

HM Inspectorate of Probation Corporate Plan 2016-19

HM Inspectorate of Probation
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Our role

We exist to provide independent assurance to the Secretary of State for Justice and to the public on the effectiveness of work with adults, children and young people who have offended to implement orders of the court, reduce reoffending, protect the public and safeguard the vulnerable.

Our values

Integrity

We work in an independent, honest, open, professional, fair and polite way.

Accountability

We are reliable and stand by the evidenced conclusions we reach. We will always fully account for our actions.

Effectiveness

We report and publish inspection findings and recommendations for improvement, focused on service practice quality and impact, in good time and to a high standard. We check the impact of our inspections. We disseminate widely to enable improvement across England and Wales.

Inclusion

We promote attention to diversity in all aspects of our work, including within our own employment practices and organisational processes and are committed to pursuing equality of outcomes for all.

Foreword by the Chief Inspector


I am pleased to present our first three year Corporate Plan, covering the period April 2016-March 2019.

Our work will change significantly over the life of this plan. Most notably, we will take responsibility for the review of cases where an individual commits a serious further offence while supervised by probation services. It is important that the public and most particularly those directly affected know that such cases are reviewed scrupulously, independently and transparently, and that any lessons are learned. In this way we think we can add value to the criminal justice system as a whole.

Our established role is clear. We provide independent assurance on the effectiveness of probation and youth offending services. Following recent, substantial changes to the way probation services are delivered, the UK government is now developing both prison and youth justice policy. In response, we are changing our priorities and approach. In this plan we set out how we are developing risk-based programmes of inspection, and putting greater emphasis on identifying effective or promising practice and positive innovations as we inspect. By targeting our inspections to where there is most to gain, and by promoting good practice and effective working arrangements nationally, we can add most value to those who receive probation and youth justice services.

Government and others clearly want to know whether government's policies are working and delivering as intended, but measures of the effectiveness of rehabilitation and changes in reoffending rates are far off. We plan to do more, and more timely thematic inspections, to show how things are working on the ground. Whenever we find policy is not delivering as it should, we will seek to identify why that is, so that all involved can see how to increase the likelihood of success.

Success is by no means guaranteed. Reoffending and attrition rates are hard to shift, but those working in probation and youth justice can and do make a difference. They do difficult and often distressing work, and we hope that our planned work will help them to improve the life chances of those individuals in the criminal justice system.



Dame Glenys Stacey

Our role

HMI Probation is the independent inspectorate for probation services and youth offending services in England and Wales¹. We undertake individual inspections, and also inspect jointly with other criminal justice inspectorates² and other bodies. We report to the Secretary of State for Justice and provide independent assurance to the public on the effectiveness of work with adults, children and young people who have offended to implement orders of the court, reduce reoffending, protect the public and safeguard the vulnerable.

Our context

The role of probation

Over 260,000 people, comprising 240,000 adults and 21,000 children and young people under the age of 18 are supervised by probation and youth justice services each year. Those under supervision must comply with the order of the court. This can include attending regular meetings with their supervising officers and following other rules, for example residing at an agreed address, obeying a curfew or completing specific treatment programmes or other activities designed to reduce the likelihood of them reoffending.

Probation staff will:

- assess and manage the risk an offender poses to the community
 - help rehabilitate an offender by dealing with problems such as drug and alcohol misuse, and lack of employment or secure housing
 - monitor whether they are complying with requirements, and report them to court or request recall to prison if they are not.
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Government policy

Government is embarking on a radical programme of prison and criminal and youth justice reform so as to deliver better outcomes, improved public safety and lower costs for taxpayers. A key policy aim is to reduce reoffending. Youth justice, victims services and prison offender management services are under review, community courts are proposed, the prison estate reorganised, and in 2014 the UK government extended probation supervision for the first time to offenders released from prison sentences of under twelve months (some 50,000 people each year) so that now, all offenders released from prison on licence are subject to supervision. In addition, since May 2015, probation services must provide offenders with resettlement services while they are in prison, in anticipation of their release.

Probation services are being provided in a mixed economy model, with an expectation of greater involvement of the third sector. Government wishes to promote innovation in probation services, and in June 2014, under the UK government's Transforming Rehabilitation programme, probation services were divided into a public sector National

¹ Section 7, *Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000*, as amended by the *Offender Management Act 2007*, section 12(3)(a).

² The *Police and Justice Act 2006* established a statutory responsibility on each of the criminal justice inspectorates to draw up a joint inspection programme and associated framework.

Probation Service (NPS) and 21 new privately-owned Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) providing services under contract. The NPS advises courts on sentencing all offenders, and manages those offenders presenting high or very high risks of serious harm, or who are managed under Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements. CRCs supervise most other offenders presenting low and medium risk of harm. CRCs operated as companies in public ownership until 01 February 2015 when they transferred to eight alternative providers.

Our resources

The 2016–21 Comprehensive Spending Review reduced the core funding available to the Ministry of Justice for 2016-17 and beyond. Our core funding for 2016-17 has been reduced accordingly to £3.6m, from £3.8m in 2015-16. We will improve our efficiency and maintain management controls to reduce our expenditure.

We expect to receive an additional £100,000 programme funding in 2016/17 to enable us to prepare for the transfer on 01 April 2017 of responsibility for the review of cases in which someone on probation commits a serious further offence. We expect to receive additional £2.7m core funding in 2017/18 and beyond, to enable us to review those cases.

The table below shows our indicative funding for the remaining period of the Comprehensive Spending Review.

Year	Indicative Budget (£m)
2017 - 2018	6.21
2018 - 2019	6.12
2019 - 2020	6.04
2020 - 2021	5.95

Demonstrating the effectiveness of probation services

The National Offender Management Service monitors CRC contractual compliance and performance, and conducts compliance audits. We inspect CRC and NPS probation services, and youth offending services so that government and the public can be assured of the quality of those services, the impact they have on the likelihood of reoffending, the extent to which the public are protected from harm and the degree to which individuals abide by the sentence of the court.

We have reported regularly on the implementation of Transforming Rehabilitation³. At the start of the business year 2016-17 we implemented our new Quality and Impact (Q&I) inspection methodology for adult probation services, shaped around the service user, and taking into account the new operating model for probation services and the additional expectations of probation services (supervision of those released from short prison sentences and enhanced rehabilitation provision).

Our Q&I inspection methodology seeks to identify enablers and barriers to positive outcomes for service users, and when we find failings in the delivery of probation services we seek to establish the root cause. We think this particularly pertinent as new delivery arrangements for probation bed in.

What we plan to do in 2016-17

Enhance our inspection framework by:

- developing a risk-based approach to determining our programmes of inspection. We will publish risk criteria, and build and maintain risk models to inform immediate and medium term inspection priorities. We will publish our inspection framework and outline programme and any changes to our plans
- undertaking full joint inspections of youth justice in up to six local authority areas and short quality screenings of local (YOT) youth services in up to 23 areas. We will review our 2016-17 inspection programme for youth justice immediately following the Ministry of Justice review of youth justice and subsequent policy decisions
- inspecting CRC and NPS probation service provision in up to 11 police force areas, selected by using a risk-based approach. We will liaise with NOMS contract management and operational assurance teams to reduce any overlap and duplication of their work and ours
- rebalancing our efforts across the types of inspection we undertake. We will do more thematic inspections, and fewer but more targeted Prison Offender Management Inspections (POMI)⁴. We will maintain our established commitment to Criminal Justice Inspectorate Joint Inspections and to Joint Targeted Area Inspections of services for vulnerable children and young people⁵. Working with HMI Prisons, we will inspect and report on the effectiveness of Through the Gate resettlement services
- applying published criteria to determine subjects for thematic inspection. We will undertake up to ten thematic inspections during this financial year, including inspections of accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds, desistance and young people, referral orders, rehabilitation activity requirements, approved premises, and court work.

³ See HMI Probation at <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation>

⁴ These are joint inspections conducted with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons

⁵ These are joint inspections conducted with Ofsted, Care Quality Commission, and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary

Enhance our inspection methodologies by:

- being clear about the basis of the judgements we make on the quality of work we inspect
- developing and publishing new Case Assessment Guidance applicable to all Q&I inspections
- increasing our effectiveness by reporting clearly, succinctly, unequivocally and promptly; cross-referencing to relevant research and materials in our reports where helpful, and producing interim reports where appropriate
- developing our range of inspection methodologies, for example by developing research-based approaches, and a short quality screening methodology for adult probation services
- developing and applying a range of proportionate and targeted follow-up activities to check the impact of our recommendations in a timely way
- developing proposals for transitional youth justice inspection, pending implementation of any change to youth justice provision as a result of new UK government policy.

What we plan to do in 2017-19

- Keep our inspection framework under review, and consider periodically (for example) the balance of inspections, the most sensible unit of adult inspection, appropriate notice periods for inspection, the nature of follow-up activity, and whether our framework is sufficiently effective and efficient.
- Implement any changes to our framework for youth justice inspection for 2017 and beyond as a result of changes in UK government policy.
- Continue to inspect the provision of Through the Gate resettlement services.
- Consult annually on our proposed inspection frameworks and programmes.
- Review our newly introduced Q&I inspection methodology and consider whether it is both proportionate and effective.
- Review and develop our youth justice inspection methodology in response to emerging UK government policy on youth justice.

Outcomes

- There will be greater transparency in relation to the quality of probation services.
- Delivery of selected key UK government criminal justice policies will be evaluated.
- We will have used public funds proportionately.

Promoting promising practice and positive innovation, and identifying poor practice

In the new, mixed economy model for probation services, CRCs have greater scope for differing operating models and the NPS is developing its practices as well, to reflect its changed role. CRCs must meet contract performance requirements, and will be judged over time on longer-term measures of the rate of reoffending.

Probation quality standards are not explicitly stated beyond the general provisions of the 2015 NOMS Practice Framework⁶, and practice will diverge over time, as CRCs implement different and sometimes innovative approaches.

As we inspect, we seek to identify both established and new practice that is effective, or appears promising, and to identify positive innovations as well. In a mixed economy model it is potentially extremely valuable for us to identify for others the examples we find of promising approaches and actions in CRCs, the NPS and in youth justice.

What we intend to do in 2016-17

- Detail clearly in our inspection reports examples we find of effective and promising practice and positive innovations that enable good service provision.
- Establish ways to provide ready access to effective and promising practice and positive innovation examples, by way of periodic summaries and reports, and easy links to other relevant sources.
- Continue to employ and develop probation professionals on secondment to us from probation and youth services, returning staff regularly to the field with enhanced exposure to inspection, benchmarking and standards.
- Highlight poor practice and barriers to good service provision promptly whenever we see them – for example, when we find contract incentives distorting priorities unduly.

What we intend to do in 2017-19

- Use our collated data and information to compare and report periodically on aspects of the effectiveness of probation services.
- Provide probation staff with the opportunity to take part in inspections local to them, so as to promote awareness of inspection, benchmarking and standards.

Outcomes

- Probation and youth service staff will be able to use what we report to improve the prospects of positive outcomes for individual service users, victims and the general public.
- The knowledge and skills of those seconded to us from probation and youth services will be enhanced, enabling them to promote good practice locally and so improve the prospects of positive outcomes for service users, victims and the general public.
- Leaders will be able to tackle factors associated with failures we identify, thereby improving the prospects of positive outcomes for service users, victims and the general public both nationally and locally.

⁶ *Practice Framework National Standards for the Management of Offenders in England and Wales*, NOMS, 2015.

Protecting the public

We undertake inspections with other criminal justice agencies and other bodies, often with public protection and/or safeguarding as central issues under consideration and scrutiny. Through joint inspections we are able to provide a comprehensive view of provision across organisational boundaries. Our joint inspection plans are published annually.

In all our routine inspections of probation and youth justice, we consider and report on the extent to which public protection and safeguarding are being delivered sufficiently well. During inspections we intervene immediately in any case we find posing unacceptable risk to the public - a rare occurrence.

To enhance public confidence and to increase transparency, the UK government intends to transfer to us (an independent body) responsibility for the review of cases where an individual commits a serious further offence while supervised by probation services, with effect from April 2017. We will publish our reports in those cases where the individual is convicted of the serious further offence.

Our reviews will identify what has happened, establish lessons to be learned and make recommendations about any changes required to minimise the possibility of a recurrence of similar events. We will report on systemic, organisational or individual failures and also identify notable good practice, recognising that those involved may have taken all reasonable action to manage the offender.

What we intend to do in 2016-17

- Maintain our established level of commitment to joint inspections (save in relation to POMI, see page 7).
- Prepare for the transfer of responsibility to us of serious further offence reviews. We will develop our operating model and supporting systems so as to conduct serious further offence reviews effectively and efficiently.

What we intend to do in 2017-19

- Conduct independent, proportionate and timely reviews of alleged cases of serious further offences.
- Publish those reviews in cases where the offender is convicted of a serious further offence.
- Continue to consider and report on public protection and safeguarding when we inspect probation and youth justice services.
- Report periodically on the effectiveness of public protection measures, in practice.

Outcomes

- Lessons to be learned in cases where an individual is convicted of a serious further offence, will be set out, so that where possible, arrangements to protect the public and safeguard the vulnerable can improve.
- Transparency will be increased.
- Victims and their families in serious further offence cases will be able to see what has happened, and why.

Developing our people, systems and resources

HMI Probation was established in 1936. Our role has changed over time, and is changing again with the transfer of new responsibilities and as UK government criminal and youth justice policy develops. We plan to develop our people, resources and systems to enable us to continue to deliver well.

In readiness for the transfer to us of Serious Further Offence review responsibilities, we will develop new systems and review and develop our operating model. It is likely that we will locate Serious Further Offence work in one or two locations, so as to centralise expertise, promote learning and provide resilience, but we will remain a geographically dispersed organisation, with other staff working in teams generally formed for individual inspections and then disbanded. In this model it is particularly important that we select, train, supervise and support our staff effectively.

So far as possible our ways of working throughout the Inspectorate will be IT-enabled effectively, so that we can be flexible, responsive and effective across the range of work we do.

Like others in public services, we have plans to make savings over the period covered by this plan.

What we intend to do in 2016-17

We will develop our people by:

- reviewing and enhancing our approach to the recruitment, selection and development of our staff, taking the opportunity afforded by the transfer of Serious Further Offence reviews to broaden our range of backgrounds and experience
- developing our staffing model and reviewing the balance of staff, so that we are sufficiently flexible, effective and efficient
- developing and implementing a staff training and development plan. Priorities will be business-driven and will include report preparation, commercial awareness and quality standards training
- recruiting, inducting and training staff in Serious Further Offence review work ready for 01 April 2017.

We will improve our systems by:

- developing our operating model, systems and processes ahead of the transfer of responsibility for Serious Further Offence reviews. We will enhance key support service and management functions and systems (for example, external and internal communications, legal support, case management and resource management)
- developing and implementing an IT strategy, designed to increase our effectiveness and efficiency
- developing measures of our effectiveness and our efficiency
- developing our governance arrangements, for example by establishing an Advisory Group
- reviewing our approach to deployment of staff, to increase transparency and fairness.

We will make best use of our resources by:

- implementing a five-year budget that delivers savings expected by 2020 in view of the Ministry of Justice's Comprehensive Spending Review settlement
- developing our strategic financial reporting systems and processes
- engaging with the wider research community and work collaboratively where that is beneficial
- developing effective and efficient arrangements for the conduct of serious further offence reviews
- reviewing our reporting approach, so that our reports are accessible to those interested, and developing a strategic editing function.

What we intend to do in 2017-19

- Develop and implement succession planning for key posts.
- Continue to recruit, induct and train staff as required.
- Continue to implement and hone our IT strategy.
- Review and further develop our operating model, and our systems and processes.
- Continue to develop, monitor and report on our effectiveness and efficiency.

Outcomes

- Our people will be better able to give of their best, and we will deliver more for less so that public money is better spent.
- Our work will be done and our reports delivered in a timely way, thereby aiding prompt changes to practice to improve outcomes for service users, victims and the general public.
- Our reports will have more impact and will therefore be more likely to drive improvement for the benefit of service users, victims and the general public.



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