



Policy name: Offender Management – Psychology Risk Assessment (PRA) Reports

Re-Issue Date: 13 April 2026 *

Implementation Date: 01 August 2025

Replaces the following documents (e.g., PSIs, PSOs, Custodial Service Specs) which are hereby cancelled:

- PSI 36/2011 (Offender Management – Psychologist’s Report Format SPRE)

*The Policy Framework was first published internally in 2025 for consideration by psychologists and is now ready for wider publication after their comments were addressed.

Introduces amendments to the following documents: N/A

Action required by:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	HMPPS HQ	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Governors
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Public Sector Prisons	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Heads of Group
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Contracted Prisons	<input type="checkbox"/>	Contract Managers in Probation Trusts
<input type="checkbox"/>	Probation Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	HMPPS-run Immigration Removal Centres (IRCs)
<input type="checkbox"/>	HMPPS Rehabilitation Contract Services Team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Under 18 Young Offender Institutions
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other providers of Probation and Community Services		

Mandatory Actions:

All groups referenced above must adhere to the Requirements section of this Policy Framework, which contains all mandatory actions.

For Information:

Directorate and Regional Lead Psychologists must ensure that any new local policies that they develop because of this Policy Framework are compliant with relevant legislation, including the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act, 2010). This Policy Framework should be read alongside the corresponding Equality Analysis which sets out the actions taken to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

All Psychologists must ensure that when handling personal data, they have comprehensive and proportionate arrangements for collecting, storing, and sharing information, as set out in

PSI 4/2018, The Data Protection Act 2018, General Data Protection Regulation, The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

All references to “prisoner” within this Policy Framework also refer to those under 18 years of age who are in custody. In this document the term Governor also applies to Directors of Contracted Prisons. All references to “prison” within this Policy Framework also refer to those establishments that hold those under 18 years of age, including Secure Training Centres and Secure Children’s Homes.

Section 7 of the Policy Framework contains guidance to implement the mandatory requirements set out in Section 4. Whilst it will not be mandatory to follow what is set out in this policy, clear reasons for departure from the guidance should be documented locally. Any questions concerning departure from the guidance can be sent to the contact details below.

How will this Policy Framework be audited or monitored:

Directorate, Regional and Thematic Lead Psychologists must have Quality Assurance (QA) arrangements in place in line with National guidelines to ensure that PRAs meet the quality standards described in this Policy Framework.

Psychology Services monitoring data will be used to ensure that PRA reports are provided in a timely way as set out by the Policy Framework.

Resource Impact:

PRA reports are existing work. This Policy Framework will not result in new work but will formalise standards ensuring the quality of reports already being provided by HMPPS Psychology Services (and those providing reports on their behalf).

Contact: PsychologyOperationalDelivery@justice.gov.uk

Deputy/Group Director sign-off: Dr Jo Bailey, Chief Psychologist, Head of Psychology Services Group, HMPPS.

Approved by OPS for publication: Helen Judge, Chair, Operational Policy Sub-board, May 2025.

Review

Date	Update
13 April 2026	Amendments to the PRA template, section 7.

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 HMPPS Psychologists (and those commissioned on behalf of HMPPS Psychology Services) providing reports for the Parole Board and on behalf of the Secretary of State (SofS) are required to follow a template that meets the requirements of the Public Protection Manual, Offender Management process, Professional Standards as set down by the Health Care and Professions Council (HCPC), requirements of the Parole Board (S32 (6) CJA1991), Parole Board Rules, Generic Parole Process Policy Framework and the Recall, Review and Re-release of Recalled Prisoners Policy Framework.
- 1.2 This document sets out the requirements and guidance for Practitioner Psychologists and Trainee Psychologists (under the supervision of Practitioner Psychologists) producing Psychology Risk Assessment (PRA) reports for the following purposes within His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS):
- As part of the Generic Parole Process (GPP) for the Parole Board;
 - For recalled prisoners when directed by the Parole Board;
 - Assisting with Offender Management (OM) activity (e.g., sentence planning and review boards);
 - Contributing to Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangement (MAPPA) panels;
 - Contributing to Category A, Restricted Status and terrorist / terrorist-connected risk reports.
- 1.3 This Policy Framework predominately applies to PRA reports however the general requirements can also be applied to other psychology reports as detailed in Section 8.

2. Exceptions

- 2.1 All PRA reports prepared for the purposes listed above should adhere to the standards set down in this Policy Framework. Reports completed for internal purposes and those that are not risk related are exceptions to this guidance. Exceptions include feedback reports following interventions, case file reviews, consultation reports, reports completed as part of the Offender Personality Disorder (OPD) Pathway Service and reports completed by In-Reach Psychologists employed by the National Health Service (NHS).
- 2.2 Refer to section 7.1.5 for more information regarding Accredited Programme and Intervention reports that are directed to be included in the Parole Dossier.

3. Outcomes

- 3.1 This framework aims to achieve the following:
- Psychologists will provide timely and proportionate PRA reports to the Parole Board.
 - PRA reports will comply with all relevant rules, legislation and professional standards.
 - Reports will assist with offender management decisions, re-categorisation, and release planning.
 - Reports will follow the template provided, to ensure consistency and completeness.

- Reports will be completed, where possible, with the involvement of the prisoner, and will be disclosed to the prisoner before submission so that their views can be incorporated.
- Quality assurance (QA) processes will ensure that expected standards for PRA reports are met and maintained.

4. Requirements

- 4.1 PRA reports submitted for inclusion in a parole dossier must be compliant with the Parole Board Rules and any subsequent amendments to these Rules.
- 4.2 Report authors must comply with the report timeframe set within the service level agreement (SLA) with the Parole Board, unless an extension is agreed in advance.
- 4.3 Psychologists must remain abreast of practice, policy and legal changes which impact how reports are prepared and how evidence is provided to oral hearings. It is the responsibility of the report writer (or their supervisor(s) where the report writer is a Trainee Psychologist) to ensure that they remain aware of and compliant with any subsequent parole changes.
- 4.4 For reports prepared for the Parole Board, report writers (or their supervisor(s) where the report writer is a Trainee Psychologist), must be registered as a Practitioner Psychologist with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). They must use only those protected titles recognised by the HCPC.
- 4.5 Where reports are completed by Trainee Forensic Psychologists, they must be produced under the supervision of a Health and Care Professionals Council (HCPC) Registered Psychologist. The supervisor is responsible for ensuring the report meets appropriate standards in preparation and presentation.
- 4.6 In some cases, appropriately trained and supervised non-psychologists may be able to write the reports detailed in Section 8. This will be agreed on a case-by-case basis by the Directorate or Regional Lead Psychologist.
- 4.7 Prisoners should be invited to participate in the assessment process for the PRA that is about them. Their involvement will usually be via interview. This approach should constitute informed consent, with the purpose of the report, the nature of their requested involvement, and the expected outcomes fully explained.
- 4.8 PRA reports must be disclosed to the prisoner who is the subject of the report prior to wider dissemination, and they must have the opportunity to comment. The way PRA reports are disclosed to prisoners is a key factor and there are potentially significant risks should progression not be recommended or the wording in the PRA be less favourable. The mental health and wellbeing of prisoners is important to consider as is the physical risk to staff from a violent response. The disclosure process must be managed in accordance with professional and best practice guidelines, and local and national prison policies and processes (such as for safety and security) adhered to, to mitigate risk to both staff and prisoners.

- 4.9 Reports submitted as part of the Generic Parole Process, or Offender Management sentence planning process must include, as a minimum, those elements of the standard format set out in the guidance section of this document (Section 7).
- 4.10 Psychology managers and supervisors should ensure that compliance and quality assurance checks on PRA reports are undertaken by qualified psychologists. It is recommended that 10% of all reports produced annually are randomly selected for assurance checks; these must include QA checks on all cases denoted as Critical Public Protection (CPPC), terrorist / terrorist-connected and Noteworthy cases. A quality assurance checklist is available via the Psychology Service Group team overseeing parole processes: ISPTeam@justice.gov.uk.
- 4.11 Regional and Lead Psychologists must satisfy themselves that the requirements set out by this Policy Framework are being implemented.

5. Constraints

- 5.1 Only those PRA reports completed by HMPPS Practitioner Psychologists, Trainee Psychologists, or those specifically commissioned by HMPPS to deliver such reports will be permitted, unless specified as appropriate within Section 8: Schedule of Reports.
- 5.2 Only reports prepared to the standards as laid out in this Policy Framework will be permitted.
- 5.3 Only those reports compliant with Parole Board rules and the most up to date HMPPS guidance will be permitted.

6. Guidance

6.1 Context and Format for PRA Reports

- 6.1.1 This Policy Framework provides the overarching standards that apply to all PRA reports. Section 7 provides a general template on which all PRA reports referred to by this Policy Framework should be based. Where the purposes of reports differ, (for example for reports completed for sentence planning rather than parole purposes) their requirements can be found in the schedule provided in Section 8.
- 6.1.2 Where completed for the Parole Board, the PRA report should be aligned with the terms of referral to the Parole Board on behalf of the Secretary of State (SofS)¹. As a minimum, all PRA reports should include: an executive summary, a statement of purpose, an assessment of risk and protective factors using a structured tool where relevant and

¹ The Terms of Referral to the Parole Board from the Secretary of State (SofS) set out the type of case it is and what the SofS is asking the Parole Board to do. The referral note should be at the front of the dossier for indeterminate sentence and determinate sentence (non-recall prisoners). In determinate sentence recall cases, the SofSs referral is not always included in the dossier in the same format as an indeterminate sentence case, but it will be clear from the Dossier Cover Sheet that it is a recall case.

applicable², a psychological formulation³, scenario planning, risk management strategies and a concluding statement based on an overall assessment of risk, with a professional opinion where possible, according to the purpose and remit of the report.

- 6.1.3 All formal psychological testing and Structured Professional Judgement (SPJ) assessments should be conducted within the HCPC Standards of Proficiency for Practitioner Psychologists (2023) or other relevant regulatory body, considering any relevant protected characteristics of the individual being assessed. The report should clarify the ways in which the diversity needs of the prisoner have been considered throughout the assessment and reporting process, to ensure equality and inclusivity.
- 6.1.4 PRA reports may be submitted following a recommendation from the Psychology Services triaging process, following a Parole Board Direction or when requested on behalf of the SofS. The template at Annex A should be used for all these purposes.
- 6.1.5 Documentation routinely completed following completion of Accredited Programmes or other intervention services should be considered as evidence which forms part of the PRA report and should not be submitted to the Parole Board directly. They are not risk assessment reports and are not “owned” by Psychology Services. The PRA report writer should incorporate this evidence into their own assessment of the risks as part of their PRA report.
- 6.1.6 Report writers should aim to ensure all psychological assessments required to inform the PRA report are undertaken unless such assessments are not possible to complete. If further assessments are recommended report writers should identify the most feasible way to achieve them. Report writers should bear in mind that not all presenting issues require formal assessment and that a focus on understanding and managing a presenting issue may be sufficient to assist the Parole Board and other colleagues such as Probation. The aim of the PRA report is to aid the parole process.
- 6.1.7 HMPPS Psychologists (or those commissioned on behalf of HMPPS) are always responsible for providing PRA reports to the Parole Board for prisoners in custody on the OPD Pathway.
- 6.1.8 PRA reports should show evidence of liaison with the wider system including the Community Offender Manager, Probation/Prison Offender Manager and other relevant practitioners and staff within the prison. The ACCT process can be a source of information as can DPS/Nomis case notes, CSIP reviews and other safety processes. The ACCT can also be considered as a means of support for prisoners during the PRA process if required.

6.2 Supervision Process

- 6.2.1 The supervision process for trainee forensic psychologists involves the Registered Practitioner Psychologist (the supervisor):

² A Structured Professional Judgement (SPJ) tool or a structured formulation approach can be applied. This could include use of a general framework or application of theoretical frameworks for specific offence types.

³ A very brief explanation should be provided of the formulation model applied and why this approach has been chosen.

- a. satisfying themselves through discussions with the report writer that, to the best of their knowledge, the assessments and interventions reported have been conducted appropriately and in line with BPS Codes of Conduct and ethical guidelines as well as HCPC Standards of Proficiency;
- b. satisfying themselves that the PRA report is correctly aligned to the terms of referral to the Parole Board for the case;
- c. reviewing the report to ensure that opinions expressed within it are supported by, and grounded within, current and evidence-based psychological theory and practice;
- d. ensuring that the risk management options provided, to the best of their knowledge, are appropriate to the forensic formulation, address the referral questions, represent all the options for addressing the risk and needs identified and are available/achievable.

6.2.2 The supervision process is not intended to establish the factual accuracy of information contained within the PRA report. Forensic formulations and opinions presented should be supervised on the basis that facts underpinning them are correctly represented within the report by the author.

6.2.3 Registered Psychologist Practitioners should engage with a peer supervision process on a regular basis to ensure the standards set out in this Policy Framework are met within their reports. Directorate and Regional /Thematic Lead Psychologists are responsible for ensuring this process is provided and appropriate.

6.2.4 All PRA reports completed for Noteworthy, CPPC and terrorist / terrorist-connected prisoners must be completed by Registered Psychologists and must be peer supervised by a Registered Psychologist colleague.

Section 7. PRA Report Template

- 7.1 This Annex provides a summary of the template to be used by those providing PRA reports on behalf of HMPPS. Full details regarding the contents to be included within the template are provided by supplementary guidance that may be subject to change. The template structure described below is unlikely to change as the guidance is updated. This template represents the standard information that will be included in every report but can be added to, to meet the referral question and report type.
- 7.2 PRA reports should be concise and not exceed 20 pages. PRA reports should follow current Government guidance on standard size, font, and colour of all text to ensure that they are accessible. The length of some reports may vary depending on complexity and the specific directions from the Parole Board.
- 7.3 The PRA report template should include the following:

Front Cover Sheet

Not included in word or page count and should include the following:

- Prisoner's⁴ details (name, prison number and location)
- Report writer's name, job title and place of work
- Title of the report (which clearly communicates the report's purpose)
- Contents page specifying the page number for each section.

Main Report

1) Author Credentials

The overall aim of this section is to introduce the report writer, their experience and role as relevant to the case. The following should be included in this section:

1. Full job title and professional statement of HCPC/BPS registration of report writer (and supervisor's details if required)
2. Relevant experience/training of the report writer (in line with referral question) and time in relevant employment⁵
3. Any potential conflict of interest resulting from prior involvement or prior knowledge of the case.

⁴ Referred to as Prisoner from here on in to refer to all those individuals being assessed within custody.

⁵ Full and complete author credentials can be added as an Annex if required.

4. A statement which indicates that the report author is aware of any changes to parole processes or legislation (if appropriate), and that the report is in line with these requirements.

2) Executive Summary

The overall aim of this section is to provide a concise summary of the conclusions of the report. The intention being that if the reader(s) were to only read one section of the report, they would understand what has been concluded, from the executive summary. The following should be included in this section:

1. A brief summary of the outcome of assessment, and professional opinion. There is flexibility here to include any key information considered important (for example any crucial limitations), but it should be brief and focus on the conclusions. It should not summarise the full report.

3) Issues to be Addressed

The overall aim of this section is to provide an overview of the purpose of the report to contextualise the report for the reader(s). The following should be included in this section:

1. A clear statement of purpose, including reference to the terms of the referral to the Parole Board.
2. The issues to be addressed and/or the specific Parole Board Member Case Assessment (MCA)⁶ or Oral Hearing directions if such have been issued.
3. The outcome of the HMPPS Psychology Service triage process in place if one has been completed as part of the GPP process.
4. A paragraph that demonstrates the report author's understanding of any Parole changes that have impacted the context of the report.

4) Methods of Assessment

The overall aim of this section is to summarise the various sources of information that have been used to inform the assessment. This section should include:

1. Knowledge of the prisoner
2. Nature and duration of contact with the prisoner
3. Level of engagement

⁶ The Member Case Assessment Guidance v3, January 2025, describes MCA at paragraph 1.2 as: Every case referred to the Parole Board is required to go through the MCA process. MCA has been described as a form of 'triage' because each case, at the earliest opportunity (the point of referral), is considered by an accredited MCA member who determines whether the case can be concluded on the papers or sets out additional steps that are needed for the matter to be determined fairly and swiftly.

4. Sources of information⁷
5. Methods of assessment
6. Report disclosure information.

5) Background information

The overall aim of this section is to provide a concise summary of the case history of the prisoner that is relevant to the psychological assessment and formulation. This section should not repeat large sections of other reports already in the dossier but summarise the key areas with reference to other sources as appropriate⁸. The primary aim of the psychology risk assessment report is to add psychological assessment to the known information and not to present information that is available elsewhere. This section could include pertinent factors relating to the prisoner's circumstances including:

1. Aspects of developmental history, intimate relationships, wider family circumstances, medical or psychiatric history, education and/or employment situation, substance misuse history, criminal history, response to custody/supervision, social or leisure interests and protective factors.
2. Outcomes of risk or other specialist assessments already completed.

6) Assessments of XXXX (cognitive ability / personality disorder etc)

If any additional assessments have been carried out (for example assessments of personality or cognitive functioning) they can be summarised in this section. This keeps them separate from assessments specifically related to risk and links the outcomes to the fact-finding section of the report, before providing conclusions and opinions.

7) Assessment of risk and protective / resilience factors

The overall aim of this section is to provide a current assessment of risk and protective or resilience factors (of whatever type is being assessed) under sub-headings that the report writer considers relevant. This should pull together the facts of the case already outlined, into an opinion regarding what this means for risk. The report writer should aim to be succinct and not repeat information, focussing on the risk factors that ARE present, not those that are not.

This section may include:

1. Summary of relevant risk factors and protective factors (for all settings available for risk management)

⁷ This should be comprehensively prepared with references/sources of all information being clearly cited. This can be provided as an annex if lengthy. Where allegation information has been included within the PRA this should be clearly stated and compliant with current Parole Board guidance on the handling of allegation information.

⁸ In these instances, include report title, author, date and page number.

2. Formulation summary⁹
3. Risk and desistance scenarios
4. Risk management plans for each available option
5. Timings

8) Conclusion / Professional opinion

The overall aim of this section is to draw all the issues together to assist the Parole Board in their recommendations relating to the test being considered, including release or open conditions (if this option is available to the Parole Board).¹⁰ Final conclusions should be succinct, clear, and based on the evidence presented earlier in the report. They should relate back to the original directions, addressing each in turn, (and as such may be broader than just an opinion on release and / or open conditions), but should include the report author's professional opinion on the prisoner's suitability for the community or open conditions, if the report author is able to make one. The report should also note any relevant timescales considered within the assessment.

9) Disclosure

The way PRA reports are disclosed to prisoners is important and there are potentially significant risks should progression not be recommended or the wording in the PRA be less favourable. The mental health and wellbeing of prisoners is important to consider and also the physical risk to staff from a violent response.

10) Appendices

This section should include anything that is not necessary to be described in full in the report and would add to the overall length if included. This could include, but is not limited to:

- a. Author credentials.
- b. Glossary of technical terms.
- c. List of documents examined and source/location.
- d. SPJ tool information.
- e. SPJ coding information¹¹
- f. Full formulation where relevant to the main body of the report.
- g. References.

⁹ Formulations should be referenced so that it is clear where the PRA author is drawing different elements of their formulation from.

¹⁰ Please note that different open test criteria apply for different sentence classifications, for example for Foreign National Prisoners the criteria is very low risk of abscond and for terrorism risk offenders there is the additional requirement for exceptional circumstances to be evidenced.

¹¹ A summary of the SPJ coding can be presented in the appendices in table format. Raw data should not be included in the report.

Section 8: Schedule of Reports

	Type of Report	Minimum Registration of the Report Writer	Relevant Training of the Report Writer	Exceptions/Requirements
1	Parole Board Directed: PRA report.	HCPC Registered Practitioner Psychologist. or Forensic Psychologist in Training (supervised by the above).	Training and experience in a range of forensic risk assessment tools and psychological tests. Experience of providing professional evidence to Oral Hearings.	Reports for terrorist, terrorist-connected cases and cases of concern (to be specified internally) to be completed by qualified HMPPS Psychologists only and not commissioned outside of HMPPS.
2	Parole Board Directed: PRA Addendum and Joint reports.	HCPC Registered Practitioner Psychologist. or Forensic Psychologist in Training (supervised by the above).	Training and experience in a range of forensic risk assessment tools and psychological tests. Experience of providing professional evidence to Oral Hearings.	Should be completed by original author wherever possible. If within the same parole window existing materials should be used to inform the addendum report and not repeated. Timing for SPJ re-assessment remains flexible but should be in accordance with specific risk assessment manuals ¹² and HMPPS psychology guidance. Addendums should focus specifically on the referral question and avoid repetition with the original report. In most cases it is unlikely a new report will be required, but usually a review of existing report, update of relevant risk assessments/risk scenarios and final conclusions on risk management.

¹² SPJ guidance recommends that timing of re-assessment is based on the following considerations: applicable law, statutes, or policy whether the individual is in a community/institutional setting; and level of risk. Those in custody settings and of lower risk may require less frequent re-assessment than higher risk individuals in the community. Re-assessment is advised whenever there is an important change in circumstances. Re-assessment may consist of evaluators simply recoding the items and the summary risk rating / management plan considering their current knowledge.

				<p>Discretion can be applied to the use of an addendum, or a new report based on the referral question and to the addendum structure.</p> <p>For Joint Reports directions Psychology Services guidance should be referred to.</p>
3	PRA report prepared following recommendation from MAPPA.	<p>HCPC Registered Practitioner Psychologist.</p> <p>or</p> <p>Forensic Psychologist in Training (supervised by the above).</p>	<p>Training and experience in a range of forensic risk assessment tools and psychological tests.</p> <p>Experience of providing professional evidence in formal settings.</p> <p>Awareness of community monitoring and supervision processes.</p>	<p>Reports for terrorist, terrorist-connected and cases of concern (to be specified internally) to be completed by qualified HMPPS Psychologists and not commissioned outside of HMPPS.</p> <p>Psychology Services MAPPA Guidance should be referred to.</p>
4	CAT A/Restricted Status report.	<p>HCPC Registered Practitioner Psychologist.</p> <p>or</p> <p>Forensic Psychologist in Training (supervised by a the above).</p> <p>or</p> <p>Those practitioners deemed by the Lead Psychologist as being appropriately trained and supervised.</p>	<p>Awareness of Directorate of Security, YCS and Women's Estate Psychology Service processes.</p>	
5	Reports for sentence planning processes (including MALRAP, annual reviews, IPP)	<p>HCPC Registered Practitioner Psychologist</p> <p>or</p> <p>Forensic Psychologist in Training</p>	<p>Awareness of ISP sentence planning and transition processes.</p>	<p>Reports for terrorist and terrorist-connected and cases of concern (to be specified internally) to be completed by qualified HMPPS Psychologists only and not commissioned from outside of HMPPS.</p>

	Progression Panels etc).	(supervised by a the above) or Those practitioners deemed by the Lead Psychologist as being appropriately trained and supervised.		Qualified psychologists only to attend sentence planning processes for cases of concern terrorist or terrorist – connected cases, to ensure consistent level of input through the case.
6	Post Intervention reports.	Those practitioners deemed by Lead Psychologists as being appropriately trained and overseen.		<p>Post intervention reports that include an assessment of risk should not be written by the intervention provider.¹³</p> <p>The structure of these reports will be specific to the intervention and should not use the template in Annex A given the focus on risk.</p> <p>NB: Post intervention reports being written solely for the intention of being submitted to the Parole Board or MAPPA are subject to the same requirements and exceptions as No 1 and 2.</p> <p>Accredited programmes reports are not the responsibility of Psychology Services, and sit with Interventions Services staff.</p>
7	Specialist responsivity or other neurodiversity assessments.	<p>HCPC Registered Practitioner or Psychologist</p> <p>or</p> <p>Forensic Psychologist in Training (supervised by a the above)</p> <p>or</p> <p>Those practitioners deemed by the RLP as being appropriately trained and supervised.</p>	Training in use of the specialist assessment being used.	Specialist assessments should only be completed where it is necessary and ethical to do so. Sometimes this may be as part of a PRA. Many specialist assessments fall outside the remit of HMPPS Psychology Services staff.

¹³ As per recommendation #2 of HM Inspectorate of Probation (2006). An Independent Review of a Serious Further Offence Case: Anthony Rice.