



HM Prison &  
Probation Service

**Action Plan Submitted:** 27<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

**A Response to the HM Inspectorate of Probation Inspection:**

Essex North, Probation Service & Northamptonshire, Probation Service –  
East of England Region.

**Report Published:** 17<sup>th</sup> May 2022.

## 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 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 <b>must</b> 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.





			<p>meetings, individual supervision meetings and the wellbeing committee. The communications strategy will be developed and shared across the East of England (EoE) region; this will ensure that any changes to priorities are clearly outlined.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Essex North PDU will ensure that clear expectations are set, and that they are understood, for probation practitioners and middle managers in relation to the assessment and management of the risk of serious harm, reducing reoffending and in supporting and delivering quality outcomes for People on Probation (PoPs).</li> </ul>	<p>Head of PDU Deputy Head of PDU</p>	<p>November 2022</p>
2	<p>Ensure all new senior probation officers receive the appropriate support and training to enable them to manage their teams and caseloads effectively</p>	<p>Agreed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Essex North PDU will ensure that new and existing managers attend all relevant practice development workshops including, but not limited to Touch Points, the OASys Countersigning Framework, and the East of England Human Resource (HR) set of workshops, which will directly support the development of the management team and the delivery unit in achieving its business objectives.</li> <li>- Essex North PDU will ensure that all new managers have access to and complete all required training for First Line Managers,</li> </ul>	<p>Head of PDU</p> <p>Head of PDU</p>	<p>March 2023</p> <p>March 2023</p>





			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Essex North PDU will ensure that all staff engage with the East of England Professional Development Programme (PDP), which forms part of the EoE Quality Framework, through their attendance on the 'all staff live events' and in accessing the associated 'development packages,' which are delivered within themed quarters, which include Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse within 2022/23.</li> <li>- Essex North PDU will use the East of England (EoE) mandatory training records to ensure that all staff have completed core training around Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse and to ensure that they are up to date with their mandatory training requirements.</li> </ul>	<p>Head of PDU Head of Performance &amp; Quality</p> <p>Head of PDU Probation Learning Lead L&amp;D Team</p>	<p>March 2023</p> <p>November 2022</p>
4	Ensure all administrative staff receive the training they need in order to complete the full range of duties following unification.	Agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Essex North PDU will use EoE mandatory training records to ensure that administrative staff have completed and are up to date with their mandatory training requirements.</li> <li>- Essex North PDU will undertake a full PDU review of required learning for administration teams and ensure a clear plan is in place to provide access and support to learning</li> </ul>	<p>Head of PDU</p> <p>Probation Learning Lead L&amp;D Team</p> <p>Head of PDU</p>	<p>November 2022</p> <p>November 2022</p>



			<p>through training, shadowing, and buddying opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Essex North PDU will utilise the EoE administration training guide to identify and provide access to further relevant training and development opportunities for case administrators</li> </ul>	<p>Head of PDU</p> <p>Probation Learning Lead L&amp;D Team</p>	<p>November 2022</p>
<b>Northamptonshire PDU should:</b>					
5	<p>Ensure staff have the relevant training to use risk and safeguarding information, obtained from key stakeholders, to appropriately inform assessments, plans and the delivery of the sentence to improve victim safety.</p>	<p>Agreed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Northamptonshire PDU will use the regional mandatory training record to ensure that staff in the Northamptonshire PDU have completed and are up to date with all core mandatory probation service training</li> <li>- Northamptonshire PDU will ensure staff have access to and understand the Risk of Serious Harm Guidance, the Assessment Quality Assurance (AQA) tool/Quality Development Tools (QDTs) and relevant materials to improve the application of risk and safeguarding information to assessment, planning, delivery, and victim safety. Particular focus will be on the Four Pillars (supervision, monitoring &amp; control, interventions &amp; treatment, victim safety) and 4 Steps to Risk Management (actuarial</li> </ul>	<p>Head of PDU</p> <p>Probation Learning Lead L&amp;D Team</p> <p>Deputy Head of PDU and Quality Lead</p> <p>Head of P&amp;Q</p>	<p>November 2022</p> <p>March 2023</p>



			<p>assessment, structured professional risk assessment, immediacy, assign the risk level).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Northamptonshire PDU will implement peer learning opportunities across the PDU to enhance understanding and application of risk and safeguarding information to assessment, planning, delivery, and victim safety. The peer learning opportunities will consist of peer learning groups, allowing for sharing of knowledge and experience to support staff development</li> </ul>	Deputy Head of PDU and Quality Lead	November 2022
6	Ensure that senior probation officers (SPOs) have access to adequate induction and training to prepare them for and develop them in their roles	Agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EoE will develop a structured induction for First Line Managers including shadowing and buddying opportunities, with both internal and external stakeholders.</li> <li>- Ensure that all new managers have access to and complete all required training for First Line Managers and supplement this with EoE new managers development programme</li> <li>- Ensure that new managers have access to and engage with the EoE 'New Managers Development Programme.' This will include Workshops and Action Learning Sets.</li> </ul>	<p>Head of PDU Head of Staff Development</p> <p>Head of PDU</p> <p>Head of Staff Development</p>	<p>November 2022</p> <p>November 2022</p> <p>November 2022</p>







			supporting and delivering quality outcomes for People on Probation (PoPs).		
8	Ensure all administrative staff receive the training they need in order to complete the full range of duties following unification	Agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Northamptonshire PDU will use EoE mandatory training records to ensure that administrative staff have completed core training and to ensure that they are up to date with all mandatory training requirements.</li> <li>- Northamptonshire PDU will undertake a full PDU review of required learning for administration teams and ensure a clear plan is in place to provide access and support to learning through training, shadowing, and buddying opportunities.</li> <li>- Northamptonshire PDU will utilise the EoE administration training guide to identify and provide access to further relevant training and development opportunities for case administrators</li> </ul>	<p>Head of PDU</p> <p>Probation Learning Lead L&amp;D Team</p> <p>Head of PDU</p> <p>Head of PDU</p> <p>Probation Learning Lead L&amp;D Team</p>	<p>November 2022</p> <p>November 2022</p> <p>November 2022</p>
9	Implement the regional engaging people on probation strategy to promote their involvement in service delivery.	Agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Northamptonshire PDU will identify and establish an allocated Senior Probation Officer (SPO) with a specific lead in this area of work, working alongside a cross grade of PoP 'champions' to support the implementation of the local plan.</li> </ul>	Head of PDU	September 2022



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A new local engaging PoP plan will be developed and implemented to enable delivery of the regional strategy. The progress of the plan will be discussed at the quarterly Regional Senior Leadership meeting</li> <li>- Review the PoP survey findings, specifically for the Northamptonshire PDU, and incorporate those findings into the local plan</li> <li>- Northamptonshire PDU will establish an approach/range of methods to obtain feedback from PoP to inform service delivery. Additionally, ensure that expectations are met to focus on core tenets of Assess, Protect and Change to provide clear outcomes for people on probation and the public</li> </ul>	Head of PDU	September 2022
				Head of PDU	December 2022
				Engaging People on Probation (EPOP) Manager	December 2022

**The Probation Service – East of England region should:**

10	Support senior and middle managers to manage and prioritise both their individual, and their team workloads across the PDU	Agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The EoE will ensure sufficient Senior Probation Officer (SPO) and Senior Administrator Officer (SAO) resource is in place to manage current staffing and planned recruitment based on the 1:10 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) model. This will be reviewed and updated in line with national</li> </ul>	Regional Probation Director	September 2022
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	(for Essex North PDU)		<p>developments for both staffing ratios and planned SPO workload management tools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The EoE will ensure that all middle managers have access to Management and Leadership development opportunities in 2022/23. Middle managers will complete core training requirements as part of the 2022/23 Competency Based Framework (CBF) approach.</li> <li>- The EoE will seek to clarify, and where possible simplify, workload prioritisation approaches across the region to manage workloads, particularly within under-resourced locations.</li> <li>- The EoE will implement peer learning opportunities across the region to enhance understanding and application of their workloads. Peer learning opportunities will consist of peer learning groups, allowing for sharing of knowledge and experience to support staff development</li> </ul>	<p>Regional Probation Director</p> <p>Regional Probation Director</p> <p>Regional Probation Director</p> <p>Quality Lead</p>	<p>March 2023</p> <p>September 2022</p> <p>November 2022</p>
11	Prioritise quality assurance activity of current case supervision.	Agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The EoE will recruit additional Quality Development Officers (QDOs) in line with current business plan objectives for 2022/23. A regional case audit approach will be developed and implemented using SPOs, QDOs and locally trained HMIP Assessors</li> </ul>	Regional Probation Director	September 2022



	(for Essex North PDU)		<p>based on the Regional Case Audit Tool (R-CAT) model, providing regular reports to teams / PDUs and the Region. This work will be consistently reviewed and evaluated within the EoE Quality Improvement Plan and through a number of regional forums and boards, including Senior Leadership Team meetings and the Quality Board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EoE will continue to progress with the Performance &amp; Quality plan, as outlined within the 2022/23 business plan.</li> </ul>	Regional Probation Director	March 2023
12	<p>Ensure that management information in relation to CRS is made available at PDU level so that waiting times and backlogs are understood.</p> <p>(for Northamptonshire PDU)</p>	Agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure that the EoE Commissioned Rehabilitative Services (CRS) Performance Reports (already available) are utilised across the EoE Region and within PDUs and Functions, which provide comprehensive and detailed information surrounding CRS activity, volumes, delivery trends and outcomes, at regional, PDU and individual levels.</li> <li>- EoE will work with the Head of Community Integration (HoCI) and the Commissioned Rehabilitative Services (CRS) team to support the continued use and understanding of the EoE Management Information (MI) suite of reports.</li> </ul>	<p>Regional Probation Director</p> <p>Regional Probation Director</p>	<p>September 2022</p> <p>November 2022</p>



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Head of Community Integration (HoCI) will, via the Senior Contract Manager (SCM), continue to regularly review, discuss and undertake any required actions to address waiting times and backlogs for Commissioned Rehabilitative Services (CRS).</li> </ul>		
<b>HM Prison and Probation Service should:</b>					
13	<p>In conjunction with the region, review the provision of services delivered by commissioned rehabilitation services (CRS) providers by ensuring CRS providers are adequately resourced for the volume of referrals being made</p> <p>(for Essex North PDU)</p>	Agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EoE Regional Probation Director (RPD) and Head of Community Integration (HOCl) will review CRS volume data, performance, trends, and recommendations provided by the Senior Contract Manager (SCM) at the Commissioning Board each month. This will be reviewed monthly from May 2022- August 2022.</li> <li>- In conjunction with the outputs and recommendations from the national 'deep dive' work on CRS volumes, the monthly Commissioning Board will; review and determine any necessary changes or action to address CRS volumes and resourcing and specifically agree an action plan for accommodation and women's services contracts by the end of September 2022, to be implemented by the end of the year.</li> </ul>	Senior Contract Manager, Contract Management Team HMPPS.	<p>August 2022</p> <p>December 2022</p>



14	<p>Support East of England region to recruit and retain staff</p> <p>(for Essex North PDU)</p>	Agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Probation Workforce Programme (PWP) will continue to support regions in the recruitment and allocation of new entrants in partnership with Group Resourcing, as well as working to provide an overview of recruitment activity to identify pinch points.</li> <li>- PWP will explore the use of geographical supplements in particular areas where local variations in costs are having a detrimental impact on the ability to recruit and retain. This will be supplementary to the wider proposals for reform to pay structures as part of the proposed multi-year pay deal, the impact of which will be considered as part of this work.</li> </ul> <p>HMPSS will support EoE region to recruit and retain staff by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review of existing Probation Recruitment &amp; retention Strategy will be published.</li> <li>- Commitment to recruit and onboard 1500 PQiP's in 2022/23, including the East of England component required to support target staffing.</li> <li>- Development of a retention toolkit, supporting regions to apply targeted</li> </ul>	<p>Probation Workforce Programme and Divisional Head HR, HMPSS HR</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Commenced June 2022</p> <p>Completed</p>



			<p>interventions to address local retention issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support targeted recruitment campaigns in East of England to help bolster the number of applications for roles across the region.</li> <li>- Relaunch of career pathways for staff approaching retirement, to promote retention and retain experience/knowledge.</li> </ul>		<p>July 2022</p> <p>July 2022</p>
15	<p>Expedite the vetting of staff as a matter of urgency.</p> <p>(for Essex North PDU)</p>	Agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vetting as a component of recruitment indicatively takes 25 working days through the shared services provider, but this does not take account of the recruitment, sifting and selection stage. If probation staff require higher vetting including police vetting, timings are constrained by the time the police take to process the checks, which is 35 working days.</li> <li>- Due to the current police check timeframes (Non-Police Personnel Vetting) NPPV, it has been agreed that these checks will be conducted post-employment, as long as the HMPPS Enhanced Level check has been passed at the pre-employment stage. This will enable applicants to start employment with HMPPS much sooner, though it should be noted that all applicants in a Probation</li> </ul>	Divisional Head HR, HMPPS HR	Completed





			<p>Officer or other operational role must successfully complete NPPV police vetting prior to performing their job role, as this is a mandatory requirement for them to be able to access the ViSOR (Violent and Sexual Offenders Register) system, which has become an integral part of probation case management of offenders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Additionally, capacity to conduct at scale, early intervention in the processing by the shared services provider and pull applications at Day 10 in vetting and progress to clearance by Day 17 is under consideration, which will potentially reduce vetting by 8 working days. Additional resources are being recruited at present to support this process.</li> <li>- HMPPS will prioritise Probation Regions with the largest vacancy numbers based on red sites and key job roles, to address any delays that are within procedural scope.</li> </ul>		<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
16	Review how accurately the workload measurement tool reflects workloads in	Agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A Workload Management Tool (WMT) timings /weightings review has been commissioned to improve the transparency, accessibility and understanding of the tool,</li> </ul>	Probation Workforce Programme	Commencing June 2022



	<p>The Probation Service following unification</p> <p>(for Northamptonshire PDU)</p>		<p>as well as the accuracy and reliability of the workload measure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The WMT will be expanded to incorporate amendments to Case Management Support and implementation of a Senior Probation Officer allocation tool.</li> </ul>		<p>October 2022</p>
17	<p>Consider how SPO workloads are measured, including the impact and effectiveness of the touchpoint management oversight expectations</p> <p>(for Northamptonshire PDU)</p>	Agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implementation of 10 key recommendations arising from the managerial role review completed in May 2022. The 10 key recommendations are specifically on: Case Administration support for SPOs, Job Evaluation Scheme for the SPO role and role review of Business Managers. It will also partner with the Activity Based Costing (ABC) Team to scope potential activity-based costing sprints for the managerial responsibilities of other SPO roles [Prisons, Interventions etc.] and provide oversight.</li> <li>- Commissioned review of SPO activities and weightings to contribute to a new process of measuring SPO workloads which will inform target staffing.</li> <li>- In conjunction with Effective Practice and Service Improvement Group, commissioned review of the Touchpoints Model (the Touchpoints Model is a set of principles that the Probation Service will adhere to in</li> </ul>	<p>Probation Workforce Programme</p>	<p>Commencing June 2022 (24-month project)</p> <p>August 2023</p> <p>December 2022</p>



			<p>terms of management oversight (MO) and sets out a framework of 'Touch Points' during the life of a case where oversight activity could be expected to take place). Feedback will be sought from staff and stakeholders with a view to presenting an options paper to Probation Senior Leadership Team regarding any changes required to the model</p>		
18	<p>Ensure CRS providers are adequately resourced for the volume of referrals being made</p> <p>(for Northamptonshire PDU)</p>	Agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EoE Regional Probation Director (RPD) and Head of Community Integration (HoCI) will review CRS volume data, performance, trends and recommendations provided by the Senior Contract Manager (SCM) at the Commissioning Board each month.</li> <li>- In conjunction with the outputs and recommendations from the national 'deep dive' work on CRS volumes, the monthly Commissioning Board will; review and determine any necessary changes or action to address CRS volumes and resourcing and specifically agree an action plan for accommodation and women's services contracts by the end of September 2022, which will be implemented by the end of the year.</li> </ul>	<p>Senior Contract Manager, Contract Management Team, HMPPS</p>	<p>August 2022</p> <p>December 2022</p>



