



# **Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP/YOI Bronzefield**

**For reporting year  
1 August 2023 to 31 July 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 also to the prison's records.

The Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT) is an international human rights treaty designed to strengthen protection for people deprived of their liberty. The protocol recognises that such people are particularly vulnerable and aims to prevent their ill-treatment through establishing a system of visits or inspections to all places of detention. OPCAT requires that states designate a National Preventive Mechanism to carry out visits to places of detention, to monitor the treatment of and conditions for detainees and to make recommendations for the prevention of ill-treatment. The IMB is part of the United Kingdom's National Preventive Mechanism.

## **2. Description of the establishment**

HMP/YOI Bronzefield opened in June 2004. It is a privately run local prison for women, managed by Sodexo Justice Services Ltd (Sodexo), which holds both remand and sentenced prisoners. It is located in Ashford, Surrey, close to Heathrow Airport.

During the reporting period, the prison had a certified normal accommodation (CNA; the number of prisoners a prison can hold without being overcrowded) of 557<sup>1</sup>, which included 30 additional prisoner places (APP). The average population of the prison in the reporting year was 517 prisoners (471 in the previous year) and it has held, on average, 17 young adults (YA) aged between 18 and 21, who are accommodated on a spur in one of the same houseblocks as the adult prisoners. It also accommodates a 12-bed mother and baby unit (MBU), with room for 13 babies. Up to 218 prisoners are held in double cells, as there are 79 standard double cells, plus 30 converted double cells for the APPs. Bronzefield serves over 130 courts, both by production and videolink. At the end of the reporting period, the prison held 13 restricted status (RS) prisoners. (These are women, convicted or on remand, whose escape would present a serious risk to the public and who are required to be held in designated secure accommodation.)

Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust (CNWL) took over delivery of all health services at Bronzefield from Sodexo on 1 April 2023. The integrated substance misuse service (ISMS) is subcontracted to Forward Trust, and GP services are subcontracted to the agency DrPA. The prison has a 24-hour inpatient healthcare unit, but no dedicated mental health unit.

Education services and facilities management are provided by Sodexo. There are various external organisations supporting family and community ties and linking to services that help with resettlement after release. A full list of these is published annually in Bronzefield's strategy document.

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<sup>1</sup> 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**

#### **3.1 Main findings**

From the beginning of 2024, there has been a negative impact on prison services across many areas of provision, often to the detriment of prisoners, their opportunities to access purposeful activities and their wellbeing.

This was due to a combination of staff shortages, an increase in the prison's population (+10%, compared with the previous year), the management of complex prisoners (women who have physical, mental and emotional issues, as well as challenging behaviour) and problems in the delivery of healthcare services.

Staff shortages resulted from a number of factors, principally: the significant deployment of prison custody officers (PCOs) to off-site bed-watches and hospital/court escorts; a high turnover of newly recruited officers; and temporary deployment of staff to other prisons.

Problems in the delivery of healthcare services were mainly the result of the overall lack of GPs and nurses, combined with ineffective co-ordination between contracted healthcare providers and the prison (e.g. delays in dispensing medication). (6.1)

As evidenced throughout the report, in spite of the challenges created by staff shortages, the Board has observed a positive working relationship between staff and prisoners and a high level of commitment and dedication from staff throughout the year. (4.1, 4.4, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 6.3, 7.2)

Further evidence of the impact on prisoners is provided throughout the report and includes the following:

- curtailed regime, resulting in prisoners being locked up for excessive periods and consequent increases in levels of frustration (6.4);
- prisoners missing or being late for medical appointments and purposeful activities (education, employment, chaplaincy, wellbeing centre) (5.5, 7, 7.1);
- failure to schedule, or cancellation of, key worker sessions and YA activities (such as, for example, life skills groups) (5.3, 5.4, 6.3); and
- delays and backlogs in processing prisoners' property (5.8).

#### **3.2 Additional findings**

##### **Safety**

- Prisoners arriving in reception experienced delays in receiving medication, including methadone, and have often not been able to make their first phone calls. (4.1)
- The incidence of self-harm remained high throughout the reporting year. (4.2)
- Roll count was regularly late, due to inaccuracies in counting, impacting security and regime. (4.6, 6.4)

##### **Fair and humane treatment**

- Individual cell keys held by prisoners for security and privacy reasons were not always readily available. (5.1)

- As the prison population increased throughout the year, single cells with bunk beds, known as ‘small doubles’, were used to accommodate two prisoners, which led to privacy, security and wellbeing issues. (5.1)
- The Board regularly observed that the level of care provided in the separation and care unit (SCU) to prisoners by staff and managers was attentive and delivered with a high awareness of their needs. (5.2)
- The number of key worker sessions is still well below the target of 456 per month. (5.3)
- The availability and price of essential products for Afro/curly hair and darker skin continues to be lacking and expensive. (5.4)
- No improvement in the lengthy delays dealing with prisoners’ complaints has been observed and prisoners remain sceptical about using this system. (5.7)
- A new property policy was implemented in April 2024, which was viewed by both the prisoners and the Board as unfair and unworkable (5.8)

### **Health and wellbeing**

- The poor collaboration and ‘silo’ working between the healthcare stakeholders is of significant concern to the Board. (6.1)
- The lack of a physical presence of a GP in reception for most of the week results in sub-optimal care at this critical time in a prisoner's journey, especially for those with substance misuse issues. (6.1)
- Poor integrated substance misuse services, both clinical and recovery, has continued. (6.5)

### **Progression and resettlement**

- Concerns remain about the number of women released into temporary accommodation. (7.5)
- The combination of the in-prison employment hub, Job Centre Plus, and the increased capacity of the pre-release team have benefited prisoners on release. (7.5)
- A new bicycle repair training facility, operated with Recycle Your Cycle, became operational in November 2023 (7.2)

### **3.3 Main areas for development**

#### ***TO THE MINISTER***

- The number of women sent to Bronzefield under a ‘Place of Safety’ warrant has nearly doubled this year. What are the Minister’s plans to address this issue? (6.3)
- How does the Minister plan to improve the support of prisoners released from court or at short notice, who are discharged without suitable accommodation? (7.5)
- How does the Minister plan to improve the integration of the healthcare services (under NHS England commissioning) within Bronzefield? (6.1)
- How does the Minister plan to improve ‘through the gate services’ to ensure that discharged prisoners are properly supported in the community? (7.5)

### ***TO THE PRISON SERVICE***

- The Board remains concerned about the number of prisoners coming into the prison, having been identified as acutely mentally unwell (including some prolific self-harmers), either requiring section under the Mental Health Act or admission to a secure hospital. How does the Prison Service plan to provide support to manage these prisoners, who cannot be easily moved to secure psychiatric hospitals due to a shortage of beds? (6.3)
- Will the Prison Service help the prison deal with complex and challenging prisoners, either by providing additional support or facilitating the managed distribution of complex prisoners within the wider women's estate?
- Due to the pressure on the prison population, prisoners are often transferred before they have completed their vocational training. How does the Prison Service plan to prevent this happening in future? (7)

### ***TO THE DIRECTOR***

- The number of complaints not answered within the timelines contained in the Prisoner Complaints Policy Framework continues to be of concern to the Board and has resulted in prisoners losing confidence in the system. What will the prison do to address this issue? (5.7)
- What plans does the prison have to prioritise prisoner/key worker meetings for those prisoners who have been identified as most likely to benefit from them? (5.3)
- Roll count has frequently been late, which has had a negative impact on the regime and security. How will the prison ensure that roll count returns to being accurate and timely? (4.6)
- A number of concerns have been raised about the early days in custody process. How does the prison plan to address these issues? (4.1)
- How will the prison improve the property process? (5.8)
- What plans does the prison have to work more effectively with CNWL and Forward Trust to improve the timely dispensation of medication? (6.1)

### ***TO NHS ENGLAND***

- How does NHS England plan to improve the integration of the healthcare services in Bronzefield? (6.1)
- How does NHS England plan to address the shortage of GPs, nurses, and substance misuse practitioners in Bronzefield? (6.1, 6.5)
- NHS England specifies the provision of face-to-face GP services, seven days a week. However, to date, this has not been achieved. How and when does NHS England intend to remedy this lack of provision? (6.1)

### ***TO SODEXO JUSTICE SERVICES***

- What plans does Sodexo have to address the significant impact of staff shortages on the provision of services in the prison? (3.1, 5.3)

### 3.4 Response to the last report

Issue raised	Summary response (See the detailed response in the <a href="#">letter from the Minister of Justice</a> , dated 14 March 2024, as published on the IMB website)	Progress
<p><b>To the Minister</b></p> <p>There has been a significant shortage of probation officers at the prison during the reporting year. This has, again, had an impact on the provision of accommodation for prisoners on release. What are the Minister's plans to address this issue?</p>	<p>Kent, Surrey and Sussex Probation Service saw an increase of 142 full-time equivalent staff, as of 31 December 2023, who have prioritised deployment to Bronzefield. It is acknowledged that the London region has a shortage of staff and is experiencing recruitment challenges.</p> <p>There are significant challenges in securing accommodation.</p> <p>Kent, Surrey and Sussex Probation service accepted Sodexo's proposal to provide four additional staff members for 12 months (from January 2024) to fill pre-release team vacancies at Bronzefield.</p> <p>CAS3 (community accommodation service, tier 3) provides up to 12 weeks' accommodation on release, with support to move to more settled accommodation.</p>	<p>At the end of the reporting year, there were six members of staff in the pre-release team, only two of whom are employed by the Probation Service (PS), and four by Sodexo (as agreed for a 12-month period). The full complement of six officers has been in place only since March 2024. There are three prison offender managers (POMs) employed by the Probation Service within the prison. They are not directly involved in the provision of accommodation on release. (7.5)</p> <p>The Board has noted an increase in the number of prisoners being discharged to CAS3 accommodation. (7.5)</p>
<p>What are the Minister's plans to address the number of prisoners coming into prison, having been identified as acutely mentally unwell and either requiring section</p>	<p>The expansion of the HMPPS Bail Information Service will help judges have the necessary information to make informed decisions on bailing vulnerable individuals.</p> <p>The Ministry of Justice is working with health and</p>	<p>The Board has been informed that Bail Information Support Officers are now physically located in the prison. However, the number of women sent to Bronzefield under a 'Place of Safety' warrant has nearly doubled during the reporting year. (6.3)</p> <p>The shortage of beds in secure psychiatric hospitals and disputes</p>



under the Mental Health Act or admission to a secure hospital?	justice partners to introduce the non-statutory independent role to monitor delivery of the 28 daytime limit for transfer of vulnerable prisoners to hospital.	between trusts over funding continues to result in significant transfer delays. A total of 41% of positively assessed referrals for transfers to secure hospitals waited more than 28 days in the reporting year. (6.3)
<b>To the Prison Service</b>		
How does the Prison Service plan to provide support to manage the prisoners coming into prison, having been identified as acutely mentally unwell and either requiring section under the Mental Health Act or admission to a secure hospital?	<p>The National Partnership Agreement on Health and Social Care in England (February 2023) sets out a shared priority work plan to deliver effective care for prisoners.</p> <p>In April 2023 a new contract was implemented for the Integrated Healthcare Services, including Bronzefield, which provides a fully integrated mental health model.</p> <p>The HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) Women's Estate Case Advice and Support Panel (WECASP) provides multidisciplinary support to prisons in the management of restricted status prisoners and those with complex needs, including severe mental illness. There are 20 prisoners at Bronzefield on the WECASP caseload.</p> <p>Bronzefield operates an enhanced offender management programme as part of the offender personality disorder pathway to provide psychologically informed additional support</p>	<p>Since April 2023, healthcare services have been provided by Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust (CNWL). The Board has observed that there is no effective collaboration between the prison and CNWL and no direct means by which the Director can hold CNWL to account. (6.1)</p> <p>Women in the prison have a high level of healthcare needs, particularly in relation to complex and acute mental health needs. There have been many shortcomings in the delivery of the healthcare services in the reporting year. (6.1)</p> <p>WECASP convenes monthly panel meetings. Bronzefield refers prisoners for the panel to discuss their needs, but of the 20 prisoners on the WECASP caseload, only a very few are acutely mentally unwell. The Board is not aware of any meaningful impact from WECASP in the support of acutely mentally unwell prisoners who require admission to a secure hospital.</p> <p>The enhanced offender management programme operates successfully in the prison and was very effective in supporting one particularly complex prisoner. It is a programme for prisoners with psychological personality disorders. It does not provide support for prisoners who are acutely mentally unwell and who</p>

		require sectioning under the Mental Health Act or admission to a secure hospital.
Will the Prison Service support the prison in working with Serco to address the impact of the late arrival of vans.	<p>The prisoner escort and custody services provider (PECS) is contractually required to return prisoners by the prison's latest reception time. PECS monitors contractors' performance.</p> <p>Reception processes at Bronzefield are being reviewed to ensure efficient running of reception, especially late at night.</p>	<p>The Board has observed a good working relationship between Serco and the Bronzefield staff. The prison introduced a new overtime model to support prisoners arriving late. (4.1)</p> <p>Long delays have been reported to the Board on arrival in reception and many prisoners have reported not having had their phone call. (4.1)</p>
<b>To the Director</b>		
What are the plans to re-introduce User Voice (a charity offering prisoners the chance to air their views through prison councils, etc)?	No response received.	User Voice restarted within the prison in the second half of the reporting year. (5.1)
How does the prison plan to ensure that complaints are handled in line with the Prisoner Complaints Policy Framework?	No response received.	Significant problems continue, with lengthy delays in final response times to prisoner complaints. Of the 1,387 complaints received during the reporting year, for the seven months to July, the average number answered fully within a five daytime period was 56%. (5.7)
What plans does the prison have to increase the allocation of key workers and the number of key worker meetings?	No response received.	The number of key worker sessions remain well below the prison's target. (5.3)
<b>To the Mayor of London</b>		
What has the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC)	MOPAC has no statutory power or duty to increase accommodation provision for prisoners.	

done to increase the availability of accommodation for those who leave prison with no fixed abode?	<p>MOPAC established the London Blueprint Delivery Group to improve accommodation outcomes for people leaving prison and has produced the Women's Prison Release Practice Briefing. Bronzefield is expected to use the practice briefing to reduce the number of prisoners leaving prison homeless.</p> <p>MOPAC supported Housing for Women (H4W) to successfully bid for funding for a supported housing provision for three to six months.</p> <p>The Mayor's Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation programme supports the needs of vulnerable women offenders who have experienced domestic abuse.</p>	<p>The Board understands that many of the meetings were cancelled during the reporting year and that this initiative has had no noticeable impact on prisoners leaving the prison with no fixed abode.</p> <p>Bronzefield has referred prisoners to H4W, which has a unit in Lewisham, and there have been positive outcomes in obtaining accommodation.</p> <p>The Board is not aware of the involvement in this programme for prisoners released from Bronzefield.</p>
<b>To NHS England</b>		
How does NHS England plan to address the lack of a GP physically present during the weekdays and the fact that there is only a substance misuse GP at the prison on Mondays?	NHS England is supporting an increase in GP provision to ensure a physical presence at the weekend and an appropriate level of substance misuse GP cover. Provision will include additional specialities via a GP for obstetrics and primary care, a clinical lead for complex patients and a regular pain relief clinic.	For much of the reporting year, a primary health GP was only present four days a week and the Board has seen no plans to have a GP present at weekends. In reception, a GP has only been physically present two days a week, with consultations on all other days (including weekends) taking place virtually. Medical staff have reported that such practices are unsafe when dealing with complex prisoners and there have been reported delays of up to three days for uncontrolled drugs for new arrivals. There was no female GP for the first six months of the reporting year and no effective lead GP or clinical director. (6.1)

How does NHS England plan to address the severe shortage of Forward Trust staff for recovery services?	<p>A recruitment campaign has increased the number of staff.</p> <p>Since January 2024, this has allowed an increase in therapeutic group sessions and alcohol misuse services.</p>	There were ongoing staff shortages, particularly of recovery workers. There were only three out of a complement of eight recovery workers, which has led to a drastic reduction in one-to-one support and psychosocial groups. (6.5)
<b>To Sodexo Justice Services</b>		
How does Sodexo plan to address the issue of higher canteen prices at Bronzefield than at other, comparable prisons?	<p>Prices are not always comparable, due to different brands and sizes of products.</p> <p>A price review is conducted every six months with HMPPS Controllers team to ensure that the retail price charged to prisoners is within a maximum of 10% above cost price.</p>	The Board continues to receive complaints relating to canteen prices from prisoners who have transferred from other establishments.

## Evidence sections 4 – 7

### 4. Safety

The prison holds monthly safer prisons, security and use of force (UOF) meetings and weekly safety intervention meetings (SIMs), which oversee violent incidents, use of force, self-harm and prisoners on a challenge, support and intervention plan (CSIP), which are used to support and manage prisoners who pose an increased risk of violence. Each week at the SIM, a prisoner is identified who may benefit from the weekly self-harm supervision session, which a psychologist and the prisoner's proximal network attend.

A senior manager heads the safer custody (SC) team, which includes four other members. Two further PCOs are being recruited.

The Board has spoken to a number of prisoners about their feeling of safety in the prison. Most of them stated that they felt safe but were not clear about procedures to follow if they felt unsafe.

Over a two-to-three month period, from May 2024, there were significant increases in security breaches around the locking of gates.

#### 4.1 Reception and induction

There have been staff shortages in reception on a regular basis throughout the reporting year, with escorts and bed-watches taking key staff away from the unit.

Over a week-long period, the Board spoke to prisoners who had arrived in reception, many of whom raised concerns: delays of two to three hours to be processed through reception to the houseblocks; delays in receiving medication, including methadone; and not being able to make their first phone calls. Generally, the prisoners' and peer supporters' impression of staff in reception ranged from 'fine' to 'outstanding', 'kind' and 'helpful'. The orderlies (trusted prisoners who take on work to provide services that contribute to the running of the prison) in reception praised reception staff and described the supportive atmosphere at a stressful time for the prisoners. They reported, however, that the food in reception from the kitchen was poor and insufficient, which was also observed by the Board.

On release, prisoners are seen by a nurse in reception, alongside a pharmacist. They complete the necessary paperwork and are given their property, with a rail warrant provided to their probation address.

The issue with long delays of Serco vans in the last reporting year appear to have eased and the Board has observed a good working relationship between Serco and Bronzefield staff. Van drivers were described as very compassionate by prisoners.

Early days in custody (EDIC): A number of issues have been raised by EDIC peer supporters (there were seven at the end of the reporting year):

- Reception: many women do not receive a call in reception, which is often then very delayed and leaves families worried and without information.
- The Rough Guide (a guide for new prisoners to the way in which the prison operates) is outdated.
- Used and dirty flasks have been handed to new reception prisoners.

- Second-hand clothes, sent from stores for reception to hand out, are often dirty and stained.
- Prisoners not there for induction are being put onto the induction houseblock and who, due to their own mental health problems, cause new prisoners (particularly those new to custody) to be fearful.

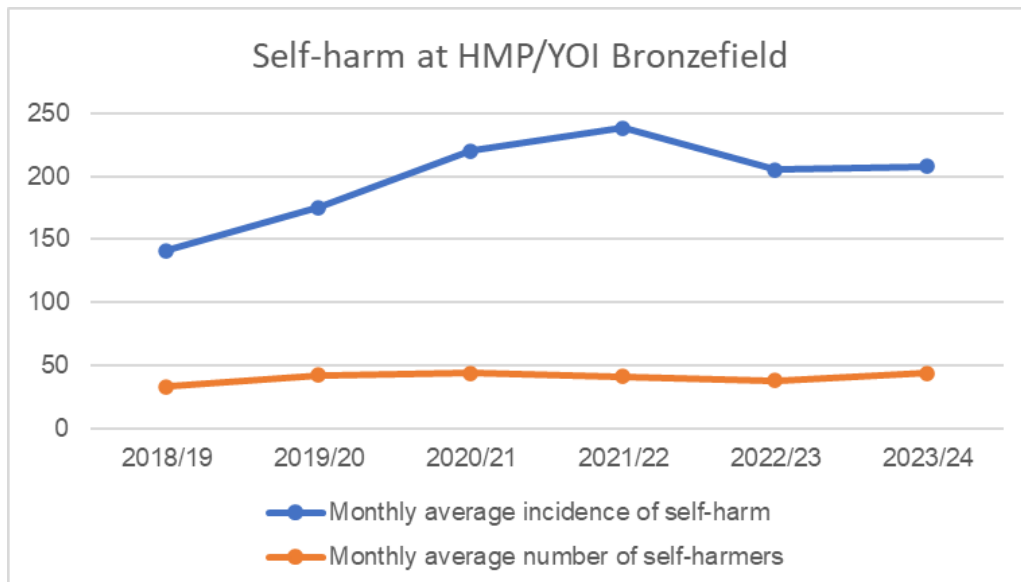
The induction process carried out by the EDIC peer supporters, over a 15-day period, is very thorough and other prisoners praise them for their help. The peer supporters complete an induction booklet, which covers all issues and information required by new receptions, even if they have been in custody at Bronzefield before. One peer supporter deals with the education assessments from which the new receptions are allocated to education, if required.

The Board has checked through a number of EDIC booklets for prisoners and all were thoroughly completed, including officer overnight observations on the first night in custody.

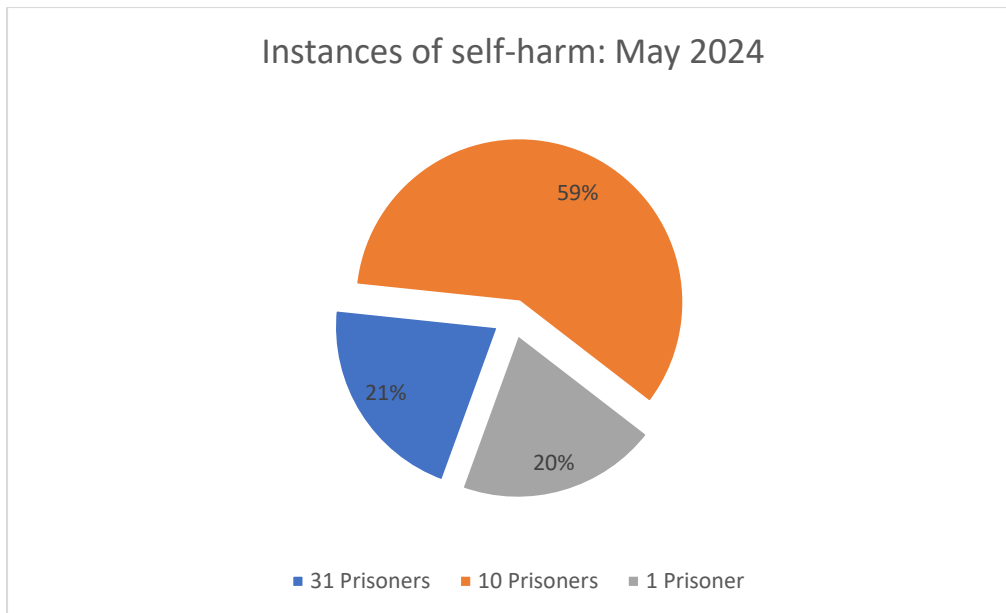
#### 4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

One prisoner, who had been very unwell for some time with a terminal prognosis, died in hospital during the reporting year. There is yet to be a Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) investigation and an inquest. The prison managed the situation empathetically, with a memorial and condolence book set up in the houseblock where she had resided.

The incidence of self-harm remained high, with 2,495 incidents in the reporting year. The average number of incidents was 208 a month (205 in 2022-2023) in the reporting year and the average number of self-harmers was 44 a month (38 in 2022-2023). The monthly average fell to 181 incidents without the inclusion of one prolific self-harmer.



There are a number of prolific self-harmers who account for the majority of the incidents of self-harm. In May 2024, of the 243 self-harm incidents, 11 prisoners accounted for 79% of them (of which 20% related to one prolific self-harmer), with 31 other prisoners accounting for 21% of the remaining self-harming incidents.



An Alert, Intervene, Monitor (AIM) tool was put in place in the reporting year. This alerts the prison if there is a change in a prisoner's behaviour or routine that may indicate a risk factor for safety and wellbeing. Bronzefield was the first prison to roll this out in the prison estate. The SC team check the AIM daily and in the event of an alert, the prisoner is visited and checked by a member of the SC team. Key trigger dates for prisoners are shared one week in advance to all case managers to pre-empt safety and wellbeing issues. This relies on a member of staff inputting the data into the Nomis (internal computer) system.

A total of 589 (585 in 2022-2023) assessment, care in custody and teamwork documents (ACCTs), which are used to manage prisoners at risk of self-harm or suicide, were opened during the year. All staff are trained in how to open ACCT documents. Within one hour of opening an ACCT, a senior prison custody officer (SPCO) makes an intervention plan with the prisoner. The first case review is within 24 hours and, thereafter, reviews depend on what is determined to be the risk.

At the end of the reporting year there were five Listeners (prisoners trained by the Samaritans to provide confidential emotional support to fellow prisoners), two of whom are very experienced, having been in their roles for over 18 months, and one of whom is still in training. This is an unpaid role but all the Listeners told the Board that they felt they made a real difference and gained satisfaction from helping other prisoners. They reported to the Board that there had been a significant drop in their call outs in the reporting year because prisoners were wrongly being told they were not available, which was perceived to have been due to staff shortages.

#### **4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation**

There was an average of 25 (20 in 2022-2023) violent incidents per month - 301 in total - during the year, with the main drivers being debt, trading and consequent bullying, poor tolerance of stress and frustration and mental health. One prisoner accounted for many of the violent incidents.

The 'violence reduction policy', which was updated during the course of the reporting year, includes a zero tolerance approach to violence. Following every incidence of violence:

- a restorative approach peer worker will see the prisoner in a supportive role; and
- every incident is investigated. The alleged perpetrator's cell-sharing risk assessment (CSRA) and incentives scheme status are reviewed. Their violence in prison estimator (VIPER) scores for risk are adjusted and adjudication outcomes (disciplinary hearings held when a prisoner is alleged to have broken prison rules) are recorded to ensure standardisation. All violence incidents are recorded and discussed at the SIM or safer prisons meetings.

A CSIP is opened for all violent incidents and then screened with individualised intervention plans created. A trained CSIP key worker is allocated to each prisoner on a CSIP plan and these have been noted by the prison to have been very effective. Some prisoners who present a dual risk are on both CSIPs and ACCTS

It has been noted by the security team that an increase in violence has resulted from excessive noise on the houseblocks due to a lack of staff, in particular to keep the hub areas clear, and in the mornings due to restricted regime the day before.

#### **4.4 Use of force**

In October 2023, a use of force (UoF) co-ordinator was appointed, whose main role is quality assurance and as a UoF trainer. There are now also three other trainers who cover at weekends. The UoF training course for new recruits has been observed by the Board to be competently run in a very realistic manner.

There is a detailed informative and analytical UoF meeting each month, as observed by the Board, led by the UoF co-ordinator, which considers, among other things, the following information:

- the number of incidents of UoF and the prisoners involved;
- the justifiability of the UoF;
- time and location hotspots, to check for trends;
- trends in minority ethnic groups; and
- officers most frequently involved/initiating UoF incidents, to check for patterns.

An external UoF audit in February gave the UoF management processes a 'green' rating.

During the reporting year, there has been a shortage of body worn video cameras (BWVCs). Updated cameras were purchased in January 2024, but the IT system needed to be upgraded to hold the increased data. This was not completed until after the end of the reporting year.

There was an average of 67 (47 in 2022-2023) use of force incidents per month during the reporting year. There are a small number of prisoners who account for a large number of UoF incidents. In June 2024, two prisoners accounted for 33% of the 67 instances of UoF. The Board has monitored many incidences of planned and unplanned use of force and has not witnessed any excessive use of force. During planned removals, prisoners have been given ample opportunity to walk accompanied by staff instead of force being used.



It has been noted by the UoF co-ordinator in the UoF meeting that the limited regime, due to staff shortages, has contributed to force being used when prisoners are reluctant to return to their cells, which also takes officers involved away from their other duties.

#### **4.5 Preventing illicit items**

The main routes into the prison for illicit goods such as drugs and mobile phones and the prison's response are:

- Parcels.
- Rule 39 letters (these are legal or court correspondence and prison staff cannot open or read these unless there is a very good reason to do so): intelligence has uncovered a 'fake rule 39 team'.
- Visits: intelligence and pat down searches are used.
- Staff: intelligence-led, random and pop-up searches are used.
- Reception: new receptions are searched on arrival.

An intelligence-led search in one houseblock in July resulted in 11 finds, including tampered vapes, unauthorised tablets and photos of prisoners. Seven finds were from one cell.

#### **4.6 Roll count**

In the last few months of the year, roll count was regularly late due to inaccuracies in counting. This impacted security, appointments and regime and, therefore, caused frustration for the prisoners. In July, there were 24 days (78%) in which the 12.45pm roll count cleared after 1pm. (See Annex A). This is not an issue that the Board has observed in previous years.

## **5. Fair and humane treatment**

### **5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food**

Accommodation is provided through four residential houseblocks and units for separation and care (SCU), healthcare and mothers and babies. Phoenix House, previously a resettlement unit, remained empty throughout the reporting year and is not part of the contracted accommodation services. A spur is dedicated to young adults (18-25 year olds) and another to incentivised substance-free living, where pregnant prisoners are also accommodated.

The residential areas appear modern, bright and are generally well maintained. The Board received numerous comments throughout the year about the temperatures in the cells, which can vary throughout a houseblock and are difficult to control in extreme weather. The temperature in the central hub area, when the main doors to the houseblocks were left open during the colder months, was often very low. As the prison population increased throughout the year, single cells with bunk beds, known as 'small doubles', were used to accommodate two prisoners. At the reporting year end, there were 24 small doubles in use. Double cells do not have adequate privacy curtains or secure individual lockers and the Board noted that privacy and ventilation issues in these smaller cells were particularly acute.

Due to inconsistent provision of communal furniture across the prison, new furniture was ordered in June 2024. New saloon-style shower curtains were installed in the bathrooms in three houseblocks in January 2024, which now provide greater privacy.

The Board was repeatedly told by staff, peer workers and prisoners that the equipment provided in cells for newly arrived prisoners was inconsistent and these cells were often under-equipped. The Board also noted inconsistency throughout the year in the provision of appropriate cleaning supplies for the wings, which hampered prisoners' ability to maintain acceptable levels of hygiene, both communal and in their cells.

The Board noted that prisoners often complained that they were unable to easily access a first canteen order (a facility where prisoners can buy snacks, toiletries, stationery and other essentials, using their allocated funds) on arrival in the prison.

Staff and prisoners informed the Board that individual cell keys, held by prisoners for security and privacy reasons, were not always readily available and the Board was told this led to theft from cells.

User Voice meetings restarted within the prison in the second half of the reporting year. Informal meetings are held with the appointed prisoner representatives twice weekly, with a formal quarterly meeting. Communications to the prisoners regarding User Voice are through the appointed representatives and the POD (the internal prison information system), where prisoners are able to complete a form with any issues they wish to highlight.

The longstanding catering manager left at the end of October 2023 and a replacement was not in place until the end of February 2024. Prior to his departure and in the interim period, prisoners felt the quality and variety of the food provided was inadequate and the Board received many complaints about portion sizes, particularly from prisoners on the detox houseblock.

The new catering manager has introduced a compact (a type of contract) for kitchen workers and this has led to a noticeable improvement in the atmosphere in the kitchens and the engagement levels of the prisoners working there, who appear to find the work rewarding, despite the long hours. A new changing room for kitchen workers was established in May and this had led to increased levels of tidiness, with personal possessions able to be stored individually.

As with the previous reporting year, servery workers were often not wearing whites and staff were not always present when meals were served. Prisoners felt this led to variations in portion size and arguments among prisoners. The whites that were provided were seen to be dirty, stained and, occasionally, damp.

Mothers order and prepare food for their own babies in the MBU. The Board was repeatedly made aware of concerns with the pricing, variety and freshness of food available to purchase. Staff were aware of these concerns and were keen to assist, but the ordering system was centralised and did not allow much flexibility. The Board also observed that there was an issue for a number of months with mothers using a rusty microwave to prepare food. Monthly group meetings to address these issues were held on the unit. These were discontinued in March 2024, however, and staff now attempt to address issues on a more individual basis.

## **5.2 Segregation**

The average level of occupancy for the 13 cells in the SCU within the reporting period was six. The special cell (where items such as furniture, bedding and sanitation are removed in the interests of safety) was not used. The Board observed that the level of care provided to the SCU residents by staff and managers was consistently attentive and delivered with a high awareness of their needs, which were often complex and required careful and integrated case management. The SCU staff work closely with the healthcare unit and this allows consistency of care and approach when prisoners move between both units. The six prisoners who were held in the SCU for over 42 days (the limit allowed without external authorisation) were consistently encouraged to move on from the unit, but often refused or were not deemed suitable for relocation for varying reasons, which placed additional pressure on staff and resourcing on the unit.

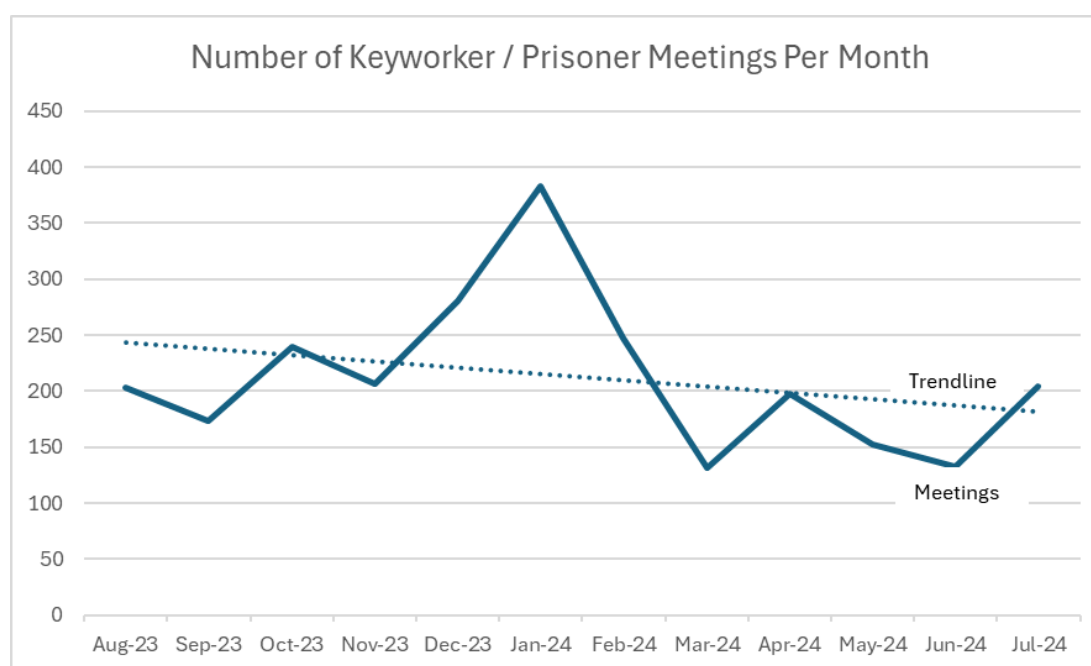
Adjudications are the disciplinary hearings held when a prisoner is alleged to have broken prison rules. A total of 1,666 adjudications were held throughout the reporting period (1,164 in 2022-2023), and when this process was monitored by the Board, it appeared to have been carried out fairly.

Good order or discipline (GOoD) reviews for prisoners who are segregated are held within the SCU. The Board observed 139 of these, either in person or remotely. The Board felt that the targets set for prisoners were realistic and adequate and that the reviews were conducted with the aim of progressing the prisoner out of segregation as safely and appropriately as possible. The attendance of a nurse from CNWL is mandatory at GOoD reviews, but the Board observed that nurses often attended late and, in some instances, not at all. The SCU staff often spent considerable time following this up.

### 5.3 Staff and prisoner relationships, key workers

The Board observed that staff and prisoners' relationships were, on the whole, positive, considering the challenging working environment created by staff shortages. There continued to be high levels of staff turnover, in particular involving those leaving within one year (over half of PCOs), resulting in a high number of inexperienced staff having to manage complex prisoners with challenging behaviour. However, the Board noted that senior officer turnover has fallen since the previous reporting year.

SPCOs manage key workers on their houseblocks. Since December, the senior leadership team (SLT) has been sent a weekly delivery tracker, highlighting the numbers of key worker sessions. The template for the form that key workers complete following a session has changed to include key areas and talking points and the key worker team review the completed forms. The Board has been told that completing the forms satisfactorily is a lengthy process for officers. Low staffing levels have impacted the number of key worker sessions, which have averaged 213 per month. The target number of sessions per month is 456, so the prison is falling well short of its target, which has already been reduced from a target of 2,000 sessions per month last year.



### 5.4 Equality and diversity

At the end of the reporting year, 50% (43% in the previous year) of the prison population were 'white British' and 14% (20% in the previous year) were 'white other'. The largest minority ethnic groups were black, at 19% (18% in the previous year) and 6% Asian (also 6% in the previous year).

There are three diversity and inclusion action team (DIAT) members. Monthly DIAT meetings, chaired by a member of the SLT, took place, apart from the last three months of 2023. Plans for one member of the SLT to be allocated to champion each of the protected characteristics (these include race, religion, age, disability, sex,

pregnancy and maturity, gender reassignment and sexual orientation, all of which it is unlawful to discriminate against) have not materialised. At the year end, there were four diversity and inclusion (D&I) peers, who provide a link between the prisoners and staff.

The D&I peer workers run weekly groups for prisoners, focusing on the protected characteristics, and provide feedback from the groups to the D&I lead. The Board observed some focus groups and found them to be well run, with all attendees participating and providing constructive points.

Sexual orientation and gender reassignment. At the reporting year end, there were 11 transgender prisoners. Local Boards for transgender prisoners were up to date and the Board observed a complex case review board, which was well run and fair for the prisoner. Transgender prisoners reported to the focus groups that they feel well supported by the D&I team, but that they would like staff to be more mindful and aware of the use of pronouns.

Age. There were 85 prisoners over 50 years old at the end of the reporting year. They reported, again, that they would like dedicated activities for their age group, in particular in the gym. At the year end, there were 16 (18 in 2022-2023) young adults, who reported that provision of activities for their group was variable. There were weekly community meetings and the mental health team was often present on the spur, but other activities, such as life skills groups, were frequently cancelled due either to lack of staff or low numbers. (6.3)

Race. At the year end, there were 129 foreign national (FN) prisoners. There are often problems with foreign national prisoners being sent overseas currency by friends and relatives (which cannot be exchanged) and it not being possible for them to access social video calls with some countries. The Board was told by the foreign national prisoner peer workers that problems continue with access to translation services. They also reported that the main headings on the POD are translated, but anything that regularly changes, such as menus and canteen, remain in English only.

The availability and price of products on the POD for essential afro/curly hair and darker skin continued to be limited and expensive.

Disability. The focus groups identified that the healthcare unit takes too long to action appointments and follow ups and prisoners with non-visible disabilities would appreciate a badge highlighting their disability.

Pregnancy and maternity. There were nine confirmed pregnant prisoners at the end of July. It was reported in focus groups and to the Board that pregnant prisoners would like more variety in their pregnancy food packs and, in particular, more fruit. (6.2)

Faith, marriage and civil partnership. Muslim prisoners report that they struggle to get their welcome packs, whereas the Christian packs are readily available. (5.5)

Neurodiversity. When possible, new receptions undergo the 'rapid screener', to identify their needs or neurodivergent traits, and are subsequently well supported by the neurodiversity team. Some of the neurodivergent prisoners proved challenging to manage on the houseblocks and, as a result, were moved to the healthcare unit or the SCU. (See Annex A)

Between January and June, the Board reviewed 40 discrimination incident reporting forms (DIRFS), of which eight (none if the previous year) had overdue responses. Those prisoners who were contacted by the Board were happy with the outcomes. The most common complaints were regarding alleged racial comments and staff behaviour. Staff acknowledged racial comments, apologised and were referred for D&I refresher training.

## **5.5 Faith and pastoral support**

The responsibility for organising activities over the Christmas and Easter periods was moved from chaplaincy to the houseblock managers. As a result, the provision was extremely variable, with some houseblocks experiencing very little activity over the Christmas period, and similarly, numerous prisoners reported that none of the promised activities had taken place over the Easter period.

The chaplaincy team organised a quiz for Christmas and Easter and ensured that all prisoners received a gift for the main Christian and Muslim festivals. In addition, activities are arranged in the chapel for other religions' main festivals.

The D&I focus groups highlighted that there are no services for Christian Orthodox prisoners who are, therefore, obliged to attend the Catholic services.

As a result of low staffing levels, it has sometimes not been possible for prisoners to attend services in the chapel at the weekend. On these occasions, the chaplaincy team and guitarist went to the houseblocks to sing with the prisoners, which has been very popular.

It was reported to the Board by a member of the chaplaincy team that some prisoners are prevented from attending services at lunchtime. A variety of reasons have been identified, including some staff locking up too early, as well as the prisoners not being ready in time.

The Freedom Programme, a domestic abuse programme, is run bi-monthly twice a week for four weeks for 15 participants. It has been condensed in order to accommodate prisoners on short sentences. As a result of feedback from the prisoners on the course asking for ongoing support and, sometimes, one-to-one support, the Freedom Programme facilitator's role was expanded in February to specialist domestic abuse practitioner. In-cell packs were provided to prisoners awaiting support, of which there were 88 at the end of June. Feedback from the prisoners who have attended the course was very positive.

## **5.6 Incentives schemes**

In May, User Voice carried out an incentives schemes consultation, with 56 prisoners taking part. Just over half the respondents said they understood the incentives scheme, but none of them considered the system to be fair. Prisoners would like to see the incentives scheme process standardised across the prison and staff refresher training. (See annex A). A new policy framework, based on these findings, was being developed at the year end.

## **5.7 Complaints**

Significant problems with the prison's complaints system have remained throughout the reporting year, with lengthy delays in final response times. This reflects the Board's conversations with the prisoners, who say there is little point using the

complaints system. The prisoner complaints policy framework states that a Comp1 (a form for making an ordinary complaint) should be answered within five days (unless complex) and that the use of interim responses (a holding response pending a final conclusion) should be exceptional. The policy at Bronzefield is that complaints should be answered within five working days.

Of the 1,387 complaints (Comp 1) received during the reporting year, for the seven months to July, the average number answered fully within a five day time period was 56%. However, prison data indicates that over 98% of responses were answered on time, as an interim response was counted as an 'on time' response.

## **5.8 Property**

The number of applications (prisoners' written representations) regarding property received by the Board increased to 23% of total applications received, compared with 17% in the previous year. The issues largely related to repeated delays in the provision of appointments to attend reception to receive property, the cancellation of these appointments at short notice, repeated backlogs of processing parcels that arrive at the prison, general confusion over the prison's property policy and inconsistencies between what is allowed and how prisoners receive property. The prison did not monitor or measure its performance against the nationally agreed service level agreement brought in in April 2023.

A new property policy was implemented in April 2024, which was viewed by both the prisoners and the Board as unfair and unworkable. Staff did not appear to understand or have knowledge of the policy, which was consequently applied inconsistently. The property policy is in the process of being reviewed but, in the interim, there does not appear to be a workable system in place.

The staffing of officers to handle property was continually hampered throughout the reporting period, due to the staffing needs of escorts and bed-watches, which were always prioritised. A dedicated group of officers was established to assist bed-watches towards the end of the reporting year, but this did not have any noticeable impact on prisoners' ability to access services related to their property. The inconsistent and delayed provision of property resulted in understandable distress and frustration among the prisoners, which led to broader implications, such as houseblock staff following up property issues.

## **6. Health and wellbeing**

### **6.1 Healthcare general**

Since April 2023, healthcare services have been provided by Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust (CNWL), which subcontracts the provision of GP services to DrPA and the substance misuse services to Forward Trust (FT). NHS England (NHSE) retains responsibility for the quality assurance of health contract delivery. Whilst the Director is responsible for the prison, the Board's observation is that there is no direct means by which the Director can hold CNWL to account. Effective collaboration between the prison and CNWL is poor and not helped by the long-term absence of the head of the healthcare unit in the latter part of the reporting year.

With a large number of complex prisoners and a rapid turnover, the prison has very high healthcare needs. The Board has observed that these needs are often not adequately recognised, leading to shortcomings in the delivery of healthcare services.

A shortage of nursing staff has led to difficulties in covering reception, a lack of nurse attendance at meetings and failure of a nurse review of new arrivals in the SCU within the prescribed two-hour requirement. Although funding was allocated in March 2024 for a 40% increase in staff (both nursing and administration posts), only six out of the proposed additional 11.5 whole time equivalent posts had been filled by the end of the reporting year.

NHSE provided funding for face-to-face GP services six days a week, as well as a virtual GP on a Sunday. However, for much of the reporting year, a primary health GP was only present four days a week, and the Board understands that there is still no plan for a GP to be in the prison at weekends. In reception, a GP is only physically present two days a week and consultations on Wednesday to Fridays take place virtually, via telemedicine, with a virtual (rather than in person) emergency service being available for new arrivals at weekends. Medical and nursing staff have told the Board that such practices are unsafe when dealing with complex prisoners. They have resulted in documented incidents of dangerous delays in medication for new arrivals of more than 24 hours for detoxing prisoners and up to three days for those on drugs that are not controlled.

There were no female GPs for the first six months of the reporting year and the Board felt there was no effective lead GP or clinical director. The Board has observed a lack of appropriate documentation of GP visits in the SCU, which should occur at least every 72 hours. For example, in June, there were documented GP rounds in the SCU every Monday and Friday and one Wednesday only.

Waiting times to see a GP appear to be equivalent to those in the community for both routine and urgent appointments. Urgent dental appointments are generally accommodated and routine dental appointments occur within four to six weeks.

There continue to be examples of 'silo' working and lack of collaboration between CNWL, Sodexo and CNWL's subcontracted service providers. For example nurses from Forward Trust (FT) refuse to help with issues they see as a primary health concern, even in an emergency, and a directive from the prison advising officers that it is not their responsibility to check prisoners' mouths after controlled drugs have



been dispensed by CNWL nurses, to protect patient confidentiality. There have also been instances of primary care doctors covering reception being unwilling to write prescriptions for methadone because they have not had the appropriate training.

Delivery of medication to prisoners is inefficient, as nurses from FT and those from primary care dispense different types of drugs separately. This leads to long medication times, which results in delays in prisoners going to work, as well as prisoners missing appointments. It also results in a lack of officers to supervise other activities (e.g. the serveries) and prisoners getting locked up in the evening without having been given their prescribed medication.

Shortages and, at times, extreme shortages of operational staff have led to issues with the supervision of medication. The Board has, on occasion, observed a complete lack of supervision, even for controlled drugs, resulting in prisoners walking away with unconsumed tablets.

An attempt has been made to establish health forums for prisoners to air their concerns and complaints about healthcare, and User Voice has also held meetings with a CNWL representative. However, the Board's view is that neither could be described as well established.

In monitoring the effect of staff shortages, the Board is aware of the cancellation of urgent appointments (including a 'two-week rule' appointment for the investigation of possible cancer), delayed medication rounds, night staff being unable to deliver medication and, in the year April 2023 to March 2024, the cancellation of 329 out of a total of 1,463 hospital appointments (899 for planned appointments and 235 for emergencies).

The percentage of health-related applications received by the Board has been stable, at 18% (19% last year). Recorded healthcare complaints have decreased, on the background of an increasing prison population, from a monthly average of 47 in the latter part of last year, to 24 in this reporting year.

## **6.2 Physical healthcare**

All new arrivals receive a comprehensive general health assessment (secondary screening, including vaccination history, together with identification of health-screening requirements and long-term conditions needing additional support) by nurses.

A health promotion week was held in May 2024, which had good attendance as prisoners were incentivised to visit the wide range of stalls. These included screening for multiple conditions, vaccination updates, smoking cessation and mobile chest X-rays.

There have been up to 13 pregnant women in the prison at any one time during the reporting year, usually housed together on a single spur. They are all considered medically high risk and receive obstetric care from staff from Ashford and St Peter's Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and support from dedicated prison officers and peer workers, as well as visiting healthcare workers. There are weekly multi-disciplinary meetings at which all pregnant prisoners are discussed. The Board has observed that the widespread changes, introduced into all parts of the prisoner pregnancy pathway following the death of baby Aisha Cleary at the prison in 2019, appear to

have become embedded in practice. Personal alarms are issued to all pregnant prisoners for use if their cell bell is out of reach and they also have direct, free access to a 'call a midwife' advice line and maternity triage line. Pregnant prisoners have told the Board that they are satisfied with the level of antenatal care. However, the obstetric team have complained about poor handover and communication from FT when dealing with pregnant prisoners who have substance misuse issues.

### **6.3 Mental health**

The number of women sent to Bronzefield as 'place of safety', under the Mental Health Act (19 in 2023-2024, compared with nine in 2022-2023), together with the churn of mentally unwell women, continues to put considerable stress on the prison's mental health services. The Board has been told by the head of mental health services that, as a result, the service has become one of bed management more than nursing care and is the worst he has seen for 15 years.

The shortage of beds in secure psychiatric hospitals, together with in-fighting among NHS health trusts over funding, continues to result in significant transfer delays. During the reporting year, there has been a total of 34 prisoners transferred to secure psychiatric hospitals, compared with 56 in 2022-2023. The target time for transfer is 14 days from the access assessment accepting the need to transfer. This target was met in only 30% of cases, with a further 41% waiting more than 28 days.

The 18-bed inpatient facility at the prison is consistently full of complex, challenging prisoners. There is usually a waiting list of prisoners referred for an inpatient bed but who have to be managed on the houseblocks, as none is available. This list has averaged between four and five over the reporting year, with a range of one to 12.

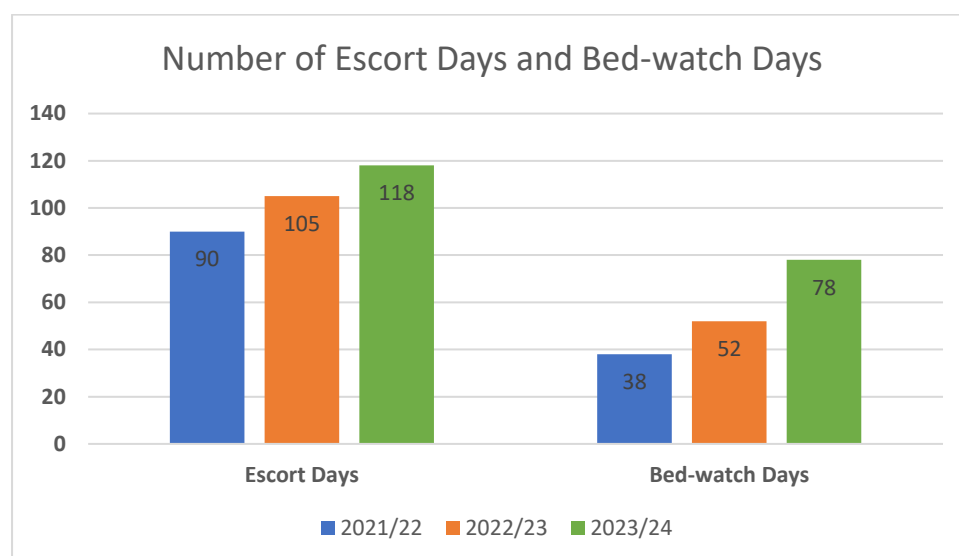
The Board observed a high level of commitment and dedication from staff in the inpatient facility, who dealt with complex, acutely mentally unwell women, throughout the reporting year. The appointment of a mental health practitioner with specific responsibility for the SCU and healthcare has been widely welcomed.

There is a well-staffed and, in the Board's view, an effective perinatal mental health service, as well as a young adult service, fully staffed with psychologists and occupational therapists. However, the Board has been told by an involved senior member of healthcare staff that the work on the dedicated young adult wing has been compromised by a lack of officers dedicated to that wing, and by staff shortages, which curtail movement to some of the focused, purposeful activities provided for this group of prisoners. (5.4)

### **6.4 Time out of cell, regime**

The staff shortages referred to earlier in the report resulted in the loss of regime virtually every weekend, sometimes up to the level of a 23-hour lock-up. This worsened in the second half of the year, when unpredictable restrictions were frequently imposed during the working week and including a week in March and a week in May when there was no purposeful activity off the houseblocks except for catering. Listeners and peer workers and educational activities were delivered on the houseblocks. The restrictions were poorly communicated to both prisoners and staff and were exacerbated by frequent problems with roll counts, resulting in the delayed movement of prisoners to appointments and activities. Senior officers have described staffing levels on the residential houseblocks as dangerous at times.

The staff shortages were generally attributed to the high number and unpredictability of escorts and bed-watch days, which have increased from a monthly average of 105 and 52 in 2022-2023, respectively, to 118 and 78, respectively, in 2023-2024.



The Board has frequently noted that regime restrictions are not recorded in the residential observation books and, therefore, questions the accuracy of the official returns for prisoners' time out of cell.

The Board has heard many complaints of early lock up, resulting in prisoners not being able to take showers on returning from work, having to eat meals in their cells and having to choose between, for example, exercise or going to chapel. (5.5)

## 6.5 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

The year was characterised by ongoing staff shortages, particularly of recovery workers, with as few as three out of an establishment of eight. This resulted in a skeleton service covering induction and release only and, therefore, a drastic reduction in one-to-one support and psychosocial groups. The service usually has three or four peer workers, but for much of the reporting year, there has been none, as pressure on prison places means that even trained peer workers have to be transferred.

Narcotics Anonymous and Cocaine Anonymous returned during the reporting year, providing weekly sessions.

## **7. Progression and resettlement**

The factors outlined at the beginning of the report have impacted the education, vocational training and work functions to a material degree. Prisoners have often been late for, or unable to get to, purposeful activities and, on occasion, suffer cancellation of an entire session or sessions due to curtailed regime and lockdowns. The Board has also heard frustration from both staff and prisoners that courses and training cannot be completed, due to transfers occurring at unpredictable times.

### **7.1 Education, library**

An education core curriculum is run, with two sessions in the morning and two in the afternoon, covering English, maths, IT and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), with a neurodiversity facility available for those less suited to mainstream education. All prisoners are eligible for courses, most of which are six weeks in duration, with generally high demand for English and maths. The prison has an attendance target for purposeful activities of 80% of enrolled prisoners. The Board understands that this target was not achieved during the reporting year, largely due to the impact of the factors outlined at the beginning of the report. As these events usually occur at short notice, the provision of in-cell education is often not practicable,

The library has been fully open throughout the reporting year and appears generally well used (some 400 visits in June 2024) with a new 'books for first nighters' initiative, which has proved popular.

There are up to 30 peer workers in education, including seven peer workers trained in reading and functional maths by the Shannon Trust to level 3 advanced education training (AET). They offer 20 minute one-on-one mentor sessions to prisoners and support for self-study in reading and functional maths. The Board has been told that that these sessions have generally continued, even during curtailed regime. In June 2024, there were 150 prisoners being mentored under the 'turning pages' reading scheme and 27 under the 'count me in' functional maths scheme.

New neurodiversity initiatives include the creation of a 'one-page profile' for all special educational needs' (SEN) prisoners (which the Board has been told assists integration of SEN prisoners into work/education), an 'easy to read' programme for those finding reading difficult, 'personal growth workshops' to help prisoners address social and emotional difficulties and 'individual support plans' for the most complex prisoners.

A debating skills course has been run with the opportunity for 'public' debates, which has been well received by prisoners. Three prisoners were registered on Open University courses and eight on Prison Education Trust (PET) courses in the reporting year.

At the end of the reporting year there were three English tutors (with two vacancies), three maths tutors (with three vacancies), one tutor each for IT and ESOL, a SEN tutor and a SEN co-ordinator.

## 7.2 Vocational training, work

Shades of Beauty, offering hair and beauty treatments, was open throughout the reporting period, offering a variety of training courses, including City & Guilds (C&G) levels 1 & 2 and a C&G level 2 barbering course.

The Jailbirds arts and crafts facility was open throughout the year and included art with a therapeutic element, aimed at building confidence.

The employment hub has an office within Jailbirds, providing a ten-week level 1 C&G business enterprise course and an employability skills course to C&G employability level 1, including financial/stress management, budgeting, debt, disclosure requirements and CV writing for prisoners with at least six weeks remaining on their sentence and a 'pre-release' course for prisoners in the last 12 weeks of their sentence.

Up to 20 prisoners work in the kitchens alongside the chefs. The staff café, Vita Nova, was in operation throughout the reporting year, employing ten prisoners, with some security-cleared prisoners from Vita Nova rotating to work in the visits' hall café.

All prisoners working in the kitchens and cafés or as server workers are trained to level 2 C&G food safety. Prisoners working in Vita Nova are trained to level 2 C&G barista skills (around 45 learners in the reporting year), C&G level 2 patisserie and confectionary (around 16 learners in the reporting year). Those working in the kitchens also have the opportunity to train to level 2 C&G barista skills. A new C&G level 2 diploma course in food production, budgeting and cooking started during the reporting year.

A new bicycle repair training facility, operated with Recycle Your Cycle, became operational in November 2023, supported by three peer workers. During the reporting year, over 150 bikes have been completed and returned for use. Training for C&G level 1 bicycle mechanics has recently started, with the first five prisoners enrolled.

Pimlico Opera has not put on a musical production this year but has resourced popular singing, dancing and movement workshops on Friday afternoons.

The 'roots and shoots' gardening team is led by a trained horticulture tutor and employs prisoners working in the gardens on a part-time or full-time basis, with training being offered to RHS horticulture level 2

The wellbeing centre operates seven days a week and offers a range of options, including: sessions in the gym; and weekly classes (e.g. boot camp, legs, bums & tums, badminton, meditation, yoga and Pilates). It also offers externally run programmes and events, such as a training and upskilling course with Brentford Football Club, and visits from Amy Fuller (British Olympic snowboarder) and Katya Jones, one of the professional dancers from TV's Strictly Come Dancing. An 'in-prison' Park Run has started. The Board has observed the enthusiasm and dedication of the wellbeing centre staff, who have supported and led these activities.

### **7.3 Offender management, progression**

Offender management is carried out by a team of prison offender managers (POMs) employed by Sodexo, with prisoners assessed as 'high risk' being managed by POMs from the Probation Service (PS).

During the reporting year, there were 11 prisoners on release on temporary licence (ROTL), the relatively low numbers being attributed to the low number of eligible prisoners.

The video conferencing centre (VCC) has 14 video courts, reducing the need for physical attendance at court.

A 'restorative approaches' (RA) programme operates as part of a nationwide scheme, primarily run by three fully trained peer workers. The RA peer workers see all new prisoners in reception and explain the prison's approach to violence reduction. They also visit all prisoners on cellular confinement (CC) and offer mediation, following disputes between prisoners, by way of individual sessions taking place either informally or in a designated room on one of the houseblocks. The programme is supported by the safer custody team.

Peer worker/prisoner activity co-ordinators are present on all of the houseblocks and in MBU. Their role is to organise evening and weekend activities, such as drawing, painting and games, and they have access to a modest budget for materials.

### **7.4 Family contact**

Friends and family can use the 'email a prisoner' scheme, with emails usually delivered within one working day, and can send photos directly to prisoners, if ordered from an approved online service. The photos are checked for content and recorded in reception, with any child protection issues being referred to security. Photos sent in the mail from any other source are photocopied in colour, then sent to the prisoner.

Social visits were available throughout the reporting year and social video calls, which are available seven days a week, remained popular, particularly for those prisoners with family abroad, or who have elderly relatives or young children, which makes travel difficult or expensive.

### **7.5 Resettlement planning**

The employment hub, with four Sodexo staff and two peer workers, assists new prisoners with purposeful activity opportunities, whether in the workplace or in education, with a follow-up review every three months. It also works with prisoners in the last 12 weeks of their sentence. It helps with identity documents, disclosure requirements and banking and employment opportunities. Examples of post-release job placements include Iceland (15 job offers), Marriott (three job offers), and Superdrug (one senior stylist role offered), as well as referrals to New Futures Networks.

Job Centre Plus staff (from the Department for Work and Pensions) assist prisoners in the last 12 weeks of their sentence. They advise on universal credit and benefits' applications and help with potential barriers to employment; in certain circumstances, they can arrange for an advance of benefit entitlements to prisoners on release. Job Centre Plus staff are present in reception daily to ensure that all prisoners being

released are either on the universal credit (UC) pilot scheme (under which they can, subject to meeting certain criteria, receive an advance on universal credit of £393) or know how to activate their UC account, using a freephone number. Job Centre Plus also works with remand prisoners, particularly regarding housing concerns whilst on remand, and is able to assist remand prisoners with housing costs for the first six months following release (paid directly to the relevant landlord). The Board has been told that Job Centre Plus staff not being permitted to visit prisoners on the houseblocks during the frequent periods of curtailed regime due to DWP security concerns has resulted in a significant waste of resource and opportunity during the reporting year.

The pre-release team, which at the end of the reporting year comprised six staff, two employed by the Probation Service (PS) and four by Sodexo, seeks to ensure prisoners will have accommodation post release. The Board has been told that around 75% of prisoners being discharged from the prison, without their own or family accommodation, will either have a referral to the community accommodation tier 3 service (CAS3), or equivalent accommodation, or will have an appointment with the PS or the relevant local authority housing team. If attended, it should result in the provision of temporary accommodation (usually a hostel or hotel), but it is not unusual for discharged prisoners to fail to attend.

The Board has been told that where prisoners are released from court, or are subject to sudden out-of-hours or short-notice release, there is insufficient time for the pre-release team to become involved. This results in prisoners being discharged without accommodation.

Whilst members of the chaplaincy team (with volunteers) often walk with discharged prisoners to Ashford train station and the prison has, on occasion, provided a taxi service to assist prisoners deemed especially vulnerable to reach their allocated accommodation, the Board has been told that there is a significant need for a 'through-the-gate' service, properly co-ordinated between the PS, accommodation providers and the prison, to support prisoners on discharge.

Following the concerns reported by the Board in the last two annual reports about the number of prisoners being released without safe and sustainable long-term accommodation (such as their own, or to family), the Board undertook another survey of 100 sentenced prisoners leaving the prison during March-June 2024.

In summary, of those surveyed: 27% said that they were going to their own home or family (down from around 28% in the previous two surveys); and 13% declared themselves homeless (a notable improvement from the 31% who declared themselves homeless in each of the previous two surveys). A total of 56% said they were going to temporary accommodation, by way of CAS3 or a hostel or an appointment with the PS to arrange accommodation (a big increase on the previous two surveys; the Board has been told that some referral appointments are only made shortly before discharge occurs, which may explain why the survey reveals lower numbers of referrals than the 'approximately 75%' provided by the pre-release team).

A partnership between St Hilda's (a local church), Sodexo and the Hope into Action charity provided one ex-prisoner, who would otherwise have been homeless, with a supported home for up to two years following release.

## 8. The work of the IMB

### Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	15
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	14
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	12
Total number of visits to the establishment	426

### Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year %	Current reporting year %
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	4	8
B	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives scheme, sanctions	1	3
C	Equality	5	2
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, time out of cell	3	0.5
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection, restrictions	6.5	8
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	4.5	2.5
F	Food and kitchens	4	6
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	19	18
H1	Property within the establishment	16	21
H2	Property during transfer or in another facility	1	2
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogues	5	4
I	Sentence management, including HDC (home detention curfew), ROTL (release on temporary licence), parole, release dates, re-categorisation	4	3
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	19	16
K	Transfers	1	1
L	Miscellaneous	7	5
	Total	100%	100%
	<b>Total number of applications</b>	<b>426*</b>	<b>559*</b>

\*The number of applications to the IMB this reporting year has been inflated by some prolific application submitters, three of whom accounted for 58 of the 426 applications received.



## Annex A

### Supplementary information

#### 4.6 Roll count

	<u>Days in month</u>	<u>Days in which 12.45pm roll count cleared after 1pm</u>	<u>% of roll counts 'late'</u>
April 2024	30	17	57%
May 2024	31	26	83%
June 2024	30	17	57%
July 2024	31	24	78%

#### 5.4 Equality and diversity

Neurodiversity: Of 237 new receptions in July, 132 underwent the 'rapid screener' to identify their needs or neurodivergent traits. The gap between new receptions and those who took the rapid test is due to refusals, the inability to take the test due to substance misuse or mental health issues, quick release, transfer to a different facility, or a new tracking system, where women do not need to repeat the test if they have taken it before. Seven women received in-depth screenings, which are conducted when women are involved in education such as maths, English or IT. Additionally, 52 women were referred for individual support or further evaluation due to diagnoses, traits, or learning disabilities or difficulties. Among them, eight new arrivals received individual one-to-one support provided by the neurodiversity team.

#### 5.6 Incentives schemes

User Voice incentive scheme survey: The key findings were as follows:

- 55% said that they understand the incentives scheme process but 55% did not have a staff member explain the system to them on arrival at Bronzefield.
- No one considers the incentives scheme process to be fair at Bronzefield.
- 50% would like to be notified of issued incentives scheme awards with paper slips.
- 60% have been in at least one situation where they have expected an incentives scheme awards and not received one.
- 74% prisoners would like to trade five positive incentives scheme awards for Vita Nova credit, 59% for salon, and 39% for a £5 canteen credit.
- Prisoners feel that the reason why someone refuses to attend work or education should be considered, and a warning system should be put in place.
- Prisoners think that when property or facilities are damaged, the person responsible should pay for the costs.
- Prisoners would like to see the incentives scheme process standardised across the prison and staff refresher training and for positive incentive entries to be issued more often.



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