



HM Inspectorate of Prisons  
New methodology for the inspection of leadership

## **Frequently asked questions**

June 2021

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### 1. What if the governor is not available during an inspection?

The inspection of leadership will still take place. The presence or absence of one member of a leadership team for a short period should not inevitably affect outcomes or our ability to evidence leadership findings.

### 2. Will the Prison Group Director be consulted beyond week 1, particularly if findings are not positive, to offer support and give their viewpoint?

Yes, HMI Prisons' team leaders will do this as necessary.

### 3. Will the slides from the leadership presentation be shared?

Yes, they were sent to Phil Cople's office for wider distribution on 20 May 2021. The slides and the self-assessment report (SAR) template are available on our website at

<https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/about-hmi-prisons/expectations-for-leadership/>

### 4. Will HMI Prisons engage with the HMPPS training and leadership project?

Yes, we have periodic meetings with staff from the HMPPS training and leadership project.

### 5. Will governors and prison leaders be able to access the results of the HMI Prisons survey of staff at our establishment?

We introduced the staff survey as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and have decided to refine the questions to provide evidence for our new leadership expectations. At present we publish the staff survey methodology and the full staff survey results alongside our reports. We do not share the sub-group analyses or staff comments to protect the identity of participants. The methodology for our staff survey methodology is not as robust as for our prisoner survey due to the email sampling system we employ, and we therefore use the data produced with more caution than the prisoner survey data. We hope to improve the methodology of the staff survey over time.

6. Will the current leadership and management expectations under each healthy prison test be replaced by these new expectations?

Yes.

7. Which leaders in the prison will you be assessing?

Leadership in a prison exists at many levels – not just with the governor. We will be inspecting leadership from the level of a custodial manager (CM) up to Prison Group Director (PGD).

8. How will you measure resourcing under the ‘enabling’ expectation? Will you look at how efficiently money is being used?

We will not be doing a ‘value for money’ audit. Rather, our judgement will be around whether the prison has the resources it needs to deliver good outcomes for prisoners, whether it is making good use of the resources it has and how well it seeks additional resource where necessary.

9. Does HMI Prisons’ approach to leadership inspection favour a particular style of leadership?

Different leadership styles are appropriate at different times depending on the circumstances, and individual approaches will vary with personality. We do not intend to prescribe a particular style; we are interested in how leadership behaviours impact on outcomes for prisoners.

10. How will you review the effectiveness of this project?

The first group of sites inspected using the new leadership expectations will be treated as pilots. Our assessments of leadership will be shared with the governor and PGD for feedback, but not published. This effectively provides us with a training period for HMI Prisons’ staff. We anticipate that the process will go live in July and have committed to a full review, starting in December 2021.

### 11. How will HMI Prisons ensure consistency across teams/team leaders when it comes to inspecting leadership?

Most inspections include either the Chief Inspector of Prisons, Charlie Taylor or the Deputy Chief, Martin Lomas for the deliberation meeting, which helps ensure consistency. Our editorial process also incorporates several layers of checking and all our reports are signed off personally by the Chief Inspector.

### 12. Who should write the self-assessment report? Does it need to be signed off by HMPPS?

The governor may ask other prison leaders to contribute to the SAR, but we expect that it will be signed off by the governor. We do not consider it necessary for HMPPS to approve what a governor has written. HMI Prisons will use the information in the SAR to inform the inspection of leadership and the four healthy prison tests, but we will not publish it.

### 13. What does visible leadership mean?

‘Visibility’ refers to the availability and presence of leaders at the point of service or delivery. Visible leaders observe first-hand how outcomes are achieved; they are approachable and can give and receive information to/from staff and prisoners; they understand the reality of what happens in the prison and do not always rely on others to tell them what is happening. Being visible is inevitably harder in bigger prisons and it is often more challenging in complex prisons, where leaders often experience more daily operational challenges that take up time. There are other ways in which leaders can be effective even if they cannot walk around the site every day. For example:

- multi-disciplinary morning briefings
- focused and multi-disciplinary strategic meetings
- formal consultation forums, including an effective prisoner council
- good quality bilateral meetings with functional heads
- regular informative governors’ newsletters
- video messages on in-cell TV
- wing surgeries
- senior management team question time.

**14. The relationship between private sector prisons and the PGD is not the same as in public sector prisons – how will HMI Prisons manage this?**

When we inspect private sector prisons, we will seek an interview with the director's line manager (often the chief operating officer) and with the HMPPS controller.

**15. What are HMI Prisons' expectations when governors do not have line management responsibility for something?**

While the Governor may not have complete control over some areas of work, they should still be able to work collaboratively with the provider to exert some control or influence. Ultimately, enduring problems may need to be escalated to more senior leaders as necessary. We expect to see evidence that leaders have done whatever is possible to influence an outcome – partnership working, collaborating and managing contracts effectively are all features of leadership.

**16. Do the IMBs understand HMI Prisons' leadership expectations and will they use it?**

Charlie Taylor meets regularly with Dame Anne Owers, National Chair of the IMBs. The leadership expectations have been discussed and will remain a topic of conversation in the coming months. IMBs always contribute to our inspections and have recently agreed to provide us with a written update to their most recent report before each inspection.