



Guide to Independent Reviews of Progress (IRPs) for prison staff

May 2024

Printed and published by:
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1. Rationale for Independent Reviews of Progress (IRPs)

1.1 In 2018 the Justice Select Committee recommended that HMI Prisons provide ministers with an independent assessment of the progress made in addressing concerns resulting from particularly troubling prison inspections. The Ministry of Justice has funded this work and HMI Prisons has developed the IRP methodology.

2. Purpose of IRPs

2.1 The aims of IRPs are to:

- provide an independent, evidence-based assessment of how the prison is progressing against the priority and key concerns identified at the previous inspection
- assess progress in terms of outcomes for prisoners in the areas of main concern
- support improvement
- identify any emerging difficulties or slippage in progress at an early stage
- assess the sufficiency of the leadership and management response to the main concerns from the previous inspection.

2.2 The purpose of an IRP is distinct from an inspection. The purpose of an inspection is to assess the treatment of prisoners and the conditions of detention in relation to our expectations and the four healthy prison tests (HPTs), and to raise concerns designed to promote improvement.

2.3 The below table shows the key differences between an inspection and an IRP.

Features of a full inspection	Features of an IRP
10 or 15 inspectors/researchers over seven days	Four or five inspectors over two and a half days
Comprehensive: all previous concerns are followed up and all expectation areas are assessed	Selected concerns are followed up
Focus on assessing treatment and conditions	Focus on assessing degree of improvement since the previous inspection
Use of expectations to make judgements about outcomes	Use of 'key questions' to make judgements about progress against the concerns
HPTs are graded	HPTs are not graded
All prisons are inspected at least once every five years	There is funding for 15–20 site visits per year – usually struggling prisons – eight to 12 months post inspection
Concerns are raised	New concerns are unlikely to be raised ¹
Prisoner survey	No prisoner survey

¹ Exceptionally, additional concerns are raised if a significant issue relating to the safety or well-being of prisoners which is not being adequately managed is discovered.

3. Selection of sites

3.1 IRPs will take place in prisons. Sites are identified at the discretion of the Chief Inspector of Prisons (HMCIP), but particular consideration will be given to the following factors:

- poor (1) HPT scores
- the pattern of healthy prison judgements
- repeated poor inspections
- the type of prison and the risks presented
- the vulnerability of those detained
- failure to address previous concerns
- level of confidence in the leadership and the capacity for change and improvement
- The Chief Inspector's judgement that a follow up review will help encourage sustained improvement.

3.2 It is likely that the following institutions will be prioritised for an IRP:

- prisons that are subject to the Urgent Notification (UN) process
- prisons where some outcomes are poor (1)
- prisons where none of the scores are above the line
- prisons with two or more successive poor inspections, particularly if the proportion of concerns addressed is low.

4. Programming and staffing of visits

4.1 IRPs take place eight to 12 months after the source inspection and there are 15–20 IRP visits in each 12-month programme. Wherever possible, the team leader who conducted the source inspection is assigned to the IRP. There are usually three or four other inspectors, including any specialists or partners. Ideally, at least one member of the IRP team will have conducted the previous inspection. One of the inspectors is identified as coordinator. HM Chief Inspector of Prisons (HMCIP)/HM Deputy Chief Inspector of Prisons (HMDVIP) may also attend for part of the visit.

5. Working with partners

Care Quality Commission (CQC)

5.1 HMI Prisons will invite CQC to participate in IRPs if CQC issued notices following the previous inspection. CQC will attend whenever possible, but there may be circumstances when it is more appropriate for it to arrange a separate follow-up visit.

Ofsted

5.2 Ofsted intend to participate in IRPs when the overall judgement for education, skills and work at the previous inspection was either inadequate or requires improvement. It will do

so by conducting a prison monitoring visit² at the same time as the IRP. Occasionally, joint working may not be possible and Ofsted may conduct a separate prison monitoring visit.

Estyn

- 5.3** Estyn will participate in IRPs at Welsh prisons where there are priority and key concerns relating to education, skills and work.

6. Announcement

- 6.1** HMCIP will write to the governor/director of the prison, usually two to three months in advance of the visit, confirming the date of the visit and which concerns will be followed up (usually a maximum of 15). The list may include concerns that were rejected or only partly accepted by HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). If Ofsted is conducting a concurrent prison monitoring visit, the list will include the 'themes' it will follow up. HMI Prisons will copy this letter to the Chair of the Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) and invite him/her to meet the team/team leader during the visit.

7. Pre-visit planning

- 7.1** The governor should appoint a liaison officer who can fulfil the job description outlined in Appendix A. The coordinator will arrange to visit the prison in advance of the IRP to explain the IRP process, answer any questions and make more detailed arrangements relating to logistics and documentation.
- 7.2** In advance of the IRP, HMI Prisons will:
- provide the attendance/key requirement/IT information for the gate
 - provide the name of the inspector who will look at each recommendation
 - offer an opportunity for staff association representatives to meet the team leader
 - arrange to meet representatives from the IMB.
- 7.3** HMI Prisons will also ask the governor and liaison officer to:
- complete a proforma to identify a manager responsible for each of the concerns that are being followed up
 - provide HMI Prisons with an updated action plan for the concerns it is following up
 - prepare a presentation (a maximum of one hour) to be delivered on the first day of the inspection, which should explain what staff have done to address our concerns, reflect on what has gone well and what has been challenging and offer a self-assessment of how much progress has been made against the concerns
 - complete a bespoke data request, which HMI Prisons will supply
 - provide well-organised documentation and data which evidences the work done to respond to the concerns that are being followed up – this may include new policies and procedures, quality assurance data and minutes of meetings
 - provide information on the prisoner population using the instructions in Appendix B
 - provide a copy of any operational support and assurance group (OSAG) reports.

² Ofsted's approach to undertaking monitoring visits and the inspection methodology involved are set out in the *Further education and skills inspection handbook* at paragraphs 25 to 27, available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-education-and-skills-inspection-handbook>

- 7.4** All these documents should be received by/provided to the prison no later than five working days before the start of the IRP visit.
- 7.5** Ofsted will make contact directly with the learning and skills manager or equivalent.

8. Structure of the visit

8.1 The visit will last two-and-a-half days. The following schedule is indicative only:

Day 1

- Morning: travel
- Noon: team briefing
- 12.30pm: presentation by governor/SMT
- Afternoon: inspectors begin collecting evidence
- Afternoon: team leader has separate meetings with governor, IMB chair and staff association representatives.

Day 2

- Morning: inspectors continue collecting evidence
- 12.30–2pm: team meeting
- 2.30pm: team leader feedback to governor
- Afternoon: inspectors continue evidence gathering and prepare short written judgements for each of the concerns being followed up.

Day 3

- HMCIP/HMDCIP may attend
- Morning: inspectors collect final evidence and give feedback to named managers
- Morning: Ofsted inspectors confirm final key findings and progress judgements to governor, Head of Reducing Reoffending, learning and skills manager or equivalent and other interested parties
- Morning: team leader collates key judgements and prepares draft debrief document for discussion at deliberation meeting
- Afternoon: deliberation meeting to finalise judgements and debrief document
- Approximately 4pm: feedback to the governor.

9. Gathering evidence

9.1 Sources of evidence for an IRP will be similar to those for an inspection. Inspectors will speak with staff, prisoners and relevant third parties; review documentation and data; and observe what happens within the prison. As in an inspection, they will base judgements on evidence which has been ‘triangulated’: corroborated by several evidence sources. The main difference from an inspection is that there is no prisoner survey. HMI Prisons may occasionally organise group discussions with prisoners.

9.2 HMI Prisons may visit any part of the establishment and will ask questions of staff and prisoners, but the primary focus will be on the concerns being followed up (unless HMI prisons identifies something else which is particularly concerning).

10. HMI Prisons judgements against concerns

- 10.1** There will be no overall judgement. HMI Prisons will make judgements on progress, relating to each individual recommendation that is being followed up. Progress is defined as activities that have the potential, in time, to lead to improved outcomes. HMI Prisons follows up using the following definitions:
- *No meaningful progress*
Managers had not formulated, resourced or begun to implement a realistic improvement strategy to address this concern.
 - *Insufficient progress*
Managers had begun to implement a realistic improvement strategy to address this concern, but the actions taken since our inspection had not yet resulted in sufficient evidence of progress (for example, better and embedded systems or processes).
 - *Reasonable progress*
Managers were implementing a realistic improvement strategy to address this concern and there was evidence of progress (for example, better and embedded systems and processes) and/or early evidence of some improving outcomes for prisoners.
 - *Good progress*
Managers had implemented a realistic improvement strategy to address this concern and had delivered a clear improvement in outcomes for prisoners.

11. Ofsted judgements against themes

- 11.1** Ofsted will make a progress judgement for each of the themes they follow up, using the following definitions:
- *Insufficient progress*
Progress has been either slow or insubstantial or both, and the demonstrable impact on learners has been negligible.
 - *Reasonable progress*
Action taken by the provider is already having a beneficial impact on learners and improvements are sustainable and are based on the provider's thorough quality assurance procedures.
 - *Significant progress*
Progress has been rapid and is already having considerable beneficial impact on learners.

Ofsted will not make an overall judgement.

12. Calibrating progress

- 12.1** The following 'key questions' framework shows what kinds of activities inspectors look for when making judgements about the extent of progress made towards addressing an identified concern. Effective change is likely to happen when leaders and managers take concerns seriously, plan effectively, act, monitor and refine procedures, and measure outcomes.

Leadership

Have leaders and managers taken HMI Prisons' concerns seriously?

- Can staff articulate these concerns?
- Do staff share these concerns?
- Do staff have an in-depth understanding of the problems faced?
- How quickly after the inspection did staff start work?
- Are staff motivated to address the concerns?
- Do staff feel able to effect change?
- Are staff listening to what prisoners say about the concerns?
- Is there a sense of urgency and a clear sense of direction?

Planning

Is there a realistic plan for addressing HMI Prisons' concerns?

- Have managers developed and communicated a credible plan?
- Does the plan take account of the starting point and have key measures of success?
- Does the plan have the potential to improve outcomes in a reasonable timeframe?
- Is the plan prioritised?
- Is the plan resourced?
- Are there clear milestones/timescales and specific goals?
- Have staff, prisoners and relevant third parties been involved?
- Does a named member of staff have overall responsibility for addressing specific concerns?

Action

Is the plan being robustly implemented?

- Is there evidence of ongoing, focused activity to achieve change?
- Are senior managers monitoring implementation of the plan?
- Do stakeholders communicate effectively to support progress?
- Do staff understand what they need to do to deliver improvement?
- Do senior managers take an interest in the implementation of the plan?
- Is data accurate?
- Do leaders and managers monitor and analyse relevant data?
- Are successes celebrated?

Is there evidence of proactive problem solving?

- Are staff encouraged to provide feedback on progress?
- Are prisoners encouraged to provide feedback on progress?
- Do leaders and managers receive support from the operational line?
- Do leaders and managers work collaboratively with partners and politicians/government departments, where relevant, to create solutions?
- Are risks identified and managed?
- Are there clear accountability systems?
- Is enforcement action taken where necessary?
- Is disciplinary action taken where necessary?

Evaluation

Is tangible/discernible improvement taking place?

- Is data on measures of success (outputs) encouraging?
- Can staff identify changes made?
- Are managers encouraging behaviour change?
- Is staff behaviour changing?

- Can prisoners identify changes made?
- Is prisoner behaviour changing?
- Are outcomes demonstrably better than at the inspection?
- How well do outcomes compare to other similar prisons?

13. Debriefing

- 13.1** The team leader will meet with the governor for a formal debrief at the end of the final day of the IRP. A copy of the debrief document will be given to the governor and subsequently shared electronically with various staff in HMPPS.

14. Report writing and publication

- 14.1** The draft report will be shared with the governor for fact check purposes approximately two weeks after the IRP. The final report will be sent to the Secretary of State for Justice and published on HMI Prisons' website within 25 working days of the end of the IRP visit.

15. Follow-up

- 15.1** IRPs will usually be followed by a full unannounced inspection. The judgements on progress made during an IRP will be used to inform decisions about the timing of this event. The UN protocol cannot be invoked following an IRP.

16. Post-IRP feedback processes

- 16.1** HMI Prisons will send a feedback form to the prison liaison officer shortly after the visit so that the officer can comment on process issues. Once the report has been published, HMI Prisons will seek additional feedback from the governor.

Appendix A: The role of the liaison officer

Job title	Liaison officer
Job purpose	To be the focus of communication between inspection team members, and the management and staff of the establishment.
Who should the liaison officer be?	Someone who knows the establishment well and knows where to go to get information. It helps if this person has the respect of their peers and is flexible and able to adapt to changes. This person will need to be reliable, motivated and available throughout the IRP period.
Preparation tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange a half-day preparation visit by the coordinating inspector to include a one-hour meeting with the governor. • Liaise with the organising inspector about logistical requirements for the IRP, for example gate passes, keys, car parking arrangements, laptop permissions. • Organise a base room large enough for approximately six people, with an external telephone line, extension leads, staff contacts list, a flipchart and pens. Access to refreshments would be welcome. • Provide requested information, documentation and data electronically in advance as requested (see 'Pre-visit planning' section). • Collate any additional information in hard copy. • Arrange a venue for the presentation at 12.30pm on day 1. • Arrange meetings between the governor and team leader each afternoon during the visit.
Tasks during the IRP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make contact with the team leader three times a day during the IRP visit to meet additional requests or to manage any difficulties the team may be experiencing, at times to be agreed.
Tasks after the IRP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the material requested and used by the inspection team is destroyed or returned to the correct departments. • Respond to any further requests from the HMI Prisons team.

Appendix B: Instructions for creating the prisoner population report for an IRP

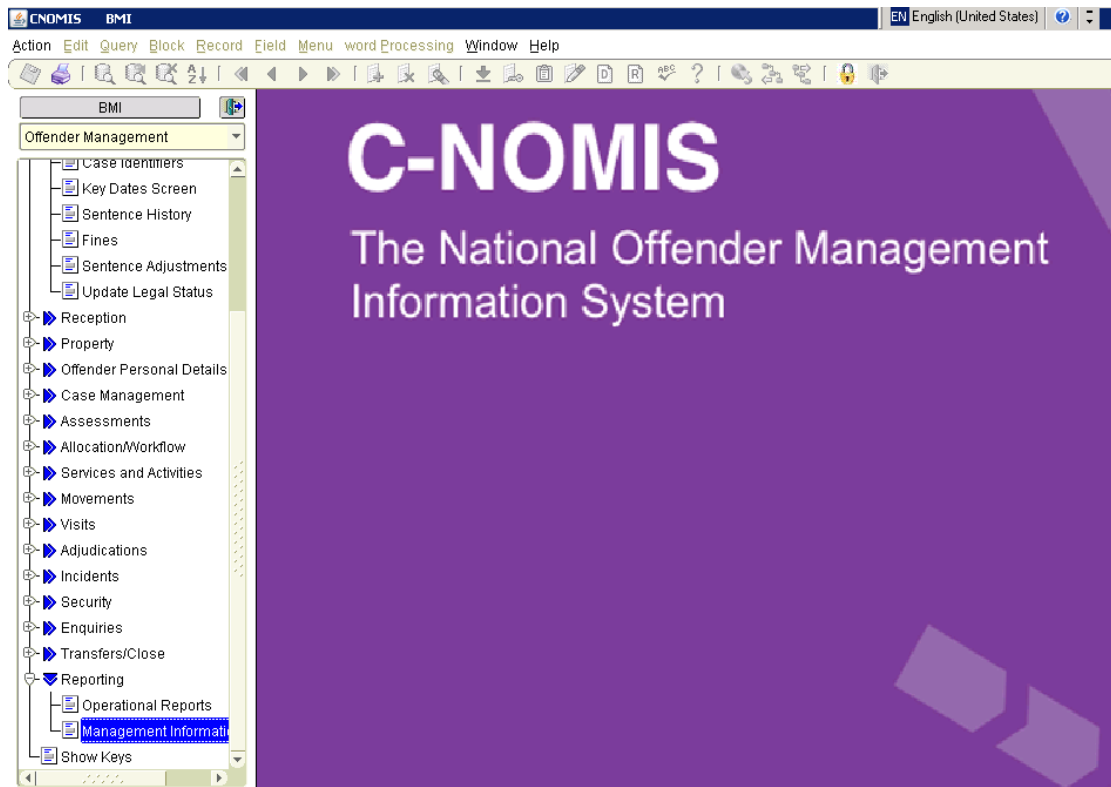
Please refer to your establishment's type in the table below to determine which report is required.

Establishment type	Report name
Adult establishments	Adult HMP Establishments Population Breakdown
Young offender institutions	YOI Population Breakdown
Split establishments – Adults and young adults	Population Breakdown for Split Establishments - Adults and Young Adults

Each report has three sections (tabs). For an IRP only the report on the first tab is required, called 'summary'.

Please see below for instructions on how to access and print the reports required.

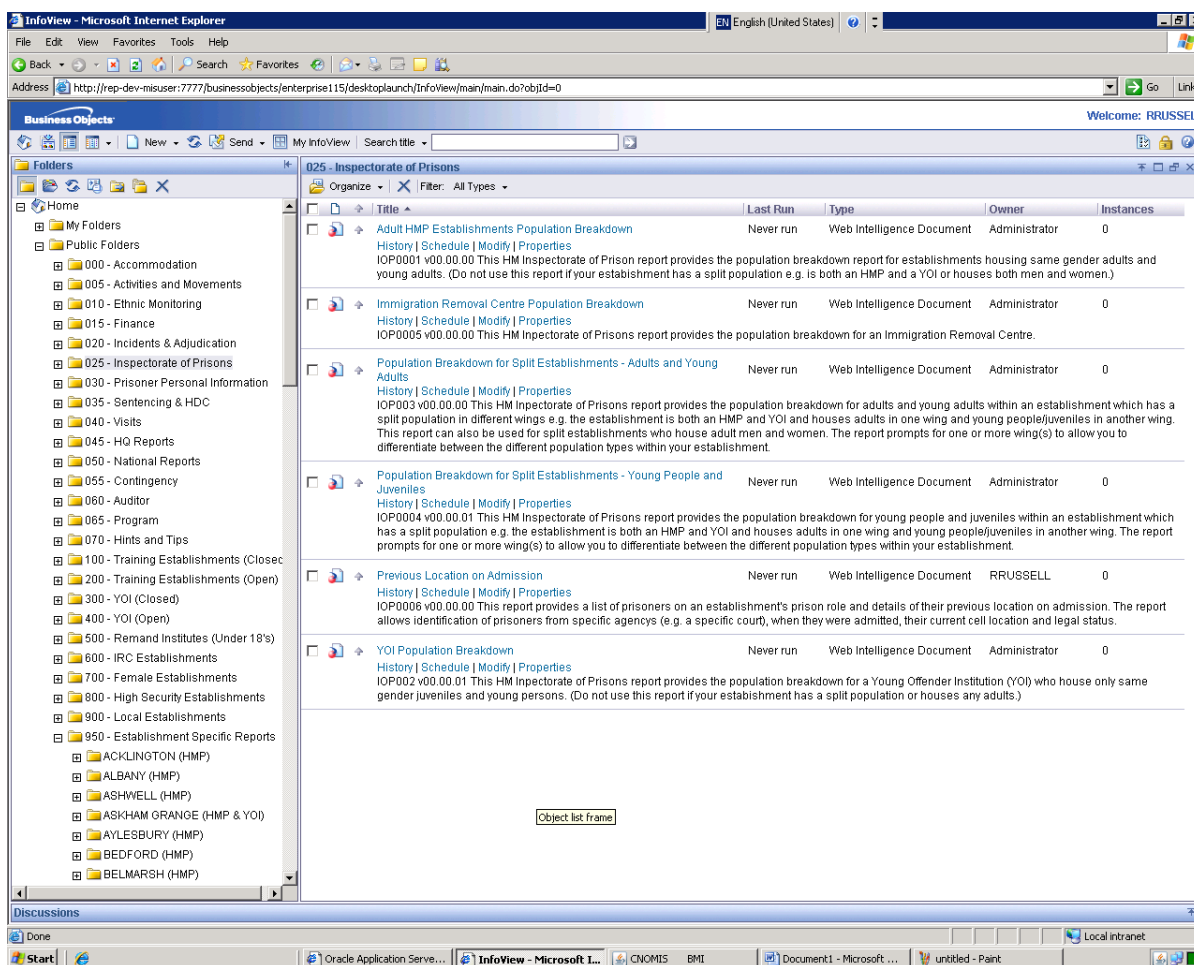
- Log in to the NOMIS application. A shortcut to the Prison-NOMIS application should be available on all PCs within NOMIS-enabled establishments.
- Once in the NOMIS application, select 'Offender Management' (from the drop down menu underneath the establishment code).
- Locate 'Reporting' in the menu navigation pane and double click on 'Management Information' to launch the reporting sub-system.



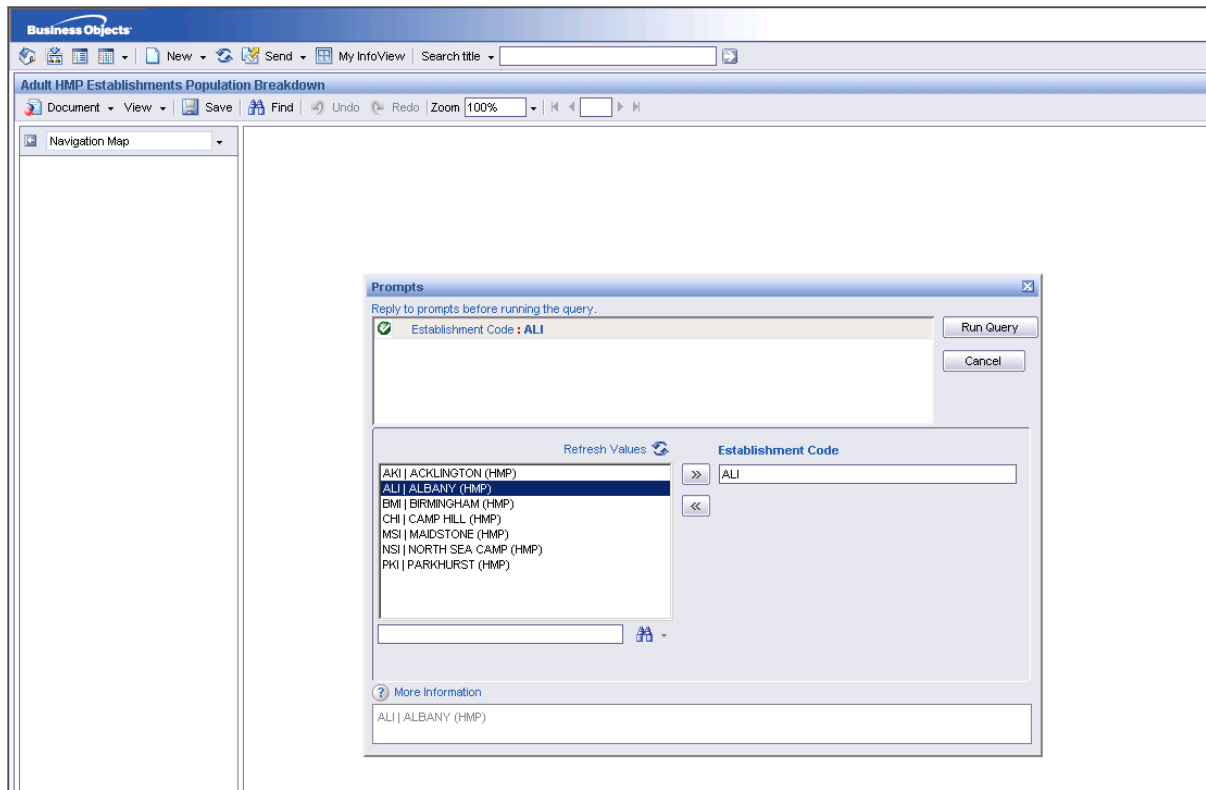
The Management Information reporting sub-system is a web portal. It consists of a folder structure pane on the left-hand side and if you click on a folder it will reveal the reporting content.

To find the HMI Prisons reports, expand the folder called 'Public Folders', and then locate and click on the '025 - Inspectorate of Prisons' folder.

Click on the appropriate 'population breakdown' report to obtain population proforma information.



When you click on a report, the report will open and present a prompts dialog. Select the name of the establishment to be inspected and click on the right arrow to enter the corresponding establishment code. This will act as a parameter value for the report. Once entered, click on the 'Run Query' button and wait for the query to complete.



When the query has finished running, you will see the report populated with data and the three tabs: 'summary', 'core detail' and 'detail'.

For an IRP, HMI Prisons only needs the summary, which provides the counts by the various attributes, such as status, length of stay, age, ethnicity and so on. Below is a screenshot from the first page of the report (the data shown is not real but the report structure is accurate).

RESTRICTED

**Adult HMP Establishments
Population Breakdown - Summary**

Data Refreshed Date
20/01/2012

Parameters

Establishment Code: ALI

This report is for Adult HMPs only. Do not use this report for establishments with a split population or HMPYOIs or IRCs.

ALBANY (HMP)

Status	18 - 20 yr olds	21 and over	Other	%
Sentenced	4	519	0	91.6%
Recall	0	0	0	0.0%
Convicted unsentenced	0	5	0	0.9%
Civil prisoners	0	5	0	0.9%
Detainee	0	1	0	0.2%
Other	1	38	0	6.5%
Total	5	566	0	100.0%

Sentence	18 - 20 yr olds	21 and over	Other	%
Unsentenced	3	342	0	60.4%
Less than 6 Months	0	2	0	0.4%
6 Months to less than 1 Year	1	3	0	0.7%
1 Year to less than 2 Years	1	5	0	1.1%
2 Years to less than 3 Years	0	1	0	0.2%
3 Years to less than 4 Years	0	4	0	0.7%
4 Years to less than 10 Years	0	6	0	1.1%
10 Years or more and Less than Life	0	3	0	0.5%
Lifer	0	200	0	35.0%
Total	5	566	0	100.0%

Age	No. of Prisoners	%
Minimum Age: 18	-	-
Under 21	5	0.9%
21 years to 29 years	51	8.9%
30 years to 39 years	113	19.8%
40 years to 49 years	165	28.9%
50 years to 59 years	116	20.3%
60 years to 69 years	74	13.0%
70 plus years	47	8.2%
Maximum Age: 111	-	-
Total	571	100.0%

Nationality	18 - 20 yr olds	21 and over	Other	%
British	2	424	0	74.6%
Foreign nationals	0	38	0	6.7%
Not stated	3	104	0	18.7%
Total	5	566	0	100.0%

Reference: Adult HMP Establishments
Population Breakdown
IOP0001

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Save the data as a PDF (go to the 'Document' menu and select 'Save to my computer as...PDF'). A 'file download' dialog box will appear and you can choose to save the file to a location on your computer (click the 'Save' button).

Send the PDF file to the coordinator electronically.