



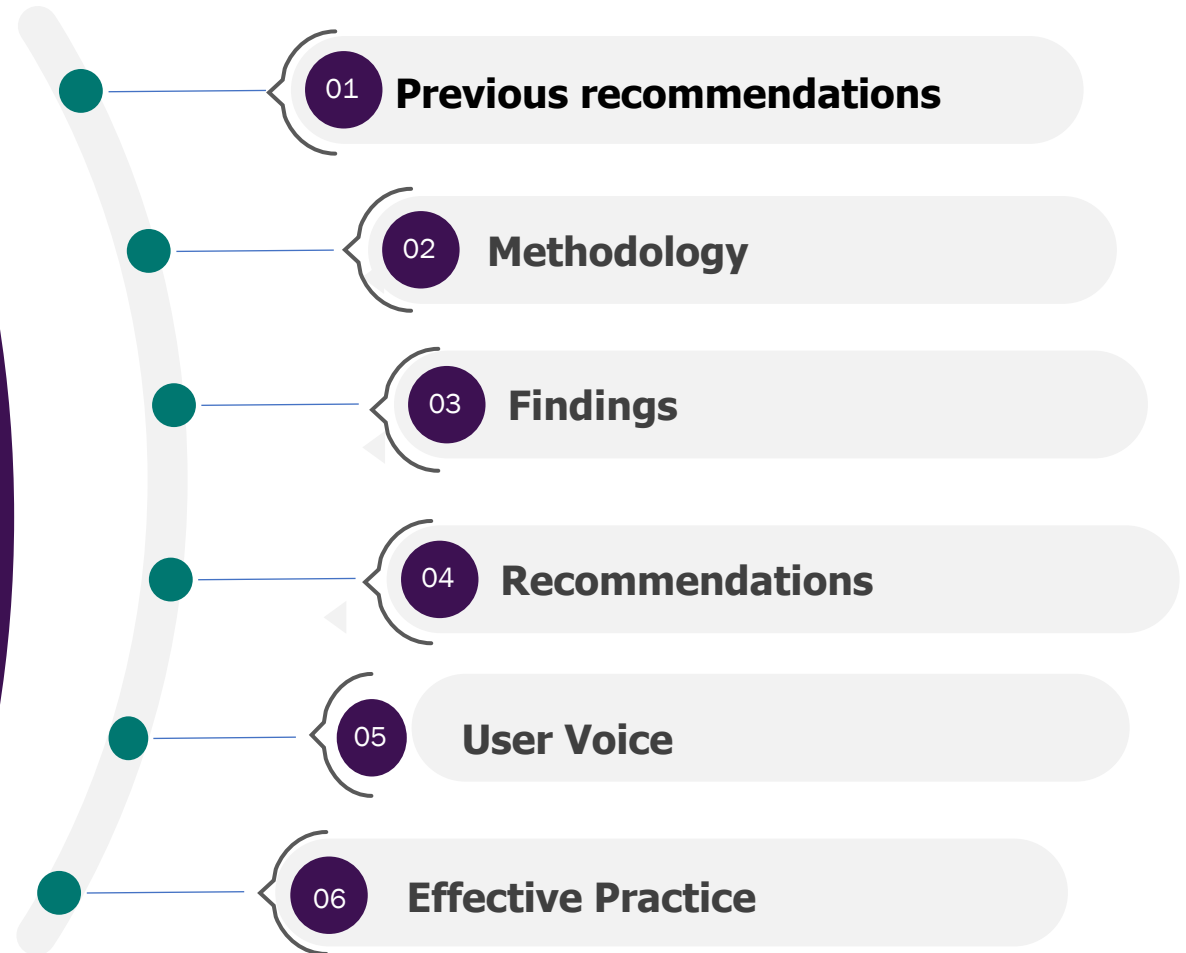
HM Inspectorate
of Probation

Race equality in probation follow-up: A work in progress

A thematic inspection by HM Inspectorate of Probation

Launch event - Friday 08 September 2023

**Today's speakers
will present on the
following aspects
of the report:**



Key findings and recommendations from 2021

Assessment and engagement with minority ethnic people on probation **required improvement** and few specific services were commissioned. There was **little training** on race equality and minority ethnic staff **lacked confidence** in management's response to their concerns.

We made 15 recommendations including:



- **Improve** the quality of assessments on minority ethnic individuals
- **Commission** services for minority ethnic people on probation
- **Ensure** ongoing engagement of minority ethnic staff
- **Develop** learning programmes for all staff



Methodology

- Met with national leaders responsible for implementing the previous inspection action plan
- Visited five PDUs: Bedfordshire, Nottingham, Southwark, Walsall and Wolverhampton, Bradford and Calderdale.
- Met with key leaders and managers in each Region
- Inspected 50 cases of minority ethnic people on probation, interviewing 44 practitioners
- Reviewed data from 1547 cases from 32 PDUs in our core local inspection programme
- Surveyed 97 minority ethnic probation staff
- User Voice spoke with 82 minority ethnic people on probation
- 52 staff and 47 managers attended focus groups





Culture and inclusivity

76 per cent of minority ethnic staff say there is an inclusive culture in probation:

“People are now more inclusive in my office”

However, negative experiences continue:

“I see white senior managers coming into the office now and again. They don’t talk to me and tend to gravitate to white staff”

“The culture here is terrible. People rarely mix and there are teams within teams”



Understanding and support from managers

41 per cent minority ethnic staff consider managers to have **'little' or 'no' understanding** of the issues they face.

“Black people, Asian people and those from mixed heritage backgrounds have different needs. They are all clumped together”

Most are **not consulted** before being allocated a racially motivated offender

“If I had to go back to a manager to say I can't have a case it would concern me that I would be judged as being incompetent”



Fairness, development and progression

58 per cent are **encouraged** and **supported** to progress
However, 41 per cent do not believe that there is equal opportunity in staff recruitment in the Probation Service.

“As non-white staff we must constantly prove ourselves. If we make a mistake it is twice as bad compared to a white person making it.”

Minority ethnic staff are as likely to be promoted as white staff, but there is still underrepresentation in assistant chief officer grades.





Handling of complaints and grievances

- 45 per cent **do not feel safe** raising issues of racial discrimination and only two out of 17 who raised grievances felt they were dealt with to their satisfaction.
- However, grievances of minority ethnic staff are now as likely to be upheld as white staff.

There is cumulative impact of negative experiences:

“I feel betrayed. I have given so much of my working life to probation and they have shown I don’t matter to them. I have now logged off.”





Leadership, Strategy and resources

- The Race Action Programme have led some important initiatives, however, they have not always become locally embedded
- Clear commitments from Regional Probation Directors, however not always recalled by frontline staff
- No centrally driven strategy for race equality in service delivery
- Important role of local leaders in communicating initiatives and modelling behaviours and expectations



Staff recruitment, development, training and engagement

- Staff are **more representative** of the communities served, however, **minority ethnic people fare worse** in the recruitment process.
- **Just** 45 per cent of practitioners said there is **sufficient training** on race equality and diversity, however there are some **positive local initiatives**.
- Training programmes for managers on managing inclusion and diversity are being rolled out.
- Minority ethnic staff have **statistically significant lower levels of satisfaction** than white staff on several key measures.



Services for minority ethnic people on probation

Commissioning of specialist services was delayed and the funds available have been reduced. Only one such service was seen on inspection.

Knowledge of services in the local community was anecdotal and lacked coordination

Many waiting areas were bare, lacking in positive images of minority ethnic people

Learning from the PSR pilot courts about improving the quality and targeting of reports on minority ethnic people has not been disseminated.



Use of research and information

- Research on the value of matching practitioners and people on probation by ethnicity was produced but not translated into policy/practice.
- Comprehensive data on service delivery and HR outcomes is now published annually.
- The Probation Equality Monitoring Tool is available to monitor disproportionality, however, it is not well understood or used consistently.

“Everybody is good at giving you stats, but commentary is lacking. I want to know what these stats mean.”



Comparative quality of assessment, planning and delivery (1547 cases)

	Ethnic Minorities	White Groups	Statistically Significant
Does assessment focus sufficiently on engaging the person on probation?	53%	62%	Yes
Does planning focus sufficiently on engaging the person on probation?	49%	58%	Yes
Is the sentence/post-custody period implemented effectively with a focus on engaging the person on probation?	51%	58%	Yes
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the person on probation's desistance?	47%	55%	Yes



Progress with previous recommendations

- One recommendation **sufficiently met**: - publication of outcome data.
- **Some** progress with nine recommendations: - staff recruitment, progression, development plans and training of managers. Research, commissioning services and quality of PSRs. Engagement with minority ethnic staff and consulting minority ethnic people on probation.
- **No progress** on five recommendations, which have been repeated or amended.





Summary of recommendations

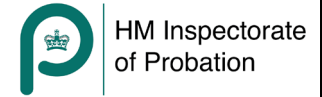
Repeat recommendations

- develop a national race equality strategy for service delivery
- develop learning programmes for probation staff to be confident in discussing racism, challenging discrimination and provide culturally competent services
- provide materials for working with those convicted of racially motivated offences
- review formal and informal complaint and grievance procedures.

New recommendations

- Improve the quality of assessment and planning for minority ethnic people on probation
- Improve engagement with minority ethnic staff to achieve equal levels of satisfaction
- Ensure that minority ethnic people on probation have access to appropriate services
- Provide a welcoming environment in probation premises that celebrates diversity

USER VOICE
ONLY OFFENDERS CAN STOP RE-OFFENDING



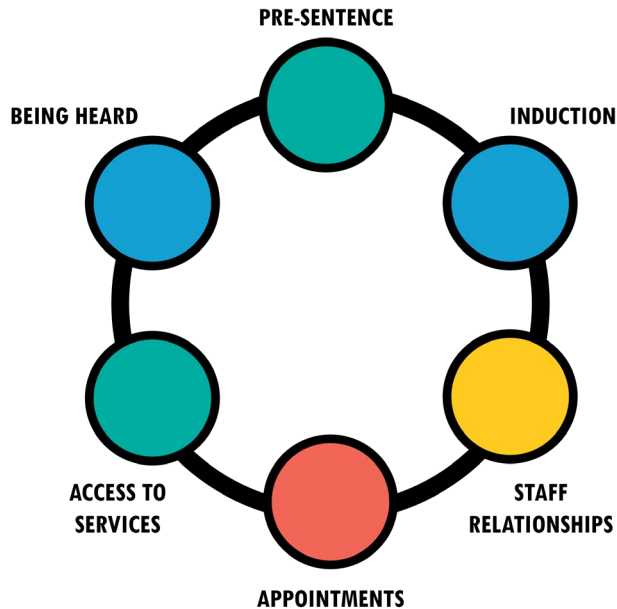
THE VOICE OF PEOPLE ON PROBATION FOR THE RACE EQUALITY REVIEW INSPECTION

LAUNCH EVENT

APPROACH

User Voice conducted remote semi-structured interviews with people on probation from a minority ethnic background.

82
PEOPLE HAD
THEIR SAY



PROBATION EXPERIENCE MAP:

To capture the voice of people on probation for the inspection, probation experience was broken down into six key areas.

How an individual's race and ethnicity relate to these six key areas are discussed throughout our published report.

Today we will speak through three key themes that emerged from the 82 interviews.

OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the consultation was to better understand how an individual's race and ethnicity affects their probation experience.

Furthermore, our objectives were:

- To understand the experience of people on probation and what support they have (or haven't) had both in general and in relation to their race and ethnicity.
- To understand how people on probation's experience of probation in relation to their race and ethnicity has changed since the previous inspection in 2021.
- To collate people on probation's views on what probation needs to do to better help those from a minority ethnic background.
- To highlight any good practices that could be built upon by the service.

7 IN 10 BELIEVE THAT THEIR RACE AND ETHNICITY ARE NOT A FACTOR THAT AFFECTS THEIR PROBATION EXPERIENCE. HOWEVER, SOME STILL EXPERIENCE CLEAR DISCRIMINATION

- Most people on probation from a minority ethnic background haven't experienced any discrimination whilst on probation.
- Some people on probation from a minority ethnic background have experienced clear discrimination and what they describe as “a subconscious racial bias.”
- Participants expressed the need for more religious and cultural awareness across probation.



PEER-LED SOLUTION:

Celebrate the cultural heritage of people on probation through campaigns, posters, awareness sessions, etc. This would foster knowledge amongst probation staff and other people on probation which would result in those from a minority ethnic background feeling more welcomed and considered.

THERE'S A SIGNIFICANT VOID IN THE APPROACH TO RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND FOR SOME IT IS A "NO-GO AREA OF DISCUSSION"

- There was the perceived lack of discussion around religion and religious practices with probation staff.
- Multiple interviewees stated that they were told by their probation practitioner that they are not allowed to speak about religion or their religious beliefs.
- **3 in 5** people on probation from a minority ethnic background reported having a positive experience with their induction. However, there is a significant inconsistency in experience regarding being asked about their cultural needs.
- **Effective practice - the case study of ZS:** ZS got to know his probation Practitioner well before his release.



PEER-LED SOLUTION:

Probation practitioners need to take the time during inductions to speak to an individual about their religious beliefs and their cultural heritage. However, this cannot be in a 'tick box style' way. Such topics need to be discussed during an open conversation where the practitioner gets to better understand the needs of the individual, and simply, get to know the person better.

DIVERSITY IN PROBATION STAFF AT ALL LEVELS IS KEY TO FOSTERING UNDERSTANDING AND CREATING INCLUSIVITY AND RELIABILITY

- In cases where the office is more diverse, people feel like there is more of an understanding. The diversity of an office has an impact on everyone's knowledge from within the office.
- Many people on probation from a minority ethnic background feel that there's a lack of diversity in probation staff, with diversity more likely to be found in "lower paid staff."
- However, participants from certain probation regions feel that ethnic minorities are well represented across probations staff.



PEER-LED SOLUTION:

Employ more people from a minority ethnic background. Specifically, employ more people from a minority ethnic background into senior positions. Where this is already the case, it has been noted to foster understanding across the rest of probation staff.



Effective practice principles

- **Engagement** grounded in desistance principles and procedural justice
- **Be courageous and curious;** enquire about diversity, racial profiling, and discrimination
- **Ask individuals about their self-identity**
- **Discrimination considered not only as a contributory factor to involvement in the CJS,** but also as a potential barrier to individuals moving on with their lives
- Interventions should be tailored to the **needs of the individual**
- Take **opportunities to reflect on your own practice**



Spotlight on Southwark

Example of effectiveness: promoting opportunities to share different cultures

"What works is the little things, like listening to each other, listening to understand and hear, and not make your own assumptions."

Example of effectiveness: inclusive culture led from the top

"I strongly believe that as head of the PDU I have a responsibility to weave equality, diversity, inclusion, and belonging into everything we do as a PDU, for the benefit of colleagues and people on probation"

(Chantel Foster former Head of Southwark PDU)

Example of effectiveness: tackling violence, Southwark

"in one meeting we shared that one young man had been stopped and searched nine times in under five hours, and there were other cases heard that day, with more active intelligence, who had not been stopped. We were able to discuss the rationale and bring more awareness to issues such as disproportionality."



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Examples of Effectiveness

Equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging team, London

A dedicated team consulted staff about problems with inclusion, using staff suggestions to form a plan for each business unit to address underlying issues. Effectiveness to be measured by results from the Civil Service People survey.



Muslim Women in Prison, Bradford West Yorkshire

A specialist grassroots service that supports women to overcome the challenges they face in their journeys back into the community. Those working with the Muslim women have a good understanding of their cultural and faith context to work with them effectively.



Dr Sofia Buncy

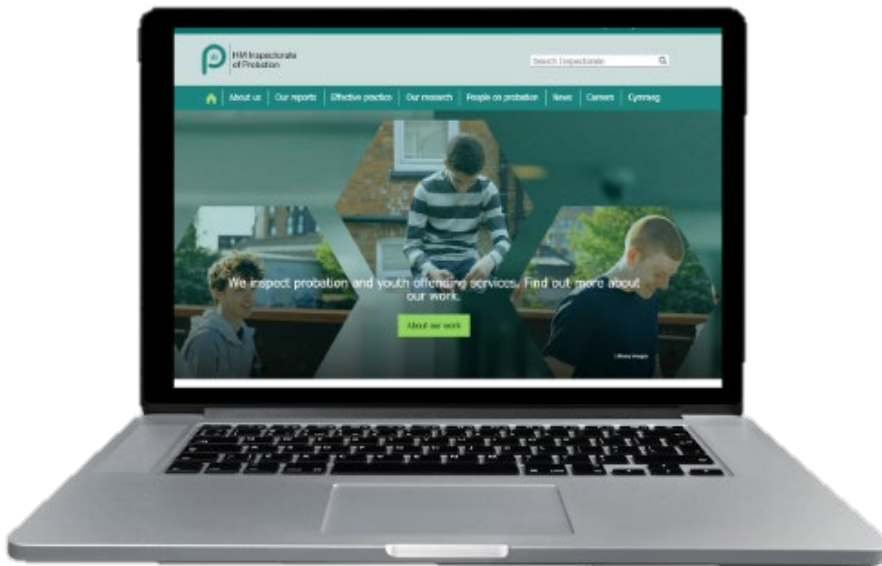


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Now, read the full report



[You can read the full report here](#)



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