PRS: prison rating system

Technical note

Contents

INTRODUCTION TO THE PRS MODEL

- The PRS is the Prison Rating System.

- The Overall aim of PRS can be summarised as "Measure what counts rather than count what is easier to measure".

- The PRS model was developed by the Criminal Justice Group (CJG) alongside the National Offenders Management Service (NOMS). It is now owned by NOMS.

- The main aim of the PRS model development was to create a single, transparent system that enables the performance of both public and private prisons to be measured.

- Development of the PRS has enabled a fresh outlook of the way in which prisons are rated in relation to their performance in four key areas (Public Protection, Reducing Reoffending, Decency and Resource Management and Operational Effectiveness).

- Development involved working closely with stakeholders (Operations, CJG and Policy) and taking on board feedback for present and future model development.

- PRS 11/12 is an annual performance assessment, based on the full year's data and ratified by the NOMS Agency Board.

- The final, annual ratings, based on full year's data, will be ratified by the full NOMS Agency Board (NAB) which includes the three NOMS Non-Executive Directors to provide independent assurance.

- Figure 1 outlines the basic process in the development of the PRS.

Figure1: Summary of the PRS approach
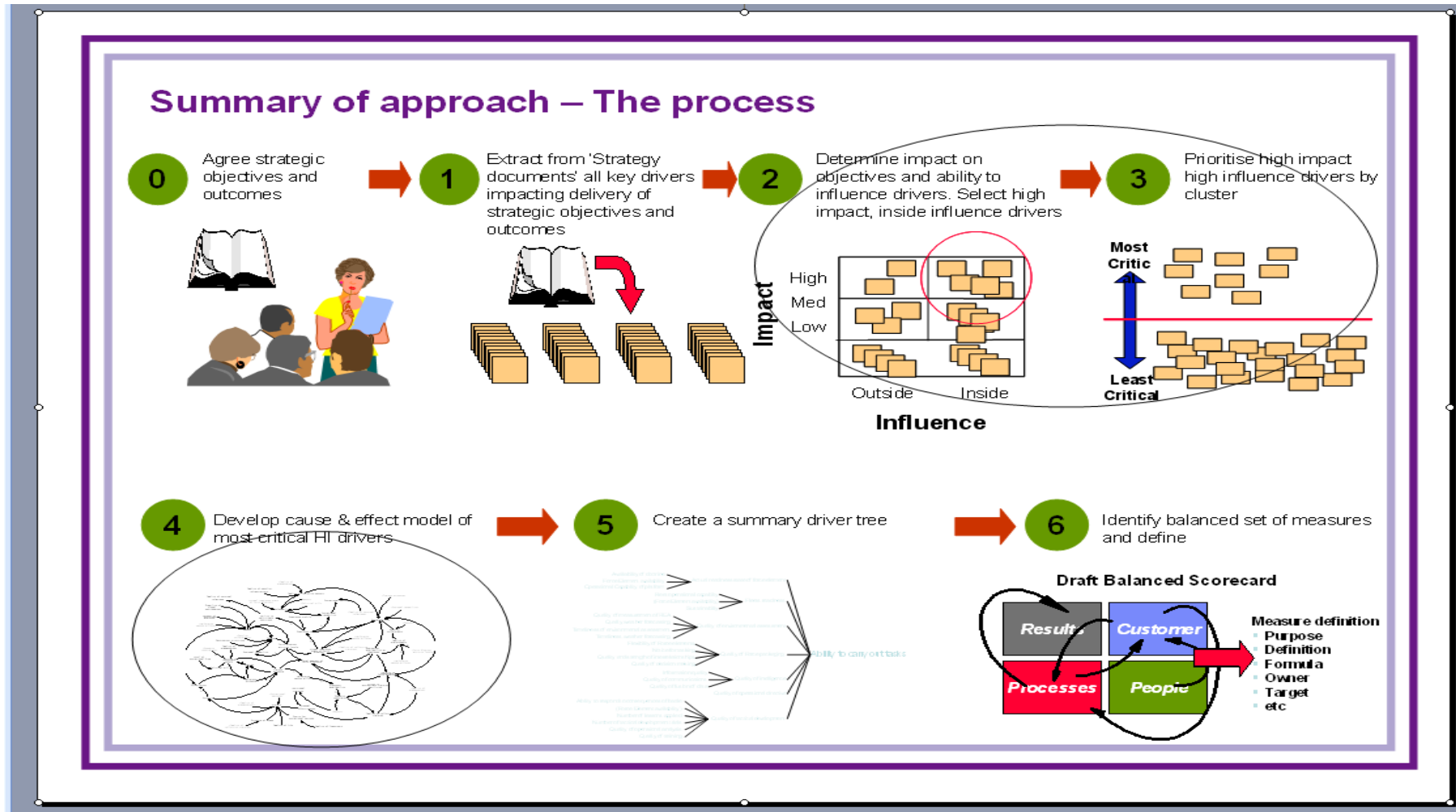
The Key Performance Areas in the PRS

1. The four key areas that the PRS looks at in rating prison performance are:

   - Public Protection
   - Reducing Re-offending
   - Decency
   - Resource Management and Operational Effectiveness

2. The four performance areas above are referred to as the 'Domains'.

3. The four key Domains are broken down into 'Drivers', which are shown in figure 2 below. The performance of each domain is driven by the performance of its drivers.

4. In order to determine performance against these Drivers, the Drivers are further broken down to a series of 'Measures'. The performance for each measure is directly measurable.

5. The domain, driver and measure relationship can be thought of as a performance tree. Figure 3 shows how measure performance directly feeds back into the overall domain performance.

Figure2: The four Domains and their Drivers

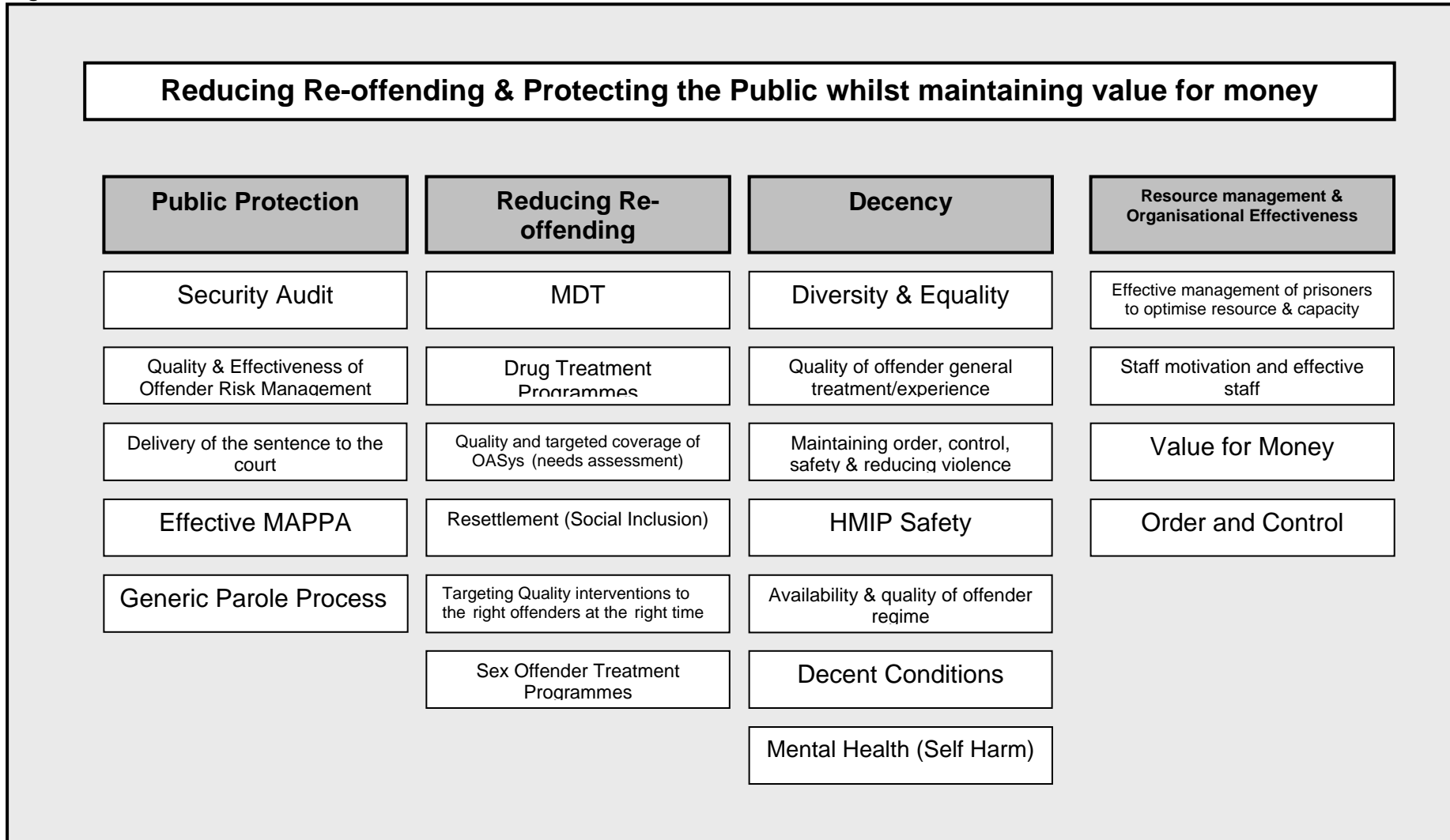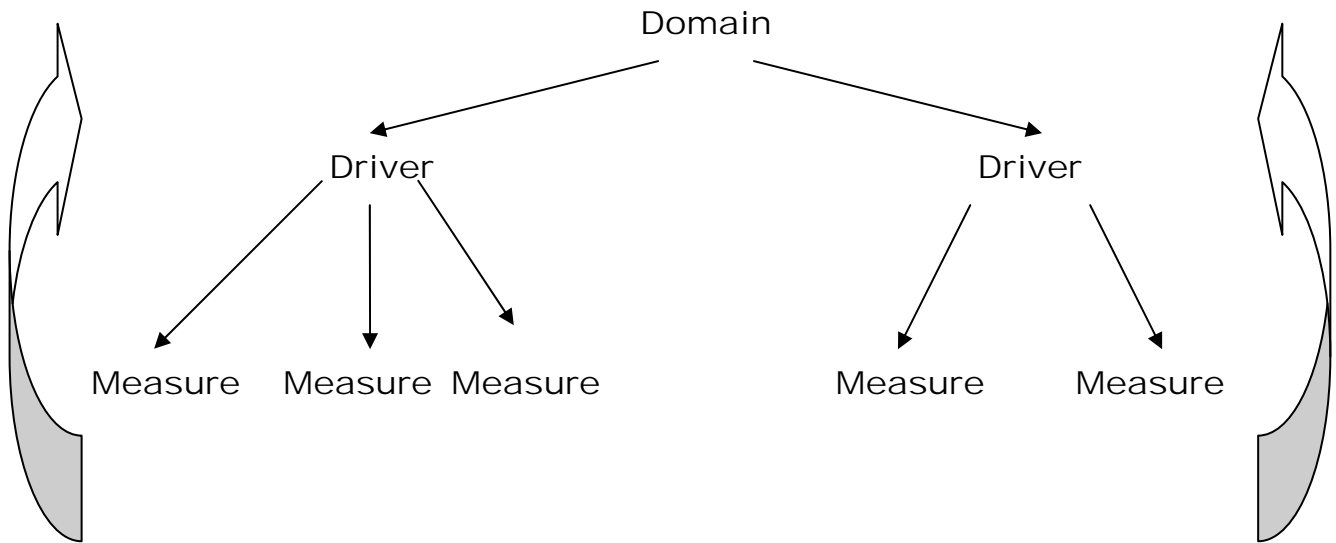| Reducing Re-offending & Protecting the Public whilst maintaining value for money			
Public Protection	**Reducing Re-offending**	**Decency**	**Resource management & Organisational Effectiveness**
Security Audit	MDT	Diversity & Equality	Effective management of prisoners to optimise resource & capacity
Quality & Effectiveness of Offender Risk Management	Drug Treatment Programmes	Quality of offender general treatment/experience	Staff motivation and effective staff
Delivery of the sentence to the court	Quality and targeted coverage of OASys (needs assessment)	Maintaining order, control, safety & reducing violence	Value for Money
Effective MAPPA	Resettlement (Social Inclusion)	HMIP Safety	Order and Control
Generic Parole Process	Targeting Quality interventions to the right offenders at the right time	Availability & quality of offender regime	
	Sex Offender Treatment Programmes	Decent Conditions	
		Mental Health (Self Harm)	

Figure 3: Summary of Domain/Driver/Measure relationship

6. For example, consider the driver 'Resettlement'. The performance of this Driver can be found by measuring the performance of a series of measures in turn. These measures are 'Settled accommodation on release', 'Employment on Release', 'Education and Training on Release' and 'Her Majesty's inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) Resettlement'

7. A more detailed list of measures, their drivers and domains can be found in the PRS Data file.

Weights in the PRS

1. Weights are used to reflect the relative importance of indicators within the model.

2. They indicate the relative importance of each domain, driver and measure to the model overall and are applied at three different levels:

   - From Measure to Driver level
     (*The sum of the Measure weightings equals the Driver weighting*)

   - From Driver to Domain level
     (The sum of the Driver weightings equals the Domain weighting)

   - From Domain to Overall level
     (The sum of Domain weights is 100%)

3. These weights are known as **global** weights as they show the relative importance of individual measures.

4. Actual weights applied may vary for individual prisons where certain measures are not applicable.

5. In these cases the weights are redistributed amongst the other measures. This redistribution ensures that all drivers and measures aggregate to the Domain weighting whilst retaining the relative importance to each other.

6. For example, consider the Driver Order and Control) which has a weight of 2.0. This Driver has two measures (Control & Restraint Staff Training (C&R)and Tornado Training) which each carry 50% of the driver weight i.e. 1.0. If, for an individual prison C&R is not applicable then the measure weights are redistributed so that the Tornado measure now carries 100% of the driver weight i.e. 2.0.

7. Please refer to PRS Data file for full weighting details.
Her Majesty's inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) and Measuring the Quality of Prison Life (MQPL) Weights

8. The results from HMIP inspections and MQPL are weighted in order to take into account the age of the assessment.

9. Figure 4 shows how the weights are adjusted:

Figure 4: HMIP/MPQL weighting

Band awarded	Age of result	Weight
1 – 4	<= 1 year	100%
3 – 4	>1 year	100%
1 – 2	2 years old	50%
1 – 2	3 years old	25%

10. If the result is less than a year old then it is of high importance and a full 100% weighting is applied.

11. If however, a band 1 or 2 was awarded and the result is more than 1 year old then it is assumed that the prison has had time to address the issue and the weightings are adjusted accordingly.

12. From Q3 2011/12 Update to the HMIP Short Follow-up Inspections and new Weight Rules

13. The way in which Short Follow-Up (SFU) Inspections are scored by HMIP has changed. Previously, if an establishment had an SFU Inspection, each HMIP measure would get a score ranging between 1 ('Outcomes for prisoners are poor') and 4 ('Outcomes for prisoners are good').

14. Under the new process, an SFU will be conducted where the overall inspection score is a 3 or 4. Each HMIP measure will have an SFU score of either 1 ('Insufficient progress has been made') or 2 ('Sufficient progress has been made').

15. New PRS Rules

- Poor original scores (1&2) and poor SFU scores (1): the *date* used for the age reduction in the weight will be the date of the SFU inspection. I.e. a prison will not benefit from age reduction based on the date of the initial full inspection. The weights applied to the original scores will be reduced as per Figure 4.

- Poor original scores (1&2) and good SFU Scores (2): no changes to the current age weighting process.

- Good original scores (3&4) and poor SFU (1): the weight on original score is reduced by 50% and then it increases by time; 1 – 2 years 75% and older than 2 years 100%

- Good original scores (3&4) and good SFU Scores (2): no age reduction to weight

Dispersal Prisons

16. The application of a common set of weights places too much emphasis on some of the measures, for example resettlement for dispersal prisons. A revised set of weights is hence applied to dispersal prisons, which decreases the resettlement weighting from 12.7% to 4.1%. The weighting is redistributed, placing greater emphasis on Mandatory Drug Testing (MDT) and Substance Misuse and offender programme outcomes. This more accurately reflects the key drivers of performance delivery for these prisons. See PRS Data file for full weighting details.
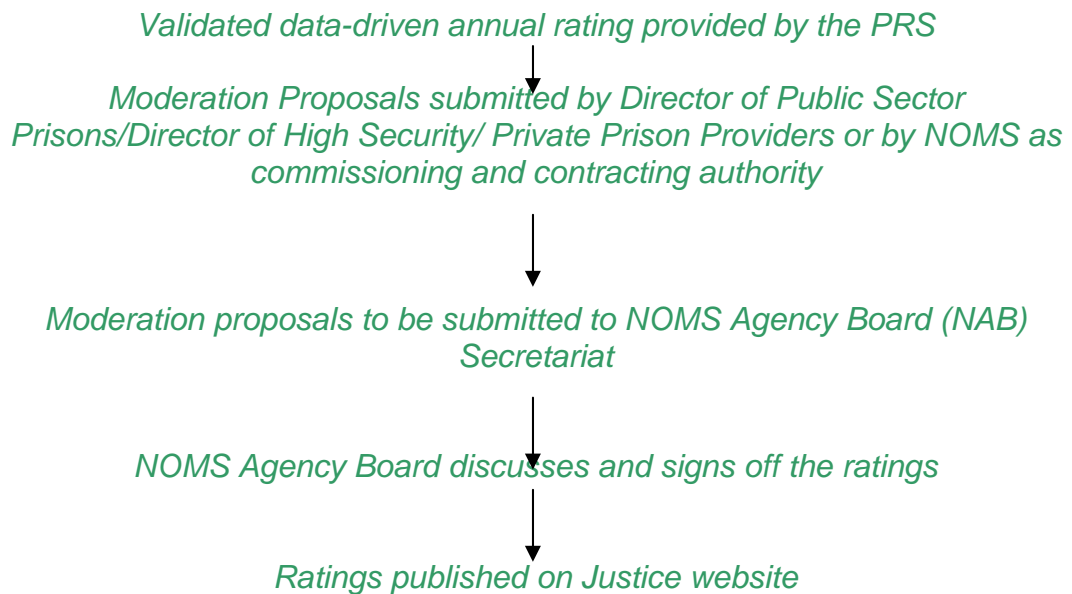
Additional Rules in the PRS

1. Rules are used to ensure prisons are assessed appropriately.

2. In the main, prison performance will be assessed against indicators with a target however in some circumstances an additional check will be made on the performance data.

3. Additional rules:

   - Since Q4 2010/11, a prison with any domain rated as Level 1 or Level 2 (<2.55) cannot achieve a Level 4, exceptional performance rating overall even if band aggregate is above >=3.1.

   - Escape: Moderation for Escape will be lifted without the need to submit moderation proposal if:
     -If the escape occurred over a year ago
     -The establishment has had a data driven rating of 3 (regardless of moderation) over the last 3 quarters.
     -The action plan resulting from the escape has been implemented.
     -The Deputy Directors of Custody (DDC) will be responsible for alerting the PRS team if action plans have been implemented during the 'checking' period following provisional release and if so, the moderation will be lifted for validated release.

   - If HMIP or MQPL measure which is more than 1 year old   then a reduced weighting is applied. See the weighting section for more information.

Moderation Process

What is Moderation?

1. Moderation is a process whereby there is an opportunity for the final prison rating, Q4, awarded to any given prison to be considered for amendment.

2. It enables additional evidence that cannot be accounted for in the PRS to be considered.

3. The process works as follows:

Validated data-driven annual rating provided by the PRS

Moderation Proposals submitted by Director of Public Sector Prisons/Director of High Security/ Private Prison Providers or by NOMS as commissioning and contracting authority

Moderation proposals to be submitted to NOMS Agency Board (NAB) Secretariat

NOMS Agency Board discusses and signs off the ratings

Ratings published on Justice website

4. Please note that for 2011/12, moderation takes place once, at Q4.

Moderation for an escape

5. If an escape occurs, the prison will automatically go forward for mandated moderation.

6. Moderation for Escape will be lifted without the need to submit moderation proposal if: it happened over a year ago, the PRS rating has been => 3 for the last three quarters and the PRS team has confirmation from the DDC that the action plans have been implemented.

7. The Deputy Directors of Custody (DDC) **will be responsible for alerting the PRS team** if action plans have been implemented during the 'checking' period following provisional release and if so, the moderation will be lifted for validated release.

8. This process ensures that all escapes are considered along with the circumstances that contributed to the escape and the robustness of any action plans.

9. The general expectation is that an escape will result in a downward moderation of the prison's rating. However, each case will be reviewed individually by the moderation panel.

Moderation for Her Majesty's inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) measures

10. If a prison has a level 1 score for 2 or more HMIP measures then, as for escapes, the prison will automatically go forward for mandated moderation.

11. A moderation form will be completed stating the relevant director's recommendations and taking into consideration any changes in performance since the prison's last inspection.

Determining Band Levels

1. Each prison is awarded an overall band of between 1 and 4. This band is based on an overall aggregated band score for the prison (detailed in figure 5 below).

   Figure 5: Level Description Table

Total Aggregated Score	Level	Level Description
>=3.1	4	Exceptional Performance
>=2.55	3	Meeting the majority of targets
>=2.2	2	Overall performance is of concern
<2.2	1	Overall performance is of serious concern

2. The overall aggregated score is calculated using a similar hierarchy to the weights, shown in Weight tab in the PRS Data file.

3. Performance for measures is assessed on a 4 point scale:

   - Level 1 – x % of target achieved. Where x indicates a level of unacceptable performance;

   - Level 2 – x % of target achieved. Where x is less than 100% but a relatively near miss when compared to target;

   - Level 3 – Meeting Target (100% of target met);

   - Level 4 – Either
       a. Meeting target and doing better than peers (comparative group)
       b. 4 pt scale already exists i.e. HMIP
       c. Not applicable e.g. Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) Failure average performance is 99%

4. For details about individual measures and the level boundaries please the Measure Information tab in the PRS Data file.

Exceptional Performance (Level 4)

5. Where applicable, a level 4 for exceptional performance is achieved for measures where a level 3 has been awarded and the actual performance is within the top 25% of the relevant comparator group.

6. The relevant peer group can be comparator groups (detailed in PRS Data file), regional groups or national. See PRS Data file for details of each measure where a level 4 is obtainable and the relevant peer/comparator group for that measure.

7. For most measures the 75th percentile of the relevant peer groups' actual performance data is calculated. A level 4 is then awarded to all prisons whose actual performance is greater than or equal to this percentile value.

8. The 75th percentile value is calculated for measures where a higher actual value indicates a better performance. For some measures, e.g. Mandatory Drug Testing (MDT), a lower actual value indicates better performance. In these cases the 25th percentile is calculated and a level 4 awarded to all prisons whose actual performance is less than or equal to this value.

9. Where measures are compared with their comparator groups, group 1 and 2 (as shown in the 'Comparator Group tab in the PRS data file) are mostly treated as a single group. The only exception to this is MDT for which this group has been divided so that Large City Male Local and Core Local establishments are compared separately. This only applies to MDT and has been implemented to ensure exceptional bands are awarded fairly within the model.

10. For audits, a level 4 is achieved by a Green colour being awarded to the establishment.