

Regional representatives

Background

The new governance structure consists of

- a Management Board, responsible for developing the strategies, policies and guidance that support the work of IMBs
- a network of regional representatives, providing direct support to boards and chairs.

This governance structure has been formally agreed by Ministers, and is set out in the Protocol between the IMBs and the Ministry of Justice.

The regions are, as at present, geographical, except for the immigration detention estate. There are 11 prison regional representatives, covering ten English regions and Wales, and two for the immigration detention estate, covering immigration removal centres and short-term holding facilities. There is a deputy regional representative for the north-west because of the size of the region.

Role of regional representatives

The regional representative provides advice and support to chairs and boards in their region to help them fulfil their statutory responsibilities. They report directly to the National Chair. They liaise closely with the Management Board to ensure that national strategies and policies are informed by work on the ground, and provide support to boards and chairs in implementing those policies and strategies. They are also the focus for networking among the boards in their region or area.

Specific tasks

Support for chairs and boards

- Supporting and advising Chairs and Boards in the implementation of nationally agreed policies and procedures, including statutory responsibilities; being available for advice or comment.
- Keeping in regular communication with boards and chairs in the region to promote best practice and flag up any concerns; this can be by attendance at each board meeting during the year, or a focused discussion with board officers
- Advising on recruitment campaigns (for example approving joint local recruitment) and on best practice in probation and retention of members; helping with succession planning for board officer posts; advising on transfers and dual boarding requests
- Assisting Boards to maintain and improve performance: available to assist with appraisals of board members or annual team performance assessments; receiving exit surveys from departing board members
- Being the first point of contact for any personnel issues; providing advice to chairs and seeking to resolve issues informally where possible, or referring them to the Secretariat, Management Board or Chair.
- Receiving boards' annual reports and where required assisting boards to develop monitoring and reporting processes, according to the national monitoring framework and annual report template
- Assisting boards to manage their budgets and visits allocations where required

Meetings and reporting

- Holding meetings of chairs and vice-chairs in the region either three or four times a year, to discuss matters of mutual concern, share good practice and provide a space for training and development.
- Meeting once a year with the Management Board and once with the National Chair, to share issues and concerns and promote a corporate approach to supporting boards and chairs
- Being a direct and timely link and conduit between boards and the National Chair and Management Board, feeding back boards' views and concerns and ensuring that they inform policy development.
- Encouraging boards' training and development; liaising with regional trainers and feeding training needs into the national Training and Development Working Group.

This role takes up at least 4 days a month, in addition to the Board duties agreed with the local Board Chair.

Regional representatives have been appointed for an initial three-year term, renewable once.