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Opening words

I am pleased to introduce this latest issue of HMI Probation's newsletter to those whose work we inspect, and other interested parties, to keep you informed of progress in our inspection work.

Inspection Programmes

We are continuing to make good progress on our main inspection programmes. Our Youth Offending Team Inspection Programme, covering the 157 YOTs of England & Wales over 5 years, has now been completed. We are publishing an 'End of Programme' report on 19 March 2009 and will be holding a launch event at the Bridgewater Hall, Manchester.

We are scheduled to start its successor programme, the Inspection of Youth Offending (IYO) programme, in April 2009. These inspection findings will feed into the new Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) arrangements in England.

Turning to 'adult offending' work, we will complete the current Offender Management Inspection (OMI) programme in March 2009, and our aim is to start its successor programme (OMI 2) in September 2009.

We continue to be strongly involved with thematic inspection work, jointly with other inspectorates. Some of these inspections focus just on adult offending, some on youth offending, and some on both. In September 2008 we published a joint thematic report led by HMI Probation on electronic monitoring. Currently we are leading a further four joint thematic inspections.

More details on all our programmes are set out inside this newsletter.

CAA and other performance frameworks

HMI Probation is a full partner in the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) of local areas led by the Audit Commission starting in 2009. We expect to be contributing to each assessment our key inspection findings as they become available, especially findings from the Youth Offending inspections. We also expect to relay performance information from the YJB and NOMS, together with our commentary. Full information on CAA and how it will operate is available on the Audit Commission website, as link [here](#).

Our inspection findings on adult offending will also feed into the performance monitoring system being established by the NOMS Agency and the Ministry of Justice.

Plans for 2008/09

More information about our work and approach for the current year is set out in our Plan for 2008/09 on our website, as link [here](#). Meanwhile our Plan for 2009/10 is currently in preparation and is scheduled to appear on the website too, in April.

As part of our plans, we contribute substantially to joint inspection work with both the Criminal Justice and other Inspectorates. 90% of our inspection work in 2008/09 is within the jointly-owned Joint Inspection Programme. The Criminal Justice Inspection Business Plan for 2008/09 is also available on our website, as link [here](#).

More generally, information on our work is set out on our website:

<http://inspectorates.justice.gov.uk/hmiprobation>

Inspection of Public Protection and Safeguarding work

Public Protection and Safeguarding work are not readily measured by any means other than inspection, and we have given a prominent focus to these closely related areas of work since 2004. We have noted a slow but steady improvement from a national benchmark of less than two-thirds of Public Protection work with adult offenders being done 'Sufficiently well' in 2005/6 to over two-thirds of it being so in 2008/9.

Both of these are 'high-risk' (reputational risk) areas of public service, where it is inevitable that a tragic injury or death will occur on periodic rare occasions. When it does, and when deficient practice has been found in an individual case, people want to know if this represents a wider problem of poor practice. It is only through a regime of regular independent inspection that Ministers and the public can be assured about the general quality of the work being undertaken in these areas – are all the relevant authorities 'doing all they reasonably can' to protect people from harm? Although we consider that there is much improvement still needed, we can note that such improvement is clearly under way in adult and youth offending work.

Staffing Changes

We are very pleased to welcome Catherine Calton, Zoe Bailey and Pete Clegg who have joined our support service staff team over the last 6 months.

We are very sorry to bid farewell to the following colleagues who have left us:

Helen Cash, Steve Blackburn, Dan Parks and Karen McKeown as HM Inspectors, and Liam Murphy and Maura O'Brien from our support service staff. We are very grateful to these colleagues for their substantial contribution to our work, and wish them well for the future.

A further development on staffing is that Kate White, Assistant Chief Inspector who has been responsible for the OMI programme, has gone on a 12 month secondment as Senior Adviser to the newly created Office of the Chief Inspector of the UK Border Agency from November 2008.

During this time, Krystyna Findley will be covering Kate's work as Assistant Chief Inspector.

We look forward to continuing to work with you.

Andrew Bridges
Chief Inspector of Probation
March 2009

Inspecting adult offending work

Offender Management Inspections

The OMI programme started in May 2006, and has inspected offender management in all 42 Criminal Justice areas over a 3 year period. It is now nearly complete and will end, to schedule, in March 2009, following inspections in the North-East Region.

We introduced the second phase of the programme from July 2007, with an increased focus on the handling of custodial cases. The OMI criteria under the second phase are [here](#).

The OMI reports we have published in the last 6 months are:

Humberside	17/03/2009
North Yorkshire	24/02/2009
West Yorkshire	24/02/2009
Warwickshire	20/01/2009
Staffordshire	16/12/2008
West Mercia	25/11/2008
Gwent	21/10/2008
West Midlands	23/09/2008
Dyfed Powys	23/09/2008
North Wales	09/09/2008

The published reports can be found on the OMI reports page of our website [here](#).

We have also completed the inspections of offender management in South Yorkshire, Teesside and Northumbria criminal justice areas. The reports of these will be published shortly.

The remaining OMI inspection, of Co. Durham, is due to take place during March 2009.

A key element of OMI is inspection of the assessment and management of offenders' *Risk of Harm to others* - see also section below.

From the second phase of OMI, and following the introduction of offender management arrangements in custody, a joint methodology for the inspection of offender management arrangements in prison, including outcomes for prisoners, is in operation by HMI Probation and HMI Prisons. We now publish joint reports with HMI Prisons on the quality of offender management arrangements for prisoners who are within the scope of the National Offender Management model. We published the first of these reports, on the South East region in April 2008, and have published the report for the South West region in June 2008, for London in September, for Wales in December 2008 and for West of Midlands in February 2009. Reports will similarly be published for the Yorkshire & Humberside and North East Regions.

Following discussions with the NOMS Agency, we agreed that some of our key results from OMI would be incorporated into the IPPF (Integrated Probation Performance Framework) - the main performance mechanism for probation areas used by the NOMS agency - in order to produce a comprehensive picture of performance across probation areas. Our key results are being included in IPPF accordingly, though we are discussing with NOMS how in the longer term our results will be included.

Plans are well advanced for the development of the successor offender management programme - OMI2 - which will start in September 2009 and similarly cover offender management in all 42 Criminal Justice areas over the following 3 years, and (jointly with HMI Prisons) offender management inside prisons too. The new programme will be a development from the current one, with an increased focus on the outcomes

of work with offenders. We will be piloting our new methodology, in March 2009, both in the community and in the custodial settings.

Joint Thematic Inspections

All our current thematic work is carried out jointly with other CJ and other inspectorates, and accordingly is also contained in the CJ Joint Inspection Programme. Some of this work focuses just on adult offending work, some of it solely on youth offending work (see the IYO programme), and some on both.

Under the CJ Joint Inspection Programme in 2008/09, in October 2008 we published the report of an inspection led by HMI Probation on electronic monitoring "A complicated business: a joint inspection of electronically monitored curfew requirements, orders and licences". This inspection also involved HMIC and HMICA. The report is available [here](#).

We are leading a joint inspection of prolific and other priority offenders, involving all the other criminal justice inspectorates. The fieldwork for this inspection has now been completed and the report is due to be published in the spring of 2009.

We are also working with HMI Prisons on an inspection of indeterminate sentences for Public Protection (IPP). The first phase of the work was led by HMI Prisons, focusing on cases in custody, and the report was published in September 2008, available [here](#). The second phase of the work – focusing on cases following release – is being led by HMI Probation, with the report also due to be published in spring 2009.

In addition, we are leading joint inspections on mentally disordered offenders and sex offenders. Fieldwork for both these inspections is underway and the reports will be published in the summer of 2009.

We have also contributed to a number of other joint reports, including the third review of Safeguarding Children and Young People led by Ofsted and published in July 2008: the summary report is available [here](#).

We are also developing plans, with the other Criminal Justice Inspectorates, for the Joint Inspection Programme 2009-10. We expect to support other inspectorates in some joint thematics which they lead. These plans have been developed in the light of the consultation exercises by the CJS inspectorates during 2008.

Supporting People Inspections

We have contributed to the Supporting People Inspection Programme led by the Audit Commission of the "Supporting People" programme, aimed at delivering support services to help vulnerable people to live independently. The Inspection Programme - which has covered all local administering authorities in England over a 5 year period from 2003 - is now virtually complete but we are working with the Audit Commission on some reinspections during 2008-09.

Inspecting Youth Offending work

Youth Offending Inspections

The YOT inspection programme covering the 157 YOTs in England and Wales over the 5 year period from mid-2003 has now been completed.

The YOTI reports published in the last 6 months are listed overleaf:

Swansea	11/02/2009
South Tyneside	14/01/2009
Wokingham	07/01/2009
Blackburn with Darwen	07/01/2009
Essex	17/12/2008
Reading	17/12/2008
Oldham	17/12/2008
Warwickshire	03/12/2008
Dorset	15/10/2008
Sutton	22/10/2008
Tameside	08/10/2008
Norfolk	08/10/2008
East Riding of Yorkshire	08/10/2008
North East Lincolnshire re-inspection	17/09/2008
Waltham Forest	10/09/2008
South Gloucestershire	03/09/2008

The reports can be found on the YOTI reports page on our website [here](#).

We will be publishing the remaining YOTI reports – for Carmarthenshire, Monmouth & Torfaen, and the re-inspections of Vale of Glamorgan and Pembrokeshire – over the next month or so.

With the completion of the current programme we also plan to publish a number of aggregate findings across the inspections on particular topics over the next 6 months. The joint report on health issues with the Healthcare Commission, 'Actions Speak Louder', was published in February and is available [here](#). Plans for publication of the reports on other topics include a number of briefings on good practice, a joint report with Ofsted on employment, training and education, a specific report on Wales, and a briefing outlining children and young people's views.

We are also publishing an 'End of Programme' report pulling together main findings from the YOTI inspection. This is due to be published on 19 March 2009 and we will be holding a launch event at the Bridgewater Hall Manchester. Representatives from each YOT, CEOs and Chairs of Boards have all been invited, along with other interested parties.

New Inspection of Youth Offending (IYO) programme

Having completed our five-year programme of YOT inspections in 2008-09, we are scheduled to start its successor, the Inspection of Youth Offending (IYO) programme in April 2009. These inspection findings will feed into the new Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) arrangements in England. It will be a much slimmer and more focused programme than its predecessor: although there will be two tiers to the new programme, and it will be completed in three years instead of five, its much more focused nature means that per year its average impact will be no greater than before, and each individual inspection will accordingly be markedly slimmer than its predecessor.

Core case inspection (CCI):

The first tier of IYO is the 'rolling programme' of core case inspections formally approved by the relevant Cabinet sub-Committee, DA(PED). HMI Probation will lead a visit to every relevant area of England & Wales over the next three years and examine a representative sample of case files in order to assess how often certain aspects of youth offending work are being done well enough – principally public protection and safeguarding work. This approach was jointly agreed by the Secretaries of State for Justice and for Children.

These key findings from these case inspections will feed into the CAA for the area, alongside the inspectorates' perspective on the other available performance information - from the Youth Justice Board for example. We will be working through all the areas in England by Government Office Region in sequence, working through each Region in turn, completing three Regions each year, with the first set of these inspections starting in the North West region in April 2009.

An equivalent set of these inspections will be undertaken in Wales, tailored as appropriate to the different local government arrangements there.

To date we have 'tried' CCI in two YOTs – County Durham and Wiltshire – and we warmly thank the staff and managers of those YOTs for generously allowing us to test our methodology there.

IYO Thematic inspections:

The thematic tier of the new IYO programme will focus on national youth offending issues such as youth group crime (gangs), prevention work, health (alcohol) and Court work, with different inspectorates such as HMI Prisons, HMI Constabulary and the Healthcare Commission leading these different joint thematic inspections over the next year – accordingly these inspections also appear in the Joint Plan for the five CJS inspectorates. However, we are also actively seeking to engage the partnership of Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission in this programme for this work in England, and Estyn and the Health Inspectorate Wales for this work in Wales.

Public protection (minimising Risk of Harm to others), and Safeguarding (minimising risk of harm to self from others)

Public Protection work and Safeguarding work are both integral to our core inspection practice, because they are work that is not readily measured by any means other than by inspection. Accordingly they are key examples of where and how inspection uniquely adds value. But it is important for us to be clear about how inspection can, and cannot, inform Ministers and the public, and about how it can help managers and practitioners to improve. The two subjects can be seen as being largely the same type of work in many respects, but approached from the opposite direction: with Safeguarding the focus is on current and potential victims (individuals who are at risk of harm from others, or themselves); with Public Protection the focus is on current and potential offenders (individuals who are at Risk of Harm to others). Hence for this Inspectorate there is an underlying approach that applies broadly for both.

- It continues to be necessary to emphasise that 'risk to the public' can never be eliminated, but the public are entitled to expect the authorities to do their job properly.
- 'Doing one's job properly' means 'doing all that one reasonably could' – with Public Protection this is "taking all reasonable action to keep to a minimum each offender's Risk of Harm to others"
- When this Inspectorate reviews an individual case (Hanson and White, or Anthony Rice), we report on whether the authorities 'did all they reasonably could' in that particular case – this is a qualitative judgement, and is a judgement of reasonableness, not of perfection.
- When we inspect a sample of cases (50 – 250+) we report on how often the authorities 'did all they reasonably could' in that sample of cases. To put it another way, if and when a Serious Further Offence (SFO) or other tragic event should occur in a particular area – and it can happen anywhere - our inspection finding indicates the likelihood that the authorities there would be able to demonstrate that they had done 'all they reasonably could'.

This is the basis for the *Assurance* that we offer Ministers and the public (not reassurance, which is a very different thing!). But this approach to inspection can also help to promote *Improvement*, if practitioners and managers can learn from it what is expected from them in these two difficult areas of practice.

To this end, we have also developed the *Risk of Harm Inspection Module* (RoHIM). We use this in OMI for any re-inspection of a probation area which showed a poor result on *Risk of Harm* work. The module is also available as a tool to help self-assessment by practitioners. Material on RoHIM is available [here](#).

On occasions, at the request of Ministers we carry out a specific inquiry. In March 2008 we published the report of an inquiry into the management of *Risk of Harm to others (RoH)* in Gwent as a follow-up to the Craig Sweeney case from early 2006: the report is available [here](#). In July 2008 we published the report of an inquiry into the management of *RoH* in London as a follow-up to the Chester Nash case from 2005. This is available [here](#).

We continue to provide advice to NOMS and the Youth Justice Board on the development of *RoH* work in both the adult and youth offending contexts.

Further information on our *RoH* work is on our website [here](#).

Diversity

Our overall aim is “***Working to remove improper discrimination in the Criminal Justice System.***” To this end we aim to integrate best Diversity practice into our inspection methodology and into our own staffing practices. Our Diversity Action Plan for 2008-09 is [here](#).

In the first part of 2008 we ran again the shadowing scheme for black and minority ethnic probation and YOT staff. The aim of the scheme – a positive action measure taken under sections 37 and 38 of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 - has been to promote equality of opportunity by informing and encouraging potential applicants from black and minority ethnic groups to apply for posts in HMI Probation where they have been previously under-represented, although the shadowing scheme is kept separate from the recruitment process. The scheme - which has previously also run in both 2006 and 2007 - has been well received. We are reviewing our experience in running the scheme, and the case for doing so again in future years.

We continue to work to our Welsh Language Scheme, which has been approved by the Welsh Language Board. This is available in Welsh [here](#) and in English [here](#).

Further information on our approach to diversity is on our website [here](#).

QA Strategy

We recognise that an independent Inspectorate needs to offer assurance that the work it does is carried out to the highest standards, to ensure that the work we inspect is scrutinised fairly, and inspection findings reached through a consistent and transparent process.

Our Quality Assurance Strategy was developed to help us systematically to examine a range of elements of our inspection process, to ensure that they reach consistently high standards, particularly in our judgements and our data production.

The strategy is applied to each of our inspection programmes. It is made up of the following parts, designed to cover each of the main aspects of our work and processes:

- diversity
- selection of case samples
- questionnaires to service users
- training of probation area assessors
- assessment of cases
- interview groups and meetings during inspections
- data analysis
- report writing
- report editing
- report production.

The 2008-09 action plan for implementing the strategy will be reviewed in March and a new action plan put in place for the following year.

STAFF CONTACT

HMI Probation has offices in London and Manchester

London Office

HM Inspectorate of Probation
Second Floor
Ashley House
2 Monck Street
London
SW1P 2BQ

General Enquiries

Tel: 020 7035 2202

Fax: 020 7035 2237

Email: HMIP.enquiries@hmiprobation.gsi.gov.uk

Manchester Office

HM Inspectorate of Probation
6th Floor
South Wing
Trafford House
Chester Road
Stretford
Manchester M32 0RS

General Enquiries: 0161 869 1300

Inspection Support enquiries: 0161 869 1301

Fax: 0161 869 1350

Our website address is:

<http://inspectorates.justice.gov.uk/hmiprobation>

HMI Probation Staff

HM Chief Inspector of Probation

Andrew Bridges 07810 055459

HM Assistant Chief Inspectors of Probation

Joint Inspection Programme

Liz Calderbank 0161 869 1300

Inspection of Youth Offending Programme (Thematic)

Julie Fox 0161 869 1300

Inspection of Youth Offending Programme (Core Case Inspection)/Supporting People Programme

Alan MacDonald 0161 869 1300

Offender Management Inspection Programme

Krystyna Findley 020 7035 2216

Support Services and Development

Peter Ramell 020 7035 2233

Inspectors

Jane Attwood 07973 614573

Helen Boocock 07715 989413

Mark Boother 07771 527326

Rose Burgess 07771 942675

Sandra Fieldhouse 07789 943122

Jude Kelman 07717 361639

Sally Lester 07917 084763

Lisa McDowell 07733 195658

Yvonne McGuckian 07768 033528

Ian Menary 07917 183197

Joy Neary 07810 055449

Tony Rolley 07792 631866

Nigel Scarff 07766 422290

Joe Simpson 07917 084764

Andy Smith 07771 527327

Les Smith 07798 607828

Ray Wegrzyn 07788 184212

Steve Woodgate 07789 943088

Practice Assessors

Sarah Ashworth 07900 338362

Stephen Hubbard 07789 943112

Associate Inspectors (fee paid)

Malcolm Bryant 0161 869 1301

Melva Burton 0161 869 1301

Paddy Doyle 0161 869 1301

Sue Fox 0161 869 1301

Martyn Griffiths 0161 869 1301

Keith Humphreys 0161 869 1301

Martin Jolly 0161 869 1301

Iolo Madoc-Jones 0161 869 1301

Sarah Mainwaring 0161 869 1301

Ian Simpkins 0161 869 1301

Dorothy Smith 0161 869 1301

Vivienne O'Neale 0161 869 1301

Eileen O'Sullivan 0161 869 1301

Rory Worthington 0161 869 1301

Programme Manager

Andy Bonny 0161 869 1301

Information Manager

Kevin Ball 0161 869 1301

Assistant Information Manager

Oliver Kenton 0161 869 1301

Services Delivery Manager

Lynn Carroll 0161 869 1301

Inspection Support Manager

Rob Turner 0161 869 1301

Inspection Support Team

Pippa Bennett 0161 869 1301

Andrew Doyle 0161 869 1301

Catherine Calton 0161 869 1301

Zoe Bailey 0161 869 1301

Publications/Manchester Office Manager

Alex Pentecost 0161 869 1300

Finance/London Office Manager

Charles Luis 020 7035 2208

Personal Secretary in HMI Probation

Ann Hurren 020 7035 2202