

Executive Summary: Target Operating Model for the Future of Probation Services in England & Wales

The [Target Operating Model](#) will establish a strengthened probation service that keeps the public safe, supports victims of crime and tackles the often-complex causes of offending. It will support the provision of a robust Criminal Justice System that commands public confidence.

Our new model will unify probation delivery under a single organisation that draws on best practice and innovation from current CRC and NPS approaches.

We are investing an additional £155 million per year in the unified probation service so that we can deliver effective community sentences that provide a credible alternative to custody, together with the right rehabilitative support to empower perpetrators of crime to make positive and lasting change to their lives.

In steady state, our investment will support the following improvements¹:

- **Sentence management:** an estimated increase of £55 million in annual spend will support recruitment of additional Probation Practitioners, improvements in the assessment of risks and needs to protect the public and more consistent supervision to help reduce reoffending.
- **Interventions:** an estimated additional £24 million in annual funding will enable an increase in the number and quality of Unpaid Work placements, Accredited Programmes and Structured Interventions. Alongside better targeting of interventions, this will drive up completion rates and deliver better outcomes.
- **Rehabilitative services:** an estimated additional £66 million in annual funding will allow probation to commission a greater range of resettlement and rehabilitative services regionally from specialist organisations. This will enable the delivery of services that can be tailored to respond to the diverse backgrounds and needs of individuals to effect positive outcomes as well as maximise opportunities for collaboration with local partners, including VCSE organisations, local authorities and Police and Crime Commissioners.

¹ These are example figures based on current best estimates of the additional spend in 2024/25 (steady state) compared to the current baseline (2019/20). Spending priorities, allocations and the example figures used will be constantly reviewed and subject to future spending reviews. They do not take into account the impact of additional police officers and exclude any residual transition (one-off) costs for 2024/25. The figures quoted do not add up to £155m as we anticipate that operational efficiency savings will be reinvested into the system to cover some of the additional spend.

- **Resettlement:** an estimated increase of £5 million in annual spend will support an improved and consistent support offer both pre and post release to give people the best opportunity to be able to reintegrate into the community successfully. It will also see the creation of 'short sentence functions' in each of the 12 probation regions to help minimise disruption and sustain services for those serving short custodial sentences.
- **Court:** an estimated £8 million increase in annual funding for court teams to strengthen probation's effectiveness in court, including improving the use and quality of pre-sentence reports to support more effective sentences and better outcomes.
- **Victims:** an estimated additional £3 million annual spend to better support victims of crime. This includes expansion of the Victim Contact Scheme to support victims of stalking and harassment and an enhanced 'opt-in' process to ensure victims can be re-engaged at key moments in the sentence.
- **Learning and development:** around £20 million of additional annual spend will support improved learning and development programmes for probation staff. This recognises that our people are integral to successful delivery of probation reform – the service they provide changes lives and keeps the public safe and we need to invest in them to support this and ensure that the new probation service is a rewarding place to work.

Our model is underpinned by the principles of the HMPSS Strategy to enable our people to be their best, transform delivery through partnerships, promote an open, learning culture and modernise our estates and technology.

Since publication of our draft Target Operating Model in March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in significant challenges to the delivery of probation services. Probation staff are now working in quite different ways that are changing our established thinking and assumptions. The pandemic prompted us to adjust our model to bring delivery of Unpaid Work, Accredited Programmes and Structured Interventions into the new probation service so that we can put probation on a more stable footing, improve our operational resilience and move straight from recovery into reform.

Our response to the pandemic also enables us to learn from those alternative delivery approaches that we have had to adopt and reflect in the new model those that have worked well. As we are still evaluating some of these new ways of working, we will need to be flexible, and ready to consider further changes to the operating model in the light of our collective experience. We want to be an open, learning organisation, eager to incorporate evidence and feedback from stakeholders (including staff and those subject to probation services) on what works in practice.

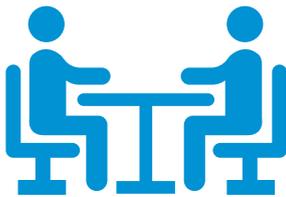
The [Target Operating Model](#) details the new, unified probation service that we will start to implement in June 2021. It is centred around the following key features:



New regional probation leadership structures that enable greater local accountability, partnership working and delivery of services that more closely meet individuals' diverse needs.



Investment in our workforce to support continuous development, attract and retain talent, create a diverse workforce, foster confident leaders and promote wellbeing.



Improvements to Sentence Management delivery to encourage greater focus on effective supervision to help protect the public and promote rehabilitation wherever possible.



Improved interventions that respond to an individual's specific needs. This includes improvements to the delivery of Unpaid Work and Accredited Programmes, the introduction of Structured Interventions and securing the expertise of other sectors in the delivery of rehabilitative and resettlement services.



Modernisation of our estate and technology so that our physical spaces create positive working environments and we reduce duplication in our systems, creating efficiencies and enabling better data recording and analysis to facilitate more effective decision-making.

New regional probation leadership structures

Implementation of our new model is reliant on strategic leadership and more effective partnership working which will be led at a regional level by Regional Probation Directors, supported by senior leadership teams. To support this approach, we have

introduced revised geographical regions – the new probation service will be split into **Wales and 11 regions in England**, with boundaries aligned to police force and local authority boundaries. We will also revise the **business planning model** to enable more strategic decision making.

Regional Probation Directors' overarching responsibilities will include:

Setting and overseeing implementation of a regional strategy that reflects both national and local priorities, draws effectively on the evidence base, and ensures maintenance of professional standards.

Providing a single, influential probation voice within the region – advocating for all probation providers in the region and building external confidence.



Overseeing regional contracts to deliver service outcomes and value for money.

Promoting effective partnership working, driving integrated delivery and cross criminal justice system strategic alignment.

Revisions to our **performance framework** will provide assurance that the new probation service, at both a national and regional level, is carrying out its duties effectively. This will focus on three key elements:

- **Getting the basics right:** holding the new probation service to account on its core duties.
- **Assuring the quality of what we deliver**, including new quality measures, a greater focus on equalities monitoring and strengthening the importance we place on feedback from people that are subject to probation.
- **Focusing on outcomes** which evidence shows help to reduce reoffending.

Investment in our workforce

Our staff are fundamental to probation delivery and in recognition of this, it is essential that we invest in the skills, capabilities and ways of working they need

to do their jobs to the highest standard. In June 2020 we published our Probation Workforce Strategy and implementation of this is critical for the successful implementation of the new unified model.

It will focus on:

Promoting wellbeing for everyone, ensuring our workforce is supported by the right structures and encouragement to maintain mental and physical health.

Attracting and retaining talented people by making the new probation service a rich, fulfilling and rewarding place to work.

Supporting and developing people through provision of enriched learning resources that enable continuous professional development and improved performance management processes.



Creating a more diverse workforce where everyone feels included, creating a unified and purpose-driven culture that promotes equality and diversity.

Fostering confident leaders who inspire and empower others, recognising the importance of role modelling equality, diversity and inclusion in our work and giving staff opportunities to develop and demonstrate leadership skills.

In the short-term, we recognise the challenges on our people that change will bring and as such are considering the employee experience of both those currently working in the NPS and those in CRCs. In particular, how we can provide certainty on people's future roles and making the **transition as smooth as possible** for all.

We have established a dedicated change management function. Its focus will include articulating a **clear vision for the future**; describing **what changes will look and feel like** and **ensuring everyone has a voice** in being able to shape and influence our future organisation. In this way we will begin to **create a new, shared culture**.

Improvements to Sentence Management delivery

The move to a new, unified probation service provides the opportunity for one consistent service to deliver **end-to-end Sentence Management**, that takes the best of current practice and builds on this based on evidence. We have broken this down into three broad areas of **advice to court, Sentence Management** and **resettlement**.

We will achieve this by:

Developing our approach to sentencer liaison and the **effective deployment of practitioners** to influence outcomes.



An improved training offer and operating environment for our court staff to equip them to be able to provide high quality advice

Increasing the use and quality of pre-sentence reports to facilitate more responsive sentences that can feed into better sentence planning and management. This will include targeting women and those from black, Asian and other minority ethnic backgrounds, who we know are disproportionately more likely to receive prison sentences.

Sentence Management

There is significant evidence about the power that Probation Practitioners can have in helping individuals to make positive changes to their lives through their supervisory role.

Our focus is therefore on helping Probation Practitioners use the right key skills, activities and behaviours to achieve the most effective outcomes for those under our supervision, victims and the public:

Better assessment and management of risk to ensure **public protection**.

More balanced caseloads

so Probation Practitioners can deliver all elements of their role.

Consistent management and delivery of the sentence plan, involving individuals in the development of their sentence plans to encourage their buy-in and provision of the right interventions at the right time.



An **improved case allocation** process that assigns an individual to a Probation Practitioner with the appropriate skills and experience to manage their case.

Active engagement in evidence-based change work that complements rehabilitative interventions delivered by specialist providers and focuses on strengthening the relationship with individuals supervised to motivate and support behavioural change.

An integrated approach that enables Probation Practitioners to work collaboratively to deliver change and places an increased focus on the specific needs and requirements of particular cohorts.

Resettlement

We want to provide people with better opportunities to reintegrate into society. We will renew our focus on resettlement, building on lessons learnt from through-

the-gate services so that we strengthen support for the transition from custody into the community, acknowledging the need for a different approach for women and taking into account specific needs of individuals.

This will include:

Enhanced pre-release support that is more closely coordinated with prisons and provides a more consistent approach that meets an individual's resettlement needs.



Creation of **short-sentence functions** to better address the needs of those subject to short sentences and reduce high levels of recidivism in this group.

Utilising the Dynamic Framework to provide relevant and local resettlement services that complement the core offer in prisons.

Improved interventions

In each of the new regions an Interventions Team will be responsible for the delivery of Unpaid Work, Accredited Programmes (including delivering Accredited Programmes in prisons in Wales) and approved Structured Interventions.

Improvements to the quality of Unpaid Work delivery will encourage the use of community orders as a robust alternative to custody and improve engagement in the process for those undertaking Unpaid Work.

There will be a particular focus on ensuring a sufficient number of **quality placements that improve the availability of educational and training opportunities.**

Accredited Programmes will remain the intervention of choice where appropriate and the focus on more effective eligibility and suitability checks will help **improve their effectiveness.**

We will **introduce Structured Interventions as a consistent delivery model for lower risk individuals** with needs around Attitudes, Thinking and Behaviour; Domestic Abuse and Emotional Management.

For all interventions delivered directly we will create an increased emphasis on:

Availability of **placements/ programmes within the local area** to encourage attendance and in the case of Unpaid Work, enable local payback in the community.

More regular reviews of active cases to ensure higher rates of completion and timely corrective action where required.



Improvements in the assessment and induction process to ensure more relevant and timely placements and interventions that individuals can better engage in.

Ongoing professional development for staff delivering interventions to help improve rehabilitative outcomes.

We recognise that there remains a place for expertise outside our organisation to deliver some probation services and so we will **implement a Dynamic Framework** which will act as a mechanism **to source resettlement and rehabilitative interventions at a regional and local level.**

This will provide a clear space for voluntary sector participation in the new unified model as well as for expert organisations from other sectors and enable:

- **Access to a suite of interventions** that address areas of need that are either strongly associated with reoffending or provide the stabilisation that individuals need.
- **Tailored support** which recognises diverse backgrounds and needs of supervised individuals.
- **Collaboration with local partners** to help ensure supervised individuals can access all available and relevant opportunities.

We will also implement a **Regional Outcomes and Innovations Fund**. It will provide a small pot of money for each region to help lever investment in wider services that may help reoffending but do not directly deliver the order of the court.

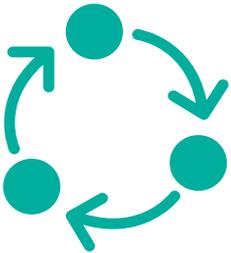
Modernisation of our estate and technology



We will invest in a **modern, safe and enabling estate** for both staff and people subject to probation services. We will be creating smarter and more flexible working environments, that will be maintained to a high standard. This includes recognising the benefits of co-location with other partners in the criminal justice system and limiting travel time for supervised individuals.



At the heart of our digital and data strategy is developing a **seamless view of an individual's journey through the probation system**. In this way we can better track people's experiences and at the same time, build a better understanding of what works.



We will focus our approach on **getting the core essentials right**, improving business processes, removing duplication and then **upgrading our systems**. This streamlining will mean that Probation Practitioners will be able to focus their time on where they can add real value rather than on administrative tasks. We will also seek to **provide mechanisms that supervised individuals can use to better understand and engage** in their sentence plans to help improve rehabilitative outcomes.



We will take this opportunity to **transform the way we make decisions** in probation, **collecting better data** and learning from what this tells us, making more informed decisions through the application of **evidence-based practice**. We will ensure that **data insights are embedded** into the day to day routines of probation staff and are shared where appropriate with custodial colleagues in HMPPS as well as wider criminal justice system partners.

