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Rehabilitative Culture

# Creating an Enabling Environment

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**The concept of Rehabilitative Culture (RC) encompasses 'all aspects of our culture being safe, decent, hopeful and optimistic about stopping offending'.<sup>1</sup> This is not only concerned with services and policies but also with the social environment, created by the nature of the relationships between people. The importance of social environment is not only significant in prisons, but in many institutions and workplaces, such as schools and hospitals. Recognising this, the Royal College of Psychiatrists embarked on a project to 'bridge older distinctions between clinical and non-clinical settings, to develop a single common core vocabulary, applicable across a range of agency and service environments, for those factors in the social and community 'dimension' which are believed to be positive for health and well-being'.<sup>2</sup> This led to the development of the 'Enabling Environments Standards', creating 'a common core of key principles and value statements which underpin all such attempts to establish quality services which foster productive relationships and promote good mental health'.<sup>3</sup>**

There are ten Enabling Environment (EE) Standards: belonging; boundaries; communication; development; involvement; safety; structure; empowerment; leadership, and; openness. Organisations can be assessed for the Royal College of Psychiatrists 'Enabling Environments Award', an accreditation that can be awarded for three years as 'a mark of quality allowing a service to demonstrate that it has achieved an outstanding level of best practice in creating and sustaining a positive and effective environment'.<sup>4</sup>

The EE award has been embraced by many prisons as a means of promoting the development of rehabilitative cultures. This has largely been sought on

small, specialist units, including those working with people with very complex needs. Only two prisons have achieved the Enabling Environments Award for the whole prison. The first was HMP Drake Hall, a women's prison, and the second, was HMP Springhill, a men's open prison.

This article focusses on the process of working towards the EE award at HMP Springhill, and is a discussion between the Governor and Deputy Governor during the period in which the main work towards this was undertaken.

## The value of Enabling Environments

**JB:** Going back to the start of the journey, the engagement with EE accreditation came when Springhill was at a very low ebb. In 2013, a prisoner had been released on temporary licence (ROTL) from Springhill and had committed a murder. This terrible event exposed serious weaknesses in the ROTL process and had shaken the confidence of the establishment. The HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) carried out an investigation into the events that led to the murder and were rightly critical, describing that 'the system failed the public it was supposed to protect'.<sup>5</sup> This led to major changes in the national ROTL policy. The impact at Springhill was significant. An inspection of Springhill in 2014, noted that the events had 'struck at its central purpose' and that although there was work to improve ROTL, 'getting this right was difficult; relationships were being impacted and staff in some roles were very stretched'.<sup>6</sup> They assessed that purposeful activity and resettlement work were 'not sufficiently good'. The start of the work on EE accreditation was consciously recognising that Springhill was rebuilding. EE was a vehicle for this reconstruction.

1. HM Prison and Probation Service (2018) *Rehabilitative culture handbook: second edition* London: HM Prison and Probation Service

2. Royal College of Psychiatrists (2013) *Enabling environments standards* available at <https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/pdf/ee%20standards%20-%202013.pdf> p.3

3. Ibid

4. Ibid

5. HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2014) *A review by HM Inspectorate of Prisons: Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) failures available at* <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2015/07/ROTL-unredacted-WEB-amended-16-July-2015.pdf> p.5

6. HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2014) *Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP Spring Hill 6–15 May 2014* available at <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2014/09/Springhill-Web-amended-2014.pdf> p.6

You joined Springhill after those events and the inspection reports. What was your view on the value of EE?

**MT:** I saw it as part of a desire to get the rehabilitative culture strategy better within the prison. That was also an issue highlighted in the 2014 inspection report at Springhill. Initially EE wasn't top of my agenda, I was more focussed on how rehabilitative culture could be developed.

To set that off, we ran some 'culture web' exercises, facilitated by the regional psychology team and local managers. There were separate sessions with the senior management team, staff and residents. In these sessions, participants were asked to describe elements of the existing organisational culture. A follow up session was also held in which they were asked to identify what improvements would better facilitate a rehabilitative culture. We went to town on it a bit in order to try to make it meaningful.

The idea of this was that it gave us a structure to pin the rehabilitative culture work on. This generated action plans, which were then managed through a monthly rehabilitative culture committee. Initially that was our focus, and EE was just a secondary item on the committee agenda. Over time that switched. That was partly because the culture web exercises often generated actions that were intangible. The EE process had a clear structure, with ten standards and a number of indicators for each standard. There was more to get our teeth into and it became a better way of driving forward a rehabilitative culture.

### **Delivering Enabling Environments**

**JB:** There is a business side to achieving EE accreditation, with self-assessments against the standards and action plans to meet them. The assessment also requires the production of a substantial portfolio of evidence. How was that drawn together?

**MT:** It wasn't always smooth. There were some false starts. Initially we went on one unit, but that faltered, before we decided to go for prison-wide accreditation. That decision was made in a staff meeting, when there was some debate about what

was the best approach and in the end the whole team agreed that a whole-prison approach was right.

**JB:** What did you feel were the main barriers to achieving the EE award?

**MT:** It's a big task putting together the portfolio and developing the organisation, so it needs investment of time and energy. The sheer scale of the task can be a barrier.

The language was also a barrier. The award comes from the health sector and so terms such as 'recipient' and 'provider' had to be translated into our context. We had to do work to make sense of the standards in our particular setting and make it relevant and accessible to people involved.

**JB:** Having started the process, how was it developed?

**MT:** There was good attendance at the rehabilitative culture committee, in part because there was a three-line whip to attend. Committee members were then asked to identify an EE criteria against which we were doing very well. The response to this was patchy and it looked like progress was going to be very slow producing the portfolio. We discussed this and you agreed to put some resources into this. Initially, you suggested a consultant, who might work with us, but that didn't come off. We then identified a PhD student, who came on board, working with us part-time, collecting data for the portfolio

of evidence. We needed that resource. It was necessary to either free someone up internally or bring someone in to support.

**JB:** The role of the PhD student was to support the process, gathering the evidence rather than being the strategic project manager. You and the Head of Residence at Springhill led the programme, supported by members of the rehabilitative culture committee. The PhD student offered some additional administrative support in compiling the portfolio and assessing this against the standards. This was necessary as this was a time when there were significant vacancies, so it wasn't possible to free someone up internally, but there was some underspend we could use to fund this.

**MT:** The PhD student we brought in started by undertaking a systematic review of the evidence we had gathered for the portfolio. He went through each

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of the ten standards and identified where we were meeting the standards and had sufficient evidence; where we were meeting the standards but did not have sufficient evidence, so had to collect more, and; where we were not meeting the standards and we had to consider what more we might do to meet the standards. It was the third group that was the driver for change. Without that, we would simply have been putting forward evidence of what we already did. This review was extremely useful in giving us a clear starting point.

The next step was to make the action deliverable. We set up a team for each of the standards, which included an officer, an administrator, an operational support grade, and a prisoner. Those multi-disciplinary teams then had to take forward the actions from the review of the evidence. The rehabilitative culture committee was the main body for feeding back progress. We held those meetings more regularly coming up to the assessment.

To give some focus and impetus to the process, we also set a date for the EE assessment visit to take place. It was in August 2017 that the PhD student was recruited and the assessment took place in November.

**JB:** After completing the portfolio, there was then an assessment visit, where an assessor appointed by the Royal College of Psychiatrists came to the prison in order to evaluate us against the EE standards.

**MT:** Yes, how we planned and undertook that was as important as the portfolio itself. As well as the traditional portfolio, with documents in three or four lever arch folders, we wanted the visit to include evidence of the standards presented in a more visual way. We created stands including photographs and quotes, addressing each of the ten standards. These were displayed in different places around the prison, matching the standards to the area. For example the standard on 'Belonging', which includes supporting newcomers and marking people leaving, was displayed in the reception area. We had a prison officer and a prisoner taking the assessors around the site and introducing them to staff and prisoners in each of the ten locations. Everyone talked really passionately about what they do and how they contributed towards creating an EE. We did all the

'red carpet' treatment, offering them a nice meal at the lunch time, hosted by some of the prisoners.

**JB:** The first assessment concluded that eight of the ten standards had been met, but that further work was needed on the other two. The EE award was not therefore given at that point, but instead there was a six month period in which to implement a development plan and meet the other two standards, with a re-assessment visit scheduled for the end of that period.

**MT:** There was a time lag between the assessment and the outcome being published to us. During that time we were in a bit of limbo. When we got the feedback, it felt fair, as we'd come a long way but done it quickly so it needed to be embedded. Their main feedback was that we had done a lot to demonstrate our commitment to what they call 'recipients' of the service, in our case prisoners, but we hadn't done enough to show that we met the EE standards for 'providers', in this case the prison staff. We had to do more work on induction and professional supervision in particular.

**JB:** We went into the first assessment almost seeing it as a staging post towards gaining accreditation. We didn't really expect to get it first time around, but actually the assessment day went so well that we started to hope that we might. I agree that the feedback was fair and helpful. We responded by developing a further plan to address the points raised and we updated the portfolio to respond to the feedback provided. At the re-assessment visit, we had to go bigger and better than first time around.

One part of the feedback is that we didn't have sufficient evidence of commitment from what they described as 'back office staff', by which they meant for example administrators. Rightly, the assessors had a view that these people undertake important work that has an influence on the wider culture. In order to evidence the commitment of all staff, we created a pledge committing themselves to the principles of EE, which was signed by people from all around the establishment. We also gathered personal statements for the portfolio from people, including 'back office staff' about how they contributed towards EE. Then on the re-assessment day, the assessor met with about 50 people in the boardroom, where people from all

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around the establishment talked about their work, how meaningful it was and how they contributed towards EE. There was a real buzz around the room, a sense of positivity. People really believed in this and wanted to be part of it. It was a really moving experience to be there.

It was after the re-assessment that we received the feedback that the EE accreditation was to be awarded to Springhill.

### **Nurturing an Enabling Environment**

**JB:** Focussing on some of the content and substance of an Enabling Environment, this was integrated with a series of developments around the prison. There was a concerted effort to improve education, training and employment both inside the prison and externally for people on ROTL.

Following the implementation of a series of revisions to the ROTL policy and practice in 2013 and 2014, the number of people going out each day dropped to less than 20 from a population of 330. This meant that the new policies could be implemented and the necessary improvements made to the process. With a safer and more effective process in place, we were then building this up, helping men to secure education, training and employment places in the community. By 2017, this saw an increase to 80-100 being out each day doing meaningful rehabilitative work. Inside the prison, there was also much closer attention paid to ensuring that people were attending education and work places. In an open prison, that can be challenging as it is a large site with relatively few staff. There was good engagement from those who worked at Springhill who did a good job at challenging non-attendance and addressing any issues. We also had to ensure that what prisoners were being asked to do was meaningful. We didn't want work in the kitchens, waste management or farms and gardens, to just be seen as us exploiting people for cheap labour. So, there was investment in providing qualifications to people in those workplaces and creating opportunities on ROTL for people to use the skills and qualifications they gained in those workplaces to secure employment.

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The way these developments were discussed were important. The learning and skills provision at Springhill had consistently received 'requires improvement' on OFSTED inspections, and attendance was sometimes as low as 85 per cent. I've got kids at school and I kept asking myself and others the question, 'would I send my kids to a school that constantly 'requires improvement' and where nearly one in five of the students don't turn up every day'. My answer to that question was 'no'. So, if I wouldn't accept this as a recipient of a public service, then I couldn't accept it as a provider. Most people could equally get that. There was good support from people thinking about how they could personally play a role in improving standards and improving attendance.

One of the other areas that has always been challenging at Springhill is the physical state of the accommodation. Some of it is past its normal life and every HMIP or Independent Monitoring Board report rightly highlights that although the living accommodation is generally clean, it is old and in need of replacement. How did you approach this from an EE perspective?

**MT:** One way that was encouraged was the introduction of a monthly 'cleanest hut' competition, with the prize being a special communal meal for the winning hut. This was also linked to the idea of people having a

sense of community within their own hut.

We did introduce some painting and maintenance on the huts, with the men being able to take some responsibility for their own environment. There were mixed results as that was the period in which the facilities management provider, Carillion, was struggling and eventually went into receivership. That is certainly an area where there is a lot more potential.

**JB:** What thought was given to basics such as food and clothing in an EE context? I can certainly think of how we encouraged important cultural and faith celebrations such as the festival of Eid to be shared occasions. In that example, Muslim residents could invite a member of staff or another resident of a different faith to join them for the meal. This was positively received and built shared understanding and appreciation.

**MT:** There were also events such as the 'Bake off' competition, in which teams of residents from each hut made cakes. There were over 50 people took part in each competition. It helped to bring people together.

**JB:** What about sports?

**MT:** Yes, one of the initiatives that came out of the EE work was the introduction of a Parkrun. Through this, staff, prisoners and people from the community could take part in those weekly events. That was one way that they gym added to what they were doing to bring people together.

**JB:** Arts were also important. I would get a lot of people contacting me asking to run projects at Grendon, attracted by its reputation for therapeutic work. I would try to divert some of these offers to Springhill. For example, the Irene Taylor Trust funded a musician in residence for three years, and Drawing Connections, an off-shoot of University of Cambridge's Learning Together programme, involved a creative collaboration between residents, staff and students at a local college. The most extensive and successful partnership was with Kestrel Theatre, who worked with men to write and produce plays, which were performed inside the prison and at the prestigious Royal Court Theatre in London.

As well as all of these activities that prisoners could get involved in, how could they be encouraged to get involved in the day to day running of the prison?

**MT:** The prison council changed to reflect the principles of EE. One way this happened was that it became hut-based, so there was a representative from each hut. This again reinforced the idea of each hut being a community. The idea was that the representative would consult with the others on the hut. They representatives had to meet with one of the supervisory officers prior to the main council in order to identify five key questions they wanted to raise. This made it more structured and effective.

The peer support was strengthened. One particular way was setting up a dedicated information and advice room where orderlies were available to support people with requests, applications, and practical problems.

**JB:** With any staff group, some people will be enthusiastic, some will go with the flow and others

will be resistant. What did you sense was the response at Springhill?

**MT:** We discussed that at the start, in particular the minority who were resistant. We agreed that we shouldn't expend our energy simply taking on those who were negative, but rather encourage those that were positive and so marginalise and reduce the negative minority.

This was successful to start with, but then we made the next step, which was that when we put together the groups to deliver the EE standards, some of the people we allocated work to were those who were less engaged but were potentially influential. Many of them responded to this and in fact some really thrived and became quite fired up about it.

**JB:** You set out your expectations at the beginning by delivering a series of three presentations at successive staff meetings.

**MT:** Yes, explaining rehabilitative cultures, legitimate authority and EE itself.

**JB:** One thing that I hadn't seen before that grew organically out of this process was that on three occasions we had residents presenting at staff meetings. Once it was on identifying people at risk of absconding, the second time was the screening of a short film made by residents in collaboration with Kestrel Theatre and the third time was a presentation on the work of

Listeners. I recall the first time being struck by how warm the reception was. I felt that really showed how the culture was shifting.

Families of prisoners have a significant role too. One of the benefits of being an open prison is that there are outside areas that can be used. Based on feedback from residents, we developed a small coppice near the visits areas where children and parents could be taken on guided woodland walks. More recently, the men worked with Kestrel Theatre to write and perform a pantomime for families during the visits time.

### **How was success celebrated and recognised?**

**MT:** For residents there was a monthly recognition event. There were three points at which residents were recognised: achieving their first ROTL; gaining an educational or vocational qualification,

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and; when they were about to be released. The idea was that we would get some positive feedback from people about each individual, and they would also give some reflections and testimony on their achievement. The intention was to foster a sense of hope. Each person would receive a certificate but as well as the more formal parts of the event, there was tea and cake and we would encourage people to stay afterwards and talk to each other.

**JB:** We also have to deal with people breaking the rules. In late 2017, we had a cluster of absconds and I remember considering at the time how this could be approached in a way that reflected EE principles rather than just taking a punitive approach. One of the EE standards on 'Communication' says that how people act is a form of communication. Our initial analysis showed that indeterminate sentence prisoners were absconding more frequently at that stage. Putting the EE principles into practice, I invited all of the indeterminate sentence prisoners to a meeting to discuss how together we could reduce the reasons for abscond and better support people who are at risk of absconding. The outcomes of this were: a request for a hut dedicated to men serving indeterminate sentences where they could support one another; dedicated lifer family days, and; more regular dedicated meetings for indeterminate sentence prisoners. These were all implemented following the meeting.

### Outcomes of Enabling Environments

**JB:** The outcomes of the EE award were not solely the award for its own sake, although it was a significant achievement. The impact on the establishment as a whole was significant. We talked at the beginning about how the EE process was intended as a vehicle for wider organisational improvement, prompted in part by the HMIP reports in 2014. At the end of 2017, after the initial EE assessment, there was a further inspection conducted by HM Inspectorate of prisons. This was a significant gauge of the progress that had been made. The outcome was that the prison improved on the inspectorate judgements for

'purposeful activity' and 'resettlement' and was now outcomes for prisoners were 'good' or 'reasonably good' in all four areas.<sup>7</sup> In addition, OFSTED judged for the first time that learning and skills provision at Springhill was 'good'.

The experience of residents and staff also appears to have improved. In 2018, there were Measuring the Quality of Prison Life (MQPL) and Staff Quality of Life (SQL) surveys conducted at Springhill. This is the first time since 2014, so again it is a reflection of the period in which EE was developed. The outcomes showed that overall quality of life for both staff and prisoners improved, as did their perceptions of safety.

Another set of outcomes relate to the relationship between Grendon and Springhill. Sometimes, it seems that Grendon has greater prestige and reputation and that Springhill is a bit in the shadow. The therapeutic work at Grendon is accredited by the Royal College of Psychiatrists and now, through EE, Springhill is accredited by the same professional body. This raises the prestige and reputation of Springhill, as well as better integrating the services across both establishments. A further outcome is that following the EE award, Springhill was commissioned to deliver a service for prisoners with complex needs as part of the joint Ministry of Justice and National Health Service, Offender Personality Disorder (OPD) Pathway.<sup>8</sup> This is something that has been lobbied for over several years with the work towards EE being part of the case presented to commissioners. The commissioning of this service also improves integration with Grendon, which is already part of the OPD pathway.

This is a process that has improved the experience of those who live and work at Springhill, and the success has been demonstrated in a range of organisational measures.

**MT:** There was also an impact in the culture, encouraging greater empowerment. The process encouraged the idea that if there is something that can be done to improve, then do it. Of course not everyone would accept that responsibility, but enough people did to create a more dynamic community.

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7. HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2018) *Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP Spring Hill 4–15 December 2017* available at <https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmiprison/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2018/04/Spring-Hill-Web-2017.pdf>

8. See <http://personalitydisorder.org.uk/the-offender-personality-disorder-pathway/>