



Her Majesty's  
Inspectorate of  
Probation

# HM Inspectorate of Probation

Corporate Plan 2022-2024

Including:

Business Plan 2022/2023



## **Justin Russell, Chief Inspector of Probation**

It is now over a year since the Probation Service was reunified back into the public sector. The next three years will be crucial as these new unified structures bed in, and the service continues its recovery from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, which have been profound. Normal operating arrangements have been suspended for many months over the last two years and this has inevitably been reflected in our most recent probation inspection scores. But I hope that by the end of the three-year period covered by this corporate plan, we will start to see significant improvements in ratings and performance, and the morale of the service. And I hope the feedback and recommendations we provide and the effective practice that we identify, can help the probation service with this recovery.

Our core purpose remains to promote high-quality probation and youth offending services that change people's lives for the better. We do this not just through local inspections, but through our national thematics, research and increasingly important effective practice guides as well. We're also continuing to listen to the voices of people on probation on our thematic inspections, a priority for me since I became Chief Inspector, and over the next three years our new partnership with User Voice will greatly expand the evidence we collect from them on local inspections too.

The picture for our youth inspections has remained more positive despite the pandemic. But the complexities and traumas that children being supervised by local youth offending services (YOS) experience remain very challenging and, in some ways, have become even more pronounced. We continue to work to improve our youth justice inspection methodology and are aiming to complete our current six-year cycle of all local YOS inspections by May 2024. A key priority over the coming year will be to start to develop a methodology for the next full cycle of YOS inspections, bearing in mind the significant changes to this landscape since our previous cycle started in 2018. We will also be taking forward important thematic inspections in 2023/24 of the relationship between youth

offending services and children's social care and of the transition of children from YOS to probation and of the supervision of young adults by probation.

Finally, my extended tenure began on 1 June 2022 and will run until 31 May 2024. In this corporate plan, I have set out in detail my business plan objectives for 2022/2023.

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**

**August 2022**

# HM Inspectorate of Probation

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## Our Vision

High-quality probation and youth offending services that change people's lives for the better.

## Our Purpose

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation is the independent inspector of probation and youth offending services in England and Wales. We set the standards that shine a light on the quality and impact of these services. Our inspections, reviews, research and effective practice products provide authoritative and evidence-based judgements and guidance. We use our voice to drive system change, with a focus on inclusion and diversity. Our scrutiny leads to improved outcomes for individuals and communities.

## 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 2022-2024

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### **Strategic objective 1:**

Strong focus on workforce development

We will continue to develop our staff to make sure they have the appropriate skills and expertise to deliver our purpose. Our new inspection skills certification programme and Learning, Development and Quality Assurance Team will ensure that all of our inspections are conducted to the highest possible quality.



### **Strategic objective 2:**

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 our new, more local probation inspection approach.



### **Strategic objective 3:**

Further develop the inspection regime to flexibly respond to changes in the probation and youth justice landscape

We will continue to develop our inspection standards and methodology – including the introduction of new regional ratings and standards for probation from April 2023. Proposals for a new methodology for our next cycle of youth inspections from 2024 will be developed and consulted on. 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 4:**

Contribute to national policy thinking with a view to improving service delivery, and increase the impact of the Inspectorate by expanding our reach into areas where independent scrutiny would add value

We will increase the impact of the Inspectorate on the services we inspect and those they interact with by promoting our inspection findings, publishing research, disseminating effective practice, undertaking thematic inspections and expanding our reach into areas where independent scrutiny would add value. We will continue to quality assure serious further offence reviews and to undertake high profile reviews ourselves when asked to do so. Proposals for inspecting approved premises will be developed to expand our role in this critical area of probation delivery.

## Our achievements in 2021/2022

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Progress against some of my key priorities for 2021/2022 are summarised below.

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

Following unification in June 2021, we have implemented our new probation inspection approach focused on local Probation Delivery Units (PDUs). Using our new methodology and standards for the unified service and our adapted remote inspection techniques, we restarted our core local inspection programme at the end of October 2021. Our programme of YOT inspections continued in 2021 and into 2022. In 2021/2022, we published a total of 44 inspection reports: 6 adult inspections, 29 youth inspections, 6 thematic, 1 joint targeted area inspection and 2 annual reports (probation and youth offending services). Four of our published thematic inspections were joint inspections (on drugs, mental health, education, training and employment (ETE) for YOT cases, and Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)).

We are always looking to continuously improve our methodology and increase the impact of our inspections. This has included the introduction of a new standard to our YOT inspections to assess the quality of work done to support children after release from custody and a new standard around the outcomes for people on probation from their first months under supervision. Additionally, the publication of every thematic report is now accompanied by an online launch event open to any practitioner to attend and, where we see effective practice, guides and/ or events capturing this for managers and practitioners. We have also been running workshops for local heads of services to explain our methodology and key findings.

We have also invested significantly in quality assurance of our inspectors – with two new full time quality assurance staff appointed to dip sample and quality assure the judgements being made by our inspectors. We have continued to routinely quality assure a sample of serious further offence (SFO) reviews undertaken by the probation service itself and we will publish a report on our first-year findings from our assurance activity this summer.

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

Over the last year, as part of all our thematic inspections, we have continued to engage with a range of organisations to interview people on probation on our behalf, using people who have been through the system themselves to conduct the interviews. In addition, we have now launched a three-year partnership with the organisation User Voice to collect the views of people on probation as part of all of our local PDU probation inspections.

- **What does effective practice look like?**

We have continued to publish effective practice guides alongside our thematic inspections and have extended our effective practice 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.

At the start of 2021 we published two comprehensive guides on effective case supervision – one for probation service staff and one for youth offending service case managers. These were reformatted in March 2022. Effective practice guides published in 2021/2022 alongside some of our thematic inspections include:

- Substance misuse (September 2021)

- Black and mixed heritage boys in the youth justice system (December 2021)
- Electronic monitoring (January 2022)
- Mental health effective practice guide (February 2022)
- Education, training, and employment services (June 2022)
- Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (July 2022)

In addition, we have published 5 Research and Analysis Bulletins and 10 Academic Insights papers since our previous corporate plan was published, contributing further to the probation and youth justice evidence base. We have also now completed our webpage reviewing the evidence base for high-quality probation services: [The evidence base – probation services \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://justiceinspectorates.gov.uk)

## Our objectives 2022/2023

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### Strategic objective 1:

Strong focus on workforce development

- Our new Learning, Development and Quality Assurance Team will develop and implement a learning and development strategy by January 2023.
- Our People and Culture Group will review how we recruit, train, reward and provide opportunities for progress for all staff.
- We will ensure that all new HM Inspectors and Assistant Inspectors complete our professional development curriculum and are able to gain our new externally accredited certificate in inspection skills.



### Strategic objective 2:

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

#### Probation inspection programme

- We will inspect 20 PDUs by April 2023.
- We will develop proposals for an inspection regime for approved premises with the aim of piloting this in 2023/24.
- We will expand the quality assurance of our inspections with two full-time quality assurance staff in place by summer 2022.

#### Youth inspection programme

- We will conduct 34 YOT inspections by June 2023.
- We will review the potential of re-joining Ofsted led joint targeted area inspections in 2023/24.
- We will produce an annual report on our youth offending service inspections by March 2023.



### Strategic objective 3:

Further develop the inspection regime that flexibly responds to changes in the probation and youth justice landscape

#### Youth offending service inspection development

- We will implement the recommendations of our reviews of our youth inspection methodology in summer 2022.
- We will start to develop proposals for reforms to our youth justice inspection ratings and standards ahead of our next cycle of youth offending services inspections which start in 2024.

#### Probation inspection development

- We will finalise and pilot proposals for our regional probation standards and ratings in December 2022 and go live with the final agreed standards from April 2023.



## Digital implementation

- We will start to implement our new digital inspection tools in Q4 2022.



### Strategic objective 4:

Contribute to national policy thinking with a view to improving service delivery, and increase the impact of the Inspectorate by expanding our reach into areas where independent scrutiny would add value

## Thematic reviews

### Adult

- We will conduct the following thematic reviews of adult probation in 2022/23:
  - **Offender Management in Custody (OMiC):** a joint thematic with HM Inspectorate of Prisons looking at how the new OMiC model is embedding in practice.
  - **Meeting the needs of victims in the Criminal Justice System:** This joint inspection will focus on the quality of communication and support for victims at each stage of the criminal justice system. HMI Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) will lead with HM Inspectorate of Probation and HM Crown Prosecution Inspectorate (HMCPSI) as partners.
  - **Extremism:** This joint inspection will build on recent reviews and include a focus on the implementation of the new probation national security directorate and case management arrangements for this cohort of people on sentences supervised by probation. HM Inspectorate of Probation will lead with HMICFRS and HMI Prisons as partners.
  - **Domestic abuse:** We published a critical thematic review of Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) work on domestic abuse in 2018 but we continue to find issues around domestic abuse checks and the quality of supervision. This follow-up thematic will allow us to take a closer look at the data sharing/checking arrangements between probation and police as well as the delivery and effectiveness of the Building Better Relationships programme and other interventions with this cohort. We will consider the potential to make this a joint inspection through the joint inspectorate group.
  - **Racial equality in probation:** In March 2021 we published our thematic review of [Race equality in probation: the experiences of black, Asian and minority ethnic probation service users and staff \(justiceinspectors.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/race-equality-in-probation-the-experiences-of-black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-probation-service-users-and-staff). Our concerns were such that we committed to revisit this thematic topic within two years of publication. We will be looking for evidence of significant progress in addressing our original thematic recommendations. This piece of work will take place towards the end of 2022-2023.

## Research

### Secondary analysis

- We will undertake secondary analysis of existing inspection data. Key topics for analysis include:
  - The identification of safety concerns by youth offending services.

- The delivery of probation services: links between inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes.
- The delivery of youth offending services: links between inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes.

#### Primary research

- We will undertake primary research projects on:
  - The implementation and delivery of community resolutions: the role of youth offending services.
  - Exploring the use of Contextual Safeguarding approaches by youth offending services.
  - Probation interventions – the current landscape.
  - Care-experienced children and/or young adults.

#### 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 are committed to reviewing, developing and promoting the evidence base for high-quality probation services. We use both research and inspection findings to:
  - Inform our understanding of what helps and what hinders probation services.
  - Develop our inspection programmes, guidance and effective practice products.
  - Consider system-wide change that could improve public protection, support distance, and change people's lives for the better.

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

- Where we see effective practice we will continue to showcase and share via effective practice guides and/ or events.
- We will actively pursue opportunities to share effective practice from our core inspection programmes.

#### Independent assurance of Serious Further Offences reviews

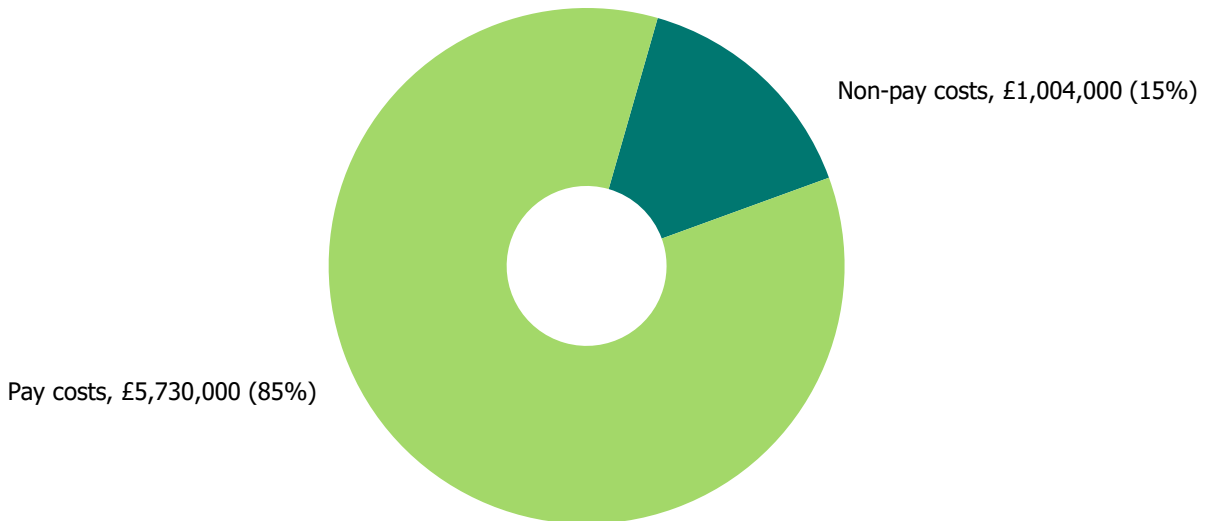
- We will continue to routinely quality assure 20% of all SFO reviews completed by the probation service.
- We will report on our findings from our assurance activity in 2021/22 in the summer of 2022.
- We will continue to undertake SFO reviews ourselves on high profile cases, when commissioned to do so by the Secretary of State and will review the resource requirements for our SFO team, due to the increased demand for these types of review.

# About HM Inspectorate of Probation

## Our budget 2022/2023

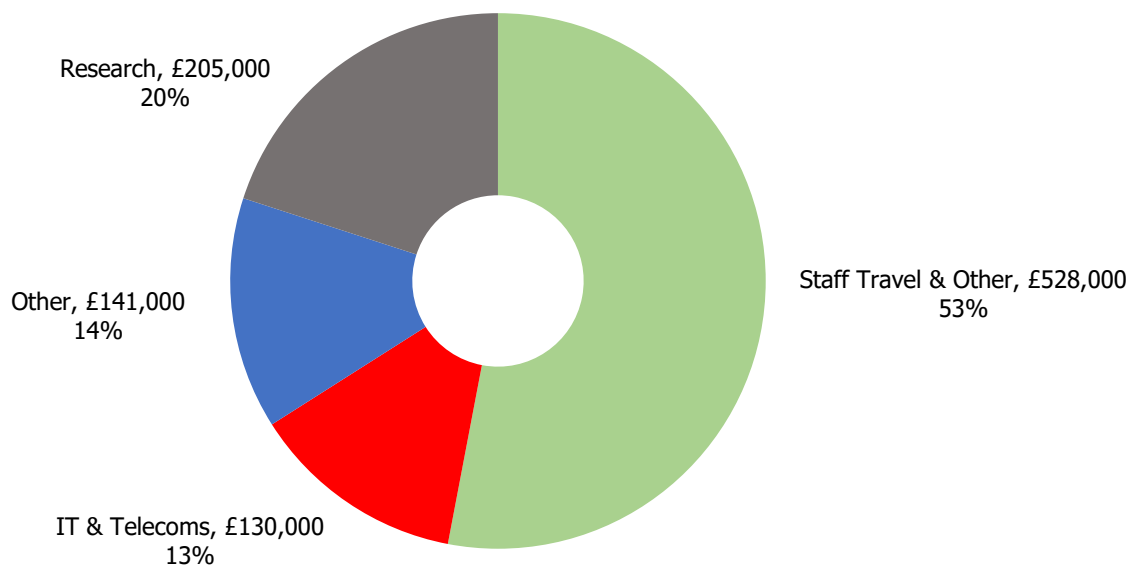
HM Inspectorate of Probation receives a delegated budget from the MOJ which, for 2022/2023, is £6.54m. A further £194k has been provided by HMPPS to fund SFO inspections. At its highest level our budget can be separated into pay and non-pay costs, as shown below.

### Pay vs. Non-pay costs



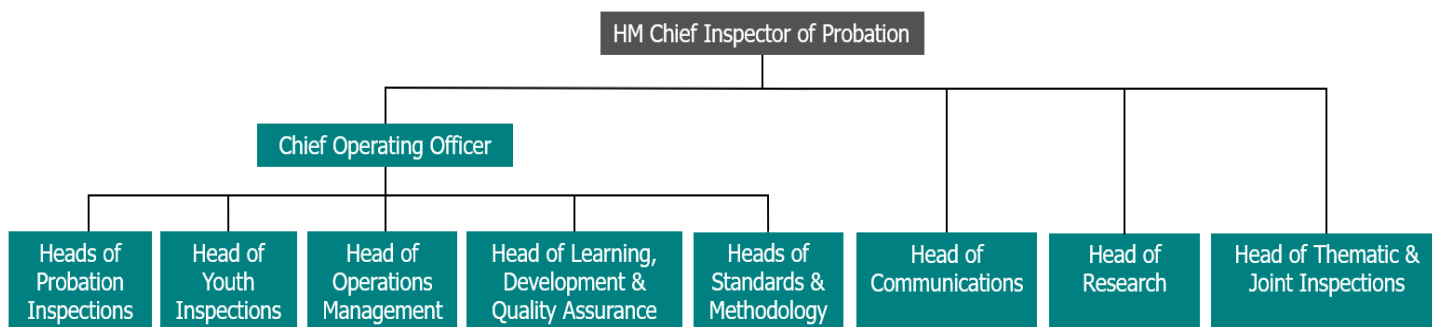
Less than 20 percent of our budget is spent on non-pay costs; a breakdown of these is given below. Over half (53 percent) of our non-pay costs relate directly to inspection activity – hotels and subsistence, rail and other travel costs, and participation.

### Breakdown of non-pay budget 2021/2022



## Our structure

HM Inspectorate of Probation is an organisation of 82 staff (July 2022). The Chief Inspector is supported by a Chief Operating Officer who line manages the Heads of inspection teams and the headquarters functions which support these. The Inspectorate also has the Heads of research, thematic inspections, and communications who are line managed by the Chief Inspector himself.



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 60:40 split in permanent and seconded staff across our HM Inspector group and 30:70 in our Assistant Inspector group to ensure that we retain up-to-date operational experience in our inspection teams.

### People survey

We received an 81 per cent response rate with an engagement index of 60 per cent (a decrease on the previous year). To address this, we have reformed our SMT and governance arrangements, and introduced a People and Culture Group with the primary purpose of owning and improving issues of culture and ways of working on behalf of the organisation. We continue to signpost staff to wellbeing resources through our fortnightly staff bulletin.

### Increasing the ethnic diversity of our inspection staff

We collect diversity data from our staff group on an annual basis and we have a [Diversity and Inclusion Strategy](#) from which we have focused on updating and amending our recruitment processes. The percentage of our inspection staff from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups is now 18% - which is a significant improvement from last year, thanks to a drive to recruit more ethnically diverse inspector teams in 2021.

### Professionalising staff roles

Our Research Team are all members of the Government Social Research Profession and undertake a minimum of 50 hours professional development on social research each year. The Profession follows the [GSR membership guidance](#) and [GSR Social Research Technical Framework](#).

We expect all new HM Inspectors (HMI) and Assistant Inspectors (AI) to enrol for the HM Inspectorate of Probation Inspection Skills Certificate of Achievement, and to achieve this

within their first year in post. The Inspection Skills Certificate of Achievement will be recognised externally as the Inspectorate is obtaining recognition as an accredited skills centre assessed and externally quality assured by SFJ Awards.

All new inspectors undertake a learning and development programme including comprehensive induction, core skills training, shadowing and ongoing feedback on practice and lead inspector skills training for HMIs.

Inspectors are required to meet all the assessment criteria within the bespoke inspector designed Occupational Standards. Four occupational standards are applicable for AIs, and all eight occupational standards apply to HMIs:

- Develop your knowledge skills and competence (OS1)
- Planning and preparing to lead an inspection (OS2 ) – HMI only
- Leading an inspection team (OS3) – HMI only
- Case inspection and providing feedback to practitioners (OS4)
- Leading meetings, gathering information and giving feedback during inspection activity (OS5)
- Promote equality, value diversity and inclusion (OS6)
- Analysing and interpreting information gathered during an inspection (OS7) – HMI only
- Write inspection reports (OS8) – HMI only