

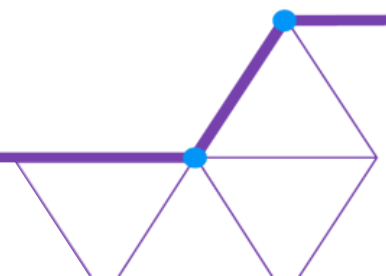


NPS Service User Involvement National Plan

January 2021



'Working together
to protect the public
and help people lead
law-abiding and
positive lives.'



Foreword

Amy Rees,
Director General for Probation and Wales



As we transition to our unified model of delivery in the probation service, it is important we create a system which fully integrates service user perspectives into all we do.

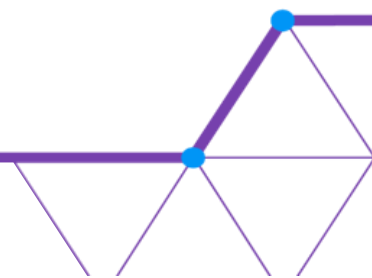
Involving people who use our services in how we design and deliver them, is key to our mission of working together to protect the public and help people lead law-abiding and positive lives.

It also helps us deliver against two of our wider HMPPS strategic aims; enabling people to be their best, and creating an open learning culture.

We want to build a culture of including and listening to diverse sources of input and insight, to understand what works, and apply learning across the service.

Listening to the voices, stories and lived experiences of service users, helps us understand what really matters and what works for those we support. We need to listen to and learn from those under our supervision, as well as those who have been a victim of crime.

This NPS National Service User Involvement Plan sets out how far we have come and where we want to go in the next year and beyond, to develop and reach joint solutions with the people we support and work with.



Introduction

Sonia Flynn,
Chief Probation Officer, Director
Women



I am delighted to welcome you to our first NPS National Plan for Service User Involvement.

The way in which we involve service users in designing and delivering our services is an important indication of how inclusive we are, and how we value diversity.

Being talked to and listened to as equals, and treated with honesty, respect and dignity is the cornerstone of how we work - and a culture of service user involvement needs to be the golden thread which runs through everything we do.

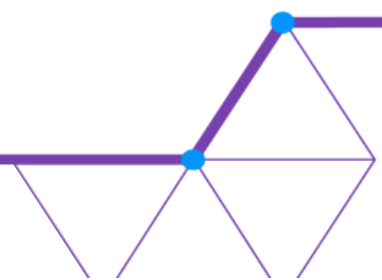
We have asked our service users and partners what we should include, and this has influenced and shaped all the priorities and ambitions in this Plan.

A stronger culture of involvement and inclusion will help us deliver truly equitable and value-for-money services which meet the needs, preferences and choices of those who use them.

Over the next year and beyond, I look forward to the productive and creative work we will do together to build on, and strengthen what we have already achieved.

This plan sets out our four over-arching ambitions:

1. Service user insights in action [Page 3](#)
2. Valued and rewarding peer led work [Page 5](#)
3. Strengthened employment opportunities for current and ex-service users [Page 7](#)
4. A clear path to excellence [Page 9](#)



Service User Insights in Action



“It’s nice to feel like people are listening to what I’ve got to say about probation. I wasn’t sure when I was asked to be part of this group if what I had to say was important, but it is.”

Women’s voices are the conduit through which I learn - I listen and try to understand what has worked for each one of them.

Angela Auty
Senior Probation Officer
Women’s Strategic Lead

In the NPS, our service users are important stakeholders with views and needs that should legitimately influence all our priorities and approaches.

Whilst we have made some good progress, often led by our CRC colleagues and other partners, there is plenty more to do. We currently involve and engage with service users in a number of ways:

- one-to-one conversations
- group based consultation and engagement meetings and events
- service user attendance and representation at planning and review meetings
- drop in service user engagement sessions and surgeries

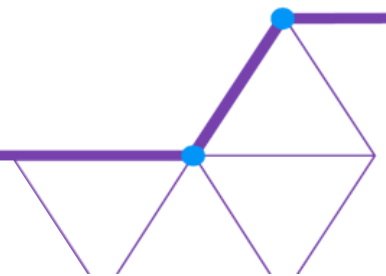
We also hear from service users through:

- An annual national service user survey “Your Views Matter”
- Approved Premises Exit and Entry Surveys, (including Independent Approved Premises)
- Complaints Processes & Suggestion Boxes
- Views gathered through audits by our Operational and System Assurance Group.

We work closely with the Victims Commissioner so victims of crime can shape the support and contact work we provide to them. Our Victim Liaison Officers also bring invaluable insights and perspectives to our wider service reviews and plans.

As we transition to the Unified Probation Model in June 2021, we want to strengthen and enhance our Service User Involvement (SUI) work, making it more visible and relatable. Where helpful, we will draw on new ways of working and use of technology prompted by Covid.

The views of the Probation Inspectorate have also played an important role in shaping our work, and we will build on this going forward.



Service User Insights in Action (cont.)

In the next 12 months we will:

- ✓ **Increase** briefings and awareness raising for staff and service users, to improve their understanding and ownership of SUI.
- ✓ **Ensure** we provide clear and timely updates to service users on key changes.
- ✓ **Strengthen** and expand SUI training and development for staff and service users, to increase their levels of confidence and capability.
- ✓ **Secure** more service user involvement in staff training, development and recruitment, and include service users in work to develop the staff training curriculum.
- ✓ **Make** better user of service user surveys by:
 - Using technology to make surveys easier to respond to.
 - Actively supporting more marginalised service users to engage.
 - Improving how we analyse, share and act on what we hear.
 - Telling service users what we have done i.e. “you said, we did” .
- ✓ **Explore** how different service users like to consult and engage with us, and use this to inform our SUI work - starting with exploring preferences for female service users.
- ✓ **Consider** how to include those who are less heard, and less involved.
- ✓ **Recognise** the diverse needs and learning styles of service users, such as using Easy Read principles.
- ✓ **Develop** our confidence and expertise in trauma-informed approaches to SUI.
- ✓ **Introduce** a national Service User Recognition Scheme.
- ✓ **Create** a representative national NPS service user forum which offers a more direct route of influence into national and strategic work.
- ✓ **Promote** the national compendium of HMPPS service user insights, so these insights have more influence on our national probation work.
- ✓ **Review** how we hear from and involve victims in our service reviews and plans, based on learning from challenges and opportunities arising from Covid.



“ I might not be a maths or science expert, but I am an expert about me. I have all the answers about what will work and what won't for me.”

Valued and Rewarding Peer-led Support

The many potential benefits of peer-led work are well recognised, and can offer powerful and life changing experiences for our service users.

Peer led work is seen by many as a credible and non-judgemental form of support, helping people build new social networks, and take new and positive steps forward.

People who receive peer support often experience a positive impact on their attitude, engagement and behaviour - while peer led workers themselves can increase their positive self-identity, self-confidence and employability skills.

Peer led work in probation currently delivers support to service users through a variety of both practical and emotional support.

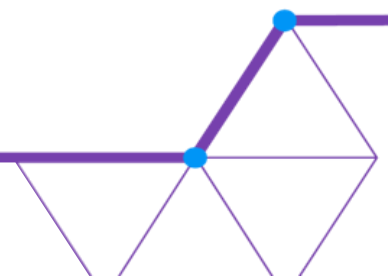
Some peer workers work very closely with paid staff whilst others work relatively independently. This includes:

- Supporting sentence management work and delivery of Rehabilitation, Activity Requirements including sessions designed by Peer Mentors.
- Engaging with service users in waiting rooms, before and after accredited programmes, and after groupwork sessions.
- Providing support through the prison gate on release.
- Contributing to training new peer led workers.
- 1:1 support.
- Home visits with probation practitioners.
- Delivering motivational support for Unpaid Work and Accredited Programmes.



“ My peer mentor takes the time to listen, we talk about everything and he knows about my family. I get myself into trouble a lot but if he is around I won't cause any problems 'cus it puts extra stress on the day. He is the only one who calms me down.”

“ When I talk to the reps I tell them things I wouldn't tell the staff. They just get it.”



Valued and Rewarding Peer-led Support (cont.)



“ It’s just better when they involve us - there are so many small changes that we can suggest. ”

When peers draw on and share their experiences with others, it provides unique and invaluable opportunities for support and learning.

Lisa Udale
Senior Probation Officer

In the next 12 months we will:

Develop a consistent approach to peer-led work which ensures:

- The benefits of peer-led work are better understood and more visibly drive our approach. As part of this, we will promote and share success stories and role models.
- We address the current variation in peer-led work across our probation regions, and establish more equitable and consistent access to peer-led work.
- Clear references to peer-led services and support are included in probation regional plans for 20/21.

To do this we will:

- ✓ **Build** a clearer understanding of the nature and level of need for peer led support.
- ✓ **Explore** the potential for quality assurance and continuous improvement mechanisms, to enhance and strengthen peer led support services.
- ✓ **Consider** the need for a core offer, with consistent roles and job descriptions.
- ✓ **Introduce**, where appropriate, eligibility criteria and assessment & referral processes.
- ✓ **Develop** national and regional processes to track the uptake of peer-led support.
- ✓ **Establish** a national lead role for Peer-led Services and Support.

Strengthened employment opportunities for current and ex-service users

The NPS needs to lead by example in demonstrating the value and importance of employing people with convictions.

Experience tells us that people with lived experience of our services often make resilient, highly motivated, empathetic and knowledgeable employees, who engage well with service users, and bring new ideas and fresh thinking.

Securing employment is also one of the most important steps to success for people on a journey away from crime.

Our work to develop pathways and progression routes into employment for people with lived experience of our services, has strengthened considerably in the last year:

- In our Probation Workforce Strategy, we have made a strong commitment to create a more diverse workforce, including service users.
- Our Probation Workforce Programme is exploring how people with experience of probation, inform learning and development for probation staff.
- The New Futures Network is a specialist team which works with employers and the Cabinet Office to secure prison leavers employment in the civil service.
- The MoJ People Group has a dedicated lead to improve employment opportunities for ex-service users, including how recruitment processes best support our efforts to recruit more ex-service users into the MoJ.
- The HMPPS Insights Group is recruiting to a lived experience post, to help deliver our Insights Programme, and strengthen how we include service user insights in HMPPS thinking and delivery.

- Our Reducing Reoffending Directorate has a lived experience post supporting SUI work across HMPPS, to improve service user recruitment and advise on wider service user engagement.
- The Civil Service-wide Going Forward into Employment Scheme (GiFE) offers an alternative route into employment for prison leavers, and has recently expanded to include those on licence and under community supervision.
- MOJ commercial colleagues are actively exploring how to create more employment opportunities for ex-offenders in the wider MOJ and other supply chains.

“ We just need the chance to get involved, try it out, and see what we can do - if not, what's the point. ”



Strengthened employment opportunities for current and ex-service users (cont.)

In the next 12 months we will:

- ✓ **Recruit** ex-service users to a minimum of 12 identified roles in the NPS and across the wider Civil Service, with an ongoing target of 50 each year.
- ✓ **Strengthen** support and advice to colleagues across the civil service, on how to employ people with a conviction.
- ✓ **Improve** how we identify employment opportunities in a variety of NPS locations and roles. This will include policy & strategy roles as well as frontline roles.
- ✓ **Seek** to secure ministerial support for civil-service wide targets for life chance opportunities.
- ✓ **Incorporate** the ambition for prison leaver employment, into the Personal Wellbeing and Women's Services Dynamic Framework competitions.
- ✓ **Increase** employment opportunities across the whole of the Government's supply chain, where relevant.
- ✓ **Continue** to build on and strengthen our relationships with potential employers in all sectors.
- ✓ **Support** 150 ex probation service users into employment in probation (by April 2022).



“ Involvement gives users real world opportunities to showcase their skills, engage with the organisation and help them realise they are not only users of, but part of the organisation. ”

Service users have really enriched and improved how we plan and deliver our services – we need to listen to them to ensure we get it right.

Joe Howard
Deputy Head of Stakeholder Engagement

A clear path to excellence

Our HMPPS Service User Involvement (SUI) Standards of Excellence* set out where the path to excellence needs to take us. They are based on what over 200 service users have told us is important, as well as input and advice from a wide range of NPS, CRC and voluntary sector colleagues.

Since April 2019, we have used these standards to inform all our regional plans, helping us to set SMART objectives and track our progress.

The standards of excellence also form the basis for an HMPPS SUI Toolkit, with lots of templates, checklists, tips and examples of good practice across our regions.**

The Insights Group leads HMPPS-wide work to ensure service user insights and perspectives form part of HMPPS considerations and plans.

National work is also steered and supported by two skilled and active groups:

- The NPS Service User Involvement Group (SUIG) - where SUI Champions from each NPS Region meet regularly to share their ideas and expertise, and steer and strengthen our SUI work.
- The HMPPS Service User Involvement Group (SUAG) - a multi-agency advisory group which offers invaluable and expert advice, as well as a critical friend to SUI work across the whole of HMPPS.

**See appendix 1 for the Standards of Excellence*

***The SUI Toolkit is on the MyLearning Platform - use the link at the top of the HMPPS (not MoJ) Intranet front page or browse <https://mydevelopment.org.uk>*

In the next 12 months we will:

- ✓ **Develop** a short and user-friendly version of the HMPPS SUI Standards of Excellence, to display in probation reception areas and other shared spaces and settings.
- ✓ **Use** tighter and clearer criteria to measure and evaluate our progress against the standards of excellence.
- ✓ **Share** the SUI Toolkit more widely and continue developing it's content.
- ✓ **Create** SUI Plans in every NPS Region, which address the local needs of service users, and consider how they can be part of service planning and review at every level.



“I always hung back and kept to myself, but they really made the effort to involve me and now I'm enjoying being part of it, and having my say.”

Appendix 1: HMPPS Service User Involvement Standards of Excellence

Ensuring service users actively contribute to the planning and review of their progress:

1	All staff are skilled and competent in securing service user involvement in planning and reviewing their activities, sentence planning and wider rehabilitation activities.
2	Service users have been actively involved in the development of their activities, sentence planning and wider rehabilitation activities.

Securing service user feedback on which interventions most help them, and how these could be improved at a wider level:

3	Robust methods for securing good insight into the needs of service users are in place and used regularly.
4	Opportunities for service user input are provided to enable service users to influence which interventions work best for them and others.

Involving service users in key stages of service design, development and delivery:

5	There is clear evidence of the influence and impact of service user involvement on service design, development and delivery at a strategic / organisational level.
6	Opportunities for service users to assist with service review and development as well as opportunities to co-deliver services, are actively sought and realised where possible.
7	A system-wide effort is made to engage with a diversity of service users including those from specific and under represented groups, with evidence of a tailored response to their needs (consistent with the Equality Act 2010).

These standards draw on the UK Customer Service Excellence (CSE) standard, and are in line with the Recognised for Excellence model.

