



HM Prison & Probation Service

Helen Davies
**HM Assistant Chief Inspector of
Probation**
1st Floor
Manchester Civil Justice Centre
1 Bridge Street West
Manchester
M3 3FX

Amy Rees
Director General of Probation and Wales
HM Prison and Probation Service
3rd Floor Churchill House
Churchill Way
Cardiff CF10 2HH

e-mail: DirectorGeneralProbation@justice.gov.uk

14 April 2020

Dear / Annwyl Helen,

HMIP thematic inspection of Domestic Abuse- The Work Undertaken by Community Resettlement Companies

Following the information that we shared with you in November 2019 in relation to our Action Plan, in response to your inspection entitled Domestic Abuse - the Work Undertaken by Community Resettlement Companies (CRCs), I am writing to provide a further update of progress against two actions that you have specifically highlighted.

Firstly, you ask the following;

- *Recommendation 3, the approach to Building Better Relationships evaluation. Could we please have sight of the feasibility study and recommendations or an update of progress if not complete?*

In November 2019 we outlined that feasibility work regarding the most appropriate methodological approach for conducting an evaluation, to assess the impact of Building Better Relationships (BBR) on proven reoffending, was on track for delivery by the end of March 2020. This feasibility work remains ongoing but has been delayed. Quality assurance of centrally held community data has highlighted issues with the completeness and accuracy of accredited programme administrative data that is collected by CRCs. Complete and accurate data is necessary for a reoffending impact evaluation to be conducted for BBR. Due to competing priorities and limited expert resource on the use of the specific data systems in question, the Ministry of Justice is undertaking a recruitment exercise to employ a suitable specialist to provide an understanding of the issues and make recommendations about data quality and future use for evaluation purposes. Although the national context in which the work is being conducted is rapidly changing, it is anticipated that a suitable specialist will be identified by the end of May 2020 with a view to completion of the feasibility study

by the end of December 2020. The delivery of feasibility work and any recommended evaluation projects will be constantly under review.

Secondly, you ask for an update of progress in relation to the work to improve the correct use of Domestic Abuse (DA) flags (recommendation 5), including following the appointment of a new analyst.

In November 2019, we explained that the correct use of DA flags had shown some improvements but that this was not across the board and that further work was needed to improve confidence. We outlined continued compliance exercises and the central appointment of a new analyst, who was to identify priority areas of performance for monthly monitoring of Management Information. I can confirm that our new analyst now provides prioritised Management Information to Senior Contract Managers, the wider Senior Management Team, Contract Management Teams (CMTs) and CRCs on a monthly basis. This data is used by CMTs to analyse current practice, identify and raise issues with CRCs and identify areas for improvement. This Management Information is currently focussed on access to programmes, including Building Better Relationships. A Compliance Assurance exercise, in relation to Risk was due to commence in April 2020, including to test the correct use of DA flags. Unfortunately, this has been put on hold until approximately September 2020 due to current circumstances. Once this exercise is complete, a full analysis will be completed both at national and local level, which will determine future targeted areas for assurance and will inform further options for Management Information reporting. In the meantime, a working group will consider the assurance approach for CRC's Extraordinary Delivery Models, for launch by the end of April 2020, which will include the use of DA flags.

The activity described above will be reviewed in the light of Covid-19 and may be further delayed depending upon the extent of the disruption, but we will endeavour to make as much progress as possible despite the circumstances.

I hope you have found this update helpful.

Yours sincerely / Yn gywir,



Amy Rees,
Director General of Probation and Wales, HM Prison and Probation Service
Cyfarwyddwr Cyffredinol y Gwasanaeth Prawf a Chymru, Gwasanaeth Carchardai a Phrawf EM

Cc
Ian Poree (Director of Community Interventions)