

Prison Officer Applicants – A guidance on health and fitness standards

This quick guide will help you to understand what health conditions require further examination in an application process and what physical and mental abilities are required to perform key aspects of the prison officer role safely and competently.

Due to the physically demanding, challenging, confrontational and dynamic environment within prisons nature of the role of prison officers, HMPPS applies medical standards to all prison officer and transferee applicants.

If your application progresses, assessment of any health questionnaires and Assessment Recruitment Centre (ARC) face to face health assessments will be undertaken by an Occupational Health Nurse.

The Equality Act 2010 covers all positions in HMPPS. If you have a disability, adjustments will be made if it is reasonable to do so. The opportunity to declare a disability will be included in your health questionnaire and will be dealt with in the strictest confidence

Health issue	Will require individual assessment by Occupational Health	Other information and key aspects of the role
Cardiovascular	Yes. A GP / specialist report is likely to be required.	At the Assessment and Recruitment Centre (ARC) day, you will not be permitted to take the physical Fitness Test if your blood pressure is over 170/100mmHg. The Occupational Health Nurse can provide further information and advice on the day.
Diabetes	Yes. A GP / specialist report is likely to be required.	OH assessment required on a case by case basis. There must be no risk of loss of consciousness or collapse.
Neurological conditions	Yes. A GP / specialist report is likely to be required.	Speech – any impediment that interferes with communication in an emergency should be individually assessed. Must be able to communicate verbally face to face, by phone and on a radio. There must be no risk of loss of consciousness or collapse. Not suitable if causes significant loss of functional ability in relation to demands of job.
Epilepsy	Yes. A GP / specialist report is likely to be required.	OH assessment required on a case by case basis. There must be no risk of loss of consciousness or collapse. Able to communicate verbally face to face, by phone and on a radio and respond to emergencies.

		Not suitable if causes significant loss of functional ability in relation to demands of job.
'Stress', anxiety or depression	Yes. A GP / specialist report might be requested.	OH assessment required on a case by case basis. Cognitive function and alertness must be at a level where the safety of self, colleagues and prisoners will not be compromised. Not suitable if causes significant loss of functional ability in relation to demands of job.
Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)	Yes. A GP / specialist report is likely to be required.	OH assessment required on a case by case basis. Cognitive function and alertness must be at a level where the safety of self, colleagues and prisoners will not be compromised. Not suitable if causes significant loss of functional ability in relation to demands of job.
Alcohol and drug misuse	Yes. A GP / specialist report is likely to be required.	Current issue – unlikely to be suitable. Past issue will need individual assessment.
Prescribed Warfarin for a blood clotting disorder	Yes. A GP / specialist report is likely to be required.	Medication with any anticoagulant is inconsistent with fitness for full officer duties. Use of combination of antiplatelet agents is inconsistent with fitness for full officer duties. Use of single antiplatelet agent will not affect fitness but must be discussed at pre-employment.
Musculoskeletal conditions	Yes. A GP / specialist report may be requested.	Must be able to respond to emergencies, walk, run, turn, climb stairs, stand, bend, kneel and rise without support, grip with hands, lift with upper limbs. Must be able to remain in control of keys, pass annual fitness test and deploy control and restraint techniques. Not suitable if causes significant loss of functional ability in relation to demands of job.

Prosthetic limb	<p>Yes.</p> <p>Will require further information, investigation and assessment to see if adjustments are required.</p>	As per musculoskeletal conditions.
Recent significant illness / recent surgery	<p>Yes.</p> <p>A GP / specialist report is likely to be required.</p>	<p>Cognitive function and alertness must be at a level where the safety of self, colleagues and prisoners will not be compromised.</p> <p>Must be able to respond to emergencies, walk, run, turn, climb stairs, stand, bend, kneel and rise without support, grip with hands, lift with upper limbs.</p> <p>Must be able to remain in control of keys, pass annual fitness test and deploy control and restraint techniques.</p> <p>Not suitable if causes significant loss of functional ability in relation to demands of job.</p>
Poor hearing in one or both ears	<p>Yes.</p>	<p>The individual should be able to hear normal conversation at a distance of 10 feet (3m) without the use of hearing aids. An Occupational Health nurse will assess you at the ARC day.</p>
Poor eyesight history	<p>Yes.</p> <p>A GP / specialist report is likely to be required.</p>	<p>At least 6/12 with both eyes open.</p> <p>If correction required to achieve this, at least 6/36 uncorrected with both eyes open.</p> <p>An Occupational Health nurse will assess you at the ARC day. Laser eye surgery (PRK, Lasek and Lasik) is acceptable 6 weeks following documented successful, uncomplicated procedure in those above age 22.</p> <p>Individual assessment is recommended for all with history of invasive intra-ocular procedures, trauma or medical conditions affecting vision.</p> <p>Referral for further assessment (optometry) and objective functional assessment may be required to assess suitability for entry.</p>
Monocular vision (sight in one eye only)	<p>Yes.</p>	<p>Specific assessment of visual fields and a risk assessment from HMPPS hiring manager will be required to</p>

		assure protection of the remaining functional eye.
BMI, height and weight	Yes.	BMI <19 or > 35 should be assessed on an individual basis.
Respiratory conditions	Yes.	<p>Asthma patients should bring inhalers to the ARC day and the OH nurse will assess fitness to participate in the fitness test.</p> <p>Not suitable if causes significant loss of functional ability in relation to demands of job.</p> <p>Active TB not suitable, history of active TB / treatment – investigate.</p> <p>Questionnaire and clinical follow up if required.</p>