



ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PROBATION INSTITUTE 2020/21

Undoubtedly 2020 leading into 2021 has been a very difficult year. Nevertheless, it has been quite productive for the Probation Institute. Like so many others, we have learned to conduct the business of the Probation Institute remotely and have worked hard to offer support to Probation Services leading up to the transition to the new National Probation Service to be launched in June 2021.

PROMOTION

We took the opportunity of early “down time” in Spring 2020 to invest in a new [website](#) and a review of our membership levels, our marketing and promotion. Our new website was launched in July and is much easier to navigate. Richard Rowley has been working with us on promotion and social media.

We have built up our presence on [LinkedIn](#) by developing this space as a focal point for important developments in rehabilitation and resettlement, particularly for those with an interest in Probation. We have over 450 followers on LinkedIn, and the discussions are expanding.

The Promotion work has resulted in a significant increase in new members, particularly towards the end of the year. Thank you to all our members for your support in 2020. We are monitoring use of the website and building up the [Professional Discussion Forum](#) for members only. Members receive the monthly Newsletter plus weekly updates from the “*Useful Documents*” section of our website.

Our [Twitter](#) account is busy with over 5800 followers.

PROFESSIONAL DISCUSSION GROUP - PROBATION AND COVID-19

Since April 2020 we have held a fortnightly online Professional Discussion Forum for practitioners, researchers, academics and Probation Institute Fellows. This forum, on Zoom, has provided an opportunity for us to share information, experiences, successes and concerns about probation practice through the filter of Covid-19. We have discussed remote supervision, aspects of Probation Reform, approved premises, assessment, the experience of BAME staff and service users, probation accommodation and many more topics. These discussions will continue through 2021. A review of the Discussion Forum was presented in February with an interesting programme of new topics set going forward.

PROBATION REFORM

Directors of the Probation Institute have met regularly with the Probation Reform Team, and we hope that we have been able to influence some important aspects of the emergent new National Probation Service. We provided constructive comment on the NPS Target Operating Model (TOM) published on 10th February 2021.

Meetings with the Probation Reform Team have included a focus on:

- The Dynamic Framework
- Work with young adults
- The Rehabilitative Culture
- The impact of Covid-19
- Court work - including discussion with NPS and the Magistrates Association
- Embedding diversity and values
- Probation accommodation
- Workload
- The Sentencing White Paper

These meetings continue and we hope that they have established the Probation Institute in the role of a critical friend to the Reform Team and its successors.

The Probation Institute is represented on the following NPS Advisory Boards:

- Service User Advisory Group
- Electronic Monitoring Advisory Group
- Advisory Panel on Probation Learning

In September our Fellows and other friends helped us to think about what kind of probation service we would like for the future resulting in the paper released in November - [“A Probation Service Fit for the Future”](#).

PROFESSIONALISM

The Probation Institute website does not currently include the Professional Register as we are scoping the how regulation and registration could best work in the new service. The Centre for Justice Innovation has published a very positive paper on [Professionalisation](#) building on the White Paper *“A Smarter Approach to Sentencing”*. The Probation Institute has written to the Minister for Prisons and Probation urging the introduction of regulation and registration for the new service. We will publish our findings on a potential new model in June.

POSITION PAPERS

In August we published a Position Paper on [“Probation and the Voluntary and Community Sector”](#). - an important paper setting out the history of partnership between probation and the voluntary and community sector, together with principles for partnership going forward. The principles encourage constructive partnership working in the interests of service users, NPS and the voluntary and community sector.

In January we published a Position Paper on [“Probation Court Work”](#) together with a Briefing Paper on [“Remote Courts and Probation Practice”](#) including a useful guide for practitioners in remote court settings.

We were also able to bring together the NPS and the Magistrates Association with the Probation Institute, for a discussion on strengthening the role of probation in the court and increasing the use of community sentences.

We are commencing work on revision of the Position Paper on (Probation) Accommodation Arrangements particularly in the light of the increase in home working, remote supervision, and the integration of probation services.

A short Position Paper on the Protocol for Pre-Sentence Reports Before Plea is due for release in April.

EVENTS

We have held four online events:

- The Research Event in October 2020 included Professor Nicole Westmarland from Durham University on probation work with perpetrators of domestic abuse including remote interventions. We were joined by the Commissioner for Domestic Abuse Nicole Jacobs, Stacey Musimbe - Researcher from KSS CRC Research Team, Alistair Sherlock from Respect and Chris Edwards the NPS lead on domestic abuse.
- The Trainees Event in November 2020 included a presentation from Sonia Flynn, Executive Director NPS. Also participating were Paula Harriot from the Prison Reform Trust and Charlotte Miller from St Giles Trust on Services User perspectives, and Steve Doggett from Unilink on technology for supporting supervision. All the presentations were excellent and well received.
- The second Trainees Event in March 2021 featured two strong presentations from Dame Vera Baird the Victim Commissioner on Probation work with victims, and Sam Ainslie Criminal Justice Lecturer from Sheffield Hallam University on Reflective Practice. Katie Lomas Chair of Napo spoke to the trainees about Napo.
- The second Research Event in March 2021 focused on Recall and included research from Dr Matt Cracknell from Middlesex University and Kate Parsons from the National Probation Service. David Breakspear from the Lived Experience Team at Revolving Doors gave an important service user perspective. David Miners and Laura Burgoine from HMI Probation spoke about their recent thematic inspection report.

RESPONSES

We have commented on a number of reports including the White Paper *"A Smarter Approach to Sentencing"*, the Government consultation on race equality, the HMI Prisons reports on the experience of black and minority ethnic prisoners of rehabilitation, release planning *"What happens to Prisoners in a Pandemic?"* and the HMI Probation Report *"Race Equality in Probation"*.

PROJECTS

The project “*Services for Ex Armed Services Personnel under Supervision*” funded by the Forces in Mind Trust, fully completed this year with the review of the [e-learning product](#) - this is still accessible to all on our website.

In September 2019 we commenced a new project funded by the Forces in Mind Trust looking at the histories of veterans who commit serious offences of harm. This project in partnership with Liverpool John Moore’s University has been severely delayed by the pandemic, but the initial three sets of interviews clearly indicate that this will be important and potentially very rewarding research and we hope to resume in Summer 2021.

FELLOWS

A big thank you to all our [Fellows](#) - many of whom regularly join us for online discussions looking at progress and priorities for the Institute, also sharing concerns and issues affecting probation services.

The [Probation Quarterly](#) has gone from strength to strength - our huge thanks to Professor Anne Worrall who has edited PQ for three years. We look forward to Dr Jake Phillips from Sheffield Hallam University taking up the role of editor in 2021.

FUNDING

In 2020/21 funding from the Probation Institute has come from:

- Membership fees
- Grant from the National Probation Service to support online events
- Grant from Unilink
- Project grants

[Directors of the Probation Institute](#)

April 2021

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