



# INDEPENDENT PRISON MONITORING RECRUITMENT INFORMATION PACK





## Message from Wendy Sinclair

*His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland*

Could you provide invaluable support by ensuring prisoners' human rights are upheld and that life in prison contributes to their rehabilitation?

You may be the person who can make a unique contribution to improving Scotland's Prisons, listening to, and supporting prisoners and positively impacting on their lives and your wider local community.

Becoming an Independent Prison Monitor (IPM) can be challenging and rewarding. As well as the opportunity to participate in one of the most unusual and valuable types of voluntary work, you will have the opportunity to meet and work with many people from diverse backgrounds and walks of life.

I would be delighted if you would consider joining our Independent Monitoring Teams and in doing so be part of bringing the communities in Scotland into Scotland's prisons.

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HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland

## Contents

1. Are there any minimum requirements? .....	2
2. What is an Independent Prison Monitor (IPM)? .....	2
3. Locations in Scotland .....	2
4. What would I be doing? .....	3
5. What skills and qualities do I need to have? .....	4
6. What's in it for me? .....	5
7. How much time will I be expected to give? .....	5
8. How do I apply to become an IPM and what are the timescales.....	6

## 1. Are there any minimum requirements?

To apply to become an IPM the following minimum requirements must be met:

- I **am** at least 18 years old.
- I **understand** IPMs are expected to visit a prison at least once a month, more frequently where possible.
- I **understand** there is mandatory training I must complete before I can begin monitoring.
- I **understand** IPMs are expected to monitor for at least 2 years (up to a maximum of 9 years).
- I **have** been resident in the UK for the last 3 years.
- There are **no** restrictions on my residence in the UK.
- I am **not** on any anticoagulants (medication used to prevent and treat blood clots i.e., "blood thinners").
- I **am** physically able to undertake mandatory Personal Protection Training

## 2. What is an Independent Prison Monitor (IPM)?

An IPM is a volunteering role for His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland (HMIPS). The role holds statutory authority under the [Public Services Reform \(Inspection and Monitoring of Prisons\) \(Scotland\) Order 2015](#). It is an essential role within the Scottish justice system as it helps ensure prisoners' human rights are upheld and that life in prison contributes to their rehabilitation. Under the system established in 2015, HMIPS have a statutory obligation to visit each prison in Scotland at least once per week. This duty is discharged by publicly appointed IPMs.

The role is challenging yet rewarding; you will be providing an independent viewpoint on the humane treatment and conditions for prisoners at an allocated prison; conduct investigations either because of a prisoner raising an issue or from your own observations and report back on your findings.

We are looking for people with a range of different backgrounds and experiences. As you can imagine it is a complex role and requires you to have excellent listening and observation skills; the ability to gain the respect of prisoners, prison staff and the prison Governor; the confidence in dealing with challenging situations; and a commitment to social justice.

The role is a flexible one as visits are conducted at various times and can fit in with your personal circumstances. This includes day, evening, weekends, and occasional night visits. You will also be fully supported in your role with training provided to all new IPMs, one to one support from your Prison Monitoring Coordinator (PMC), group support from the rest of the Monitoring Team as well as opportunities for further training and options for professional development.

## 3. Locations in Scotland

There are currently 17 prisons in Scotland. The country has been divided into four regions, shown in the table below, with a PMC assigned a region. The PMC supports and manages the IPMs in each establishment within their region.

<b>Region 1</b>	<a href="#">HMP Castle Huntly</a> <a href="#">HMP Glenochil</a> <a href="#">HMP &amp; YOI Grampian</a> <a href="#">HMP Inverness</a> <a href="#">HMP Perth</a>	<b>Region 2</b>	<a href="#">HMP Barlinnie</a> <a href="#">HMP Shotts</a> <a href="#">HMP &amp; YOI Stirling</a> <a href="#">The Bella Centre</a> <a href="#">The Liliac Centre</a>
<b>Region 3</b>	<a href="#">HMP Dumfries</a> <a href="#">HMP Greenock</a> <a href="#">HMP Kilmarnock</a> <a href="#">HMP Low Moss</a>	<b>Region 4</b>	<a href="#">HMP Addiewell</a> <a href="#">HMP Edinburgh</a> <a href="#">HMP &amp; YOI Polmont</a>

#### 4. What would I be doing?

You will be completing a variety of tasks, including:

- Monitoring the humane treatment of prisoners and conditions in prisons which includes:
  - Planning prison visits with the rest of the Monitoring Team.
  - Conducting visits to observe and monitor all aspects of prison life.
  - Talking to prisoners about their treatment and conditions in prison.
  - Talking to visitors, prison officers, and other people working at the prison about the treatment of prisoners.
  - Monitoring the conditions in which prisoners are detained.
  - Ensuring the provision of appropriate support for prisoners.
  - Monitoring the arrangements for the temporary release of prisoners.
  - Developing effective working relationships with prisoners, staff, and the Governor.
- Conducting investigations either because of a prisoner raising an issue or from your own observations:
  - Responding to requests from prisoners for confidential conversations.
  - Assisting prisoners with the prison complaints process, where requested.
  - Sourcing and assessing relevant information, as required.
  - Taking appropriate action to issues raised or to observations made with support from the Monitoring Team and the Prison Monitoring Coordinator.
  - Examining relevant prison records relating to the treatments of prisoners in response to issues or concerns raised or observed.
  - Appropriately escalating issues to prison management, if required.
  - Exercising discretion and authority when intervention is necessary.
- Reporting on your monitoring and/or investigations:
  - Reporting back on observations made.
  - Maintaining records of observations and investigations
  - Highlighting good practice and provide constructive feedback.
  - Raising issues with the Governor and the Prison Monitoring Coordinator, as required.
  - Contributing to the Prison Monitoring Annual Report as requested/required.

## 5. What skills and qualities do I need to have?

You do not need any special qualifications or experience. We will provide the necessary training and support. We are looking for **highly reliable people** with the **time, energy, and enthusiasm** to make a difference and to help us to discharge our statutory responsibilities. You do need to be open-minded, a natural communicator and be able to exercise sound, objective judgement.

We require you to be IT competent, committed to diversity, equality, and understand human rights. Important skills, abilities and aptitudes include:



### Curiosity

Exploring and proactively trying to understand what is happening, including when the

environments are familiar due to regular visiting. This involves looking, listening, smelling, asking direct questions, following up and reflecting on information received.



### Taking the initiative

Doing things without always having to be told, finding out what you need to know, being

resourceful and resilient, and spotting and using opportunities to discover further evidence and data.



### Critical thinking

Analysing facts objectively and forming a judgement. This involves open-mindedness,

taking an inquisitive approach, appreciating potential power dynamics, different perspectives and points of view, clarity, and precision, making a solid argument based on evidence, good reasoning skills, and discerning fact from fiction by applying evidential criteria, self-reflection, and evaluation.



### Clear communication

Exchanging ideas, thoughts, opinions, knowledge, and data with people at all levels of

authority so that messages are received and understood with clarity and purpose.



### Knowing when to seek help

Being aware of your own limitations.



### Courage

Voicing opinions even when going against the majority or established view, challenging

decisions, and actions, standing your ground when appropriate even in the face of challenge and defensiveness, not being afraid to ask questions that might be perceived by some to be obvious and learning from mistakes.



### Interpersonal skills

Listening actively, understanding, and empathising with others,

exercising appropriate sensitivity, managing conflict, building relationships, working well with others, taking people with you, problem solving and assertiveness.



### Tenacity

Handling challenges, being self-motivated, building confidence, not dismissing

things that may at first appear minor or irrelevant and escalating matters of concern.



### Attention to detail

Looking closely at all the data and evidence, identifying patterns, spotting evidential

weaknesses and gaps, following those up appropriately, and being thorough and accurate.



### Self awareness

Understanding your own biases and assumptions, managing emotions, aligning

behaviour with internal values, and understanding issues from multiple perspectives.

## **6. What's in it for me?**

As an IPM, you will have the opportunity to develop a wide range of personal skills such as decision-making, inter-personal skills and team-working which can benefit your career prospects, existing career, and your employer.

Volunteering with HMIPS is a fantastic opportunity for personal and professional growth. By giving your time and skills you will make a positive contribution to people who are detained and ensuring that they are treated fairly and with respect. All of this whilst making a valuable contribution to your community and wider society in Scotland.

As an IPM you also have a unique opportunity of working in a prison otherwise closed to the public. We offer comprehensive training to ensure that those appointed gain the knowledge and understanding needed to carry out the role effectively. Examples of that training are as follows:

- The role of the Independent Prison Monitor
- Human Rights and other relevant legislation
- Personal Protection Training
- Standards for Inspecting and Monitoring Prisons
- Monitoring Guidance
- Local Prison Induction Training
- Prisoner Complaints

This is also a chance for you to meet new people, a chance to widen your social network and to provide unique and invaluable support. Whilst IPMs can work on their own, there is the opportunity to work in pairs or in small groups. You will be given one to one support and be included in local and regional meetings of IPMs. We will of course reimburse all travel and subsistence as appropriate.

## **7. How much time will I be expected to give?**

The time commitment for each IPM can vary and tends to range between 14 to 22 days per year, including attendance at training and relevant meetings. HMIPS need people who can reliably commit to this.

Initial training may take up to three days. While we do our best to offer training at a range of dates and times, in an area close to you, some of the initial training is provided by the Scottish Prison Service and may only be available Monday to Friday, from 9 to 5. In addition, you may be offered training opportunities involving travel in your region.

A prison visit usually takes between 3-5 hours. The day/time at which you visit the prison is flexible to fit in with your personal circumstances and you will be part of a rota system coordinated by the Prison Monitoring Coordinator. You may also respond with follow up actions as required by your visit and attend the prison at other times that are not part of the regular rota which can increase the number of days you will be committing to.

We understand that life can be complicated therefore we aim to be flexible with all volunteer IPMs. The volunteering commitment as an IPM is a period of three years and ongoing one to one support and performance evaluation will be provided by the Regional Prison Monitoring Coordinators. We will work closely with you during a 'settling in' period to ensure that we are mutually satisfied that the role of IPM is one that you are suited to and feel comfortable in. We understand that it is not for everyone.

If you stay for three years, you may be re-appointed, however the maximum length of time an IPM can serve is nine years in total.

## **8. How do I apply to become an IPM and what are the timescales**

Applications are submitted online, see the [HMIPS website](#). HMIPS aims to sift applications within 2 weeks of receipt and hold interviews as soon as possible thereafter. The appointment timescale for successful applicants will depend on:

- a) swift completion and return of Enhanced Disclosure (Scotland) forms.
- b) applicants' availability and flexibility to attend mandatory training.

HMIPS will be as flexible as possible with interview and training dates and locations.