



HM Prison &
Probation Service

Probation Workforce Strategy

July 2020–2023

Introduction

Probation is at the heart of Government plans to strengthen the Criminal Justice System. It sits firmly within HMPPS as a fundamental service that reduces reoffending and protects the public.

The service you, our valued workforce, provide changes the lives of those who need your support and keeps the public safe.

Thank you for all you have done to continue to provide this service to a professional and unflinching standard while we have faced such unprecedented change as we tackle COVID-19. We know this has required a mammoth effort from all of you.

We are also facing an opportunity to create a new, unified probation service, with one consistent service delivering end-to-end sentence management and the best possible unpaid work, accredited programmes and structured interventions. As new colleagues join us, we look forward to sharing best practice and learning from the breadth of skills and experience they bring.

Alongside this, the challenge of COVID-19, and the current important debates about equality and inclusion we know that our entire workforce is critical, and as the workforce evolves over the next few years we are determined to support you and invest in the skills, capability and ways of working you need to do your jobs to the highest standard.

This also includes championing and investing in our commitment to tackle racism and other forms of discrimination where it exists in the service and widen our diversity. We are firmly committed to doing more to create positive change in this space, and we hope that the actions and commitments outlined in this strategy give you a clear indication of that.

This workforce strategy contains our ambition for a positive, inclusive and diverse workforce and the steps we will take to achieve it over the next three years. You may have already seen the HMPPS People Plan, which sets out five key objectives that will allow the service to grow as an organisation and focus on our people over the next three years.

The Probation Workforce Strategy has developed from the People Plan, with engagement from across probation services, setting out our approach to achieving the service's vision that is tailored specifically to probation and our core purpose to Assess, Protect, Change.

The vision of the strategy applies equally to all our workforce, regardless of where in the system you work, and sets out our commitment to you in investing in your wellbeing, your ongoing professional development and making sure that probation is an excellent and rewarding place to work.

It also reflects the importance of flexible borders, where it is easier to move across HMPPS, MoJ and the wider Civil Service to help build up a diverse talent pipeline. Our focus on diversity also emphasises the importance of supporting staff from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities and widening our recruitment so that our workforce better reflects wider society.

As we move from the Exceptional Delivery Model to the Recovery phase of our response to COVID-19, we will learn about the new ways of working that have made things easier for you, and those you are keen to move away from.

This is a fundamental tenet of our Recovery work. As the specifics of this emerge, we will keep you informed so that you are aware of and confident in these changes.

The strategy is our template to ensure that the changes happening in probation and wider society go hand-in-hand with positive changes for our workforce, reflecting our desire to work more closely with all of HMPPS, especially prisons, and support the aim of the wider HMPPS Strategy to enable people to be their best. We value the impactful and often challenging work you do with integrity, every day.

This is a new beginning for probation and the transition towards a new era. We owe it to you and the public to seize this opportunity and make probation a brilliant place to work.



Jo Farrar
Chief Executive Officer,
HM Prison & Probation Service



Amy Rees
Director General of Probation and
Wales, HM Prison & Probation Service

Our objectives

We have spoken to leaders and staff across probation to determine the aspects of workforce reform that are most important to you. Together, we have translated the five objectives of the HMPPS People Plan for the new probation workforce.

Promoting wellbeing for everyone

The pressures of your job, amplified by the impact of COVID-19, has a significant impact on you and your wellbeing. We are committed to ensuring our workforce has the right structures, support and encouragement to maintain your mental and physical health.

Attracting and retaining talented people

We want the probation service to be a rich, fulfilling and rewarding place to work. The workforce has adapted to and absorbed a very different way of working to keep staff and service users safe from COVID-19. Our aim is to absorb the best aspects of these new ways of working into our everyday working practices and, in doing so, create more compelling reasons to attract and retain talented staff.

Supporting and developing our people

Your skills and expertise are unique and are the core of a safe and effective probation service. We are transforming our model for learning and development to provide a comprehensive and modernised learning offer that delivers engaging content at the point of need. This will support you throughout your career in your role at the heart of the Criminal Justice System. This embraces new digital and flexible means of learning and development and qualification while providing valuable face-to-face and reflection time for the highest value learning opportunities.

Creating a more diverse workforce where everyone feels included

We are building an environment that creates diversity and promotes equality to help support a unified and purpose-driven culture for the probation service. We will tackle racism and other forms of discrimination where it exists in the service and we will ensure the workforce is equipped and supported to do the same. The probation system has come together and delivered such extraordinary work over the past few months. We have tried and tested new ways for people to deliver their work in a more flexible and diverse way, and our aim is to retain the positive ways of working that have emerged, shaping our culture through many voices.

Fostering confident leaders who inspire and empower others

Now more than ever we are reliant on innovative, confident and diverse leadership. Leadership is demonstrated at all levels and we are committed to nurturing this throughout your career.

All of these measures are intended to progress our diversity and inclusion objectives. We will conduct equality impact assessments on these measures as they are further developed and implemented to ensure that we are doing everything we can to support staff with protected characteristics and ensure the right safeguards are in place.

Over the next few years, with your help, we will work hard to deliver these objectives.

**From strategy
to action**

**Our objectives
in more detail**

Promoting wellbeing for everyone

The pressures of your job, amplified by the impact of COVID-19, has a significant impact on you and your wellbeing. We are committed to ensuring our workforce has the right structures, support and encouragement to maintain your mental and physical health.

Our ambition

- ▲ You are supported and work in flexible and adaptable ways.
- ▲ You have the best tools to make informed decisions well, including local partners, new technologies and artificial intelligence.
- ▲ We accurately forecast future caseloads and interventions requirements through better workforce management and adapt to changing volumes, emphasising personal wellbeing.

What we need to do to achieve this

Wellbeing: Promote the health and wellbeing of all our people by delivering dedicated campaigns, policies, training, support and services.

Workforce management: Develop an intelligent approach to workforce planning that can adapt to changing caseload volumes and complexity and interventions delivery.

Actions we're going to take to deliver this

1. We commit to implementing the wellbeing action plan for all staff across probation, including a rollout of Mental Health Allies and internal and external post-incident support by 2020/21.
2. As part of our response to COVID-19, within the next two months we will continue to provide **support for the psychological wellbeing** of staff through top tips for managers on spotting potential psychological boundary issues, information on how to detach from work and a further package of tools and advice including webinars, videos and evidence reviews.
3. Continue to **adapt our digital services** as part of a larger IT strategy to provide staff with modern, fit-for-purpose tools that allow them to perform some of their work remotely. This will be prioritised as part of the Recovery work of 2020/21.
4. By 2021/22, use data analytics across the system that will enable staff to better target interventions, support more strategic workforce planning and by 2022/23 use **artificial intelligence and machine learning technologies** that will provide data which aids professional experience and judgement.

Attracting and retaining talented people

We want the probation service to be a rich, fulfilling and rewarding place to work. The workforce has adapted to and absorbed a very different way of working to keep staff and service users safe from COVID-19. Our aim is to absorb the best aspects of these new ways of working into our everyday working practices and, in doing so, create more compelling reasons to attract and retain talented staff.

Our ambition

- ▲ The probation service is a rich, fulfilling and rewarding place to work with diverse and talented staff.
- ▲ Our people are passionate and believe in the work that we do. We have a varied recruitment pipeline that represents wider society and can adapt to changing demands over time.
- ▲ Our new starters process delivers a welcoming experience so that you can do your best work from day one.

What we need to do to achieve this

Attraction: Deliver insight-led, targeted recruitment marketing campaigns that aim to attract the right candidates into our roles. Expand routes into probation to build a workforce that better reflects the diversity of our society and service users.

Recruitment and retention: Grow our staffing levels significantly, creating a varied talent pool and a flexible and innovative recruitment model. Make it easier for you to move internally and provide career pathways that enable us to both retain staff and encourage those who move across the justice system to return to the service with broader experience. Focus on your continuous professional development and improve our exit data so that we can readily identify and improve sources of attrition.

New starters: Create a welcoming experience for staff when they join, bringing probation to life and supporting you from day one.

Qualifications and routes into probation: Widen entry routes into probation without compromising the professional service you provide.

Reward: Provide a fair and enduring reward package for all, that promotes the probation service as an attractive place to work.

Actions we're going to take to deliver this

1. Despite the recruitment challenges created by COVID-19, we will increase **recruitment of probation staff** this year and have a minimum of 1000 new probation officers in training by January 2021.
2. **Enhance qualification routes** by improving the existing Professional Qualification in Probation (PQiP) and testing an **accelerated progression pathway** from Probation Services Officer to Probation Officer launching in 2020/21.
3. Continue working with staff and trade unions to progress our collaborative work on **pay modernisation** in 2020/21 and onwards, and to develop proposals focused on improving the overall **reward offer** available to staff.
4. By 2021/22, to support the transfer of CRC staff and new joiners, introduce a **new joiner induction framework**, including interactive **virtual/face-to-face induction experiences, a buddy network** and/or **peer coaching** support.

Supporting and developing our people

Your skills and expertise are unique and are the core of a safe and effective probation service. We are transforming our model for learning and development to provide a comprehensive and modernised learning offer that delivers engaging content at the point of need. This will support you throughout your career in your role at the heart of the Criminal Justice System. This embraces new digital and flexible means of learning and development and qualification while providing valuable face-to-face and reflection time for the highest value learning opportunities.

Our ambition

- ▲ Staff are empowered to champion their professional development and the high standards of the probation service, aligned with our core values of Assess, Protect Change.
- ▲ We will create an open learning culture with enriched learning resources that are accessible at the point of need, enabling you to own your continuous professional development and keep up to date with evidence-based practice.
- ▲ Our professional standards underpin everything that we do. Our register and framework ultimately hold us to account and drive recognition for our outstanding profession.
- ▲ Our performance management ensures we deliver a consistent, high-quality service.

What we need to do to achieve this

Learning and development: An open learning culture where you have the capacity to champion your professional development, supported by robust leadership, with easy access to high-quality, practical learning resources that address your learning needs and support day-to-day tasks, allowing you to develop the necessary skills and expertise.

Performance management: Increase personal accountability and ensure performance conversations determine whether you have the right support, as part of the regular discussions about your work and career aspirations.

Practice standards, register and framework: A clear framework to ultimately regulate and safeguard our practice and provide pathways for continuous professional development.

Actions we're going to take to deliver this

1. Implement a **new learning and development model** from 2020/21 to provide a comprehensive and accessible learning service for staff, that takes full advantage of available technology.
2. Develop new training and support for probation teams as they carry out an expanded role in unpaid work and interventions delivery, and undertake new functions in developing and delivering **regional strategies**.
3. Implement the new Civil Service **performance management** approach in 2020/21.
4. Consult practitioners on new **practice standards** to ensure we have the required qualifications and capability, and create an internal **professional register** for probation-qualified practitioners, which will ultimately safeguard standards of practice, by 2021/22.
5. Establish a **Curriculum Authority** to ensure we have a quality, evidence-based curriculum, informed by experts, by 2020/21.

Creating a more diverse workplace where everyone feels included

We are building an environment that creates diversity and promotes equality to help support a unified and purpose-driven culture for the probation service. We will tackle racism and other forms of discrimination where it exists in the service and we will ensure the workforce is equipped and supported to do the same. The probation system has come together and delivered such extraordinary work over the past few months. We have tried and tested new ways for people to deliver their work in a more flexible and diverse way, and our aim is to retain the positive ways of working that have emerged, shaping our culture through many voices.

Our ambition

- ▲ A diverse and inclusive workforce across the entire probation system that is more representative of societal diversity and the diversity of our service users.
- ▲ All staff are treated fairly and equally irrespective of your protected characteristics, background, role or experience so that you feel valued and empowered to make the best decisions for the communities we serve.
- ▲ Racism is tackled head on and has no place in the service.
- ▲ The culture of our organisation is engaging, professionally rewarding and energised by our core purpose to Assess, Protect, Change, and reflects the wider MoJ values of Purpose, Humanity, Openness and Together.

What we need to do to achieve this

Diversity and inclusion: Creating solutions that celebrate a diverse and inclusive workforce and ensure the service better reflects wider society. Ensure racism and all forms of discrimination have no place in the probation service and that our diversity data is maintained through system join-ups and staff declaration rates. Recognise the equal value of all roles in the probation service.

Culture and engagement: Agree the shared culture that we want the service to deliver that aligns with our core values and behaviours. Define the future Culture Code for probation, then build and embed the culture through an integrated roadmap of activities that deliver a positive employee experience.

Actions we're going to take to deliver this

1. By 2020/21, develop a new **diversity and inclusion strategy** that sets out our objectives, focusing on representation of protected characteristics as outlined in the **Lammy Review**, and provide opportunities to expand diversity of **experience, background and thought** in the workforce.
2. By 2020/21 we will release a service user and prisoner BAME engagement package and **Race Action Programme**. We will also introduce **Race Ambassadors** in all NPS regions.
3. From 2020/21, we will target a wider, more diverse range of people via **new labour markets, marketing campaigns, and by diversifying the entry pathways**. We will also roll out new **assessment methods**, including blended interviews and role-based exercises, which select the most capable candidates regardless of their background and enhance our recruitment approach **to attract the right people in the right places, including ex-offenders** where appropriate, and those with broad and varied life experience.
4. Explicitly engage staff from across the probation system including NPS and CRCs to inform and co-develop the cultural vision for the organisation which will be captured in a **Probation Culture Code**. The Culture Code will be published and used as a tool to embed a unified, inclusive and diverse culture into all aspects of our workforce by 2021/22.
5. Work with our staff to **understand** their **experiences** and views on what is needed for the future changes to be successful, which will then inform workforce processes, policies and systems by 2021/22.
6. Use the HMPPS **Welsh Language Scheme** to promote a bilingual culture within the workplace through actions such as bilingual recruitment processes, raising awareness of the right of staff to use the language and ensuring adequate numbers of Welsh-speaking staff.

Fostering confident leaders who inspire and empower others

Now more than ever we are reliant on innovative, confident and diverse leadership. Leadership is demonstrated at all levels and we are committed to nurturing this throughout your career.

Our ambition

- ▲ Staff have opportunities to progress their careers and demonstrate their leadership capacity.
- ▲ The right support and structures are in place to ensure leadership skills underpin the work of all aspects of the probation service.
- ▲ Development opportunities and career pathways exist which create supportive and resilient leaders at all levels.
- ▲ Our senior leaders are more representative of the diversity within the unified probation service and role model equality, diversity and inclusion in the work they do and the way they do it.

- ▲ Leadership awareness will bring to life desired behaviours that are aligned with the organisation's values, creating an inclusive environment where everyone feels empowered to be themselves and difference is positively valued.

What we need to do to achieve this

Leadership training: Design and implement leadership training, to teach and boost the skills needed to demonstrate positive leadership and role model the desired future culture for the probation service.

Careers: Design varied jobs and career pathways that are underpinned by a transparent and data-led approach to talent management.

Actions we're going to take to deliver this

1. In 2020/21 we will launch leadership products such as the **Aspiring Leaders Toolkit** for those who aspire to management positions in the future and the **HMPPS Leadership Continuous Professional Development Framework** for all leaders.
2. Introduce clear opportunities for **career moves and shared learning** and development opportunities across partners in government, the voluntary and private sectors, and HMPPS by 2022/23.
3. Extend the **developmental training schedule** for operational leadership in Approved Premises in 2021/22.
4. Host workshops and provide guidance for senior leaders to help support them as they **create an inclusive environment** where difference is positively valued.



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