



HM Inspectorate
of Probation



Approved Premises: Preliminary Theory of Change model

February 2026

Background

A preliminary Theory of Change model has been developed to identify the explanatory pathways and processes for Approved Premises (APs) supporting positive change through the provision of rehabilitative activities and reintegration opportunities.

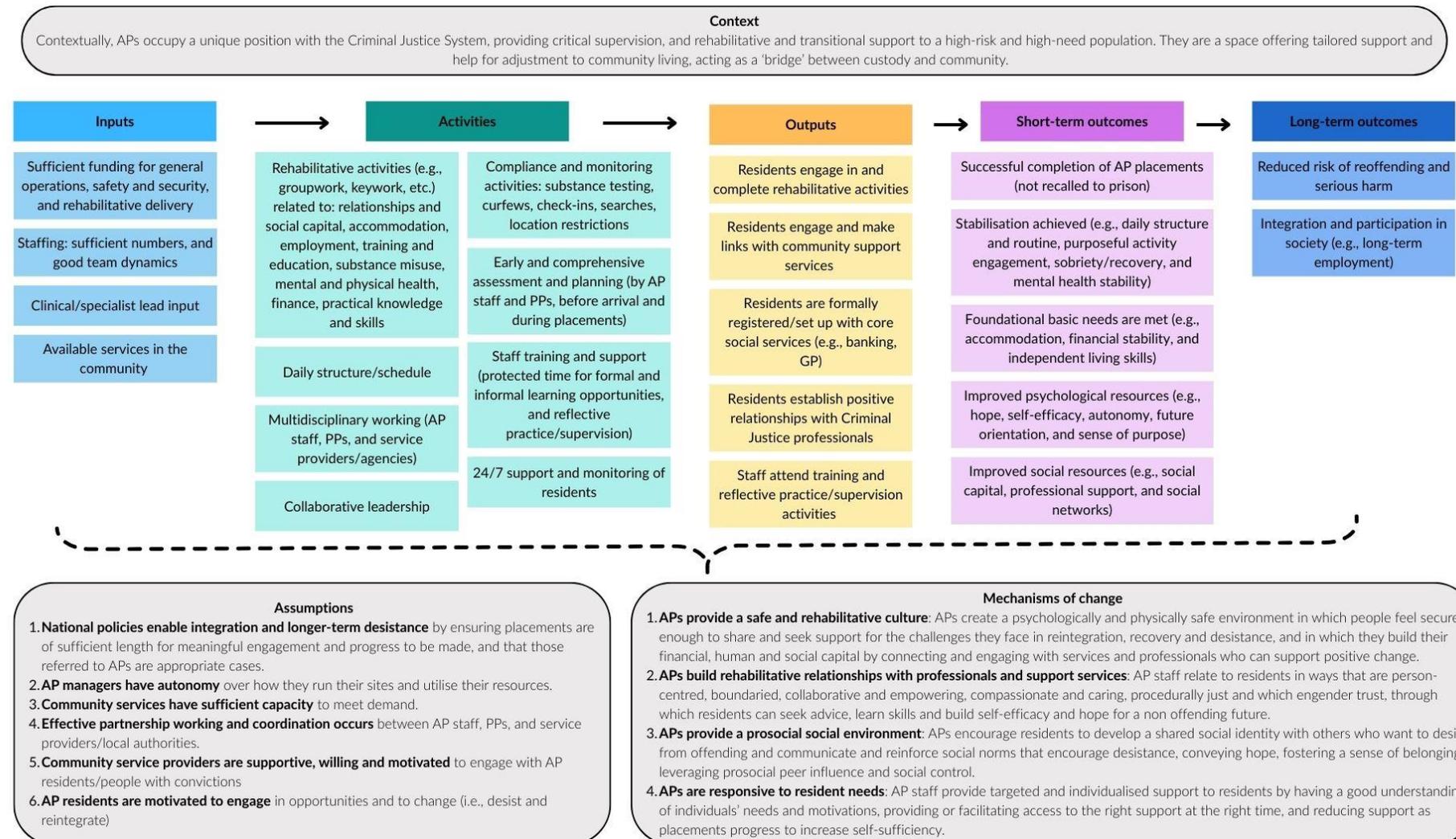
The model is structured according to:

- **context:** the context, including the problems, needs, or challenges to be addressed
- **assumptions:** the underlying conditions that are necessary for intended change to occur
- **inputs:** the resources required to implement activities and achieve desired outcomes
- **activities:** the specific actions, interventions or activities carried out to create change
- **outputs:** the direct, tangible products, services, or results of the activities
- **short-term outcomes:** the immediate and measurable changes resulting from AP placement
- **long-term outcomes:** the ultimate, sustained change that APs aim to achieve
- **mechanisms of change:** how and why desired change comes about.

The preliminary model has been based primarily on the findings of the 2025 research study commissioned by HM Inspectorate of Probation; for more information, please see the [full research report](#). However, it should be noted that the outcomes included in the model have been drawn from the wider (not AP-specific) criminological and desistance theory and research, rather than emerging directly from the study's data. While positive outcomes are indicated in the prior published research, and the study's participants spoke of improvements being made for various outcomes, more specific examination and especially quantitative research is needed with regards to the impact of APs before this part of the model can be formalised.

Further testing, refinement, and elaboration of the preliminary model is required; at present this Theory of Change should be considered a starting point only, assisting with further research and evaluation, rather than a fully formed model.

Approved Premises Theory of Change



The model was prepared by Professor (Hon) Helen Wakleing, Dr. Flora Fitzalan Howard, and Dr. Georgia Barnett from Knowledge to Action Research and Consulting LLP.

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