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HM Chief Inspector of Prisons
CHARLIE TAYLOR

Ruth Jones MP
Chair, Welsh Affairs Committee

11 November 2025

Dear Chair,

Thank you for your letter dated 21 October 2025. I hope the below addresses your additional queries:

- HMI Prisons has full responsibility for designing the questionnaires we use during our inspections.
- As the independent inspectorate, our independence is of critical importance to how we operate. We do not seek input from MoJ or HMPPS on our survey design. Whilst we welcome feedback from stakeholders, including but not limited to the Ministry of Justice and HMPPS, we ultimately determine what is included in the survey. Survey questions are based directly on the relevant version of Expectations, the criteria against which we inspect.
- New survey questions are tested with a group of detainees (cognitive testing) to make sure that they are understandable and interpreted in the way they are intended.
- Any suggestions for new questions for HMI Prisons detainee survey are carefully considered by our research team. In particular, the team is mindful about lengthening the survey if there is any risk that such additions might reduce the likelihood of detainees completing it. Our surveys are used as an inspection aid, and whilst we are not opposed to questions about the Welsh language, we do not feel they would be necessary for our inspections – as stated in our previous correspondence, we instead seek this information through observation and reviewing of documentation. However, if you have any specific questions about the Welsh language that you would like to be considered, for either our detainee or staff surveys, please contact Sophie Riley, our Head of Research, Data & Thematics (copied into this correspondence) for her consideration.
- HMI Prisons often comments on the Welsh language in our inspection reports published on Welsh prisons, highlighting the salient points in each establishment.

Yours sincerely,

11/11/25

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Charlie Taylor', enclosed within a thin black rectangular border.

CHARLIE TAYLOR



Welsh Affairs Committee

Tuesday, 21 October 2025

Charlie Taylor
His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons
His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons

Dear Charlie,

Thank you for answering my committee's additional questions following your appearance in May 2025 as part of our inquiry into *prisons, probation and rehabilitation in Wales*.

One of these questions related to how HMIP reports on Welsh language provision in prisons in Wales. As you will remember, I asked whether HMIP was willing to work with the Welsh Language Commissioner to design a uniform and consistent survey for Welsh-speaking prisoners, including questions specifically designed to gather information about the quality and availability of Welsh language services at the prison.

My committee welcomed your commitment to the Welsh language and to ensuring that prisons 'communicate effectively with all prisoners', however having discussed your response with interested stakeholders, such as Dr Robert Jones of the Wales Governance Centre and Dr Gregory Davies of the University of Liverpool's School of Law and Social Justice, there are a few points I wish to clarify.

- Does HMIP assume full responsibility for designing the questionnaires it uses during its inspections?
- Does HMIP ask either the Ministry of Justice or HMPPS for input on its survey design? If so, under what circumstances would this occur?
- What is preventing HMIP itself – as opposed to the Welsh Language Commissioner in partnership with HMPPS - from designing questions relating to the topic of the Welsh language, given that HMIP designs questions of a similar nature to monitor the experience of different prisoner population sub-groups?
- What is preventing HMIP from including a dedicated section on the Welsh language, in which the same issues are covered in a consistent manner, in all of its inspection reports published on Welsh prisons?

I am sure you will appreciate the salience of this issue for my committee, and, in light of this, I would be grateful for a response by the time the House returns from the November recess.

Yours sincerely,



**Welsh Affairs
Committee**

Ruth Jones MP
Chair of the Welsh Affairs Committee