

Jenny Rathbone MS
Equality and Social Justice committee
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

MoJ ref: ADR126281

20 August 2025

Criminal Justice in Wales

Dear Jenny,

Thank you for your letter on 1st August 2025 with additional questions on behalf of the Equality and Social Justice committee. The UK Government is committed to working with the Welsh Government on justice matters and I am happy to provide the following information.

- 1. As HMP Berwyn was designed as a rehabilitation-focused prison, what are the main barriers preventing it from delivering on that vision—particularly in terms of education, purposeful activity, and stability— and what steps are being taken to address them?*

Stability within a prison is a key enabler of a rehabilitative regime. Recent population pressures across the prison estate have meant that the population at HMP Berwyn has been changed to support the national estates demand for prison places.

His Majesty's Independent Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) report of HMP Berwyn published in May 2025 highlighted a number of areas of positive practice, including the prison's "bright and welcoming wellbeing hub for learners" where "prisoners benefited from and valued these facilities for education and work" as well as noting that the "vocational learning workshops were of exceptional quality...they provided industry-standard environments for learners to develop valuable skills and accreditations, for example in construction workshops, a training kitchen, barber shop, warehousing and logistics."

The Inspectorate also noted that "a wide range of organisations were located together in an impressive resettlement hub, which enabled effective communication and joint working. Prisoners could attend the hub to discuss their resettlement plans as they prepared to return to the community." However, it is recognised that further improvements could be made, as detailed in HMP Berwyn's recently published action plan in response to HMIP recommendations. The following progress has already been made:

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- Education and Workshop provisions in HMP Berwyn have been reviewed to ensure that each is being maximised to its full potential.
- Ongoing stakeholder engagement with businesses in the community to develop further opportunities for prisoners to engage in activity that supports the local labour market and provides skills needed to gain employment upon release.

Additionally, a new Governor has been appointed to HMP Berwyn who will bring great value to the prison and the management team as well as oversee progression of the HMIP action plan.

2. *Please can you confirm how many of the 1,300 Probation Officers employed in a recent recruitment drive were recruited into Welsh prisons?*

Over the last 4 years, 4,632 trainee Probation Officers (known as PQiPs – Professional Qualification in Probation) have started since Probation unified in June 2021; of which 315 have been allocated to Wales. These trainees become Probation Officers after qualification. Some are placed in prisons, but the majority are allocated to Probation Delivery Units in the community. A Breakdown of this is shared below.

	National	Wales
2021/22	1518	145
2022/23	1514	127
2023/24	543	10
2024/25	1057	33

Allocation of trainees in Wales has been based on vacancies and expected demand; to note, Wales has traditionally not been carrying a high level of vacancies in Probation Officer roles.

In addition, as you rightly note, we have made a ministerial commitment to onboard 1,300 PQiPs this financial year, these will be recruited in two cohorts (commencing September 2025 and March 2026). This recruitment activity is ongoing and PQiPs are allocated based on business and operational need, taking into consideration the candidate’s preference.

3. *Please can you provide data on re-offending by prisoners with home postcodes in Wales – including, where possible, a breakdown of Welsh prisoners serving/having served sentences outside Wales?*

Data regarding reoffending rates for individuals released from custody who held a Welsh postcode at the time of their most recent conviction has been requested and will be produced as an ad-hoc statistical table by 1st September 2025.

Data availability does not allow for the further breakdown requested. I will ensure that officials share the data with the Committee when released.

I hope this information assists the Committee and should you require any further information then please do let us know.

Your sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James". The script is cursive and fluid, with a large initial 'J' and a long, sweeping tail on the 's'.

Lord Timpson
Minister for Prisons, Probation and Reducing Reoffending