



HM Prison &  
Probation Service

Action Plan Submitted: 13 September 2023

A Response to: [The quality of reading education in prisons: one year on](#)

Report Published: 30 June 2023

## INTRODUCTION

HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) and HM Inspectorate of Probation for England and Wales are independent inspectorates which provide scrutiny of the conditions for, and treatment of prisoners and offenders. They report their findings for prisons, Young Offender Institutions, and effectiveness of the work of probation, and youth offending services across England and Wales to Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). In response to the report HMPPS / MoJ are required to draft a robust and timely action plan to address the recommendations. The action plan confirms whether recommendations are agreed, partly agreed, or not agreed (see categorisations below). Where a recommendation is agreed or partly agreed, the action plans provide specific steps and actions to address these. Actions are clear, measurable, achievable, and relevant with the owner and timescale of each step clearly identified. Action plans are sent to HMIP and published on the GOV.UK website. Progress against the implementation and delivery of the action plans will also be monitored and reported on.

Term	Definition	Additional comment
Agreed	All of the recommendation is agreed with, can be achieved and is affordable.	The response should clearly explain how the recommendation will be achieved along with timescales. Actions should be as SMART (Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound) as possible. Actions should be specific enough to be tracked for progress.
Partly Agreed	Only part of the recommendation is agreed with, is achievable, affordable and will be implemented. This might be because we cannot implement the whole recommendation because of commissioning, policy, operational or affordability reasons.	The response must state clearly which part of the recommendation will be implemented along with SMART actions and tracked for progress. There <b>must</b> be an explanation of why we cannot fully agree the recommendation - this must state clearly whether this is due to commissioning, policy, operational or affordability reasons.
Not Agreed	The recommendation is not agreed and will not be implemented. This might be because of commissioning, policy, operational or affordability reasons.	The response must clearly state the reasons why we have chosen this option. There <b>must</b> be an explanation of why we cannot agree the recommendation - this must state clearly whether this is due to commissioning, policy, operational or affordability reasons.



ACTION PLAN: [The quality of reading education in prisons: one year on](#)

1. Rec No	2. Recommendation	3. Agreed/ Partly Agreed/ Not Agreed	4. Response Action Taken/Planned	5. Responsible Owner	6. Target Date
	Recommendations		Reference to Governors apply equally to Directors from the Private Estate.		
1	Governors should implement an effective reading strategy for their prisons without further delay.	Agreed	<p>All establishments now have Reading Strategies in place –these will continue to be evolved and reviewed with relevant assurance activity undertaken.</p> <p>Ofsted workshops have taken place with Governors and Prison Group Directors (PGD), along with wider training to education leaders within establishments to help embed the Reading Strategies.</p> <p>The Custodial Contracts Directorate (CCD) alongside the Reducing Reoffending Partnerships and Accommodation Directorate (RRPA) will introduce a Reading Strategy Assurance Process to assess the implementation and effectiveness in each establishment.</p>	<p>Deputy Director, Prisons</p> <p>Deputy Director, RRPA</p> <p>Head of Education Operational Delivery Group, CCD</p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>September 2023</p>
2	Leaders should rapidly ensure that prisoners' reading skills are properly assessed. They should accurately establish the reading levels of the prison population and ensure	Agreed	All four Prison Education Framework (PEF) providers have finalised a National Reading Plan document, following pilots held in December 2022 and January 2023. All providers are now using the Powell Phonics Checker (PPC) as the initial assessment tool for prisoners, following its launch in April 2023, which included a package of full staff training. Once a learner is assessed, a Reading Support Level (RSL) is now identified, and provision is designed around the identified RSL.	Head of Education Operational Delivery Group, CCD	Complete



	that there are sufficient classes at the appropriate levels to improve prisoners' reading skills.		As part of the Annual Needs Assessment and in line with their Reading Strategies, Governors are required to review the curriculum and delivery to ensure there are sufficient classes at the appropriate levels to improve prisoners reading skills. This will be assured as part of the new Reading Strategy Assurance process.	Deputy Director, Prisons	April 2024
3	Leaders should improve their understanding of prisoners' progress in reading through more effective information-sharing and collaborations with the Shannon Trust (or similar organisations). They should increase the number of prisoners who progress into education, skills and work.	Agreed	<p>The CCD will undertake a review of the systems used to record and monitor prisoner reading levels at establishment level to identify system improvements to enhance the Governor's oversight and information sharing arrangements with other providers, including Shannon Trust.</p> <p>The CCD will assure through second tier contract assurance that Dynamic Procurement System (DPS) delivery is captured on CURIOUS (the system where interventions are monitored and shared).</p> <p>Governors will ensure reading starting points and progress after support are captured on CURIOUS or appropriate digital platform, so that information sharing within and between prisons, PEF providers, DPS provision and Shannon Trust is more robust.</p> <p>The CDD will use data from CURIOUS to measure the number of prisoners who enter Education, Skills and Work (ESW) after reading support.</p>	<p>Head of Education Operational Delivery Group, CCD</p> <p>Head of Education Operational Delivery Group, CCD</p> <p>Deputy Director, Prisons</p> <p>Head of Education Operational Delivery Group, CCD</p>	<p>December 2023</p> <p>April 2024</p> <p>April 2024</p> <p>April 2024</p>



			The CCD will assure Annual Delivery Plans reflect prisoner learning needs.	Head of Education Operational Delivery Group, CCD	April 2024
4	Governors should ensure that there is enough time and space for properly trained mentors to support prisoners with their reading	Agreed	<p>As part of recently introduced Reading Strategies, Governors are required to outline provisions including adequate time and space for mentors to support prisoners with their reading, which is addressed locally matching need to delivery. The CCD will monitor this within the new Reading Strategy Assurance process.</p> <p>Heads of Reducing Reoffending (HoRR) are now responsible for regime delivery and activities attendance, including consideration of how they can enable mentors to support prisoners with their reading. Clear guidance and expectations will be provided to HoRR, combined with expectations for how Governors support their work.</p> <p>The National Quality Team commenced running tutorials on the basics of using systematic synthetic phonics to support reading. This is open to all providers and prison staff to upskill staff reading mentors.</p>	<p>Head of Education Operational Delivery Group, CCD / Deputy Director, Prisons</p> <p>Deputy Director, RRPA Directorate</p> <p>Deputy Director, RRPA Directorate</p>	<p>September 2023</p> <p>November 2023</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
5	Governors should consider providing incentives for prisoners to attend early reading courses and initiatives.	Agreed	As part of the new Reading Strategy Assurance Process Governors will be required to review their local incentive mechanisms to ensure prisoners are incentivised to attend early reading courses.	Deputy Director, Prisons	April 2024



6	Governors should improve access to their prison libraries and develop initiatives to promote reading throughout the prison.	Agreed	<p>The CCD will undertake a review of library provisions across the custodial estate and provide feedback to Governors on the adequacy of their library provision and access, in line with the Annual Needs Analysis.</p> <p>The CCD with the National Quality Team will provide support to Governors in identifying good practice and what initiatives are already in place across the custodial estate to promote reading.</p> <p>As part of the new Reading Strategy Assurance process Governors will be required to outline the library provision and minimum access arrangements.</p>	<p>Head of Education Operational Delivery Group, CCD</p> <p>Head of Education Operational Delivery Group, CCD / Deputy Director, RRPA Directorate</p> <p>Deputy Director, Prisons</p>	<p>April 2024</p> <p>April 2024</p> <p>September 2023</p>
7	Leaders should significantly increase the number of teachers and trainers who can use systematic synthetic phonics to improve prisoners' reading skills in the classrooms and workshops, and in the prison more widely.	Agreed	The CCD will ensure contracted teaching staff have completed training on systematic synthetic phonics and monitor uptake through second tier contract assurance.	Head of Education Operational Delivery Group, CCD	April 2024



8	Governors and curriculum managers should urgently improve the initial assessment, support and teaching for prisoners with ESOL needs so that they make better progress in their reading and thrive in their prisons.	Agreed	The RRPA have commissioned a working group in collaboration between reading specialists, Foreign National Offender prisons and experts in ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) to consider the specific challenges for prisoners who have a reading need and where English is not their first language.	Deputy Director, RRPA Directorate	September 2023
			The RRPA will consider what adaptations will be required to the PPC to ensure the screening tool meets the needs of those who have ESOL needs.	Deputy Director, RRPA Directorate	February 2024
			The National Quality Team will work with Foreign National Offender establishments to review educational resources, including reading, and ensure they are appropriate for ESOL prisoners. A best practice guide will be developed to support Governors in updating their Reading Strategies which will be subject to the new assurance processes.	Deputy Director, RRPA Directorate / Deputy Director, Prisons	April 2024

Recommendations	
Agreed	8
Partly Agreed	0
Not Agreed	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>

