



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

**for reporting Year**  
**1 August 2016 – 31 July 2017**

**Published**  
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*Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody*

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## 1 STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

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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 or centre is situated.

The Board is specifically charged to:

- (1) 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.
- (2) inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority as it judges appropriate, any concern it has.
- (3) **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.

## INDRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP/YOI Bronzefield for the period 01 August 2016 to 31 July 2017. The IMB evidence comes from observations made on visits, scrutiny of records and data, contact with prisoners and staff, surveys and prisoner applications.

## 2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### Main judgements

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1. Overall prisoners are treated fairly and with decency in Bronzefield
  2. The prison's positive emphasis on humane treatment is recognised.
  3. The Board remains concerned about Healthcare where prisoners with severe mental illness are held for prolonged periods pending transfer to scarce secure mental health facilities. *(Section 8 page 13)*
  4. Preparation for release is emphasised but is frustrated by the short stay of the prisoners which averages two weeks. Strenuous efforts are made to find accommodation on release but lack of suitable housing leads to approximately 50% of the prisoners leaving homeless. *(Section 11 page 16)*
  5. Under the Offender Rehabilitation Act (ORA) recalls to prison have increased dramatically. The majority of these recalls are for two weeks. It is insufficient time to resolve problems such as accommodation, mental health issues and drug addiction. It may even exacerbate them. The impact on the prisoner, and her family, is of serious concern. *(Section 11 page 16)*
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### Main Areas for Development

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#### TO THE MINISTER

- Will the Minister consider the effectiveness of the Offender Rehabilitation Act (ORA) and its negative impact on repeated, and costly, short-term recalls? *(Section 11 page 16)*
  - When will serious consideration be given to making accommodation available to prisoners who are discharged with no fixed abode? *(Section 11 page 16)*
  - What plans does the Minister have to address the issue of prisoners with severe mental health problems waiting prolonged and detrimental times for transfer to secure facilities? *(Section 8 page 13)*
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#### TO THE PRISON SERVICE

- What plans does the prison have to address the issue of temporary cramped double cells with no toilet privacy? *(Section 7 page 11)*

## TO THE MAYOR OF LONDON

- When will serious consideration be given to making accommodation available to prisoners who are discharged with no fixed abode? (*Section 11 page 16*)

## IMPROVEMENTS

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- The kitchen has been deep-cleaned and a new Catering Manager appointed.
- The quality of record keeping for the Assessment Care in Custody (ACCT) documents has improved with training for staff and for the Board.
- Body cameras were introduced during the year. Initial indications are that the use of the cameras is useful in de-escalating incidents.
- In the past year there has been a dramatic improvement in the way that the Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) and the Offender Management Unit (OMU) have become a team and work together. They appear well integrated and respectful of each other to the benefit of the prisoners.

### **3 DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON**

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

The prison has a Certified Normal Accommodation (CNA) of 527 plus 45 Additional Prisoner Places (APP) and holds approximately 27 Young Offenders aged between 18 and 21 who are accommodated in the same houseblocks as the adult prisoners, and also accommodates a 12-bed Mother and Baby Unit with room for 13 babies. 236 prisoners are held in double cells. HMP/YOI Bronzefield serves 90 courts and takes remand and sentenced prisoners. At the end of the reporting period the prison held 17 Restricted Status prisoners.

Primary GP services are provided by a private sector agency, Cimarron UK. Nursing staff are employed directly by Bronzefield with shortfalls filled by agency nurses. Secondary mental health care is provided through a contract with Central North West London NHS Foundation Trust. The prison has a 24-hour in-patient healthcare unit but no dedicated mental health unit.

Education services are provided by Sodexo Justice Services. The prison provides City and Guilds educational qualifications, which is in line with other establishments, so that prisoners transferring between prisons can continue their studies.

There are various outside organisations supporting family and community ties and linking to services that help with resettlement after release. Among them are:

- AGE UK
- Alcoholics Anonymous
- Aurora Project (sexual abuse and sex workers)
- Battersea Dogs
- Birth Companions
- Choice for Change
- Friends of Bronzefield
- Hibiscus
- Job Centre Plus
- Nia Safe Choices (support for young offenders)
- Re-unite (mothers and children)
- Royal Parks Harness the Horses
- Safe Choices
- Samaritans (support for Listeners)
- SARC and RASASC (rape and sexual abuse)
- Shannon Trust
- SMART Recovery
- User Voice – charity to stop reoffending
- WISH (support for prisoners with mental health issues)
- Women in Prison
- Womens Institute

## 4 SAFETY

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- The prison holds monthly safer custody meetings which are well attended by staff from Safer Custody, Diversity, Healthcare and Residence. The Listeners attend the meetings and give valuable feedback on their activities as prisoner peer support workers.
- The total number of violent incidents from January to June was 103 with a reduction from 26 in January to 14 in June. There has been an improvement in the gathering and analysis of information with more detailed data being obtained on violent incidents and self-harm.
- There were 2 deaths in custody, one in June and one in July, which are currently being investigated by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman and will be the subjects of Coroners Inquests. Both incidents were monitored by the Board and were handled professionally and sensitively by the prison staff.
- There has been an increase in the volume of drug related intelligence and drug related search finds. A new drug detector machine has been sourced and is currently being trialed.
- Body cameras were introduced during the year with 54 currently in use. All the relevant staff have been trained in the appropriate use of the cameras. Methods of evaluating their effectiveness are being discussed with other prisons but initial indications are that the use of the cameras is useful in de-escalating incidents.
- The quality of Assessment Care in Custody (ACCT) documentation continues to be reviewed and has improved over the year. Staff and the Board have had ACCT training. ACCT documentation is regularly checked. It has been agreed that a nurse must be present at all first ACCT Case Reviews.
- There are currently 9 Listeners, supported by the Samaritans, with more being actively recruited. Awareness of the support they offer is widely advertised throughout the prison.
- Safer Custody has an open-door policy and prisoners are encouraged to contact the department if they feel unsafe or have thoughts of self-harm. Reports from prisoners to the Board indicate that they are aware of the policy and feel able to access Safer Custody when necessary.
- The Board noted an increase in applications relating to bullying, specifically during the period from September 2016 to January 2017. There were 87 applications in the year 2015-2016 and 157 this reporting year, an increase of 80%. The Board was unable to identify any particular reason for this increase. Towards the end of the reporting period the prison adopted the Custodial Violence Management Model (CVMM) which focuses on monitoring and intervention where persistent bullying is identified.

## 5 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS

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- Bronzefield has a positive and proactive approach towards equality matters.
- A positive external audit of the establishment's processes in managing equality and inclusion was carried out in late 2016 and concurs with the Board's observations.
- Prisoner-led focus groups for specific areas, chosen by the prisoners, are chaired by a Diversity Peer Support worker. They have been well received and the number of applications made to the board relating to disability, equality and diversity, immigration or foreign national/language issues has reduced further in the reporting year from 32 in the year 2015-16 to 16 this year.
- Bronzefield demonstrates a zero tolerance policy to all forms of discrimination. The prison has a Decency Manager who has responsibility for Equality and Exclusion. The Board recognises the efficient and pro-active work of the whole team.
- Foreign National (FN) prisoners report that they feel well supported by the Diversity Team.
- The FN population has fluctuated and is currently around 24%. The number of nationalities represented varies between 42 and 50.
- Cultural Awareness days are held on a monthly basis and are well-received by prisoners.
- There is a close and effective working relationship between prison staff and staff from the UK Border Agency. Two Home Office immigration officers visit twice a week to assist with care and advice for the FN prisoners.
- The houseblock electronic kiosks ('pods') provide interactive information in 21 languages and have a number of pictures to assist FN prisoners.
- The Rough Guide to the prison, given to new arrivals, is available in several languages.
- There is a good range of books in other languages in the Library.
- Telephones in key areas have speaker phones or dual handsets to facilitate the use of the Bigword translation service.
- All FN prisoners can now receive free legal advice for immigration issues. This is provided by external charities, including Bail for Immigration Detainees, BHB Law (a solicitor's firm) and the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants.
- The Salvation Army provides support for female victims of trafficking.
- Hibiscus Initiatives provides support for FN prisoners with complex needs.
- Disabled prisoners are entitled to have a named fellow prisoner as a disability assistant. These assistants have a clear role description and are paid for their work. A training package to support them in their role has been developed.

- Under the Social Care Act a social care worker attends the prison.
- Disabled prisoners have equal access to all areas of the prison including the gym.
- The Board has observed an increased number of prisoners with learning disabilities, some of whom are apparently reluctant to self-declare. In May 2017 there were 189 women with declared disabilities, some with more than one, out of a prison population of 551. Comparative figures for May 2016 were 145 out of 558.
- The number of older prisoners has risen. In May 2016 there were 8 prisoners aged over 60. In May 2017 there were 15.
- There is an average of 27 young offenders in Bronzefield
- The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme for young offenders has not been available for over a year.
- A pilot Youth Club has been trialed in the gym on Saturdays in an effort to address the over-representation of youth offenders in transfers to Separation and Care and at Adjudications.
- The transgender prison population has varied between 4 and 6 in the reporting year. Individuals are routinely assessed within 3 days of arrival at the prison and appropriately catered for, with chest binders and male razors, as appropriate. The Board has observed case reviews of transgender prisoners conducted with great sensitivity and prisoner focus.
- High quality transgender training is available for all prison officers and Board members.
- At the end of the reporting period there were 65 children in care whose mothers were prisoners in Bronzefield. Arranging visits to see their mothers is often difficult, particularly when the children have to be accompanied by a social worker.
- Family days are held 7-8 times a year.
- The provision of in-cell phones is highly valued by prisoners as the primary means of maintaining family contact and the prison scored well in the Family Contact dimension of the 2016 Measuring Quality of Prison Life (MQPL) survey.
- The prison's Faith Centre supports all faiths and offers a broad range of services and activities and is well attended.
- The Board has actively sought to increase its diversity but remains without visible ethnic diversity.

## **6 SEGREGATION/CARE AND SEPARATION UNIT**

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- The unit has 12 cells and a special accommodation cell which has not been used. There are two long term prisoners with complex needs residing in the unit, one of whom is being gradually integrated onto normal houseblock accommodation. The unit is used for those on Good Order or Discipline (GOoD) and those serving cellular confinement. Adjudications are held in the unit.
- For most of the reporting period the unit has been almost full, reflecting the increased population following the closure of Holloway Prison.
- The Board sees every prisoner unlocked every week and prisoners are seen confidentially if requested.
- The Board is informed within 24 hours of prisoners being moved onto the unit and the Board receives timely notice of GOoD reviews and has attended the vast majority.
- The increased use of the unit is reflected in the number of reviews attended by the Board. 332 GOoD reviews were attended in this reporting period as compared with 220 in 2015/16 - a 50% increase.
- During the reporting period there have been 53 days when the staff have had to deal with dirty protests. Although only attributable to 2 or 3 prisoners there has been a significant number of incidents. Conditions in the unit at these times are not satisfactory and the present air-conditioning, which is in the office only, and the air-freshening systems do not appear to be adequate.
- The unit has dealt with a high volume of complex and difficult prisoners and the Board commends the staff dedication and professionalism.
- The Board attends a random selection of adjudications. Prisoners are made aware of their right to appeal the decision.

## 7 ACCOMMODATION

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- The four houseblocks, Mother and Baby Unit and recreational areas are modern, fit-for-purpose and generally present as clean and tidy. The bathrooms and showers allow privacy.
- The newly refurbished single cells, which have been adapted to accommodate two prisoners, are very cramped, with inadequate storage space and little privacy. The staff do their best to rotate occupancy so that no one is in these cells for too long.
- Management has considered the problem of lack of privacy for prisoners using the toilet in these adapted double cells. The Board has been told that the installation of a privacy screen is considered a safety issue as it could provide a ligature point and obscure sightlines.
- The Board has received complaints about new prisoners not always getting showers or basics such as toothbrushes and cutlery.
- Laundry is well organized.
- The Board has received complaints about property within the prison and when property has not followed the prisoner on transfer.
- Prisoners have access to the facilities list in Reception and on the houseblocks. The prisoners' forum 'Your Voice' has been replaced by a prison council run by User Voice.
- Most information is through the 'pods', including canteen items. There are also information notices throughout the houseblocks.
- There has been an intermittent shortage of basic items available on the canteen.
- There are 6 unit / wing workers on each houseblock spur. The jobs of laundry, cleaning and servery worker are interchangeable ensuring appropriate cover. Prisoners have reported to the Board that they like this system as it gives them more variety in their work.
- Problems with inter-prison phone calls have been reported to the Board.
- Staff have commented to the Board that the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 curtailing surveillance cameras in the visits area significantly compromises their ability to prevent the entry of banned items and substances into the establishment.
- There have been problems with the phones and the 'pod' in Reception not working during the year which means that some residents have not been able to have their reception call.
- The Board has observed that with the high and rapid turnover of prisoners it is difficult for the staff to get to know the prisoners well. The average length of stay in Bronzefield is 2 weeks.
- Food comments and complaints are made on the 'pods'.
- Servery whites are often grubby and ill-fitting.

- Corporate Head of Catering for Sodexo and his team are currently working in the kitchen to introduce new menus and completely restructure the regime. The aim is for prisoners to do all the cooking, with staff training and supervising.
- A new catering manager has been appointed and the kitchen has been deep-cleaned.
- The staff went smoking-free on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017 in preparation for the whole prison going smoking-free from 11<sup>th</sup> September 2017. The Board notes the extensive efforts made to bring about a smooth transition.

## 8 HEALTHCARE

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- Primary healthcare, dental, optician and podiatry services are provided by Sodexo. The GP contract is through Cimarron. There are currently 4 GP's attending on weekdays and 2 at the weekend. Nurses are employed by Sodexo and are available on site 24/7. Any shortfall is filled by agency nurses. There has been a re-structuring of the nursing provision with one team leader nurse appointed for each house block with 5 in each team making them more accessible to the prisoners.
- The 18 bedded inpatient Healthcare unit has been full for the majority of the period. The Board commends the staff for their sensitive and caring work with the most challenging prisoners many of whom have serious mental health problems.
- There are 9 members in the Substance Misuse Team.
- Current waiting times for healthcare appointments are satisfactory and any issues are addressed effectively by the prison.
- All prisoners are seen in Reception by a nurse, and a doctor if required.
- The current healthcare area is jaded and is due for refurbishment.
- The secondary mental health service is provided by Central North West London NHS Foundation Trust which has a multidisciplinary Mental Health Inreach Team (MHIT) on site.
- Following Holloway Prison's closure, the number of prisoners with severe mental health problems has increased. In November 2016 there were 13 prisoners waiting for a bed in a secure mental health unit. This has halved during the year. The Board has been informed that the average waiting time from diagnosis to transfer is around 3 months. The Board observes that this unacceptably extended period is dependent on funding and the availability of scarce secure hospital accommodation.
- Talking Therapy programmes are provided on a weekly basis. Group programmes cover a variety of issues such as PTSD, stress, depression and managing emotions.
- The Board has received complaints about the healthcare complaints procedure. A new confidential system will direct complaints directly to healthcare staff.
- Within 72 hours all residents are seen by a Recovery Worker to address immediate drug and alcohol related needs. There is an adapted recovery programme to addresses the needs of short-stay prisoners.
- A Sexual Health clinic is available to prisoners, by referral or self-referral, with specialist sexual health nurses.

## 9 EDUCATION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

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- Bronzefield has a well led and resourced team with 9 full time teaching staff, 6 part-time plus 2 librarians, and 4 administration staff. The number of prisoners working as learning support staff has recently increased to 12.
- English and Maths is assessed at induction for all prisoners.
- The prison has moved to a culture of assigning education on a basis of 'need' rather than 'want'.
- All prisoners have the opportunity to work, but also need to achieve education Entry Level 3. The prison has brought in 'embedded learning' to enable prisoners to continue to work towards Level 1 & 2 English and Maths within their area of employment, which is popular with the prisoners.
- Progression is monitored. Targets are set and monitored for each prisoner; the prison is working on a plan that goes with prisoners and allows progression if they are transferred.
- There is good attendance on courses; staff have been asked to conduct appointments with prisoners in their workplace wherever possible to reduce absence.
- The average stay in Bronzefield is 2 weeks. Short, 10 hour, courses in English and Maths are offered.
- English and Maths teaching uses a functional skills approach (e.g. planning a living room) which has proved popular and increased the success rate.
- The Shannon Trust Turning Pages programme operates at the prison where prisoners support others with literacy skills.
- 85% of the prisoners are in education or work.
- The prison has a Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) who assesses any special educational needs and recommends a plan such as education in smaller classes, or support in larger classes.
- Prisoners with ADHD attend reduced sessions of 1.5 hours, instead of the usual 3 hours, to accommodate their learning needs. Currently 12 prisoners have this provision.
- Prisoners have access to the library 3 times a week.
- The Board notes that there is frustration by the staff about the lack of access to degree courses for bright long term prisoners. The Education Manager met with the Prison Education Trust who have agreed to provide additional funding on a case-by-case basis.

## **10 WORK, VOCATIONAL TRAINING and EMPLOYMENT**

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- A new Call Centre was opened in February 2017, increasing the number of employment places available to 552. The Call Centre working day is designed to mimic that outside the prison. In March the first Call Centre worker was released, and was given a job on her first day out.
- Work in prison is focused on employment opportunities on release, and includes the Hair and Beauty salon, Café and the Call Centre.
- A review of the risk assessments for jobs, and subsequent lowering of many of the bandings, has created many more employment opportunities.
- Vita Nova cafe employs around 10 prisoners. Links with an external company have resulted in some prisoners receiving training and a barista qualification.
- Prisoners who are working sign a Contract of Employment. This requires them to complete training and commit to stay for minimum of 4 months to help train others. This is designed to mimic the outside workplace.
- The Business Enterprise qualification offered is popular with prisoners.
- The gym has a good range of equipment, staff are committed and the Board has observed a good rapport with prisoners. Some residents have reported that the 3 hour 'work' gym sessions are too long.
- Some prisoners, including older and lifer residents, have complained to the Board that there is no opportunity to visit the gym regularly but for shorter periods, to fit in with their work.
- Bronzefield is working with Virgin Gyms to find employment opportunities, both on Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) and release.
- The strict rules governing ROTL limits the opportunity for prisoners to gain valuable work experience outside the prison.
- Currently only one prisoner is on ROTL.

## 11 RESETTLEMENT PREPARATION

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- In the past year there has been a dramatic improvement in the way that the Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) and the Offender Management Unit (OMU) have become a team and work together. They appear well integrated and respectful of each other.
- The Board spoke to many prisoners being released from Bronzefield and found that 50-60% were leaving as No Fixed Abode (NFA). Although a letter is given to local authorities, they do not see women coming out of prison as a priority. There is a desperate shortage of hostel and social housing. So many of these women could end up on the streets living rough and open to abuse. Many of these women are vulnerable with addiction problems, learning difficulties and mental health problems. Frequently these women end up back in prison in a worsened state. Many of these women also have children in care.
- If a prisoner has an address when coming into Bronzefield, this is not checked or discussed with the prisoner. There are prisoners who are released back into abusive relationships and unsuitable accommodation as they have nowhere else to go.
- Under the Offender Rehabilitation Act (ORA) recalls to prison have increased dramatically and continue to climb. The majority of these recalls are for 2 weeks. This causes major problems for the prison and CRCs and OMU staff, and the prisoner. It is insufficient time to resolve problems such as accommodation, mental health issues and drug addiction. The cost to the prison service and the prisoner is disproportionate. There are costs to the women as they are often the carers in the family; they may lose any employment, and possibly accommodation and personal possessions.
- Many of the prisoners entering Bronzefield have short sentences of less than 3 months. There is insufficient time to make any real impact and work on their problems. 'Through the Gate' services provided by charities and outside support agencies typically need six weeks to set up. Finding accommodation, addressing drug problems and mental health issues all take time. The Board notes that the prison is trying to address this but it is a difficult task. This can lead to the 'revolving door' where prisoners come in for a short sentence or on recall, are released with the same problems, and then deteriorate further in the community, before coming back in again on another short sentence.
- Remand prisoners comprise up to 40% of the population. There is help, and benefits, given to assist them to maintain any home or accommodation they already have. They do not come under the remit of the CRCs, or any of the "Through the Gate" services. Those that come in homeless and with social problems are likely to leave with them.
- When prisoners are released on Home Detention Curfew (HDC) if they do not have an address then they can be given hostel accommodation miles from their home and family. Although the hostels are often run by charities with good intent, prisoners have told the Board that many accommodate drug users.
- For prisoners to obtain benefits it is necessary to have a bank account and an address. To get a bank account a photo ID is required (e.g. passport, driving licence) and proof of address. The CRCs and St Mungos along with the Halifax have addressed this by giving prisoners the photo ID from prison and an address via their probation service.

## Work of the Board

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Each week Board members attend the prison to conduct rota visits, to respond to IMB applications, to monitor meetings and prisoner forums. Members attend Separation and Care Reviews and randomly monitor adjudications.

Applications to the Board have risen during the reporting period to 782 from 598 in the previous year, an increase of 31%. The Board holds a monthly meeting which the Director, or his Deputy, attends in order to brief the Board on prison matters and to discuss issues from rota reports.

Board members gave talks about the IMB to new prison staff during their initial training.

Two Board members attended the IMB Annual Conference in 2017. Members have attended national training courses, hosted visits from IMBs from other prisons and have, in turn, visited another establishments.

<b>BOARD STATISTICS</b>	
Recommended Complement of Board Members	17
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	16
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	12
Total number of visits to the Establishment	550
Total number of segregation reviews attended	332

## Applications

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Code	Subject	Current reporting year	Previous reporting year
A	Accommodation including laundry, clothing, ablutions	36	18
B	Discipline including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	10	5
C	Equality	16	32
D	Purposeful Activity including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	25	25
E 1	Letters, visits, phones, public protection restrictions	71	53
E 2	Finance including pay, private monies, spends	28	27
F	Food and kitchens	32	28
G	Health including physical, mental, social care	147	165
H 1	Property within this establishment	91	56
H 2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	21	20
H 3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	25	16
I	Sentence management including HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	38	32
J	Staff/prisoner concerns including bullying	157	87
K	Transfers	12	12
L	Miscellaneous	73	22
	<b>Total number of IMB applications</b>	782	598