



Ministry
of Justice

Lord Timpson
Minister of State for Justice

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

MoJ ref: SUB131209

13 February 2026

Dear Chair,

**HMP/YOI BRONZEFIELD: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 AUGUST 2024 – 31 JULY 2025**

Thank you for providing your Board's annual report on HMP/YOI Bronzefield. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for your continued hard work. Annual Reports provide invaluable insight into our establishments, and your efforts are sincerely appreciated. It was helpful to discuss some of the issues during my visit on 9 October 2025 and I trust you found it equally beneficial.

I was saddened to hear three prisoners died during the reporting year, either in custody or shortly after release. These are tragic events, and I offer my condolences to those affected. I was reassured by your comments about the considerable attention given to prisoner and staff welfare following these deaths and that a family liaison officer was made available to those families impacted. I note that the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman are still investigating the deaths – pleased be assured that any subsequent recommendations made will be treated with the upmost importance.

It is regrettable that there appeared to be an increase in the number of women sent to HMP/YOI Bronzefield as a place of safety by the Courts. Further to last years' response, I am pleased to update that the Mental Health Bill received Royal Assent on 18 December 2025. Whilst the new Mental Health Act 2025 will end the use of prison as a place of safety for people who have been assessed as needing hospital care to meet their mental health needs, the Bail Act 1976 will also be amended to prevent the remand of a defendant for their own protection solely on the grounds of mental health. Instead, courts will be directed to bail the defendant and work with local health services to put in place appropriate support and care to address risks to their safety. The significant reforms contained in the recently passed Sentencing Act 2026 will provide the Courts with further options.

I am aware that sometimes the use of the term 'place of safety' is used mistakenly to describe a wider group of people in prison with severe mental health needs. A number of these people will be waiting to be transferred to hospital when a bed is available for them, and I recognise that many are currently waiting too long. To address this issue, the Mental Health Act 2025 introduces a statutory 28-day time limit for these transfers to take place in line with existing NHS good practice guidelines. The Ministry of Justice is working closely with NHS England to support the national Mental Health and Justice Strategic Advisory Group which is focused on meeting the requirements of the legislation and will report directly to Parliament. The group will have oversight of the transfer process and brings together key partners to identify and deliver solutions to address common causes of delays.

Turning to your continued concerns about the integration of healthcare services at HMP/YOI Bronzefield, NHS England undertook a full independent review of the healthcare model at the prison in 2025. Recommendations included a new service model which integrates staff, prescribing practices, and co-location. The healthcare provider (Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust - CNWL) and Sodexo are already strengthening integration between both parties by adding the CNWL Head of Healthcare to Sodexo's Senior Leadership Team, clarifying roles, and co-designing health and wellbeing strategies for prisoners.

The Board will be aware of the range of services provided by Commissioned Rehabilitative Services (CRS) providers to support women at HMP/YOI Bronzefield for both pre-release and post-release needs. To further support discharged prisoners, the CRS is currently procuring new contracts for women's services which will go live in Spring 2028, which will better reflect the persistent, time-consuming support needed to secure and maintain housing and jobs. The future providers will be based in prisons delivering services to the whole population including those on remand. The service will address immediate needs on reception and other issues that arise throughout someone's time in custody. Providers will also be expected to offer a pre-release meeting with the community-based provider and also a 'meet at the gate' service for vulnerable prisoners who will benefit from being accompanied to accommodation or appointments on the day of release. The future services will also help individuals develop new lifestyles and relationships which are not linked to offending or substance misuse.

I appreciate some of the issues you have raised are continued concerns. It was therefore encouraging to receive your feedback that progress has been made in other areas during the reporting period together with the positive leadership and management changes brought about by the new Director. I was reassured to note that staff and prisoner relations remains positive and was pleased to learn about the initiative to introduce modules of the longer courses and the availability of short 'e-learning' courses to help address the transient nature of the prison's population. It was also immensely heartening to learn about the Vita Nova café/Hilton hotel group competition with the winning prisoner's creation subsequently being placed on the afternoon tea menu at Hilton hotels throughout the UK.

I note you have raised some issues for the attention of HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) and NHS England. Comments in response to these and other issues raised in your report are set out in the attached annex. Local issues of concern raised in your report will be addressed by the Director who will continue to keep you aware of progress as work continues.

The Deputy Prime Minister and I continue to appreciate the value and scrutiny brought by members of Independent Monitoring Boards to improve the estate and we extend our thanks for your continued dedication on behalf of HMP/YOI Bronzefield.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James', written in a cursive style.

Lord Timpson
Minister for Prisons, Probation, and Reducing Reoffending

HMP/YOI BRONZEFIELD: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 AUGUST 2024 – 31 JULY 2025

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Mentally Unwell Prisoners

Further to last years' response, NHS England have completed the scoping work to ensure clinical leadership throughout the clinical pathway from and to prison and mental health hospital. As mentioned in the Minister's letter, the Mental Health Act 2025 introduces a new statutory time limit of 28-days for the transfer of patients with a mental disorder from prison and other places of detention to hospital. This time limit, together with operational improvements, aims to reduce unnecessary delays and deliver swifter access to treatment. The Mental Health and Justice Strategic Advisory Group will have oversight to assure the 28-day transfer process. Working closely with the healthcare provider, the prison will continue to provide appropriate care for individuals suffering acute mental health problems to keep them safe prior to appropriate transfer.

Complex Prisoners

HMP/YOI Bronzefield is one of only three women's prisons currently authorised to hold Restricted Status women and consequently contracted and funded to do so. In the event a transfer is established as the most suitable option for an individual, it is for the prisons to manage moves between themselves. HMPPS does not think it would be appropriate to arbitrarily distribute women with complex needs across the estate. Any decisions regarding transfers should be made in line with the individual's needs and to support their progression.

The Women's Estate Case Advice and Support Panel continues to support prisons in the management of women with complex needs, and a range of evidence-based interventions and services are provided for women in prison. Referrals for all services are encouraged from across the female estate, to support women to access the services they need. These services include the Women's Offender Personality Disorder Pathway, as well as the Women's Estate Psychology Services team, which provides forensic psychologists within all women's prisons, to deliver therapeutic services for women in our care.

Additionally, NHS England have stood up a task group to address common understanding escalation pathways and standardised referral processes. A host of on-site services are available and include therapeutic groups and individual goal-centred therapies. Tailored care plans are also available and a new Complex Case Manager in the healthcare department has been introduced to coordinate support.

NHS England comments on matters raised in the report

Integration of healthcare services

Please see the Ministerial response above.

Nursing Provision

As outlined in the Ministerial response, NHS England undertook a full independent review of the Healthcare model and provision in HMP/YOI Bronzefield in 2025. Healthcare providers worked considerably hard during the second half of 2025 to ensure robust recruitment processes are in place. This has seen good progress and resulted in nearly 80% of healthcare staff either in post, undergoing vetting, with offers of employment, or due to commence employment.

Reception General Practitioner (GP) Cover

Following the end of the reporting period, GP provision in reception at HMP/YOI Bronzefield was resolved. Both the primary care GP and substance misuse provision were reviewed, and any necessary changes have been implemented.