



Ministry
of Justice

Lord Timpson
Minister of State for Justice

Rt Hon the Lord Foster of Bath
Chair of the Justice and Home Affairs Committee
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

4 April 2025

Dear Lord Foster

Future Prison Leaders Programme Launch

Following my evidence at the Justice and Home Affairs Committee on 1 April, I am delighted to confirm that His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) has launched the Future Prison Leaders Programme today.

This new scheme builds on the success of previous fast track programmes which trained many of the Prison Service's current leaders, including Amy Rees (Director General, Chief Executive HMPPS) and Phil Copple (Director General Operations).

The Future Prison Leaders Programme aims to recruit and train the next generation of prison leaders. The three-year programme will recruit 35 talented individuals from diverse backgrounds, including successful graduates, and offers a clear career pathway to a senior leadership position in prisons.

Following a competitive selection process, successful candidates will serve as prison officers learning the full range of operational duties on the wings, before progressing to Custodial Manager in year two, when they will manage a team of prison officers. In their third year they will undertake a Head of Function management role, taking responsibility across a prison in areas such as security, operations, drug strategy, residency and staffing.

Upon completion, participants will be prepared to undertake assessments to become Deputy Governors with accountability for providing leadership and direction, making strategic decisions and managing risks in a prison.

This programme will help us recruit a new generation of leaders and support our vision to transform HMPPS into a world-class service.

You also requested information on the number of governors approaching retirement age. As of 31 March 2024, there were 14 Band 10-12 Operational Managers across Prison and Probation who were over 60 years old, and 127 who were aged 50-59.

This compares to 21 and 130 respectively as of 31 March 2023.¹ The initiatives I spoke about at the hearing including enhanced succession planning and this new talent scheme will contribute to developing the pipeline for these roles alongside the natural progression of internal staff.

Please note that the Committee will be receiving a separate response addressing other issues raised during oral evidence in due course.

I look forward to updating you on the progress of the Future Prison Leaders Programme.

Yours sincerely,

Lord Timpson
Minister for Prisons, Probation and Reducing Reoffending

¹ HM Prison & Probation Service Staff Equalities Report: 2023-2024 - GOV.UK published on <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics> on 28 November 2024; Operational managers at Band 10 and 11 are typically governors in charge of prisons. Band 12's are HMPPS Prison Group Directors and Regional Probation Directors.