



Her Majesty's
Inspectorate of
Probation

HM Inspectorate of Probation

Corporate Plan 2021-2024

Including:

Business Plan 2021/2022



A tentative return to normal

Justin Russell, Chief Inspector of Probation

Eighteen months on from the start of the UK's first lockdown and I feel optimistic about some return to more normal ways of working. While, at the time of writing, our inspections and thematics continue to be conducted remotely, and my workforce remains working from home, we have developed a blended way of working that will enable us to return to some onsite inspection while continuing to use remote activity for elements of inspection where there is clear advantage for the inspected body and/ or us. For the foreseeable future, we will liaise with the services we are inspecting in advance of our fieldwork to set out an agreed way of working during inspections. This will take account of each service's assessment of risk as well as the needs and desires of my staff and we have already started to test this collaborative approach.

While remote working has proved a challenge in some regards, it has also offered some advantages. For instance, it has meant less travelling time for staff attending our focus groups or in-depth interviews, who previously may have had to travel several hours to meet with our inspectors. And it has allowed us to deliver launch events and effective practice seminars for our thematic publications that are much more accessible to attendees who are widely dispersed across England and Wales.

Despite the unusual circumstances of the last year and a half, I am pleased to report that the Inspectorate has delivered against last year's business plan objectives, maintaining important public assurance of services under unique pressure. As I set out in my foreword to last year's corporate plan, given the huge operational pressures involved in operating through the pandemic we suspended routine local inspections and ratings for much of last year and focussed instead on looking at salient issues on a national thematic basis. In addition to our inspection of the quality of delivery under the Covid-19 related exceptional delivery models in both adult and youth services in 2020, my team went on to complete a national thematic on the route to recovery for probation services and another on the service's preparedness for unification of Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRC) and the

National Probation Service (NPS). Following the Black Lives Matter inspired debates of last summer, which affected everyone in the criminal justice system, we've also done two important thematics on race – looking at racial equality in the probation service and at the support and supervision of black and mixed heritage boys by youth offending services. We've also taken a national look at drug treatment services in the community for people on probation and with colleagues in the other three criminal justice inspectorates have undertaken the first fully joint inspection of the experience of people with a mental illness progressing through the criminal justice system.

Other notable deliverables include the finalisation and launch of our approach to quality assuring a sample of Serious Further Offence reviews - a new task that we began in April 2021 at the request of the Lord Chancellor; the introduction of new elements to our youth inspections – resettlement and a revision to our out of court disposals standard; and the development of our new methodology for inspecting probation services following unification, which we will apply from autumn 2021. The new approach will see us inspect all Probation Delivery Units (PDUs) over a three-year period, with a look at each region every year, and a strengthened approach to inspecting diversity and outcomes for people under probation supervision.

In terms of my other key strategic objectives, we continue to deliver effective practice products for probation and youth justice practitioners, which we have now extended to include seminars. And we have appointed our first Participation Lead to help us extend the involvement of people on probation and children in touch with the youth justice system in the evidence we collect on our core inspections as well as thematics.

Last but not least, I am absolutely delighted that my tenure has been extended by another two years, taking my time as Chief Inspector to mid-2024. This will enable me to see through the first round of probation PDU inspections as well as fully embed my strategic objectives. With this in mind, I have extended this corporate plan to match the remainder of my time in post and have set out in detail my business plan objectives for 2021/2022.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Justin Russell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Justin Russell
HM Chief Inspector of Probation

September 2021

HM Inspectorate of Probation

Our Vision

Promoting excellence in probation and youth offending services.

Our Mission

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation is the independent inspector of probation and youth offending services in England and Wales. Our mission is to promote positive changes in these services. Our recommendations, research and effective practice guidance drive improvements at individual, local and national levels. This leads to improved outcomes for adults on probation and children in contact with youth offending services, better information and support for victims; and better protection of the public.

Values

Influential

We care about making a positive impact on the organisations we inspect and the individuals they work with.

Independent

We ensure that the judgements we make are supported by evidence, are fair and impartial.

Professional

We work in a respectful, transparent, professional way, listening to and sharing learning internally and externally.

Inclusive

We will work as 'One HM Inspectorate of Probation', valuing and respecting each other's viewpoints and skills, so that everyone feels a part of what we do.

Diverse

We are passionate about diversity and the value that comes through giving everyone a voice in our inspections and the chance to succeed in our organisation.

Our strategic objectives for 2021-2024



Strategic objective 1:

Apply clear standards and robust inspection and rating to encourage the delivery of high-quality services

We will continue to inspect the quality of probation and youth offending services through our programme of local inspections in order to drive improvement. We will apply our updated inspection standards to our youth inspections, and we will respond to the unification of probation services in June 2021 by applying a new inspection approach.



Strategic objective 2:

Develop an inspection regime that flexibly responds to changes in the probation and youth justice landscape

We will keep our inspection approach under review, incorporating learning and making sure it is transparent and adequately reflects the delivery environment. We will monitor the changes we have made to both the youth and adult frameworks to ensure our inspection approach best delivers public assurance.



Strategic objective 3:

Identify and disseminate effective practice¹ to contribute to national policy thinking with a view to improving service delivery and impact

We will further refine our approach to identify and disseminate examples of effective and replicable practice, helping guide frontline staff and policy makers on what 'good' looks like. This will continue to be supported by our programme of thematic inspections and research projects that seek to inform both the policy and practice evidence base from a strategic perspective.



Strategic objective 4:

Increase the impact of the Inspectorate by expanding our reach into areas where independent scrutiny would add value

We will quality assure and rate a sample of Serious Further Offence reviews each year - from April 2021 and will publish a summary of our findings on a regular basis. We will keep under review other areas of probation and youth justice practice that are not currently the subject of independent scrutiny, but which might benefit from it. We will review the relative merits of HM Inspectorate of Probation involvement in potential new areas of work and assess the reach of our remit.

¹ Defined as 'Effective practice – where we see our standards delivered well in practice'.

Our achievements in 2020/2021

Progress against some of my key priorities for 2020/2021 are summarised below.

- **Refocusing our inspection activity to add most value**

Over the course of 2019/2020 we published 50 inspection reports of local youth offending and probation services and a range of national thematic inspections. In comparison, despite the interruption to business as usual caused by the pandemic, we published a total of 38 reports: 22 Youth Offending Service (YOS), 5 CRC and 1 NPS inspections, 8 thematics and 2 annual reports in 2020/2021. In addition, we contributed to three joint child safeguarding reports, a State of the Nation report from the joint Chiefs on the impact of Covid-19 on delivery of criminal justice services and led a commissioned inspection of the Northern Ireland Probation Service on behalf of Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland.

A number of these inspection reports related to activity conducted prior to April 2021, but we still conducted 14 small YOS inspections and 3 local probation inspections, as well as completing remotely the interrupted inspections that began before lockdown. In addition, we completed a thematic on probation's preparation for unification as well as embarking on another three thematics, along with partner Inspectorate colleagues in most cases, on substance misuse, mental health and service provision for black and mixed heritage boys.

In preparation for the unification of probation services, the Inspectorate has redesigned and will deliver a new inspection approach for the unified adult probation service from October 2021 based around local PDUs. We have also reviewed and redesigned elements of the youth inspection standards framework; and developed a method of providing independent quality assurance of Serious Further Offence reviews which we started to apply in April 2021, all following multiple public consultations.

- **Taking into account the views of people on probation and children in contact with the youth justice system**

Over the last year, for each thematic we have conducted, we have engaged with a range of third party organisations to gather the views of people on probation or of children in contact with youth offending services, using people with lived experience of being in prison or on probation to conduct the interviews. In order to give those individuals a clear voice, we have incorporated their views in our judgements as well as the reports but have also published dedicated reports summarising their feedback alongside.

In December 2020 we welcomed our first Participation Lead to the team. Under her guidance we are developing a more complete way of engaging those under the supervision of the services we inspect, both adult and youth, in our core inspections.

In the coming year we intend to develop a new Participation Strategy which will elevate our activity further.

- **What good looks like**

We have continued to develop our effective practice products, extending our activity beyond published documents to include seminars for practitioners. This provides the opportunity for those doing things well in frontline services to showcase their work, from which others can learn.

Most significantly, we published two comprehensive guides at the end of 2020, one for probation service staff and one for youth offending service case managers, on effective case supervision. Simultaneously, we produced an evidence resource, detailing the research base on effective probation practice which has been extremely well-received. We will mirror this for youth in 2021/2022.

In addition, we have published five Research and Analysis Bulletins and nine Academic Insights papers, contributing further to the probation and youth justice evidence base.

- **Looking forward to 2021/2022**

I am delighted that the Lord Chancellor has extended my appointment as Chief Inspector for another two years, taking my time at the Probation Inspectorate to mid-2024. This will allow me to see through the first cycle of probation inspections using the new methodology we have developed for local PDUs.

In addition, I have agreed to chair the Criminal Justice Joint Chief Inspectors' Group in 2021/2022 and have overseen the agreement of a new Joint Criminal Justice Inspectorates business plan, setting out a joint inspection programme until 2022/2023, including joint work on Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), supervision of extremist offenders in the community and a criminal justice system wide look at the support offered to victims.

Our objectives 2021/2022



Strategic objective 1:

Apply clear standards and robust inspection and rating to encourage the delivery of high-quality services

Probation inspection programme

- We will begin our new round of local probation inspections, post-unification, in autumn 2021 and will inspect six PDUs across three regions before the end of March 2022.
- We will conduct a post transition review of probation services in winter 2021.
- We will review our contribution to HM Inspectorate of Prisons' inspection of Rehabilitation and Release Planning.
- We will produce an annual report on our probation inspections at the beginning of 2022.

Youth inspection programme

- We will conduct 33 YOT inspections, 28 by ourselves and 5 jointly with other inspectorates.
- We will contribute to four Ofsted-led safeguarding visits in England and up to two of the Welsh equivalent.
- We will produce an annual report on our youth offending service inspections by March 2022.
- We will produce a Criminal Justice Joint Chief Inspectors' State of the Nation report at the end of 2021 covering how services are responding to the legacy of the pandemic.
- We will introduce a programme of training and accreditation for our inspectors in partnership with Skills for Justice to professionalise the inspector role.



Strategic objective 2:

Develop an inspection regime that flexibly responds to changes in the probation and youth justice landscape

Youth offending service inspection development

- We will introduce the new resettlement and out-of-court policy and practice elements of our standards framework to our core inspections starting July 2021.

Probation inspection development

- We will start our new inspection approach, post-unification, in autumn 2021.

Digital implementation

- We will introduce our new digital inspection tools for youth inspections from July 2021 and probation PDU inspections from autumn 2021.

- We will monitor the application of our new inspection frameworks and tools and respond to any immediate changes that need to be made in-year while ensuring some consistency of approach. We will learn from this next year of inspections and record any substantial changes that may need a more formal change programme response.



Strategic objective 3:

Identify and disseminate effective practice to contribute to national policy thinking with a view to improving service delivery and impact

Thematic reviews

Adult

- We will conduct the following thematic reviews of adult probation:
 - **mental health:** a joint thematic with HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and HM Inspectorate of Prisons with input from the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW) looking at the quality of mental health provision at every stage of the criminal justice system. To be published autumn 2021
 - **electronic monitoring:** a HM Inspectorate of Probation only thematic looking at the use of electronic monitoring as a tool for probation in reducing reoffending and managing risk including the use of new GPS technology. Publication in early 2022
 - **Offender Management in Custody (OMiC):** a joint thematic with HM Inspectorate of Prisons looking at how the new OMiC model is embedding in practice. The pilot will take place in 2021/2022 with the bulk of the project in 2022/2023
 - **MAPPA:** a joint thematic on Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements for high risk offenders, including the effectiveness of joint working arrangements between probation, police and other agencies to manage risk of serious harm. To involve HM Inspectorate of Probation, HM Inspectorate of Prisons and HMICFRS. Fieldwork will start in January 2022.

Youth

- We will conduct the following thematic reviews of youth offending services:
 - **race:** a thematic review of the quality of youth offending service delivery specifically to black and mixed heritage boys. To be published in autumn 2021
 - **education, training and employment (ETE):** a joint thematic with Ofsted and Estyn in Wales on the provision of education, training and employment opportunities to children supervised by youth offending teams. Fieldwork from December 2021
 - **girls:** a joint thematic review, with HM Inspectorate of Prisons (lead), CQC and Ofsted on the experience of girls in custody and on post-release supervision. To be published in spring 2022
 - **serious youth violence:** a joint thematic, led by HMICFRS, with Ofsted and CQC on serious youth violence (among those up to the age of 25 years).

Research

Secondary analysis

- We will undertake secondary analysis of existing inspection data. Key topics for analysis include:
 - the quality of delivery of out-of-court disposals in youth justice
 - the identification of safety concerns by youth offending services
 - inspecting youth offending services: a technical review of our standards framework
 - delivery of probation services: links between inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes
 - delivery of youth offending services: links between inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes.

Primary research

- We will undertake primary research projects on:
 - knife crime and young people – exploring promising strategies, interventions and casework
 - staff experiences of supervising service users at risk of self-harm and/or suicide
 - working with trauma: an exploration of current probation service approaches
 - contextual safeguarding
 - community resolutions.

Academic Insights

- We will continue to commission leading academics to present their views on specific topics, assisting with informed debate and aiding understanding of what helps and what hinders probation and youth offending services.

Evidence-based resource

- We will launch a modular, web-based resource that sets out the evidence base underpinning our youth offending service inspection standards starting in the winter of 2021/2022.

Effective practice – where we see our standards delivered well in practice

- We will continue to publish effective practice products alongside all thematic inspections.



Strategic objective 4:

Increase the impact of the Inspectorate by expanding our reach into areas where independent scrutiny would add value

Independent assurance of Serious Further Offences reviews

- We will routinely quality assure a sample of Serious Further Offence (SFO) reviews from April 2021.

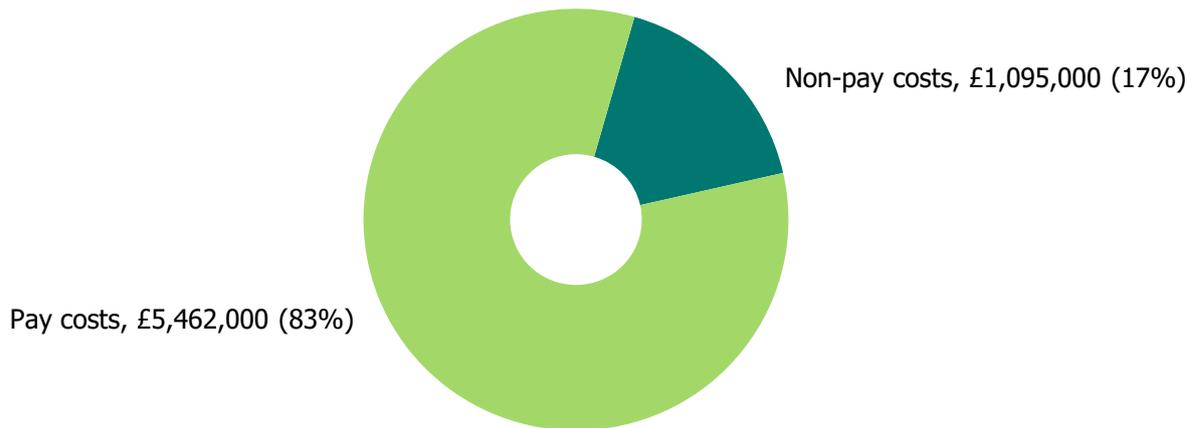
- We will develop a multi-agency oversight function around SFO reviews to ensure learning is taken forward by other criminal justice agencies in relevant cases.
- We will develop benchmarking activity, in conjunction with the HM Prison and Probation Service team, for regional SFO leads to ensure our learning from the quality assurance of SFO reviews is incorporated into practice.
- We will report on our findings from our assurance activity at the end of 2021.

About HM Inspectorate of Probation

Our budget 2021/2022

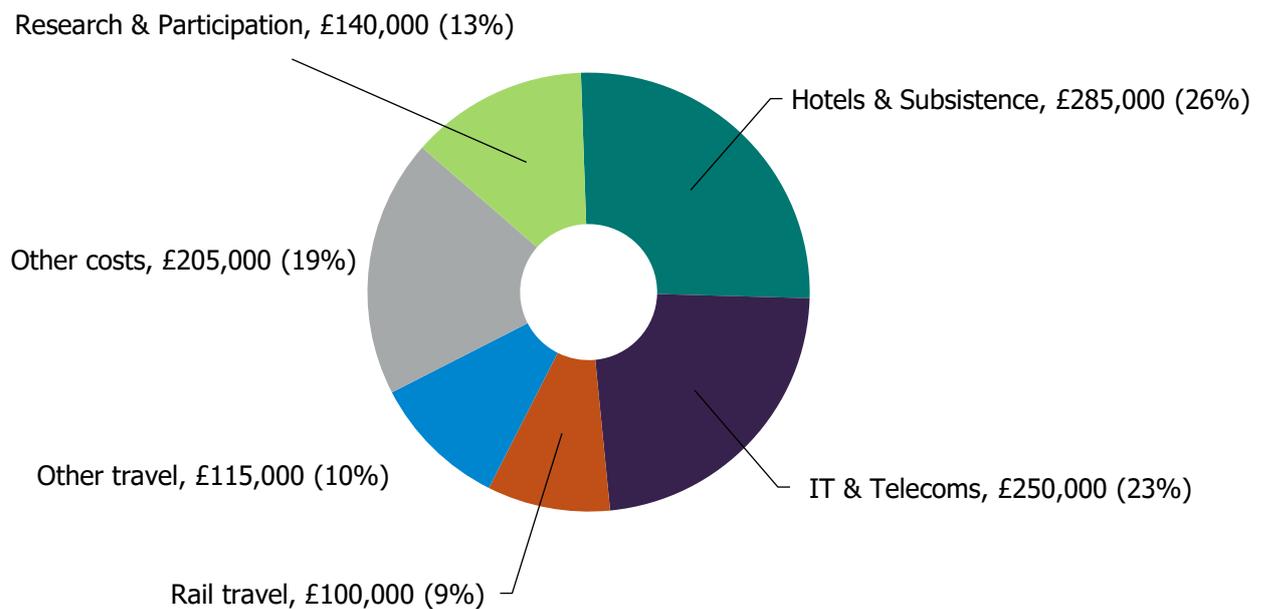
HM Inspectorate of Probation receives a delegated budget from the MOJ which, for 2021/2022, is £6.56m. At its highest level our budget can be separated into pay and non-pay costs, as shown below.

Pay vs. Non-pay costs



Less than 20 per cent of our budget is spent on non-pay costs; a breakdown of these is given below. Over half (53 per cent) of our non-pay costs relate directly to inspection activity – hotels and subsistence, rail and other travel costs, and participation. Expenditure on this will depend on what proportion of inspections are conducted remotely as opposed to onsite in 2021/2022.

Breakdown of non-pay budget 2021/2022



Our structure

HM Inspectorate of Probation is an organisation of up to 90 staff, divided into two directorates, the Strategy and Research Directorate and the Operations Directorate. Each is headed by a Director, who reports directly to the Chief Inspector.

HM Chief Inspector of Probation	
Operations Directorate	Strategy and Research Directorate
Training and development	Thematics and joint working
Probation inspection	Inspection standards & policy
Effective practice	Participation
Youth inspections	Research
Inspection methodology and assurance	Communications
Operations management	

Our **Strategy and Research Directorate** has responsibility for steering the Inspectorate's strategic direction. It ensures that our inspection approach both maximises the impact of inspection on the quality of probation services and drives improvements in their provision; and that it can adapt to changes in the way probation services are provided and to changes in the oversight model or any extension of remit. Five main areas of work are delivered by the Directorate covering, thematics and joint inspections, inspection approach including standards and policy, research, participation and communications.

Our **Operations Directorate** has responsibility for leading the delivery of our annual programmes of inspection and rating of providers. The Directorate encompasses six different strands of work: inspection of the Probation Service; inspection of Youth Offending Teams; effective practice; inspection methodology and assurance; training and development; and operations management.

The majority of our HQ staff are permanent civil servants. Our inspection staff are drawn from across different backgrounds, though the majority have worked at some time in probation or youth offending services. We maintain an approximate 50:50 split in permanent and seconded staff across our HM Inspector group and 30:70 in our Assistant Inspector (AI) group to ensure that we retain up-to-date operational experience in our inspection teams.

People survey

We received a 92 per cent response rate (an increase of 28 per cent on the previous year) to the annual Civil Service People Survey in 2020, with an engagement index of 76 per cent (an increase of seven per cent on the previous year). We have continued to build on this positive baseline through multiple surveys and focus groups with our staff to measure and respond to their changing wellbeing needs during the various pandemic lockdowns. We have strengthened the governance of our wellbeing activity and have signposted staff to wellbeing resources through our fortnightly staff bulletin during the period of remote working. In addition, we have engaged our staff in developing our future ways of working,

responding to the needs of staff and inspected services as we return to more normal ways of operating.

Increasing the ethnic diversity of our inspection staff

We collect diversity data from our staff group on an annual basis. As part of our diversity action plan we committed to compare the ethnic diversity of our staff to that in the inspected services, where it was available. The analysis revealed that we had a lack of comparative diversity among our inspection staff which we prioritised for action in 2020/2021.

We ran a shadowing scheme for staff employed in probation or youth offending services from an ethnic minority background early in 2021 with a total of 31 participants going through the process. The purpose being to expose candidates to a 'day in a life of' an inspector in the hope of promoting our roles to a wider audience.

We also set up and introduced a mentoring/support scheme for all applicants who are successful at sift to our inspection staff recruitment campaigns. Early indications are that this scheme has been well received by candidates.

A significant amount of work has been undertaken to update and amend our recruitment processes (with a view to specifically eliminating any bias) for both the AI and HMI roles.

We have successfully run the AI recruitment process from start to finish and it has worked well. We will be undertaking a formal review of the whole process in due course, but we know that black, Asian and minority ethnic candidates made up 44 per cent of all applications, with a similar proportion of successful applicants.

Professionalising our inspector roles

The skills required for inspection are distinct from those that most staff will have acquired as practitioners and managers in operational organisations. Until now, however, there has been no process for accrediting these skills and experience. HM Inspectorate of Probation will therefore be applying to become an accredited centre with Skills for Justice as the awarding body, in 2021.

The professionalisation project is reviewing and revising the HM Inspectorate of Probation core inspector and lead inspector training programme to align to ten agreed occupational standards for inspectors. This will enable new inspectors to learn and demonstrate core inspection skills during their first year of appointment and achieve a certificate of achievement.

We anticipate that our accreditation programme will:

- ensure that all HMIs and AIs are trained to the same high standard
- ensure that the work of all inspection staff is assessed to ensure consistency within the inspection process
- support staff to work efficiently and effectively to transparent standards
- provide inspected bodies with assurance about the quality of inspection work
- recognise inspection skills, by having them accredited
- enhance career development opportunities.