



HM Inspectorate  
of Probation

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Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice  
Minister for Prisons and Probation  
Minister for Victims and Violence Against Women and Girls  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Justice  
Chief Inspectors of Criminal Justice  
HM Chief Inspector, Ofsted  
Victims Commissioner for England and Wales  
Chief Executive, Care Quality Commission  
Chief Inspector, Estyn  
Chief Executive, Healthcare Inspectorate Wales  
Chief Executive, Care Inspectorate Wales

11 February 2025

## **Re: HM Inspectorate of Probation's response to the consultation on the Inspectorate's thematic inspection and research programmes for 2025/2026**

### **1. Background**

- 1.1. We would like to thank those who responded to our consultation on our thematic inspection and research programmes for 2025/2026. In total, we received 22 responses to our consultation, which we have now reviewed. A list of respondents can be found at **Annex 1**.
- 1.2. Under the Police and Criminal Justice Act 2006, we are required to consult key stakeholders on our inspection frameworks and programmes. It is our practice to consult more widely, with those we inspect and associated bodies who can provide valuable insight and information as we develop our framework and programmes.
- 1.3. Our consultation opened on 29 October 2024 and closed on 22 November 2024. The consultation letter was published on our website and can be viewed here:  
<https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/about-hmi-probation/consultations>
- 1.4. The consultation set out proposals for our upcoming thematic inspection and research programmes, which included a list of suggested topics. We posed the following questions:

1. Do you have any preferred thematic inspection topics from our list for 2025/2026?
2. Do you have any additional proposals for thematic inspection topics for 2025/2026?
3. Do you have any preferred research topics from our list for 2025/2026?
4. Do you have any alternative proposals on research topics for 2025/2026?

- 1.5. We asked for evidence for any alternative proposals and a sense of prioritisation of topics.

## **2. Summary of responses**

### *Thematic inspection programme 2025/2026*

- 2.1. We received most support for our suggested topics of (1) Safeguarding vulnerable adults known to the Probation Service (2) Local strategic partnerships (adult), and (3) Youth Justice Services strategic arrangements.
- 2.2. Respondents also put forward the below additional topics:
  - Violence against women and girls
  - Children's use of social media
  - Mortality under probation supervision
  - Recall
  - Anti racist review
  - Irish travellers and Romany gypsies
  - Probation provision/work with women
- 2.3. Most of the additional topics suggested above were limited to one response, except for recall (three responses) and probation provision/work with women (two responses). Many of these topics have been the subject of, or are closely related to, recent inspections or research: Race equality in probation (2021 and 2023), The experiences of black and mixed heritage boys in the youth justice system (2021), The quality of work undertaken with women (with HMI Prisons, 2024), Domestic abuse (2023

and current Joint Targeted Area Inspection), Girls in the youth justice system (with HMI Prisons, 2022). Deaths while under probation supervision is closely related to the research we published in 2022 on probation staff experiences of working with people at risk of suicide and/or self-harm. The topic is also relevant to the upcoming safeguarding vulnerable adults' inspection. Recall practice was most recently inspected following a ministerial commission on IPP (2023) and is an area likely to be picked up as part of the independent review of sentencing, so we will keep this area as a potential area for inspection in future years.

#### *Research programme 2025/2026*

- 2.4. We received most support (nine responses) for the proposed research project on 'partnership working in the probation service'.
- 2.5. There was also reasonable support (four responses each) for the proposed projects on 'probation work with the courts (with a focus on judicial views)' and the 'youth justice interventions landscape'.
- 2.6. A wide range of additional topics were suggested by respondents – all of these suggestions were limited to one response.

### **3. Decisions**

#### *Thematic inspection programme 2025/2026*

- 3.1. We will complete thematic inspections on the following topics in 2025/2026:
  - a) Safeguarding vulnerable adults known to the Probation Service**
  - b) Local Strategic Partnerships (adult)**
  - c) Youth Justice Services strategic arrangements**
- 3.2. Scoping work has started on Safeguarding vulnerable adults known to the Probation Service. The inspection will focus on how individuals under probation supervision, who have known vulnerabilities, are safeguarded.

#### *Research programme 2025/2026*

- 3.3. The following research projects will continue into 2025/2026:
  - Approved Premises and the safe integration of residents into local communities.
  - Serious Further Offence reviews – promoting a culture of learning for probation.
  - Delivering a high-quality, rights-compliant and procedurally just service for all children and all victims.
- 3.4. In addition to these projects, we will progress the most positively supported research project on '**partnership working in the Probation Service**',

aligning to and complementing the thematic inspection on local strategic partnerships.

- 3.5. In the second half of 2025/2026, we will consider whether we have the available resource to progress 'probation work with the courts (with a focus on judicial views)' and the 'youth justice interventions landscape' as internal projects. Further consideration will be given to the added value of such projects (taking into account the latest developments, e.g. following on from the Sentencing Review) and to the potential for any collaborations (e.g. with the Youth Justice Board).
- 3.6. Bearing in mind that all of the other suggested topics were limited to one response, we do not propose to take them forward as primary research projects in 2025/2026, but we will consider whether we can progress them in other ways (e.g. Academic Insights papers; secondary analysis of inspection data) or whether they should be considered as priorities for 2026/2027.

## Annex 1: List of respondents

| Consultation respondents   |
|--|
| Lord Chancellor, Minister for Prisons and Probation, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Ministry of Justice |
| Buckinghamshire YJS  |
| Buckinghamshire YJS  |
| Prison Reform Trust  |
| Kent YJS   |
| Estyn  |
| Care Inspectorate Wales  |
| Public Health Wales  |
| Children's Commissioner  |
| Probation Institute  |
| East of England Probation Service  |
| Clinks   |
| Welsh Government   |
| Switchback   |
| User Voice   |
| NACRO  |
| One Small Thing  |
| Bromley YJS  |
| Justice Committee  |
| Birth Companions   |
| Lancashire YJS   |