



HM Inspectorate
of Probation

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Corporate Plan 2024/2025

Including:

Business Plan 2024/2025

September 2024

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Foreword

My role leading HM Inspectorate of Probation began in March this year when I was appointed as the Chief Inspector. The organisation inspects both probation services and youth justice services and our core purpose is to set the standards which shine a light on the quality and impact of the services we inspect.



In the year prior to my appointment, the Inspectorate completed many important pieces of work which are summarised in this plan. These included completion of our previous cycle of probation service inspections, continuation of our youth justice service inspections, and publication of serious further offence (SFO) reviews for the cases of [Damien Bendall](#), [Jordan McSweeney](#), and [Joshua Jacques](#). We have published well-received Research and Analysis Bulletins, including research on [links between the quality of supervision and positive outcomes](#), [contextual safeguarding](#), and [community resolutions](#). Additionally, we completed thematic inspections on [Offender Management in Custody](#), [domestic abuse](#), [counter terrorism](#), [race equality in probation](#), [children on remand](#), [IPP recall decisions](#), and [management oversight](#) – along with publishing [effective practice guides](#) for some of these.

This year we have launched our new round of probation inspections, in which we completed one full region by the end of March. We are in the final months of our current inspection programme of youth justice services, and we have also been developing the inspection programme for our next cycle of youth justice services inspections, which we plan to start in January 2025. Following a consultation we have set out our next thematic inspection and research programmes, [details of which can be found here](#). We have also published a consultation on our plans to inspect approved premises – final details of which will be developed over the coming months.

This corporate plan sets out our commitments for the next year, reflecting my key priorities and setting out success factors to measure progress and provide accountability for our commitments. I look forward to shining a light on not just where services need to make improvements, but also where we can highlight effective practice and drive change.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martin Jones". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Martin Jones CBE

HM Chief Inspector of Probation

Vision, purpose and values

Our Vision

High-quality probation and youth justice services that change people's lives for the better

Our Purpose

HM Inspectorate of Probation is the independent inspector of probation and youth justice services in England and Wales. We set the standards that shine a light on the quality and impact of these services. Our inspections, reviews, research and effective practice products provide authoritative and evidence-based judgements and guidance. We use our voice to drive system change, with a focus on inclusion and diversity. Our scrutiny leads to improved outcomes for individuals and communities.

Our Values

Influential: We care about making a positive impact on the organisations we inspect and the individuals they work with.

Independent: We ensure that the judgements we make are supported by evidence, are fair and impartial.

Professional: We work in a respectful, transparent, professional way, listening to and sharing learning internally and externally.

Inclusive: We will work as 'One HM Inspectorate of Probation', valuing and respecting each other's viewpoints and skills, so that everyone feels a part of what we do.

Diverse: We are passionate about diversity and the value that comes through giving everyone a voice in our inspections and the chance to succeed in our organisation.

Achievements in the previous year (2023/2024)

Progress against the Inspectorate's previous key priorities for 2023/2024 is summarised below.

A strong focus on workforce development

- We have a fully staffed Learning and Development Team.
- We are now up to our sixth cohort for our professionalisation programme. Our professionalisation programme is externally accredited.
- We had four inspection development weeks over the course of 2023/2024.
- All staff have completed bullying and harassment training.

Application of clear standards and robust inspection and rating to encourage the delivery of high-quality services

- We completed our previous probation inspection cycle in August 2023. We developed the inspection standards and ratings process for our new probation inspection cycle. These have been implemented and are being delivered.
- We are now in the final year of our current youth inspection programme having inspected 18 services during the year April 2023 to March 2024 and we continue to apply our standards and ratings – to highlight both areas for improvement and examples of good practice.

Development of the inspection regime to flexibly respond to changes in the probation and youth justice landscape

- We have made significant changes to our new probation inspection programme, including having introduced a rated regional inspection.
- We have published a consultation on our proposed new youth justice service inspection programme approach. We have carried out a series of roadshows and consultation events to engage with the youth justice sector. We have also engaged with the sector through a stakeholder working group. We have continued to develop and consult on our new standards and inspection programme for our next cycle for youth justice services.

Contributions to national policy thinking and increasing the impact of the Inspectorate

- We completed seven thematic inspections during the year April 2023 to March 2024, and we have been reactive to ministerial requests for thematic inspections, including through our inspection of imprisonment for public protection (IPP) recall decisions, and youth remand.

- We completed a consultation on our next thematic inspection and research programmes and published our decisions on which thematic inspections and research areas we will be taking forward in 2024/2025. Preparation work has commenced for these.
- We have continued to produce effective practice guides alongside our thematic inspections, including ones on: OMiC, domestic abuse, race equality in probation, children on remand, and management oversight. Our effective practice guides have received positive feedback.
- We have continued to work well with the joint criminal justice inspectorates through our joint thematic inspections, and we published a spotlight report with the joint inspectorates. We have also re-joined the Joint Targeted Area Inspections for child protection.
- We have implemented a participation contract with User Voice for our thematic inspection programme and participation reports have been published as a result alongside some of our inspections.
- We have produced six Research & Analysis Bulletins and 14 Academic Insights papers over 2023/2024. We have also launched Reflections Videos.
- We have published three independent serious further offence (SFO) reviews and have completed detailed audits on 85 SFO reports.

Objectives 2024/2025

Strategic objective 1	Inspection Integrity
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- We will inspect and report publicly on probation services and youth justice services, encouraging the delivery of high-quality services.
- We will inspect against a standards framework that is evidence based and in a way that is fair, consistent, reliable and robust.
- For probation inspections, we aim to inspect all probation delivery units. We will also inspect regions to hold them accountable for how well their probation delivery units are performing.
- For youth inspections we will implement a new programme of casework inspections (for children and victims) supplemented by full youth justice service inspections where these are appropriate.
- Our thematic inspection programme, including joint inspections with other inspectorates, will continue to inspect topics that affect the probation and youth justice sectors.
- We will continue to quality assure our inspection findings to increase the confidence of inspected services in the outcomes.

Strategic objective 2	Inspection Impact
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- We will continue to follow-up inspection recommendations via our action planning process and explore other avenues to show that measures have been implemented and progress made.
- We will keep under review how we report the findings from our inspections and be sensitive to the impact those findings have on managers and staff of inspected bodies.
- We will continue to monitor, evaluate and review our inspection standards and methodology, being cognisant of the service delivery landscape.

Strategic objective 3	Inspectorate Reach
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- We will contribute to national policy development to improve service delivery and extend the scope of our inspections into areas where independent assessment would be beneficial.
- We will enhance the influence of the Inspectorate on the services we inspect and their partners by sharing our inspection results, generating and publishing research findings, increasing our publication visibility, undertaking stakeholder events on our standards, and spreading effective practice.
- We will quality assure SFO reviews and undertake reviews of high-profile cases as requested by the Secretary of State for Justice.

- Following consultation with stakeholders, we plan to start inspecting approved premises from April 2025.
- We will continue to produce high-priority research products.
- We will explore further ways of disseminating and communicating research evidence and effective practice.
- We will share effective practice to highlight strengths in probation and youth justice work and to drive improvement.

Strategic objective 4	Skills and Knowledge Development
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- HM Inspectorate of Probation prioritises maintaining high-quality inspection practices, supported by our commitment to the following initiatives for staff development:
 - a) Enhance the expertise and development of all staff, from inspection teams to headquarters personnel, ensuring they possess the essential skills, knowledge, and understanding to conduct and support high-quality inspections across all roles and grades.
 - b) Conduct a comprehensive training needs analysis for headquarters staff and undertake a period of consultation to create meaningful development pathways to support their career growth.
 - c) Offer all staff development opportunities that elevate their expertise in their current roles and extend their skills beyond.
 - d) Mandate the completion of the HM Inspectorate of Probation Inspection Skills Certificate of Achievement within a year for all new inspectors. Offer the Probation Inspection Skills Certificate of Achievement to all existing inspectors.
 - e) Implement continuous quality assurance measures for our inspection outcomes to maintain rigorous and dependable judgements.
 - f) Continue to develop IT and digital skills across the Inspectorate.

Strategic objective 5	Embedding Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
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- We will create, promote, and embed cultural humility within the Inspectorate. We are committed to treating all employees fairly, with respect, and as individuals.
- Under the Public Sector Equality Duty, we will have due regard for the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between individuals who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.
- We will continue to promote and provide training for all staff in the areas of equity, diversity and inclusion.

- We will work towards ensuring that inspected bodies have a strong focus on equity, diversity and inclusion.
- We will proactively seek effective practice which not only recognises equity, diversity and inclusion across the range of protected characteristics but also mitigates barriers to support individuals to be the best versions of themselves.
- We will provide mentoring and shadowing opportunities for minority ethnic individuals to provide support for the interview and assessment process.
- We will strengthen our approach to equity, diversity and inclusion by ensuring all protected characteristics are covered in our strategy.

Strategic objective 6

Inspection Support Systems

- We will continue with the development and piloting of our new inspection support IT system (Inspect Plus) with the aim to implement for youth and probation delivery unit and regional inspections by March 2025.
- We will train the inspection support team and the inspection teams in the application of Inspect Plus prior to roll out to ensure staff are confident in its use.

Business plan 2024/2025

Key success factors	
1. Inspection Integrity	1(a) Ensure our probation inspection programme is evidence based and enables us to inspect in a way that is fair, consistent, reliable and robust.
	1(b) Complete youth programme against current youth standards by the end of 2024.
	1(c) Start inspection against the new youth standards in January 2025.
	1(d) Probation programme fieldwork for three regions to be completed by December 2024, next four regions by early 2026, a further four by early 2027 and final region by summer 2027.
	1(e) Ensure stakeholders understand our inspection standards.
	1(f) Complete fieldwork and publish high-quality thematic inspection reports and effective practice guides on the following topics: (1) Young adults in probation (2) Unpaid work (3) Recruitment, training and retention in probation.
	1(g) Complete fieldwork for pre-court disposals (youth) thematic inspection.
	1(h) Contribute to joint work led by other inspectorates where it adds most value, including through the Joint Targeted Area Inspection Programme.
2. Inspection Impact	2(a) Ensure changes in the probation environment are monitored, and the impact on our methodology reviewed.
	2(b) Reports to be published and promoted to maximise the visibility and impact of findings.
	2(c) Maintain and update the website summaries of evidence underpinning the delivery of high-quality probation and youth justice services.
	2(d) Review our approach to incorporating the voice of people on probation in our inspections.

	2(e) Expand the suite of effective practice products e.g. to include practitioner workshops.
	2(f) Complete a series of roadshows, stakeholder, leadership, and practitioner events regarding the expectations of the new youth inspection programme (May 2025 – and then ongoing throughout the programme).
	2(g) Revise and introduce an improved approach to enable child participation in youth inspections by January 2025.
	2(h) Develop and deploy an approach to measure evidence of progress made against our recommendations.
	2(i) Publish high-quality Research & Analysis Bulletins at regular intervals across 2024/2025, adding to the evidence base.
3. Inspectorate Reach	3(a) Develop inspection standards, ratings, and methodology to inspect approved premises.
	3(b) Deliver targeted communications, including local, regional, and national events to maximise impact of learning from inspections.
	3(c) Develop options to strengthen our work to follow up on inspection and independent SFO review recommendations.
	3(d) Quality assure 20 per cent of SFO reviews each 12-month period.
	3(e) Three multi-agency learning panels convened and delivered by September 2024.
	3(f) Completion and timely publication of independent reviews commissioned by the Secretary of State.
	3(g) Promote effective practice by publishing effective practice guides on women, young adults and unpaid work by the end of April 2025, and delivering practitioner learning events or other products where beneficial to do so.
	3(h) Publish relevant Academic Insights papers and Reflections from Research videos at regular intervals across 2024/2025, promoting the evidence base.

4. Skills and Knowledge Development	4(a) Ensure every staff member has a tailored learning and development plan, which is reviewed and updated yearly, with compulsory training completed by all.
	4(b) All relevant inspection staff to have completed the professionalisation programme within 12 months of commencement.
	4(c) Continuously quality assure the findings of our inspections by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collating and reviewing continuous feedback from inspected bodies. • Assuring 10 per cent of D2/D3 cases inspected every year.¹ • Attaining a 95 per cent or better QA assurance rate in D2/D3 summary decisions.
5. Embedding Equity, Diversity and Inclusion	5(a) Run a shadowing scheme for potential minority ethnic applicants for assistant inspector and HM inspector posts.
	5(b) Review, update and publish an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and business plan.
	5(c) Develop mechanisms to measure diversity and inclusion metrics.
	5(d) Probation, youth justice, thematic, SFO and approved premises programmes to embed learning and feedback relating to language, current questions, and guidance.
	5(e) Develop guidance on all protected characteristics to understand expectations in probation and youth justice services.
	5(f) Ensure all training programmes developed within the Inspectorate incorporate principles of cultural humility to enhance accessibility.
6. Inspection Support Systems	5(g) Continue to review our workforce diversity to maximise representation across protected characteristics.
	6(a) Conclude work around, and implement, Inspect Plus.
	6(b) Launch the pilot intranet.

¹ Before we conduct our fieldwork, we identify a cohort of cases using specific criteria. When on site we look at those selected cases and assess the quality of practice. These are called Domain 2 (D2) and Domain 3 (D3) cases. Domain 3 (D3) cases refer to out-of-court disposals for our YJS inspections.

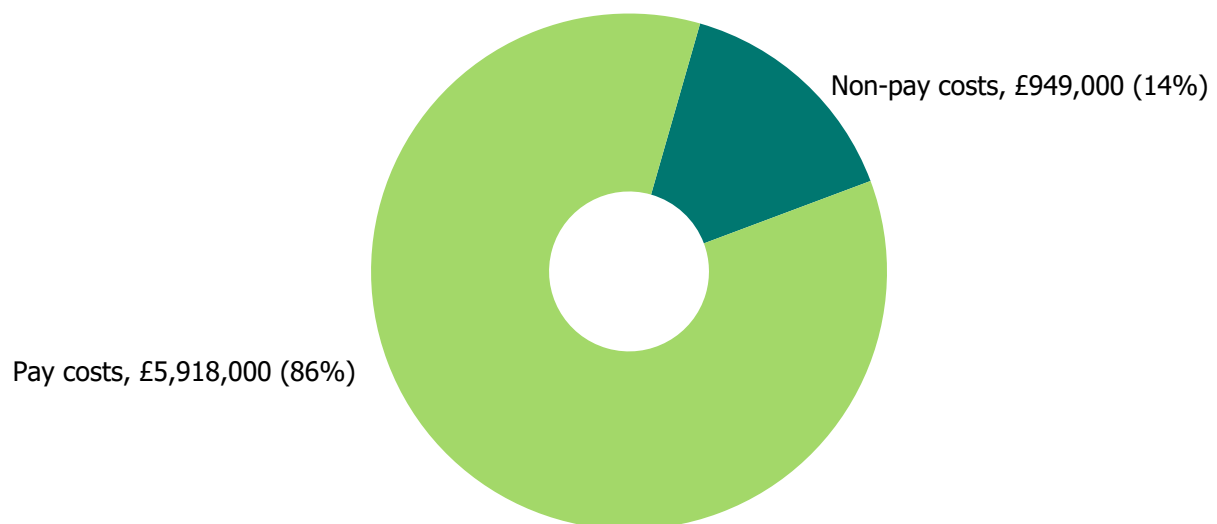
About HM Inspectorate of Probation

Budget 2024/2025

HM Inspectorate of Probation receives a delegated budget from the Ministry of Justice which, for 2024/2025, is £6.867m. A further £257k has been provided by HMPPS to fund SFO reviews. At its highest level our budget can be separated into pay and non-pay costs.

Over half of our non-pay costs relate directly to inspection activity – hotels and subsistence, rail and other travel costs.

Figure 1: Pay vs. Non-pay costs

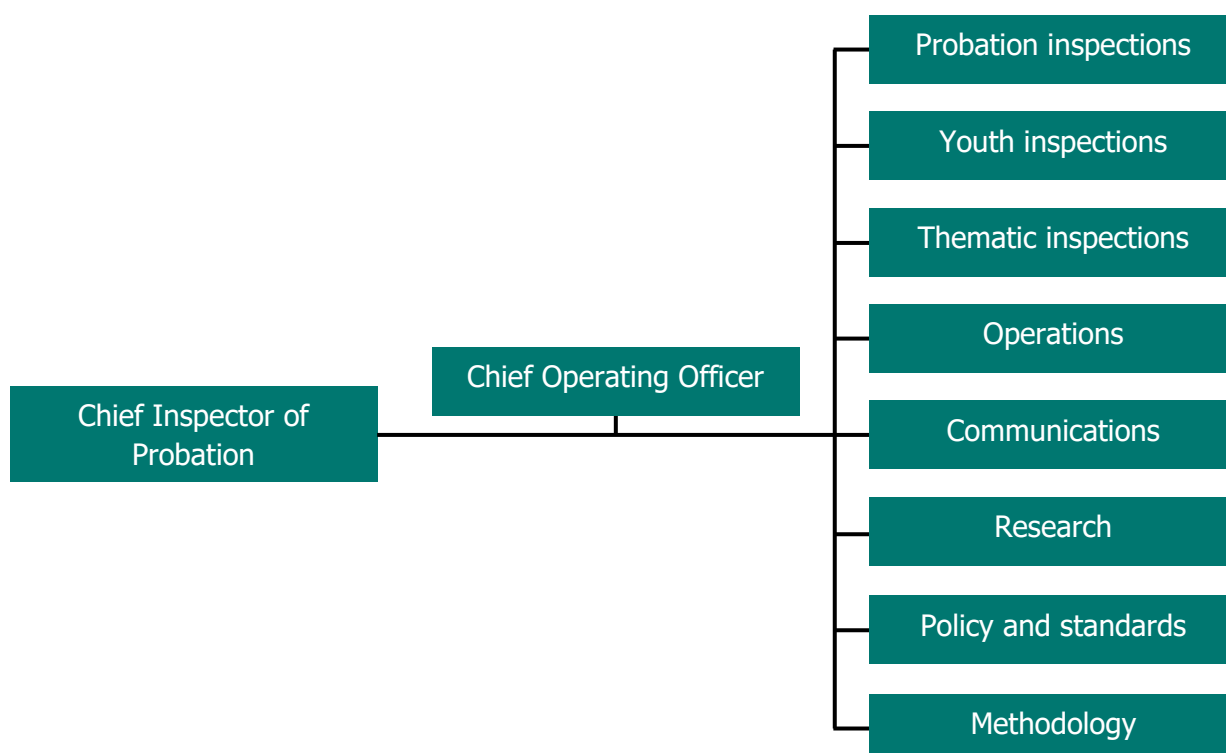


Structure

HM Inspectorate of Probation is an organisation of 92 staff (July 2024). The Chief Inspector is supported by a Chief Operating Officer, and beneath this structure sits the heads of inspection teams, research, methodology, standards, and communications. The Inspectorate also has headquarters functions which support the running of inspections and the organisation.

The majority of our HQ staff are permanent civil servants. Our inspection staff are drawn from across different backgrounds, though the majority have worked at some time in probation or youth justice services. We maintain an approximate 60:40 split in permanent and seconded staff across our HM inspector group and 30:70 in our assistant inspector group to ensure that we retain up-to-date operational experience in our inspection teams.

Figure 2: Organisational structure



People survey

Over the past year we have had a strong focus on improving culture and wellbeing of staff, specifically through our People and Culture Group, and it is positive to see this work reflected in our People Survey results. The Civil Service People Survey takes place annually and includes questions on topics including engagement, bullying and harassment, career, wellbeing, and other areas. We are pleased to report our Engagement Index score for last year's survey (2023) increased by 19 per cent and we had positive increases in scores across all questions. To reflect on some key areas, our results show an increase in staff who feel that it is safe to challenge the way things are done in the organisation (a 26 per cent increase on 2022), staff who feel their workload is acceptable (a 21 per cent increase on 2022), and we have seen a reduction in staff responding that they have experienced discrimination, bullying or harassment at work.

Increasing the ethnic diversity of our inspection staff

We collect diversity data from our staff group on an annual basis and will be publishing an updated Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy this year. We will run a shadowing scheme for potential minority ethnic applicants for assistant inspector and HM inspector posts.

Staff development

A key priority for us over the next year is a focus on the development of non-inspection staff at the Inspectorate. Non-inspection staff covers all of our headquarters staff, who are not HM inspectors or assistant inspectors. We will conduct a training needs analysis for headquarters staff to identify areas for training

opportunities and we will undertake a period of consultation with staff to create meaningful development pathways to support their career growth.

More generally, we will continue to have our inspection staff development weeks and in 2025 we will have our annual all staff conference. Our 2024 annual staff conference took place in May and focused on the theme of 'collaboration'.

Professionalising staff roles

Our Research Team are all members of the Government Social Research Profession and undertake a minimum of 50 hours professional development on social research each year. The Profession follows the [GSR membership guidance](#), the [GSR Social Research Code](#), and the [GSR Social Research Technical Framework](#).

Given the scrutiny role we play, it is vital our inspection staff maintain, and are recognised as, meeting the right standards for inspection. We expect all new HM inspectors (HMI) and assistant inspectors (AI) to enrol for the HM Inspectorate of Probation Inspection Skills Certificate of Achievement, and to achieve this within their first year in post.

All new inspectors undertake a learning and development programme including comprehensive induction, core skills training, shadowing and ongoing feedback on practice and lead inspector skills training for HMIs.

Inspectors are required to meet all the assessment criteria within the bespoke, inspector designed Occupational Standards. Four occupational standards are applicable for AIs, and all eight occupational standards apply to HMIs:

- Develop your knowledge skills and competence (OS1)
- Planning and preparing to lead an inspection (OS2) – HMI only
- Leading an inspection team (OS3) – HMI only
- Case inspection and providing feedback to practitioners (OS4)
- Leading meetings, gathering information and giving feedback during inspection activity (OS5)
- Promote equality, value diversity and inclusion (OS6)
- Analysing and interpreting information gathered during an inspection (OS7) – HMI only
- Write inspection reports (OS8) – HMI only