



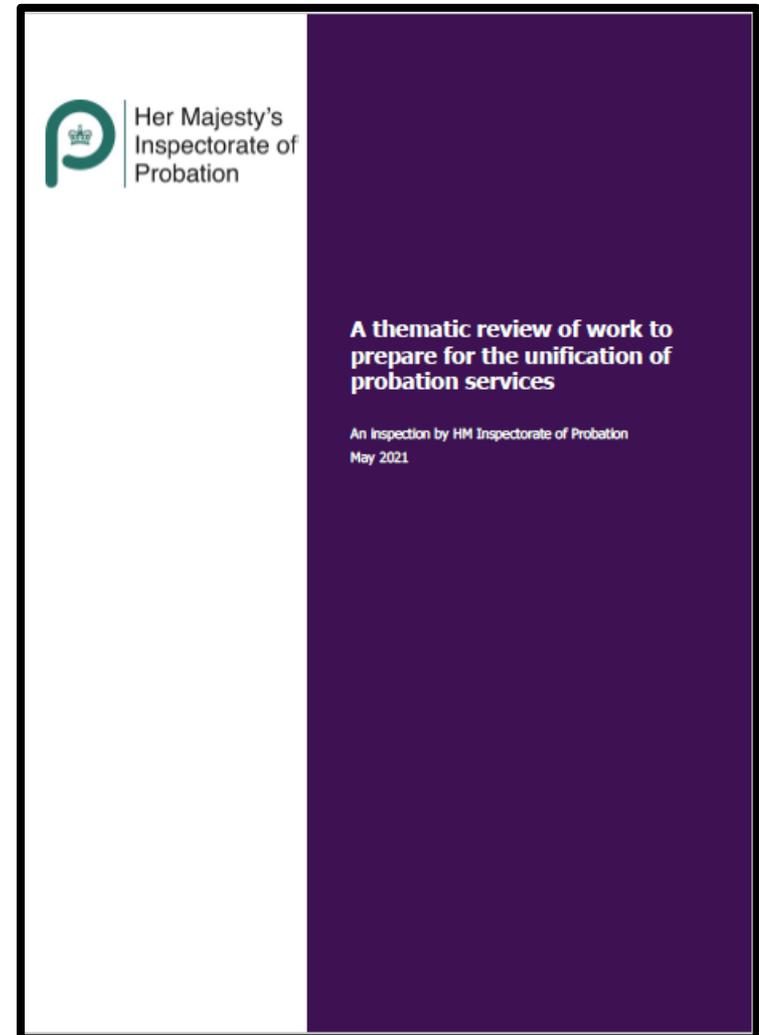
Her Majesty's  
Inspectorate of  
Probation

# A THEMATIC REVIEW OF WORK TO PREPARE FOR THE UNIFICATION OF PROBATION SERVICES

14 MAY 2021

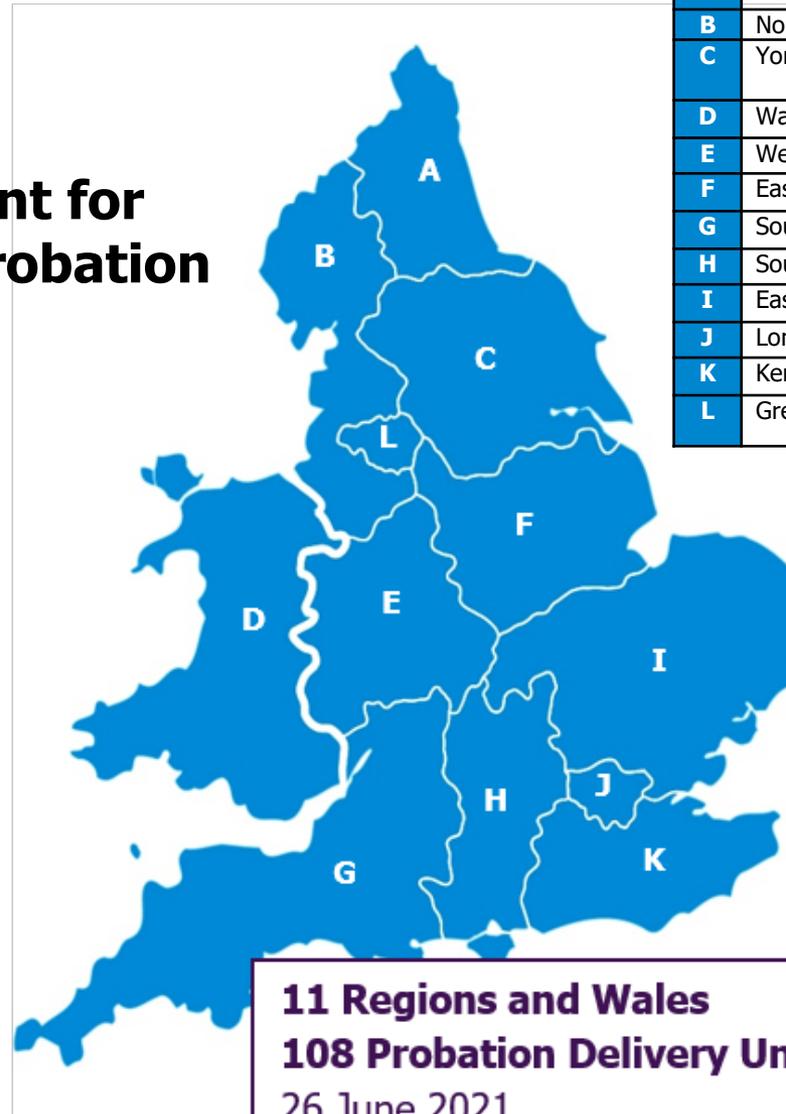
## About this report

- Transition Date – 26 June 2021
- Case Supervision went earlier in Wales (December 2019)





**This map shows the footprint for  
the new model – with 12 probation  
regions**



**New Probation Regions**

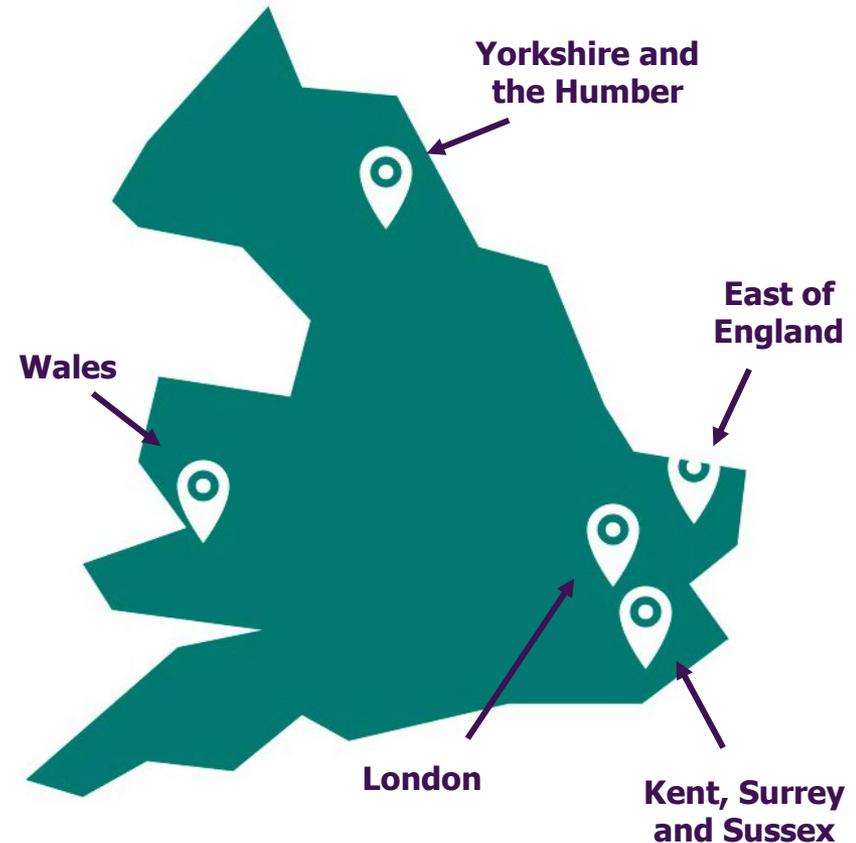
A	North East
B	North West
C	Yorkshire and the Humber
D	Wales
E	West Midlands
F	East Midlands
G	South West
H	South Central
I	East of England
J	London
K	Kent, Surrey and Sussex
L	Greater Manchester

**11 Regions and Wales**  
**108 Probation Delivery Units**  
26 June 2021



## Methodology

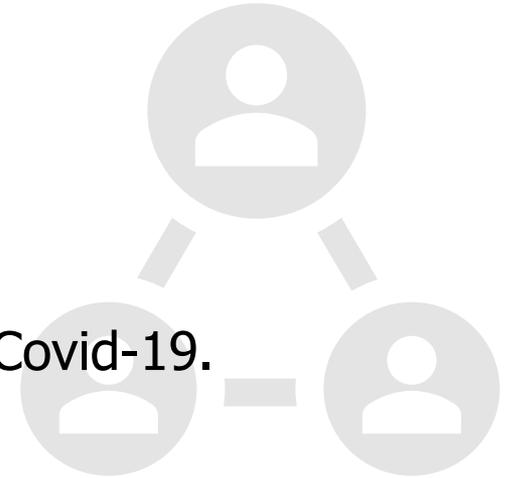
- **Fieldwork** in five Regions between October 2020 and February 2021
- **Two weeks** of National Meetings
- **Total of 204 Interviews** held with both CRC and NPS staff and stakeholders
- We additionally interviewed all 12 new Regional Probation Directors
- Unusually we didn't look at any cases, focusing instead on our leadership and corporate standards





## Leadership

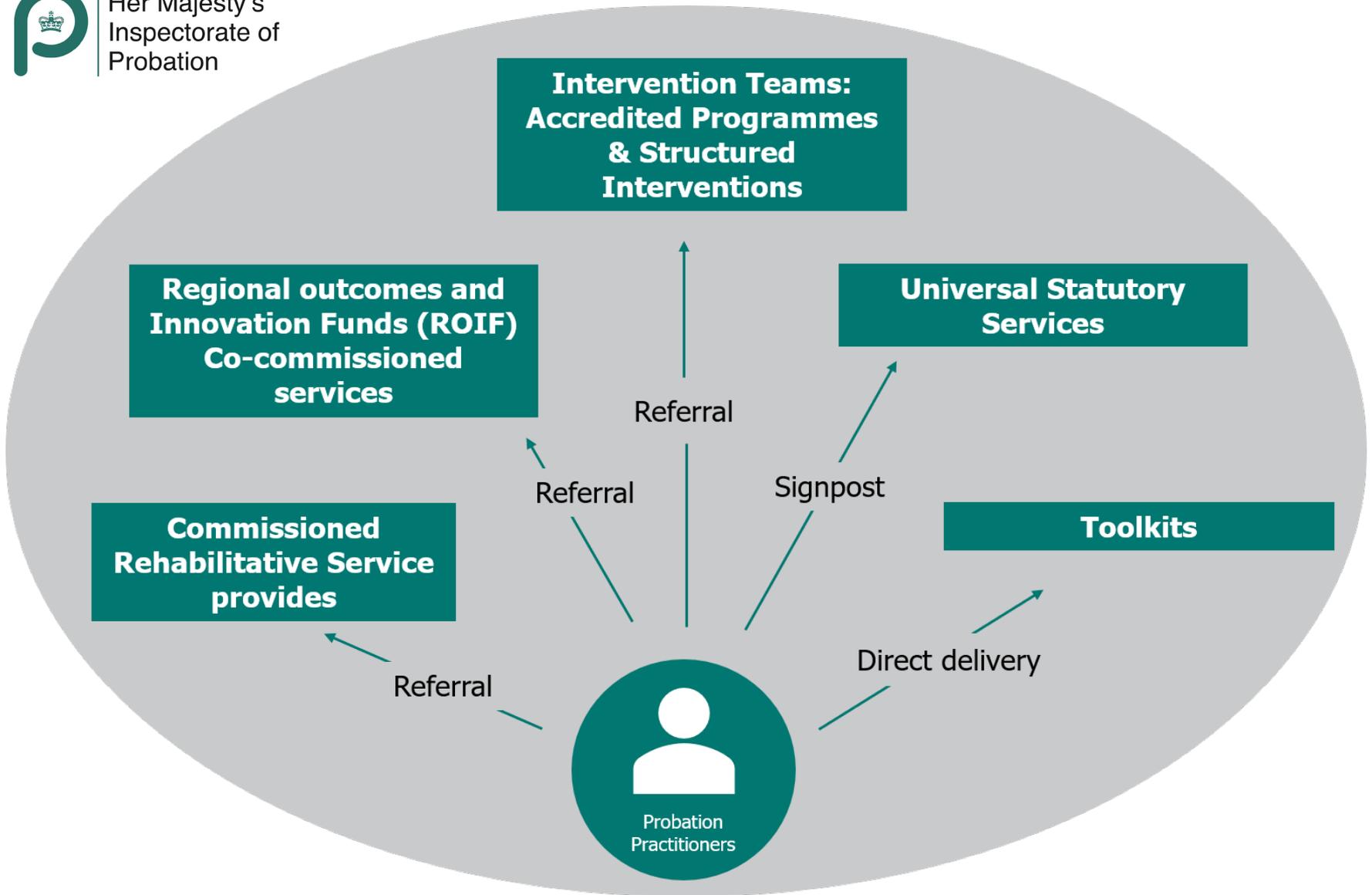
- Well led programme despite challenges of Covid-19.
- Multiple interdependencies across work streams.
- National and regional transition boards delivering the work.
- Direction of travel supported by majority unlike *Transforming Rehabilitation*.





## Target Operating Model

- Most recent version published in February 2021 and provides a comprehensive plan for delivery of Probation Services.
- Will not all happen on day one, rather a staged approach between now and 2024.
- £155 million extra funding for the first year agreed with implicit intent for this to continue to support increase in staff, roll out of IT etc.



The Probation Practitioner will have a variety of interventions and programmes at their disposal



# Timescale for full transition to unified model



## **26 June 2021 – commencement of the unified model**

- a 'lift and shift' approach
- staff placement into roles in the new structure

## **Sept 2021 to March 2022 – service stabilisation and harmonisation**

- staff placements to be confirmed
- processes to be harmonised during this period
- all mandatory training
- probation practitioners moving to a blended caseload

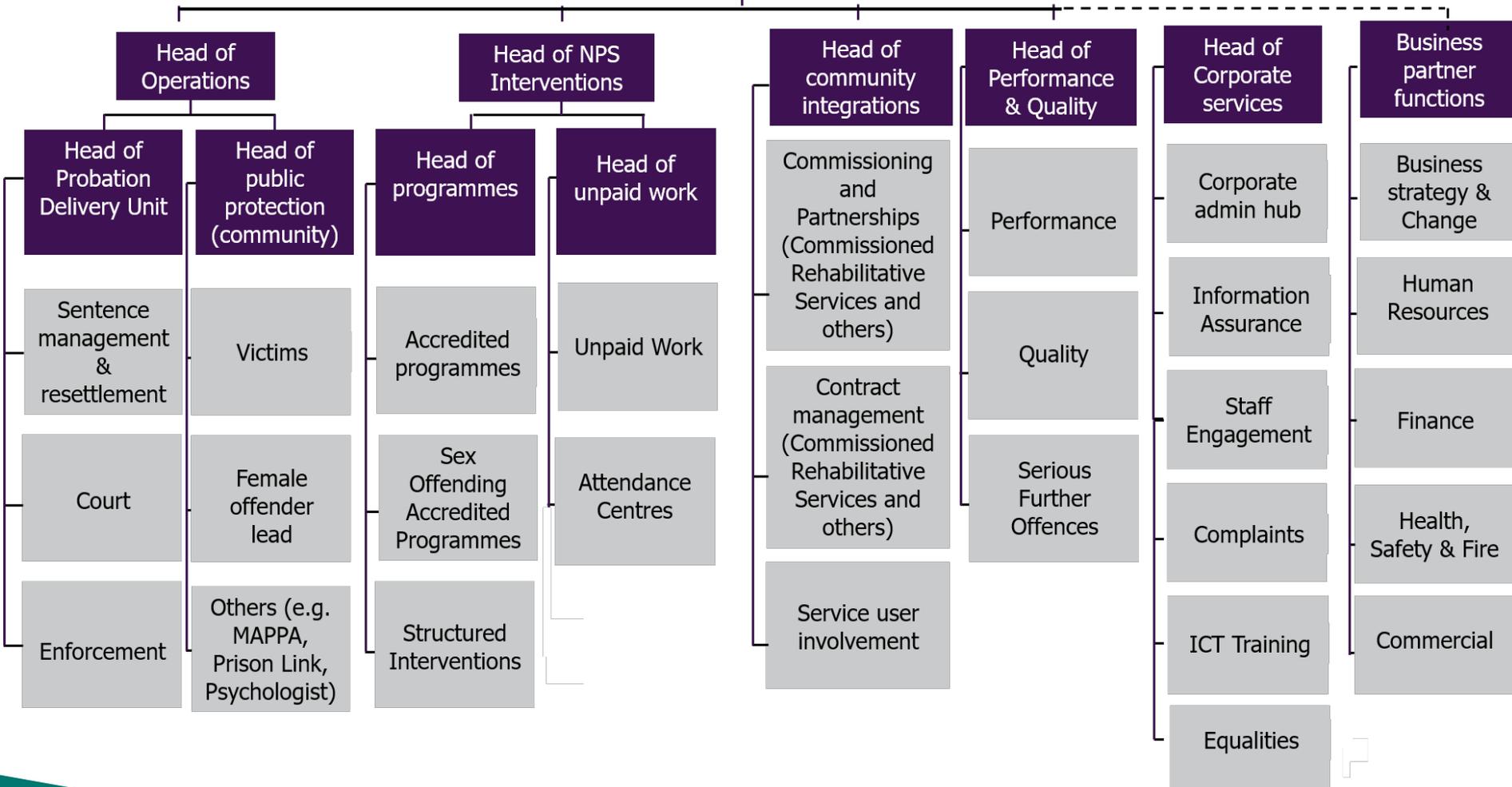
## **March 2022 to July 2024 and beyond – service transformation**

- professionalisation and registration of probation officers
- improvements to existing electronic case management and risk assessment tools, and probation buildings



# Staff

## Regional Probation Director





## Staff



**8500** moving from non NPS organisations to the unified probation service.

**54** different organisations involved in the transition process. Approximately 50% of staff have joined CRCs since Transforming Rehabilitation so no experience of working for government run probation service.

### **Our recommendations:**

- ✓ Ensure an inclusive culture is in place that embraces different experiences and backgrounds of the staff forming the new probation model and gives equal status to interventions and sentence management staff.



## Staff



- Recruitment and retention staff is an ongoing challenge and it will take time to address.
- New Workforce Strategy aims to recruit more probation trainees.
- There is a balance to be had between new staff arriving and the necessary infrastructure, managers and staff to support them.



## Staff



### Our recommendations

- ✓ Ensure the skill base of transition CRC commissioning and corporate staff is sufficiently understood and employed appropriately in the new unified model.



## Diversity



- Diversity Data remains an issue.
- New IT equipment appears to support assisted technology users well.
- Death of George Floyd and Black Lives Matter has provoked useful discussions about issues of race in many regions.
- Additional funding for black, Asian and minority ethnic service users had been awarded to nurture potential services and providers.

## Any questions so far?





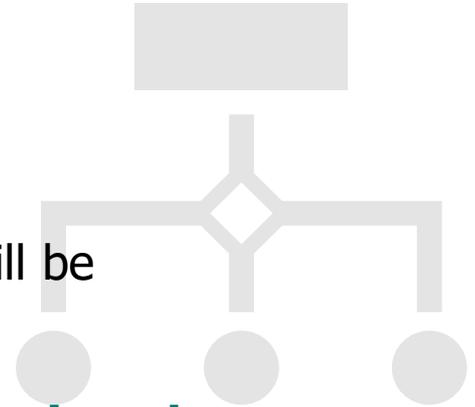
## Services

Dynamic framework is the process in which services will be commissioned.

**11 separate intervention pathways to be commissioned eventually – focus has been on four so far** - education, training and employment (ETE); accommodation; personal wellbeing and women's services.

**110 contracts been tendered initially on a national basis, further to be commissioned locally**

Plans for the delivery of Unpaid Work progressing well, with the intention to enable existing projects to continue in the first instance. This is to be followed with further plans to include agreements with some national beneficiaries.

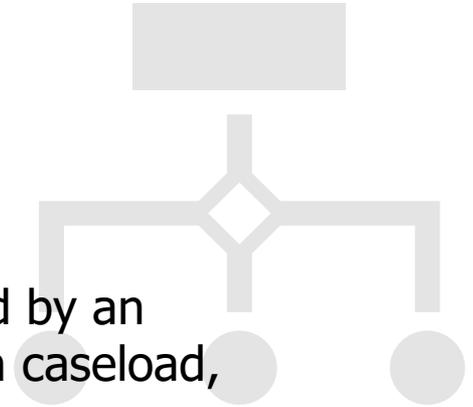




## Services

- Area in which we have made most recommendations. Potential that there will be gaps in provision of services at day one although during inspection contingences, including direct award of contracts, were being considered.
- Some question about the loss of small local providers who may not have the infrastructure to bid – majority of those successful bids thus far are to larger organisations.
- Lack of bids in some areas has resulted in retendering – and given delays will mean they may not be available from day one.
- Regional strategic leadership for resettlement services lacked clarity, with no post specifically responsible for this crucial area of work.

# Services



## Our recommendations:

- ✓ ensure commissioning of services in regions is informed by an up-to-date strategic needs analysis of the full probation caseload, including all transferring CRC cases
- ✓ ensure that regional probation directors review the services that have been commissioned nationally for their respective region within two years to ensure they meet the needs of their region
- ✓ ensure clearer strategic oversight of resettlement services in each English region and Wales. We suggest the appointment of regional heads of resettlement
- ✓ ensure appropriate services are in place to manage risk of harm and address risk of offending, during the last months of the CRC contracts before they terminate.



## Information & Facilities – Probation buildings



- Comprehensive audit of Probation buildings has taken place.
- Most staff will stay in the same location in June with phased changes over the subsequent four years.
- Significant programme of work to update those NPS buildings that are outdated or in disrepair.
- The Facilities management contract remains an area of concern.



## Information & Facilities - Digital



- Some particular issues with those not using the main risk assessment tools.
- Roll out of IT equipment to all staff was commencing at the end of our inspection period and appeared to be progressing well.
- Plan is for all staff to have their IT in place and working for day one – given as we said earlier 8000 staff this is no small task.



## Information and Facilities



### Our recommendation:

- ✓ Ensure that an effective workload measurement tool is used in the unified probation service which is informed by assumptions about timings that reflect current practice for all activities.