HM Prison & Probation Service

Action Plan Submitted: 6 November 2026

A Response to HM Inspectorate of Probation: Dynamic Inspection of Public Protection National Report

Report Published: 24 September 2026

INTRODUCTION

HM Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) is the independent inspector of youth justice and probation services in England and Wales. It reports on the effectiveness of probation and youth justice service work with adults and children.

In response to the report, His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) / Ministry of Justice (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 HMPPS website.

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 **mus**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 **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.

ACTION PLAN: Dynamic Inspection of Public Protection National Report

1. Rec No	2. Recommendation	3. Agreed/ Partly Agreed/ Not Agreed	4. Response Action Taken/Planned	5. Responsible Owner	6. Target Date
HMPPS should:					
1.	**Reduce vetting delays and address workforce instability by implementing streamlined and more regionally responsive recruitment processes.**	Agreed	A Recruitment Stabilisation Plan is now in place, underpinning a whole-system approach to improving probation recruitment. This is supported by the commencement of a centralised recruitment forecasting model from July 2026, ensuring a more data-driven, proactive approach to forecasting vacancies. In July 2026 Regional Workforce Planning Panels were established to ensure collaboration between resourcing, analytics, policy, and regions. This work is being driven through a new weekly Probation Staffing Working Group (PSWG), which will feed into existing governance forums such as the Recruitment Taskforce and National Operational Stability Panel (NOSP). HMPPS will complete a review of the Recruitment Stabilisation Plan to assess the impact of actions on recruitment timescales, vetting performance, vacancy levels, and workforce stability, and agree any further improvement actions including regarding regionally responsive recruitment processes.	Divisional Director, Resourcing Selection and Onboarding Deputy Director, Probation Workforce, Probation Operations Directorate Divisional Director, Resourcing Selection and Onboarding	Complete Complete April 2027

			HMPPS will improve vetting performance for probation recruitment against the 2025/26 baseline, with a focus on reducing overall processing times, avoidable delays and the proportion of cases experiencing extended timelines. Performance will be reported quarterly through the Personnel Security Review Board and Onboarding Working Group. HMPPS has implemented a monthly performance dashboard to monitor vetting timeliness, application volumes, bottlenecks, and candidate withdrawals attributable to vetting delays.	Director, Operational Security Group Director, Operational Security Group	April 2027 Complete
2.	**Develop a national strategic approach to information sharing with police and children's services to support regions in achieving consistency and compliance with legislation to obtain and use information to protect the public.**	Agreed	HMPPS agrees that stronger national arrangements, frameworks, and expectations are required to support effective and consistent information-sharing with police and children's services and compliance with legislative requirements. HMPPS recognises the need for greater national consistency and oversight in information-sharing practice. However, implementation must reflect the differing governance arrangements, partnership structures, and local processes that operate across 43 policing areas and 175 local authorities. HMPPS will therefore continue to strengthen national governance, frameworks, guidance, and escalation routes, while working with regions and local partners to understand and address barriers to effective information-sharing, retaining the appropriate flexibility for local partnerships to deliver information-sharing arrangements that reflect local context.		

			The following arrangements have already been put in place to support information sharing: - Joint working with the Department for Education (DfE) to strengthen information sharing between children's services and probation. - Participation in the DfE-led Multi-Agency Information Sharing Programme Board. - Establishment of the National Child Safeguarding Working Group as a national escalation route. - Introduction of a national safeguarding enquiry template. - Collaboration with the National Police Chiefs' Council to strengthen national information-sharing agreements. - National governance structures supporting escalation and oversight of information-sharing issues.	Director, Public Protection Group	Complete
			HMPPS will work with partners to revise the process-specific data sharing agreement and issue updated guidance setting out national expectations for local information-sharing arrangements, escalation routes, and compliance with legislative requirements.	Director, Public Protection Group	March 2027
			Following implementation and embedding of the revised guidance, HMPPS will seek feedback from regions and key partners to identify any ongoing barriers to information sharing and inform future improvements to national frameworks and guidance.	Director, Public Protection Group	December 2027

			The Public Protection Taskforce has been refreshed to provide oversight, coordination and assurance of key activity intended to address identified public protection gaps and improve probation practice. The taskforce will undertake a stocktake and produce a visual map of key activities underway to deliver improvements in probation public protection practice, including work underway to address information-sharing practice. It will assess the extent to which current improvement activity and its intended benefits will sufficiently address known areas for improvement. Where significant gaps are identified, it will commission further work as appropriate.	Deputy Director, Public Protection Taskforce Lead, Probation Operations Directorate	March 2027
3.	**Provide regions with increased dedicated learning and development resource to enable greater delivery of training and continuous professional development activities for all staff.**	Partly Agreed	HMPPS recognises that practitioners require ongoing learning, development, and professional support to strengthen professional judgement, confidence, and capability in managing complex public protection work. HMPPS also concurs that regions should be supported to embed learning into frontline practice and address capability gaps among less experienced staff. While HMPPS agrees with the objective of increasing learning and development opportunities and continuing professional development (CPD) activity for staff, it considers that the existing national learning and development model, together with planned improvements, provides the most effective means of achieving this outcome. HMPPS has already established a comprehensive national learning and development model with a central		

			delivery team that provides mandatory, role-specific and CPD learning across all regions. Current evidence indicates that the primary challenge is not a lack of learning provision, but ensuring that existing learning opportunities are consistently accessed, applied, and embedded within operational practice. HMPPS will focus on enabling learning environments, improving participation and the translation of learning into practice through existing national and regional structures. Addressing these issues remains a priority, and sustained improvement will strengthen practitioner capability. A substantial programme of work is already underway to support this ambition. This includes delivery of the Our Future Probation Service (OFPS) programme, which will reduce workload by 25% by April 2027. We have also implemented a Recruitment Stabilisation Plan (see above) and strengthened workforce planning arrangements to improve recruitment, retention, and operational resilience, creating greater capacity for learning, development, and reflective practice. In addition, HMPPS will implement the recommendations arising from the Review of Reflective Practice Supervision (RPS) Standards to strengthen professional support and learning within existing resources. This will include improving guidance and clarifying expectations for managers and practitioners, increasing flexibility in	Head of Operations, Operations and Business Services, Probation	December 2027

			how RPS is delivered to improve access and participation, strengthening engagement and communication regarding RPS, and improving quality assurance and recording arrangements. HMPPS central directorates will also work with regional quality teams to further embed learning into operational practice through delivery of the National Quality Group programme, including the sharing of evidence-based practice resources; the development and dissemination of learning products linked to risk management, sentence planning and implementation of the Assessing Risks, Needs and Strengths (ARNS) tool; and the identification and sharing of effective regional approaches to capability development and practitioner support. Taken together, these measures will strengthen practitioner capability, professional support, supervision, and quality improvement arrangements across regions. HMPPS therefore considers that the most effective response is to maximise the impact of existing learning and development provision and embed learning more consistently into practice, rather than introducing additional dedicated regional learning and development resource.	Operations Directorate Deputy Director, Improvement Support Group	July 2027
4.	**Develop and implement a training programme for Professional Qualification in Probation (PQiP)**	Partly Agreed	HMPPS agrees with the objective of strengthening practical skills in managing complex risk and promoting consistency and quality across regions. However, HMPPS considers that the significant reforms already		

	trainees and continuing professional development programmes that gives priority to applying practical skills in managing complex risk, ensuring consistency and quality across all regions.		made to the PQiP programme, together with the existing national CPD offer, provide the appropriate framework to deliver these objectives. HMPPS therefore does not consider that the development of a separate new PQiP or CPD programme is required and will instead focus on embedding and continuously improving the arrangements already in place. HMPPS has invested significantly in strengthening the quality, consistency, and practical application of learning in this area. Following a comprehensive 12-month review of the PQiP programme undertaken by the Probation Workforce Programme in 2022, several substantive improvements were implemented. These included the introduction of a revised Level 6 academic qualification in March 2023, a redesigned vocational qualification in September 2023, and a new PQiP curriculum in March 2024. These changes strengthened the focus on professional judgement, risk assessment, risk management, and the application of learning into practice. The PQiP programme is also subject to ongoing review to ensure that it continues to meet operational requirements and reflects emerging evidence and learning from practice. Where improvements are identified as necessary, HMPPS will continue to make appropriate changes through existing governance arrangements, including oversight and scrutiny by the Probation Learning and Capability Board, to ensure the		

			programme remains up to date and aligned with organisational learning and capability priorities. The academic component of the PQiP programme will be reviewed as part of the mobilisation of the new contracts for Community Justice Learning with effect from March 2027. This will further support the delivery of nationally consistent, high-quality training for future cohorts. HMPPS also recognises the importance of CPD and ongoing support to help practitioners apply learning consistently in operational practice. HMPPS provides a comprehensive national CPD offer focused on managing complex risk. This includes products specifically designed to develop practical risk management skills, including Advanced Domestic Abuse and Risk of Serious Harm: Developing and Enhancing Practice, alongside recently refreshed learning on child safeguarding, adult safeguarding, and domestic abuse awareness. Resources will therefore be focused on strengthening the uptake, application and embedding of existing learning products across all regions to improve the consistency and quality of practice. HMPPS recognises that newly qualified officers (NQOs) require ongoing support to continue to develop their confidence, analytical capability, and professional judgement. To support this, the NQO framework was launched in 2024 and was reviewed in 2025, leading to	Deputy Director, Workforce and Capability, Transforming Delivery Directorate Deputy Director, Workforce and Capability, Transforming	March 2027 October 2027

			an updated version being launched in 2026. HMPPS will review the implementation of the updated version in autumn 2027, following the completion of the first cohort's NQO period.	Delivery Directorate	
5.	**Evaluate current national performance metrics to determine whether they drive quality public protection practice and consider how to embed public protection-specific metrics in dashboards to enable leaders to monitor quality and impact effectively.** **AND** **Embed public protection-specific metrics in dashboards to enable leaders to monitor quality and impact effectively.**	Partly Agreed	HMPPS agrees with the recommendation to embed public protection-specific metrics within performance dashboards to support leaders in monitoring quality and impact. However, HMPPS considers that a separate evaluation of current national performance metrics is not necessary at this stage, as significant reform of the Performance Framework is already underway. Introducing a separate review in parallel would risk duplication and limit the ability to assess the impact of recent changes. A broader evaluation will be considered once the revised framework has been fully implemented and embedded. Public protection already forms a significant component of the Performance Framework and is supported by a range of quality measures that assess key risk-related practice. The Performance Framework has been further strengthened for the 2026/27 business year through the introduction of Probation Delivery Unit (PDU)-level quality measures for Assessment and Planning and Risk Management. These quality measures provide internal assurance of the quality of public protection practice at a lower system level, enabling leaders to identify strengths, risks and areas requiring improvement within individual PDUs.		

			The effectiveness and ongoing suitability of these measures will be reviewed annually through established Performance Framework governance arrangements to ensure that measures remain aligned to operational priorities, support service improvement and provide meaningful assurance of practice quality. As part of these arrangements, HMPPS will continue to engage with key stakeholders, including HMIP, when reviewing the Performance Framework.	Deputy Director, Performance Assurance and Risk Group	Complete
6.	**Review national arrangements to provide regions greater autonomy in adapting risk management approaches to local contexts, while maintaining accountability and assurance.**	Not Agreed	HMPPS recognises HMIP's finding that the strongest public protection arrangements operate within a clear national framework of accountability and assurance, while retaining sufficient flexibility to tailor delivery to local circumstances. HMPPS also recognises HMIP's finding that local flexibility can support effective public protection, noting the positive examples identified by inspectors of regions adapting their approach in response to local risks, partnership arrangements, and operational pressures. However, HMPPS does not consider that the inspection findings indicate a need for additional regional autonomy beyond existing arrangements. The findings identify several examples of regions adapting delivery models and risk management approaches to local circumstances within existing national frameworks, while also highlighting workforce instability, vetting delays, high workloads, organisational instability, and information-sharing challenges as significant barriers to effective delivery. HMPPS considers these findings point primarily	Deputy Director, Community Delivery Group, Probation Operations Directorate	

			to operational and systemic challenges, rather than limitations in the degree of autonomy available to regions within existing frameworks. HMPPS agrees with HMIP's conclusion that effective public protection is best delivered through an appropriate balance of national consistency and local flexibility. Existing national policy and operating frameworks already establish that balance, enabling regions to tailor delivery to local risks, partnership arrangements and operational pressures whilst operating within clear national standards and public protection requirements. HMPPS therefore considers that the findings support continued focus on addressing the operational and systemic challenges identified by HMIP. In light of the flexibility already available within existing frameworks, HMPPS considers that a review of national arrangements to provide regions with greater autonomy in adapting risk management approaches to local contexts is not necessary at this stage.		
7.	**Review AP capacity and placements to support the appropriate management and resettlement of people on probation.**	Agreed	HMPPS agrees that effective Approved Premises (AP) capacity planning, placement decision-making and resettlement arrangements are critical to supporting public protection outcomes and the safe management of people on probation. HMPPS also recognises the importance of ensuring that placement decisions are informed by risk, need, operational intelligence and local circumstances.		

			Significant reforms to AP referral and placement arrangements have already been implemented through the National Central Referral Unit (NCRU). This includes a digitalised national referral process, which provides oversight of suitability and eligibility assessments, supports appropriate placement matching, maximises occupancy and promotes consistency in the use of AP capacity across England and Wales. This approach is underpinned by demand analysis and supports more timely and responsive placement decisions and future capacity expansion remains dependent on funding decisions and wider estate planning considerations. HMPPS will undertake a review of AP demand, occupancy, referral, and placement data to identify emerging capacity pressures, operational risks, and opportunities for improvement across England and Wales. HMPPS will align AP eligibility and referral arrangements with wider probation reforms to ensure that available capacity is prioritised for individuals presenting the highest levels of risk and public protection need.	Probation Director, Community Accommodation Services Probation Director, Community Accommodation Services	March 2027 December 2026