

Probation Inspection and Audit Forum

RESPONSIBILITIES AND CONTACTS

NATIONAL AUDIT OFFICE

The National Audit Office (NAO), headed by the Comptroller and Audit General, audits the financial accounts of Government departments, agencies and non-departmental public bodies and reports to Parliament on significant matters arising. It also examines the value for money (VFM) of Government expenditure, producing some 60 reports a year for Parliament on the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of selected aspects of Government activity.

In relation to the National Probation Service (NPS), the NAO undertakes the financial audit of the annual consolidated accounts, which bring together the expenditure of the National Probation Directorate (NPD) and the Probation Boards. In this work, the NAO draws on the results of the Internal Audit of the NPS and the Audit Commission's audits of Probation Board accounts. In addition, the NAO undertakes periodic VFM studies either focused on probation activity or covering it within a wider study of cross-Government activity, e.g. the study on the Implementation of the NPS Information Systems Strategy in 2001.

Contact:

For financial audit matters:
Andy Burchell, Director, 0207 798 7534
Andy.Burchell@nao.gsi.gov.uk

For VFM audit matters:
Peter Gray, Director, 0207 798 7575
Peter.Gray@nao.gsi.gov.uk

NAO reports can be found on www.nao.gov.uk.

HM INSPECTORATE OF PROBATION

HM Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) is an independent Inspectorate, funded by the Home Office, that reports directly to the Home Secretary. It was given statutory authority in 1991. It is a fundamental principle that the Inspectorate retains its independence from both the policy making and operational functions of the NPS.

The Inspectorate's purpose is to:

- report to the Home Secretary on the extent to which the NPS for England and Wales is fulfilling its statutory duties, contributing to the achievement of Home Office aims and meeting performance and efficiency targets as required

- demonstrate that inspections and audits contribute to improved performance in the NPS
- contribute to sound policy and effective service delivery by providing advice and disseminating good practice, based on inspection and audit findings, to Ministers, the Home Office, Criminal Policy Group and NPD and Probation Boards/areas
- promote actively race equality and wider diversity issues in the NPS
- promote the overall effectiveness of the criminal justice system.

HMIP therefore provides Ministers with an independent assessment of the national, regional and local work of the NPS, with a sustained focus on continuous improvement.

Contact:

Professor Rod Morgan, HM Chief Inspector:
0207 273 3766

Rod.Morgan@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Frances Flaxington, HM Deputy Chief Inspector:
0207 273 4317

Frances.Flaxington@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

John Hutchings, HM Assistant Chief Inspector:
0102 273 3364

John.Hutchings@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Peter Ramell, HM Assistant Chief Inspector:
0207 273 3791

Peter.Ramell@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

THE AUDIT COMMISSION

The Audit Commission is a non-departmental public body established by statute in 1983 to:

- appoint and oversee the external audit of local authorities, police services, local Probation Boards and healthcare providers in England and Wales
- undertake national VFM studies
- produce police and local authority performance indicators.

It covers over 12,000 bodies who spend nearly £100bn p.a. (around 15% of the Gross Domestic Product [GDP]). The Audit Commission promotes the best use of public money by checking that funds are well spent and by helping to improve local public services.

The Audit Commission's work with the NPS is focused upon the external audit of local Probation Boards in England and Wales, together with

periodic local and national VFM studies. In the year 2001/2002 the Audit Commission carried out the following studies commissioned by Probation Boards:

- Change Management/ Management Arrangements – 24
- Performance Management – 14
- Information Communication Technology (ICT)/Data Protection– 14
- Accredited Programmes- 4
- Managing High-Risk Offenders – 3
- Partnership – 1
- Youth Offending Teams – 1

Contact:

Sharon Gernon-Booth, Associate Director:
0207 396 1278

S-Gernon-Booth@audit-commission.gov.uk

Sean Quiggin, Research Manager:
0207 396 1470

S-Quiggin@audit-commission.gov.uk

HOME OFFICE INTERNAL AUDIT OF THE NPS

The main objective of Internal Audit is to provide management with an independent opinion as to the effectiveness of their controls in achieving the objectives of the organisation. As such, internal audit is mainly interested in the robustness of the management process rather than the outcomes which result from those processes. When Internal Audit review outcomes, this is mainly to verify the effectiveness of management controls. The underlying principle is that if management controls are effective, the desired outcomes are likely to be achieved.

In relation to the NPS, Internal Audit is carried out at three levels:

- Type 1 – audit reviews of NPD as a Directorate of the Home Office. For these the customer is the Departmental Accounting Officer (John Gieve) and the delivery of the audit service is overseen by the Home Office Audit Committee.
- Type 2 – audits carried out on behalf of Eithne Wallis as Accountable Officer of the NPS. These take a national overview of specific topics and are usually carried out in a sample of probation areas and in NPD. Delivery of these audits is overseen by the NPS Audit Committee.
- Type 3 – audits carried out within probation areas for Probation Area Accountable Officers, reporting to them and their Audit Committees on the robustness of controls in their areas. This is the largest element of the NPS Internal Audit programme.

Contact:

Tim Hurdle, Chief Internal Auditor:
0207 802 1836

Tim.Hurdle@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Roman Pronyszyn, Head of NPS Internal Audit:
0207 802 1842/07775 822 159

Roman.Pronyszyn@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Denis Heaney, Head of NPS Central Audit Team:
0207 616 5944/07775 822 157

Denis.Heaney@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Linda Hood, Head of Business Support:
0207 616 5930/07780 610 347

Linda.Hood@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

THE NATIONAL PROBATION SERVICE

The NPS was created in April 2001 under the auspices of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000. It is a national unified service orchestrated centrally by the NPD and consisting of 42 local area services which are clustered into 10 Government regions in England and Wales.

The collective aim is that the NPS should:

- by 2004 establish itself as a world leader in designing and implementing offender assessment and supervision programmes that effectively reduce reoffending and improve public safety
- by 2006 be recognised as a top performing public service as benchmarked by the European Excellence Model (EEM).

In addition to local area reviews of work, there are national arrangements being developed for quality assurance of:

- National Standards Compliance – already underway
- Offender Assessment (OASys – a joint development with the prison service)
- Accredited Programmes (national quality assurance arrangements currently being discussed).

The NPS has been subject to Better Quality Service (BQS) reviews since April 2001 on the basis of a four-year cycle. The topics for the current year are human resources and finance. Through time it is expected that this will create a highly developed 'mixed economy' in the service, providing for substantial improvements in both efficiency and effectiveness.

Last but not least, all 42 areas and the NPD conduct EEM self-assessments each year using the results to inform the continuous improvement element of their annual plans. Area service assessments are led and coordinated by the 10 regional managers working in the performance and planning department of the NPD.

Contact:

John Scott, Strategic Head of Planning, Performance Management and Regional Coordination: 0207 217 8244

John.ScottNPD@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

David Perry, Strategic Head of Interventions:
0207 217 0775

David.Perry@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk