



HM Government

National Partnership Agreement for supporting prisoners to access employment and welfare support in custody and the community

2023 - 2026

Purpose of this document

This document sets out the partnership agreement between the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). It sets out the basis of a shared understanding of, and commitment to, the way in which the partners will work together in England and Wales.

This National Partnership Agreement sets out:

- The defined roles of each partner and their responsibilities
- An overview of the journey for a prisoner through prison and into the community, and identification of the touchpoints and interactions between each of the services in this agreement
- Our commitment to working together and shared objectives
- Our shared priorities 2023 - 2026

The National Partnership Agreement is supported by an ongoing joint programme of work at official level with regular engagement between MoJ, HMPPS and DWP.

Objective

This National Partnership Agreement sets out our aspirations for the way the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), HM Prison and Probation service (HMPPS) and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) work together in adult prisons and in the community in England and Wales. It sets out the intent of each partner, our shared objectives over the next few years and, at a high level, the roles of each partner in a prisoner's journey.

Scope of the agreement

This agreement covers the national working arrangements between MoJ, HMPPS and DWP in both custody and the community. In particular, the agreement specifies how DWP, prisons and probation services work together across the prisoner journey through custody to the community. The agreement applies to adult prisons but where applicable we will share learning with the youth estate.

Local partnership arrangements will need to reflect the variation in local set up in different areas and will be a matter for prisons and jobcentre districts in collaboration with the Probation Service and Commissioned Rehabilitative Service Providers (CRS) in the area into which prisoners are released.

Both Government Departments are committed to this collaborative way of working and it is a model that prisons, the Probation Service and Commissioner Rehabilitative Service (CRS) and DWP districts should adopt.

How we will work together

Each partner to this agreement has distinct statutory responsibilities, but we must work together to ensure the most effective join up between our services – providing support to the prisoner in custody to prepare for employment on release. Following release ensuring prison leavers continue to access support to obtain work as well as timely access to benefits where appropriate. Through coordinating this activity, we can deliver effective rehabilitation support which will ultimately reduce reoffending. We continue to work together to better share data and information to ensure a joined-up end-to-end service.

Governance

This agreement is applicable from **1 January 2023 and will be in place until 31 December 2026** unless otherwise superseded. This partnership agreement will be overseen by the MoJ/HMPPS/DWP partnership board, which will meet quarterly or more often as needed, and will be co-chaired by MoJ/HMPPS and DWP.

The partnership agreement provides an overarching framework that can be implemented at a local level, reflecting the different nature of individual prison establishments and local probation delivery units. The partnership board will provide a level of oversight to ensure that these local arrangements are happening effectively and joined up delivery is taking place on the ground.

Who we are

The Ministry of Justice is a major government department, at the heart of the justice system. Our vision is to deliver a world-class justice system that works for everyone in society. We are responsible for reducing reoffending and supporting prisoners into work.



Ministry
of Justice

HM Prison & Probation Service is an executive agency of MoJ which carries out sentences given by the courts, in custody and the community, and rehabilitate and resettle people subject to probation supervision through addressing need and managing risk against the general public



HM Prison &
Probation Service



Department
for Work &
Pensions

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is responsible for welfare, pensions and child maintenance policy. It is responsible for a network of over 200 Prison Work Coaches who provide prisoners with employment and training support throughout their sentence and benefit advice prior to release. DWP has a network of jobcentres throughout the UK supporting people with employment and benefits.

What we are committing to deliver

Innovation and testing

- Test new ways to start a UC claim in custody in 15 prisons and where successful, roll out across the prison estate by 2024
- Recruit education specialists into the senior leadership team of prisons across the estate who are responsible for oversight and delivery of all education, skills and work-based activities, functions and staff, following an initial trial period in Accelerator sites.
- Test ways to work with employers across all sectors, particularly growth sectors and those affected by labour shortages, to help employers enhance their recruitment approach to attract prisoners and prison leavers
- Test ways to improve male prisoners' hope, motivation and engagement to secure employment, through our Prison Leavers Project, Employability and Skills Team.

A joined up, collaborative approach to employment support for prisoners and those subject to licences and probation supervision

- Take a proactive approach to working together to ensure effective joint working between all organisations including Prison Employment Leads, Prison Work Coaches and jobcentres, Probation Service and Commissioned Rehabilitative Services.
- Embed reformed probation arrangements.
- Embed investment in education and employment arising from 2021 Spending Review.
- Ensure prisoners have proper access to the right training and support, improving literary and functional skills during their time in custody.
- Maximise opportunities and initiatives to support prisoners to develop appropriate skills for employment that suits them.
- Roll out of new Employment Hubs, Employment Advisory Boards, Prison Employment Leads and ID & Banking Administrators across 92 prisons.

Ensuring prisoners and those subject to licences and probation supervision are financially able to support themselves

- Provide necessary support to enable prisoners to be equipped with the elements to enter employment such as a basic bank account, ID, National Insurance number, and accommodation on release.
- Support prison leavers in securing stable employment.
- Provide access to benefits on release including any advance payment.

Overarching obligations

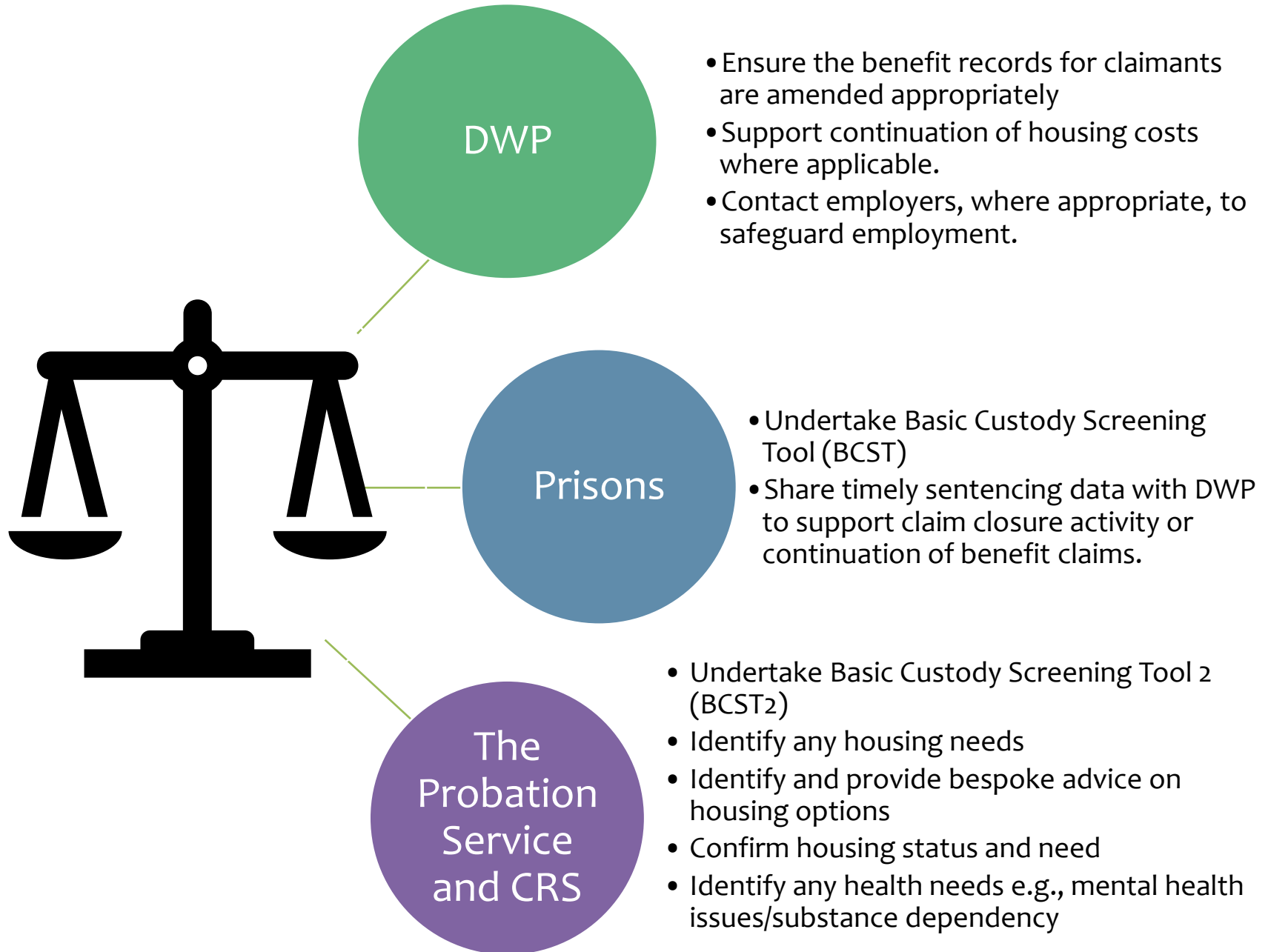
The Ministry of Justice and HMPPS will;

- Provide work and education inside prison and work experience through Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL);
- Ensure that the Probation Service and Commissioned Rehabilitative Service providers deliver on their pre-release and resettlement commitments as described in the probation policy framework, the assessment and identification of prisoners for signposting to the relevant work programmes in the community and to in-custody services;
- Ensure all resettlement prisons have Employment Hubs that act as a form of jobcentre within prisons, managed by Prison Employment Leads who will coordinate the employment services/stakeholders within establishments;
- Ensure prison leavers where appropriate have ID that demonstrates right to work and through the Prisoner Banking Programme enable them to apply whilst in custody for a basic bank account on release;
- Ensure any relevant information and/or plans for release are shared with DWP in a timely way;
- Where appropriate, tailor services to the needs of specific cohorts, for example female offenders, those with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities.
- Ensure that Prison Work Coaches have both the right physical environment and information on and access to prisoners, required for efficient working, including:
 - A telephone for PWCs and an appropriate space to work
 - Clear escalation processes to enable PWCs to raise concerns efficiently and effectively
 - Broadband access where the estate allows
 - Secure document storage
 - Appropriate prison training
 - Prison intranet and e-mail address to support communication with internal partners
- Expansion and improvement of prison estate including IT Infrastructure improvements.

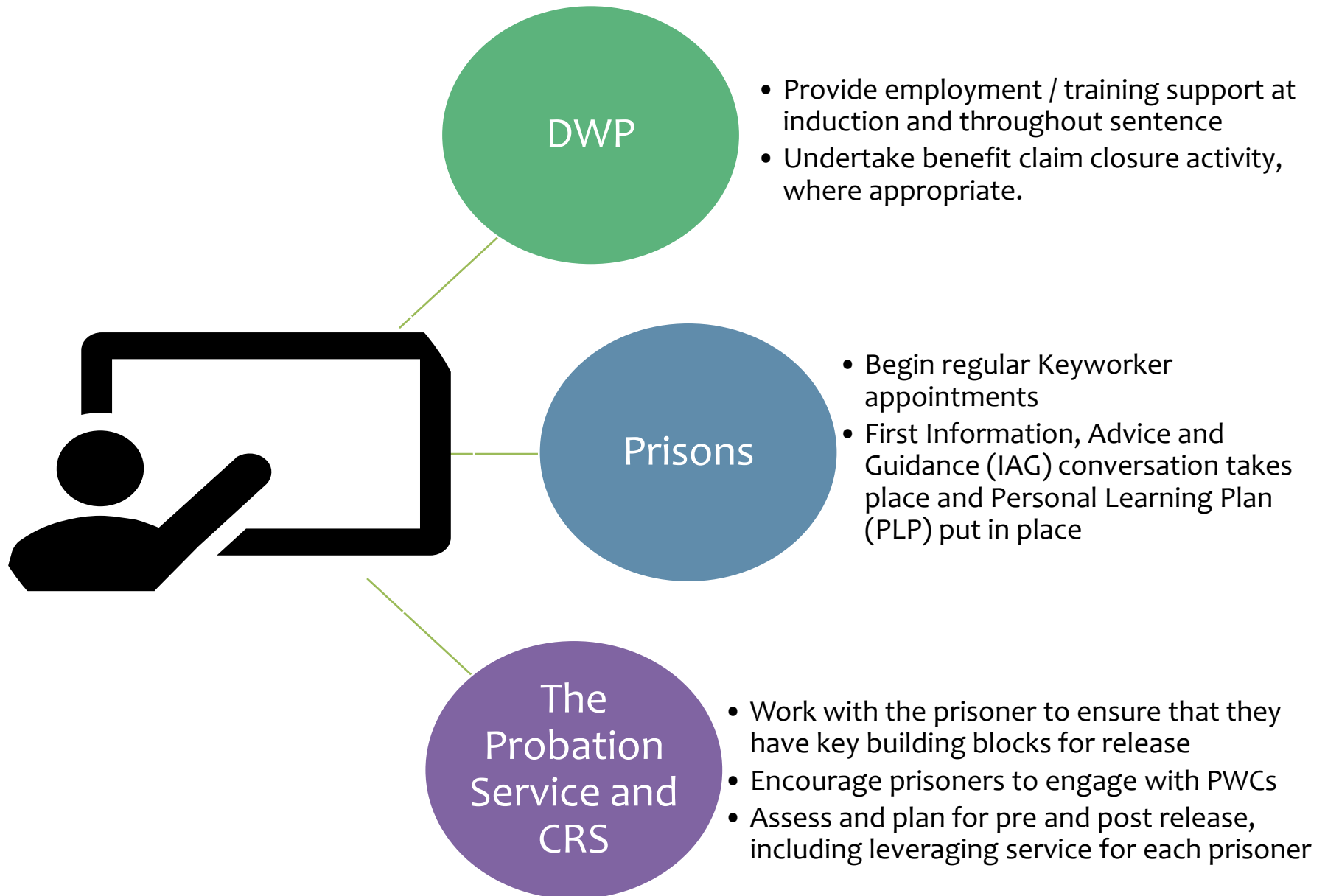
The Department for Work and Pensions will;

- Provide employment and benefit support to prisoners and prison leavers.
- Maintain a network of prison work coaches and jobcentre work coaches, who will deliver appropriate employment and welfare support that is specific to individuals' needs.
- Support continuation of Universal Credit housing costs, for those serving 6 months or less, to protect tenancies;
- Ensure benefit claim closure activity is completed where appropriate when prisoner enters prison
- Liaise with the prisoner's employer, where appropriate, to preserve employment;
- 12 weeks before release, offer a range of support to prisoners such as preparing them to make a claim for UC, telling them about the documentation/information needed to make a claim and booking an advance appointment at the local jobcentre;
- Share local labour market intelligence with Probation /New Futures Network and Prison Employment Lead, to help inform "sentence plans" including training and work opportunities;
- Provide information and advice about employment, including day one access to DWP employment programmes, benefits and DWP services;
- Liaise with jobcentre work coaches to ensure continuous support as people leave prison – warm handover to jobcentre colleagues;
- Proactively encouraging prisoners and those subject to licences and probation supervision, to engage with Work Coaches;
- Promote Going Forward into Employment (GFIE) opportunities to prisoners due to be released;
- Support the facilitation of work experience, training and employment opportunities, in prison and beyond – helping employers understand the value of hiring ex-offenders;

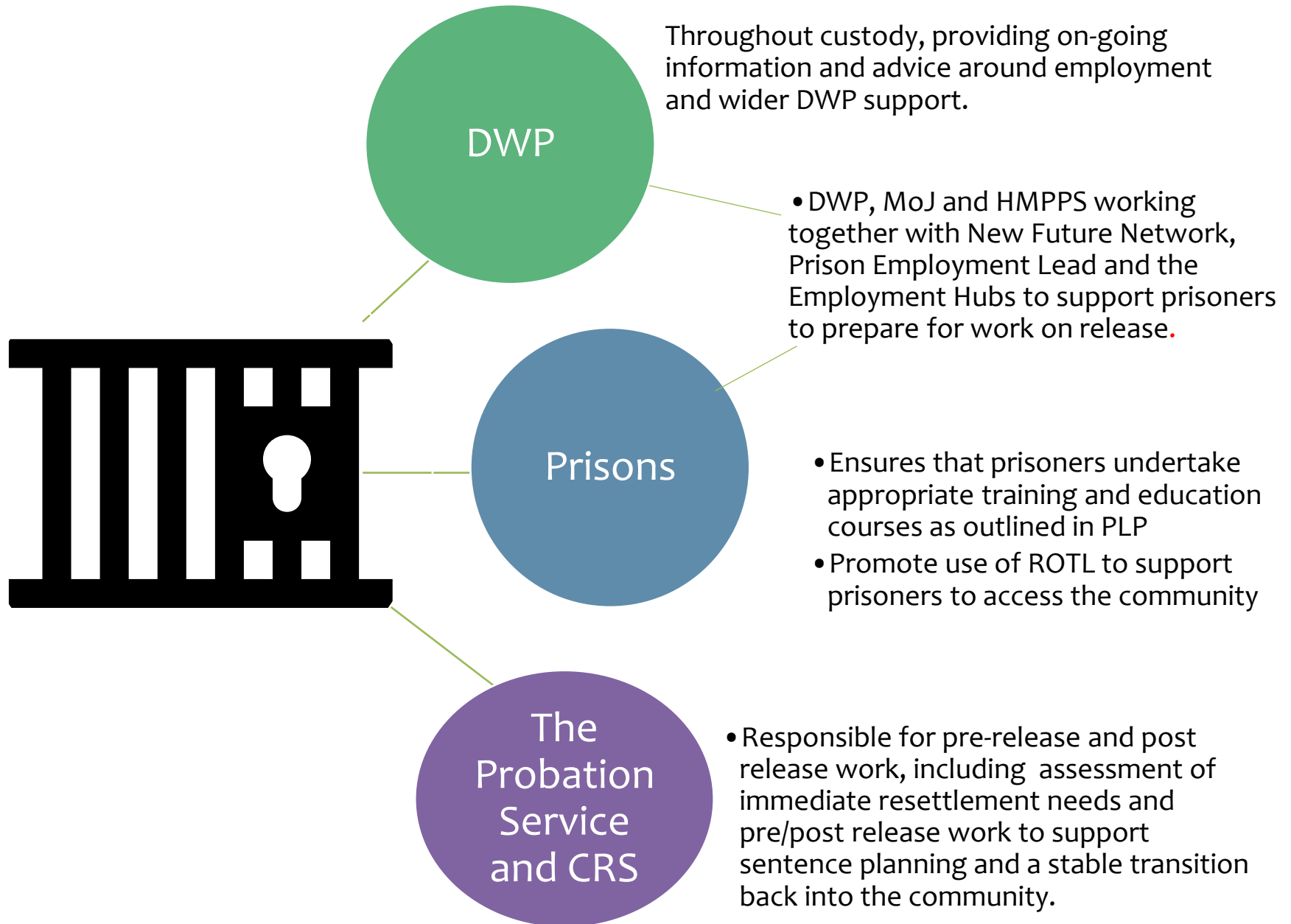
The prisoner journey: Sentencing



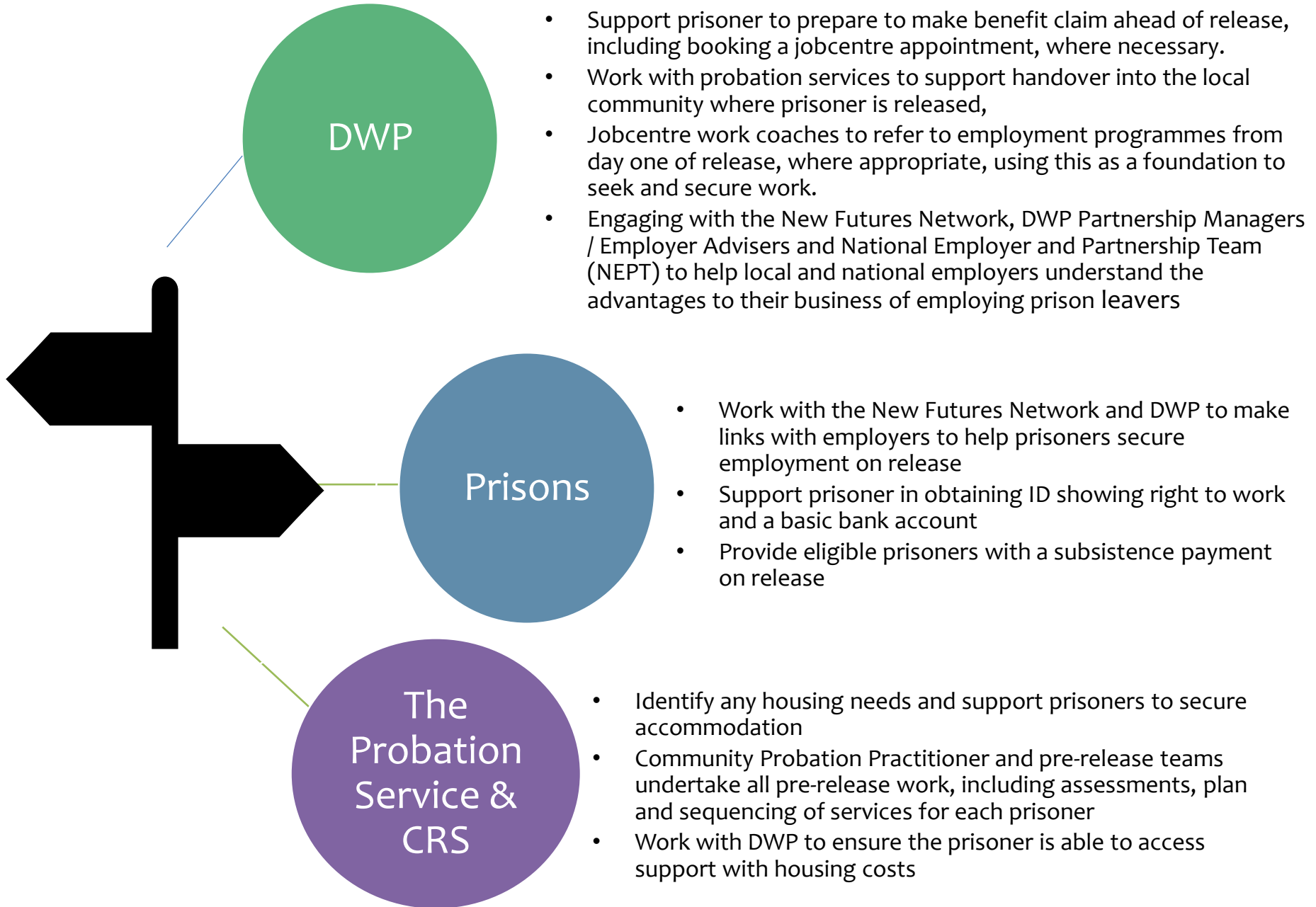
The prisoner journey: Induction



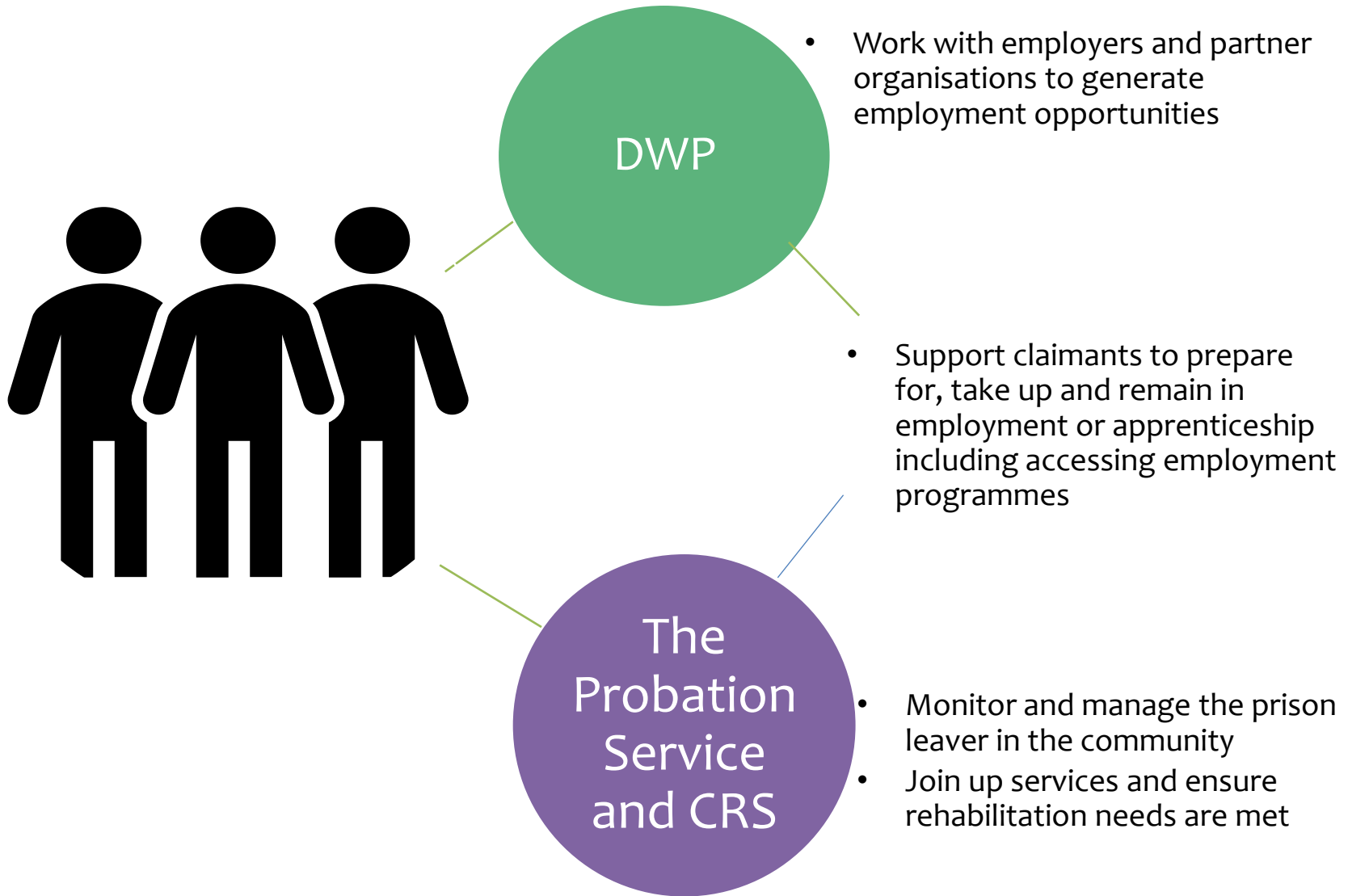
The prisoner journey: During Sentence



The prisoner journey: Release



The prisoner journey: Community



Signatories

National Partnership Agreement between MOJ, HMPPS and DWP covering services in England and Wales



Ross Gribbin - Director General
Policy (Prisons, Offenders and
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Ministry
of Justice



Amy Rees – Chief Executive
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HM Prison &
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Barbara Bradley, Director General Work
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Department
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