



HM Inspectorate  
of Probation

# National probation inspection

## Rules and guidance

HM Inspectorate of Probation, December 2024  
V1.3

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# Introduction

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Our national inspection standards are designed to enable us to comment on the sufficiency of national arrangements to support, enable or drive the effective delivery of probation services by regions and probation delivery units (PDUs). We are interested in the relationship between what happens at a national level and how this links to the effective delivery of probation services to the people receiving them. Each of the national inspection standards is awarded a rating on our four-point scale of 'Outstanding,' 'Good,' 'Requires improvement' or 'Inadequate.'

The ratings are based on a combination of qualitative data, including interviews with staff and other relevant stakeholders and examining policies and procedures and data and information, and our inspection of cases. Gathering a breadth of different types of evidence in these different ways enables us to triangulate our findings, ensuring that our judgements are fair and valid.

## How to use the rules and guidance

The purpose of the rules and guidance is to provide advice, clarity and a consistent understanding of the required expectations. They outline approaches that set high standards to assess quality. The rules and guidance are based on international and national probation standards and rules;<sup>1</sup> research evidence, summarised at [Organisational delivery \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk); and inspection evidence, including our own inspection findings and benchmarks.

The rules and guidance explain how evidence should be assessed and how judgements should be formed against the key questions and prompts for each standard. Inspectors should read the guidance, evidence and judgement for each prompt. The *guidance* describes in detail what it is that inspectors are looking for.

The *evidence sources* indicate where to find evidence for that prompt. The evidence lists are neither exhaustive nor prescriptive; evidence that is not listed may also be used and we do not expect that all the evidence listed will always be useful or required. The evidence lists are there to guide but not restrict inspectors or His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS), which is invited to submit evidence.

The *judgement* section guides the inspector in answering yes or no to the prompt, based on all the evidence for that prompt.

## Inspecting equity, diversity and inclusion

We expect regions and PDUs to take a personalised approach to their work with people on probation and staff. We reflect this throughout our standards framework. Organisational arrangements and activity should support and enable this approach.

We split our definition of a personalised approach into two parts. First, we consider diversity factors, which we define as the protected characteristics set out in the *Equality Act 2010*. These are race, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage or civil partnership, and religion or belief. Separate to this, we consider an individual's personal circumstances and how well the region or PDU meets the needs arising from these – for example, flexible supervision arrangements for a person on probation who works or is a carer.

We expect a personalised approach to include relevant equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) factors and to consider relevant personal circumstances. A personalised approach is one in which services are tailored to meet the needs of individuals, giving people as much choice and

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<sup>1</sup> Confederation of European Probation. '[Council of Europe Rules & Recommendations](#)'.

control as possible over the support they receive. This personalised approach must include EDI issues related to an individual's protected characteristics. In inspecting EDI, we pay attention to the interconnected nature of social categories, including protected characteristics and personal circumstances such as race, class, gender and cultural heritage, and how they can create overlapping experiences of discrimination or disadvantage. When we inspect cases, and talk to staff about their experiences, we recognise that everyone has their own unique experiences of discrimination.

### **Public sector equality duty (the *Equality Act 2010*)**

The *Equality Act 2010* requires public bodies to address diversity and equality issues. This requirement is described by the public sector equality duty. It consists of a general equality duty, supported by specific duties that are imposed by secondary legislation. The secondary legislation was passed before probation services were unified in 2021. It names probation trusts as the unit of delivery under the Act's Specific Duties and Public Authorities Regulations 2017. We have interpreted this to mean that both the general and specific duties apply at the national level. Full information can be found on the Equality and Human Rights Commission website: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/essential-guide-public-sector-equality-duty>.

The broad purpose of the general equality duty is to integrate consideration of equality and good relations into the day-to-day business of public authorities. The general equality duty requires organisations to consider how they could contribute positively to advancing equality and good relations. It also requires them to reflect equality considerations in the design of policies and the delivery of services, including internal policies, and to keep these issues under review. It aims to shift the onus from individuals to organisations, placing an obligation for the first time on public authorities to promote equality positively, not merely to avoid discrimination. It was developed in order to harmonise the equality duties and include all the protected characteristics. In summary, those subject to the general equality duty must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

These are sometimes referred to as the three aims of the general equality duty. To meet these, the vision and strategy should set out how the organisation will:

- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people on probation because of their protected characteristics
- take steps to meet the needs of people on probation from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people on probation
- encourage the engagement of people on probation from protected groups to participate in ways that meet their needs.

The specific equality duty requires probation regions to publish annual equality information and one or more equality objectives every four years. The objectives must be specific and measurable. They must be published in an accessible format as a stand-alone document, or within another document. Full information about the requirements of the specific equality duty can be found on the gov.uk website: [Public Sector Equality Duty: guidance for public authorities - GOV.UK](#)

## N.1 Leadership and governance

### N.1 Leadership and governance

National leadership and governance arrangements drive the effective delivery of probation services.

The *Leadership and Governance* standard is based on the *Primary Colours Model of Leadership* (Pendleton, 2012) and *Future-Engage-Deliver: The Essential Guide to your Leadership* (Steve Radcliffe, 2008). This model groups leadership arrangements and activity into three distinct sets: strategic, operational and interpersonal leadership. We have reflected these areas in our key questions and prompts. We also examine how effectively the organisation uses evidence and learning to improve the delivery of probation services.

#### ***N.1.1 Do national strategic arrangements support the effective delivery of probation services?***

##### **a) Is there a national evidence-based vision and strategy for the probation service?**

###### **Guidance:**

There should be a national vision and strategy that is evidence-based and clearly set out and that gives priority to delivering high-quality supervision and services.

The vision and strategy should be based on current evidence and information, and should be informed by regular review and evaluation. The underlying evidence base from research and effective/promising practice should be used to understand what is likely to work and improve delivery.

Nationally, there should be a clear focus on continuous improvement, with regular review and evaluation of the vision and strategy. Evaluation and review should be based on data and involve relevant stakeholders. The views of people on probation should be sought, analysed, and used to inform the vision and strategy.

*Quality of service:* We are interested in what services are like to use, from the perspective of those receiving them. We also consider whether they do what they are supposed to do, in relation to reducing reoffending; managing and minimising risk of harm to others; and ensuring that individuals abide by the sentence of the courts. Quality of service is more than simply achieving agreed performance targets.

*Adherence to the evidence base:* There should be evidence of how the strategy enables regions and PDUs to deliver high-quality services, and the key actions that leaders and managers have taken to ensure that these are delivered. The strategy should be explicit about the evidence base that underpins the strategic vision.

Compliance with the general equality duty requires public authorities to be conscious of their obligations to meet diverse needs. Compliance also requires public authorities to take a deliberate approach to meeting these obligations. The vision and strategy should outline the work being undertaken to address disproportionality and any unequitable outcomes related to people's protected characteristics (*Equality Act 2010*).

A deliberate approach requires that, nationally, leaders:

- are fully aware of, and take responsibility for, obligations under the public sector equality duty
- make use of information about the protected characteristics of staff and people on probation, including from any engagement

- have mechanisms in place to ensure that equality evidence is available on time and in the right format

Leaders should take steps to integrate equity, diversity and inclusion into 'business as usual'. Having clear objectives to do so in the vision and strategy, measuring the progress made, and reporting against them indicates a deliberate approach.

### Evidence:

#### EiA

- HMPPS business plan
- Reducing reoffending strategy
- Area Executive Director plans

#### Fieldwork

Meetings with:

- HMPPS Chief Executive Officer
- HMPPS Director General
- Executive Directors
- Area Executive Directors
- Chief Probation Officer
- Relevant senior leaders from other government departments involved in nationally significant partnerships (for example: courts, mental health and substance treatment and safeguarding of children and adults)

### Judgement:

Where there is a clearly stated vision and strategy, which prioritises delivering high-quality supervision and services and addressing disproportionality, there should be a positive judgement.

Where the vision and strategy is not clear and/or do not prioritise delivering high-quality supervision and services and/or addressing disproportionality, there should be a negative judgement.

### **b) Is there a national delivery plan that supports the delivery of the vision and strategy?**

#### Guidance:

There should be a national delivery plan or equivalent that translates the vision and strategy into practice and that guides the regions and PDUs in their business planning.

Delivery plans should set out the mechanisms by which the strategy will be translated into practice, where and to whom progress should be reported, and how delivery should be reviewed, with any necessary changes to implementation agreed. Inspectors will look for evidence that appropriate programme and project management approaches have been followed, to ensure that strategies have been implemented in a timely fashion and to a good standard.

There should be national, planned arrangements in place to commission services. The plan for commissioning should be based on an analysis of risk, needs, and strengths, and should fully take into account diversity factors. The commissioning plan should be clear about the expectations of regional commissioning and commissioners and have appropriate freedoms and flexibilities in place.

## Evidence:

### EiA

- HMPPS framework document
- HMPPS business plan
- One HMPPS arrangements

### Fieldwork

Meetings with:

- HMPPS Chief Executive Officer
- HMPPS Director General
- Executive Directors
- Area Executive Directors
- Chief Probation Officer

## Judgement:

Where there is a clear delivery plan that ensures that the national vision and strategy is implemented effectively, and includes commissioning arrangements, there should be a positive judgement.

Where delivery plans are unclear or do not ensure effective implementation of the national vision and strategy, and/or this does not include commissioning arrangements, there should be a negative judgement.

### **c) Do national governance arrangements effectively support the delivery of the vision and strategy?**

## Guidance:

Governance is the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented).<sup>2</sup> Nationally, clear governance arrangements should be in place to ensure that the national vision and strategy and the supporting delivery plan(s) can be delivered effectively. Arrangements should be participatory, consensus-oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient and equitable.

Governance arrangements should set out clear lines of accountability and decision-making through relevant boards and meeting structures. They should be clear about who is responsible for delivering each element of the strategy (the responsible owner). Governance arrangements should cover arrangements for delivered and commissioned services and for regions and PDUs. Whatever the governance arrangements are, they must enable the most effective and efficient delivery of the national vision and strategy.

## Evidence:

### EiA

- HMPPS management committee terms of reference and minutes
- Governance structures relating to transforming delivery, strategy, planning and performance, change and reducing reoffending
- HMPPS annual report
- One HMPPS arrangements
- Audit and Risk Assurance Committee minutes, audit programme and internal audit reports

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<sup>2</sup> United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (2009). [What is Good Governance?](#)

## Fieldwork

Meetings with:

- HMPPS Chief Executive Officer
- HMPPS Director General
- Executive Directors
- Area Executive Directors
- Chief Probation Officer
- Non-executive board members sitting on the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee
- Relevant senior leaders from other government departments involved in nationally significant partnerships (for example: courts, mental health and substance treatment and safeguarding)

### Judgement:

Where there are national governance arrangements in place that effectively support the delivery of the vision and strategy, there should be a positive judgement.

Where there are national governance arrangements in place that do not effectively support the delivery of the vision and strategy, there should be a negative judgement.

### **d) Are strong and well-maintained collaborative arrangements in place with HMPPS and cross-government partners?**

#### Guidance:

National leaders should collaborate with national partners and stakeholders to ensure effective delivery of the vision and strategy. There should be a range of collaborations at this level that enable partners to work effectively to achieve the vision and strategy. Leaders should be clear about the expectation both from and of HMPPS and cross-government partners. They should provide evidence of the positive influence of national arrangements on effective probation delivery. Collaborative and partnership arrangements should be proactive and designed to support improvements in services for people on probation.

National arrangements should empower and support regions and PDUs in their relevant strategic partnerships.

#### Evidence:

##### EiA

- HMPPS board minutes and associated action planning
- HMPPS management committee terms of reference and minutes
- Governance structures relating to transforming delivery, strategy, planning and performance, change and reducing reoffending
- HMPPS annual report
- One HMPPS arrangements
- Probation liaison arrangements with other MoJ departments, such as HMCTS, and with the DHSE, DfE, Home Office, and DLUC

## Fieldwork

Meetings with:

- Executive Directors



- Area Executive Directors
- Chief Probation Officer
- Non-executive board members sitting on the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee
- Relevant senior leaders from other government departments involved in nationally significant partnerships (for example: courts, mental health and substance treatment and safeguarding)

### Judgement:

Where there are effective collaborative arrangements across HMPPS and cross-government partners, and these arrangements support the effective delivery of probation services, there should be a positive judgement.

Where collaborative arrangements across HMPPS and cross-government partners are not effective, and/or these arrangements do not support the effective delivery of probation services, there should be a negative judgement.

### *N.1.2 Does national leadership activity support the effective delivery of probation services?*

#### **a) Does the national operating model enable regions to take a deliberate, strategic, and informed approach to meeting diverse needs?**

### Guidance:

Compliance with the general equality duty requires public authorities to take a deliberate approach to meeting their equality obligations. They should take steps to help staff, decision-makers, and commissioned services to understand the general equality duty. National leaders should embed equity into their scrutiny and decision-making and be able to describe how the diverse needs of people on probation are met.

A deliberate approach requires that national leaders:

- are fully aware of, and take responsibility for, obligations under the public sector equality duty
- collect information about the protected characteristics of people on probation and staff, including from any engagement activities
- have mechanisms in place to ensure that information on equity, diversity and inclusion is available on time and in the right format
- set clear guidance for regions and PDUs on decision-making and record-keeping
- set specific, measurable objectives to enable the diverse needs of people on probation to be met. Ideally, these should be carried out as part of normal business planning processes.

The national operating model should support and enable regions and PDUs to comply with the public sector equality duty. The operating model should ensure that regional and PDU leaders understand the requirements and are enabled to be compliant with them. This may involve training and review sessions, as well as being a feature through governance and line management arrangements. The national operating model should enable leaders to take appropriate decisions on applying equity, diversity and inclusion principles. It should provide regions and PDUs with the level of autonomy that they need to effectively deliver services that meet diverse needs.

For non-commissioned services and universal services, the national model should build in a requirement for monitoring, and, where appropriate, challenging this in services, organisations or departments for which there is no direct line of control.

## Evidence:

### EiA

- The target operating model and any documentation related to monitoring or evaluating its implementation
- Outlines of board structures, subgroups, lines of command and reporting arrangements
- Change management framework and communication strategies
- National equity, diversity and inclusion strategies, plans and management arrangements

### Fieldwork

Meetings with:

- HMPPS portfolio holder for equity, diversity and inclusion and members of senior boards setting the national approach
- Executive Director for change and senior leaders contributing to the implementation of policy

## Judgement:

Where the national operating model enables and supports regions and PDUs to take a deliberate approach to meeting EDI needs, supports regions and PDUs to do the same, requires them to monitor and challenge the delivery of non-commissioned or universal services and provides an appropriate level of autonomy to regions and PDUs, there should be a positive judgement.

Where the national operating model does not enable and support regions and PDUs to take a deliberate approach to meeting EDI needs, and/or does not support regions and PDUs to do the same, not requiring them to monitor and challenge the delivery of non-commissioned or universal services and not providing an appropriate level of autonomy to regions and PDUs, there should be a negative judgement.

## b) Do national leaders ensure the effective implementation of policies?

### Guidance:

National leaders should ensure that national policies are in place, covering, as a minimum, operational expectations, sentence management, health and safety, human resources (HR), management of risk, and management of resources. Policies and guidance should be communicated effectively and understood by all relevant staff and stakeholders.

National leaders should monitor, evaluate and review national policies regularly to ensure that they are understood, implemented and working as intended. Ideally, they should do this annually as a minimum, but for new or significant changes it may need to be more frequent. Where policies are not understood, implemented or working as intended, leaders should take prompt action to rectify the issues. Policies should be current and reviewed on a regular basis.

## Evidence:

### EiA

- Change management framework
- Communication strategies

### Fieldwork

Meetings with:

- Executive Director for change and senior leaders contributing to the implementation of policy

### **Judgement:**

Where national policies are effectively communicated, implemented and subject to regular monitoring, evaluation and review, there should be a positive judgement.

Where national policies are not effectively communicated, implemented and subject to regular monitoring, evaluation and review, there should be a negative judgement.

### **c) Does national leadership activity support and enhance regional and PDU leadership?**

#### **Guidance:**

There should be a national structure that enables regional and PDU leaders to effectively deliver probation services in a way that best meets local need. Regional and PDU leaders should be provided with sufficient support and direction, underpinned by evidence-based policies and processes and clear routes of accountability to national leaders.

Regional and PDU leaders should be supported by policies and processes that are effective and efficient. This will enable the needs of individual regions and PDUs to be met and will give them sufficient autonomy and flexibility to best meet needs in their areas.

There should be effective and appropriate communication in place between national leaders and regions, and between national leaders and PDUs. Regional and PDU leaders should be provided with the right resources to deliver probation services effectively, and given room for flexibility and appropriate innovation where this would assist them.

#### **Evidence:**

##### **EiA**

- Arrangements for delegated budgets
- Decisions on national spread of the Regional Outcomes and Innovation Fund

##### **Fieldwork**

Meetings with:

- Executive Director for change and senior leaders contributing to the implementation of policy

### **Judgement:**

Where national leadership activity provides support, accountability and resources to regional and PDU leaders in a way that enables them to deliver probation services effectively, there should be a positive judgement.

Where national leadership activity does not provide support, accountability and resources to regional and PDU leaders in a way that enables them to deliver probation services effectively, there should be a negative judgement.

### **d) When implementing national changes, is the impact on service delivery, including equality impact, assessed, and appropriate action taken?**

#### **Guidance:**

For each significant change to operational delivery, systems, processes, or staffing, an impact assessment should be carried out that identifies any unequal impact. Where unequal impacts are identified, they should be further assessed and be addressed in a way that is proportionate, efficient and effective, and that mitigates any risk of inequity arising from implementation. This should form part of a standard, documented change and risk management process that fully considers the impact of changes to operational delivery, systems, processes, or staffing and sets out the action to be taken.

## Evidence:

### EiA

- Change management framework and communication strategies
- National equity, diversity and inclusion strategies, plans and management arrangements

### Fieldwork

Meetings with:

- HMPPS portfolio holder for equity, diversity and inclusion and members of senior boards setting the national approach
- Executive Director for change and senior leaders contributing to the implementation of policy

## Judgement:

Where there is a consistent approach to assessing the delivery and equality impact of significant changes, with appropriate action taken as a result, there should be a positive judgement.

Where there is not a consistent approach to assessing the delivery and equality impact of significant changes, or appropriate action is not taken as a result, there should be a negative judgement.

### *N.1.3 Does the national culture support the effective delivery of probation services?*

#### **a) Is there effective national communication to regions and PDUs that supports the effective delivery of probation services?**

## Guidance:

There should be a national staff engagement strategy in place. It should be clear from the strategy how staff will be engaged, using a variety of different approaches to best meet their diverse needs. There should be recognised channels for raising and responding to staff concerns. The reasons why decisions are reached, and how they are reached, should be communicated clearly.

Information for regions and PDUs must be communicated in ways that are understood by regions and PDU staff. Effective communication should be matched to the needs of recipients, should use different channels, and should allow, where appropriate, for a two-way exchange of information.

For communication to staff, communication channels could include:

- intranet-based resources and knowledge banks
- email communication and discussion fora
- presentations
- line management briefings
- newsletters and bulletins
- question and answer sessions
- training and development sessions.

Effectiveness can be judged by the clarity and ease of use of communication channels and feedback from recipients, as well as the effective implementation of policies.

## Evidence:

### EiA

- Staff engagement strategy
- National response to the annual People Survey and other aggregated feedback from PDUs and regions

- Tackling Unacceptable Behaviours Unit delivery plan and overall findings
- HMPPS management standards in relation to controlling workload, change management, and organisational support

### **Fieldwork**

Meetings with:

- Senior national lead for engaging people on probation
- Tackling Unacceptable Behaviours Unit senior leadership
- Executive Director for HR
- Trade union leaders
- Head of Health and Safety
- Head of Organisational Change

### **Judgement:**

Where there is a national staff engagement strategy in place, national communications are clear and delivered in a variety of formats, and their effectiveness is checked, there should be a positive judgement.

Where there is no national staff engagement strategy in place, and/or national communications are unclear or not delivered in a variety of formats, and/or their effectiveness is not checked, there should be a negative judgement.

### **b) Are regions and PDUs enabled to be responsive to feedback from staff and people on probation?**

#### **Guidance:**

There should be a culture that achieves an appropriate balance between prescribing nationally required ways of working and providing appropriate levels of autonomy, to enable regions and PDUs to deliver services in a way that best meets local needs. This approach should enable appropriate innovations to be supported and provide regions and PDUs with the level of autonomy that they need to effectively deliver services that meet local need, based on feedback from staff and people on probation.

#### **Evidence:**

##### **EiA**

- National expectations for engaging people on probation
- National response to the annual People Survey and other aggregated feedback from PDUs and regions
- Tackling Unacceptable Behaviours Unit delivery plan and overall findings
- HMPPS management standards in relation to controlling workload control, change management, organisational support

### **Fieldwork**

Meetings with:

- Senior national lead for engaging people on probation
- Tackling Unacceptable Behaviours Unit senior leadership
- Executive Director for HR
- Trade union leaders

- Head of Health and Safety
- Head of Organisational Change
- Regional probation directors

### **Judgement:**

Where there is a culture that allows appropriate innovation based on feedback from staff and people on probation, there should be a positive judgement.

Where the culture does not allow appropriate innovation based on feedback from staff and people on probation, there should be a negative judgement.

### **c) Does the culture of the probation service promote openness, constructive challenge, and ideas?**

#### **Guidance:**

Culture refers to 'the ways things are done around here', and incorporates the beliefs, behaviours, and values that influence the way people work. An open culture is one where staff are consulted routinely about issues affecting them and their work, and receive clear explanations about how important decisions are made.

A culture should be promoted where staff at all levels feel able to contribute to service improvement and are clear about how decisions are made and how they can provide input to them. National leaders should take a proactive approach to staff engagement.

Staff should have opportunities to contribute to the formation of the vision and strategy, as they are then more likely to own it. Staff should have opportunities to constructively challenge (that is, question) plans and decisions that affect them and their work, for example through consultations and meetings between management and unions. These opportunities should be valued by both sides.

Effective staff engagement at a national level is especially important, as a culture of engagement set at the national level should filter through to better engagement at regional and PDU levels too. Staff at all levels should feel confident in bringing forward their views and should know that these will be fully considered.

Processes for being open to ideas might range from suggestion schemes at the most basic, through to full-blown innovation strategies, the formation of development teams, and the championing of new initiatives to which staff have contributed. An open culture is one that is responsive to ideas and challenges. These may come from fora with people on probation, or from consultation with external stakeholders, such as sentencers and partner organisations.

#### **Evidence:**

##### **EiA**

- National expectations for engaging people on probation
- National response to the annual People Survey and other aggregated feedback from PDUs and regions
- Tackling Unacceptable Behaviours Unit delivery plan and overall findings
- HMPPS management standards in relation to workload demand control, change management, organisational support

##### **Fieldwork**

Meetings with:

- Senior national lead for engaging people on probation

- Tackling Unacceptable Behaviours Unit senior leadership
- Executive Director for HR
- Trade union leaders
- Head of Health and Safety
- Head of Organisational Change

### **Judgement:**

Where national leaders have provided opportunities for constructive challenge and open communication, and promoted a culture of constructive challenge, there should be a positive judgement.

Where national leaders have not provided opportunities for constructive challenge, communication is not open and a culture of constructive challenge is not promoted, there should be a negative judgement.

### **d) Is there a sufficient focus at the national level on staff wellbeing?**

#### **Guidance:**

The probation service has a legal duty to promote the health, safety and wellbeing of staff.

Staff wellbeing goes further than health and safety. It includes the provision of welfare facilities; support after critical incidents; occupational health services (immunisations, wellbeing clinics, and so on); and support for staff experiencing stress and personal problems that are impacting on their work. There should be strategies and facilities that are designed to support a healthy workforce, so that they are better able to provide high-quality services.

Arrangements should be set out in relevant policies, procedures, and guidance, at a national level, supported by the autonomy being provided for local arrangements at regional and PDU level, where appropriate.

These should include:

- management standards for controlling work-related stress
- making sure the buildings where practitioners work and people on probation report to are safe and welcoming
- a lone working policy and procedure, along with guidance on making home visits
- working patterns and flexible working
- including health and safety reports in senior management and governance meetings.

Staff wellbeing also includes ensuring equitability of access to promotion opportunities, and reward and recognition practices for staff from all backgrounds should be actively provided. This should be visible and proactive. Positive action policies should be in place, promoting equitability of access both to promotion opportunities, and reward and recognition. This should be actively monitored and any issues addressed.

Reasonable adjustments should be made for all staff who have a disability that falls within the definition of the *Equality Act 2010*, to enable them to work effectively. National leaders must ensure that they monitor disability and record this for all staff. Where staff identify disabilities that require reasonable adjustments, leaders must make provision, which might include, but is not limited to:

- an accessible workplace
- appropriate furniture and furnishings
- assistive technology

- additional support staff
- reduced workload or reduced hours.

### Evidence:

#### EiA

- National response to the annual People Survey and other aggregated feedback from PDUs and regions
- Tackling Unacceptable Behaviours Unit delivery plan and overall findings
- HMPPS management standards in relation to workload demand control, change management, and organisational support
- Positive action policies

#### Fieldwork

Meetings with:

- Senior national lead for engaging people on probation
- Tackling Unacceptable Behaviours Unit senior leadership
- Executive Director for HR
- Trade union leaders
- Head of Health and Safety
- Head of Organisational Change
- Positive action policies

### Judgement:

Where there is a broad approach to staff wellbeing at a national level that is supported by appropriate levels of autonomy for regions and PDUs, there should be a positive judgement.

Where the approach to staff wellbeing at a national level is not broad and/or does not provide appropriate levels of autonomy for regions and PDUs, there should be a negative judgement.

#### *N.1.4 Do national leaders use analysis, evidence, and learning to support the effective delivery of probation services?*

#### **a) Are comprehensive national assurance arrangements in place that support the effective delivery of probation services?**

### Guidance:

An assurance system should enable the objective examination of evidence and provide an impartial assessment of performance. It is essential that there is an effective and efficient framework in place to give sufficient, continuous and reliable assurance on the stewardship of the organisation and the management of the major risks to delivering probation services.

There should be national performance and quality assurance systems in place that enable leaders and staff to understand the effectiveness of the work they are delivering. These systems should be fit for purpose, including being easy to understand and clearly measuring progress as well as areas for improvement. Systems should cover each service delivery function.

National assurance arrangements should:

- provide timely and reliable information on the effective delivery of services and the management of major strategic risks
- provide a cohesive and comprehensive view of assurance across the risk environment and facilitate the escalation of risk



- be efficient
- clarify, rationalise and consolidate assurance arrangements that exist nationally, regionally and at a PDU level
- facilitate better use of assurance skills and resources.

### Evidence:

#### EiA

- Performance and quality reporting arrangements
- National action planning and response in relation to quality issues in local casework
- National action in response to themes arising from serious further offences, audit or inspection, domestic homicide reviews, serious case reviews or any other multi-agency reviews

#### Fieldwork

Meetings with:

- Executive Director, Strategy, Planning and Performance
- Chief Probation Officer
- Head of Performance Strategy
- Head of Community Assurance
- Head of System Assurance and Intelligence
- Head of Risk and Resilience
- Area Executive Directors

### Judgement:

Where there are national assurance arrangements in place that enable an objective understanding of the quality of delivery, and that are easy to understand and are efficient and effective, there should be a positive judgement.

Where national assurance arrangements do not enable an objective understanding of the quality of delivery, and/or are not easy to understand and/or are inefficient and ineffective, there should be a negative judgement.

### **b) Is there a sufficient national understanding of performance and quality across the probation service and at all levels?**

#### Guidance:

National leaders should be able to articulate the key performance and quality measures that apply to their area of delivery, the reasons why they are important, and the part they play in achieving high levels of performance. National leaders should use performance information and audits of the quality of work to underpin activity to drive improvement. This should be informed by the routine analysis of accessible data on performance, segmented appropriately and interrogated to identify trends, causes, and potential improvements. National leaders should create an environment of open dialogue, where staff understand the drivers of performance and quality and can use them to improve service delivery.

Nationally, there should be benchmarking of systems processes, and performance measures. Stretch targets, that include quality measures to drive forward improvement, should be set and reviewed with trends analysed, and the reasons for high performance or causes of underperformance identified and addressed.

Performance and quality measures should be reviewed regularly, to ensure that they are driving the right behaviours and outcomes. They should be refined when necessary, so that they do not encourage perverse behaviours or have unintended consequences.

### **Evidence:**

#### **EiA**

- Performance and quality reporting arrangements
- National action planning and response in relation to quality issues in local casework
- National action planning in response to themes arising from serious further offences, audit or inspection, domestic homicide reviews, serious case reviews or any other multi-agency reviews

#### **Fieldwork**

Meetings with:

- Executive Director, Strategy, Planning and Performance
- Chief Probation Officer
- Head of Performance Strategy
- Head of Community Assurance
- Head of System Assurance and Intelligence
- Head of Risk and Resilience
- Area Executive Directors

### **Judgement:**

Where national leaders fully understand performance measures, actively use them to drive improvement, and review them regularly across delivery areas, there should be a positive judgement.

Where national leaders do not fully understand performance measures, or do not actively use them to drive improvement, and do not review them regularly across delivery areas, there should be a negative judgement.

### **c) Do national leaders learn systematically?**

#### **Guidance:**

This prompt relates to organisational learning rather than the promotion of individual learning and continuous improvement, which is covered in prompt 2.3a).

There should be a nationally agreed and understood approach to organisational learning and development, which assists regions and PDUs in their journey of continuous improvement. Learning should take place at all levels, so there should be processes in place for capturing, assessing, and applying learning across the organisation. National leaders should learn both from things that have gone wrong and from effective practice and things that have gone well. They should make changes as a result. This entails that, for example:

- evaluations and lessons learned reviews are completed on service improvement activity
- complaints are reviewed, and lessons learned are captured
- there is a process for cascading organisational learning through regions and PDUs
- learning is built into future organisational development plans and incorporated into training programmes
- information from research is published on intranet fora and included in knowledge banks

- learning from any internal audits, inspections, serious further offences, domestic homicide reviews or serious case reviews or any other multi-agency reviews should inform policy and practice, as relevant

### Evidence:

#### EiA

- Performance and quality reporting arrangements
- National action planning and response in relation to quality issues in local casework
- National action in response to themes arising from serious further offences, audit or inspection, domestic homicide reviews, serious case reviews or any other multi-agency reviews

#### Fieldwork

Meetings with:

- Executive Director, Strategy, Planning and Performance
- Chief Probation Officer
- Head of Performance Strategy
- Head of Community Assurance
- Head of System Assurance and Intelligence
- Head of Risk and Resilience
- Area Executive Directors

### Judgement:

Where there are embedded arrangements that ensure national leaders learn systematically and these are supported by examples, there should be a positive judgement.

Where arrangements to ensure national leaders learn systematically are not embedded or these are not supported by examples, there should be a negative judgement.

#### **d) Do national leaders understand and use equity, diversity and inclusion information to drive improvement?**

### Guidance:

Nationally, there should be an approach to organisational learning and development that helps to drive improvement. This should include the use and analysis of information on equity, diversity and inclusion, which may be collected at national, regional or PDU level, to help deliver a high-quality service.

If equity, diversity and inclusion information about people on probation with particular protected characteristics is incomplete, work should be undertaken to fill the information gaps.

The information collected should be used not just to identify, mitigate, or remove poor practice, but also to identify ways to advance equity of opportunity. Driving improvement can happen at different levels, so any learning and action taken should be disseminated through appropriate structures, such as regional probation director meetings, staff meetings and quality improvement fora. Learning can be communicated internally, externally, and between providers through exchanges, showcases, and research and evaluation publications.

### Evidence:

#### EiA

- Performance and quality reporting arrangements

- National action planning and response in relation to quality issues in local casework
- National action in response to themes arising from serious further offences, audit or inspection, domestic homicide reviews, serious case reviews or any other multi-agency reviews

## **Fieldwork**

Meetings with:

- Executive Director, Strategy, Planning and Performance
- Chief Probation Officer
- Head of Performance Strategy
- Head of Community Assurance
- Head of System Assurance and Intelligence
- Head of Risk and Resilience
- Area Executive Directors

## **Judgement:**

Where the analysis of equity, diversity and inclusion information is used to drive the effective delivery of a high-quality service, there should be a positive judgement.

Where the analysis of equity, diversity and inclusion information is not sufficiently used to drive the effective delivery of a high-quality service, there should be a negative judgement.

## **e) Do national leaders seek, analyse and use the views of people on probation at a national level to review and improve services?**

### **Guidance:**

Consultation with, and the involvement of, people on probation should be used nationally to plan, develop and deliver services.

The views of people on probation may be sought in a variety of ways, including surveys and questionnaires, but should also include more sophisticated approaches, such as focus groups and councils for people on probation. This will provide a more in-depth understanding of their needs, where there are gaps and where needs are being met effectively, and how services should change to address their needs better.

However they are collected, the views of people on probation should be fed into service reviews, and representatives for people on probation may be included directly in the groups carrying out these reviews. The specific contributions that people on probation have made to reviews, and the results of their input, should be drawn out and publicised, to promote confidence in the consultation and involvement process for people on probation.

### **Evidence:**

#### **EiA**

- Performance and quality reporting arrangements
- National action planning and response in relation to quality issues in local casework
- National action in response to themes arising from serious further offences, audit or inspection, domestic homicide reviews, serious case reviews or any other multi-agency reviews

## **Fieldwork**

Meetings with:

- Executive Director, Strategy, Planning and Performance
- Chief Probation Officer
- Head of Performance Strategy
- Head of Community Assurance
- Head of System Assurance and Intelligence
- Head of Risk and Resilience
- Area Executive Directors

### **Judgement:**

Where there is a national, proactive approach to working with people on probation to deliver better services, covering key delivery functions and leading to specific identifiable improvements, there should be a positive judgement.

Where there is not a national, proactive approach to working with people on probation to deliver better services, or this does not cover key delivery functions and lead to specific identifiable improvements, there should be a negative judgement.

### **f) Are probation services improved through evaluation and development of the underlying evidence base?**

#### **Guidance:**

For service improvements to be effective, plans and action taken must be informed by regular and routine monitoring to check whether they are achieving their aims. They should also be informed by evidence from research about what is likely to work and improve delivery.

Monitoring should include examining improvements to processes, to identify whether they are achieving what was intended, with feedback from stakeholders on how they are working in practice. Improvement plans and their impact should be monitored routinely by someone responsible for managing the relevant process, reporting under an appropriate governance arrangement. They should be aligned with the evidence base, both building on existing research and contributing to it.

Where appropriate, leaders should consider external monitoring, to improve the integrity of the process. They should also consider engaging researchers or collaborating with similar organisations undertaking a comparable improvement process, to benchmark progress and maximise learning.

#### **Evidence:**

##### **EiA**

- Performance and quality reporting arrangements
- National action planning and response in relation to quality issues in local casework
- National action in response to themes arising from audit or inspection, serious further offences, domestic homicide reviews, serious case reviews or any other multi-agency reviews

#### **Fieldwork**

Meetings with:

- Executive Director, Strategy, Planning and Performance
- Chief Probation Officer
- Head of Performance Strategy

- Head of Community Assurance
- Head of System Assurance and Intelligence
- Head of Risk and Resilience
- Area Executive Directors

**Judgement:**

Where improvements to probation services are made based on the underlying evidence base, and are routinely monitored, reviewed and amended where needed, there should be a positive judgement.

Where improvements to probation services are not made based on the underlying evidence base, and/or are not routinely monitored, reviewed and amended where needed, there should be a negative judgement.

## N.2 Staffing

### N.2 Staffing

National arrangements for staffing enable the effective delivery of probation services.

*N.2.1 Do national workload management arrangements support the effective delivery of probation services?*

**a) Do national resourcing arrangements ensure manageable workloads for regional and PDU staff?**

#### Guidance:

National resourcing arrangements should guarantee that regional staffing is sufficient to deliver all regional functions effectively and that PDU staffing is sufficient to ensure that probation services are delivered effectively. Arrangements should ensure that this can be achieved with staff having manageable workloads. A manageable workload is where staff can manage the work they are undertaking effectively within the hours available, most of the time. Sufficient means that enough staff are in place to deliver all of the required functions of the region effectively.

Principles should be set out that describe how decisions about regional and PDU staffing are to be made and who is responsible for making them. National resourcing arrangements should avoid role overload or role drift. Role overload is a situation that results from an individual taking on a role or multiple roles in which they are asked to do more than they are capable of doing in a specific period of time (quantitative overload) or where they are stretched beyond their knowledge, skills and abilities (qualitative overload). Role drift occurs where core work duties for a specific role or grade are undertaken increasingly by other staff – typically, where work is delegated to more junior staff.

Appropriate arrangements should be in place to identify and plan for vacancies, high attrition rates and sickness. Flexibility should be built in to respond to changing demands, which may include taking on new functions or ways of working, in line with the needs of regions and PDUs. National arrangements should allow for sufficient and appropriate flexibility for regions and PDUs to act in order to secure the resources they need to deliver their functions and services effectively.

#### Evidence:

##### EiA

- Organisational data
- Practitioner grade recruitment projections
- Directions given to regional probation directors regarding resource allocation and operational flexibility
- Prioritisation Framework evaluation
- National workforce planning strategy, plan, and reviews, including workload management monitoring, sickness absence monitoring, exit interview analysis, and other assumptions

#### Fieldwork

Meetings with:

- Executive Director, Transforming Delivery
- Deputy Director, Transforming Delivery
- Head of Capacity and Efficiency
- Senior leaders for workforce planning

### **Judgement:**

Where national resourcing arrangements provide sufficient staff with manageable workloads and allow for regional and PDU autonomy to best meet needs, there should be a positive judgement.

Where national resourcing arrangements do not provide sufficient staff with manageable workloads and/or do not allow for regional and PDU autonomy to best meet needs, there should be a negative judgement.

## **b) Do national resource management tools support regions and PDUs to effectively manage staff workloads?**

### **Guidance:**

National resource management tools should enable regions and PDUs to manage resources in a way that best meets their needs. National managers, regions and PDUs should understand the resource management tools and how to apply them. The tools should be able to reflect contextual and local information and give a true picture of resourcing challenges that is comparable across regions and PDUs. They should provide sufficient freedom and flexibility to promote rather than hinder effective resource management.

The resource management tools should be supported by activity which sets out the resources required to effectively deliver probation services. This should inform staffing levels and decisions made about geographical local arrangements to provide national assurance that work can be delivered locally within the resources allocated.

Where there are areas of staffing that do not have workload management tools, for example custodial sentence managers, senior probation officers, business managers, victim liaison officers and court staff, there should national arrangements to support regions and PDUs to effectively manage the workloads of these staff.

### **Evidence:**

#### **EiA**

- Activity costing model assumptions.
- Practitioner grade recruitment projections
- Directions given to regional probation directors about resource allocation and operational flexibility
- Prioritisation Framework evaluation
- National workforce planning strategy, plan, and reviews, including workload management monitoring, sickness absence monitoring, exit interview analysis, and other assumptions

### **Fieldwork**

Meetings with:

- Executive Director, Transforming Delivery
- Deputy Director, Transforming Delivery



- Head of Capacity and Efficiency
- Senior leaders for workforce planning

### **Judgement:**

Where national resource management tools support regions and PDUs to manage staff workloads effectively, taking into account local pressures and offering appropriate freedom and flexibility, there should be a positive judgement.

Where national resource management tools do not support regions and PDUs to manage staff workloads effectively, including not taking into account local pressures and offering appropriate freedom and flexibility, there should be a negative judgement.

### **c) Are regions and PDUs given appropriate authority and support to manage workloads in response to local pressures?**

#### **Guidance:**

Where regions and PDUs face workload pressures, they should be provided with the appropriate levels of authority to enable them to manage these pressures. They should be given sufficient freedom and flexibility to make changes that will help them to manage workloads locally. Such changes may be to team structures and arrangements, local recruitment or individual job roles. They should be able to make these changes without undue constraints, where this is in the interest of the region or PDU being able to effectively deliver probation services.

#### **Evidence:**

##### **EiA**

- Practitioner grade recruitment projections
- Directions given to regional probation directors regarding resource allocation and operational flexibility
- Prioritisation Framework evaluation
- National workforce planning strategy, plan, and reviews, including workload management monitoring, sickness absence monitoring, exit interview analysis, and other assumptions

##### **Fieldwork**

- Meetings with:
  - Executive Director, Transforming Delivery
  - Deputy Director, Transforming Delivery
  - Head of Capacity and Efficiency
  - Senior leaders for workforce planning
  - Regional probation directors

### **Judgement:**

Where regions and PDUs are provided with authority and support to manage their workloads in response to local pressures, there should be a positive judgement.

Where regions and PDUs are not provided with authority and support to manage their workloads in response to local pressures, there should be a negative judgement.

### ***N.2.2 Do national recruitment and retention arrangements support regions and PDUs to deliver effective probation services?***

#### **a) Do national recruitment and retention arrangements ensure the provision of sufficient numbers of staff to regions and PDUs?**

### Guidance:

Arrangements for recruitment and retention should ensure that regions and PDUs are provided with sufficient numbers of staff. This requires analysis, planning and delivery. It should be done at a national strategic level and include activities to mitigate risk to staffing levels. Recruitment processes should be flexible enough to respond to regional and PDU needs and not overly constrain regions and PDUs.

### Evidence:

#### EiA:

- Practitioner grade recruitment projections and recent actual recruitment against forecasted rate
- Attrition rates by region, analysis of principal causes and action taken
- National workforce planning and strategy documents
- National recruitment strategy
- National management information relating to diversity declarations across the workforce

### Fieldwork

Meetings with:

- Regional Probation Directors
- Heads of Corporate Services
- Area Executive Directors
- Executive Director, HR
- Chief Probation Officer
- Head of Professional Registration
- Senior leaders responsible for the national recruitment strategy and oversight of its implementation

### Judgement:

Where the national arrangements for recruitment and retention are based on analysis and planning, offer sufficient flexibility and result in the provision of sufficient numbers of staff to regions and PDUs, there should be a positive judgement.

Where the national arrangements for recruitment and retention are not based on analysis and planning, and/or do not offer sufficient flexibility and/or do not result in the provision of sufficient numbers of staff to regions and PDUs, there should be a negative judgement.

### **b) Do national recruitment and retention arrangements ensure the provision of staff with the right skills to regions and PDUs?**

#### Guidance:

Arrangements for recruitment and retention should ensure that regions and PDUs are provided with staff with the right skills. This requires analysis, planning and delivery. It should be done at a national strategic level and include activities to ensure that staff with the right skill levels are provided nationally. Recruitment processes should be flexible enough to respond to regional and PDU need and not overly constrain regions and PDUs. Recruitment and retention arrangements should promote a positive professional identity of probation work.

Recruitment arrangements should ensure that individuals know the details of the role that they are applying for, including both the management of risk and the support elements for those working directly with people on probation.

## Evidence:

### EiA:

- Practitioner grade recruitment projections and recent actual recruitment against forecasted rate
- Attrition rates by region, analysis of principal causes and action taken
- National workforce planning and strategy documents
- National recruitment strategy
- National management information relating to diversity declarations across the workforce

## Fieldwork

Meetings with:

- Regional Probation Directors
- Heads of Corporate Services
- Area Executive Directors
- Executive Director, HR
- Chief Probation Officer
- Head of Professional Registration
- Senior leaders responsible for the national recruitment strategy and oversight of its implementation

## Judgement:

Where the national arrangements for recruitment and retention are based on analysis and planning, offer sufficient flexibility and result in the provision of suitably skilled staff to regions and PDUs, there should be a positive judgement.

Where the national arrangements for recruitment and retention are not based on analysis and planning, and/or do not offer sufficient flexibility and/or do not result in the provision of suitably skilled staff to regions and PDUs, there should be a negative judgement.

### **c) Do national recruitment and retention arrangements support the achievement of a diverse workforce?**

## Guidance:

National recruitment and retention arrangements should enable regions and PDUs to take action locally to recruit a workforce that reflects the diversity of the local communities they serve. This is to promote understanding and confidence in delivery, and to ensure that services are designed to better meet the needs of people on probation. Nationally, there should be up-to-date information about the profile of the workforce, including managers, staff, and volunteers. National leaders should ensure that regions and PDUs are able to reflect local diversity through recruitment by giving them sufficient freedom and flexibility.

Arrangements should begin at the point when recruitment starts. For example, assessment centres should be prepared to accommodate additional needs and there should be arrangements to ensure that regions and PDUs are supported to manage any occupational health needs of applicants and new starters.

## Evidence:

### EiA:

- Practitioner grade recruitment projections and recent actual recruitment against forecasted rate
- Attrition rates by region, analysis of principal causes and action taken
- National workforce planning and strategy documents
- National recruitment strategy
- National management information relating to diversity declarations across the workforce

## Fieldwork

Meetings with:

- Regional Probation Directors
- Heads of Corporate Services
- Area Executive Directors
- Executive Director, HR
- Chief Probation Officer
- Head of Professional Registration
- Senior leaders responsible for the national recruitment strategy and oversight of its implementation

## Judgement:

Where national recruitment and retention arrangements allow regions and PDUs to recruit and retain a diverse workforce, there should be a positive judgement.

Where national recruitment and retention arrangements do not allow regions and PDUs to recruit and retain a diverse workforce, there should be a negative judgement.

## d) Are national recruitment arrangements efficient?

### Guidance:

National recruitment and retention should operate within reasonably swift timeframes. Processes should be efficient and well executed. They should be reviewed regularly to ensure that recruitment is timely and that candidates are not lost or demotivated due to unnecessary delays. For example, all necessary vetting should be instigated at the earliest possible opportunity and should be completed pre-appointment to avoid losing candidates once they have been appointed.

Regions and PDUs should have sufficient autonomy to make any changes to recruitment processes and activity where this would make them more efficient for that local area but would not affect the integrity of the national recruitment processes. Timely communication to candidates and transparency about systems adds to an efficient process. Action should be taken nationally to minimise the length of time that recruitment takes.

### Evidence:

#### EiA:

- Practitioner grade recruitment projections and recent actual recruitment against forecasted rate
- Attrition rates by region, analysis of principal causes and action taken
- National workforce planning and strategy documents
- National recruitment strategy
- National management information relating to diversity declarations across the workforce

## Fieldwork

Meetings with:

- Regional Probation Directors
- Heads of Corporate Services
- Area Executive Directors
- Executive Director, HR
- Chief Probation Officer
- Head of Professional Registration
- Senior leaders responsible for the national recruitment strategy and oversight of its implementation

### **Judgement:**

Where national arrangements for recruitment provide the shortest possible timescales, provide timely regional and PDU autonomy, and include efficient communication to candidates, there should be a positive judgement.

Where national arrangements for recruitment do not provide the shortest possible timescales, and/or regional and PDU autonomy is not provided efficiently, and/or communication to candidates is not timely, there should be a negative judgement.

### ***N.2.3 Do national learning and development arrangements support regions and PDUs to effectively deliver probation services?***

#### **a) Is a culture of learning and continuous improvement promoted actively at a national level?**

### **Guidance:**

This prompt relates to the promotion of individual learning and continuous improvement rather than organisational learning and continuous improvement, which is covered in prompt 1.4c).

There should be a national learning and development strategy that sets out how all staff in regions and PDUs are supported to attend training and participate in learning opportunities relevant to their learning needs. The strategy should facilitate continuous learning and development, including practice development and improvement post-qualification and should proactively foster a positive professional identity for probation. The strategy should identify the national scale of learning and development that is needed and how that will be achieved.

Nationally, leaders should be striving to improve opportunities for learning, which may come through:

- evaluation of training and staff development processes
- provision of support for external study
- support for obtaining relevant qualifications.

These opportunities should be taken up by staff, with support provided for them to do so.. In order to develop the right culture, staff should be enabled, available, and supported to access, attend and consolidate learning and development.

### **Evidence:**

#### **EiA**

- Practitioner-focused learning and development strategies
- National learning and development committee/board/steering group minutes and action plans
- Any material relating to the evaluation of learning and development activity for practitioners and middle managers

- National training needs analysis
- Learning and development team national structure, expectations, and impact evaluation

## Fieldwork

Meetings with:

- Chief Probation Officer
- Head of Learning and Development
- Head of Probation Learning Services
- Head of Professional Registration
- Head of Probation Learning Delivery
- Head of Probation Professional Pathways
- Head of Learning Design
- Relevant senior policy leads

## Judgement:

Where the national culture promotes learning and continuous improvement that encourages staff to participate in learning and development opportunities, there should be a positive judgement.

Where the national culture does not promote learning and continuous improvement or does not enable staff to participate in learning and development opportunities, there should be a negative judgement.

## **b) Do policies, strategies and arrangements for learning and development support the effective delivery of probation services?**

### Guidance:

National policies, strategies and arrangements for learning and development should be informed by an analysis of staff learning and development needs. Arrangements should ensure an adequate supply of qualified, suitable, experienced and trained staff to fill key roles as they become vacant, ensuring that all staff and managers have the right qualifications and experience for their role.

National arrangements should ensure that structured opportunities, such as coaching, mentoring and job shadowing, are available for staff to test their capabilities and fit for more senior roles. Arrangements should act as a motivator to encourage staff to improve and progress.

Policies, strategies and arrangements for learning and development should promote continuous professional development and allow for succession planning to be undertaken by regions and PDUs. Arrangements should ensure equity of opportunity and be well understood. The national arrangements should allow regions and PDUs to provide learning and development opportunities, as appropriate, without constraint.

### Evidence:

#### EiA

- Practitioner-focused learning and development strategies
- National learning and development committee/board/steering group minutes and action plans
- Any material relating to the evaluation of learning and development activity for practitioners and middle managers
- National training needs analysis
- Learning and development team national structure, expectations, and impact evaluation

## Fieldwork

Meetings with:

- Chief Probation Officer
- Head of Learning and Development
- Head of Probation Learning Services
- Head of Professional Registration
- Head of Probation Learning Delivery
- Head of Probation Professional Pathways
- Head of Learning Design
- Relevant senior policy leads

### Judgement:

Where policies, strategies and arrangements for learning and development are based on analysis, promote equity of opportunity and meet the needs of regions and PDUs, there should be a positive judgement.

Where policies, strategies and arrangements for learning and development are not based on analysis, and/or do not promote equity of opportunity, and/or do not meet the needs of regions and PDUs, there should be a negative judgement.

### **c) Do national learning and development arrangements ensure that staff are sufficiently skilled, competent and experienced?**

#### Guidance:

National arrangements for learning and development should ensure that regions and PDUs are provided with staff with the skills that regions and PDUs need. This requires analysis, planning and delivery. It should be done at a national strategic level and include activities to ensure that enough staff with the right skills are recruited nationally. Learning and development processes should be flexible enough to respond to regional and PDU need and not overly constrain regions and PDUs. The training and development offer should actively enable staff to develop and maintain the right skills to work in regions and PDUs.

National arrangements should ensure there are appropriate mechanisms in place to meet learning and development needs at a local level. Regions and PDUs should be sufficiently resourced to provide continuous learning opportunities and promote a positive professional identity for probation.

National learning and development arrangements are not just about providing training but should also include opportunities for mentoring and coaching. This should be underpinned by national activity to ensure the right levels of management support and oversight are available.

#### Evidence:

##### EiA

- Practitioner-focused learning and development strategies
- National learning and development committee/board/steering group minutes and action plans
- Any material relating to the evaluation of learning and development activity for practitioners and middle managers
- National training needs analysis
- Learning and development team national structure, expectations, and impact evaluation

## Fieldwork

Meetings with:

- Chief Probation Officer
- Head of Learning and Development
- Head of Probation Learning Services
- Head of Professional Registration
- Head of Probation Learning Delivery
- Head of Probation Professional Pathways
- Head of Learning Design
- Relevant senior policy leads

### **Judgement:**

Where national arrangements for learning and development are based on analysis, offer regions and PDUs appropriate levels of freedom and flexibility, and provide staff with the right levels of oversight and support, there should be a positive judgement.

Where national arrangements for learning and development are not based on analysis, do not offer regions and PDUs appropriate levels of freedom and flexibility, and/or do not provide staff with the right levels of oversight and support, there should be a negative judgement.

### **d) Is the impact of learning and development evaluated and changes made in response?**

#### **Guidance:**

There should be embedded, consistent and effective national arrangements for evaluating learning and development. Evaluation should identify whether learning and development is effective at meeting identified objectives, is being consolidated into practice, and meets the needs of regions and PDUs and supports them proactively and responsively. Nationally, there should be quality assurance/audit activity around learning and development to support continuous improvement, ensure that learning is embedded, and measure the impact of what is delivered. Where changes are needed, they should be made as a result of the evaluation activity.

#### **Evidence:**

##### **EiA**

- Practitioner-focused learning and development strategies
- National learning and development committee/board/steering group minutes and action plans
- Any material relating to the evaluation of learning and development activity for practitioners and middle managers
- National training needs analysis
- Learning and development team national structure, expectations, and impact evaluation

#### **Fieldwork**

Meetings with:

- Chief Probation Officer
- Head of Learning and Development
- Head of Probation Learning Services
- Head of Professional Registration
- Head of Probation Learning Delivery
- Head of Probation Professional Pathways



- Head of Learning Design
- Relevant senior policy leads

**Judgement:**

Where the effectiveness of learning and development is routinely evaluated and supported by quality assurance/audit activity, and changes are made as a result, there should be a positive judgement.

Where the effectiveness of learning and development is not routinely evaluated, and/or not supported by quality assurance/audit activity, and changes are not made as a result, there should be a negative judgement.

## N.3 Services

### N.3 Services

National arrangements drive the effective delivery of a comprehensive range of probation services.

*N.3.1 Is there a complete and up-to-date national analysis of the profile of people on probation that enables the effective delivery of a comprehensive range of probation services?*

**a) Does the analysis capture sufficiently the desistance and offending-related factors presented by people on probation?**

#### Guidance:

Nationally, there should be an up-to-date analysis of the desistance and offending-related factors presented by people on probation. The analysis should produce sufficient, meaningful information on desistance and offending to influence service delivery.

National leaders should understand this information well. They should use it effectively to determine both the type and nature of services to be provided, including direct service delivery and commissioning arrangements, and how best to distribute resources. It should be reviewed at least annually using approved assessment tools and timely data and information.

The analysis should enable the service to target resources where they can best meet the person on probation's desistance and offending-related needs and build on their strengths. The analysis should cover all sentence types and operational delivery options. There should be both a large volume and high quality of information available.

#### Evidence:

##### EiA

- An analysis of the profile of people on probation
- Material relating to the allocation of resources and delivery planning, informed by the analysis

#### Fieldwork

Meetings with:

- Executive Director, Reducing Reoffending, Partnerships and Accommodation
- Head of Rehabilitation System Reform
- Other senior leaders accountable for the planning of services based on offending pathways

#### Judgement:

Where there is a comprehensive national analysis of the desistance and offending-related factors presented by people on probation that is able to inform service delivery and commissioning, there should be a positive judgement.

Where there is not a comprehensive national analysis of the desistance and offending-related factors presented by people on probation and/or it is not able to inform service delivery and commissioning, there should be a negative judgement.

**b) Does the analysis capture sufficiently the risk of harm profile of people on probation?**

## Guidance:

Nationally, there should be an up-to-date analysis of the risk of harm profile of people on probation. The analysis should produce sufficient, meaningful information on risk of harm to influence service delivery. National leaders should understand this information well. They should be able to use it effectively to determine both the type and nature of services to be provided, including direct service delivery and commissioning arrangements, and how best to distribute resources. It should be reviewed at least annually using approved assessment tools and timely data and information.

The analysis should enable the service to target resources where they can best meet needs, manage risk of harm and build on strengths. The analysis should cover all sentence types and operational delivery options. There should be both a large volume and high quality of information available.

## Evidence:

### EiA

- An analysis of the profile of people on probation
- Material relating to the allocation of resources and delivery planning, informed by the analysis

### Fieldwork

Meetings with:

- Executive Director, Reducing Reoffending, Partnerships and Accommodation
- Head of Rehabilitation System Reform
- Public protection group
- Other senior leaders accountable for the planning of services based on offending pathways

## Judgement:

Where there is a comprehensive national analysis of the desistance and offending-related factors presented by people on probation that is able to inform service delivery and commissioning, there should be a positive judgement.

Where there is not a comprehensive national analysis of the desistance and offending-related factors presented by people on probation and/or it is not able to inform service delivery and commissioning, there should be a negative judgement.

### **c) Does the analysis pay sufficient attention to equity, diversity and inclusion factors and to issues of disproportionality?**

## Guidance:

The national analysis must include breakdowns of data and information by protected characteristics. It should also include an understanding or explanation as to meet desistance and offending related factors and factors relating to risk of harm. The analysis should produce sufficient, meaningful information to influence service delivery. Nationally, the analysis should highlight where there is disproportionality in a way that aids understanding and enables effective action to be taken, including forming the basis for impact assessments.

## Evidence:

### EiA

- An analysis of the profile of people on probation
- Material relating to the allocation of resources and delivery planning, informed by the analysis

## Fieldwork

Meetings with:

- Executive Director, Reducing Reoffending, Partnerships and Accommodation
- Head of Rehabilitation System Reform
- Other senior leaders accountable for the planning of services based on offending pathways

## Judgement:

Where the analysis scrutinises data and information that is broken down by protected characteristics, and highlights disproportionality in a way that aids understanding and enables effective action to be taken, there should be a positive judgement.

Where the analysis does not scrutinise data and information that is broken down by protected characteristics, and/or does not highlight disproportionality in a way that aids understanding and enables effective action to be taken, there should be a negative judgement.

## d) Is there sufficient analysis of local patterns of offending and sentencing?

### Guidance:

The national analysis should include breakdowns of local patterns of offending and sentencing at regional and PDU level. The analysis should produce sufficient, meaningful information to influence service delivery. National leaders should be able to understand differences and similarities between local patterns of offending and sentencing. They should be able to scrutinise the analysis to determine both the type and nature of services to be provided, including direct service delivery and commissioning arrangements, and how best to distribute resources.

The analysis should enable the service to target resources where they can best meet needs. This should include an analysis of local patterns of offending and sentencing. It should enable leaders to benchmark trends and patterns of sentencing across regions and PDUs to identify significant variations. There should be both a large volume and high quality of information available.

The analysis should evidence how sentencing is influenced and impacted, taking into account factors such as prison capacity and demand for programme delivery.

### Evidence:

#### EiA

- An analysis of the profile of people on probation
- Material relating to the allocation of resources and delivery planning, informed by the analysis
- Sentencing trends information
- Analysis of demand management.

## Fieldwork

Meetings with:

- Executive Director, Reducing Reoffending, Partnerships and Accommodation
- Head of Rehabilitation System Reform
- Other senior leaders accountable for the planning of services based on offending pathways

## Judgement:

Where there is an analysis of local patterns of offending and sentencing that enables differences and similarities to be understood and comparisons to be made, there should be a positive judgement.

Where the analysis of local patterns of offending and sentencing does not enable differences and similarities to be understood and/or comparisons to be made, there should be a negative judgement.

### **e) Does the analysis inform national delivery planning and resourcing?**

#### **Guidance:**

The national analysis should inform the national delivery plan, which should support regions and PDUs in allocating resources. The analysis should inform planning and resource allocation for directly delivered services and commissioning arrangements (nationally, regionally and at PDU level), as well as planning to ensure that people on probation have access to mainstream or universal services.

The breakdowns in the analysis, for example on the basis of protected characteristics, by presenting need, by region and PDU and by offending or sentencing type should inform delivery planning in each of the areas in which the analysis is broken down.

#### **Evidence:**

##### **EiA**

- An analysis of the profile of people on probation
- Material relating to the allocation of resource and delivery planning, informed by the analysis

##### **Fieldwork**

Meetings with:

- Executive Director, Reducing Reoffending, Partnerships and Accommodation
- Head of Rehabilitation System Reform
- Other senior leaders accountable for the planning of services based on offending pathways

#### **Judgement:**

Where the analysis informs the national delivery plan, including directly delivered services, commissioning arrangements and access to mainstream services, there should be a positive judgement.

Where the analysis does not inform the national delivery plan, including directly delivered services, commissioning arrangements and access to mainstream services, there should be a negative judgement.

### ***N.3.2 Do national arrangements ensure the provision of a sufficient range and volume of probation services?***

#### **a) Are the right partnerships in place and operating effectively at a national level to effectively deliver probation services?**

#### **Guidance:**

Partnership arrangements at a national level should provide the framework for the effective delivery of services at a regional and PDU level. This could include arrangements with other government departments, other criminal justice agencies, the police, children's services, public health and prisons. National arrangements should support regions and PDUs in collating and sharing relevant information and ensure that the necessary services are available.

National partnerships should facilitate effective partnership work at regional and PDU level. They should enable regions and PDUs to deliver services in-house, commission services, and

provide access to mainstream or universal services through effective local partnership work. National arrangements should enable national leaders to build relationships with partners at their own level that support regions and PDUs in their partnership delivery efforts.

At a national level, partnerships should be fostered to underpin regional and PDU arrangements. There should be a shared and proactive commitment to improvement across partnerships. Roles and responsibilities and lines of accountability should be transparent within partnership arrangements. Partnerships should be broad enough to ensure that the needs of particular groups can be equitably met.

Where there is evidence of disproportionality – that is, the overrepresentation of any particular group within the criminal justice system, national partnership arrangements should be working actively to explain and address this.

### **Evidence:**

#### **EiA**

- National commissioning strategy and policy
- National contract management arrangements
- Interface arrangements between Heads of Community Integration and central commissioning and contracting leads
- Contract evaluation and performance monitoring

#### **Fieldwork**

Meetings with:

- Heads of Community Integration
- Area Executive Directors
- Executive Director, Reducing Reoffending
- Head of Commissioned Rehabilitative Services
- Senior contract managers on the national team

### **Judgement:**

Where national partnership arrangements provide an effective framework for regional and PDU delivery, with clear lines of accountability and a proactive commitment to improvement, including where there is disproportionality, there should be a positive judgement.

Where national partnership arrangements do not provide an effective framework for regional and PDU delivery, and/or are without clear lines of accountability and/or a proactive commitment to improvement, including where there is disproportionality, there should be a negative judgement.

#### **b) Are national arrangements for the provision of services well understood by regions and PDUs?**

### **Guidance:**

National delivery plans should enable regions to exercise sufficient control over the procurement and management of organisations that provide services to people on probation. Regions should be supported by sufficiently skilled, knowledgeable and experienced contract management, commissioning and information security professionals. This should be supplemented by operational guidance that is fit for purpose, setting out national responsibilities, regional responsibilities and PDU responsibilities. To be effective, regions and PDUs need to understand where they fit and what their role is under the national arrangements and what this means for the provision of services in their region or PDU.

Operational guidance should set out in detail how services are to be delivered, whether in-house or through commissioned or non-commissioned providers. The respective plans must be aligned to avoid any potential confusion about responsibilities at each level of delivery.

### **Evidence:**

#### **EiA**

- National commissioning strategy and policy
- National contract management arrangements
- Interface arrangements between Heads of Community Integration and central commissioning and contracting leads
- Contract evaluation and performance monitoring

#### **Fieldwork**

Meetings with:

- Heads of Community Integration
- Area Executive Directors
- Executive Director, Reducing Reoffending
- Head of Commissioned Rehabilitative Services
- Senior contract managers on the national team

### **Judgement:**

Where national arrangements for the provision of services are understood by regions and PDUs and supported by operational guidance to aid understanding, and delivery plans are aligned, there should be a positive judgement.

Where national arrangements for the provision of services are not well understood by regions and PDUs, and/or are not supported by operational guidance to aid understanding, and/or delivery plans are not aligned, there should be a negative judgement.

### **c) Do national arrangements for the provision of services meet the needs of regions and PDUs?**

#### **Guidance:**

National arrangements for in-house delivery, for commissioned services and for access to mainstream or universal services should meet the needs of regions and PDUs. Regions and PDUs should be able to provide the right levels of service in a timely way by providing enough high-quality placements to meet all needs across regions and PDUs. Access to provision should be available to individuals in a timely manner, without excessive backlogs. At a national level, this requires services to be sufficiently resourced to meet demand flexibly. It also requires national teams to support regional commissioning and contract management activity. Regional probation directors and senior leaders should be supported to make appropriate decisions about spending budgets, awarding contracts and managing the performance of third-party provider organisations. National arrangements should ensure that the needs of particular groups can be met equitably, for example offering women-only provision to promote a women-friendly environment.

Where there are significant gaps in capacity and/or the range of provision, credible action should be being taken nationally to address this. Where there is evidence of disproportionality – that is, the overrepresentation of any particular group within the criminal justice system, – particular attention should be given to offering appropriate provision.

### **Evidence:**

## **EiA**

- National commissioning strategy and policy
- National contract management arrangements
- Interface arrangements between Heads of Community Integration and central commissioning and contracting leads
- Contract evaluation and performance monitoring

## **Fieldwork**

Meetings with:

- Heads of Community Integration
- Area Executive Directors
- Executive Director, Reducing Reoffending
- Head of Commissioned Rehabilitative Services
- Senior contract managers on the national team

## **Judgement:**

Where national arrangements for the provision of services enable regions and PDUs to effectively deliver the right services for the cohorts of people on probation, in the right way and at the right time, there should be a positive judgement.

Where national arrangements for the provision of services do not enable regions and PDUs to effectively deliver the right services for the cohorts of people on probation, in the right way and at the right time, there should be a negative judgement.

## **d) Is appropriate authority delegated to regions and PDUs in relation to contracting with local providers and managing their performance?**

## **Guidance:**

Regions and PDUs should have sufficient authority to commission local providers and manage their performance to best meet local needs. National arrangements should facilitate this in line with the effective delivery of probation services. This will require clarity about the roles of national leaders, regions and PDUs in the commissioning arrangements. Workable guidelines and the appropriate delegation of budget and contract management arrangements should be in place. Regions and PDUs should be given the support they need to deliver services effectively alongside local providers.

## **Evidence:**

### **EiA**

- National commissioning strategy and policy
- National contract management arrangements
- Interface arrangements between Heads of Community Integration and central commissioning and contracting leads
- Contract evaluation and performance monitoring

### **Fieldwork**

Meetings with:

- Heads of Community Integration
- Area Executive Directors
- Executive Director, Reducing Reoffending
- Head of Commissioned Rehabilitative Services
- Senior contract managers on the national team



## Judgement:

Where appropriate authority is delegated to regions and PDUs and they are effectively supported to commission and manage contracts with local providers, there should be a positive judgement.

Where appropriate authority is not delegated to regions and PDUs and/or they are not effectively supported to commission and manage contracts with local providers, there should be a negative judgement.

## e) Do national arrangements promote effective collaborative working between service providers and probation practitioners?

### Guidance:

National arrangements should enable freedom, flexibility and support for regions and PDUs to build effective collaborative arrangements at a local level.

The national delivery model should ensure that regions and PDUs have sufficient resources to build relationships and work collaboratively. Where commissioning arrangements are delivered and managed nationally, there must be an expectation that service providers will work collaboratively at a delivery level. Nationally, support should be provided to regions and PDUs to find solutions where this may not be happening.

National arrangements should promote key partnerships, with action taken nationally where needed to improve communication and unblock problems. Where provision is nationally commissioned or directed, probation practitioners should have access to operational guidance that makes clear what is expected of them.

National arrangements should support and enable effective local safeguarding arrangements. Although it is not a statutory requirement for PDUs to be members of a safeguarding adults board, the Probation Service National Partnership Framework (June 2015) stipulates that they should, there should be national support to enable this membership to happen. Nationally this should be supported.

### Evidence:

#### EiA

- National commissioning strategy and policy
- National contract management arrangements
- Interface arrangements between Heads of Community Integration and central commissioning and contracting leads
- Contract evaluation and performance monitoring

#### Fieldwork

Meetings with:

- Heads of Community Integration
- Area Executive Directors
- Executive Director, Reducing Reoffending
- Head of Commissioned Rehabilitative Services
- Senior contract managers on the national team

## Judgement:

Where national arrangements promote effective collaborative working, underpinned by the resources, support and frameworks that regions and PDUs need, there should be a positive judgement.

Where national arrangements do not promote effective collaborative working, and/or this is not underpinned by the resources, support and frameworks that regions and PDUs need, there should be a negative judgement.

**f) Is building strengths and enhancing protective factors central to the national commissioning and delivery of services?**

**Guidance:**

In order to support and promote desistance and manage risk, building strengths and enhancing the protective factors of people on probation should be at the forefront of the national commissioning and delivery of services. Regardless of the delivery model, these factors should underpin all provision for people on probation.

Commissioned and delivered services should enable people on probation to access suitable accommodation; education, training, and employment; women's services; finance, benefit, and debt assistance; and support for health and substance misuse needs that builds on positive factors. Interventions should also be in place to support and enhance lifestyle and personal factors. These include parenting and family support, self-esteem, relationships, engagement in positive activities, mentoring initiatives, and other projects to enhance social inclusion.

**Evidence:**

**EiA**

- National commissioning strategy and policy
- National contract management arrangements
- Interface arrangements between Heads of Community Integration and central commissioning and contracting leads
- Contract evaluation and performance monitoring

**Fieldwork**

Meetings with:

- Heads of Community Integration
- Area Executive Directors
- Executive Director, Reducing Reoffending
- Head of Commissioned Rehabilitative Services
- Senior contract managers on the national team

**Judgement:**

Where building strengths and enhancing protective factors are at the forefront of the national arrangements for the commissioning and delivery of services, there should be a positive judgement.

Where building strengths and enhancing protective factors are not at the forefront of the national arrangements for the commissioning and delivery of services, there should be a negative judgement.

**g) Is public protection central to the national commissioning and delivery of services?**

**Guidance:**

Protection of the public has been the most concerning area of practice and leadership from inspections of PDUs and regions to date. Public protection should be at the forefront of the national commissioning and delivery of services. Regardless of the delivery model, effective risk management arrangements should underpin all provision for people on probation. This should include as a minimum:

- electronic monitoring commissioning, management and deployment
- work with the police and other agencies in relation to violence against women and girls
- national leadership insight into the appropriate enforcement of orders
- oversight at a national level of completion of sentence requirements
- engagement with prisons in relation to properly managed resettlement.

Commissioned and delivered services should enable people on probation to access suitable accommodation; education, training, and employment; women’s services; finance, benefit, and debt assistance; and support for health and substance misuse needs that builds on positive factors. Interventions should also be in place to support and enhance lifestyle and personal factors. These include parenting and family support, self-esteem, relationships, engagement in positive activities, mentoring initiatives, and other projects to enhance social inclusion.

### Evidence:

#### EiA

- National commissioning strategy and policy
- National contract management arrangements
- Interface arrangements between Heads of Community Integration and central commissioning and contracting leads
- Contract evaluation and performance monitoring

#### Fieldwork

Meetings with:

- Heads of Community Integration
- Area Executive Directors
- Executive Director, Reducing Reoffending
- Head of Commissioned Rehabilitative Services
- Senior contract managers on the national team

### Judgement:

Where building strengths and enhancing protective factors is at the forefront of the national arrangements for the commissioning and delivery of services, there should be a positive judgement.

Where building strengths and enhancing protective factors is not at the forefront of the national arrangements for the commissioning and delivery of services, there should be a negative judgement.

### **h) Are equity, diversity and inclusion factors and issues of disproportionality addressed sufficiently in the way that services are nationally commissioned and delivered?**

#### Guidance:

Equity, diversity and inclusion factors should be at the forefront of the national commissioning and delivery of services. This will enable regions and PDUs to deliver probation services effectively. Commissioners should recognise any evidence of disproportionality – that is, the overrepresentation of a particular group within the criminal justice system. Any action they take to address this through the commissioning and delivery of services should be underpinned by relevant data and information. Regardless of the delivery model, equity, diversity and inclusion factors should underpin all provision for people on probation.

National commissioners and those with national oversight for the in-house delivery of services should be able to describe how, in the way that services are commissioned or delivered, the

diverse needs of people on probation are met. This includes both diversity needs related to protected characteristics and factors arising from personal circumstances.

### Evidence:

#### EiA

- National commissioning strategy and policy
- National contract management arrangements
- Interface arrangements between Heads of Community Integration and central commissioning and contracting leads
- Contract evaluation and performance monitoring

#### Fieldwork

Meetings with:

- Heads of Community Integration
- Area Executive Directors
- Executive Director, Reducing Reoffending
- Head of Commissioned Rehabilitative Services
- Senior contract managers on the national team

### Judgement:

Where equity, diversity and inclusion, along with addressing issues of disproportionality, are at the forefront of the national arrangements for the commissioning and delivery of services, there should be a positive judgement.

Where equity, diversity and inclusion, along with addressing issues of disproportionality, are not at the forefront of the national arrangements for the commissioning and delivery of services, there should be a negative judgement.

#### **i) Are national arrangements for the provision of services informed by regular robust evidence-based monitoring, evaluation, and review?**

### Guidance:

For national commissioning and delivery arrangements to be effective, they must be informed by regular evidence-based monitoring, evaluation, and review, to check whether the aims are being achieved. National commissioning and delivery arrangements should be informed by evidence from research about what is likely to work and improve delivery.

Robust evidence-based monitoring should include examining improvements to processes, to identify whether the improvements are achieving what was intended, with feedback from stakeholders on how they are working in practice. Commissioning and delivery plans should be monitored routinely at a national level. This should include feedback, data and information from regions and PDUs about how effectively the national arrangements support the effective delivery of probation services. Any improvement plans created as a result of this should be aligned with the evidence base, both building on existing research and contributing to it.

Where appropriate, national leaders should consider using external monitoring of arrangements, to improve the integrity of the process. They should also consider whether there are opportunities to engage researchers or work collaboratively with similar organisations undertaking a comparable improvement process, to benchmark progress and maximise learning.

### Evidence:

#### EiA

- National commissioning strategy and policy

- National contract management arrangements
- Interface arrangements between Heads of Community Integration and central commissioning and contracting leads
- Contract evaluation and performance monitoring

### **Fieldwork**

Meetings with:

- Heads of Community Integration
- Area Executive Directors
- Executive Director, Reducing Reoffending
- Head of Commissioned Rehabilitative Services
- Senior contract managers on the national team

### **Judgement:**

Where national arrangements for the provision of services are informed by regular evidence-based monitoring, evaluation and review, and this includes the experiences of regions and PDUs and results in improvement actions being taken, there should be a positive judgement.

Where national arrangements for the provision of services are not informed by regular evidence-based monitoring, evaluation and review, and/or this does not include the experiences of regions and PDUs and/or does not result in improvement actions being taken, there should be a negative judgement.

## N.4 Infrastructure

### N.4 Infrastructure

Infrastructure supports the effective delivery of probation services.

#### *N.4.1 Do facilities support the effective delivery of probation services?*

##### **a) Do national arrangements ensure that premises and offices support the delivery of appropriate personalised work and effective engagement?**

#### **Guidance:**

National arrangements should ensure that for all regions and PDUs, premises where work is delivered can facilitate personalised work and effective engagement. This includes unpaid work placements, community hubs, and buildings where the region or PDU is co-located with other services. For direct delivery of work, confidential spaces should be available where people on probation can be seen without the possibility of being overheard, including in buildings that are shared with other services and members of the public. National arrangements should ensure that regions and PDUs have facilities that provide:

- a suitable reception environment
- rooms that are appropriately decorated, furnished, signed and well lit
- positive images, such as rehabilitative posters and quotes
- information in a variety of formats and languages
- suitably sized rooms for group activities
- separate secure office space for staff.

#### **Evidence:**

##### **EiA**

- National estates strategy
- Estates inventory and risk assessments
- Facilities management arrangements and contract monitoring

#### **Fieldwork**

Meetings with:

- Executive Director, Change
- Deputy Director, Change
- Head of Change Delivery and Systems
- Head of Health and Safety

#### **Judgement:**

Where national arrangements ensure that regions and PDUs have facilities to enable the delivery of appropriate personalised work and promote effective engagement, there should be a positive judgement.

Where national arrangements do not ensure that regions and PDUs have facilities to enable the delivery of appropriate personalised work and promote effective engagement, there should be a negative judgement.

## **b) Do national arrangements provide safe environments for the effective delivery of services?**

### **Guidance:**

National arrangements should ensure that for all regions and PDUs, premises where work is delivered provide a safe environment for services to be delivered in. This includes unpaid work placements, community hubs, and buildings where the region or PDU is co-located with other services. Where services are delivered out of hours, sufficient safety arrangements should be in place for both staff and people on probation. There should be up to date and appropriate health and safety risk assessment requirements in place that are effectively managed and monitored. National arrangements should ensure that across all sites there are:

- arrangements for health and safety staff across all sites
- health and safety inductions for all new staff
- health and safety arrangements that are accessible and promoted
- health and safety inspections, emergency equipment tests and fire drills, to comply with relevant health and safety regulations
- adequate fire detection, protection and evacuation equipment, processes and procedures, and evidence of regular and recent testing
- first aid facilities and support from trained staff member(s), which are clearly signed
- arrangements for physical security, including the logging and monitoring of visitors and staff attendance
- access to suitable welfare facilities
- lone working policy and procedures, along with guidance on making home visits.

Facilities management contracts should be managed effectively, including ensuring that response times are set out, met and monitored, and that appropriate action is taken where contracts are not being delivered in line with requirements.

### **Evidence:**

#### **EiA**

- National estates strategy
- Estates inventory and risk assessments
- Facilities management arrangements and contract monitoring

#### **Fieldwork**

Meetings with:

- Executive Director, Change
- Deputy Director, Change
- Head of Change Delivery and Systems
- Head of Health and Safety

### **Judgement:**

Where national arrangements, including contract management arrangements, ensure the provision of safe environments, there should be a positive judgement.

Where national arrangements, including contract management arrangements, do not ensure the provision of safe environments, there should be a negative judgement.

### **c) Do national arrangements provide accessible environments for the effective delivery of services?**

#### **Guidance:**

National arrangements should ensure that all probation services are reasonably accessible to people on probation. This includes unpaid work placements, community hubs, and buildings where the region or PDU is co-located with other partners. 'Accessible' refers to how easy it is for staff and people on probation, including those with disabilities and those whose first language is not English, to access the premises. It relates to opening times and the availability of the premises to those who are working or have caring responsibilities. Ease of access by telephone, email or text should also be considered, along with response times.

Regions and PDUs must have appropriate autonomy to best support the compliance of individuals where there are geographical challenges, such as in sparsely populated rural areas or where people have specific needs. National arrangements should enable regions and PDUs to provide services that are accessible to local need.

#### **Evidence:**

##### **EiA**

- National estates strategy
- Estates inventory and risk assessments
- Facilities management arrangements and contract monitoring

#### **Fieldwork**

Meetings with:

- Executive Director, Change
- Deputy Director, Change
- Head of Change Delivery and Systems
- Head of Health and Safety

#### **Judgement:**

Where national arrangements, including contract management arrangements, enable regions and PDUs to provide accessible environments, there should be a positive judgement.

Where national arrangements, including contract management arrangements, do not enable regions and PDUs to provide accessible environments, there should be a negative judgement.

### ***N.4.2 Do ICT systems enable regions and PDUs to effectively deliver probation services?***

#### **a) Do ICT systems enable staff to plan, deliver and record their work in a timely way?**

#### **Guidance:**

National arrangements should provide ICT systems that enable staff to plan and deliver their work and record it in a timely, effective and reliable way. ICT systems comprise both the hardware and infrastructure elements, including telecommunications, and the software or applications systems. Information systems include, but are not limited to:

- assessment tools such as the offender assessment system
- case management tools
- central referral systems



- electronic toolkits and interventions
- risk management data-sharing tools, such as the violent and sexual offenders register (ViSOR)
- knowledge-sharing applications, such as intranets, EQuIP, websites and internet-based applications
- email and word processing
- diary, booking and logistics applications.

Systems should have sufficient capacity, and be robust, reliable and sufficiently responsive. Downtime, which can interfere with staff's ability to plan, deliver and record their work, should be kept to a minimum. Applications should work with assistive technology to enable staff with a range of access needs to use them effectively.

All of the ICT systems should be reviewed as part of a regular schedule of work. There should be processes for testing the effectiveness and ease of use of ICT systems, and these should be responsive to feedback from users. The review and any updates should ensure that the systems continue to meet the needs of their users, requirements of the programme, and government standards. Where this is not the case, the review should be of sufficient granularity to highlight where ICT improvements need to be made, in order to drive efficiencies and develop improvements across probation services.

Where arrangements are contracted out, this should be managed effectively and action taken promptly when systems are not working effectively.

### **Evidence:**

#### **EiA**

- ICT contract management and monitoring arrangements
- National directives and/or guidelines case management recording
- Information security policies

#### **Fieldwork**

Meetings with:

- Executive Director, Change
- Deputy Director, Change
- Head of Change Delivery and Systems

### **Judgement:**

Where ICT systems allow staff to plan, deliver and record their work with minimal downtime and solutions provided in the most effective way, there should be a positive judgement.

Where ICT systems do not allow staff to plan, deliver and record their work, and/or do not achieve minimal downtime, and/or solutions are not provided in the most effective way, there should be a negative judgement.

## **b) Do ICT systems enable staff to appropriately and reliably access information?**

### **Guidance:**

National arrangements should provide ICT systems that enable staff to appropriately access information held on internal systems. ICT systems comprise both the hardware and infrastructure elements, including telecommunications, and the software or applications systems. Information systems include, but are not limited to:

- assessment tools, such as the offender assessment system
- case management tools
- risk management data-sharing tools, such as the violent and sexual offenders register (ViSOR)
- knowledge-sharing applications, such as intranets, EQuIP, websites and internet-based applications
- email and word processing
- diary, booking and logistics applications.

Systems should have sufficient capacity, be robust, reliable and sufficiently responsive to enable this to happen. Downtime, which can interfere with staff's ability to access timely information, should be kept to a minimum. Assistive technology should enable staff with a range of needs to work effectively. Where arrangements are contracted out, this should be managed effectively and action taken promptly where systems are not working effectively.

### **Evidence:**

#### **EiA**

- ICT contract management and monitoring arrangements
- National directives and/or guidelines for accessing information
- Information security policies

#### **Fieldwork**

Meetings with:

- Executive Director, Change
- Deputy Director, Change
- Head of Change Delivery and Systems

### **Judgement:**

Where ICT systems enable staff to appropriately and reliably access information, with minimal downtime, and solutions provided in the most effective way, there should be a positive judgement.

Where ICT systems do not enable staff to appropriately and reliably access information, and/or do not have minimal downtime, and/or solutions are not provided in the most effective way, there should be a negative judgement.

### **c) Do ICT systems enable effective information exchange with partners?**

#### **Guidance:**

This prompt is about the digital solutions that need to be in place to enable effective information exchange with partners. There is also a cultural issue around collaboration and information exchange that is covered in N.1.1. d). This prompt only refers to the digital element.

ICT systems comprise both the hardware and infrastructure elements, including telecommunications, and the software or applications systems. Information systems include, but are not limited to:

- assessment tools such as the offender assessment system

- case management tools
- risk management data-sharing tools, such as the violent and sexual offenders register (ViSOR)
- knowledge-sharing applications, such as intranets, EQuIP, websites and internet-based applications
- email and word processing
- diary, booking and logistics applications.

For risk to be managed appropriately and for the right services to be delivered effectively, it is essential that agreements and arrangements are in place and that information exchange is effective and completed consistently and lawfully (in line with the General Data Protection Regulation).

Necessary arrangements include, but are not limited to:

- information exchange with the police and prisons on risk management, including appropriate use of ViSOR
- information received from the police on domestic abuse callouts
- information exchange with approved premises
- information exchange with public health
- information exchange with children’s social care services on safeguarding issues
- information exchange with adult social care services on safeguarding issues
- procedures for accessing and exchanging information when young adults transfer from youth justice services to adult probation services
- referral arrangements with supply chain and other delivery partners, including the exchange of information on risk, and agreements on exchanging information about attendance and outcomes
- data-recording practices for equality information and compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation
- information received from the Crown Prosecution Service on cases to be sentenced by the courts and receipt of previous conviction information from the court service on people appearing in court.

There should be national arrangements to ensure that ICT systems reliably facilitate the effective, consistent and appropriate sharing of information with partners, providers and other key stakeholders. National information-sharing agreements and arrangements should be in place, where appropriate. Regions and PDUs should be supported to implement and/or escalate these where needed.

## **Evidence:**

### **EiA**

- ICT contract management and monitoring arrangements
- National directives and/or guidelines for information exchange
- Information security policies

### **Fieldwork**

Meetings with:

- Executive Director, Change
- Deputy Director, Change
- Head of Change Delivery and Systems

### **Judgement:**

Where ICT systems ensure effective information exchange with partners, and regions and PDUs are supported to follow protocols, escalate as needed and implement local arrangements where appropriate, there should be a positive judgement.

Where ICT systems do not ensure effective information exchange with partners, and/or regions and PDUs are not supported to follow protocols, escalate as needed and implement local arrangements where appropriate, there should be a negative judgement.

### **d) Do ICT systems support remote working where required?**

#### **Guidance:**

To provide flexible services, ICT systems should enable staff to work remotely in a variety of locations in the community and in the premises of other agencies, without being restricted to a hard-wired network.

ICT systems comprise both hardware and infrastructure elements, including telecommunications, and software or applications systems. Information systems include, but are not limited to:

- assessment tools, such as the offender assessment system
- case management tools
- risk management data sharing tools, such as the violent and sexual offenders register (ViSOR)
- knowledge-sharing applications, such as intranets, EQuIP, websites and internet-based applications
- email and word processing
- diary, booking and logistics applications.

Effective remote working requires communication technology that is robust enough and can access strong enough signals to operate effectively. It is recognised that this may be difficult or impossible in remote locations, and allowance must be made for this.

Supporting remote working requires:

- laptop computers and devices that can access assessments and case records to view and record information with reasonable efficiency
- telecommunication devices that can receive good signals in the relevant locations and have facilities for providing alerts about staff safety (for example, security lanyards)
- information security policies that address remote working and the safe use, storage and transmission of confidential information
- systems for working that address the relevant display screen equipment regulations.

#### **Evidence:**

##### **EiA**

- ICT contract management and monitoring arrangements
- National directives and/or guidelines for remote working
- Information security policies

##### **Fieldwork**

Meetings with:

- Executive Director, Change
- Deputy Director, Change
- Head of Change Delivery and Systems

### **Judgement:**

Where there are effective and reliable systems that support remote working where needed, there should be a positive judgement.

Where systems do not effectively and reliably support remote working where needed, there should be a negative judgement.

### **e) Do ICT systems support the production of the necessary management information?**

#### **Guidance:**

ICT systems should effectively support regions and PDUs to produce relevant management information, for example to inform performance reports and data trends. ICT systems comprise both the hardware and infrastructure elements, including telecommunications, and the software or applications systems. Information systems include, but are not limited to:

- assessment tools such as the offender assessment system
- case management tools
- risk management data-sharing tools, such as the violent and sexual offenders register (ViSOR)
- knowledge-sharing applications, such as intranets, EQuIP, websites and internet-based applications
- email and word processing
- diary, booking and logistics applications.

ICT systems should be designed to store, retrieve, collate and analyse key data accurately and easily, including, but not limited to, data on:

- the characteristics of people on probation, including protected characteristics, needs, risk and location
- sentencing
- operational reports – for example, unpaid work and programme attendance lists
- diversity, including protected characteristics
- performance and output/outcomes
- HR
- how resources are used and workloads are managed
- complaints
- surveys of staff and people on probation.

Appropriate management information systems (MIS) should be in place that can produce routine and ad hoc reports on demand, in accessible and usable formats, according to the needs of users, regionally and at PDU level, as required. Processes should be in place for identifying and meeting the MIS needs of users and refining requirements as necessary.

#### **Evidence:**

##### **EiA**

- ICT contract management and monitoring arrangements
- National directives and/or guidelines for management information arrangements
- Information security policies

## Fieldwork

Meetings with:

- Executive Director, Change
- Deputy Director, Change
- Head of Change Delivery and Systems

### Judgement:

Where ICT systems support regions and PDUs to produce relevant, dynamic, timely and reliable management information, there should be a positive judgement.

Where ICT systems do not support regions and PDUs to produce relevant, dynamic, timely and reliable management information, there should be a negative judgement.

## f) Are regions and PDUs supported to find local ICT solutions where these may be needed?

### Guidance:

National arrangements should allow sufficient scope for regions and PDUs to implement local arrangements with national support, where this would be the best approach to deliver probation services effectively.

There may be circumstances where the best way to enable regions and PDUs to deliver probation services effectively is through local or regional arrangements. Where this is the case, regions and PDUs should be given sufficient autonomy to use local solutions with national support.

National arrangements should allow regions and PDUs appropriate autonomy to provide local solutions where these would be the best way to enable staff to plan, deliver and record their work in a timely way and to access information when necessary.

### Evidence:

#### EiA

- ICT contract management and monitoring arrangements
- National directives and/or guidelines for management information arrangements
- Information security policies

## Fieldwork

Meetings with:

- Executive Director, Change
- Deputy Director, Change
- Head of Change Delivery and Systems

### Judgement:

Where national arrangements provide scope and autonomy for regions and PDUs to implement local arrangements with national support, there should be a positive judgement.

Where national arrangements do not provide scope and autonomy for regions and PDUs to implement local arrangements with national support, there should be a negative judgement.