



**Annual Report**  
of the  
**Independent Monitoring Board**

at

**HMP and YOI Bronzefield**

for reporting Year  
1 August 2017 – 31 July 2018

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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.

## INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP/YOI Bronzefield for the period 01 August 2017 to 31 July 2018. 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, humanely and with decency.
2. The Board remains concerned about those prisoners with severe mental health problems who experience long delays awaiting transfer to secure psychiatric facilities (8.13).
3. A large proportion of prisoners are not prepared well for release. This is owing to a combination of the high churn rate and the impact of on-going high levels of homelessness on discharge (7.11, 11.2, 11.3, 11.4).
4. Rehabilitation and reduction in reoffending is frustrated due to the numbers of short stay prisoners (11.3, 11.4).
5. An efficient process for the inter-prison transfer of prisoner's property is lacking (7.15).

### **Main Areas for Development**

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#### **TO THE MINISTER**

1. With the publication of the Government 'Female Offender Strategy', when may the prison expect to see a significant reduction in the numbers of prisoners with short sentences? (11.3)
2. There continues to be a large number of prisoners discharged with no fixed abode: with the implementation of the 'The Homeless Reduction Act 2018', when does the Minister expect to see a significant reduction in the number of prisoners who are unable to access help with accommodation on release? (11.2)
3. What plans does the Minister have to address the issue of prisoners with severe mental health problems who are waiting prolonged and detrimental times for transfer to secure facilities? (8.13)
4. When is the Minister going to address the grossly unjust practice of continuing to detain those imprisoned for public protection (IPP) well beyond their tariff? (11.5)

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

1. What plans does the Prison Service have to introduce a robust process to ensure that prisoners and their property are not separated on inter-prison transfer? (7.15)

#### **TO THE MAYOR OF LONDON**

1. What has the Mayor's office for Policing and Crime done in the last year to increase the availability of accommodation for those women who leave prison with no fixed abode? (11.2)

### **IMPROVEMENTS**

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1. The efficient way that the non-smoking policy was implemented.
2. The removal of some of the cramped 'temporary' double cells and reversion to single occupancy.
3. The ongoing refurbishment of the Healthcare unit is greatly welcomed.

### 3 DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

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HMP/YOI Bronzefield opened in June 2004. It is a privately-run local women's prison, managed by Sodexo Justice Services Ltd. It is located in Ashford, Middlesex, close to Heathrow Airport.

At the end of the reporting period the prison had a Certified Normal Accommodation (CNA) of 557, which included 30 Additional Prisoner Places (APP). It holds approximately 30 Young Offenders aged between 18 and 21 who are accommodated in the same houseblocks as the adult prisoners. It also accommodates a 12-bed Mother and Baby Unit with room for 13 babies. Up to 226 prisoners are held in double cells, with a reduction of 15 double cells since the start of the reporting year. HMP/YOI Bronzefield serves 90 courts and takes remand and sentenced prisoners. At the end of the reporting period the prison held 15 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 and North West London NHS Foundation Trust. The prison has a 24-hour in-patient healthcare unit but no dedicated mental health unit. Education services and maintenance are provided by Sodexo Justice Services.

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

- Alcohol and Drug Services – Adult and YOI
- Aurora Project (sexual abuse and sex workers)
- Battersea Dogs
- Blood Born Virus Awareness
- Choice for Change (coping with loss through separation or bereavement)
- Community Chaplaincy
- Friends of Bronzefield
- Job Centre Plus
- Koestler/Watts Gallery
- Kent, Surrey and Sussex CRC (Community Rehabilitation Company)
- LEAP Confronting Conflict
- London CRC encompassing Domestic Abuse & Sex Work
- National Domestic Abuse Helpline
- Re-unite (mothers and children)
- PECAN (Peckham Evangelical Action Network; mentoring 18-24 year olds)
- St Giles Trust
- Samaritans (support for Listeners)
- SARC and RASASC (rape and sexual abuse)
- Shannon Trust
- SMART Recovery
- Sue Ryder
- User Voice – charity to stop reoffending
- WISH (support for prisoners with mental health issues)
- Women in Prison
- Women's Institute – Bronzefield Bees

## 4 SAFETY

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1. The prison holds monthly safety custody meetings which are generally well attended by staff from Safer Custody, Healthcare, Security and Residence. The Listeners and prisoner Peer Support Workers attend the meetings and provide valuable feedback.
2. A Wellbeing Support Plan has been implemented for those women who require some but not all of the support afforded by an Assessment Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) document. There are four women currently on the programme.
3. There have been no deaths in custody during the reporting period.
4. Supported by the Samaritans, there are currently 8 Listeners. It was reported to the Board that access to Listeners during the night can sometimes be delayed.
5. A new scheme where women can write directly to the Samaritans from the prison has been established.
6. Suicide and Self Harm (SASH) staff training is being implemented on a rolling programme with a target date for completion in two years. Between July 2017 and May 2018 there were 928 incidents of self-harm compared to 774 in the same period in the last reporting year. The majority of incidents of self-harm involved repeated self-harming by the same prisoners.
7. The number of drug related adjudications remained about the same with 97 this year compared to 93 in the same period last year. During the year an ion machine was introduced which assists in the detection of the new psychoactive substance (NPS) 'Spice'. There has been an increase in the number of intelligence-led cell searches.
8. The quality of ACCT documentation continues to be reviewed on a regular basis.
9. The Safer Custody team has an open door policy and prisoners are encouraged to contact the department if they feel unsafe or have thoughts of self-harm. It has been reported to the Board by prisoners that they feel able to access Safer Custody easily.
10. A new induction process was introduced during the year and the Board has received mixed reports from prisoners and Peer Support Workers as to the effectiveness of the new system. The most frequent complaint is that the new process takes longer to complete. The system for fast-tracking persistent offenders who are returned to Bronzefield is also inconsistent.
11. Responsibility for the induction process is shared by a pool of officers and changes on a day-to-day basis. The Board has had difficulty at times in identifying exactly which officers are responsible.
12. Newly arrived prisoners do not always get their statutory phone call in Reception. The system for identifying these prisoners and ensuring they make their call as soon as possible is not robust.
13. There has been a significant increase (25%) in the number of Use of Force incidents: from 212 in 2016/7 to 265 in the current reporting year. There has been a small increase (6%) in recorded Violent Incidents from 200 to 212 respectively.

## 5 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS

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1. Bronzefield continues to have a proactive approach towards equality and fairness with a zero-tolerance policy towards discrimination. The Board seldom receives applications concerned with these matters.
2. Diversity and Inclusion training for all staff is ongoing, as is training in the awareness of hate crime. Prisoner Diversity and Inclusion representatives can be requested via the houseblock electronic kiosks (pods).
3. Foreign nationals (from 42 different countries) currently comprise 22% of Bronzefield's prison population.
4. There are currently 6 transgender prisoners. They are treated sensitively by staff and appear to have integrated well into the prison community. Transgender training is provided to all staff and transgender packs containing appropriate underwear and toiletries are now available in Reception.
5. The number of older prisoners continues to increase. There are currently 39 prisoners in the 50 to 59 age group and those over 60 now number 17. This compares with 15 over 60s in May 2017 and 8 in 2016.
6. Popular 50+ focus groups offer older women activities such as bingo and age-related healthcare talks.
7. Approximately 200 women a month declare disabilities. There are 10 prisoners who are wheelchair users and there are currently 18 on Personal Evacuation Emergency Plans (PEEP). There are only 2 fully adapted cells for disabled prisoners. Other facilities, including showers, are not adapted at all. There are paid prisoner disability assistants, but this does not include personal care.
8. In the first six months of 2018 the number of young offenders has varied between 25 and 34.
9. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme has been closed since 2016.
10. In an effort to ensure that positive Incentive and Earned Privileges (IEP) are seen to be achievable by all prisoners, they are now awarded on completion of education courses.
11. The prison is to be commended on having visiting times which exceed the minimum stipulated by the prison service. In addition, officers often allow extended time for those visitors travelling long distances.
12. Those prisoners not getting regular visits may exchange visiting orders for extra money for their phones.
13. There is a well-equipped Family Room in the Visitors Centre where whole families can visit. This is operated on a booking system, with prisoners getting an opportunity to use it about every four to six weeks.
14. Babies' siblings and grandparents can visit the Mother and Baby Unit once a month.
15. There have been a few overnight Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) visits for mothers but the practice is not yet well-established.
16. The Chaplaincy provides an excellent and full range of faith facilities and services. The Board has received several complaints from prisoners that, at times, they have not been unlocked in time to attend religious services.

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

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1. The unit has 12 cells and a special accommodation cell which has not been used during this reporting year.
2. The unit is used for those on Good Order or Discipline (GOoD) and those serving cellular confinement. Adjudications are held on the unit.
3. There is one long term prisoner with complex needs who has resided on the unit for several years. She refuses to leave the unit.
4. For most of the reporting period, the unit has been very busy with several challenging prisoners who reside there for short periods on a frequent basis.
5. The Board sees every prisoner unlocked every week and prisoners are seen confidentially if requested.
6. The Board is usually informed within 24 hours of prisoners being moved onto the unit. The Board receives timely notice of GOoD reviews and has attended the vast majority, numbering 250 this year.
7. There have been four dirty protests over 11 days this year which is an improvement from 53 days in the last reporting period.
8. Understaffing has at times during the year had a negative impact on the prisoners' regime.
9. The Board attends a random selection of adjudications. Prisoners are made aware of their right to appeal. The number of adjudications has fluctuated throughout the year with a monthly peak of 160 in January 2018. In total, there were 1302 adjudications between July 2017 and May 2018 compared to 1219 in the same period the previous reporting year. The number adjourned increased from 219 to 298 this year. The most common reason for an adjudication was disobeying a lawful order and the prison is now putting more emphasis on using the IEP system rather than adjudications to encourage good behaviour.

## **7 ACCOMMODATION**

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1. The four houseblocks, Mother and Baby Unit (MBU) and recreational areas are modern, fit-for-purpose and generally kept clean and tidy. The bathrooms and showers are clean and allow decency and privacy. There has been a general lack of bathplugs with prisoners improvising with bottle tops.
2. There is a large central garden, flanked by the houseblocks, and through which prisoners walk on their way to all activities. It is well-maintained by the prisoners' Garden Academy and makes a very positive contribution to the prison ambience.
3. The single cells which were adapted as temporary doubles are cramped with no provision for additional screening for the toilet or additional storage space. Towards the end of the reporting period 15 of these cells have been converted back to singles but initially retaining the bunk beds in case of future need. The staff have tried to rotate usage of the doubles which have been unpopular with many prisoners.
4. Prisoners have phones in their cells which are on dial-out only. Prisoners have reported to the Board that they find this very helpful in maintaining family relationships. Problems with inter-prison phone calls have been reported to the Board.
5. Prisoners have access to facilities, information notices, canteen orders and requests for appointments via the electronic kiosks (pods) situated on each houseblock spur. Permanent information is available in 21 languages but notices to prisoners are only published in English. This is an excellent facility but the Board does not consider that the provision of one pod per spur

is sufficient to meet the communication needs of both the prisoners and the prison.

6. The Director has introduced a daily 'Room Fabric Safety Check' (RFSC) with 19 questions, to be completed by the spur officers. The Board has noted comments from the spur officers that the check, done properly, takes longer than the hour allocated and has led to less time available to deal with the prisoners.
7. Prisoners order their meals through the pods. The Board has received many complaints about the quality, quantity and temperature of food provided. The number of written applications to the Board concerning food has increased by 56% since the last reporting year. Meals are served on each houseblock spur. Supervision by officers is inconsistent in both fair portion control and allowing second helpings.
8. The spur servery prisoners generally present as poorly attired with stained and ill-fitting 'whites'. Prisoners have told the Board that they would prefer to wash the 'whites' themselves but this is not permitted owing to Health and Safety reasons.
9. Prisoners in MBU are encouraged to cook for their babies. They are allowed to order food items from a supermarket, using a combination of their funds and their child support money. There is a maximum order level of £25 a week due to storage available.
10. The prison went smoke-free on 11 September 2017. The staff are to be commended for the careful work done to ensure this went as smoothly as possible. Prisoners are allowed to purchase e-cigarettes and vaping kits.
11. At any one time the length of stay for approximately one third of the prison population is three weeks or less. The Board has observed that, with the rapid turnover, it is difficult for staff to get to know the prisoners well.
12. The Board was concerned to learn that there is still no timetable for the implementation of the Key Worker scheme in the Women's Estate.
13. The canteen has experienced ongoing shortages of basic items throughout the reporting year. It is being restructured and the external provider changed.
14. The Prison Council, run by User Voice, started well but tailed off. It has been revitalised and is on a trial period. Many prisoners report that they are unaware of the Council or the identity of their prisoner representatives.
15. The Board has received many complaints about property particularly with transfers between prisons. The audit trail for transfer of property has not been robust leading to much frustration for prisoners, staff and the Board.
16. It is of concern that prisoners are required to sign a compact taking responsibility for their property but are not given the means to do so. There are no lockable containers in double cells and the Board has noted that at times cell keys are not available for prisoners.

## 8 HEALTHCARE

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1. The new Healthcare Manager has been in post for ten months and on-going improvements and changes in the service provision have been noted by the Board.
2. The 18 bed inpatient Healthcare unit has been full for the majority of the period. The Board commends the staff who do an exceptional job in very demanding circumstances
3. On discharge prisoners are only given 48 hours of prescription medication. This can be an issue for those who are homeless and not registered with a GP service.
4. A programme of providing prisoners with the drug naloxone on discharge to avoid accidental overdoses, has been put in place.
5. All prisoners have equal access to the healthcare services. Waiting times are comparable to those in the community.
6. In July 2018, nursing vacancies were as follows: primary care nurses: eight from a complement of 18: recovery nurses: three from six.
7. Following the closure of HMP Holloway, there is funding for nine further nurse posts, all of which were vacant at the end of the reporting year.
8. Over 95% of prisoners in Bronzefield are taking some sort of regular medication.
9. There is a high level of missed GP appointments – approximately 20%.
10. A new complaint system was brought in last year to bring the system into line with outside procedures with respect to confidentiality. There has been an increase in the number of complaints which are now sent directly to healthcare and collected every day. Weekly meetings were started on the houseblocks where the Nurse Manager met prisoners who had complaints. These stopped after the first month due to nursing staff shortages.
11. Most complaints relate to medication prescriptions, delay in repeat prescriptions, and a lack of continuity of medication from the community.
12. A care plan meeting takes place each week which is well run and chaired by the Practice Manager. All the women on the in-patient unit and others who are of concern are discussed to ensure their needs are being met.
13. Most of the in-patient healthcare unit is taken up by those with mental health issues. The unit is frequently full with beds often blocked by those waiting a long time for transfer to secure psychiatric accommodation.
14. A number of prisoners who are deemed vulnerable are held on the healthcare unit because there is no alternative accommodation.
15. The prison's compliance with public health targets has improved significantly over the last 6 months. Prisoners are now being identified for breast cancer screening but difficulties arise due to the transient nature of a large proportion of the prisoners.
16. In February 2018 the prison dealt with an outbreak of influenza strain B. Public Health England were actively involved. Prisoners on two of the houseblocks were affected with some 15 cases confirmed which included a small number of staff. These houseblocks were locked down and quarantined. MBU was locked down to protect the babies but no cases were reported there. The whole episode, which lasted about 3 weeks, was handled robustly and efficiently. Some prisoners reported that they felt very isolated and that medication was sporadic.
17. There is now a Health Council with prisoner representatives. The first meeting was on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2018. There was an open and free discussion with various problems aired.

18. The prisoners can self-refer or be referred to the social care team. There have been 112 referrals this year.
19. One Safer Custody officer has dedicated hours to organise and deliver social care.
20. In September 2017 a cut in funding led to reduced staffing levels for social care provision by Surrey County Council. There is one allocated social worker who splits her time with another prison. Her much reduced presence and lack of communication, have had a negative impact on prisoners both during their time at Bronzefield and in the lack of liaison with the community at the time of release.

## **9 EDUCATION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES**

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1. There are assessments for all prisoners in English and Mathematics at induction, partly using computers. All women below Level 1 in English or Mathematics are required to engage in education before they can apply for work.
2. Since January 2018 all new prisoners attend a five day Health and Wellbeing course as part of an extended induction programme.
3. The department has moved to the City and Guilds awarding board for English and Mathematics to improve transferability between establishments.
4. 'Learning Together' was a successful collaboration between the prison and higher education institutions. A degree course module was taught in the prison over the course of several weeks with both university students and prisoners attending.
5. The licence for the Virtual Campus has been regained but its use during the reporting period was severely limited as only one prisoner could use it at a time, and then only in the library.
6. Further educational opportunities for those prisoners with GCSE level English and Mathematics are confined almost entirely to vocational qualifications. There are three prisoners currently enrolled in the Open University.
7. Sentence plans include individual learning plans (ILP) which are not necessarily transferred with the prisoner unless she holds it and takes it with her.
8. Owing to extra funding arising from the closure of HMP Holloway, the number of whole time equivalent (WTE) teaching staff has increased by five in the reporting year. However staffing issues during the year led to the cancellation of IT classes for six weeks and the Cleaning Academy for three weeks.
9. Classes are held 52 weeks a year. Currently there are 112 educational places in both the mornings and afternoons.
10. The needs of prisoners are regularly reviewed and classes adjusted accordingly. As a result, waiting lists are generally short.
11. An attendance record is kept and pay withheld where appropriate. Biometric registration for educational and work activity has been introduced to monitor movement more accurately but attendance particularly after interruptions such as health appointments is still suboptimal.
12. All prisoners can access the gym for up to three hours per week outside of normal work hours. A four week Active IQ course, recognised nationally, has only been available intermittently to those undertaking formal placements in the gym owing to staff shortages.
13. Three new teachers have recently been appointed adding yoga, meditation and dance to programmes on offer to prisoners.

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

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1. There is a range of work and vocational training programs focused on employment opportunities on release. They include:
  - The 'Vita Nova' café which employs up to 12 prisoners. Links with an external company have resulted in some prisoners receiving training and a Barista Level 1 qualification
  - Hair and Beauty salon where Level 1 and Level 2 qualifications are offered.
  - The Call Centre, set up in February 2017, with an outside organisation that aims to employ prisoners on release.
2. Prisoners working in the Café, Salon and Call Centre sign a contract of employment to complete training and commit to stay for a minimum of four months to mimic work outside.
3. The role of the Peer Worker is well-developed and they are deployed throughout the prison. St Giles' Trust runs accredited courses for Level 3 and 4 NVQs in Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) for them. This has been completed by 16 prisoners this year.
4. Other accredited courses on offer in work areas include Customer Services Level 1, Food Hygiene Level 2, Business Administration Level 2 and non-accredited courses include Life Skills and Budget Management.
5. Work is allocated during the core 3-5 day induction programme, after the prisoner's educational needs have been assessed.
6. The number of employment places available are 330 full time and 180 part-time. In addition, there are spur-based roles.
7. Attendance is monitored; it ranges between 78% and 94%
8. Unemployment averaged 5%.
9. The number of prisoners on ROTL has increased from one at the start of the reporting period to three at the end.
10. The prison continues to develop relationships with a range of both local and national businesses to increase the numbers of prisoners on ROTL.

## **11 RESETTLEMENT PREPARATION**

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1. Bronzefield has been without a Head of Rehabilitative Services for most of the reporting period. A new manager started work at the beginning of June.
2. The release of prisoners without accommodation continues to cause concern, particularly for those prisoners serving short sentences or those who are increasingly being returned for short periods for breach of licence. The process of finding accommodation takes 4-6 weeks. Currently, about 40-50% of prisoners are discharged to no fixed abode. Accurate and comparative data on the numbers of prisoners affected is difficult to obtain as there is no consensus among the many agencies involved about data criteria and its collection.
3. The number of recalls was 518 in 2017/18 compared to 372 in the 2016/17 reporting year.
4. At any one time the length of stay for approximately one third of the prison population is three weeks or less. This results in difficulties in many areas:

- Dealing with medical, drug and detoxification issues
  - Education and training. Many courses have to be shortened and it is sometimes difficult finding jobs with so little time available.
  - Reception is often under strain, with large numbers arriving and leaving. Keeping track of prisoners' property causes problems and the Board receives many applications about this.
  - Difficulty in maintaining a trained kitchen workforce.
5. Indeterminate sentences for Public Protection (IPP) were abolished in 2012 by the Government, which described the sentence as indefensible. However, those already sentenced to an IPP remain in custody until the notional determinate term (the tariff) has passed and then indefinitely until the Parole Board is satisfied that the significant risk of harm has reduced. Bronzefield held six such prisoners at the end of the reporting year, all of whom have served at least five years longer than the tariff fixed by the court and one who has served over nine years. These indeterminate sentences are seen as unfair and physically and mentally detrimental by prisoners and the Board.

## **WORK OF THE IMB**

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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.

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.

Board members have attended national training courses, hosted visits from IMBs of other prisons and have visited other establishments.

<b>BOARD STATISTICS</b>	
Recommended Complement of Board Members	17
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	12
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	13
Total number of visits to the Establishment	499
Total number of segregation reviews attended	250

## APPLICATIONS TO THE IMB

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<b>Code</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Current reporting year</b>	<b>Previous reporting year</b>
A	Accommodation including laundry, clothing, ablutions	33	36
B	Discipline including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	9	10
C	Equality	14	16
D	Purposeful Activity including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	25	25
E 1	Letters, visits, phones, public protection restrictions	56	71
E 2	Finance including pay, private monies, spends	24	28
F	Food and kitchens	50	32
G	Health including physical, mental, social care	113	147
H 1	Property within this establishment	70	91
H 2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	31	21
H 3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	34	25
I	Sentence management including HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	31	38
J	Staff/prisoner concerns including bullying	104	157
K	Transfers	11	12
L	Miscellaneous	53	73
	<b>Total number of IMB applications</b>	<b>658</b>	<b>782</b>