



Staff survey methodology and results

HMP High Down

June 2026

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Staff survey methodology

A survey of staff is carried out at the start of every inspection, the results of which contribute to the evidence base for the inspection.

HMI Prisons researchers developed an online questionnaire consisting of structured questions exploring the experience of staff in the establishment. There are also four open questions which allow staff to describe their experiences and tell inspectors anything else they think is important. These comments are not published or shared with the establishment.

Distribution

HMI Prisons researchers provide a link to the survey embedded in a covering email. The covering email explains the purpose of the survey, that participation is voluntary and gives assurances about confidentiality and anonymity, enabling staff to give their informed consent to participate. This email is sent to the establishment with a request that it is forwarded to all staff working at the establishment; an HMI Prisons researcher is copied into this email to provide assurance. Additionally, researchers distribute postcards to wing offices for the attention of staff about details of the online survey which included the link.

Survey response

The survey was sent to 818 email addresses at High Down. Staff were given seven days to complete the survey. We received a total of 118 completed questionnaires.

We cannot be sure that every member of staff working at the establishment received the email. Furthermore, because the online survey is set up to enable multiple responses from a single device (to facilitate participation by those who share computers), it is possible that individuals may have completed the questionnaire more than once. It is therefore not possible to provide an accurate response rate.

Full survey results

The full survey results for staff at High Down provide a breakdown of responses for only the structured questions. Percentages have been rounded and therefore may not add up to 100%.

The full inspection report is available on our website at:
<https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprison/inspections/>

Staff survey

Q1 Please tick the option which most closely matches your role:

Frontline operational staff	31 (26%)
Operational manager	24 (20%)
Health care staff	6 (5%)
Education, skills and work staff	10 (8%)
Administrative staff	31 (26%)
Other staff	16 (14%)

Staff well-being

Q2 How well is the establishment supporting staff well-being?

Very well	34 (29%)
Quite well	49 (42%)
Neither well nor poorly	13 (11%)
Quite poorly	13 (11%)
Very poorly	9 (8%)

Q3 How would you describe your morale at work:

Very high	23 (19%)
High	51 (43%)
Neither high nor low	26 (22%)
Low	11 (9%)
Very low	7 (6%)

Prisoner well-being

Q4 Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Reasonable steps are being taken to keep prisoners safe	69 (58%)	28 (24%)	6 (5%)	7 (6%)	8 (7%)
Prisoners are having enough time out of their cells	57 (48%)	34 (29%)	10 (8%)	6 (5%)	11 (9%)

Leadership in this establishment

Q5 How clearly are the top priorities of this establishment communicated to you?

Very clearly	48 (41%)
Quite clearly	47 (40%)
Not very clearly	13 (11%)
Not at all clearly	4 (3%)
I don't know the top priorities	6 (5%)

Q5a To what extent do you agree or disagree with this establishment's priorities?

Strongly agree	59 (53%)
Somewhat agree	33 (30%)
Somewhat disagree	6 (5%)
Strongly disagree	5 (5%)
Don't know	8 (7%)

Q6 Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree that your knowledge and skills are sufficient to do your job well (e.g. training and development opportunities):

Strongly agree.....	71 (60%)
Somewhat agree.....	36 (31%)
Somewhat disagree	6 (5%)
Strongly disagree	5 (4%)

Q7 How often do you meet with someone (a manager or mentor) to discuss how you are progressing in your role?

About once a month.....	47 (40%)
Approximately once every three months	32 (27%)
Approximately twice a year	6 (5%)
Once a year or less	17 (15%)
I have not had the opportunity to meet with someone.....	15 (13%)

Q8 Please rate the quality of support you receive from your line manager:

Very good.....	69 (58%)
Good	28 (24%)
Neither good nor poor	12 (10%)
Poor	4 (3%)
Very poor	5 (4%)

Q9 Please use the scale to rate the following statements:

	Always	Often	Occasionally	Never	Don't know
Governors/directors and senior managers in this establishment are approachable (e.g. they take time to listen)	49 (42%)	32 (27%)	27 (23%)	7 (6%)	3 (3%)
Governors/directors and senior managers in this establishment acknowledge and celebrate good work	43 (36%)	40 (34%)	23 (19%)	9 (8%)	3 (3%)
Governors/directors and senior managers set high standards of behaviour for staff	54 (46%)	33 (28%)	22 (19%)	3 (3%)	6 (5%)
Governors/directors and senior managers challenge poor behaviour by staff	32 (27%)	40 (34%)	30 (25%)	5 (4%)	11 (9%)
Governors/directors encourage staff to reflect on and learn from their mistakes	32 (27%)	34 (29%)	25 (21%)	6 (5%)	20 (17%)
Governors/directors use feedback from prisoners, staff and others to generate ideas, create plans and measure progress	30 (25%)	30 (25%)	22 (19%)	16 (14%)	20 (17%)

Raising concerns

Q10 Do you know what the formal procedure is to raise concerns (whistleblowing) in this establishment?

Yes.....	97 (83%)
No	20 (17%)

Q11	Have you formally raised concerns about this establishment?	
	Yes	10 (8%)
	No	108 (92%)
Q12	Would you formally raise concerns if you had any?	
	Yes	93 (86%)
	No	3 (3%)
	Don't know	12 (11%)
Q14	Who or what organisation did you raise your concern to?	
	A colleague	3
	A manager	6
	Human resources	1
	Ofsted or Estyn	0
	Care Quality Commission or Healthcare Inspectorate Wales	0
	HM Inspectorate of Prisons	1
	Trade union	3
	Professional organisation	0
	Police	2
	Other	6
Q15	Were your concerns taken seriously?	
	Yes	4 (40%)
	No	4 (40%)
	Don't know	2 (20%)
Q16	Was any effective action taken in response to the concerns you had raised?	
	Yes	3 (30%)
	No	5 (50%)
	Don't know	2 (20%)
Q18	Have you ever witnessed staff behaving inappropriately towards prisoners at this establishment?	
	Yes	34 (29%)
	No	77 (65%)
	Don't know	7 (6%)
Q19	Have you ever witnessed staff behaving inappropriately towards each other at this establishment?	
	Yes	49 (42%)
	No	67 (57%)
	Don't know	2 (2%)