

People Strategy 2018-21

HMI Probation, January 2019



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Introduction

Well over a quarter of a million people are supervised by youth offending and probation services each year. Regrettably, our growing evidence base reinforces what we said in last year's annual report: many under probation supervision are not receiving the quality of services that they should, and yet we know that good probation services can change their lives and life chances.

Good youth offending and probation services also make a big difference to society as a whole. If all these services were delivered well, there would be fewer people sofa-surfing, sleeping on the streets, or begging. Men, women and children afraid of assault could lead happier and safer lives. There would be less offending and fewer people in prison.

We all know just how much these things really matter – to those who are under probation supervision and to wider society. What we do and can do at HMI Probation is therefore vitally important. We set out in our 2018 corporate plan our strategic objectives - to:

- Promote a single shared view of high-quality services
- Encourage the delivery of high-quality services
- Develop (with others) the effective oversight of services
- Improve our effectiveness and efficiency.

We see these as enduring objectives for our organisation. What is more, we appreciate that to deliver them well, we need the engagement, support and contribution of all of us. Not one of these strategic objectives can be delivered without the input of us all.

Last year, in furtherance of our strategic objectives, we made big changes to the way we inspect. Our inspection programme is now more demanding for those we inspect, and for all of us at HMI Probation.

In anticipation, we recruited many more staff, introduced some new roles, and changed the way we are set up to work together. It was an exciting year for us. We grew not just in size, but in stature and influence, going from strength to strength. It was nevertheless a challenging time, with lots of change for us to accommodate. We did exceptionally well together, delivering a new and unrelenting programme of inspections, and of course we face another challenging and worthwhile time ahead.

The extent of our positive impact is directly determined by the quality of the work that each of us do, and the wider contributions we each make to the organisation. After such an eventful year last year, we think it right to set out here how we intend to engage all of us at HMI Probation from now on. We will revisit our actions on an annual basis, reviewing our priorities and ensuring that we are supporting and deploying people as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Dame Glenys Stacey

Chief Inspector, Probation

Our organisation

1. Culture

The Inspectorate can be characterised as an organisation that passionately believes in the work it is doing and wants to make a real difference for those under probation and youth justice supervision. This is a real strength and something we want to maintain.

As the Inspectorate has grown in size we know that we need to maintain the elements of our culture that we don't want to lose. In a recent staff checkpoint survey (July 2018) staff commented on the Inspectorate's supportive and respectful culture, being inclusive and professional and having an ethos of letting people get on with the job they are paid to do. People also valued the Inspectorate's flexible working culture, the trust placed in staff and the autonomy given. We will map whether these positive aspects of our culture remain when we analyse the findings of the annual People Survey.

Now we have moved to specialist teams and increased our inspection programme there are fewer opportunities for staff to get together across the teams. In addition, we moved from quarterly 'meetings weeks' to an annual/ bi-annual conference reducing the opportunities still further. There is work for us to do to ensure that the culture and values that we hold dear are not weakened through this new organisational approach. We also need to ensure that corporately, we are sharing crucial information across the teams to deliver our objectives most effectively and efficiently.

Action	Strengthen the sense of community among the AIs. Identify methods of engagement that support a 'virtual' team.
Action	Review the opportunity for staff to engage across the different teams in the organisation to share knowledge with the purpose of improving corporate outcomes. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• knowledge sharing across inspection programmes• knowledge sharing across the organisation.
Action	Measure the impact of these activities, possibly through a culture survey, to identify what is working and where further efforts are required.

2. Values

HM Inspectorates of Probation's values are as follows:

Integrity	Accountability
We work in an independent, honest, open, professional, fair and polite way.	We are reliable and stand by the evidenced conclusions we reach. We will always fully account for our actions
Effectiveness	Inclusion
We report and publish inspection findings and recommendations for improvement, focused on service practice quality and impact, in good time and to a high standard. We check the impact of our inspections. We disseminate widely to enable improvement across England and Wales.	We promote attention to diversity in all aspects of our work, including within our own employment practices and organisational processes and are committed to pursuing equality of opportunity for all.

At the staff conference in February 2018 we ran a short 'culture survey'. This was conducted in recognition of the significant expansion to our staff numbers in the new financial year and the desire to maintain the positive aspects of our working practices and culture.

One significant finding related to the fact that staff found our values difficult to recall. At the time a recommendation was made to revisit our values and ensure that they were:

- organisational (not personal)
- actionable (you should work towards them)
- recognisable (I will recognise it if I see it in action)
- measurable (people can be assessed against them).

The primary focus of this work now needs to be on how we operationalise our values.

Action	Develop guiding principles for the way we demonstrate our values and how we measure the behaviours that demonstrate this.
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3. Inclusion

HMI Probation has previously relied on a separate Equality and Diversity Group, consisting of staff members from across the organisation, to oversee equality and diversity issues for the Inspectorate. The latest plan covers the period 2017/18 and sets out our “commitment to valuing and promoting equality and diversity and the actions that we will take to mirror this commitment in our corporate and operational activities.”

We have a comprehensive induction session on diversity which is delivered to all staff. The content and format of this session were updated in 2017.

Additionally, we ask staff to submit a diversity monitoring form on an annual basis. This is optional for all staff but historically we have had a good return rate.

We have a Welsh language scheme which was approved by the Welsh Language Board in May 2011. We have a named HMI with lead responsibility for our Welsh Language Scheme, who produces our Annual Monitoring Report and reports to a named Head of Function on Welsh language issues.

Inclusion, however, is not limited to consideration of protected characteristics. An inclusive organisation aims to value, involve and respect all its individuals, with all individuals in turn appreciating and respecting a common organisational value set.

In the 2018 Civil Service People Survey we received the following positive results under Inclusion and Fair Treatment:

- I am treated fairly at work – 85 per cent positive
- I am treated with respect by the people I work with – 92 per cent positive
- I feel valued for the work I do - 85 per cent positive
- I think that my organisation respects individual differences (e.g. cultures, working styles, backgrounds, ideas, etc) - 73 per cent positive

Action	Review our approach to inclusion and identify measurable deliverables.
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The focus of our activity now needs to widen to promote inclusion both in our inspection activity as well as within our organisation.

4. Wellbeing

The increased frequency of inspection that we introduced in April 2018 has put additional demands on staff, and not just on those on the frontline.

The wellbeing of our staff is paramount. An organisation can only excel when all its people are able to give of their best and are engaged and motivated to do that.

Flexible working has provided some exceptional benefits to staff over the years, not least the ability to satisfy work demands while also meeting the expectations of life outside work. We allow the ability to work from home, we employ hotdesking, and we operate from two office bases. The positive impact is notable but these arrangements can also have unintended consequences. The isolation of prolonged lone working, the inability to sit with and bond as a team, and the location separation of management grades from those for whom they have responsibility need consideration if we are to maintain the positive elements of our culture with which we all identify.

Action

Consider the wellbeing needs of our whole staff group, and the different roles within it, and devise ways of meeting those needs.

5. Staff engagement

The way in which we measure the engagement of our staff is through the annual Civil Service People Survey. This survey looks at staff attitudes to, and experience of, working in government. Participation in the survey itself was 73 per cent in 2018 (not dissimilar to the 75 per cent in 2017, despite the fact we have doubled in size). In addition to the annual survey, for the past two years we have asked our staff to complete a checkpoint survey at the mid-year point. This has allowed us to gain a sense of how staff are feeling about specific key issues during the year and to get feedback on how we are responding to actions from the People Survey. We take the feedback from all these surveys and develop actions to address identified needs. Both surveys also allow us to see where we do things well.

One of the key aspects of the People Survey is the engagement index. Employee engagement is shaped by experience at work, as measured by nine themes in the survey (in order of the strength of association with engagement):

- Leadership and managing change
- My work
- My manager
- Resources and workload
- Pay and benefits
- My team
- Learning and development
- Organisational objectives and purpose
- Inclusion and fair treatment.

We have achieved consistently good results in this area over the years and in 2016 our overall engagement index was higher than all other ALBs and high performing units within the MoJ. In the 2018 survey, our engagement index was 74 per cent, again higher than other ALBs (by 12 per cent) and high performing units (by 7 per cent).

We have seen the survey results fluctuate over the years. Historically, the responses from HQ staff were more positive than those recorded by inspection staff, though this changed in the 2016 survey.

It is important that we retain our good results in the engagement index and just as important that we understand what it is that we do that achieves them.

The full results of the 2018 survey are of particular interest as our organisation has gone through a period of such significant change with so many new staff having started with us over the past 12 months.

Action	Review the results of the 2018 civil service staff survey and take action in response to the findings including how we increase the response rate.
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Current internal methods of communication/ engagement include:

- Chief Inspector's end of week message
- Fortnightly staff bulletin
- Summary updates to all staff following the core leadership team (Chief Inspector and Directors) meetings and Advisory Group (external experts) meetings
- Directorate management meetings
- Team meetings/ training weeks
- Staff conference
- Governance meetings (see later)

All vary to the extent they communicate with or engage staff in decision-making.

The Communications Team will consider the effectiveness of our internal communications as part of our Communications Strategy.

Action	Communications Team to review internal communications, including the role of virtual forms of engagement, and make recommendations for improvement.
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6. Organisation design

In the last financial year we have moved to a programme of annual inspection of CRCs and NPS divisions and have increased our workforce to deliver this increased frequency of inspection scrutiny. As part of this we have looked at the configuration and quota of skills and grades to ensure we have the right people in the right place to deliver our strategic objectives. This has led to the introduction of a number of new posts, including management posts, from April 2018. The following describes the changes and the rationale.¹

Directors

In April 2018 we introduced two new Director roles: a Director of Operations and a Director of Strategy and Research. This created two distinct directorates, one to oversee the delivery of the increased inspection and thematic programme and associated methodology, and one to maximise the impact of inspection, ensuring we adapt to any changes in the way youth offending or probation services are delivered and, consequently any changes in the oversight model or changes to our remit.

a. Operations Directorate

Programme Leads x 3

We have moved from a generalist model to a specialist model so that we now have dedicated programme leads for NPS, CRC and YOT inspections. This provides us with specialist knowledge across sectors and promotes continuity of judgement within sector. Each programme lead is responsible for delivering the inspection programme in their specialist area.

Head of Methodology & Assurance

This is a new role introduced in April 2018 with clear responsibility for all inspection methodologies (except thematic inspection methodologies). This post is also responsible for the design, development and implementation of quality assurance for all our inspections. This frees up Programme Leads to get close to their respective sectors, keeping abreast of developments and ways of working in each sector.

Head of Inspection Training

This is a new role introduced in April 2018 responsible for the recruitment, training, management and development of all Assistant Inspectors, and for developing professional training for all inspectors.

¹ This deliberately does not describe all the senior roles in the organisation. Rather, it describes the new senior posts that have been introduced and the reasons why

HM Inspectors (HMIs)

HMIs are dedicated to one of the following sectors: NPS, CRCs and YOTs and report into their relevant Head of Programme. HMIs take the Lead Inspector role on allocated inspections.

Assistant Inspectors (AI)

Assistant Inspectors work across all types of inspection and are dedicated to case assessment. This role had become increasingly adopted by HMIs. This will free up HMIs for other important work on inspection.

AIs work with us on secondment or fixed term contract. This provides the opportunity to embed good youth offending and probation standards and ways of working in providers as AIs will return to their employer, taking their HMI Probation experience with them.

b. Strategy & Research Directorate

Head of Policy & Standards

This is a new role introduced in April 2018 responsible for leading the development, continuous improvement and promotion of standards and best practice for probation and youth justice service provision. They will build a shared view of youth offending and probation service quality, both internally and externally, to identify good practice and develop approaches to disseminate and promote it effectively.

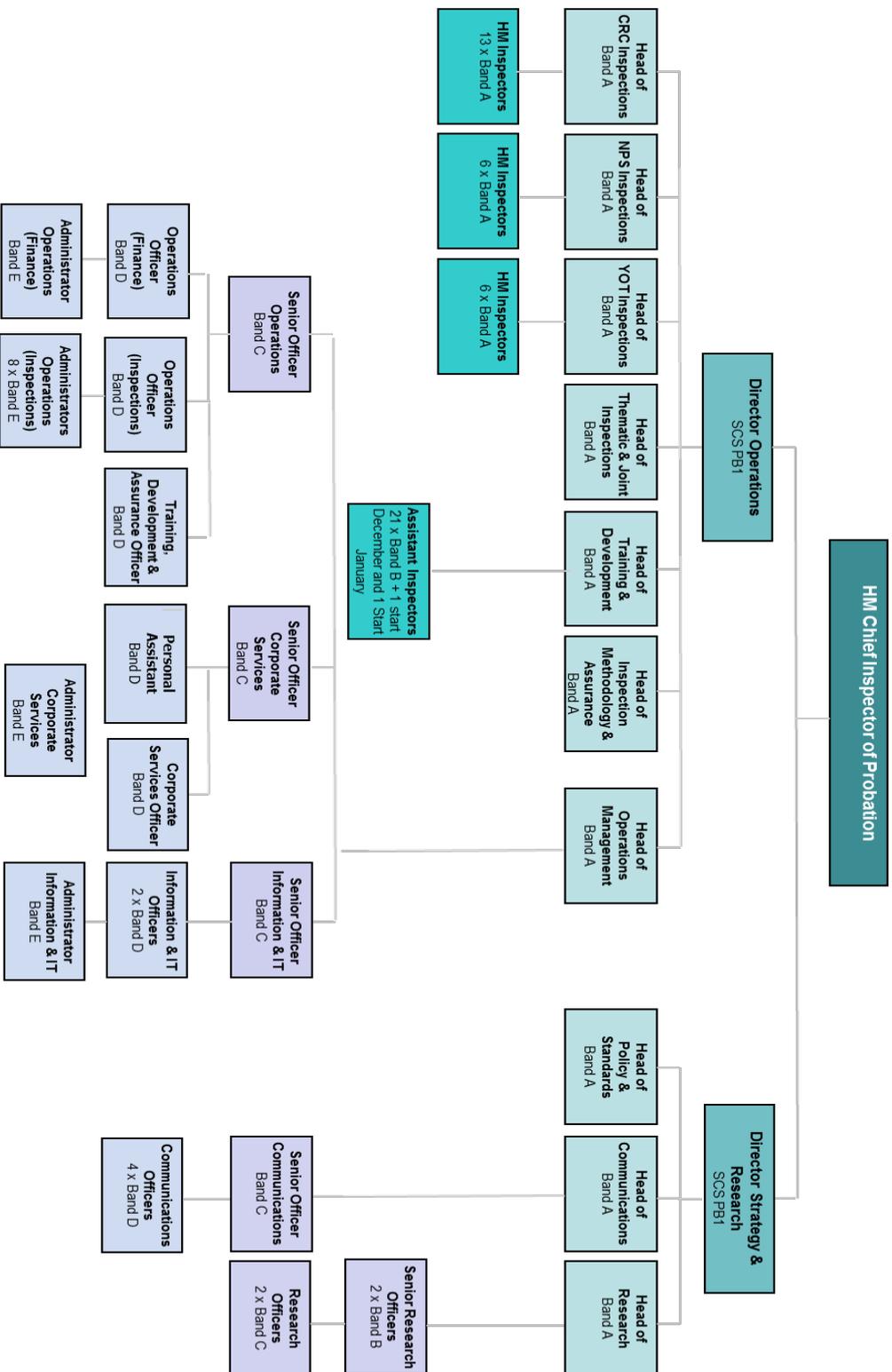
Head of Communications

This is a new role introduced in April 2018 tasked with increasing our impact by making our communications more effective through extending our reach and making our information more accessible. They are responsible for leading and developing our internal and external communications capability.

Action	Reflect on how well the organisation design has embedded by the end of the financial year.
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HMI Probation Organisation Chart – November 2018



Our leadership & governance

1. Internal governance

We have a small executive senior leadership team, consisting of the Chief Inspector, and Directors of Operations, and Strategy and Research. The team meets monthly. The two Directors each have regular meetings with their own senior teams. Directors and Heads of Function have delegated decision-making authority for some matters, set out in our Scheme of Governance.

Our internal governance is supplemented by a number of task-focused groups:

- Strategy and Policy Group – responsible for providing direction to the development of inspectorate strategy and policy, operational guidance and the development and execution of the thematic and research plan.
- People Strategy and Engagement Group – considers and advises on all aspects concerning the development and implementation of this People Strategy.

2. Operational governance

Management of the inspection programme, including resourcing, is undertaken by the Head of Operations Management with escalation to the Operations Management meeting. In addition, a ratings panel has been established.

- Ratings Panel - agrees the proposed rating for domain one for each adult and youth inspection and reviews the domain two and three ratings. The meeting is normally held in the week following completion of the inspection (Thursday for Adult, Tuesday for Youth) and before the ratings are confirmed with the NPS Division/CRC/YOT.
- Inspection Review – each inspection programme lead reviews the feedback from individual inspections, identifies improvement opportunities and reviews key themes emerging from the inspections undertaken.

In relation to thematic reviews, we will in future consider whether they would benefit from a bespoke reference group. The benefit of consulting a reference group will be determined on a case-by-case basis and, should we consider there to be a benefit, we will tailor membership, timing and the nature of engagement depending on the topic. It is important to strike the right balance of role for the group. Any such group will be advisory, rather than a steering group with executive authority. Clear and agreed terms of reference will always be put in place.

3. Corporate governance

Organisations benefit from external constructive challenge and wise counsel, and we are no exception. Otherwise there is a danger that we become, as an organisation, too settled in one way of thinking or looking at things. We get this through our Advisory Group, which generally meets once a quarter and advises on matters we put to the group. The Terms of

Reference for the Advisory Group can be found here:

<https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/about-hmi-probation/advisory-group/?highlight=advisory%20group>. They set out clearly the role of the group members. While this group is part of our governance it does not have decision-making authority. That remains with the Chief Inspector.

Equally we want the governance arrangements for specific pieces of work to be fit for purpose and we will always consider whether a Steering Group and/or external members on any Programme Board would be likely to be beneficial.

Service users and their views are not represented currently in our governance or organisation, but we are investigating how that might change.

Action	Review the efficacy of internal governance.
Action	Commission work to identify the benefits of engaging with service users and the methods we might use.

Our people

1. Recruitment

a. General

We are subject to MoJ and civil service policies in the recruitment of all staff. Within these policies the Chief Inspector has delegated authority to recruit internally (across the civil service) for all posts and externally for both front line and business critical posts.

External vacancies are advertised on the civil service job site on gov.uk, our website and are tweeted by us. Internal only vacancies are advertised on a part of the civil service jobs site open to civil servants only.

b. Recruitment Process

We follow different types of recruitment process, depending on the posts being advertised. This provides us with the necessary flexibility to recruit staff to our posts with the right skills and competencies.

HM Chief Inspector – as a parliamentary appointment, recruitment is dealt with by the MoJ Public Appointments Team.

Directors - the Cabinet Office manage the recruitment for all Senior Civil Service (SCS) positions, though we agree adverts, the selection criteria and the process for selection, e.g. psychometric tests, engagement exercise. The Chief Inspector chairs the interview panel along with an external panel member.

For all other posts we work alongside Shared Services Connected Limited (SSCL), who are contracted by the MoJ to deliver HR functions, including recruitment.

HM Inspector/ Assistant Inspector - all HMI and AI vacancies are advertised externally to ensure that we access potential applicants from within the MoJ and its agencies (including the NPS), across the civil service, CRCs, third sector and private organisations.

The recruitment process for both HMI and AI posts has three stages: sift, an assessment centre and an interview. We plan to undertake work to look at the current assessment centres to ensure they remain relevant to the current expectations and responsibilities of these posts.

Heads of Function and HQ Staff – all Heads of Function and the majority of HQ staff vacancies are advertised across the civil service only. HQ roles in particular tend to be more generalist than other roles in the organisation and while all will have specific essential skills, such skills can generally be found widely across the civil service. However, we are finding it increasingly difficult to fill some vacancies this way. We therefore now routinely advertise such posts externally. Heads of Function and HQ position applicants complete a competency based application and those successful at sift, are invited to an interview. For specialist roles on the Research Team, candidates also undertake a research knowledge test unless already

a member of Government Social Research (GSR) profession, in which case candidates who are successful at sift sit an interview (which may be accompanied by an oral presentation – depending on grade).

All vacancies below SCS are currently recruited using a competency based application process, though the MoJ plans to move to strengths-based recruitment.

Fee paid Inspectors – while have made a concerted effort to reduce our reliance on fee-paid inspectors we wish to maintain some resilience in our inspector cadre. This means we need a small collection of highly skilled inspectors who we can trust to join an inspection as and when required. This has necessarily led us to maintain the ad hoc services of previously employed HMIs whom we consider capable of being employed in such a way. We will maintain the discretion to employ fee-paid inspectors in this way but will keep this under review.

Pre-employment checks and vetting

Pre-employment checks and vetting are undertaken for all advertised roles. We have been known to lose a number of successful candidates who have secured alternative employment while their vetting is being undertaken, due to the length of time it takes. This is a common issue across the Department.

In addition to the basic vetting some groups of staff require further checks. A counter terrorism check (CTC) is undertaken for all HMIs in order that they can enter high security prisons, should the need arise.

c. Diversity

We are currently (and have been for some time) unable to obtain the diversity data for candidates at each stage of the recruitment process. We are therefore unable to undertake any form of useful analysis as to where candidates are dropping out of the recruitment process, and therefore inform action that we could take to address this. This issue continues to be pursued with the MoJ and SSCL. This applies to protected characteristics but should also apply to social mobility.

In addition, we need to monitor the diversity characteristics of our current workforce against those of the wider workforce in probation and youth justice.

Action	Review our current assessment centre process to ensure that it is testing the skills required for the current roles of HMIs and AIs and is delivering a diverse workforce.
Action	Continue to pursue diversity data for recruitment campaigns with the MoJ and SSCL.
Action	Conduct an analysis of the representativeness of HMIP’s inspection workforce against the diversity characteristics of the probation and youth justice workforce. Consider the need for targeted recruitment campaigns and the means by which they are promoted.

2. Pay and Contracts

We currently have staff on three different types of contract: permanent, secondment, and fixed term contract (FTC). This enables us to maintain a balance of continuity while keeping expertise fresh as well as enabling learning to be taken back to the sector.

Permanent – all Heads of Function and HQ staff are employed on permanent contracts. In addition, a number of HMIs are also permanent staff. Permanent staff are employed on MoJ terms and conditions and are based in either Manchester as default, or London if the nature of the role demands it.

Staff transferring to us from within the civil service would generally retain their existing salary unless it fell outside the applicable band range – if it was less they would start at the bottom of the band range, if it was more they would go on marked time. For those staff starting on promotion they would get a 10 per cent uplift or start on the band minimum, whichever is the greater. Staff from outside the civil service would start at the pay band minimum*.

Secondments – staff on secondment all retain their home employers' terms and conditions. These staff are paid by their home organisation (and then reimbursed by HMI Probation) at the salary they were on prior to secondment, unless their salary is below the applicable Band minimum on national pay scales, in which case we ask their employer to pay the Band minimum.

HMIs are offered a maximum of a three-year secondment, at which point they would become eligible to apply for a permanent contract should there be a vacancy (see below). AIs are offered a maximum of two years on secondment, at which point they would return to their home organisation. This enables the organisation to employ a pool of AIs who have recent and up to date experience of front-line practice.

Action	Propose how we can stagger the employment of secondees and FTC staff so there is resilience in our staff group.
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FTC – as some organisations have become increasingly reluctant to second their staff, we have in recent times re-introduced FTCs for inspection staff. They are on MoJ terms and conditions and national pay scales.

Similar to secondments, HMIs are offered a three-year FTC, with a possibility to apply for a permanent contract, and AIs a maximum of two years. Although this has to some extent alleviated problems with recruiting inspection staff, these staff, as new entrants to the MoJ, start at the bottom of the relevant pay band* and receive the minimum amount of annual leave. In many cases both the salary and leave entitlement are less than they received in their previous employment and understandably some candidates are therefore reluctant to accept a FTC. This remains a challenge for us.

** We do have limited discretion to increase starting salaries, within MoJ rules. As a general policy we would only use this discretion upon receipt of evidence that the candidate is currently earning above the minimum starting salary for the grade.*

Permanent contracts for HMIs

HMI Probation has clear guidance for offering permanent contracts to HMIs. In summary, the decision as to whether an HMI should be offered a permanent contract will rest with the Head of Operations Management, who will twice a year review any applications for permanency. Any HMI who wishes to be considered for permanency will be required to submit a formal request.

The Head of Operations Management will consider:

- the current and projected needs of the business
- if the individual concerned has demonstrated the full range of inspection skills, for example leading an inspection and writing a report, to a good standard
- whether a permanent contract would be beneficial to the organisation. Here, we keep in mind the need to strike the right balance between permanent and other staff.

On accepting a permanent contract, the staff member will be allocated to the Manchester office as their office base for the purposes of pay.

3. Induction

All new starters receive a basic induction which includes a personalised induction guide, signposting to our key policies and documents, and a presentation by HQ staff covering the different HQ roles and IT set up. All new staff attend our in-house diversity event too.

HMIs and AIs receive a bespoke induction programme in addition. This generally takes place during their first week. This induction programme was reviewed in 2017 but, following the large intake of inspection staff, we will look at the feedback we have received and make improvements where they are required. This induction includes sessions on each aspect of our inspection programme, staff deployment, an introduction to research (though this needs to be extended to include other aspects of our strategy directorate), public safety and safeguarding and a meeting with their line manager. Specific training in aspects such as expenses and driving on duty is also provided.

The recent focus has been on the induction of inspection staff. As a result, HQ staff induction is less advanced. Their requirements need to be considered as part of our review of induction and may be different depending on which team they are joining.

As part of our induction process, inspection staff will be allocated a mentor from within the organisation. HQ staff can request a mentor and should speak to their line manager should they wish to have one. Mentors are allocated by the new starter's line manager and will be someone with appropriate experience to undertake the role. We have a guidance document "Mentoring in HMI Probation – Guidance for staff", which is provided in the induction pack.

Action	Collate feedback from inspection staff on their induction and look at what can be improved.
Action	Review and formalise HQ staff induction.
Action	Review supervision of AIs.
Action	Develop a mentoring/ coaching scheme that considers the needs of new staff, current postholders, and senior staff.

4. Staff deployment to inspection

HMI Probation has a well-established system of using deployable hours to allocate work equitably and transparently.

Inspection staff are allocated to teams, inspection by inspection. We have found that this maximises the flexibility of our staff and it is something our staff have told us that they like.

Now we have moved to a more frequent programme of inspections, staff are understandably feeling the impact of the change. We have made some assumptions in our planning approach, such as around the need for preparation (and the length of that preparation) for different types of inspection and the ability to edit a report once involved in another activity. There have been some challenges to these assumptions and we need to consider whether all of them are working in the way anticipated.

Action	Revisit the planning assumptions to ensure staff are not unrealistically assigned tasks.
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a. HM Inspectors

HMIs are now dedicated to one of the following sectors: NPS, CRC and YOTs. For new HMIs we try to allocate them to a team which reflects their experience and knowledge.

In terms of selecting inspectors for thematic inspections, we will continue to look at experience, knowledge of the topic and availability of individuals drawing from the three specialist teams.

As part of the HMI team allocation exercise we asked staff to declare an interest in being allocated to routine joint inspections, recognising that it would be in the interests of the organisation and individual staff to have small dedicated teams with expertise in these inspections.

Action	Consider the cross-fertilisation of staff across the programme teams to increase resilience.
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b. Assistant Inspectors

Assistant Inspectors work across all types of inspection, maximising their flexibility and resilience. AIs are responsible for the bulk of case assessment work, which clearly distinguishes their role from that of HMIs. While AI deployments are mainly to adult and youth inspections, we will continue to provide opportunities for AIs to undertake support roles on thematic and joint inspections.

c. Fee Paid Inspectors (FPIs)

We currently have a pool of FPIs, who work on day rates as and when required. They are allocated to the full range of inspection programmes. FPIs are invaluable in helping to staff inspections, especially while we are carrying vacancies of inspection staff. As we use FPIs infrequently we need to find clear and structured opportunities to train FPIs and keep them abreast of developments.

The pool of FPIs has always helped HMI Probation fulfil its obligations under the Welsh Language Scheme, by including Welsh speakers. We recognise that we need to strengthen and provide further contingency for Welsh speakers and we will therefore explore options to recruit additional Welsh speakers as FPIs.

Action	Assess and address the learning and development needs of fee paid inspectors.
Action	Consider the options for increasing the recruitment of Welsh speakers to our inspection staff.

d. Local Assessors

HMI Probation has for a long time seen and recognised the value of using local assessors² in our inspections. In recent years the use of local assessors has been restricted to YOT inspections. We are now planning to extend the use of local assessors into NPS inspections and are exploring how we extend this further into private provider inspections in the future.

Action	Operationalise the NPS local assessor model by early 2019.
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The use of local assessors during CRC inspections is more complicated especially now the configuration of providers is due to change. We will revisit when the new contracts are in place.

An element of inspection staff deployment involves the allocation of a 'duty reserve' to each inspection week. The duty reserve acts as a contingency arrangement for last minute absences and emergencies experienced by other members of staff. In the main the role will

² Members of probation or youth offending staff who join us for the duration of an inspection out of area. This provides up-to-date experience and enables learning to be taken back and applied in real time.

be filled by AIs, though where no AI is available an HMI will be allocated to ensure that there is at least some contingency in place. It should be noted that where there is sufficient notice of an absence we seek to reallocate work without using the duty reserve.

Conflicts of interest

Where there is a potential, actual or perceived conflict of interest between any staff member and a specific area of inspection, that staff member will not attend the inspection, nor contribute to or seek to influence the inspection and/or published report.

Leave arrangements

HMI Probation has introduced bespoke arrangements for the management of inspection staff leave – noting the significant impact that leave has on deployment of staff. These arrangements are overseen and managed by the Head of Operations Management, working to the following guiding principles:

1. Any planned absence from work is agreed on the basis that the organisation can continue to undertake its core business
2. HMI Probation expects individual staff to exercise reasonable responsibility and consideration for colleagues when booking time off
3. It is clearly preferable for the organisation for staff to take leave during quieter periods as far as possible, i.e. non-inspection weeks.

5. Flexible working

All staff are allocated to either the London or Manchester office. The office in Manchester is HMI Probation’s main base and is the default location unless there is a reason (due to the nature of the role) to allocate to London. In reality, inspection staff are often on the road and when not on inspection are working from home in order to complete their inspection contributions.

Inspection staff have historically felt somewhat disadvantaged having a Manchester base, especially now hot desking operates, when in reality they have no dedicated space in the Manchester office.

HQ staff are office-based and have the opportunity to work flexibly in accordance with MoJ policy.

Action	Revisit the decision to have all staff allocated to an office base. Consider whether inspectors can be based at alternative locations
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6. Learning & Development

a. HQ staff

The training and development of our HQ staff is important. As the learning needs among this group differ, we have not pooled this activity in-house (as we have with inspection staff) but have maintained responsibility for identifying and meeting those needs within the management line. This works well for our specialist staff, such as those employed to our research or communications teams. There are potentially, however, common training requirements among our operations staff, who provide direct support to our inspection programme, that we need to address.

Action	Identify common training requirements among our operations staff group and propose ways of meeting that need.
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a. Inspection staff

As part of our organisational re-design, we identified a gap in our support of staff, particularly our inspection staff and those that come to us on secondment. While inspectors bring with them a wealth of knowledge and expertise in the field of probation or youth justice, they are not skilled inspectors and it takes time and effort to learn this role. To provide sufficient and timely support to our new staff we brought the training of our new inspection staff in-house and we have developed bespoke training programmes to that end. We are already evaluating whether this training package is meeting its intended outcomes.

We have invested heavily in our training of Assistant Inspectors, knowing there is planned turnover among this group, them coming to us on secondment for two years at most. We need AIs to get up to speed quickly and to make consistently high-quality decisions and judgements. We also want them to return to their employers more knowledgeable about good probation and youth offending delivery which they can put into practice in the field.

We will benchmark inspection activity internally and with local assessors; to quality assure output and assess the efficacy of training, which inform our judgements and findings. We also need to develop a strong sense of community among our AIs so they can pool their learning and experience and provide each other with support.

Action	Embed our quality assurance strategy.
Action	Apply benchmarking.
Action	Update the training offer where needed.
Action	Evaluate the impact of our collective training approaches against their stated objectives.

7. Talent management

As far as we are able, we want to:

- support the development of our staff while they are with us so they can give of their best to HMI Probation
- support the career aspirations of those who show particular talent and drive to continue their employment in government
- coach staff with the motivation and aptitude to take on new and/or more senior roles as part of a succession pipeline.

Development opportunities can often be costly and competitive. We therefore need to consider how we promote these opportunities and how we decide who we should nominate should places be restricted.

There is no one single talent management solution for our diverse staff population. We must take a different approach for different (categories of) staff. We need to consider specifically 'the offer' we give to our seconded staff who will have fewer opportunities to access development opportunities during their time with us.

Experience has also shown that for specific individual posts, where the combination of knowledge and expertise is unique, we need more resilience and a plan for covering those roles in the short and long term. We need to consider resilience as part of our succession planning as a result.

Action	<p>Develop a talent management approach that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognises the different needs of different staff (groups) • considers our more immediate resilience requirements, identifying posts most at risk and proposing solutions • develops an internal succession pipeline.
Action	Devise a transparent and equitable approach to prioritising staff for high-cost and/or competitive development opportunities.
Action	Consider the role of talented seconded staff in resilience and succession planning.
Action	Consider the role of work placements e.g. with the Prince's Trust to enrich the workforce, promote social mobility and build a talent pipeline.

8. Recognition & Reward

All seconded staff remain on the performance management procedures applied by their home employer.

All permanent and fixed term contract staff are subject to the MoJ's performance management policy. A new performance management approach was introduced by the department in April 2018 and no longer involves end of year performance judgements or the awarding of end of year bonuses. The emphasis is now much more on coaching staff and rewarding good work more immediately throughout the year by applying the MoJ's recognition and reward policy. We will develop an internal process for the awarding of rewards to promote transparency among our staff and to ensure equity in application.

Action

Develop and apply an internal assurance process for considering and awarding reward nominations, including to those on secondment.

9. Tools to do the job

Inspection is challenging. When staff are out on the road for so much of their working time it is important that they have the right tools to do their job easily and well. The efficacy of our technology also impacts on the credibility of our staff with the providers they inspect. While the technology offer from the department has vastly improved over recent years, we also need to consider the long-term options for our own bespoke technology.

Our case assessment system, in particular, is not going to be supported in future years and so needs to be replaced. We are in discussion with the MoJ to develop a digital strategy to replace such IT systems and to look at options for us to become better digitised.

Action

Deliver a digital strategy that fully supports staff in their roles.

Case samples form a significant evidence base for our inspections. At the moment, inspection staff largely have to access this information on site, commandeering terminals and office space that is then unavailable to probation staff and taking up a substantial amount of fieldwork time. We want to investigate whether there are alternative means of accessing case sample information securely and off-site while complying with data protection requirements. This will reduce burden and improve the sequencing of inspection evidence.

Action

Negotiate alternative access arrangements to case material that reduces burden to providers and the Inspectorate.