



Ministry
of Justice

Lord Timpson
Minister of State for Justice

Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Brixton
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Jebb Avenue
London
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MoJ ref: SUB121379

7 February 2025

Dear Chair,

**HMP BRIXTON: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 SEPTEMBER 2022 – 31 AUGUST 2023**

Thank you for submitting your Board's annual report on HMP Brixton which I have read in detail. I would like to express my gratitude to you and your colleagues for your work in producing the report and for capturing such helpful observations. This is all the more impressive given that you have been operating with a reduced complement of Board members.

I understand there was one death in custody during the reporting year, and I was deeply saddened to read about the prisoner's ultimate demise during August 2023. I extend my heartfelt condolences to all their friends and family and would like to reassure the Board that all deaths in custody are treated extremely seriously. Recommendations made by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman are always acted upon.

I appreciate the concerns you have raised around current headcount, echoed by the Chief Inspector of Prisons. As you will be aware, our prisons, particularly the male estate, continue to face ongoing capacity challenges, most notably in the remand population which has increased by 70% since 2020. HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) is therefore increasing the number of reception places in the areas facing the most significant challenges: North West, North East and London. As part of this process, HMP Brixton will become a reception prison from Spring 2025. Planning for implementing this change is now underway and there are no current plans to change the operational capacity of the prison. Decisions regarding the future role of G wing will be made as part of this planning process.

With the pending re-roll, and the potential of having a 60% remand population and a 40% resettlement population, the focus for the remand population will be on inductions, functional skills and unitised provision as well as the introduction of English for Speakers of Other Language courses. An annual delivery plan for the prison education framework 6-month extension is currently being planned in line with this. The focus for the resettlement population will be on provision with employer links and job outcomes. The introduction of the new Employment Advisory Board and chair will allow the development of employer links further to support positive outcomes for prisoners, including those convicted of sexual offences. I am encouraged that HMP Brixton is currently in the process of bringing XO Barbers (through the charity Onwards & Upwards) and Hatch Digital into the prison who both deliver courses with employers linked through-the-gate. It is also still exploring release on temporary licence with a small number of prisoners.

Whilst recognising your concerns, I was encouraged to receive your comments that staff and prisoner relationships have improved, healthcare waiting times have reduced significantly, and the new model of care has been successfully introduced. I also noted the kitchen continues to provide excellent meals of high quality and it was heartening to read about the wellbeing initiatives that are available at HMP Brixton.

I note you raise matters of concern occasionally with the Governor as they arise who will continue to keep you aware of progress as work continues. HMPPS comments in response to the issue raised in your report is set out in the attached annex.

The Secretary of State and I sincerely appreciate the valuable role played by members of Independent Monitoring Boards throughout the estate and we are extremely grateful for your continued hard work on behalf of HMP Brixton.



Lord Timpson
Minister for Prisons, Probation, and Reducing Reoffending

HMP BRIXTON: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 SEPTEMBER 2022 – 31 AUGUST 2023

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Infrastructure at HMP Brixton

HMPPS has invested approximately £5.8 million at HMP Brixton on necessary upgrades to the CCTV system, installation of a new cell call system and for some repair works to secure the carpark perimeter and groundworks. HMPPS is continually reviewing investment across the estate and any further requests from the establishment will be considered, noting that demands for maintenance are much greater than the available funding. Therefore, once a bid for a project is received, HMPPS must prioritise works very carefully to make best use of that funding, focusing on risk to life and risk to capacity and decency.

A plan of work is underway to improve cell conditions at HMP Brixton with new flooring and furniture and projects have been scoped to improve the wider infrastructure. This includes high level painting, lighting improvements, control room and back gate working environments, and funding to build a new recycling workshop. A new weekly meeting has commenced to ensure prioritisation of facilities management and to monitor progression of works. The planned re-role of HMP Brixton to a Category B reception prison will require extensive work but scoping of this is still in progress.