

# Trans Voices on Trans Prison Policy

In 2021/22, the Bent Bars Project conducted a survey of our 'inside' (imprisoned) members who identify as trans or non-binary. The purpose of the survey was to get feedback on how prison policies about transgender and non-binary issues work in practice. The survey responses were also a response to a review of the Ministry of Justice's Policy Framework on 'The Care and Management of Individuals who are Transgender'. Some key findings are summarised below.

You can read the full report on our website.

## General treatment in prison

- Our members reported mixed treatment from staff and fellow prisoners. Some talked about staff and other prisoners as being supportive, but many gave accounts that described poor and frequently abusive treatment.
- Most of our members had significant concerns about the safety and well-being of trans and nonbinary people in prison. Many felt that abuse, harassment and assaults were not taken seriously or addressed.

## Healthcare & gender expression

- Our members repeatedly raised issues about access to clothing, toiletries, and personal items to support gender expression. There was considerable frustration about limited canteen lists and restrictions or high costs of gender-specific items.
- Our members consistently expressed concern about access to trans-specific health care, long wait times and some discriminatory attitudes from health care staff.

## About the survey

Bent Bars sent out a total of 70 surveys to prisoners across 37 different prisons in England and Wales, plus 4 in Scotland. We received 30 responses.

Most responses were from trans women or trans feminine people held in men's prisons. Almost all identified as white, and about half of all respondents said they have learning difficulties or disabilities.

"some wing staff are supportive. The rest either ignore us, judge us, and are intolerant of us. We have had staff misgender us, ignore us while we're being harassed and even deny our gender. Staff have been previously offered awareness training but very few attended."

"It has taken 2 1/2 years to get one email to my specialist [doctor]. We don't get any information about our medical needs. Even after external clinic's advice, it takes a lot of effort to get healthcare to support my medical needs and allow me access to treatment."