

Complaints: Good Practice in Places of Deprivation of Liberty

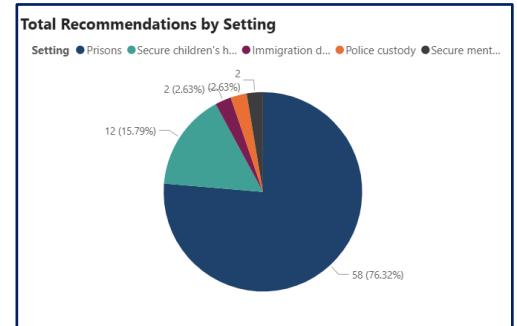
Overview

The UK NPM’s Reporting Dashboard can discern what good practice has been reported by NPM bodies across different settings with regards to complaints since 2020. Some examples, as per the CPT Complaints Mechanisms standards, are:

Availability & Accessibility

At Barlinnie, the “Our complaints procedure’ leaflet was available” for prisoners, as well as being available in different languages for those requiring assistance with a complaint. This same leaflet was given to prisoners when their complaint was acknowledged, providing information on the complaints process and seeking independent advice from the SPSO. All holding rooms in Greater Glasgow police stations “contained multiple information posters conveying details regarding...the complaints process”.

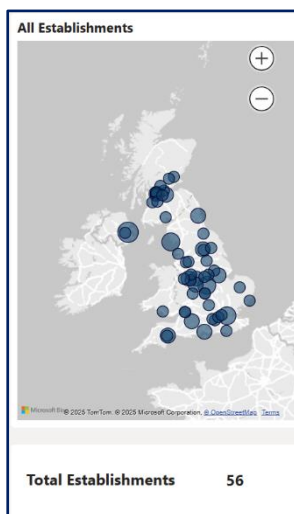
At HMP Wormwood Scrubs a “communication drive by staff to advertise and explain the complaints system had a positive impact”.



Good practice by setting

Confidentiality & Safety

Face-to-face meetings conducted with prisoners at HMP Swinfen Hall and Hydebank Wood Secure College meant that they “felt listened to”, providing an environment where concerns could be raised without fear of reprisals. Similarly, staff at the Atkinson Unit also “practise with candour and transparency, helping children understand the actions staff may take and the reasons behind them”, reassuring complainants and reducing anxiety. At Morton Hall IRC, welfare checks were completed before complaint responses were issued to ensure “that detainees’ wellbeing was taken into account before they received a reply”.



Geographical spread of good practice

Effectiveness

There are several examples of a commitment to improving the effectiveness of the complaints process. At HMP Exeter “all complaints reviewed were word processed...[conveying] a sense of professionalism and [showing] that the complaint had been taken seriously”. At HMP Addiewell, “responses to complaints is

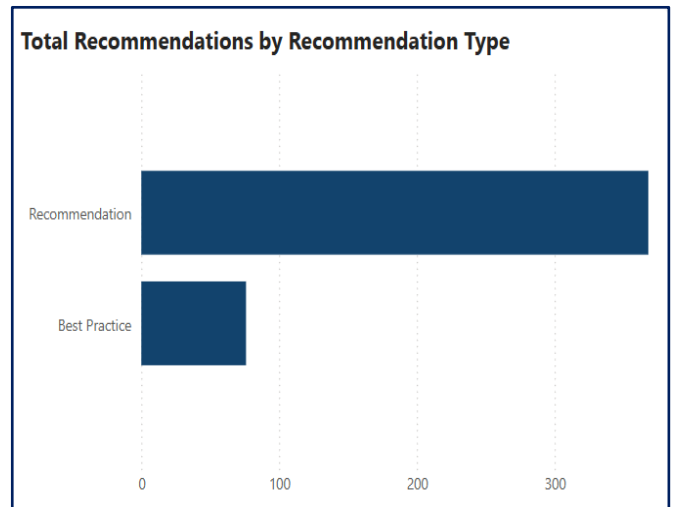
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now an agenda item on the daily management meeting...this should ensure a very robust system”. A senior governor at HMP Stoke Heath has challenged staff “over the standard of their responses to complaints and the time taken to reply to them”.

Similar practices have also been found at HMP Shotts, HMP Thameside and Swanwick Lodge.

Traceability

Evidence exists of efforts to improve traceability of complaints, as well as general data analysis and management. Improvements made to the COMP2 system at HMP Thameside resulted in “greater transparency in relation to how [complaints] are handled, and the timeframe involved”. While HMP Warren Hill “analysed monthly complaint trends and issued a report to the senior management team and prison council”. Broadmoor Hospital “investigated [complaints] and learned lessons from the results, and shared these with the whole team and wider service”.



Number of recommendations vs good practices