

IPM SUPPORT AND PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

PMCs are required in legislation to provide support to IPMs to assist those IPMs in carrying out their duties. **The legislation also states that the PMCs must evaluate the performance of each IPM appointed by the PMC.**

1 Settling in Period and review

The purpose of having an agreed settling in period is to allow both the PMCs and the IPMs a way of ensuring that their expectations are being met. By agreeing to review the relationship at an early stage an IPM can be reassured that any initial anxieties will be addressed, and that any potential problems can be identified with the aim of resolution.

The length of the settling in period for independent prison monitoring is six months, to allow for realistic opinions of how the arrangements are working out for both parties. It is important that the settling in period is clearly brought to a close with a review meeting between the Regional PMC and IPM. This is a structured meeting that will allow both parties to discuss what is going well, and to raise and address any potential issues. The meeting must conclude with a clear decision on how the relationship is to proceed, agreed on and followed through by everyone. The following decisions may be made:

- continue with current arrangements
- add to or amend the arrangements, for instance reducing the number of hours the IPM works or by providing additional training or;
- terminate the appointment.

2 Supervision discussions

Supervision discussions are used to monitor an IPM's performance and ensure they are fulfilling the requirements of the role.

Supervision discussions involve:

- Evaluating an IPM's performance in carrying out their duties.
- Identifying any training and/or personal support needs.
- Clarifying the IPM role & responsibilities.
- Improving confidence and competence in the role.
- Sharing perceptions on how the work is progressing.
- Discussing ideas on the development of the IPM role.
- Recognising and dealing with problems.

Some IPMs may not see the need for supervision, particularly if it involves extra commitment outside of their monitoring role. HMIPS considers that taking time to give feedback to the IPMs as well as taking time to receive input is a critical part of

continuous improvement and will endeavour to do this in as flexible manner as possible.

Supervision must be provided at appropriate times and places for IPMs and is a formal process. The PMCs will work to accommodate the needs of individual IPMs and will offer flexible options to ensure that they endeavour to meet the IPMs individual circumstances and personal constraints. The PMC may organise for the supervision to take place at the prison where the IPM carries out their IPM activities as part of a planned monitoring visit. It also gives the IPM the chance to demonstrate what they have learned during training under observed practice by the PMC.

Supervision is considered as part of the overall volunteering experience and is not only something that happens when there is a problem. It is important to recognise that supervision is not the same as support, or having a friendly chat, nor is it checking up on the IPM. Supervision is making sure that the needs and interests of the individual IPMs are being balanced with the needs and interests of the function of the effective Independent Monitoring of Prisons in Scotland.

For this reason, all supervision sessions will take place on a one-to-one basis between the IPM and the relevant Regional PMC. During each three year tenure formal supervision will take place as follows:

Stage 1 – After 6 months and to complete the ‘settling in period’

Stage 2 –At around 18 Months (one year after the settling in period)

Stage 3 – Annually thereafter. During stage 3 formal discussion will take place around the appropriateness of a further period of appointment. Where the IPM decides not to continue in role after the three years, the PMC will start to recruit a new IPM member to fulfil the duties of Independent Prison Monitoring in a particular prison.

Supervision meetings will be recorded and signed by the PMC and IPM. The meetings may cover the following questions:

1. **General** - How is the IPM feeling about their role in general?
2. **What is going well?** - Is there anything that the IPM has done that they feel particularly pleased with or has particularly enjoyed?
3. **What’s not going so well?** - Is there anything that has happened which the IPM is unsure about? Are there any particular situations that the IPM wants to talk through?
4. **Workload** - How are they finding the workload? – too much, too little, too easy or too demanding? How is the role fitting in with the other commitments in their life?
5. **Actions agreed last session** – Discussion about any progress with any relevant previous actions.
6. **Relationships** – How are they getting on with the other IPM colleagues, prison staff, prisoners, NHS staff etc.?

7. Ideas for Improvement – Discussion about any suggestions that the IPM may have in improving the role. Explore if there are aspects of their work or the work of the PMC that could be improved upon. Any concerns about the performance of the IPM should be raised during this session. Any specific grievances should be dealt with in accordance to the grievance process as described in Chapter 11.

8. Personal Development – Explore if there are any issues/ concerns / problems discussed in this session that can be addressed with additional information, support or training. Agree what these would be and the processes for achieving them.

9. Developments to Role – Is the IPM happy with their role? Are there any special projects they may like to explore? The IPM may want to end their role however continue to support Independent Prison Monitoring in another way where possible.

10. New Actions – Are there any actions that should be set between now and the next meeting? Is there particular issue that the IPM would like to bring to the Advisory Group or to the Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland?

3 Other forms of support

There are various types of support offered by the PMCs:

- Offering advice - Sharing ideas on what would be the best course of action for the IPM to take
- Giving information - Providing IPMs with the information they need in a particular situation (e.g. role description, relevant contacts etc.)
- Direct action - Doing something on behalf of the IPM and relieving pressure
- Training - Helping someone to acquire knowledge and skills
- Changing systems - Working to influence and improve systems which cause difficulty for IPMs- working on organisational development rather than with individuals
- Personal support - Helping IPMs to explore problems and alternative ways of dealing with a situation
- Facilitating mutual support - Enabling volunteer IPMs to support each other (e.g. group support, buddy support that is offered by the PMC through these and other activities. This may include agreed visits to other prisons within their region.

4 Team Meetings

The work of an IPM can be relatively isolated, and working as part of a rota can mean that the opportunity to meet the other IPMs in the team can be limited.

Team maintenance is a key function of the role of the Regional PMCs and is considered as vitally important to the success of Independent Prison Monitoring in Scotland.

Given the speed of life and organisations today, circumstances can rapidly change. To keep focus on their most important goals, that is ensuring the humane treatment and conditions in prisons for prisoners in Scotland, the IPM teams must meet regularly

The Act states at 7B(g) that the PMC must arrange a meeting with independent prison monitors assigned to a prison at least once every six months at which no fewer than two thirds of all independent prison monitors assigned to that prison must be in attendance

The objective of these meetings is to

- Create a trusting environment that ensures open communication, teamwork, and respect for diversity.
- Discuss 'what works' with regard to monitoring and share good monitoring practice.
- Provide opportunities for peer support, mutual coaching and for the IPMs to learn and grow in the role.
- Encourage a spirit of co-operation amongst IPMs; providing opportunities to socialise with colleagues; and the freedom for outside pressures and circumstances to be acknowledged.
- Assess how any changes may affect the function and mission of Independent Prison Monitoring (changes in a particular prison, policy changes, personnel changes, timelines changes, recommendations from the Advisory Group etc.)
- Provide an opportunity to discuss case studies and outcomes and;

10.6 Unsatisfactory Performance

If the Regional PMC is extremely concerned about unsatisfactory performance by an IPM that cannot be resolved by supervision and support, it may be necessary to begin a formal disciplinary process. In some exceptional cases, the IPM may be asked to cease the monitoring role while this process is underway. This process mirrors the HMIPS [IPM Grievance Process](#)

Stage 1 | Oral discussion

The first step will be an informal discussion between the IPM and the PMC during which the nature of the concern(s) will be detailed. This is an opportunity for the IPM to hear about the PMC's concern(s) and to offer their views. It may also seek to identify some solutions, such as additional training, if required and appropriate. The IPM will be given the option to be accompanied to the meeting by a nominated person of their choice from within the IPM team.

Stage 2 | Written caution

If the concern(s) has not been or cannot be resolved by the oral discussion at Stage 1, this may result in the IPM being issued with a written caution outlining the performance concern.

The IPM will be given the opportunity to state their case formally to the regional PMC. Again, the IPM will be allowed to be accompanied to any meetings by a person of their choice from within the IPM team.

In some cases an IPM may be asked to resign, for instance because the IPM has committed some form of gross misconduct or their conduct is not in keeping with the [Independent Prison Monitor's Code Of Conduct](#). In the event that HMIPS decides to revoke an IPM's appointment, they may appeal.

Stage 3 | Opportunity to appeal

If an IPM's appointment has been revoked at Stage 2 they have the option to appeal in writing to the National PMC. All appeals will be heard by the National PMC or in some instances the Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland and will also be attended by one other independent party.

The IPM will again be given the option to be accompanied to the meeting by a person of their choice from within the IPM team. The National PMC or Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland will respond within **5 working days** of the appeals meeting and their decision will usually be final. A copy of the Appeal Form can be obtained upon request.