

A Response to: A thematic review of the quality and effectiveness of probation services recovering from the impact of exceptional delivery models introduced due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

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## 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 <b>mus</b> t 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 <b>must</b> 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.

ACTION PLAN: The quality and effectiveness of probation services recovering from the impact of exceptional delivery models.

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
Her N	Majesty's Prison and Pro	bation Ser	vice, together with the Community Rehabilitation Companies, should:		
1	Ensure that the digital technology used by probation services is compatible with that used by key partners to facilitate effective liaison and remote service provision.	Agreed	Action Plan commitments (April 2021) National Probation Service (NPS) staff have access to <i>Microsoft Teams</i> , the preferred multi-agency platform for most agencies in the Criminal Justice sector and the majority of their partners. In addition, a Cloud Video Platform has been deployed to enable NPS staff to access meetings hosted by stakeholders and partners that use alternative systems, including Courts, where all Pre-Sentence Report (PSR) authors have been trained in its application, and the Parole Board.	Deputy Director for Business Strategy & Change, HMPPS	Completed
			HMPPS have assisted Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) to purchase laptops and mobile phones as part of COVID-19 relief. Several CRCs have also adapted their Information and Communications Technology (ICT) approach, where possible, to enable remote working. For those that do not currently have camera enabled laptops and phones, HMPPS has reviewed ICT requirements to ensure that CRCs and partner organisations have access to <i>MS Teams</i> remotely, albeit via telephone connectivity. The HMPPS Contract Management Team (CMT) will monitor the use of technology for responsible officers to increase and maintain their attendance at key risk management meetings. CMT are assuring that CRC's are utilising technology, where and when possible to engage with and maintain appropriate levels of minimum contact.	Deputy Director for Business Strategy & Change	Completed and June 2021
			As part of transition activity, the Probation Reform Programme has begun a programme of technology migration, with CRCs moving over to the same digital equipment used by NPS. This will allow CRCs to access the digital solutions they require for partnership liaison and remote service provision. People Plus (Warwickshire and West Mercia CRC) have already migrated and all remaining CRCs will have migrated by the middle of June 2021.	Deputy Director for Business Strategy & Change and Deputy Director Strategic Support, Administration & Assurance.	June 2021

			Progress against commitments (April 2022)		
			All Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRC) staff have been transferred successfully on to Authority technology prior to unification. Support for Skype for Business was withdrawn, and all staff and stakeholders transferred on to the fully supported Microsoft Teams solution allowing secure collaboration as required.	Deputy Director for Business Strategy & Change and Deputy Director Strategic Support, Administration & Assurance.	Completed
2	Establish the extent to which service user	Agreed	Action Plan commitments (April 2021)		
	digital exclusion impacts upon access to available service support and provision and resolve shortfalls.		A large-scale, rigorous outcome study on <i>blended supervision</i> has been commissioned, supported by a multi-disciplinary working group (see recommendation 5).	Deputy Director, Criminal Justice Business Partnering Team.	September 2021
			Several drug and alcohol partner agencies have been providing support services remotely, supplemented with outdoor face-to-face meetings, weather permitting. However, virtual group sessions, such as via <i>Google Meets</i> , has been a key component of support in many CRC areas. The CMT will continue to monitor this until transition to the unified model, to ensure these services are delivered as part of the Exceptional Delivery Model (EDM).	Deputy Director Strategic Support, Administration & Assurance.	June 2021
			Remote supervision has played a key part of EDMs through the COVID-19 period. Whilst video call capability has offered a digital solution for maintaining virtual contact, HMPPS recognise that digital exclusion often disproportionately impacts people under probation supervision. In recognition of this, 6500 talk and text devices were sourced in April 2020 and have been provided to people on probation who do not have access to a mobile phone. CRCs separately sourced 11,000 at the same time. Whilst these devices do not provide access to digital applications for video calling, they form part of a mixed approach which underpins remote supervision. An ongoing need for text and talk devices is anticipated and HMPPS are therefore scoping requirements for the probation service to cover demand during 2021/22 and to ensure assets are transferred to National Probation Service following reunification. Current procedures for distribution of text and talk devices are being reviewed by CMT and Senior Information Security Manager (Infosec, HMPPS).	Deputy Director for Business Strategy and Change	June 2021
			Future commissioning and contract arrangements for Commissioned Rehabilitative Services, through the Dynamic Framework, will be reviewed quarterly, including to ensure that they continue to take account of remote service delivery and the impact on those who are digitally disadvantaged.	Deputy Director, Competition Lead	To be reviewed quarterly
	1	1	Progress against commitments (April 2022)		

			A large-scale, rigorous outcome study on blended supervision has been commissioned for November 2022, supported by a multi-disciplinary working group which is meeting monthly.	Deputy Director, Criminal Justice Business Partnering Team.	November 2022
			Former CRC staff have been issued with appropriate equipment ahead of their transition to the Probation Service. The EDM delivery model also opened the provision of mobile phones to service users requiring a device and enabled greater use of video calls as a remote means of contact and engagement.	Deputy Director Strategic Support, Administration & Assurance.	Completed
			All assets transferred to Probation Service and legacy CRC sim cards were replaced with Probation Service Talk and Text sim cards ensuring equity across the cohort of people on probation. Agreement was reached on the provision of these devices as part of business as usual (BAU) community supervision and contracts with processes agreed and implemented.	Deputy Director for Business Strategy and Change	Completed
			The service design of Day One Commissioned Rehabilitative Services (CRS) embedded obligations on suppliers to facilitate remote engagement where face to face contact with Service Users was not possible. The CRS contracts are overseen by the Regional Contract Management Teams who would be able to raise any issues with suppliers in relation to remote contact and the digital exclusion of service users in the delivery of CRS. No such issues have been raised since the commencement of CRS contracts in June 2021, but access to services will continue to be monitored through contract governance and compliance / assurance activity.	Deputy Director, Competition Lead	To be reviewed quarterly
3	Resolve the backlog of unpaid work to ensure	Agreed	Action Plan commitments (April 2021)		
	fair justice for perpetrators and victims of crime.		HMPPS will work to resolve the backlog of UPW cases. A strategy to manage outstanding cases in relation to Unpaid Work (UPW) completion has been developed. All UPW requirements with outstanding hours have been categorised according to sentence date and the extent to which national restrictions have coincided with the operational period. Strategic solutions have been developed for each category.	Chief Probation Officer	April 2021
			An Unpaid Work Scrutiny Panel has been established, chaired by the Chief Probation Officer with membership from HMPPS, HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) and the Senior Presiding Judge's office. The panel will continue to scrutinise guidance and ensure consistency of application across the country, taking account of principles of fairness and justice.	Chief Probation Officer	April 2021
			UPW delivery is key to preventing further outstanding cases and CRCs are being encouraged to develop new and innovative approaches. The HMPPS CMT will continue to support CRCs through the recovery process and undertake necessary assurance to ensure	Regional Probation Director (Unpaid Work Lead) and Deputy	Completed and to be

that these strategies have been put in place at a local level. Monitoring is continuing to take place on a monthly basis through EDM reports and local Governance meetings.	Director Strategic Support, Administration & Assurance.	reviewed monthly
The outstanding cases for UPW which are to be absorbed into the Unified Model have been modelled against anticipated Court decisions regarding new UPW requirements. This in turn is being modelled on to specific resourcing scenarios, to project the number of staff to deliver UPW within the required timeframes, whilst also decreasing the number of outstanding cases. This work remains in its infancy and is undergoing further refinements. The extent of breach action as a result of the work on outstanding cases is unknown, but ongoing collaboration with HMCTS colleagues, and updated communications for sentencers is planned. As well as recruitment into any vacant posts, work on increasing the capacity of UPW via larger national contracts for groupwork projects is ongoing. Any changes to capacity in delivery will further inform the modelling work.	Deputy Director, Probation Business Recovery Programme and Deputy Director, Probation Workforce Programme	May 2021 and to be reviewed monthly
Lessons learned from the pandemic period will inform the Unified Model, in order to strengthen the delivery of UPW in the future. This may include learning from home working projects, credited travel time, increased use of Education Training and Employability (ETE), prioritisation criteria and/or daily practice. The Probation Business Recovery team and the NPS Strategic Workstream Lead for Unpaid Work will continue to oversee and review progress of resulting activity, including through monthly Regional Recovery and Transition Boards.	Regional Probation Director (Unpaid Work Lead) and Deputy Director, Probation Business Recovery Programme	Ongoing and to be reviewed June 2021
Progress against commitments (April 2022)		
The National Scrutiny Panel, chaired by the Chief Probation Officer and including senior representation from the judiciary and across HMPPS, worked together at pace to agree the best approach and to drive Unpaid Work (UPW) delivery. Improvements are ongoing and a key element of the strategy has been trialled in the Magistrates and Crown Court. Regional Probation Directors and teams have been kept up to date and progress has been communicated. Progress has been scrutinised by the Recovery Programme teams and regular Boards chaired by the Executive Director for Workforce and Recovery.	Chief Probation Officer/ Regional Probation Director (Unpaid Work Lead) and Deputy Director Strategic Support, Administration & Assurance/ Deputy Director, Probation	September 2022
A further £93 million has been awarded as part of the 2021 spending review settlement and a plan has been developed to increase the speed, scale and quality of UPW delivery. The action plan to increase unpaid work delivery using the Spending Review investment has been updated due to the impact of Covid-19 on delivery during December 2021, staffing capacity and the continued restrictions on utilising the UPW transport fleet. Regions are maximising the use of cheaper delivery models that are less reliant on fleet and staffing (e.g. home-based projects and Education, Training and Employment online services). A trajectory has been set to reach 155% by the end of September 2022, which	Business Recovery Programme and Deputy Director, Probation Workforce Programme	

will enable a reduction in the existing waiting list alongside delivery of requirements imposed as part of new sentences.	
A management information dashboard is in place to monitor progress.	

4	Resolve the backlog of accredited programmes to ensure justice for	Agreed	Action Plan commitments (April 2021)		
	perpetrators and victims of crime.		Where possible, some accredited and non-accredited individual rehabilitative work has continued throughout the pandemic. This includes, but is not limited to, work with those convicted of extremist or sexual offences	Regional Probation Director (Accredited Programmes Lead)	Completed and ongoing
			<ul> <li>HMPPS are addressing a number of outstanding accredited programme requirements, through prioritisation that takes account of principles underpinning the management of risk, fairness and justice, and an overarching commitment to public protection.</li> <li>A Prioritisation Framework, approved by the Lord Chancellor, has been implemented. This includes both the priority of programmes to be delivered and the prioritisation of group participants within those programmes.</li> <li>Programme providers are identifying, at an early stage, those who will not receive an accredited programme, in order that alternative work may be undertaken at the earliest opportunity.</li> <li>HMPPS have developed information for Offender Managers on the components of effective supervision. This includes resources for Offender Managers to deliver rehabilitative work such as through the delivery of toolkits for 1-1 work with men convicted of sexual offending, a psychosocial maturity development toolkit for 18-25 year olds (and older individuals with identified need) and resource packs to address racially motivated/aggravated offending and hate crime. As the highest volume of accredited programmes requirements are to address domestic abuse, Building Better Relationships (BBR), the priority has been the rollout of the Skills for Relationships Toolkit which was piloted in the North East of England. A further toolkit, Stepping Stones, designed to address general offending, has also been rolled out and is being evaluated.</li> <li>Additional recording guidance has been issued to probation providers so that where it has not been possible for accredited programmes to be delivered as per the sentence requirement, risk management and rehabilitative work is clearly recorded.</li> </ul>	Regional Probation Director (Accredited Programmes Lead)	Completed
			HMPPS will increase capacity for the delivery of Accredited Programmes by;		

<ul> <li>An Alternative Delivery Format (ADF), endorsed by the Correctional Services Accreditation and Advice Panel (CSAAP) has enabled continued accredited programmes delivery outside of the primary format. These formats include small group delivery to 2-3 participants, 1-1 face to face and 1-1 remote delivery. Initial feedback from staff and offenders is positive.</li> <li>Accredited Programmes training for staff has been redesigned to enable remote delivery. Training is targeted at new staff and is focused on priority programmes.</li> <li>Additional venues including the procurement of portacabins are being sourced to enable socially distanced group delivery.</li> <li>Work is underway to build increased capacity through the recruitment and training of additional staff by Autumn 2021. Approval is being sought from the recovery board March 2021.</li> </ul>	Regional Probation Director (Accredited Programmes Lead)	Completed and September 2021
<ul> <li>HMPPS will adopt a system-wide approach to manage and plan for demand for Accredited Programmes;</li> <li>Guidance has been issued to Pre-Sentence Report authors (April 2020 and January 2021) to ensure that accredited programmes are targeted to those who pose the highest risk to the public, in accordance with the Prioritisation Framework.</li> </ul>	Regional Probation Director (Accredited Programmes Lead)	Completed
Work is underway to determine the prioritisation of accredited programmes in prisons, with due regard to those released on licence who may need to complete an accredited programme in the community.	Head of Psychology	April 2021
Progress against commitments (April 2022)		
A fourth wave of the pandemic in England and Wales resulted in further restrictions which has hampered the recovery against the projected completion timeline of September 2021. In April 2021 face to face delivery resumed and continued through the fourth wave by managing isolating group members through increased Alternative Delivery Framework delivery. Some remote and 1-1 delivery remains to manage individual circumstances.	Regional Probation Director (Accredited Programmes Lead)	Ongoing
Most new groups commencing from May 2022 are back to business as usual sizes with a General Risk Assessment (GRA) in place. Some, larger, generally third-party sites can accommodate groups of more participants though. An additional 120 facilitators and 12 Treatment Managers, proportioned by regional backlog numbers, are being recruited and these are expected to be onboard throughout June and July. As a result, we expect to see an upward trajectory on the pre COVID baseline.		

			HMPPS continues to address outstanding accredited programme requirements, through prioritisation that takes account of principles underpinning the management of risk, fairness and justice, and an overarching commitment to public protection. This includes both the priority of programmes to be delivered and the prioritisation of group participants within those programmes. A suite of Approved Structured Interventions has been launched and implemented. In line		
			with the Prioritisation Framework, structured Interventions and Toolkits are delivered to People on Probation where an accredited programme cannot be delivered.		
			Prioritisation principles for accredited programmes in custody were established in June 2021 and have been adhered to since. Places are prioritised by relevant date (release or Parole Eligibility Date) and risk which aims to reduce the demand on community delivery. A regular measure of those waiting for programmes is undertaken and information shared with probation colleagues. Provision within custody remains limited given the pandemic and regime restrictions. A 2022/23 plan is under development to better plan the pathway to recovery.	Head of Psychology	April 2023 and quarterly
5	Urgently conduct a	Agreed	Action Plan commitments (April 2021)		
	large-scale, robust outcome evaluation of the effectiveness of remote (telephone- based) supervision for different types of service user if this is to become a standard		MoJ analysts are scoping a large-scale, rigorous outcome study on <i>blended supervision</i> . This will consider the effectiveness of <i>blended supervision</i> under the unified model, testing different blended approaches in specific regions compared with a "baseline" blended supervision comparator. Subject to formal approval for the research, evaluation is expected to commence in September 2021.	Deputy Director Criminal Justice Business Partnering Team.	September 2021
	part of a 'blended' approach to supervision in the future.		Indicative outcomes will be measured throughout, and robust data on reoffending outcomes is expected to be available from 2023 at the earliest, to allow a 12-month follow-up period, and for any reoffences to be processed through the courts.	Deputy Director Criminal Justice Business Partnering Team.	March 2023
			A multidisciplinary working group to support the study, including through monthly meetings, has been established. This includes representation from HMI Probation.	Deputy Director, Service Design	Completed and monthly

			Progress against commitments (April 2022)		
			A Blended Supervision evaluation is due to commence November 2022 to August 2023 involving five Probation regions, with a published report due at the end of 2023. The core evaluation will consider how blended supervision is applied and the impact of different modes of contact on sentence and risk management. Case studies will also look at how technology is used, and how home visits can be deployed to support blended supervision.	Deputy Director Criminal Justice Business Partnering Team.	August 2023
6	Evaluate the effectiveness of	Agreed	Action Plan commitments (April 2021)		
	effectiveness of alternative delivery arrangements for accredited programmes and rehabilitation activity requirements (RARs), including that delivered on a one-to- one basis if this, as well as group delivery, is to become a routine form of future provision.		Commencing by May 2021, the National Effective Interventions Panel will assess all toolkits against criteria contained within the new HMPPS Rehabilitation Strategy, so that only 'Approved Toolkits' are carried forward into the unified model. A number of toolkits are promoted for use by Responsible Officers where accredited programmes cannot be undertaken. Some of the toolkits already in existence have had positive evaluations or, as in the case of Maps for Change, designed to address sexual offending, evaluation is underway. For others, including those where development and/or rollout has been expedited, evaluations by psychologists will be completed. Initial feedback from both supervised individuals and staff has typically been positive. Evaluations will take full account of all feedback from both groups.	Deputy Director, Reducing Reoffending	May 2021 and ongoing.
			Intervention Services are conducting an <i>implementation review</i> which will focus on the process of the alternative delivery formats used for Accredited Programmes during COVID-19. This will explore staff and participant experiences, as well as the quality of delivery and is due for completion in Autumn 2021. Quality of delivery can be seen as a precursor to positive outcomes, but the review will not be evaluating the 'effectiveness' of the ADF in terms of impact or re-offending.	Deputy Director, Interventions and Operational Services	September 2021
			HMPPS are collecting data to facilitate monitoring of the ADF, which in turn will inform ongoing quality assurance of accredited programme implementation. The Data and Analytical Services Directorate are exploring ways in which to incorporate ADF into evaluation strategies for future <i>retrospective evaluations</i> of affected accredited programmes, possibly with the inclusion of ADF as specific sub-analyses (dependent on sample sizes and accurate data recording of mode of delivery).	Deputy Director, Criminal Justice Business Partnering Team.	Review March 2022
			On <i>Rehabilitative Activity Requirement</i> alternative delivery, HMPPS have contacted CRCs and supply chain providers to capture good practice and learning during COVID-19.		

HMPPS will determine the most effective means by which to formally evaluate work undertaken.	Deputy Director, Service Design	September 2021
Progress against commitments (April 2022)		
The National Effective Interventions Panel has approved a Suite of 12 Structured Interventions (covering the three areas of Emotional Management; Attitudes, Thinking and Behaviour and Domestic Abuse) to be delivered by Interventions Teams which are available to probation practitioners for licence cases and orders under the Rehabilitative Activity Requirement of a Community Order. A five-year evaluation framework has been drafted and proposed for the twelve Structured Interventions to ensure the service is transparent, credible and accountable to key stakeholders. The process evaluations are awaiting approval from the National Research Committee with the fieldwork commencing in the Summer of 2022.	Deputy Director, Reducing Reoffending	Completed and ongoing
<ul> <li>The Suite of Approved Structured Interventions are:</li> <li>Stepwise: Relationships</li> <li>Positive Pathways Plus</li> <li>Help</li> <li>Developing Assertiveness for women in relationships</li> <li>Stepwise Emotions</li> <li>Let's Talk</li> <li>Managing my Emotions</li> <li>FIRS for Women</li> <li>Stepwise: Problem Solving</li> <li>Building Better Solutions</li> <li>Positive Pathways</li> <li>Stepwise: Driving</li> </ul>		
In addition, an Approved Suite of Probation Practitioner Toolkits is now available to probation practitioners, enabling the delivery of one-to-one change work on Licence and under the Rehabilitative Activity Requirement of a Community Order. The National Effective Interventions Panel has approved 12 toolkits for use (the complete set has been available since 25/4/22). The Suite will be subject to a formal implementation review undertaken by the Probation Reform Programme, due to report in Autumn 2022. Learning about the delivery of toolkit materials remotely will be gained from the PRP Blended Supervision Evaluation – this has been delayed but is due to commence in May 2022. Individual toolkits will be subject to additional evaluation under the oversight of the Reducing Reoffending Directorate.		

			An implementation review has been completed with presentations given to key internal stakeholders to communicate findings. Quality assurance of delivery is part of business as usual, with the alternative delivery formats (ADF) being included as part of this. All findings from the assurance work completed is used to continue to develop programmes and delivery. Alternative Delivery Formats (ADF) have been launched and the ability to record session formats have been set up in both nDelius and Interventions Manager. ADF will be included	Deputy Director, Interventions and Operational Services Deputy Director, Criminal Justice Business Partnering	Completed
Com	munity Rehabilitation Co	ompanies s	as part of ongoing evaluation plans in sub-analyses where appropriate.	Team.	
7	Ensure that assessments of those due to complete unpaid	Agreed	Action Plan commitments (April 2021)		
	work are comprehensive, focus on diversity and personal circumstances, and consider the risk of		With the introduction of EDM's across CRC's it would appear that there has been a misalignment between the contract and the execution of Offender Assessment System (OASys) Risk of Serious Harm (RoSH) assessments. The HMPPS CMT will investigate this and prepare an action plan on how to initiate these for the remainder of the CRC contracts, in advance of the unification of probation services in June 2021.	Deputy Director, Strategic Support, Administration & Assurance	May 2021
	harm the individual may pose to others.		In addition to this, a working group, consisting of three Regional Probation Director's (RPD's) and three CRC Chief Executive Officers has been established to review CRCs Risk Management Plans (RMPs), to prepare a framework on areas that are demonstrating good practice, and to explore how this can be applied across the service in advance of unification.	Deputy Director, Strategic Support, Administration & Assurance	May 2021
			Robust arrangements to ensure comprehensive and effective assessment of those due to complete UPW will form part of the unified model for probation.	Senior Design Lead, Probation Reform Programme	May 2021
			Progress against commitments (April 2022)		
			HMPPS Contract Management Team (CMT) developed and published an action plan which was presented to all CRC's providing clear guidance and instruction on the requirements of the content and information contained in those Offender Assessment System (OASys) Risk	Deputy Director, Strategic Support, Administration & Assurance	Completed

of Serious Harm (RoSH) assessments. Regional contract management teams conducted assurance activities to ensure there was no further misalignment.		
The working group, chaired by the HMPPS CMT, developed and published a framework, which was circulated and presented to all the CRC's. The framework provided several examples on how to improve the quality of Risk Management Plans (RMP's), alongside offering additional examples of good practice which was taking place across several regions. Regional contract management teams, carried out assurance and compliance activities across their respective regions, ensuring that the quality of RMP's was evident.	Deputy Director, Strategic Support, Administration & Assurance	Completed
HMPPS CMT developed a detailed and comprehensive analysis not only for those individuals who were due to complete their UPW, prior to unification, but also provided to provide an overview for those that would not complete their UPW. This information was shared with the relevant Probation region.	Senior Design Lead, Probation Reform Programme	Completed