



Chair, Independent Monitoring Board  
HMP/YOI Bronzefield  
Woodthorpe Road  
Ashford  
Middlesex  
TW15 3JZ

MoJ ref: SUB120682

17 January 2025

Dear Chair,

**HMP/YOI BRONZEFIELD: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT  
FOR 1 AUGUST 2023 – 31 JULY 2024**

Thank you for providing your Board's annual report on HMP/YOI Bronzefield. Having read your report with care, I am very grateful to all the Board members for all the work that has been put into capturing your helpful observations. This is especially impressive as you had two vacancies by the end of the reporting year. Please do pass on my thanks to your colleagues.

I was saddened to hear about the demise and death of a prisoner during the reporting year. I offer my heartfelt condolences to their friends and family and would like to reassure them and the Board that any recommendations made by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman will be taken extremely seriously.

I understand the Board's concerns surrounding the use of prison as a 'place of safety'. I am pleased to inform the Board that the Mental Health Bill was introduced to the House of Lords on 6 November 2024, which will prevent courts from using prison as a 'place of safety' in this way. Under the new reforms, a defendant or convicted person who meets the criteria for detention under the Mental Health Act must be transferred directly to hospital, ensuring swifter access to the care they need. The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) is developing a cross-agency workplan to safely enact these reforms. This includes working with NHS England to ensure that clear and direct pathways are in place for those who require treatment in hospital for their mental health, and the judiciary and courts to ensure sufficient guidance and training is available.

Additionally, the MoJ is establishing a Women's Justice Board, with the aim of reducing the number of women going to prison more broadly. The Board will bring together senior external leaders to share their wealth of experience and provide a vision and direction on how to reform women's justice to deliver priorities. It will initially be focused on early intervention and diversion, community solutions, and addressing issues specific to young women and mothers with young children in the criminal justice system.

To improve the accommodation support provided to prisoners released from court or at short notice, Commissioned Rehabilitative Services (CRS) Women's Services been extended to all unsentenced people in custody either on remand or awaiting sentence, and to those who are sentenced and released on the same day (immediate releases). This additional service focuses on providing urgent and timely accommodation support for those entering custody (maintaining tenancies) and urgent releases to address any immediate needs (preventing homelessness). Where appropriate, the CRS Provider

supports 'duty to refer' activities and where necessary refers eligible prisoners to 12-week transitional community accommodation services, if they are unable to meet the accommodation needs by the time of release. In addition, new 'Custodial Support Appointments' have been introduced, allowing urgent referrals for an individual being released from court that same day to receive an appointment and associated immediate pre-release activity and/or relevant activities, including in relation to accommodation services.

With reference to improving the integration of the healthcare services, NHS England have supported the contracted services to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which will allow the service to be fully integrated; services can be provided by any member of staff regardless of the employer. Working practices are currently being developed to embed the MoU to establish an integrated way of working as soon as possible.

I share the Board's desire for effective 'Through The Gate' Services and ensuring that prisoners are properly supported when discharged. The Board will be aware that the CRS Women's Services contracts deliver bespoke and specialist support to females on probation, to address their offending behaviour including assisting their physical and mental wellbeing; supporting any dependency and recovery needs; access to accommodation; employment; supporting any finance, benefit and debt needs, and; maintaining relationships with their families. As outlined above (in relation to accommodation), this has recently been extended to unsentenced and remanded women in custody. The Probation Service will assess all prisoners needs on reception and within the last 12 weeks to release. Owing to the nature of the prison, a lot of individuals are released to different regions including London, Kent, Surrey Sussex (KSS), Hampshire and elsewhere. At HMP/YOI Bronzefield, KSS Probation have six Pre-Release Team workers, four of which are subcontracted from Sodexo, which takes account of long-standing recruitment difficulties. The team is overseen by a Senior Probation Officer and this dual model has been implemented until March 2026. The Probation Service will also deliver finance, benefit and debt advice, accommodation advice as well as employment support.

It was encouraging to receive your comments the new bicycle repair facility that was managed by Recycle Your Cycle operating at HMP/YOI Bronzefield and provided further opportunities for prisoners. I was also pleased to read about the positive working relationship between staff and prisoners at HMP/YOI Bronzefield along with the level of care that was being shown for those individuals who were in the Separation and Care Unit (CSU) and that staff were focussed and delivering care to meet the needs of individuals. I was also pleased to note the new neurodiversity initiatives that had been implemented across the prison and were proving to be very effective in supporting prisoners.

I note you have raised some local issues of concern in your report which the Director will continue to keep you aware of as work continues. HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) comments in response to other issues raised in your report are set out in the attached annex.

The Lord Chancellor and I appreciate the valuable role played by members of Independent Monitoring Boards throughout the estate and we are very grateful for your continued hard work on behalf of HMP/YOI Bronzefield.



**Lord Timpson**  
**Minister for Prisons, Probation, and Reducing Reoffending**

## HMP/YOI BRONZEFIELD: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 AUGUST 2023 – 31 JULY 2024

### **HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report**

#### **Mentally Unwell Prisoners**

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and HMPPS are committed to improving mental health outcomes for people in contact with the Criminal Justice System, to ensure that offenders and defendants with acute mental health needs receive timely support, in the most appropriate setting. It is recognised that vulnerable people in prison who meet the threshold for detention under the Mental Health Act and require a transfer to hospital continue to experience delays in accessing the specialist care and treatment they need. The MoJ are working with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to introduce the Bill in this Parliamentary session as announced in the King's Speech. The Bill includes several flagship reforms to improve access to mental health care for patients in the criminal justice system such as the introduction of a statutory 28-day time limit for transfers from prison to hospital. This time limit, together with operational improvements, aims to reduce unnecessary delays and deliver swifter access to treatment.

Locally, HMP/YOI Bronzefield continue to provide appropriate care for these individuals, while they are referred and assessed for hospital, despite HMP/YOI Bronzefield having limited physical and operational resources. HMP/YOI Bronzefield continue to work in partnership with NHS England colleagues to keep those in custody safe.

#### **Complex Prisoners**

All Closed women's prisons have complex populations, with Reception prisons specifically having to deal with any women committed by the courts they serve. Transfers are undertaken wherever possible in order to support women to progress through their sentences.

The Women's Estate Case Advice and Support Panel (WECASP) supports prisons in the management of women with complex needs. It exists to provide centralised multidisciplinary support to prisons in the management of a small number of individuals within the Women's Estate who are not progressing in their sentence plan; with the aim of stabilising their behaviour, improving their wellbeing and supporting the surrounding staff groups; to help reduce their risk and enable them to progress.

NHS England commission health services that take account of the needs of the population. At HMP/YOI Bronzefield, an Offender Personality Disorder (OPD) service supports those who screen into the OPD pathway. In addition to the OPD, the prison is also piloting bespoke support for young women at HMP/YOI Bronzefield through spending review funding.

As the Board will be aware, HMP/YOI Bronzefield hold a small number of prisoners within the women's estate who are categorised as restricted status and / or are convicted of offences under the Terrorism Act. HMP/YOI Bronzefield is specifically commissioned and funded to manage these prisoners

#### **Completion of Vocational Training**

Every effort is made to keep prisoners until they have finished any time bound intervention, be it vocational training, or other programmes. However, population pressures means that HMP/YOI Bronzefield cannot guarantee that it can keep all prisoners that it would like to, resulting in some prisoners transferring in less-than-ideal circumstances mid-way through a course, qualification, or other

intervention. Courses started at HMP/YOI Bronzefield can be continued in training prisons where the curriculum allows.