



OIFIG AN CHIGIRE PRÍOSÚN
OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR OF PRISONS

Policy on Monitoring of Recommendations

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POLICY ON RECOMMENDATIONS MONITORING

Central to the functions of the Office of the Inspector of Prisons (OIP) is the monitoring of recommendations made to the Irish Prison Service (IPS) in inspection and investigation reports. As part of the OIP’s inspection and reporting process, the OIP engages the relevant prison and the IPS to review recommendations and determine recommendation Action Plans. The IPS provides the Action Plan to the Department, and subsequently submits comments and the Action Plan to the OIP, who in turn submits to the Minister of Justice. Once submitted to the IPS Action Plans are provided to the Department of Justice, after and are submitted to the OIP prior to submission to the Minister.

Both inspection and investigation reports include IPS Action Plans, and the OIP Policy on Monitoring applies to recommendations issued with respect to inspections and investigations.

Inspections carried out by the OIP follow a four-stage process, as outlined in the 2020 *Framework for the Inspection of Prisons in Ireland*. These are:



The *Inspection Framework* (pp. 46-47) outlines the role of Monitoring in the Inspection process, as follows:

Monitoring	
3.3.16	Monitoring by the Inspectorate of progress by the IPS, against the Action Plan is a central component of the process of prison inspections and may take the form of self-assessment of progress by the IPS, or a Follow-up inspection by the Inspectorate. Self-assessment will be expected to be a rigorous process involving quarterly assessments. The Inspectorate will assist the IPS by providing a sample template to ensure that the IPS is providing the information the Inspectorate requires.
3.3.17	One of the fundamental principles underpinning inspection is transparency. Therefore, the Inspectorate intends to consult with the DJE, to work towards the development and maintenance of a live database, that will be accessible to the public, on each Inspection Report and Action Plan. The Inspectorate will draw upon expertise from the research community in addition to other key stakeholders at the database development phase. The database will enable the Inspectorate to track developments in particular areas over time. It is acknowledged that post-inspection monitoring methodology is central to and an integral component of the entire monitoring process and is not merely an aftermath.

As provided in the *Framework*, monitoring of the implementation of recommendations and corresponding Action Plans will be carried out in two forms: (i) IPS Self-Assessment, and (ii) Follow-up Inspections.

Self-Assessment

While the *Framework* provides for quarterly self-assessments, the OIP has determined that twice-annual assessments are more practicable, allowing sufficient time for implementation and reporting. As such, the OIP will provide the IPS with a template outlining all outstanding (ie., not marked as complete in an Action Plan) recommendations at two points in the year; generally, in May and November of each year. This template will provide the recommendations made, the IPS Action Plan, and an area for IPS status updates (See Appendix).

IPS self-assessments will be posted on the OIP monitoring database, which will be hosted and periodically updated on the OIP website.

Self-assessment templates will be prepared for inspection and investigation-related recommendations.

Follow-Up Inspections

The *Framework* provides the following information on the Follow-Up Inspection Process (pp. 49-50).

Follow Up Inspection Process	
3.5.1	It is important that once a General or Thematic or Functional Inspection of a prison is carried out, there is not a gap in inspecting that prison for numerous years. International best practice points to the need for an objective assessment of progress or otherwise between General Inspections. This is particularly the case where there have been findings in the General Inspection which suggest poor outcomes for prisoners and/or staff especially in terms of Safety and Security or Respect and Dignity or where generally outcomes were low. Determining which prisons will be subject to Follow-up Inspections and at what interval after the General inspection will therefore be based upon a risk analysis.
3.5.2	In general, Follow-up Inspections will take place on an announced basis. The IPS will therefore be fully aware in advance that they will be happening and what they are likely to involve. There will also be clear notification at least one month in advance of the start date of any such inspection.
3.5.3	These inspections will be focused on assessing the progress made against the recommendations from the General Inspection. They will not be a 'repeat' of the General Inspection. A Follow-up Inspection may take the form of a Functional or Thematic Inspection of appropriate.

While the *Framework* provides for announced Follow-up Inspections, the decision as to whether or not to announce a Follow-up Inspection will be will be at the discretion of the OIP.

In the aftermath of Follow-up Inspections the OIP may elect to (i) update the monitoring database with the status update of recommendations, and/or (ii) submit a Thematic or Functional Inspection report.

The OIP will determine when it is necessary to carry out a Follow-up Inspection, and will provide recommendation implementation status updates on the website at regular intervals. Follow-up Inspections will be used to assess and monitor implementation of recommendations made with respect to both inspections and investigations.

