



Staff survey methodology and results

HMP Altcourse

July 2025

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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 575 email addresses at Altcourse. Staff were given seven days to complete the survey. We received a total of 89 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 Altcourse 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/hmiprisons/inspections/>

Staff survey

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

Frontline operational staff	53 (60%)
Operational manager	13 (15%)
Health care staff	0 (0%)
Education, skills and work staff	4 (4%)
Administrative staff	8 (9%)
Other staff	11 (12%)

Staff well-being

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

Very well	9 (10%)
Quite well	25 (28%)
Neither well nor poorly	24 (27%)
Quite poorly	21 (24%)
Very poorly	10 (11%)

Q3 How would you describe your morale at work:

Very high	5 (6%)
High	23 (26%)
Neither high nor low	33 (37%)
Low	20 (22%)
Very low	8 (9%)

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	35 (39%)	45 (51%)	4 (4%)	3 (3%)	2 (2%)
Prisoners are having enough time out of their cells	48 (54%)	29 (33%)	3 (3%)	2 (2%)	7 (8%)

Leadership in this establishment

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

Very clearly	29 (33%)
Quite clearly	32 (36%)
Not very clearly	16 (18%)
Not at all clearly	7 (8%)
I don't know the top priorities	5 (6%)

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

Strongly agree	15 (18%)
Somewhat agree	37 (44%)
Somewhat disagree	17 (20%)
Strongly disagree	11 (13%)
Don't know	4 (5%)

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	36	(40%)			
	Somewhat agree	40	(45%)			
	Somewhat disagree	9	(10%)			
	Strongly disagree	4	(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	36	(40%)			
	Approximately once every three months	14	(16%)			
	Approximately twice a year	2	(2%)			
	Once a year or less	17	(19%)			
	I have not had the opportunity to meet with someone	20	(22%)			
Q8	Please rate the quality of support you receive from your line manager:					
	Very good	40	(45%)			
	Good	23	(26%)			
	Neither good nor poor	17	(19%)			
	Poor	8	(9%)			
	Very poor	1	(1%)			
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)	20 (22%)	20 (22%)	33 (37%)	15 (17%)	1 (1%)
	Governors/directors and senior managers in this establishment acknowledge and celebrate good work	10 (11%)	21 (24%)	39 (44%)	19 (21%)	0 (0%)
	Governors/directors and senior managers set high standards of behaviour for staff	18 (20%)	30 (34%)	24 (27%)	16 (18%)	1 (1%)
	Governors/directors and senior managers challenge poor behaviour by staff	14 (16%)	19 (21%)	35 (39%)	18 (20%)	3 (3%)
	Governors/directors encourage staff to reflect on and learn from their mistakes	12 (13%)	19 (21%)	31 (35%)	17 (19%)	10 (11%)
	Governors/directors use feedback from prisoners, staff and others to generate ideas, create plans and measure progress	13 (15%)	16 (18%)	31 (35%)	21 (24%)	8 (9%)

Raising concerns

Q10	Do you know what the formal procedure is to raise concerns (whistleblowing) in this establishment?	
	Yes	76 (85%)
	No	13 (15%)
Q11	Have you formally raised concerns about this establishment?	
	Yes	15 (17%)
	No	74 (83%)
Q12	Would you formally raise concerns if you had any?	
	Yes	59 (81%)
	No	6 (8%)
	Don't know	8 (11%)
Q14	Who or what organisation did you raise your concern to?	
	A colleague	2
	A manager	11
	Human resources.....	3
	Ofsted or Estyn	0
	Care Quality Commission or Healthcare Inspectorate Wales	0
	HM Inspectorate of Prisons	0
	Trade union.....	3
	Professional organisation	1
	Police	1
	Other	4
Q15	Were your concerns taken seriously?	
	Yes	5 (33%)
	No	8 (53%)
	Don't know	2 (13%)
Q16	Was any effective action taken in response to the concerns you had raised?	
	Yes	3 (20%)
	No	9 (60%)
	Don't know	3 (20%)
Q18	Have you ever witnessed staff behaving inappropriately towards prisoners at this establishment?	
	Yes	29 (33%)
	No	58 (65%)
	Don't know	2 (2%)
Q19	Have you ever witnessed staff behaving inappropriately towards each other at this establishment?	
	Yes	40 (45%)
	No	46 (52%)
	Don't know	3 (3%)