



HM Prison &
Probation Service

Action Plan Submitted: 5th July 2019

A Response to the HMI Probation Inspection: NE Division

National Probation Service

Report Published: 26th June 2019

INTRODUCTION

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation is the independent inspector of youth offending and probation services in England and Wales. It reports on the effectiveness of probation and youth offending service work with adults and children.

In response to the report, HMPPS/MoJ are required to draft a robust and timely action plan to address the recommendations. The action plan confirms whether recommendations are agreed, partly agreed or not agreed (see categorisations below). Where a recommendation is agreed or partly agreed, the action plan provides specific steps and actions to address these. Actions are clear, measurable, achievable and relevant with the owner and timescale of each step clearly identified. Action plans are published on the HMI Probation website. Progress against the implementation and delivery of the action plans will be monitored by HMPPS/MoJ and reviewed annually by HMI Probation.

Term	Definition	Additional comment
Agreed	All of the recommendation is agreed with, can be achieved and is affordable.	The response should clearly explain how the recommendation will be achieved along with timescales. Actions should be as SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound) as possible. Actions should be specific enough to be tracked for progress.
Partly Agreed	Only part of the recommendation is agreed with, is achievable, affordable and will be implemented. This might be because we cannot implement the whole recommendation because of commissioning, policy, operational or affordability reasons.	The response must state clearly which part of the recommendation will be implemented along with SMART actions and tracked for progress. There must be an explanation of why we cannot fully agree the recommendation - this must state clearly whether this is due to commissioning, policy, operational or affordability reasons.
Not Agreed	The recommendation is not agreed and will not be implemented. This might be because of commissioning, policy, operational or affordability reasons.	The response must clearly state the reasons why we have chosen this option. There must be an explanation of why we cannot agree the recommendation - this must state clearly whether this is due to commissioning, policy, operational or affordability reasons.



1. Rec No	2. Recommendation	3. Agreed/ Partly Agreed/ Not Agreed	4. Response Action Taken/Planned	5. Responsible Owner (including named individuals and their functional role or department)	6. Target Date
			<p>3) Completing 'Quality of Court Work' Staff Training Events (mandatory for all Court Probation Officers [POs], Probation Service Officers [PSOs] and Senior Probation Officers [SPOs]) in July 2019. These events include inputs in the following areas: Operating Model & Expectations; Quality of Pre-Sentence Reports; Equality, Diversity & Inclusion; Gender Informed Approaches; Maturity Assessments, and; Effective Proposal Framework. These events have been designed to enhance consistency and quality of practice with the NE Courts. Feedback is being collated following each event for the purpose of evaluation and, following conclusion, will be collated for consideration of future similar events going forward, and for current process/practice related issues to be identified and escalated to the National Court Strategy Group for resolution/clarification. Enhanced practice in these areas will be evaluated by divisional quality assurance activity undertaken in October/November 2019, incorporating comparative evaluation with the same period in 2018.</p> <p>4) Establishing quarterly meetings from Autumn 2019 for Court Senior Probation Officers (SPOs) across the NPS NE. These meetings will have a standard agenda, minutes and action log. The purpose of these meetings will be to share good practice, communicate local and national information, and to ensure consistency in the understanding and application of Court processes. Discussion, actions and resolutions from these meeting will feed directly into the existing NE Court Leads Meetings, scheduled Sentencer & Probation Services Liaison</p>	<p>Head of Stakeholder Engagement</p> <p>Head of Stakeholder Engagement</p>	<p>November 2019</p> <p>October 2019</p>



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			<p>Meetings (see 1.2), and also a proposed quarterly newsletter to all Sentencers (see 1.5). Such meetings will also be a fundamental concept within the Communication Strategy (see 1.1).</p> <p>5) Trialling and evaluating the benefits of a quarterly newsletter for distribution to staff and stakeholders, including Sentencers. This will be a NPS NE divisional newsletter which will contain anonymised case examples of where community based sentences have been imposed and completed, with successful outcomes for the Service User and/or the community. This newsletter will also include any changes or amendments to practice expectations, introduction of any new interventions, and promote awareness of any specific interventions, as required. This newsletter will be produced from information and actions from the Court SPO quarterly meetings (see 1.4), and will be circulated electronically to Courts/Sentencers, and NPS staff. These newsletters will also be promoted within Sentencer & Probation Service Liaison Meetings (see 1.2), where feedback on this communication forum will also be sought.</p> <p>6) The Performance & Quality Team working with the Head of Stakeholder Engagement to define a dataset forming the basis of information to be shared with Sentencers' in the Sentencer & Probation Providers Liaison Meetings (see 1.2), and designed to promote the work of Probation Services in Court as well as progress on Community Orders and Licences. This will provide factual data and information to measure successful outcomes.</p>	<p>Head of Stakeholder Engagement</p> <p>Head of Performance & Quality</p>	<p>April 2020</p> <p>September 2019</p>



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			7) The Performance & Quality Team investigating the potential of an interactive electronic "Liaison Library" (LLb), available to all Sentencers on their network, providing information on Offender Management and Interventions.	Head of Performance & Quality	March 2020
2	Introduce clear direction supported by effective quality assurance to make sure that risk management plans are reviewed and updated to address changes to the risk of harm to others	Agreed	<p>NPS NE fully accepts that its response to changes in the risk of harm as recorded in the Offender Assessment System (OASys) is not always timely and will undertake the actions detailed below to address this. However, with the continuing shortfall in operational staff and competing demands on time (as acknowledged in the inspection report itself), this will remain challenging.</p> <p>The NPS NE will:</p> <p>1) Design and implement a Quality Assurance Framework to monitor and improve the efficacy of risk reviews. This framework remains under development however will incorporate expectations for Managers to monitor the timely and quality completion of risk reviews in relevant cases. Compliance with the proposed framework will be discussed and explored at NPS NE Senior Leadership Meetings every six weeks. Results from the assurance activity within the framework will be circulated to operational SPOs to ensure regular review and discussion within their Team Meetings, and during reflective supervision meetings with individual staff members in accordance with the Supervision & Line Management Framework.</p>	Head of Performance & Quality	September 2019



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			<p>2) Continue to work with operational managers to ensure the correct allocation of offenders to the correct grade of offender manager (OM), improve the use of and recording of Case Management Support activity and undertake a comprehensive review of workload reductions. We will continue to assess progress by regular analysis of the national workload measurement tool (nWMT) output reported to both the NE Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the NE Workforce Planning Committee.</p> <p>3) Commission the Performance & Quality Team to examine the available data to determine if there is a causal link between the number of OASys reviews, caseload and vacancy rate (operational OMs).</p> <p>4) Deliver mandatory workshops to all operational SPOs to provide a refresher in risk review assessment and management, management oversight and statutory victim awareness (see Recommendation 3). These workshops will focus on the importance of reflective supervision practice in assessing and reviewing risk of harm to others, the importance of identifying all those potentially at risk and reflecting this within updated Risk Management Plans, and the importance of liaison with other agencies in actively reviewing risk. Completion of this mandatory workshop will be measured via My Learning. Attendance on these mandatory workshops will form part of the Quality Assurance Framework (see 2.1).</p> <p>5) Materials and information from the mandatory workshops (see 2.4) will be delivered to all operational teams within the NPS NE by their SPO. Individual staff attendance at these events will be</p>	<p>Head of Performance & Quality</p> <p>Head of Performance & Quality</p> <p>Head of Performance & Quality</p> <p>Head of Performance & Quality</p>	<p>Current and on-going</p> <p>September 2019</p> <p>October 2019</p> <p>October 2019</p>



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			<p>recorded on My Learning and form part of the Quality Assurance Framework (see 2.1).</p> <p>6) Serious Further Offence (SFO) Briefings will be undertaken within each Local Delivery Unit Cluster (LDUC) in the NPS NE in order to share and communicate with staff the common themes in SFO Review findings, including good practice and areas for development.</p> <p>7) The Performance & Quality Committee (PQC) will develop a mechanism to evaluate data gained from the Quality Assurance Framework (see 2.1) and cross reference with SFO Review findings in order to monitor and address any correlations in respect of the timely and quality reviews of risk to others and risk management.</p>	<p>Head of Performance & Quality</p> <p>Head of Performance & Quality</p>	<p>January 2020</p> <p>November 2019</p>
3	Accurately identify all statutory victim cases and ensure that they are offered contact with the Victim Contact scheme	Agreed	<p>The NPS NE will:</p> <p>1) Complete the review of victims' referrals as commissioned by the NE SLT in April 2019 and headed by the Division's strategic victims services lead.</p> <p>2) Act upon the findings of the review of victim referrals (see 3.1). This will be achieved by introducing monthly performance reporting which will be discussed and explored at NPS NE Senior Leadership Meetings every six weeks. Monthly reports will also be subject of regular review and discussion within Victim Team Meetings, and during reflective supervision meetings with individual staff members in accordance with the Supervision & Line Management Framework.</p>	<p>NE strategic lead for Victim Services</p> <p>NE strategic lead for Victim Services</p>	<p>July 2019</p> <p>From August 2019</p>



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			3) Incorporate content relating to victim services into the mandatory risk workshops (see 2.4) to emphasise the importance of the Victim Contact Scheme (VCS) and the criteria which identifies a statutory victim. This will then be cascaded to all OMs via their Team Managers to ensure that all OMs have a full awareness regarding the criteria linked with the identification of a full statutory victim.	NE strategic lead for Victim Services / Head of Performance & Quality	October 2019
4	Ensure that pre-sentence reports draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including through obtaining police domestic abuse and children's services safeguarding checks	Agreed	<p>The NPS NE will:</p> <p>1) Quarterly Court SPO Meetings (see 1.4) will reinforce the specifications contained within PI 04/2016 (Determining Pre-Sentence Reports) to promote compliance with practice and process expectations with Police Force Areas and Child Safeguarding Departments, and for this to be communicated and reinforced with Court Teams in the NPS NE. Court SPOs to dip sample a minimum of two cases per Court Officer per month to ensure compliance with these checks, in relevant cases.</p> <p>2) Expected practice in these areas will be evaluated by divisional quality assurance activity to be undertaken in October/November 2019, incorporating comparative evaluation with the same period in 2018. Such activity will be undertaken by Court SPOs in conjunction with the NPS NE Quality Development Team, and results will be shared via the NE SLT Meeting, Court SPO Meetings (see 1.4) and can also be shared with Sentencers via Liaison Meetings (1.2)".</p>	<p>Head of Stakeholder Engagement.</p> <p>Head of Performance & Quality</p>	<p>October 2019</p> <p>From October 2019</p>



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			frequency and numbers of requests for these events will continue to be provided to 6-weekly SLT Meetings.		
The Ministry of Justice should:					
6	Review recruitment processes to ensure that divisions are able to recruit staff to meet their local needs	Agreed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Recruitment for the NPS North East Division is already devolved to the Division for all grades other than for new Probation Officers, known as PQiPs (Professional Qualification in Probation). Two cohorts of PQiP Learners in the North East Division are set to qualify in September 2019 and March 2020; office placements will take account of the Newly Qualified Officers' (NQO's) Local Delivery Unit (LDU) preference, with priority for business-critical posts. 2) NPS North East are working closely with the central recruitment team to identify the on-going PQiP placement requirements for the Division, utilising forecasts with inbuilt attrition rates. The next cohort of PQiP learners (PQiP 6) are due to start in July 2019, and new joiners for PQiP 7 which went live on 24 June 2019, will start in January 2020. 3) Delivery of Probation Service Officer (PSO) recruitment has returned to NPS Divisions following a NPS Workforce Planning Board decision in Autumn 2018. A local PSO Recruitment toolkit using a national framework has been introduced to support consistency in recruitment. 	<p>Divisional Director and MoJ Resourcing</p> <p>Divisional Director and MoJ Resourcing</p> <p>Divisional Director</p>	<p>March 2020</p> <p>January 2020</p> <p>Complete</p>



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			4) The MoJ Resourcing's marketing and attraction team are working with Divisions and specialist recruitment agencies to address the challenges of the employment market in areas where we have difficulties in recruiting. On-going support is being provided to support localised targeted media campaigns. Improvements to the recruitment process are on-going, aimed at reducing both the time and cost to hire, increasing the diversity of new recruits and ensuring that the right people with the right skills are attracted. HMPPS is committed to retaining existing staff and to seeing a strong and diverse workforce.	Divisional Director and MoJ Resourcing	Complete and on-going
7	Review facilities contract management arrangements with a view to expediting essential repairs.	Agreed	<p>1) MoJ Estates has put in place a change and improvement plan, focused on the resolution of reactive and <i>Planned Preventative Maintenance</i> delivery, while also making improvements to processes. A dedicated estates team for probation has been created and a new Director of Facilities Management (FM) was recruited in February 2019 to support this change programme.</p> <p>2) Since May MoJ have been working on the specifics of the Handyman service which will undertake a number of lower level reactive works that have an impact on the day to day running of Approved Premises sites such as minor paint, fixtures, fitment and fabric works in addition to basic mechanical works. A full list has been agreed with the hard FM providers (Kier & Interserve) who have already recruited 50% of the colleagues. It is expected that this will be at 100% by early July with a planned rollout from August pending any security clearance issues.</p>	<p>Soft Facilities Management Manager</p> <p>Soft Facilities Management Manager</p>	<p>September 2019 and on-going</p> <p>August 2019</p>



