

Prisons 2020

Driving continuous improvement in the Prison Service



Response document

Prisons 2020 – response document

Thank you for responding to *Prisons 2020 – a discussion document*. This is your opportunity to give your views on how we can all continue to improve our prisons to ensure we play our part in building a safe community in Northern Ireland.

This consultation will last until 29 September 2017 and there are three ways to give your views:

- For staff and people in custody - take part in one of the focus groups in your establishment. Ask for details.
- Email us at prisons.2020@justice-ni.x.gsi.gov.uk
- Complete this document and return to the email address above or to:

Prisons 2020, Room 310, Dundonald House, Belfast BT4 3SS

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact us.

Role of the Prison Service

Please refer to Page 9 of discussion document)

Q1 Do you believe NIPS has appropriately summarised its role and defined its key strategic priorities. If you have answered “no” please outline your views in relation to the changes you would wish to suggest.

Your response

The Probation Board for Northern Ireland is positive about the opportunity for future work in partnership with the NI Prison Service and is delighted to respond to the consultation on ‘Prisons 2020’.

Probation believes that NIPS has appropriately summarised its role and defined key strategic priorities and would have some additional comments to make relating to language and definition as follows:

Under NIPS purpose the second bullet reads ‘to improve public safety by reducing the risk of reoffending by supporting people to change their behaviours’.

Probation would suggest a strengthening of language in this statement would indicate a more robust proactive approach e.g, ‘enabling’, ‘facilitating’ in place of ‘supporting’

Under NIPS Strategic Priorities 1. ‘Achieve better outcomes for people in our care’ the phrase ‘better outcomes’ would benefit from clarification e.g ‘better resettlement outcomes’, ‘better rehabilitation outcomes’. PBNI believes it would be more accurate to include the word ‘custodial’ before the word ‘care’ in Strategic Priority 1.

Under NIPS Strategic Priorities 2. ‘Deliver safe, secure and decent custody’ and the first purpose the word ‘decent’ presents multiple interpretations ie decent in relation to the quality of the built environment or decent in relation to human rights/equality considerations? This statement would benefit from clarification.

Probation would further comment that those in custody benefit fundamentally from the stability that a period of time in prison can offer – specifically in relation to structure, routine and boundaries which provide a sound base on which to build rehabilitative, offence focussed work. Furthermore, PBNI believe that the contribution that prison healthcare can make during this time in custody is critical to the appropriate discharge and rehabilitation of vulnerable individuals. This is particularly important for those people who may have mental health or substance misuse issues. The transition from custody to the community is where real change can be effected and Probation believes this is a crucial aspect of future partnership work between NIPS, Probation and other statutory, voluntary and community sector organisations.

Our People

Our People - Questions	Your views - please refer to page 10 of the discussion document
<p>Q2. What do you believe our organisational values should be?</p>	<p>Probation believes that NIPS organisational values are similar to our own. We recommend there should be values included in relation to diversity and a belief in the individuals capacity to change.</p>
<p>Q3. How can we better work in partnership with our staff and trade union partners?</p>	<p>Probation believes that recent HM Inspection reports in England/Wales provide useful recommendations for future partnership work with staff and trade unions. The focus should be on clear communications to secure buy in from all internal stakeholders and encourage ownership of organisational values across all levels. Effective management and supervision of staff is crucial to securing a well informed and involved workforce. Probation would recommend the roll out of the supervision model for middle management grades which has been introduced in the Prisoner Development Units.</p>
<p>Q4. How can we improve communication with our staff and those who work with them in the prison environment?</p>	<p>Communication with staff needs to be regular and relevant. The line management/supervision structure is key to effective communication from the top levels of the organisation and there should be regular opportunities for feedback from staff. Internal communication methods which have proved effective for Probation include the staff newsletter, Probation News and annual staff days.</p>
<p>Q5. How can we best capture and share examples of good practice across NIPS and in doing so celebrate success?</p>	<p>An effective line management/supervision structure and regular internal communications are excellent ways of capturing and promoting good practice and successes. If appropriate, and bearing in mind security considerations, some internal successes can be shared more widely with partners or the public via social and traditional media.</p>

Our People (continued)

Our People - Questions	Your views - please refer to page 10 of the discussion document
<p>Q6. How can we deliver better work-life balance for staff, and support their health and well-being?</p>	<p>A clear implementation plan for any current health and wellbeing at work policy has the potential to deliver positive developments for staff.</p> <p>Operationally it is helpful to have a proactive response to day to day pressures which is reflected in the longer term strategy for ongoing issues e.g under staffing and overtime pressures due to sickness absence</p>
<p>Q7. How can we develop our leadership capability and in particular support first line managers?</p>	<p>The line management/supervision structure is crucial in developing leadership and Probation would also recommend an internal mentoring scheme for senior/middle management grades.</p> <p>Links with other Prison Services in the UK and Ireland have the potential to provide leadership models which could be applied in NIPS. NIPS membership of the Public Protection Advisory Group (PPAG), under the auspices of the Inter-Governmental Agreement, has the potential for further developing mutual learning and benefit alongside probation and police partners on the island of Ireland.</p>
<p>Q8. What measures could we take to support staff health and well-being.</p>	<p>Probation would suggest the application of a mobility policy for staff, particularly across specialist areas – the rotation of experienced staff has the added benefit of positively influencing less experienced officers.</p> <p>Secondments and/or inputs from partner organisations also have the potential to contribute positively e.g employing community resources where appropriate. PBNI also believe that staff training in wellbeing strategies and engagement days further endorses the value placed on staff and the important work they do.</p>
<p>Q9. In recognition of the diversity of those in our care would it be helpful to have bespoke staff training for specific prisoner groups? If so, what training would be helpful?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>One suggestion is Cultural Competency Awareness training. The Equality Commission is an excellent source of guidance in this area.</p>

Our Services

Our Services - Questions	Your views - please refer to pages 11-12 of the discussion document
<p>Q10 How well do you think the Prison Service performs in prioritising resettlement and rehabilitation?</p>	<p>NIPS correctly prioritises resettlement with particular attention to practical issues but there is potential for more emphasis to be placed on rehabilitation whilst in custody towards a reduction in reoffending.</p> <p>Professor Alison Lieblich (University of Cambridge) in 'Healthy Prisons' outlines the basic requirements of those leaving custody as photographic ID, a bank account and registration with a GP.</p> <p>Mark Goodfellow's report 'Role of family and community in supporting desistance from offending' is a useful resource.</p> <p>PBNI would further highlight outstanding CJINI recommendations which are spelt out for prioritising resettlement, rehabilitation and a seamless approach between organisations.</p> <p>The CJINI follow up report (February 2016) on 'The Management of Life and Indeterminate sentence prisoners in N.I.' highlights that "Collaboration between NIPS and PBNI is 'key' to management of life and indeterminate sentenced prisoners."</p> <p>This report stated that the strategic recommendations;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. to establish a more integrated psychology service; and 2. that NIPS and PBNI should extend their current service level agreements to pilot PBNI's delivery of programmes in custody, had not been achieved. <p>PBNI believe it can play a lead role in the partnership with NIPS in the areas of resettlement and rehabilitation and would welcome redeployment of greater resource to undertake this work.</p>
<p>Q11 What could the Prison Service do differently to better support people's transition from custody back into the community?</p>	<p>Probation recognise the progress made by NIPS in the emphasis on self –care and independence for those leaving custody.. Probation would further recommend clear consistent communication with statutory partners prior to release, particularly those partners like Probation who have statutory responsibility for some individuals following release. An example provided was last minute transfer of individuals to another prison establishment prior to release which makes supervision arrangements unnecessarily difficult. The role of family should not be under-estimated, particularly in relation to women in custody whose children are in the care system. Practical measures taken prior to release can positively influence the home situation and contribute to a reduced risk of reoffending. Healthcare and discharge planning for vulnerable prisoners is critical at all stages of the prison journey and at the transition to the community in order to maximise safe and effective rehabilitation and resettlement.</p>

<p>Q12 Are there models of good practice that the Prison Service could adopt to improve its approach to resettlement and rehabilitation?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Finland has moved from one of the highest rates of imprisonment to one of the lowest through creative use of the prison estate https://www.pri.org/stories/2015-04-15/finlands-open-prisons-inmates-have-keys</p> <p>Restorative approaches could also be developed with prisoners in custody.</p>
<p>Q13 What outcomes can the voluntary and community sector provide to assist with people's resettlement and rehabilitation?</p>	<p>The voluntary and community sector can positively contribute to this area in partnership with statutory partners such as Probation who are best placed to facilitate access and provide a structure around inputs. Good examples are the Reset mentoring scheme, Women's centres contributing to the Inspire model, training/employment and drug/alcohol treatment programmes in the community.</p>

Our Infrastructure

Our Infrastructure - Questions	Your views - please refer to pages 13-14 of the discussion document
<p>Q14. Do you think NIPS could make better use of the facilities/accommodation available to us, if so how?</p>	<p>Yes. Probation believes there is an opportunity in Northern Ireland for a radical approach to revising the use of the existing NIPS estate. Some suggestions that have been put forward:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Step down accommodation for ECS 2. An extension in the use of Burren House 3. Alternative use of Murray House <p>For women prisoners there is the figure of 15 women currently serving sentences of 12 months or less in custody who could access more effective services in the community. There are also opportunities arising from the Enhanced Combination Order pilot to reduce the number of people entering prison to serve sentences of 12 months or less.</p>
<p>Q15. Do you think there are other ways NIPS could achieve our infrastructure objectives? If so please outline your proposals.</p>	<p>See above</p>
<p>Q16. How do you believe NIPS could better use technology to develop a whole prison approach, improve family connections and prepare individuals for release?</p>	<p>See above reference to closure of prisons in Finland and Holland http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-37904263</p>

Our Partnerships

Our Partnerships - Questions	Your views - please refer to page 15 of the discussion document
<p>Q17. How do you think NIPS could make better use of our partnerships?</p>	<p>Probation believes there is opportunity and potential to further develop the unique partnership between NIPS and PBNI further. The Reducing Reoffending Strategic Outcomes Group is an excellent platform upon which to launch closer partnership working at all levels.</p> <p>As noted earlier, the CJINI follow up report (February 2016) 'The Management of Life and Indeterminate sentence prisoners in N.I.' highlights that "Collaboration" between NIPS and PBNI "is 'key' to management of life and indeterminate sentenced prisoners." Probation believes this principle applies to all prisoners and propose that further work takes place on the delivery of psychology services and on programmes to challenge offending behaviour as part of a joint commitment to rehabilitation.</p> <p>PBNI believe that we have a lead rehabilitation role to play across custody and community which we look forward to discussing and considering with NIPS.</p> <p>Successful partnership working on projects such as Reducing Offending in Partnership (ROP) and the Public Protection Arrangements for Northern Ireland (PPANI) demonstrate how these partnerships can be effective in reducing reoffending and contribute to community safety, playing to the strengths and unique selling points of each partner.</p> <p>The transition process from custody to the community is the prime opportunity to make practical use of statutory, voluntary and community sector partners.</p> <p>At an organisational level there are opportunities to work more closely with partners particularly the probation service. One area could be data protection, records management and legal challenges given that the two organisations largely work with the same people.</p>
<p>Q18. How could NIPS improve communication with our partners?</p>	<p>Probation would suggest the current Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) structure could be utilised towards improved communication - both PBNI and YJA are statutory members of PCSPs.</p>
<p>Q19. How do you think NIPS could make better links with the community?</p>	<p>PBNI is keen to play a lead role with NIPS in developing better links with the community, as and when it is appropriate. Again, PCSPs offer the opportunity to raise awareness and understanding of NIPS and contribute to</p>

Additional comments

Please use this page for any further responses to the discussion document.



Your details

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Thank you for responding to Prisons 2020: A discussion document.

All personal details will be held in strictest confidence and will not be shared with any third party or made public without your prior consent.

If you have any questions about the discussion document, please contact us at prisons.2020@justice-ni.x.gsi.gov.uk

