



HMICFRS Feedback 2026

The service needs to do more to make sure the promotions process is fair and transparent

In our last inspection we highlighted an area for improvement that the service should do more to make sure staff see promotion processes as transparent and fair. 57 Disappointingly, we spoke to many operational staff who were still frustrated by the promotion process and didn't have confidence in it. Following feedback from staff, the service introduced development portfolios which replaced assessment days. This is where operational staff must demonstrate competence by completing a programme against a required set of skills, experience and behaviours. We heard from staff who told us that the concept of the portfolio programmes is good, but the implementation has been poor. In our workforce survey, 67 percent of respondents (214 of 320) agreed that the promotion process in the service was fair. We heard from staff who feel that the length of the portfolio is unrealistic to complete and it takes up a significant amount of time for the assessors to review. We also heard from staff who said that they are not user friendly and are a burden on the candidates, their line managers and the assessors. It was felt the process is too convoluted. We recognise that the service is improving its development portfolios but it should continue to engage with staff in making the necessary improvements to the process. We found that there is a perception of nepotism within the promotions process, for example, we heard from a supervisory manager who overheard a middle manager encouraging others to apply for a role as they would be the preferred choice. We also heard about another role that wasn't advertised more widely than the watch it was on. This area for improvement will remain.



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