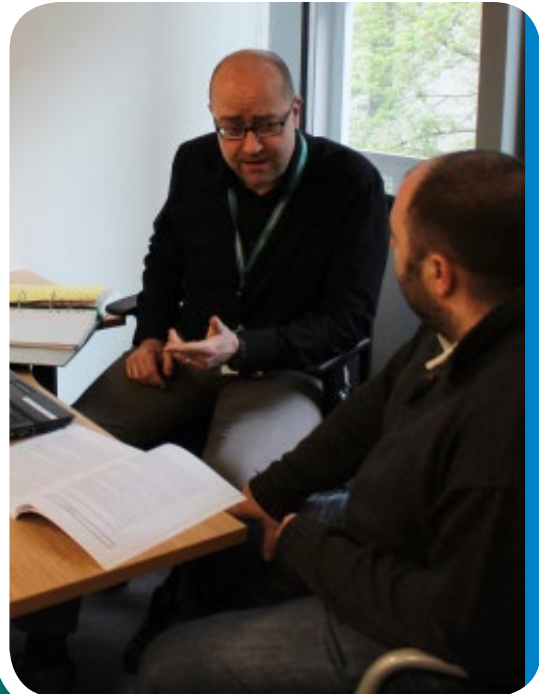




# HM Inspectorate of Probation for England and Wales

## 2017-2020



HMI Probation is the independent inspector of youth offending and probation services in England and Wales. We report on the effectiveness of work with adults and children who have offended.

**This is our corporate plan for 2017-2020**



## Our plans at a glance

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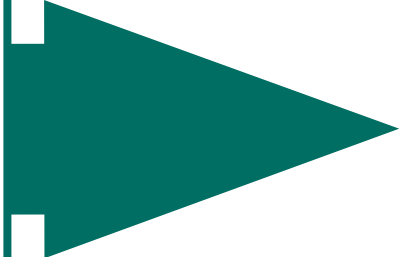
### Our ambition for the next three years is:

- an agreed view of good quality youth offending and probation services and how this should be measured
- improved delivery so that the life chances of some of the most challenging and vulnerable people in society are enhanced, and more turn away from crime.

### We will achieve this by focusing on four priorities:

- 1** Promoting a single, shared view of quality services
- 2** Encouraging the delivery of good quality services
- 3** Developing (with others) the effective oversight of services
- 4** Improving our effectiveness and efficiency

### We will know we have succeeded when:

- youth offending and probation services rely on our standards to define good quality work
  - youth offending and probation services improve as a result of our inspections
  - providers are overseen in coherent and proportionate oversight arrangements, and people trust our reports and our judgements
  - we can show how we are more effective and efficient.
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## Foreword

We are an independent inspectorate, ambitious to make the best possible difference to the quality of youth offending and probation services in England and Wales. It is important to the public, to victims and to those who commit crime that these services are as effective and efficient as possible.

As the number of children in the youth justice system continues to fall, youth offending services are increasingly engaged in the important jobs of stopping children turning to crime in the first place, and getting those first experimenting with crime back onto the right path in life. With services delivered in different ways locally, we want to ensure good quality youth offending work, and to enable both local and system-wide improvements. We are eager to work with others to build a common view of high quality across the spectrum of Youth Offending Teams' work, to underpin our inspections.

Those working in probation have experienced a deal of change and uncertainty of late, yet strive still to make a positive difference to people's lives. Community Rehabilitation Companies are driven to meet contract measures and targets, and it is timely now to redress the balance so that they are held to account in proportionate and joined-up arrangements, with measures and payment aligned well with what we all want and expect: the right quality of work and results within the resources available.

With the government poised to state clear expectations of probation services and complete its review of probation contracts, targets and

measures, there is a real opportunity to achieve that, but we do not underestimate the task.

Probation services are not being consistently delivered to an accepted standard. We will do all that we can to encourage improvement, but we cannot and should not do it alone.

Instead, we will work with commissioners, providers, probation professionals, service users and others to build a common view of high quality probation services and what is expected. We will use that to support our inspections and inform our judgements, so that those working in probation are able to do the best possible job for the individuals they work with, and for the well-being of victims and potential victims as well.

As we change the way we do things, we will aim to be as effective and efficient as possible, and not unduly burden those we inspect. We will stay true to our statutory role, our values, and our deep and unwavering commitment to good quality youth offending and probation services and what they can achieve for communities and for some of the most challenging and vulnerable people in society.



**Dame Glenys Stacey**  
Chief Inspector





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## Introduction

We have inspected all Youth Offending Teams in England and Wales, and will soon complete inspections in each division of the National Probation Service (NPS) and the majority of the 21 Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) that together now deliver probation services. In this three-year plan we describe how we will build on what we have learned and change the way we do things, so that these services are most likely to improve the life chances of some of the most challenging and vulnerable people in society.

### What we know

Many people have no direct experience of the services we inspect, but good youth offending and probation services have a key role to play in turning people away from crime and protecting potential victims from harm.

Youth offending services are generally delivered to an acceptable standard nationally, but they vary from place to place and can deteriorate over time. With youth conviction rates now at an all-time low, youth offending services have largely succeeded in that respect but still have work to do to maintain that position, to stop children turning to crime, and turn them away from crime at the first opportunity. Youth justice policy is under review and the Youth Justice Board's (YJB) oversight role for youth offending services may also change.

Our inspection findings show the quality of NPS work varies from place to place, and there are some persistent issues as well. CRCs are responsible for the bulk of cases, and are not generally delivering well, although there are exceptions.

Government wishes to see improvements across the board: earlier and more effective work with individuals; improved quality, consistency and targeting of community sentence requirements; more effective supervision and rehabilitation of people in the community; a more integrated approach to offender management in prison; and services to help prisoners find accommodation and employment on release delivered better. It is changing the way CRC services are commissioned, monitored and measured, and is set to place increased reliance on our independent assessments of the quality of CRC and NPS work.

### Our ambition for the next three years

Good quality youth offending and probation work makes a positive difference to people's life chances, to victims and to offending and reoffending. It gives people hope, and changes their life prospects and the risk that they will reoffend. To have the best chance of success, the work must be purposeful, there must be enough of it and it needs to be targeted and delivered well.

We want to use what we know, so as to best make sure that people receive good quality youth offending and probation services that are most likely to make a difference. To do so we are changing the way we do things.

We will focus on four priorities to deliver our ambition:



#### Promoting a single, shared view of quality services

We will work with others to agree standards, and what represents good quality youth offending and probation work. Our quality standards will cover the broad spectrum of work, and we will keep our standards up to date over time. We expect to publish our first quality standards later this year.



#### Encouraging the delivery of good quality services

We will develop new methodologies for inspecting youth offending and probation services. We will inspect more frequently, and grade youth offending and probation services on inspection.



#### Developing (with others) the effective oversight of services

We will work with others to agree a consistent and proportionate approach to overseeing and measuring quality, and collecting information from providers effectively and efficiently.



#### Improving our effectiveness and efficiency

We will work more effectively and more efficiently, and improve how we work with partner organisations and with those we inspect.

#### What will stay the same

Our statutory purpose and role, and our values.

Our thematic inspections, with topics selected on the basis of our published selection criteria.

Our commitment to joint inspections with other inspectorates.

We will continue to give advance notice of our routine inspections (although we will review the length of notice we give, to be more consistent).

#### What will be different

We will change the way we inspect Youth Offending Teams and probation providers, so that:

- we inspect all probation services annually, and inspect CRCs and NPS divisions separately
- we inspect Youth Offending Teams at least every four years, with some inspected more frequently
- we select Youth Offending Teams for inspection using a targeted, intelligence-led approach
- we broaden the scope of youth offending work we inspect
- we broaden the scope of probation work we inspect routinely, to include some work done in prisons
- we grade the quality of youth offending and probation services, on inspection
- our inspections are underpinned by agreed quality standards
- we use data and information available to us from providers and others, so that as far as possible, providers are only asked for information once.



## Promoting a single, shared view of quality services



### What we know

Youth Offending Teams and probation providers need to know what represents good quality work, and what is expected, so that they can deliver consistently well. Good providers will want to align their organisations around agreed and enduring expectations, to be as sure as possible of good delivery that leads to good outcomes for individuals, victims, communities and wider society.

Following changes to the way probation services are delivered and the introduction of new responsibilities, probation standards are no longer explicit, and there is no clear consensus about quality. The NPS and CRCs' performance is reported by government using measures that mainly focus on tasks completed and these measures are complemented – and often challenged - by our findings on inspection, when we evaluate the quality of work delivered.

With the substantial fall in children being convicted for the first time, and in the use of custody for youth over recent years, the work of Youth Offending Teams has changed. The YJB has set national standards for key areas, and so some expectations are helpfully set. However, those standards are not designed to cover all Youth Offending Team work or to support inspection and grading of individual Youth Offending Teams. What is more, the role of the YJB is changing.


### What we will do

We will work with others to agree what represents good quality youth offending and probation services. We will take into account government aims and expectations, and build on universally respected international standards and available national standards. We will publish agreed quality standards, and work continuously with others to keep them relevant, comprehensive and up to date. We will develop and apply a common grading scheme and criteria to show what represents good quality youth offending and probation work.

### How we will do it

In 2017-2018 we will:

- extend and develop our relationships with those interested and involved in probation standards and quality internationally
- work with commissioners, providers, professionals, service users and others to agree the scope of work to be considered, and engage with them on the detail. We will propose frameworks for quality standards covering the management of individual cases and the way providers are led, organised and work with others to deliver good quality services. We will develop standards and quality indicators, working alongside providers and government, and taking their views into account

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- test, pilot and publish our first quality standards in inspections and develop and publish criteria to guide inspection decisions on what represents good quality work
  - build ongoing relationships with providers, to have open conversations about youth offending and probation services' quality
  - analyse data and information we have, to produce benchmarks for what represents good quality work. We will use information and findings from all inspections to continue to set benchmarks and develop quality standards
  - conduct research to assist in establishing our proposed standards, methodologies and programmes.

### **What we plan to do in 2018-2020**

We will use our quality standards to underpin our inspections. We will make fair, open inspection judgements about the quality of work delivered by providers, based on those standards.

We will continue to work with others to hone and develop quality standards. We will set out our standards in ways that enable providers, commissioners and the public to see what is expected. We will work with providers and commissioners to make sure quality is measured transparently and consistently.

We will continue to conduct thematic inspections and other studies, to inform providers and others about quality services.

## Encouraging the delivery of good quality services



### What we know

The NPS is a national organisation, bringing together its staff and developing ways of working. On inspection we have found that the quality of NPS work is not sufficiently consistent, and there are persistent issues as well. Most CRCs have developed new and sometimes innovative operating models but they have found it difficult to implement them fully. Some cannot deliver services in the way they expected, for financial and other reasons, and because of delays in the provision (by government) of the necessary strategic IT gateway. Their quality of work has been mixed and in many respects poor.

Government, Judges, magistrates and the public want effective community sentences delivered in ways that are most likely to change individuals' outlook on life, and reduce reoffending. They also expect that the public and victims are protected from harm. To meet these expectations, all probation work should be of good quality.

Youth Offending Teams are well-established, but funding is less certain or long-term than it once was. Teams vary significantly in size, and also differ one from another in the balance of work that they do. Priorities are determined locally, and there is no one model for delivery. Most teams exist in their own right, but work in partnership locally. Others are more integrated into local authority children's social care services. Out-of-court disposals have become a significant area of work.

Youth Offending Teams generally perform to an acceptable level in those areas of work that we inspect at the moment, although there are exceptions. On inspection we find that strong leadership, partnership

and governance arrangements are crucial to good performance. Services often improve markedly in response to poor inspection results: we know that inspection and the prospect of inspection encourage improvement in the services provided by Youth Offending Teams.

### What we will do


We will develop new and yet more effective ways of routinely inspecting and reporting on youth offending and probation services, to encourage the delivery of good quality services. We will draw upon the experience of other inspectorates and regulators and established best practice, to design our methodologies and programmes of inspection. Our methodologies and programmes will be congruent, with common features, but will differ where necessary to take into account the differing contexts for these services, and what we aim to achieve by inspection: to ensure good quality work and enable both local and system-wide improvements in youth offending services, and to drive improvement and enhance public confidence and accountability in probation services.

### How we will do it

In 2017-2018 we will:

- conduct up to eight announced inspections of probation services provided by CRCs and the NPS in specific Police and Crime Commissioner areas. We will select those areas using our established





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risk-based approach, and inspect using our established (Quality & Impact) methodology. We will require providers to prepare and to deliver action plans in response to our findings and recommendations, and we will follow up actions plans

- develop and test a new probation inspection methodology and approach, so that in future we inspect by CRC area and NPS division, look at more cases in each inspection, inspect more frequently and regularly, and grade the quality of services that we find. Our new approach will be underpinned by our quality standards. It will cover a broader range of probation work, including services provided to prisoners ahead of their release
- develop and test a new Youth Offending Team inspection methodology and approach. We will plan to conduct some inspections jointly with others (to add value) and to grade the quality of services that we find. Our new methodology will be underpinned by our quality standards and will cover a broader range of the work of Youth Offending Teams
- work with the UK and Welsh governments as policy expectations are reviewed, and ensure that our methodologies, programmes and quality standards reflect the research and evidence base for effective youth offending and probation services as well as government expectations
- conduct thematic inspections of the work done by Youth Offending Teams to protect the public, and in dealing with out-of-court disposals. We will also undertake thematic inspections of the impact of New Psychoactive Substances on probation work in the community, enforcement and recall work in probation services, and the extent and

effectiveness of CRC and NPS supply chains. We will aim to identify good practice, and we will use our findings to inform our development of standards.

- publish the reports of our thematic inspections of resettlement (Through the Gate) probation services for longer term prisoners, Approved Premises (probation hostel) services, and probation work in courts
- be ready to implement our new methodologies and approaches in spring 2018
- review and develop with HMI Prisons the way we inspect Offender Management services and the work of probation professionals in prisons
- continue to conduct Joint Targeted Area Inspections (with Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission, and HMI Constabulary) and joint inspections with other criminal justice inspectorates.

### What we plan to do in 2018-2020

We will begin to inspect youth offending and probation services using our new methodologies in the year 2018-2019. We will inspect all CRCs and NPS divisions annually. We will inspect all Youth Offending Teams at least once every four years, and inspect some more often.

We will grade the quality of work delivered by each Youth Offending Team, CRC and NPS division using a four point scale, with the following categories: Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement, Inadequate.



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We will require action plans in response to our inspection findings and recommendations.

We will continue to conduct thematic inspections, selecting topics in accordance with our published selection criteria and with the aim of encouraging the delivery of quality services.

We will consult annually on our proposed inspection programme for the year ahead.

We will use our collated data and information to compare and report periodically on aspects of the effectiveness of youth offending and probation services.

## Developing (with others) the effective oversight of services



### What we know

Local authorities oversee the performance of their own youth justice services through the scrutiny of the local Youth Justice Management Board. Youth Offending Teams are regulated through a combination of those arrangements, our independent inspection, and YJB oversight that includes the monitoring of reducing reoffending, first time entrants and the use of custody. Sanctions for poor performance are underdeveloped and rarely used. Oversight arrangements are poised to change as the role and remit of the YJB changes.

CRCs and NPS divisions are held to account differently, and each with a set of measures and targets that differ, but tend to be task focused. Probation providers are also subject to national instructions issued by Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). The Ministry of Justice (MOJ) sets detailed contractual obligations for CRCs. Those contracts come to an end in 2022. The detailed contract terms are being reviewed, with the aim of ensuring performance measures drive the right behaviours and focus on outcomes, albeit management information on task completion will still be collected and collated.

### What we will do

We will develop (with others) proportionate arrangements for oversight of youth offending and probation services so that providers know what is expected of them and how they are measured, and so that the collective arrangements are as coherent and seamless as possible.

CRC oversight arrangements will be rebalanced. As CRC contract monitoring changes and task-based targets reduce, we will increase inspection of probation services, inspecting all CRCs and NPS divisions annually and inspecting a broader range of work.


As oversight arrangements for youth offending work change, we will increase inspection of Youth Offending Teams. We will inspect them less frequently than probation services, given their number and their comparative size. We will select Youth Offending Teams for inspection based predominantly on a targeted, intelligence-led basis, with a small number of others selected at random. We will inspect the quality of the broader range of their work with children, including out-of-court disposals.

We will grade the quality of youth offending and probation service work on inspection, so as to provide the prime qualitative measure of what is being delivered.

### How we will do it

In 2017-2018 we will:

- work with the MoJ to ensure government aims for youth offending and probation services are aligned sufficiently with enduring expectations and that they are research and evidence based
- provide advice to the MoJ, to inform its review of CRC contracts, measures and targets

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- agree with the MoJ a new oversight model for youth offending and probation services, to come into effect over the period 2017-2019. The new measures will include HMI Probation inspection gradings. We will ensure that our developing quality standards and contract and performance measures are sufficiently well-aligned
  - work with HMPPS, the YJB, commissioners and others to resolve inconsistencies in published national standards and remove any undue prescription in national instructions to providers
  - improve the level of information we obtain from commissioners and those that monitor the performance of youth offending and probation service providers, so as to inform our inspections and reduce the requirement on those we inspect to provide information more than once or to more than one oversight organisation.

### What we plan to do in 2018-2020

Our inspection gradings will become a prime measure to demonstrate the quality of youth offending and probation services.

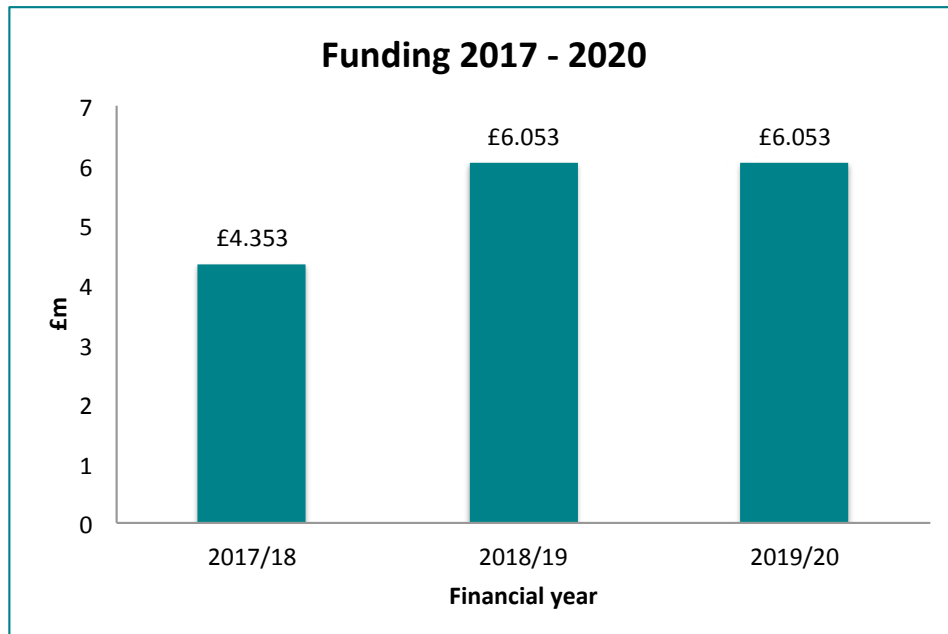
We will keep the oversight model and our own contribution under active review, to make sure that oversight is proportionate, fair and transparent, and reporting any shortcomings in the model to government.

## Improving our own effectiveness and efficiency



### What we know

Our annual funding will increase by £0.7m in 2017 and by a further £1.7m in 2018 and beyond so as to enable us to make the changes we have set out here. We have a responsibility to use all our resources as effectively and efficiently as possible, so that we deliver value for money. We keep our costs as low as possible, and have unusually low central overhead costs. As the organisation grows there will be opportunities to increase our effectiveness significantly.



We stand willing to take on additional responsibilities congruent with our statutory role (such as responsibility for the review of cases where an individual commits a Serious Further Offence while under probation supervision) should government decide. More immediately, we must develop our organisation so as to deliver our plans.

A large proportion of our resource is spent on staff, and they are our most precious resource. To enable our people to give of their best, we must engage them fully in our aims and plans, live by our values and provide them with the right tools and ways of working.

### What we will do

We will continue to keep our costs as low as possible, and deliver savings where we can. We will develop our organisational design and our workforce strategy to ensure we recruit, train and retain the right level of skilled and expert staff and that our people are deployed effectively and efficiently. We will develop the way we communicate, present and use our evidence base and reports, so as to be as effective as possible. We will improve our systems and processes, and collaborate and learn from other inspectorates and regulators, and share best practice.



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In 2017-2018 we will:

- review our organisational design, to make sure we can be as effective as possible as our organisation grows
- develop our workforce strategy to increase staff numbers and review the balance of staff, so that we are sufficiently flexible, effective, efficient and able to test and implement new programmes of inspection
- develop and implement staff training and development plans so as to enable us to deliver new methodologies and programmes competently and confidently in 2018 and beyond
- further develop our report preparation processes and skills, and extend our use of graphics and other means of communicating evidence, data and information well
- develop our website so that it becomes a prime source of ready information about the quality of youth offending and probation services.

### **What we plan to do in 2018-2020**

We will employ and develop youth offending and probation service professionals on secondment to us from youth offending and probation services and other relevant organisations, returning staff regularly to the field with enhanced exposure to inspection, benchmarking and standards. We will provide youth offending and probation staff with the opportunity to take part in inspections local to them, so as to promote awareness of inspection, benchmarking and standards.

We will keep our organisational design and its ways of working under review, with the aim of improving effectiveness and efficiency, and develop suitable performance measures.



## What this means for the public, victims and service users

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We aim to provide accessible and clear information to the public, victims and service users about what to expect from youth offending and probation services and the quality of what is actually delivered in their area, how it is delivered and how much it costs. We aim to make that information easy for people to use and understand. We aim to promote improvement by publishing quality standards and inspecting using those standards. We aim to drive improvement (where needed) by making recommendations in individual inspections and by rating and grading the quality of work we inspect.

People can expect the following changes:

- Better access to consistent and clear information about what to expect from youth offending and probation services.
- More targeted and timely information on the quality of probation and youth offending services across England and Wales, as we inspect services more.
- Better access to information about the quality of a broader range of youth offending and probation services.
- New ratings of youth offending and probation services.

Victims, potential victims and service users can expect the following changes:

- We will involve and consult with victims organisations and service users as we set quality standards and develop our methodologies and plans.
- We will inspect and report on the experience of victims and service users, as an integral part of routine inspections.
- We will always inspect and report on the extent to which services protect the public, victims and potential victims from harm.
- We will survey stakeholders annually and act on what respondents tell us.

In delivering this plan, we believe we will be doing all that we can to ensure that youth offending and probation services are of good quality for all.



## Our measures: How we intend to measure what we do

So that we know if we are succeeding, we will need to measure how we are doing. This is how we intend to do that.

<b>There is one common view of what represents good quality work, set out in our quality standards</b>	1. Youth offending and probation service professionals look to our quality standards to see what represents quality work, and see them as definitive.
	2. Commissioners, policy makers and providers accept our quality standards and do not develop or rely on alternative quality standards.
<b>Youth offending and probation services improve as a result of our inspections</b>	1. The number of services rated 'inadequate' or 'requires improvement' that improve on next inspection.
	2. The number/proportion of services that agree that our quality standards, reports and inspections help them to improve.
<b>Providers are overseen in coherent and proportionate oversight arrangements</b>	1. The oversight arrangements are clearly stated and accepted by informed commentators as balanced and proportionate.
	2. People trust our reports and believe in our independent, expert judgements about the quality of youth offending and probation services.
	3. Our ratings and gradings of services are seen as fair and consistent.
<b>We get more efficient and effective</b>	1. We work in collaboration with others where it is effective and efficient to do so.
	2. We make best use of information we have or can get readily, and do not ask for information from providers more than once.





## About HMI Probation

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**Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation is the independent inspector of youth offending and probation services in England and Wales.** We provide assurance on the effectiveness of work with adults and children who have offended to implement orders of the court, reduce reoffending, protect the public and safeguard the vulnerable. We inspect these services and publish inspection reports. We highlight good and poor practice, and use our data and information to encourage good quality services. We are independent of government, and speak independently.

### Our values:

**Integrity** - being honest, open, professional, fair and polite, and doing the right thing.

**Accountability** - being reliable, standing by the evidenced conclusions and accounting fully for our actions.

**Effectiveness** - setting quality standards by consensus and driving improvement through valid inspection and published reports.

**Inclusion** - promoting attention to diversity in all aspects of our work, and making sure that the needs of potential and actual victims and service users are taken into full account by youth offending and probation services.

### How to contact us:

HM Inspectorate of Probation  
1st Floor, Manchester Civil Justice Centre  
1 Bridge Street West  
Manchester  
M3 3FX

Telephone: 0161 240 5336

Email: [hmip.enquiries@hmiprobation.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:hmip.enquiries@hmiprobation.gsi.gov.uk)

Twitter: [@HMIProbation](https://twitter.com/HMIProbation)