4.1 Reception and induction

The reception area is just adequate for the ongoing transfer of prisoners in and out of the prison. The prison has been busy this year with the temporary presumptive release scheme (TPRS) and the introduction of early release schemes to address the population pressures in the Prison Service. The prison has been almost full for most of the reporting year, but there have been more vacancies towards the end of the year as the early release schemes in other prisons cause a delay until more prisoners are reclassified to category D. This needs to be addressed across the Prison Service if the prison is to be at or near capacity next year.

The storage area in reception is full beyond capacity and this does not help with operational efficiency. The proposed extension to the prison means that another 160 prison places are planned. The lack of adequate storage has been recognised and a new storage area is to be built. We trust this will be sufficient to meet the needs of the new, expanded prison population.

The induction process has continued along the lines reported on in our last report. Prisoners need to get their induction 'passport' stamped for all required areas in order to progress to release on temporary licence (ROTL), education or employment. It is up to the prisoners to attend the various sessions. Giving them that responsibility to help themselves is an important first step in encouraging the self-motivation that is required for a successful rehabilitation.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

In the period under review, there were no suicides, incidents of self-harm or deaths in custody. This does not happen by chance, but reflects the effort put in by the prison to identify prisoners with problems that may cause them to feel the need to commit self-damaging activities.

This comes from the holistic approach adopted from the comprehensive reducing reoffending strategy. While this obviously focuses on procedures that identify disruptive prisoners, it is primarily based on identifying prisoners with issues and helping them to overcome those issues. Family contact and resettlement support are identified in sections 7.4 and 7.5 of this report.

However, a key component of the reducing reoffending strategy lies in supporting prisoners who are neurodiverse. This is identified in section 6.3. It is worth reinforcing that the appointment in this year of a neurodiversity support manager (NSM) has been a massive signal of intent that the Prison Service wants to support neurodiverse prisoners. The impact of the new NSM has been significant and has further enhanced the work of the healthcare provider in the field of mental health.

Prisoners who are neurodiverse have a support network that will offer them the help they need. This explains the good outcomes in this area.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

The reducing reoffending strategy mentioned above does deal with preventing violence and self-isolation by the effective use of intelligence. This is supported by

regular safety intervention meetings (SIMs), where intelligence about disruptive prisoners is shared and action plans laid. This is based on the Reducing Reoffending Strategy Report, which identifies all the steps to be taken to ensure that the prison is safe.

This does not mean that activities such as intimidation and ‘cuckooing’ (where prisoners may be coerced by other prisoners) do not take place, but every effort is taken to ensure they are identified and proactively addressed. If necessary, prisoners are returned to closed conditions,

In the year under review, no violent incidents were reported.

4.4 Use of force

Use of force is limited, but prisoners are removed to closed conditions if necessary. The prison has a barred area, where prisoners are placed prior to their removal.

It is worth noting that officers have body worn video cameras (BWVCs) for when they enter into a potentially confrontational situation with a prisoner.

4.5 Preventing illicit items

Illicit items are a significant and persistent problem in all prisons, including Standford Hill. The prison undertakes a whole range of intelligence-based operations to address the issue. These include mandatory drug testing (MDT), cell searches, searches of the extensive and open grounds and searches of some prisoners returning to the prison from ROTL and working outside the prison.

Despite this, a whole range of illicit items has been found in the prison. These include takeaway food, alcohol, drugs of all categories and mobile phones. Some new prisoners have stated to the IMB that, due to the open nature of the prison, the situation is worse than in the closed prisons they were in previously.

This mainly reflects the nature of the prison. It covers a large area in an isolated position on the edge of the Isle of Sheppey. Prisoners regularly leave the prison for town visits, resettlement overnight release (ROR) and ROTL. Over 100 prisoners work outside the prison every day and return every evening. This is a major problem that is not helped by the lack of appropriate and sufficient scanning equipment. The Board has raised this point more than once in the past, but no significant change has taken place. We do not believe this to be acceptable, particularly as we are informed that unused scanning equipment is available in the prison system. The proposed expansion of the prison could make the current situation much worse unless action is taken.

It is disappointing that prisoners approaching the end of their sentences are still content to be involved in bringing illicit items into the prison. As a result, prisoners are returned to closed conditions on a regular basis. In the reporting year, the number was 143, up from 130 in the year before and 126 in the year before that. This equates to around three per week, on average.

The prison does not have a segregation unit, but it has a barred area where prisoners are held as they await return to closed conditions, as mentioned above.

The situation regarding illicit mobile phones is made worse by the lack of sufficient telephony for family contact. We understand that in-cell telephony is not an option for the old blocks, but this could be addressed by more centrally available fixed and

mobile phones for family contact. It is illogical that prisoners have access to mobile phones on a daily basis outside the prison for working out, yet they are not allowed to use them when they return. Clearly, the prison needs to identify those mobile phones used to sustain illegal activities, but a clear dividing line needs to be drawn by the provision of appropriate telephony to facilitate regular family contact, particularly as the prisoners are approaching the end of their sentences.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

The prison currently has an operational capacity of 464 prisoners (the maximum number of prisoners that can be held without serious risk to safety, security, good order and the proper running of the planned regime), who are housed in three blocks.

The two main blocks, A and B wings, were constructed in the 1970s and are brick built, lying along the road that runs through the prison. The accommodation in both blocks is on several levels and consists of single cells that do not have ensuite facilities. The spurs in each block are closed at 8pm, but prisoners are not locked in, although they have no access beyond the corridors so that they can use the restroom facilities on each floor. There are no in-cell phones and the number of phones available is quite limited.

The other accommodation is a group of 80 individual pods with ensuite facilities. These provide modern and comfortable accommodation. About 60 of these are occupied by prisoners who regularly working outside the prison. To qualify to work outside and occupy one of the pods, prisoners must:

- have less than two years remaining on their sentence;
- be in regular employment; and
- have no negative adjudications (a disciplinary hearing held when a prisoner is alleged to have broken prison rules) on their prison record.

The other 20 pods are occupied by orderlies (trusted prisoners who take on work to provide services that contribute to the running of the prison).

Food

This is currently a less satisfactory part of the Standford Hill regime. There are at present no facilities on site to cook fresh food on a mass catering basis, although there are microwaves on each of the wings to allow prisoners to prepare their own food. Most of the food is prepared in the kitchens at Swaleside prison, which is part of the cluster, but this arrangement is far from ideal. There have been occasional problems in late delivery; plus, it also offers an opportunity for contraband to enter the prison.

Future expansion plans provide for on-site kitchen facilities and, the Board believes, especially as the prison expands, that this is a very desirable and necessary development. IMB members regularly inspect the food facilities and sample the food on offer and discuss it with prisoners. The food is, in our opinion, of decent quality, although several prisoners are not impressed by the quality and quantity of food on offer. The delay in transferring food from the kitchens at Swaleside to Standford Hill means that food cannot be as fresh as if it were cooked on site. The project to build a purpose-built catering facility has been delayed by the financial collapse of the original contractor, but there is now a project plan in place to carry out the necessary work. The project is expected to be start at the end of 2024.

Significant work has been undertaken so that the “Canteen” service where prisoners can order items for personal consumption is supplemented by a shop. This will allow prisoners to purchase items from their monies electronically. This opened after the end of the reporting year, and we will report on this next year.

Accommodation

We rarely receive complaints about the quality of accommodation from prisoners, particularly those housed in the pods, who are generally very complimentary about the facilities.

The art class has recently undertaken a brightening up of A wing to make the building more interesting and this has generally been met with approval by the prisoners. This idea will be extended across the prison and some areas have recently seen murals added.

After being in closed conditions, most prisoners relish the space available, which they use for exercising and to take walks. A minority of prisoners find it difficult to adjust to the open spaces after many years spent in closed conditions and this aspect is one that the Board monitors closely, as it appears to be a finding in many open prisons.

Reference was made earlier to the expansion of the prison. While the project is regularly subject to review, we anticipate that there will be 4 x 60-bed units built, together with a kitchen and dining hall facility. There are also plans for an OMU records store, multifaith room, healthcare office and an expanded library.

It is worth noting that the project envisages the removal of the 80 pods and, therefore, the extra staffing planned is based on a net addition of 160 cells. Given the current prison population pressures, the Board finds it hard to believe that the pods will be removed. If they are not, it is essential that the additional staffing due to expansion reflects that the population of the prison will increase by 240.

One problem that is increasingly coming to light is the way in which the physical condition of the older parts of the prison is deteriorating. Several areas appear to be subsiding and parts of some buildings have been closed off. The Board is concerned about the structural stability of a number of buildings, and it is unacceptable that staff and prisoners have to work and use these facilities. Subsidence was identified in two buildings in 2023, but by the end of the year under review full structural surveys had not been carried out. Obviously, if surveys have not been carried out, plans for new facilities cannot be finalised. This delay is unacceptable. It may be necessary to re-plan, replace or significantly renovate these facilities.

One concern that relates to building safety is the overall effectiveness of the repairs to the buildings on the site. We are satisfied with the quality of the works department staff but have serious concerns about the quality of overall facilities management by Government Facility Service Limited (GSFL). The Board held a meeting with the prison authorities who oversee maintenance and repairs, in which we aired our general concern that the replacement of Carillion, the previous provider, by another body with a similar structure and philosophy, has done nothing to improve conditions in the prison. Effectively, in the Board's view, the service pre- and post-Carillion seem to be the same. This is an ongoing concern, with ageing buildings in an exposed position quite close to the sea.

The area that has caused most ongoing problems is the laundry. A number of the machines in the laundry have been permanently out of action and we have urged the prison to review, with the purchase and servicing arrangements, possibly moving to leasing agreements of suitable industrial machines. There is also a persistent leak in the laundry roof, which is a concern as there is electrical machinery underneath

and the risk of people working in the laundry slipping on the wet floors in bad weather. The laundry is an essential and integral part of the prison, especially with a large number of prisoners working outside the prison, with so many needing a regular change of uniform. Tensions rise if clothes are not available, and this puts significant pressure on prisoners working in the laundry, who feel powerless to improve the situation. To have clean clothing is essential and humane.

As the building ages, the Board receives a number of verbal comments about the state of the showers and toilets in A and B wings. We have increased the surveillance of these areas to ensure that these facilities are left in an appropriate state and that any repairs or problems are dealt with in an adequate and timely fashion. However, the facilities are old, and a number of new prisoners tell us how unfavourably they compare with other prisons they have moved from. If the prison facilities are a downgrade on previous accommodation, this can take some of the lustre away from attaining category D status.

Standford Hill is one of the few prisons that has a swimming pool. This is attached to the gym and was used by prisoners and the local community. However, it has been out of action for nearly two years, due to needing significant repair and renovation. It is highly unlikely that it will be used again, so needs to be filled in and repurposed, as it is a potential accident hazard. Access to the pool has been stopped at the moment.

5.2 Segregation

As an open prison, Standford Hill does not have a segregation facility. In reception, there is a single cell that is used as a holding facility if prisoners need to be returned to closed conditions.

5.3 Staff and prisoner relationships, key workers

One of the areas we monitor closely is the relationship between staff and prisoners. Our general impression is that despite the inevitable tensions and issues that arise in any prison environment, relationships are good and that the prison is run professionally, with efficient governance and reasonable levels of respect on both sides.

While there has not been a significant influx of temporary presumptive release scheme (TPRS) prisoners into Standford Hill, we have noticed, perhaps inevitably, that when a number of TPRS prisoners form part of the intake, the atmosphere in the prison can change. Standford Hill has a strong culture based on rehabilitation and trying to prepare prisoners for release. This culture appears to be compromised by some TPRS prisoners, who do not appear to be greatly motivated by the chance to move to a category D prison, with short periods left on their sentences.

We regularly monitor the wing observation books and talk to staff about challenges that occur in a dynamic environment. We have also carried out a night visit to gauge the way in which the prison functions. While there is a very effective system for evening management, we were aware that the prison operates on a skeleton staff. We have concerns that if a major incident happened in one of the spurs, or a prisoner suffered a major health problem, the staff left might find it occasionally difficult to manage the prison safely and efficiently.

The Governor has put commendable emphasis on reducing staff sickness and we

reported last year that there has been a welcome improvement in sickness rates.

The average rate of staff sickness in the period under review has been 8.57 days, against the average for the Kent, Surrey and Sussex group of prisons of 9.96 days. This has an impact on the regime experienced by prisoners and is to be commended.

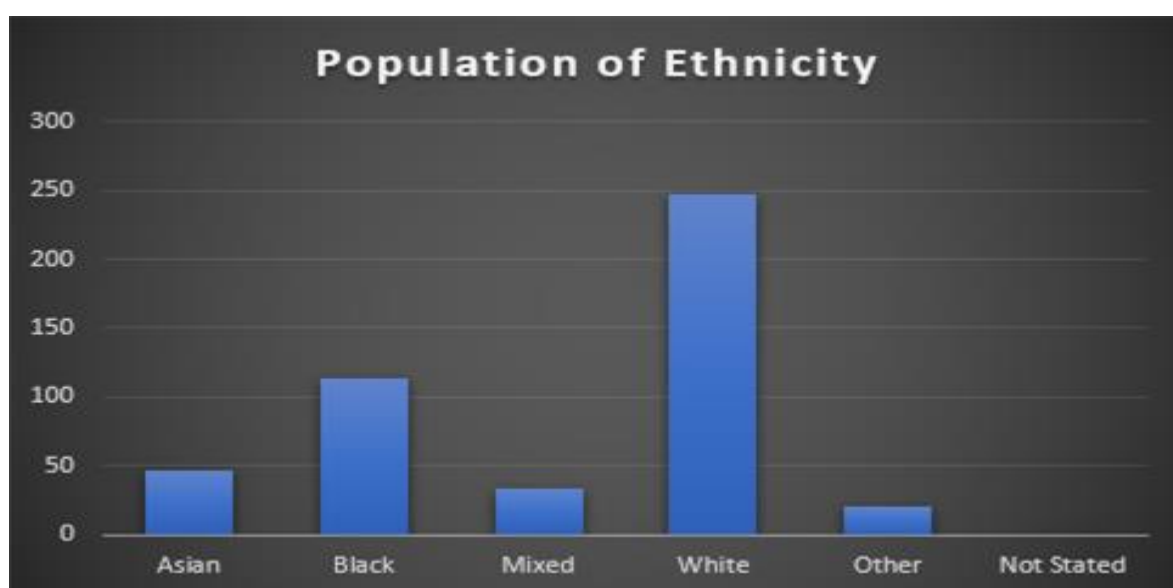
We have a high opinion of the regime that applies within the prison. Staff morale appears good and our sense, as a Board, is that the staff share a coherent vision of what the prison is and should be trying to achieve.

As a Board, we have a strong sense that prisoners throughout Stanford Hill are treated with respect and decency and this attitude is generally reciprocated by the prisoners.

5.4 Equality and diversity

The racial mix in the prison in March 2024 was as follows. Further analysis is provided in Appendix 1 of Annex B.

Ethnicity	Number of prisoners	Percentage
Asian	47	10.20%
Black	113	24.51%
Mixed	34	7.38%
White	247	53.58%
Other	20	4.34%
Not Stated	0	0.00%
Total	461	



The preservation of racial harmony is a key priority and the prison looks to ensure that significant attention is paid to focusing on equality and diversity. To ensure best practice in preserving equality, a separate member of the senior management team (SMT) at the prison represents each protected characteristic (which includes, among others, age, race, religion, sex and sexual orientation, which it is unlawful to discriminate against), although the prison recognises characteristics outside those protected by the Equalities Act, which embrace experience of living in care, IPP (imprisoned for public protection)/those with life sentences, and veterans.

The prison operates in consultation with prisoners in obtaining their views on how best to enhance equality within the prison and holds a monthly protected characteristics meeting with other specialised meetings, also arranged as required.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

There is an acknowledgement of the multifaith environment within Stanford Hill. The managing chaplain is a Muslim, and he interacts effectively with representatives of other religions represented in Stanford Hill. Details of the various religious affiliations in the prison are contained in Appendix 5 in Annex B.

The largest group represented is Muslim but all major faith groups are acknowledged and festivals held of the major faiths in the prison. While a potentially complex situation, the flexibility and respect shown by the various ministers enables worship to function effectively, although there has not been a Christian minister operating in the prison in the year under review. The lack of Christian ministry is not acceptable, although we do accept that the prison has tried to find a suitable candidate. A new Church of England minister was recruited after the reporting year end, but provision of support for Roman Catholic prisoners needs to be improved.

5.6 Incentives schemes

No issues have been raised with the Board in relation to this.

5.7 Complaints

A member of the prison staff handles and co-ordinates complaints by the prisoners. The Board prefers that prisoners with problems try to resolve them through the formal complaints system before they are referred to IMB. This is to avoid confusion in resolving issues. But all members of the Board are visible to prisoners and happy to try to help with queries or issues that they may raise verbally.

Prisoners are welcome to submit formal applications (prisoners' written representations) to the IMB. We encourage prisoners to log applications so that we can keep a record of progress and indicate the level of interaction that the IMB has with prisoners. We receive very few formal applications, as can be seen in the statistics reflecting the number of applications made. A lot of prisoners' issues can be, and are, resolved verbally without the need for formal applications to be made.

5.8 Property

One of the most frequent issues the IMB deals with in the prison is problems relating to the transfer of property. While the Board encourages prisoners to prioritise official channels to trace official items, it is often necessary to try to investigate more complex cases, as property transfers are notoriously likely to cause problems. Where appropriate, the IMB facilitates complaints about property to the Prisons and

Probation Ombudsman (PPO).

We sense a slight difference in the perception of the IMB among some prisoners, but it is hard to ascribe any particular reasons for this. It may be part of a societal change or relate to less satisfactory experiences with the IMB in other prisons. However, it is not a universal finding and many prisoners appear very grateful for our help.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

In last year's report, the Board identified a significant improvement in healthcare after the appointment of Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust to run the medical service at the prison. The improvements made then have been continued consistently throughout this year. The key to this success is the comprehensive health screening of all new arrivals. This takes place on the day of arrival in reception, followed by a full health and wellbeing screening the next day. This allows a joined-up approach to all aspects of medical care, co-ordinated by the health and wellbeing co-ordinator. The co-ordinator has made a substantial difference to the health provision in the prison.

Nurse-led clinics are the base of the provision, which are then built on through the provision of all specialisms required for primary health care.

GP services are supplied by 'Prisons in Kent GP', and they provide continuity of service. There are three GP sessions each week and the Board is not concerned about waiting times for appointments. There is also a GP pharmacist once a week for medicine reviews. Each month, the lead GP and the GP Pharmacist run a joint review for patients with complex health needs.

An NHS dental service operates two days each week, and an NHS optician service operates one day each month.

Particular specialisms are covered, including a psychologist and a counsellor, who are available one day each week, while a psychiatrist attends one day each month.

We believe that the healthcare provision is of a good standard and is well co-ordinated and provided with care.

Below are the details of appointments booked and appointments not attended for the key areas of activity in the last six months of the reporting year.

Service	Booked appointments	Did not attend
GP	767	187
Dental	482	134
Nurse-led clinics	2741	694
Substance misuse	39	0
Mental health	223	28

A total of 4,252 appointments were made in the last six months of the reporting year. It is very disappointing that almost 25% of those appointments were wasted by non-attendance.

6.2 Mental healthcare

Given the impact of being in prison, the provision of mental health services is of great importance and there is a full-time mental health nurse at the prison. This has been significantly enhanced during the reporting period by the appointment of a full-time neurodiversity support manager (NSM) as part of a national initiative to improve support in this important area. This has allowed more joint working among specialist

mental health services, which has resulted in improved outcomes for neurodiverse prisoners.

6.3 Social care

Please refer to section 7 of the report.

6.4 Exercise, regime

The prison has full gym facilities.

6.5 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

Please refer to 7.4 and the work of the charity Change, Grow, Live (CGL) in this area.

6.6 Soft skills

Soft skills to manage health challenges of all sorts are an integral part of prisoner management in any prison. We believe that, in Stanford Hill, these skills are effectively practised by the staff.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education

The year 2023-2024 was the first full year with the education department at Stanford Hill being run by Milton Keynes College and it was regarded as very successful.

During the previous financial year, 2022-2023, the department had made a good recovery from the problems of the Covid pandemic and ended it with impressive statistics for prisoners passing English, Mathematics and health and safety and first aid courses (see below).

	2022-2023	2023-2024
Overall passes	98.0%	97%
English	93.1%	91%
Mathematics	88.1%	87%
Health and safety and first aid	99.0%	97%

All new arrivals who do not have qualifications in these subjects are expected to attend these courses. These results were maintained in the year 2023-2024, which was a reflection of the high standard of teaching in these subjects.

These levels of results are regarded as normal, and significant variations are not expected. It has, however, been noted that in the last year the course reviews from the students have been more positive, notably from the younger and older attendees.

The art courses have continued to achieve successful results at the Koestler Awards for arts in criminal justice. In the reporting year, there were 42 entries, of which 12 received awards. This is a reflection of the good work being done by the tutor and demonstrates the way these classes are very good for the mindset of the students, who all emphasise to us how the classes help with their mental health.

However, one aspect of the education department that seems not to be getting better is the attendance rate. The figure for this year, at 84.1%, is theoretically quite a good number and is marginally up on the previous year's 83.1%. However, the Board feels that the dedication of the staff deserves a better attendance record and action from those responsible to ensure attendance. It is not encouraging that prisoners approaching the end of their sentences are not going to classes.

Overall, the education department has had a good year and continuity of staff has made a significant contribution to this.

7.2 Vocational training, work

The key to successful rehabilitation is re-establishing contact with the outside world and giving prisoners skills they can use when they return to society.

The labour board is held one week after arrival, and this gives prisoners opportunities for internal work and signposts to the working out scheme (WOS) programme. As long as they have attained a Level 1 in Maths and English and

received clearance from the subsequent risk board, prisoners can fully engage with the WOS. Although the process of obtaining clearance can take place early in their time at Standford Hill, they can only leave the prison if they have been successful at the risk board.

The WOS programme provides assistance in finding work and training opportunities, but it requires commitment from prisoners: they have to fully engage and, where possible, find their own opportunities.

A range of training courses is available in the prison, all aimed at areas or skills where there are job opportunities in the outside world. The courses listed below are not run all the time and will change according to outside work opportunities. Those sourced and paid for by the prison include:

- Street works
- Forklift
- Digger dumper
- HGV
- Intervention alliance to help older prisoners.
- Rocketeer for business and self-employment
- Mainstream for construction
-

In addition, East Kent College provides training funded by other bodies. These also vary over time, but include:

- Bricklaying
- Employability/Job Club
- Electrical
- Plumbing
- Railway work

The WOS programme then provides assistance to prisoners to obtain work outside the prison pre-release. Examples of employment opportunities include:

- Hospitality and catering in local pubs and hotels
- Building: labourers to trades
- Railway: different levels
- Delivery drivers
- HGV drivers
- Office work
- Retail

The WOS regularly follows leads for new employers and follows up previous employers to ensure that opportunities remain available. However, they would prefer prisoners to source their own work. Appendix 2 in Annex B gives detailed analysis of self-sourced work. As of February 2024, only 26 of the 126 engaged in the scheme sourced their own work. The ability to seek out work opportunities is a key skill for outside living and the WOS continues to emphasise this to prisoners.

The prison had over 100 prisoners leaving the prison for paid work throughout the year under review (Appendix 3 in Annex B). The figure for community outside work in March 2024 was only 18, showing the emphasis on paid work, with the myriad benefits this gives to prisoners who will shortly be returning to wider society.

It is encouraging that engagement of Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups is roughly proportionate to the population of the prison (Appendix 1 in Annex B).

We believe that the WOS provides a good template for category D prisons to consider. However, despite informal meetings, there is still no formal comparison mechanism that would allow all category D prisons to learn from each other. There must be best practice everywhere and it needs to be shared and replicated, if possible.

7.3 Offender management, progression

The offender management unit (OMU) controls the sentence management of prisoners. This can be a contentious area for prisoners, as they want to ensure they obtain full support and that their sentence and subsequent release date are correct.

OMU is to be congratulated for introducing regular 'drop in' sessions, where prisoners can discuss any concerns with the staff concerned.

Towards the end of the reporting year, moves were made by the Government to address the size of the general prison population. This was originally through encouraging category D prisons to hold prisoners shortly to be released under the temporary presumptive release scheme (TPRS). Although Stanford Hill received few such prisoners, it did not make best use of the limited spaces in the prison. Such prisoners cannot use the support available, as they are only here for a short time, and this makes the prison less efficient as a rehabilitation prison.

At the very end of the reporting year, moves were made to release prisoners early. This caused substantial work in the prison, as it had to ensure that all required procedures prior to release were carried out. This placed a substantial extra workload on the OMU. The Board is concerned that with additional extra measures being mooted, these pressures will increase. The staffing must be able to flex to meet any new requirements. The move to early release schemes can significantly impact end-of-sentence planning and, once again, affect the rehabilitation work of the prison. This can make category D Prisons less efficient in their core role of rehabilitation. The Board will monitor this and intends to write about it in next year's report.

7.4 Family contact

Even if prisoners have a family to return to, the re-establishment of good family relationships is essential for successful rehabilitation. This is primarily achieved by the provision of home leave under resettlement overnight release (ROR) and ROTL after all checks and a qualifying period are completed.

This essential opportunity afforded to prisoners allows the best chance to re-establish healthy family relationships. However, this is supplemented by support provided to prisoners from within the prison by a number of organisations.

The impact of substance misuse is addressed by the work of Change, Grow, Live (GCL). It emphasises arranging family interaction so that any family problems that could affect resettlement are addressed prior to release.

Family relations are addressed through the work of the Prison Advice and Care Trust (Pact). It facilitates extended social visits after planned social visiting time. Homework club also allows time for prisoners to be with their family before planned

visiting time. PACT facilitates baby-bonding sessions and specific family days (which bring together prisoners and their families outside of their statutory entitlement, usually in more informal settings).with an extensive range of activities. The aim is to support prisoners in achieving successful family re-integration with the many benefits this gives post-release.

7.5 Resettlement planning

A co-ordinated range of support is provided by the prison to ensure that prisoners are ready for the world of work and for life after release.

Under the Pact umbrella, CFO3 is a voluntary programme that addresses resettlement needs. This consists of one-to-one support, workbooks and courses. Recent courses run include:

- Personal finance
- Living independently
- Staying connected
- Wellbeing
- Construction work tester

The new employment hub has been operating since February 2023, with a dedicated employment lead and a staff member who assists with obtaining essential documentation and banking facilities. Prisoners are informed about the employment hub at the labour board, which takes place in the first week after arrival. This starts the process of obtaining personal documentation, which is essential for training courses and for eventually moving back into the community. If required, prisoners are signposted to the hub 12 weeks before release.

The employment hub, in addition to helping to find employment, undertakes a range of activities available to prisoners, including:

- Employability workshops, run quarterly: they address standards expected from people going to work.
- Presentations from a number of employers, both local and national.

The hub is measured by employment targets six weeks and six months after release. The latest figures are:

	<u>Target</u>	<u>Actual</u>
6 weeks post-release	41.1%	49.3%
6 months post-release	48.0%	61.6%

It is encouraging that the hub is achieving its targets.

Although the hub assists in obtaining all personal documentation and bank accounts most prisoners have bank accounts on release, but some do not. This particularly applies to those who have committed financial crimes, plus those released at short notice, such as foreign national prisoners, and men on indeterminate sentences (which initially had no release date). This could also happen if there is release under an early release scheme.

Although most prisoners return to their families on release, around 20-30% need assistance to obtain accommodation on release. The prison provides a dedicated

staff member who has the demanding responsibility to ensure all prisoners have accommodation on release. This is not easy in the current accommodation situation in the community. All prisoners are obtaining accommodation, but this is getting more difficult to achieve and requires a lot of conscientious work.

The first point of call is CAS3, which provides private rented accommodation for up to 84 days. This is run by the probation service and is generally successful in housing prisoners. However, this can be away from home areas or employment.

The introduction of the end of custody supervised licence scheme (ECSL) may address the population problem within prisons but it has knock-on effects, particularly for category D prisons. It may mean that all documentation has not been obtained, as the ECSL disrupts the established release plan. This can cause serious problems regarding accommodation, which may need to be found urgently until the accommodation identified in the release plan is available.

The ultimate test of all the progression and resettlement work within the prison is the success in reducing re-offending. See Appendix 4 in Annex B for full details.

In summary, the rates of reoffending are:

- Over 2 years 8.06%
- Over 3 years 10.65%

The Board considers these rates to be good. However, we do not have information for other prisons, which would be useful for comparison.

The work of the IMB

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	10
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	6
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	6
Total number of visits to the establishment	298
Total number of shifts on the 0800 telephone line*	0
Total number of segregation reviews attended	N/A

Applications to the IMB (including via the 0800 telephone line)

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	1	0
B	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives schemes, sanctions	4	0
C	Equality	3	0
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	5	3
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	2	0
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	8	2
F	Food and kitchens	5	1
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	4	7
H1	Property within this establishment	1	0
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	7	8
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	3	0
I	Sentence management, including HDC (home detention curfew), ROTL (release on temporary licence), parole, release dates, re-categorisation	8	2
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	4	1
K	Transfers	0	1
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system	3	6
	Total number of applications	58	31

Annex A

Service providers

- PEF: Milton Keynes College
- DPS: Rocketeer
- Kinetic Youth
- Interventions Alliance
- Extra provision: East Kent College
- Library: KSS Libraries
- CGL (Change, Grow Live) : Substance Misuse
- Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust: Mental health; dentist; physiotherapist; optometrist; and EPIC
- Gov Facility Services Limited (GSFL)
- Combat for Care: Veterans
- Irish Roman Catholic chaplain
- Romani Slovak Czech community
- Pact/CG03 (Prison Advice and Care Trust): family work
- Alpha Course: chaplaincy
- New build: MACE and ISG
- Kent Autism Trust
- Kent Youth Justice Team

Annex B

Tables and graphs

The working out scheme (WOS) at HMP/YOI Stanford Hill offers a supportive but testing regime. It allows individuals to demonstrate that they are ready and safe to return to the community by fully participating in unpaid restorative community placements, external vocational and academic training and/or full-time paid employment.

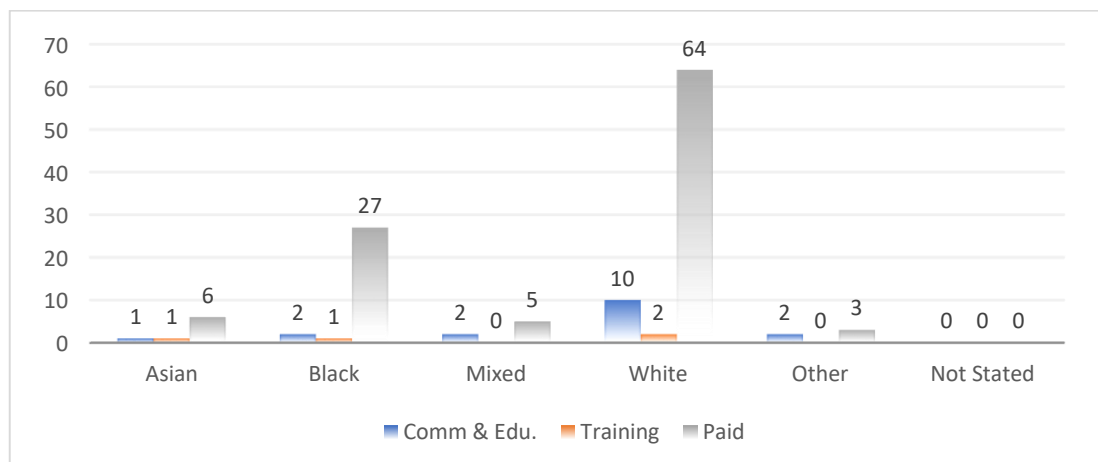
The scheme uses the release on temporary licence (ROTL) programme to allow individuals to progress into secure, sustainable, risk-assessed employment prior to their release from custody. It is designed to assist in achieving safe reintegration into local resettlement areas and, overall, to help reduce the risk of re-offending.

The following statistics from the WOS represent March 2024.

Appendix 1: Analysis of WOS figures involving ethnicity

Breakdown of WOS ROTL Figures

Ethnicity	Community and education	Training	Paid
Asian	1	1	6
Black	2	1	27
Mixed heritage	2	0	5
White	10	2	64
Other	2	0	3
Not Stated	0	0	0



Ethnicity Breakdown Vs Engagement

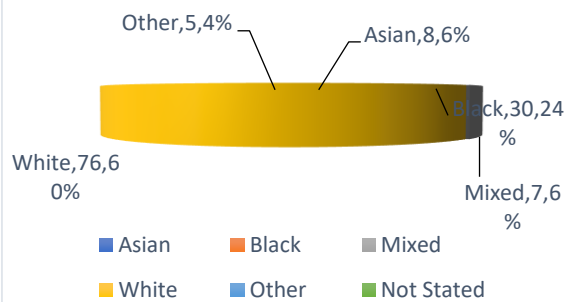
Ethnicity	WOS Eng.	%
Asian	8	6.35%
Black	30	23.81%
Mixed	7	5.55%
White	76	60.32%
Other	5	3.97%
Not Stated	0	0.00%

Population	
44	9.63%
114	24.95%
34	7.44%
245	53.61%
20	4.38%
0	0.00%

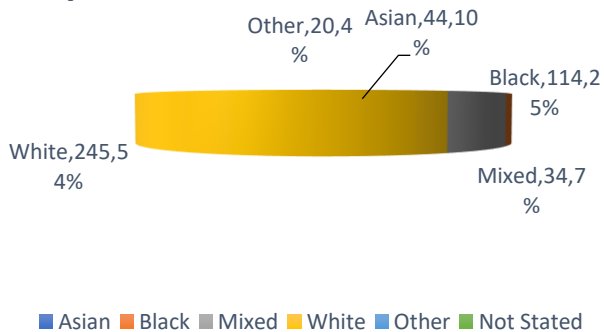
Total	126
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457	100.00%
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WOS Engagment



Population

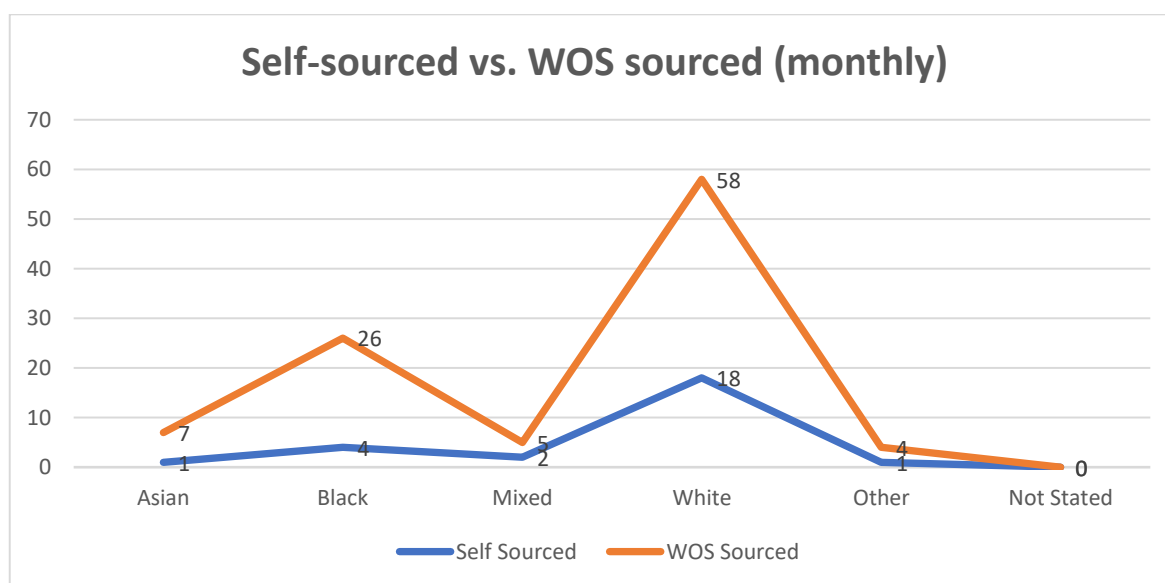


Appendix 2: Source of Employment while on WOS

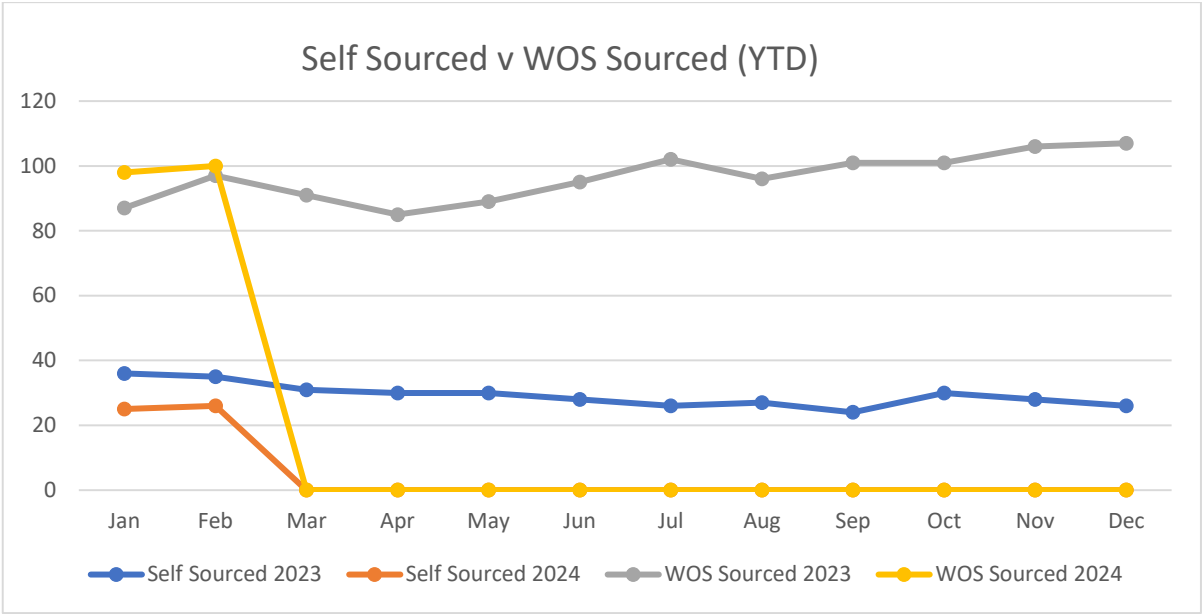
Self-sourced vs. WOS sourced (monthly)

Ethnicity	WOS Eng	Self-sourced	%	WOS sourced	%
Asian	8	1	12.50%	7	87.50%
Black	30	4	13.33%	26	86.67%
Mixed	7	2	28.57%	5	71.43%
White	76	18	23.68%	58	76.32%
Other	5	1	20.00%	4	80.00%
Not Stated	0	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

Total	126	26	100
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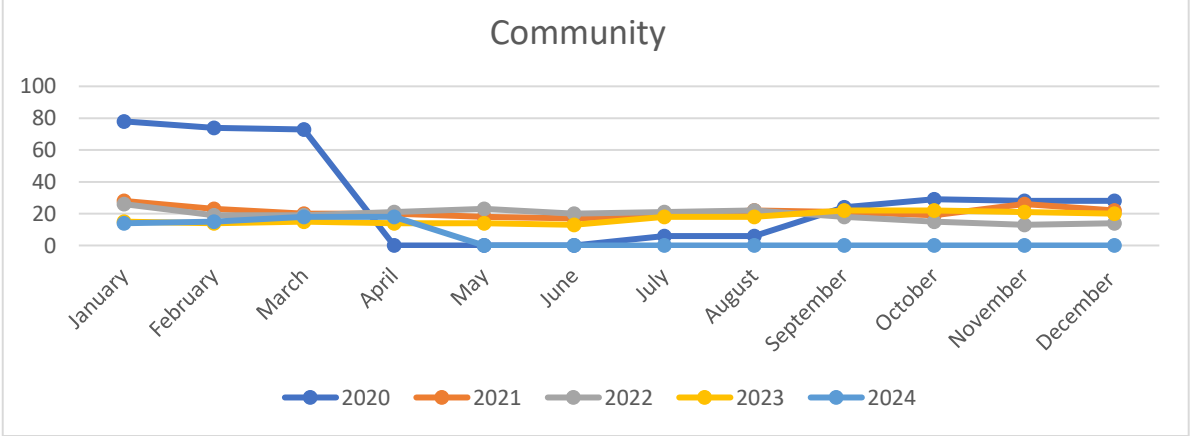
Annual statistics



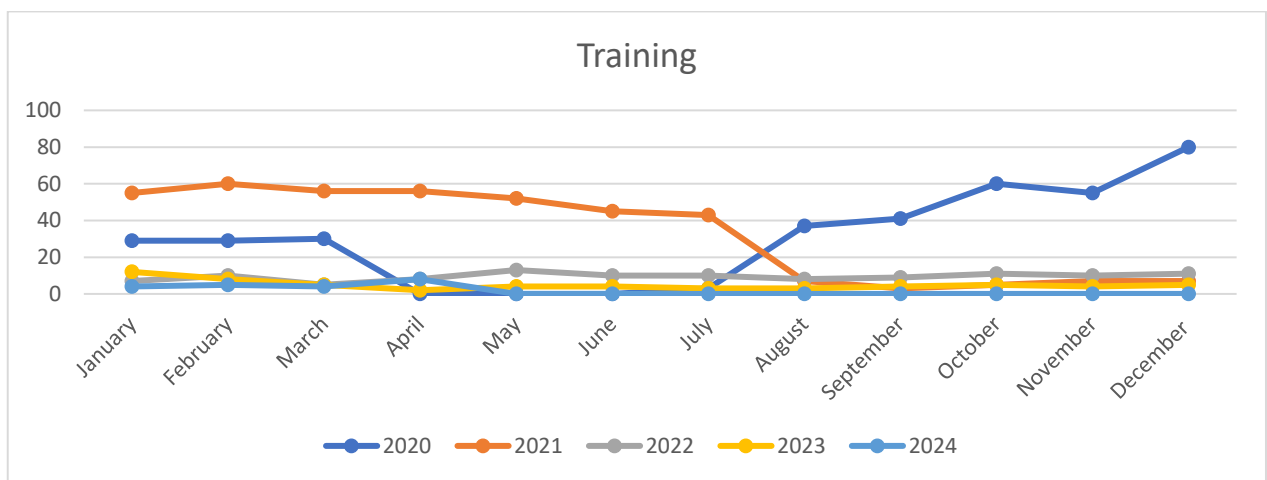
Appendix 3: Outside employment while on WOS

Year on year

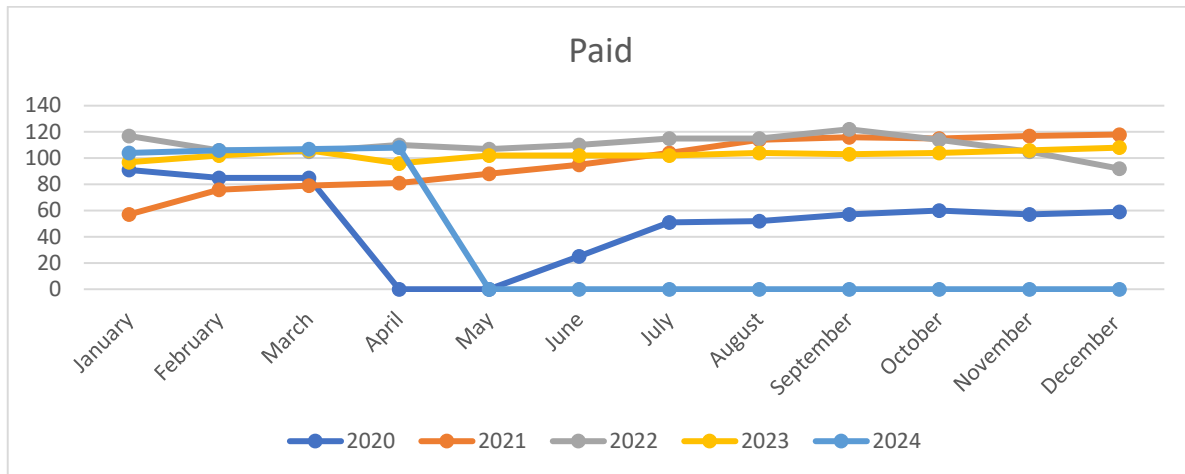
Community	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
January	78	28	26	15	14
February	74	23	19	14	15
March	73	20	19	15	17
April	0	20	21	14	18
May	0	18	23	14	0
June	0	17	20	13	0
July	6	19	21	18	0
August	6	22	22	18	0
September	24	21	18	22	0
October	29	19	15	22	0
November	28	26	13	21	0
December	28	22	14	20	0



<u>Training</u>	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
January	29	55	7	12	4
February	29	60	10	8	5
March	30	56	5	5	4
April	0	56	8	2	8
May	0	52	13	4	
June	0	45	10	4	
July	3	43	10	3	
August	37	7	8	3	
September	41	3	9	4	
October	60	5	11	5	
November	55	7	10	4	
December	80	7	11	5	



<u>Paid</u>	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
January	91	57	117	97	104
February	85	76	106	102	106
March	85	79	105	106	105
April	0	81	110	96	108
May	0	88	107	102	
June	25	95	110	102	
July	51	104	115	102	
August	52	114	115	104	
September	57	116	122	103	
October	60	115	114	104	
November	57	117	105	106	
December	59	118	92	108	



Appendix 4: Reoffending Rate January 2020-December 2023

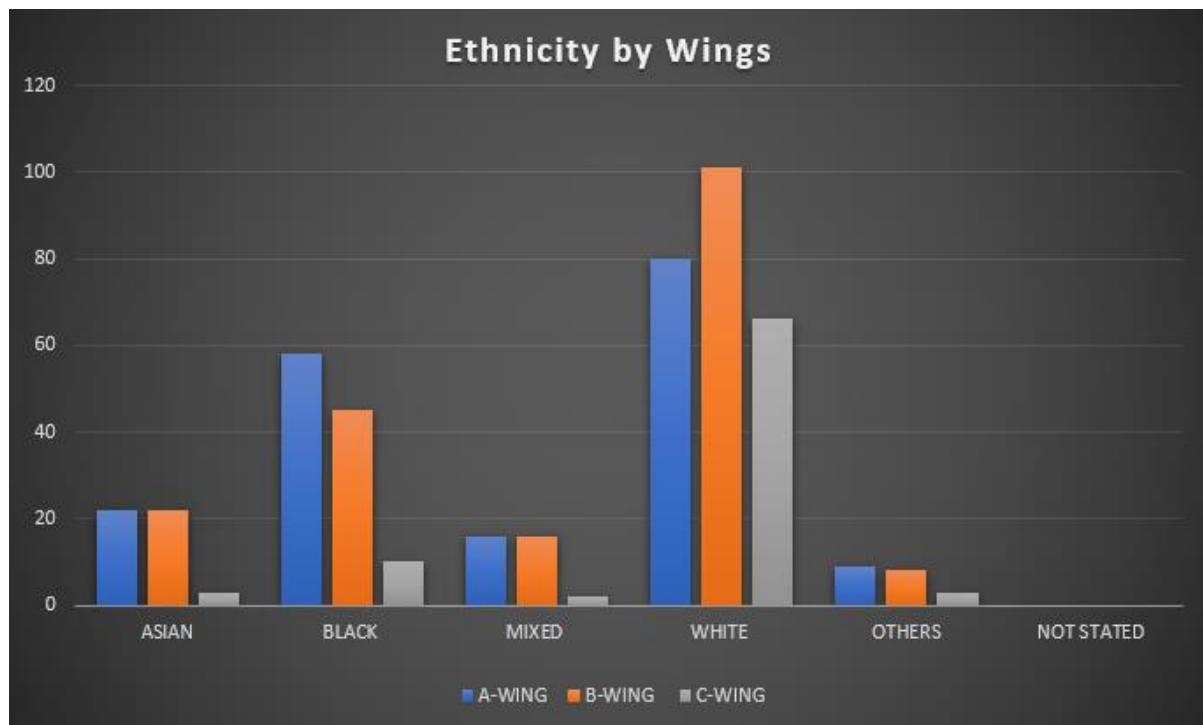
- January-December 2020: 328 discharged, with 33 returned to prison = 10.06%
- January-December 2021: 256 discharged, with 43 returned to prison = 16.8%
- January-December 2022: 271 discharged, with 28 returned to prison = 10.33%
- January-December 2023: 262 discharged, with 15 returned to prison = 5.72%

Therefore, the prison's reoffending rate is:

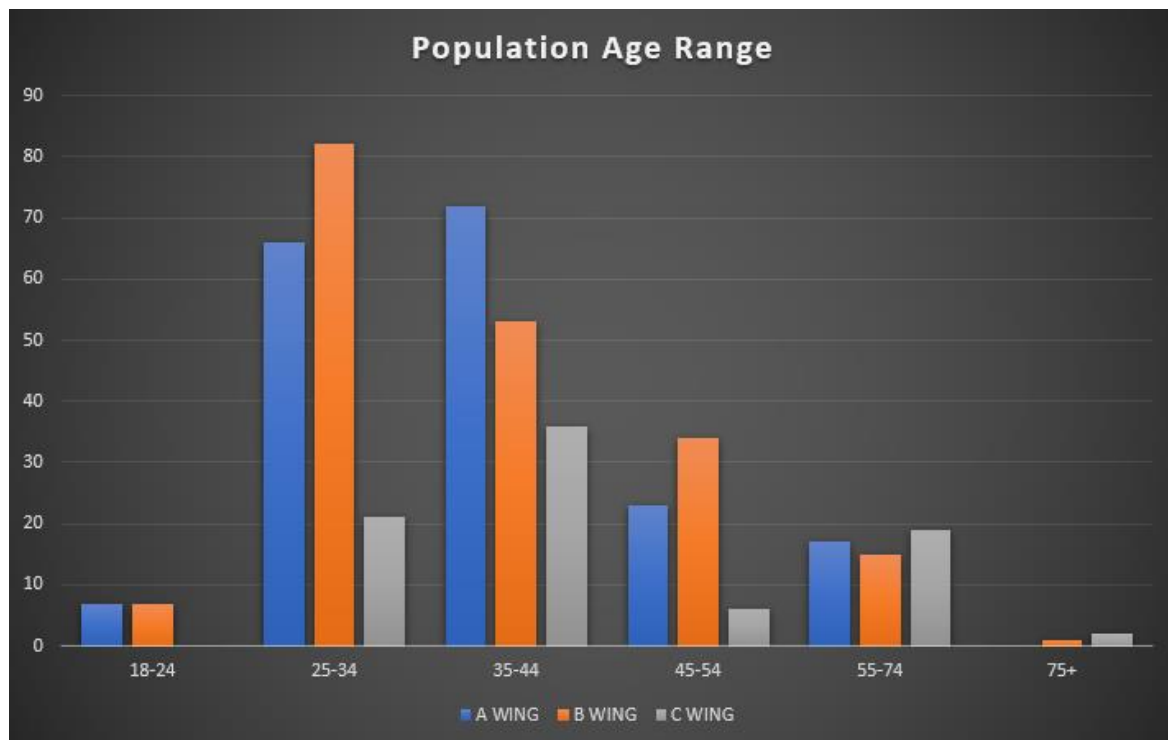
- Over 2 years: 8.06%
- Over 3 years: 10.65%

Appendix 5: Prisoner faith and ethnicity

Ethnicity	A-WING	Percentage	B-WING	Percentage 2	C-WING	Percentage 3
ASIAN	22	11.89%	22	11.46%	3	3.57%
BLACK	58	31.35%	45	23.44%	10	11.90%
MIXED	16	8.65%	16	8.33%	2	2.38%
WHITE	80	43.24%	101	52.60%	66	78.57%
OTHERS	9	4.86%	8	4.17%	3	3.57%
NOT STATED	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
	185		192		84	



AGE	A wing	Percentage	B wing	Percentage 2	C wing	Percentage 3
18-24	7	3.78%	7	3.60%	0	0.00%
25-34	66	35.68%	82	42.70%	21	25.00%
35-44	72	38.91%	53	27.60%	36	42.86%
45-54	23	12.43%	34	17.70%	6	7.14%
55-74	17	9.20%	15	7.80%	19	22.60%
75+	0	0.00%	1	0.52%	2	2.40%
	185		192		84	





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