

HM Inspectorate of Probation for England and Wales

Corporate Plan 2018-2021

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.



Our strategy at a glance

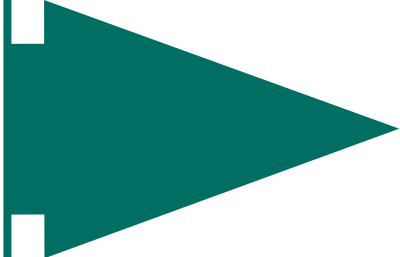
Our ambition for the next three years is:

- an agreed view of high-quality youth offending and probation services and how this should be measured
- youth offending and probation services protect the public and positively change the lives of the most challenging and vulnerable people in society, and more turn away from crime

We will achieve this by focusing on four priorities:

- 1** Promoting a single, shared view of high-quality services
- 2** Encouraging the delivery of high-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 high-quality work
 - youth offending and probation services improve because of our inspections
 - providers are inspected using 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

Increasingly, government and the public want effective community sentences as an alternative to short-sentence imprisonment. It is ever more important to us all that youth offending and probation services are as effective and efficient as possible.

For some, work starts early on. Youth Offending Teams work assiduously to turn children away from crime on any first brush with the law. We want to ensure high-quality youth offending work whether or not the child is convicted of an offence, and to enable both local and system-wide improvements.

Those working in probation have experienced a deal of change and uncertainty of late, with the prospect of more to come over the life of this corporate plan. Probation professionals will continue to strive to deliver well nevertheless, and we in turn will do all that we can to instil a common view of high-quality probation services, and to encourage and promote effective delivery in the field.

We will inspect differently, and more frequently, using standards for probation and youth offending services that we have developed with professionals and others. We are making sure our standards reflect the evidence-base for effective work, but also leave room for promising innovation. We are deepening our own expertise, with our inspectors and their managers now dedicated to CRC inspection, NPS inspection or YOT inspection, rather than working across all three. And we will conduct and publish research, with the aim of filling gaps in the evidence base for

what constitutes effective probation and youth offending services.

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. We have a deep, unwavering commitment to high-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. I hope you find our plans reflect that to the full.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G Stacey', written in a fluid, cursive style.

Dame Glenys Stacey
Chief Inspector



Introduction

In 2018 we begin inspecting youth offending and probation services in new ways. After consultation with key stakeholders we have agreed standards that underpin our inspections, and a system of rating youth and adult services. In this three-year plan we describe how we will deliver our new and ambitious approach to inspection. We are committed to ensuring that our inspections drive improvement throughout the system, improving the lives of children in youth offending services and people under probation supervision, and protecting the public.

What we know

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. With changes to the Youth Justice Board, the oversight arrangements for youth offending services are changing, with inspection playing a greater role in future.

Our inspection findings show the quality of National Probation Service (NPS) to be good overall, but it does vary from place to place and there are some persistent issues as well. Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) are generally not delivering well, although there are exceptions.

The government wish to see improvements across the board: ensuring the probation system provides better support in the community and protects the public, tackling re-offending through a cross-government approach. The government recognise the importance of our independent inspections. They value and trust our evidence-based findings and judgements of the work of CRCs, NPS divisions and individual Youth Offending Teams (YOTs).

Our ambition for the next three years

Our new standards and ratings descriptors make clear our understanding of good quality services, developed in close consultation with providers and others. We will keep our standards and ratings descriptors under careful review, to make sure they continue to exemplify high-quality services, and drive improvement wherever possible. We will do all that we can to make sure that providers continue to understand, accept and adopt our standards, so that there is one common, overall view of high-quality work while also leaving room for innovation and development.

Over the life of this plan, we intend to rate all YOTs we inspect, and inspect and rate all CRCs and NPS divisions annually. We will publish our reports and ratings, making apparent the effectiveness or otherwise of these vital public services. We will continue to work collaboratively with our stakeholders to evaluate and improve youth offending and probation services and their contribution to the wider criminal justice system. Our thematic inspections will support improved practice in a range of areas; our research will provide critical analysis that contributes to the understanding of high-quality youth offending and probation practice, and our work with other inspectorates and regulators will drive improvement in the wider criminal justice system.

We will continue to work with others to develop and improve the oversight arrangements for youth offending and probation services.





We will focus on four priorities to deliver our ambition:



Promoting a single, shared view of high-quality services

We will inspect against standards that we believe represent high-quality youth offending and probation work. Our quality standards cover the broad spectrum of work, and we will keep our standards up to date over time.



Encouraging the delivery of high-quality services

We will inspect youth offending and probation services with the aim of improving services. We will inspect organisations and their services against agreed standards and rate their delivery as either outstanding, good, requiring improvement, or inadequate.



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
- 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 inspect the quality of work of youth offending and probation services, and the way YOTs, CRCs and NPS divisions are led and run, using agreed quality standards.
- We will be inspecting more cases, so as to increase the confidence all can have in our findings.
- We will provide and publish ratings for youth offending and probation service we inspect
- We will deliver a unified approach to the oversight of probation services, led by our [Memorandum of Understanding](#) with the Ministry of Justice and HM Prison and Probation Service
- We will develop clear oversight models for youth offending services alongside the Youth Justice Board and the Ministry of Justice

- We will inspect all probation services annually, and inspect CRCs and NPS divisions separately
- We will select YOTs for inspection using a risk-based approach, guided by published criteria. We will be intelligence-led and focus our resources in a way that drives improvement
- We will inspect YOT out-of-court disposal work in each YOT inspection, for the first time, and we will develop and apply standards for youth resettlement work
- We will use data and information available to us from providers and others, so that as far as possible, providers are only asked for information once
- We will review our values to ensure they remain the best possible fit for our organisation, our role and our approach to the job that we do
- We will undertake a programme of in-house and commissioned research, to improve the evidence base for high-quality youth offending and probation services.



Promoting a single, shared view of quality services



What we know

In 2014 the government implemented its Transforming Rehabilitation plans for probation services. New court order provisions (Rehabilitation Activity Requirements) were introduced alongside contractual arrangements for the delivery of probation services to most individuals under probation supervision, and together these developments give Community Rehabilitation Companies great freedoms to determine how to best supervise offenders.

CRCs are held to account through contractual arrangements. The National Probation Service is held to account through more traditional public body performance management arrangements. There has not been a single, shared view of what represents quality services, and in practice, quality differs across the two sectors.

The work of YOTs has changed too, as there has been a substantial fall in first-time convictions, and in the use of custody for children over recent years. The Ministry of Justice, advised by the Youth Justice Board, have developed national standards for key areas, and so some expectations are helpfully set. However, those standards were not designed to support the inspection and rating of individual YOTs.

Youth offending services and probation providers need to know what represents high-quality work, and what is expected, so that they can deliver consistently well. Good providers will want to align their organisations around agreed standards of service delivery, to be as sure as possible that their services will lead to good outcomes for individuals, victims, communities and wider society.

Over the last twelve months we have consulted with government, youth offending and probation professionals, academics, representatives from the voluntary sector and others, to develop standards for youth offending and probation services. Our standards are based on evidence of how services can best protect the public and contribute to a reduction in reoffending. They set a common benchmark for high-quality services.

What we will do

We will inspect services against our published standards and rate local delivery accordingly as either outstanding, good, requiring improvement or inadequate. We will promote our standards as a benchmark for youth offending and probation services. We will keep our quality standards under review so they remain relevant, comprehensive and up to date. We will learn from our inspections and new research so that we can adapt our approach where appropriate to new practices, innovation, and wider systems change.

How we will do it

In 2018-2019 we will:

- promote our standards and work with providers and professionals to improve service delivery in youth and adult settings
- develop standards for youth resettlement services, and assess models of inspection for the new Offender Management in Custody



models being rolled out over 2018 to 2019.

- extend and develop our relationships with those interested and involved in probation standards and quality, domestically and internationally
- have an open dialogue with government, commissioners, providers, professionals, service users and others about our standards and ratings
- analyse data and information we collect in inspections to continually assess what represents high-quality work in protecting the public and reducing reoffending. This will inform any developments in our approach to standards and ratings
- conduct secondary analysis of existing inspection data to develop the evidence-base underpinning our inspections standards, at both the organisational level and individual case level. We will examine the main drivers of effective delivery
- build on the evidence base around effective practice by commissioning and conducting research. Research topics for consideration include the engagement of service users, investment in research and innovation, remote supervision including new technologies, and community hubs or other multi-agency facilities
- commence publishing Evidence & Learning Bulletins.

What we plan to do in 2019-2021

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

We will 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 government, providers and commissioners to make sure quality is measured consistently and in a way that encourages improvement.

We will continue to deliver a range of thematic inspections either as a single agency or with other regulators and inspectors. We will conduct research and analysis to develop the evidence-base for high-quality probation and youth offending services, and we will further strengthen our links with academia and the external research community.

When commissioned by ministers or others, we will continue to conduct specific case reviews and other reviews (for example, our investigation into the policy and process followed by the Victim Contact Scheme in the Worboys case) and identify and promulgate learning.

The findings from our inspections and research will inform our understanding of what helps and what hinders youth offending and probation services. We will use this evidence to consider and advise on system-wide change that can improve public protection, reduce the likelihood of reoffending, and change people's lives for the better.

Encouraging the delivery of high-quality services



What we know

The NPS is a national organisation, developing common ways of working across England and Wales. On inspection we have found the quality of NPS work to advise the court and to protect the public to be good overall, but with room for improvement locally. There is more it must do, to improve its work to rehabilitate offenders and to increase consistency.

Most CRCs have developed new and sometimes innovative operating models, but they have found it difficult to implement them fully. The specialist services that CRC supply chains were intended to provide have not materialised, and new 'Through the Gate' resettlement services have had a negligible impact. Some cannot deliver services in the way they expected, for financial and other reasons, and because of unexpected, ongoing difficulties connecting new IT systems with essential Ministry of Justice systems. Their quality of work has been mixed and in many respects poor, although there are exceptions.

Government, Judges, magistrates and the public want effective community sentences delivered in ways that are most likely to improve people's lives and contribute to a reduction in reoffending. They also expect that the public and victims are protected from harm. To meet these expectations, all probation work should be of a high-quality.

Youth offending services are well-established, but funding is less certain or long-term than it once was. YOTs 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 now 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 more significant area of work, and in our 2017 thematic inspection of this area of work we found out-of-court work of exceptional quality.

On inspection, we find YOTs performing to an acceptable level, although there are exceptions. We find a strong correlation between good leadership, partnership and governance arrangements and high-quality work. 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 YOTs.

By inspecting services against agreed standards and rating their provision we can drive improvements. That is why we have chosen to create standards for youth offending and probation services, and developed robust methodologies to inspect against them. Rating youth offending and probation providers will offer a clearer picture of where services are succeeding and where they are not.

What we will do

We will inspect youth offending and probation services against our standards, and rate them. We will inspect all probation services annually, and inspect CRCs and NPS divisions separately. We will select YOTs for inspection using a risk-based approach, guided by published selection criteria. We will rate all the services we inspect. Alongside our recommendations and action plans, we will use those ratings to encourage the delivery of high-quality services.



We will continue to draw upon the experience of other inspectorates and regulators and established best practice, to ensure our methodologies and programmes of inspection are as good as they can be. Our methodologies and programmes will be congruent, with common features, but will differ where necessary to take into account the differing contexts for the services we inspect. Through our inspection we will seek to drive improvement, enabling both local and system-wide improvements, and ensure that we hold services accountable to clear standards of delivery.

How we will do it

In 2018-2019 we will:

- inspect and rate the delivery of all 21 CRCs and each of the seven NPS divisions. We will select the youth offending services that we inspect by using a risk-based approach, guided by published selection criteria. Up to 30 YOTs will be inspected over the course of the year
- 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
- deliver our probation inspection methodology and approach. This includes inspecting CRCs and NPS divisions more frequently and regularly than we have in the past, and rating the quality of services that we find
- deliver our youth offending inspection methodology and approach. We will plan to conduct some inspections jointly with others (to add value) and to rate the quality of services that we find

- 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 work conducted by the NPS with registered sex offenders, and CRCs' work relating to domestic abuse. We will use our findings to improve practice and inform our standards
- continually review our methodologies and approaches to assess their effectiveness
- continue to conduct joint and thematic inspections with other criminal justice inspectorates, and liaise with other regulators and inspectorates where necessary and appropriate.

What we plan to do in 2019-2021

We will review our standards and methodologies systematically, learning from our inspections of youth offending and probation services as well as thematic and joint inspections and other developments in the field

We will continue to rate the quality of work delivered by each YOT, CRC and NPS division using a four-point scale, with the following categories: outstanding, good, requires improvement, and inadequate. 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 high-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

The oversight of the NPS and CRCs has been reviewed and respective roles and responsibilities have been clarified, as set out in a Memorandum of Understanding between HM Inspectorate of Probation, the Ministry of Justice and HM Prison and Probation Service.

We also know that 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. The Ministry of Justice sets detailed contractual obligations for CRCs. The detailed contract terms are being reviewed, with the aim of ensuring performance measures drive the right behaviours and focus on the right outcomes, albeit management information on task completion will still be collected and collated.

Local authorities are responsible for the performance of their own youth justice services overseen by the local Youth Justice Management Board. YOTs are regulated through a combination of those arrangements, our independent inspection, and Youth Justice Board oversight. We know that the way YOTs are overseen is changing as the role of the Youth Justice Board develops.

What we will do

We will increase inspection of probation services, inspecting all CRCs and NPS divisions annually and inspecting a broader range of work. We will work with stakeholders to ensure that the demands of inspection are proportionate and develop complementary ways of working with other inspectors, regulators, auditors and contract managers.

We will provide clear information about the oversight model for 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. We will continually review whether existing arrangements for oversight of youth offending and probation services are proportionate and reasonable.


As oversight arrangements for youth offending work change, we will increase inspection of YOTs. We will inspect them less frequently than probation services, given their number (156) and their comparative size. We will select YOTs for inspection based predominantly on a targeted, risk and intelligence-led basis.

We will rate 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 2018-2019 we will:

- agree with the Ministry of Justice a new oversight model for youth offending services and deliver the agreed oversight model for CRCs and the NPS.
- ensure that our quality standards are mapped against contract performance measures and requirements in service level agreements. We will be clear where and why any differences exist
- 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

- improve our engagement with a range of stakeholders to ensure that we benefit from wide-ranging expertise to inform our youth offending and probation inspection models.

What we plan to do in 2019-2021

Our inspection ratings 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, reporting any shortcomings in the model to government.

In discussion with our stakeholders and with the collated experience of inspecting against our standards, we will assess the most effective ways to encourage improvements and adapt accordingly.

We will develop the youth offending and probation service professionals on secondment to us, returning staff regularly to the field with enhanced understanding of and exposure to inspection, standards and ratings. We will provide youth offending and probation staff with the opportunity to take part in inspections local to them, so as to promote awareness and knowledge of the inspectorate's work.

Improving our own effectiveness and efficiency



What we know

Our provision annual funding for 2018 is c£6m. Managed well, this will enable us to deliver our expanded inspection regime in adult and youth settings, deliver thematic inspections, conduct and commission the necessary research, and recruit and retain a sufficient number of skilled staff.

Our resources are tight, and like others in the public sector, we have a responsibility to use them as effectively and efficiently as possible, so that we deliver value for money. We keep our costs as low as possible, and have low central overhead costs.

A large proportion of our resource is spent on staff, and they are our most valuable asset. Our people are skilled and highly-motivated to promote and ensure improved youth offending and probation services, and we are committed to making sure we support them to give of their best.

What we will do

We will continue to focus on providing an inspection service that is value for money and has impact. We are committed to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of how we work. We will develop our people strategy, to ensure we recruit, train and retain the right level of skilled and expert staff. We will involve our people fully in our aims and plans, live by our values and provide all at HMI Probation with the right tools and ways of working.

We will develop the way we communicate and use our evidence base, so that we make the most of the rich information the inspectorate holds. We will assess our impact and monitor the difference our inspections and recommendations make. We will improve our systems and processes, collaborating with and learning from other inspectorates and regulators.

How we will do it

In 2018-2019 we will:

- embed our new organisational design, setting clear and ambitious objectives for our staff
- keep our balance of staff under review, so that we are sufficiently flexible, effective, efficient and make best use of the knowledge and skills of our people
- develop and implement staff training and development plans so as to deliver new methodologies and programmes competently and confidently in 2018 and beyond
- focus on learning and continuous improvement through working with other inspectorates to develop inspection practices, and incorporate these into our ways of working
- develop and test systems to better assess the impact of our inspections and recommendations

- more effectively identify and communicate best practice across the sector to drive improvement
- further develop our communications and stakeholder engagement to increase our reach and impact, including our report preparation processes and skills, and exploring new and innovative means of communicating well
- develop our website so that it becomes a prime source of ready information about the quality of youth offending and probation services
- identify how we can better exploit the information and technology we have available currently, and identify whether there are any gaps that need to be filled to improve how we do our work.

What we plan to do in 2019-2021

We will ensure that all our staff have access to the training and development opportunities they need to do their job and develop their full potential.

We will develop suitable performance measures for HMI Probation with the aim of improving effectiveness and efficiency and improving the outcomes delivered across probation and youth offending services.

We aim to address the information and technology gaps we have identified to improve the way we work.





What this means for the public, victims and service users

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. We will raise awareness of 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 inspecting against our published quality standards. We will drive improvement (where needed) by making recommendations in individual inspections and thematics and rating 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 youth offending and probation services across England and Wales
- improved 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:

- when we review our standards and methods we will involve and consult with victims' organisations and service users
- we will ensure that the inspectorate listens to and learns from the lived experience of victims and service users
- we will always inspect and report on the extent to which services protect the public, victims and potential victims from harm
- we will survey a broad range of stakeholders annually and act on what respondents tell us.

In delivering this plan, we believe we will be doing all that we can to properly inspect youth offending and probation services, with the aim of improving those services to protect the public and reduce the likelihood of re-offending.



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.

There is a common view of what represents high-quality work, set out in our quality standards	1. Youth offending and probation service professionals look to our 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.
	3. The standards are adaptable to accommodate emerging good practice, research or innovation.
Youth offending and probation services improve as a result of our inspections and recommendations	1. Services agree that our quality standards, inspections and recommendations support them to improve practice.
	2. Our recommendations are implemented.
	3. The ratings for services improve upon re-inspection.
Providers are overseen in coherent and proportionate oversight arrangements	1. The oversight arrangements are clearly stated and accepted by a wide range of stakeholders as being balanced and proportionate.
	2. Stakeholders trust our reports and believe in our independent, expert judgements about the quality of youth offending and probation services.
We get more efficient and effective	1. We have the right organisational structure and staff to deliver our work.
	2. Our people have the right skills, training and support to deliver their work to a high-quality.
	3. We utilise the right IT to deliver an efficient and effective organisation.



About HMI Probation

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 high-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.

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Photos courtesy of Youth Justice Board

