



HM Inspectorate
of Probation

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Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice
Minister for Prisons and Probation
Minister for Victims and Violence Against Women and Girls Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Justice
Chief Inspectors of Criminal Justice HM Chief Inspector, Ofsted
Victims Commissioner for England and Wales
Chief Executive, Care Quality Commission
Chief Inspector, Estyn Chief Executive,
Healthcare Inspectorate Wales Chief Executive, Care Inspectorate Wales

03 February 2026

Re: HM Inspectorate of Probation's response to the consultation on the Inspectorate's thematic inspection and research programmes for 2026/2027

1. Background

1.1. We would like to thank those who responded to our consultation on our thematic inspection and research programmes for 2026/2027. In total, we received 18 responses to our consultation, which we have now reviewed.

A list of respondents can be found at Annex 1.

1.2. Under the Police and Criminal Justice Act 2006, we are required to consult key stakeholders on our inspection frameworks and programmes. It is our practice to consult more widely, with those we inspect and associated bodies who can provide valuable insight and information as we develop our framework and programmes.

1.3. Our consultation opened on 24 November 2025 and closed on 19 December 2025. The consultation letter was published on our website and can be viewed here:

<https://hmiprobation.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/about-us/consultations/>

1.4. The consultation set out proposals for our upcoming thematic inspection and research programmes, which included a list of suggested topics. We posed the following questions:

1. Do you have any preferred thematic inspection topics from our list for 2026/2027?
2. Do you have any additional proposals for thematic inspection topics for 2026/2027?
3. Do you have any preferred research topics from our list for 2026/2027?
4. Do you have any alternative proposals on research topics for 2026/2027?

1.5. We asked for evidence for any alternative proposals and a sense of prioritisation of topics.

2. Summary of responses

Thematic inspection programme 2026/2027

2.1 We sought views on the following topics:

Adult

- Court work
- Probation interventions
- Recall practice

Youth

- Youth justice services strategic arrangements.

2.2. There was wide support for the proposed topics, with 'youth justice services strategic arrangements' receiving the most support.

2.3. Respondents also put forward seven additional topics, each of which received one nomination.

Research programme 2026/2027

2.4. We sought views on the following two new topics:

- Staff safety
- High-risk panels in youth justice

2.5. We received most support – nine responses – for the proposed research project on 'staff safety'. The 'high-risk panels' project was prioritised by four respondents.

2.6. An additional six topics were suggested by respondents – all of these suggestions were limited to one response.

3. Decisions

Thematic inspection programme 2026/2027

3.1. We will undertake thematic inspections on the following topics in 2026/2027:

- a) Electronic Monitoring
- b) Probation court work
- c) Youth Justice Services strategic arrangements

3.2. We will progress the above alongside our existing commitment to an inspection of electronic monitoring and joint work with [HMI Prisons on addiction](#). There was also strong support for an inspection of recall practice, which we will prioritise early next year. A thematic inspection of probation interventions will not proceed this year, as key interventions are currently in transition and require time to fully embed to maximise the value of inspection.

Research programme 2026/2027

3.3. We are currently completing/undertaking research projects on the following topics – the last of which will continue into 2026/2027

- Bridging custody and community: The role of Approved Premises in successful reintegration
- Serious Further Offences: Promoting a culture of learning in probation
- Delivering a high-quality, rights-compliant and procedurally-just service for all children and all victims

- Working together: designing and delivering collaborative approaches to support people on probation to build social capital

3.4. In addition to these projects, we will progress the most positively supported research project on 'staff safety', giving careful consideration to the scope of the project, encompassing the links between physical safety, psychological safety, and relational safety, and the potential learning from other jurisdictions and relevant sectors

3.5. Recognising the potential value of the 'high-risk panels' project, we will undertake some further scoping work and consider it again for 2027/2028.

3.6. Bearing in mind that all of the other suggested topics were limited to one response, we do not propose to take them forward as primary research projects in 2026/2027, but we will consider whether we can progress them in other ways (e.g. Academic Insights papers; secondary analysis of inspection and linked data) or whether they should be considered as priorities for 2027/2028.

Annex 1: List of respondents

Minister of State for Justice

Youth Justice Board

Estyn

CQC

Probation Institute

Probation Service, North West region

Probation Service, Greater Manchester region

Probation Officer, South Yorkshire

NAPO

Senior Lecturer in Criminal Justice, Edge Hill

Alliance for Youth Justice (AYJ)

Interventions Alliance

Clinks

User Voice

Revolving Doors

NACRO

Buckinghamshire YJS

Hampshire YJS