

Probation Workforce Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Action Plan

Foreword

I am delighted to introduce the first Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Action Plan specifically for our probation workforce and am I proud to put my name to it.

Building on the HMPPS strategic principle "enable people to be their best", this Action Plan puts equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging at the heart of Probation as we bring together the unified service. It not only sets out how we will become a more equal, diverse and inclusive organisation, where our staff feel they belong, but how we will know when we have achieved this ambition. The delivery of this Action Plan directly supports the principles of the overarching HMPPS Business Strategy, the Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (DIB) Roadmap and HMPPS Race Action Plan.

A unified Probation Service can't just be about the structural changes, we must also focus on our staff and enabling you to deliver an excellent professional service.

The findings from the recent HMIP thematic inspection into the experience of ethnic minority probation staff was disappointing and challenging. The promises I make to you within this Action Plan form part of the robust action we are taking to challenge and change the inequalities our staff reported they experience.

Diversity is not just a moral imperative or a tick box exercise. Ensuring that we have a diverse workforce which is inclusive to everyone, because of and not despite of their background, will be a key foundation to our continuing success.

By surrounding ourselves with people who are different to us, we will start to expand our diversity of thought and experience. Those varying perspectives will in turn come up with unique solutions to difficult problems. Because the issues that we encounter within the probation service don't have 'one solution' and having that

cognitive diversity across our service will ensure we find the best solution possible for the individuals under our supervision.

We have also learnt a great deal about ourselves and our organisation over the past year. We have adapted and responded to significant challenge and change. Building on this learning, we will retain the positive and diverse ways of working that have emerged, creating a more flexible working environment.

As we move towards a unified probation service, we will be welcoming new colleagues. It is important now, as it has always been, to build that culture of inclusion and belonging by coming together as a new organisation and learning from each other.

I would encourage you all to read this Action Plan and reflect on what actions you can take to achieve the objectives, so that together, we can ensure all staff are treated fairly and equally irrespective of their background, role and/or experience. I know that there are many things here for me that I'll be taking back to the way I work.

You are integral to taking our probation service forward and delivering an excellent professional service. With your support, we will make this a positive, inclusive and diverse workforce, where everyone feels they belong.

I would also like to take this opportunity to say thank you for all your hard work and dedication as you continue to deliver an exceptional service through these challenging and unprecedented times.



Amy Rees Director General of Probation and Wales HM Prison and Probation Service

Introduction

The probation service is an essential element of the Criminal Justice System, and the service you provide, changes lives and keeps the public safe every day. To be able to do this fairly and effectively, it is important that we reflect societal diversity and the diversity of people on probation. Research shows that diversity in the workplace brings a variety of different experiences and perspectives, which helps us to better understand and meet the needs of our society and people on probation. It opens us up to new ideas and insights and encourages challenge and change, in return creating a more accountable and trusted organisation.

We understand that not all staff feel they belong. Belonging helps us to feel understood and it allows us to be our authentic selves. As we move towards a unified probation service, we will welcome new colleagues. We want to bring our staff together to create an environment where all staff feel they belong. We want to create an environment that values diversity and promotes equality. We must ensure that all staff treat each other with respect, creating an openness and transparency in the way we work together towards a common purpose.

Recent global events such as COVID-19 and the increased focus on equality and inclusion, as well as the recent findings of the HMIP thematic inspection into the experience of ethnic minority probation staff, has further highlighted that we must commit to understanding and addressing the key challenges experienced by all staff and taking full account of their different needs in our processes and policies.

Following on from the Probation Workforce Strategy (2020-23), which emphasised our commitment to 'creating a more diverse workplace where everyone feels included' and building upon the principles of the HMPPS Business Strategy and the HMPPS Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Roadmap 2021-22, we have developed this 12-month Action Plan. We will also ensure alignment with the 'MOJ Belonging Approach', a commitment made under the MOJ Outcome Delivery Plan 2021/22. Improving diversity and inclusion is fundamental to the HMPPS strategic principle 'enable people to be their best'. We have also included a forward look of deliverables for year two, which will be reassessed at the end of the year. Our approach to delivering this Action Plan also demonstrates the strategic principles of 'an open, learning culture' and 'transforming through partnerships'. This Action Plan will also be published alongside the NPS Recruitment and Retention Strategy 2021-24.

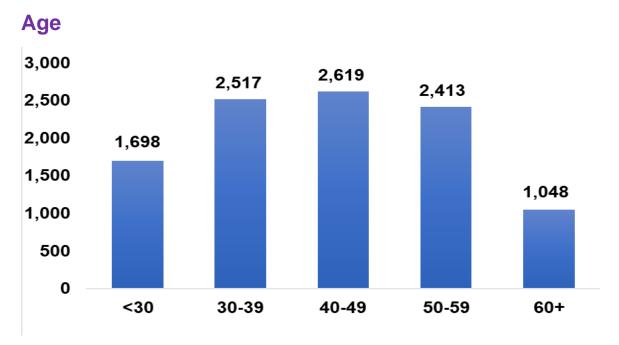
Throughout the development of this Action Plan, we have engaged and listened to our staff so that we can understand the barriers they face and what action we need to take to make a real difference. We have also engaged with staff networks, trade unions, HMI Probation, regional equality managers and other equalities experts across the National Probation Service (NPS), Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRC), the wider Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS), MOJ and Other Government Departments (OGDs).

Whilst there has been some progress made in probation, we recognise that there is still more to be done. Our staff take pride in the work they do. Therefore, we have committed to doing more to attract and retain the best talent by introducing fairer recruitment, promotion and performance management processes. We will ensure opportunities to develop and/or progress for those from a range of different backgrounds by introducing and promoting inclusive career pathways to senior management. Finally, we will create a culture where all our staff feel a sense of inclusion and belonging.

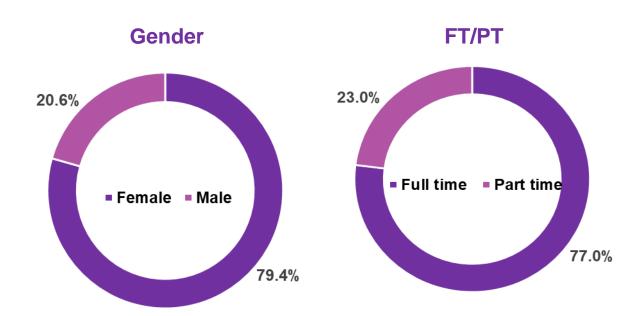
In delivering this Action Plan, we will continue to engage our internal and external stakeholders, and work as part of HMPPS alongside the rest of the Criminal Justice System and the Civil Service, to build on and share best practice. We will also engage with third sector organisations, who can provide an additional level of advice and scrutiny, improving the services we provide.

What our data tells us

As at **31 December 2020**, there were **10,295** staff (headcount) in the National Probation Service workforce.



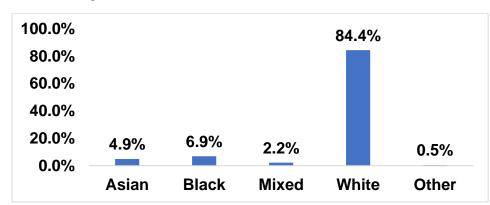
25.4% (2,619) were aged between **40-49**. While statistically our largest group, this was followed closely by the 30-39 and 50-59 age groups.



As at 31 December 2020, **8,170 (79.4%)** members of staff were **Female,** compared to less than 10% of the service user population.

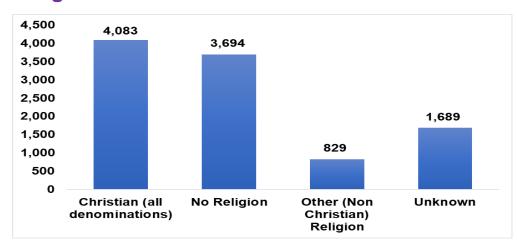
As at 31 December 2020, **2,367** (**23.0%**) members of staff worked part time.

Ethnicity

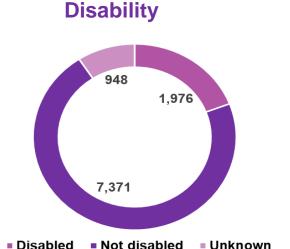


Of the 88.8% of the probation workforce that have declared their ethnicity, 15.6% are from an ethnic minority background. Of the remaining 11.2% NPS staff, with unknown ethnicity, 2.9% preferred not to say and 8.3% did not declare their ethnicity.

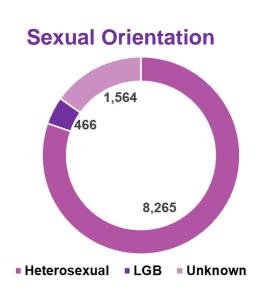
Religion/Belief



Of the 83.6% that declared their religion/belief, 42.9% reported as having No Religion and 9.6% reported as Other (Non-Christian) Religion.



Of the **90.8%** of the probation workforce that have declared their disability, **21.1%** are reported as having a **disability**.



Of the 84.8% of the probation workforce that have declared their sexual orientation, 5.3% identify as Lesbian, Gay and/or Bisexual.

HMPPS: NPS People Survey results

The 2020 People Survey ran from 1st October to 3rd November. The NPS had **6,889** responses.

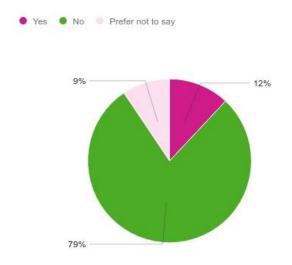
Inclusion and Fair treatment theme score:

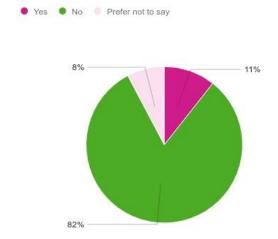


- 73% think the organisation respects individual differences (e.g. cultures, working styles, backgrounds, ideas, etc)

 B28.
- Only 64% feel valued for the work they do B27.
 - **76%** feel they are treated fairly at work B25.
 - 83% feel they are treated with respect by the people they work with B26.

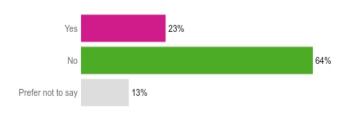
Discriminated against at work Bullied and/or harassed at work





- 12% of those who responded have been discriminated against at work. 9% preferred not to say and 79% have not been discriminated against at work in 2020.
- 11% of those who responded have been bullied and/or harassed at work. 8% preferred not to say and 82% have not been bullied and/or harassed at work in 2020.

Disabilities and Carers



• 63% answered favourably when asked if their manager supports them to ensure they have the workplace adjustments they need to reduce the barriers they face due to their condition(s) or illness(es), 11% did not and 25% were neutral.

- 23% have a physical or mental health condition or illness lasting or expected to last 12 months or more.
- 66% answered favourably when asked if they felt supported by their manager to balance their work and caring responsibilities, 11% did not and 23% were neutral.

Staff engagement

We carried out **thirteen** virtual workshops with NPS and CRC staff. In total, **106** staff members attended; **92 NPS** and **14 CRC**. We covered four topics:

- General attitudes towards equality, diversity and inclusion
- Recruitment and retention
- Learning and development
- Career progression and evaluation

Following the workshops, we identified several key themes. Some of which included embedding equalities, diversity and inclusion into governance structures, policies and process. Issues with recruitment and retention; lack of diversity within the workforce and limited entry routes. Limited career pathways, particularly for Probation Service Officers (PSOs). Diversity and inclusion being embedded into staff training and/or learning and development. Unfair outcomes from recruitment, performance management and promotion processes. Finally, senior leaders and management needing to be more visible in the way they role model and embed equality, diversity and inclusion into their business areas.

"There are no ex-offenders in the workforce. Our ethos is rehabilitation, but we don't live and breathe that." "Not if you're a PSO without a degree - your career progression is limited."

"I have not had a good experience - particularly with [my] disabilities. I had to wait 2 ½ years for a suitable chair."

"Struggling for support when only black female in the office. I feel ostracised for not drinking and for having a disability. My team do not organise outings that include me"

"Senior leaders say all the right things, but you don't know how authentic they are. There is no way of quantifying it." "As a manager, I understand why we ask for diversity data but from a team perspective I would like to know what this data is used for. We need to improve comms when asking for data and make it clear upfront what you need, why you need and what you intend to do with it."

"If people are part-time/carers – they won't have the time to do the 'over and above' stuff. Therefore, they miss out on R&R. They don't come across as exceptional against full time staff."

"A few incidences recently where people have been given jobs or told that they have job before they have been advertised – decisions are not transparent."

"Feel like I can be my authentic self but don't know how much is accredited to my colleagues or to the organisation."

"The pandemic has given us the opportunity to do things differently. We can go to training events without having to travel, stay overnight etc."

"People have different learning styles and that has to be incorporated into everything we do. One size does not fit all. Individual learning styles need to be considered."

Our Vision

The HMPPS vision is 'to work together to protect the public and help people lead law-abiding and positive lives'. To help us achieve that vision as a unified probation service, we want to build an environment that creates diversity and promotes equality. We want to become an inclusive organisation with a diverse workforce that reflects the diversity of our society and people on probation. We want a workplace where difference is understood, respected and celebrated. We want an environment where all staff feel they belong by building trust with each other and feeling safe to be themselves. We want to proactively use data to investigate and take action to address disproportionality. We will tackle bullying, harassment and discrimination where it exists in the service and we will ensure that you are equipped and supported to do the same. Innovative, confident and diverse leaders will be key to achieving this vision. By building this into our management and leadership, we will role model diversity and inclusion at all levels to ensure all staff are treated fairly and equally irrespective of their background, role and/or experience.

Our approach



Ensure

We have taken a data driven approach to developing this Action Plan, such as using published equalities data and internal reporting. Accountability will be key to delivering this Action Plan. We will measure our progress throughout and formally review and publish progress made at the end of the 12 months.



Empower

We have engaged with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders but most importantly we have engaged with our staff to identify the barriers they face and what actions we need to take. We held a series of virtual workshops with over 100 attendees from across the NPS and CRCs.



Embed

We will build equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging into our culture by embedding behaviours that address systematic disparities through good practice, innovation and action.

Our objectives

- Attract and retain a diverse workforce that better reflects the diversity of our society and people on probation
- 2 Create an environment that values equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging
- Embed equalities, diversity and inclusion into our policies, processes and governance to support all staff in reaching their potential
- Build an inclusive culture through effective leadership and management

Attract and retain a diverse workforce that better reflects the diversity of our society and people on probation

We want a probation service that is diverse and representative of the communities we serve, including people on probation. Diversity in the workplace brings a variety of different experiences and perspectives, which helps us to better understand and meet the needs of our society and people on probation. This results in staff feeling more included and engaged, enabling you to deliver better support and interventions for people on probation. We also understand that to be truly inclusive, we need to build a workforce that brings together different socio-economic backgrounds. We will explore the link between social mobility and diversity, with the objective to increase opportunities for people from all socio-economic backgrounds.

Our ambition

- A service that attracts and retains a diverse range of great people, attracting talent from under-represented groups and diverse socio-economic backgrounds.
- All recruitment is underpinned by principles of fairness, transparency and inclusivity and are accessible to all.
- A service that brings together a variety of experience and perspectives. Consistent with an open, learning culture, we want to take effective decisions daily based upon the best available evidence, including drawing on experience and views of staff and people on probation.

Actions we are going to take to deliver this objective:

- 1. Improve regional diversity of PQiPs using localised intel, outreach and engagement and improve PQiP marketing campaigns.
- 2. Widen promotion of posts by supporting local recruitment leads to promote roles using local community networks and channels that reach under-represented groups.
- 3. Develop a Recruitment and Retention Strategy, which will:
 - Review the national standard/guidance for **Expression of Interests (EOIs)**, as it is currently not consistent across the regions, which may result in some roles not being filled through open and fair competition.
 - Review the process for analysing the employee exit to better understand why staff are leaving the service and what can we improve on.
 - Analyse attrition data for trainee Probation Officer applicants, against applicant diversity information, at each stage of the recruitment process. Identify which candidates experience worse outcomes at what stage of the process.
 - Review best practice set out in the MoJ Inclusive Recruitment Guidance and embed into vacancy manager led BAU recruitment.
- **4. Increase opportunities for former people on probation** to gain employment within the service, who bring with them their lived experience.
- 5. Explore opportunities for veterans and ex-armed forces to gain employment within the service.

- 1. Wider roll-out of accelerated non-graduate route for internal Probation Services Officer candidates depending on outcome of Probation Services Officer Progression pathway.
- 2. Pilot an option for **internal staff to study part-time**, with an ambition to extend this later to external staff depending on the outcome of the Pilot.
- 3. Review and redesign the PQiP curriculum and delivery of the learning, taking into account the experience of different types of learners.
- **4. Undertake a detailed assessment of diversity across grades of staff and all regions** to identify roles which require a more focused approach to improve diversity. This could be for recruitment, retention and/or pathways.

Create an environment that values equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging

We want to bring together NPS and CRC staff to create a new probation identity, where staff have a shared purpose, enabling them to positively contribute. We want to create an environment where staff feel they belong, by observing how we interact and building trust with each other to create an inclusive environment where all staff feel safe to be their authentic selves in the workplace. We will create an environment where staff are treated with fairness and respect leading to fairer outcomes, and understanding the diverse needs of our staff, we will make reasonable adjustments as appropriate. Bullying, harassment and discrimination has no place in our workplace, and it will be tackled head on.

Our ambition

- Incoming staff feel comfortable to provide diversity data so we can continue analysing the data to understand the experiences and outcomes for staff and develop data driven action plans.
- A culture where all staff feel a sense of inclusion and belonging under a new unified probation service.
- Bullying, harassment and discrimination is tackled head on and staff feel confident in challenging and reporting inappropriate behaviour.

Actions we are going to take to deliver this objective:

- 1. Ensure staff discuss/record their equalities objective with their line manager.
- 2. Continue to improve our understanding of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).
- **3.** Encourage incoming staff to **declare their diversity data (staff declarations**) post transition across all lines of business and grades.
- **4. Build on communications** setting out why diversity declarations are required and how the information will be used and kept.
- 5. Establish accountability/assurance both regionally and nationally to action where necessary by ensuring that key staff have access to data and are equipped with the skills to assesses outcomes and are clear on steps to take should examples of potential disproportionality exist.
- 6. Encourage staff to become Diverse Representative Panel Members (DRPM).
- 7. Roll out the "Diversity and Inclusion for Staff" policy framework.
- 8. Support staff networks in raising issues and being able to influence the wider organisation.
- 9. Review existing pilots to gain insight about neurodiversity and how we can support neurodivergent staff.
- **10.** Support the creation of an **MoJ Workplace Adjustment Service**, which will work towards and support colleagues/leaders across HMPPS in following reasonable adjustments protocols in a timely manner.
- 11. Engage with relevant teams to analyse People Survey results and take necessary actions to improve results.

- 1. Continue improving and analysing our diversity data (staff declarations) across Probation, continuing to encourage incoming staff to declare their diversity data.
- 2. Ensure that our learning systems can access existing information relating to an individual's required reasonable adjustments and, where possible, be made available to all those delivering learning.
- 3. Support mental health allies in increasing our understanding of mental health issues.
- 4. Explore options and develop a Neurodiversity Network/Forum.

Embed equalities, diversity and inclusion into our policies, processes and governance to support staff in reaching their potential

We will ensure all our policies and processes respect, reflect and can respond appropriately and effectively to our diverse needs. We will promote our equalities, diversity and inclusion policies, guidance and best practice by making our aims more visible to staff. We are committed to ensuring that the performance management process does not disadvantage staff and instead promotes inclusive skills and behaviours. Building on learning from COVID-19, we will retain the positive and diverse ways of working that have emerged. We will improve our learning and development offer and open up career pathways.

Our ambition

- > Staff are treated with fairness and respect leading to fairer outcomes from recruitment, performance management and promotion processes.
- Reflecting the strategic principle 'modernise our estates and technology', accessible technology that enables all staff to fulfil their roles and supports rehabilitation.
- A comprehensive and quality package of learning and development products that meet statutory equality duties and strategic objectives to be a diverse and an inclusive service.

Actions we are going to take to deliver this objective:

- 1. Review and develop a new performance management process to ensure it does not disadvantage any member of staff and ensure appropriate oversight processes identify and analyse any disproportionality as part of the regular review.
- 2. Design a competency-based framework for pay progression that supports equality in outcomes for all staff.
- 3. Take forward the HR Policy Transformation Programme, which brings together HMPPS and MoJ People Policies into single MoJ policies, simplifying and presenting them in a more user-friendly way. As part of this, the HR Policy Transformation Programme will ensure each policy has an equality analysis completed which will respect, reflect and respond appropriately to our diverse needs.
- 4. Maintain 'Belonging' as one of the seven strategic learning priorities in the new learning and development model.
- 5. Ensure all learning and development products are tailored to and suitable for the needs of the organisation, meeting statutory equality duties.
- **6. Promote reward and recognition schemes**, encourage nominations and publicise the good work of our staff organisation wide.

- 1. Introduce clear pathways for PSOs to qualify as POs, which takes into account the learning from the PSO Progression pilot. This will include a non-graduate route, which considers previous PSO work experience.
- 2. Ensure **ED&I learning curriculum** meets the needs of the organisation and that it fits with learning needs, adult learning principles and time constraints.
- 3. Explore options how we can better draw on relevant data to improve our understanding learning and development take-up and engagement across different staff groups.
- 4. Introduce a blended approach to learning, which includes increasing the use of technology so that learners no longer need to travel long distances to access learning benefitting staff with disabilities that limit mobility, mental health issues, other conditions where fatigue is an issue, part-time workers and those with caring responsibilities.
- 5. Ensure that the **new digital resources are accessible to staff** by ensuring **assisted technology requirements** will be fed into the learning design process and will form part of the Quality Assurance framework.

Build an inclusive culture through effective leadership and management

Leaders across probation are going through high levels of unprecedented change. We will support them and their development as they lead staff in the new probation service. Equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging will be woven through our leadership and management at all levels. Through capable and trusted leaders and managers, we will bring to life the desired behaviours that are aligned with the organisation's values to create a truly world class justice system. Leaders and management will champion every voice by advocating for staff, listening and communicating openly, so that staff feel empowered to make the best decisions to deliver our service.

Our ambition

- Senior leaders and management are committed and held accountable for driving equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging in their business areas.
- > Senior leaders are more representative of the diversity within the organisation.
- Senior leaders and managers feel empowered to be themselves in the workplace and role model equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging in the work they do and the way they do it.

Actions we are going to take to deliver this objective:

- 1. **Develop an internal leadership scheme,** which weaves EDI&B throughout the programme and sets out the responsibilities and benefits.
- 2. Review training for line managers and ensure there is adequate training on awareness of EDIB issues.
- **3.** Continue to embed the HMPPS Leadership Code and to develop and deliver our leadership development offer, utilising online delivery methods where appropriate.
- 4. Embed the Culture Code, which will create inclusive and diverse culture into all aspects of our workforce.
- 5. Analyse annual staff survey data and produce action plans to address areas for improvement.
- **6. Build leadership confidence and capability** through a series of facilitated workshops on topics such as Culture
- 7. Host workshops for management to help bring to life the values and behaviours aligned to the culture code and leadership code.
- 8. Run a series of events which **bring together Regional Probation Directors and Senior Managers across NPS and CRC**, articulating any changes and providing opportunities for leaders to hear messages they will need to cascade to their staff in order to support the delivery of a unified probation service.

- 1. Increase the **diversity** of our **senior leaders**.
- 2. Using feedback and/or measures on the culture change to **identify issues and equipping leaders and culture champions to act swiftly to address them.**

Measuring Success

We will use staff survey results, HMPPS Equalities reports, PQiP reports and staff engagement findings via workshops and surveys to monitor progress. The table below shows how we will know when we are successful in delivering this Action Plan.

Attract and retain a diverse workforce that better reflects the diversity of our society and people on probation

We will know we are successful when:

- Regional diversity of PQiPs has improved by March 2021.
- The Recruitment and Retention Strategy has been published in April 2021.
- We have a clear understanding of diversity gaps across the NPS by role and a plan for improving this, by March 2023.
- Pilot an option for internal staff to study part-time in 2023, with an ambition to extend this later in 2023 to external staff depending on the outcome of the Pilot.
- Wider roll-out of accelerated non-graduate route for internal Probation Services Officer candidates by 2022/23.

Create an environment that values equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging

We will know we are successful when:

- Staff have discussed/recorded their equalities objectives.
- Staff awareness of PSED has increased.
- Staff declaration data is at least 60% by March 2022 and at least 80% by March 2023.
- Each region has developed its Equalities plan.
- The 'Diversity and Inclusion for Staff' framework has been rolled out by April 2021.
- Staff networks feedback that they feel encouraged to raise issues and influence the wider organisation.
- HMPPS Central Workplace Adjustment team has been set up in 2021 (further details can be found in the HMPPS DIB Roadmap).
- A Neurodiversity network has been set up by March 2023.

Embed equalities, diversity and inclusion into our policies, processes and governance to support staff in reaching their potential

We will know we are successful when:

- A new performance management process has been implemented by April 2022.
- Launch of a new competency-based pay progression framework in April 2021 and full implementation by April 2022.
- Introduced a career pathway for PSOs to qualify as POs in 2023, which takes into account the outcomes of the PSO Progression Pilot.
- Diversity and inclusion objectives are built into the quality assurance for all products. D&I products (as well as all other products) will be evaluated to see how successful they have been at achieving their learning outcomes.
- User data from learning platforms reflects an increased use of digital learning products.
- Quality Assurance framework implemented. Success will be measured via feedback from stakeholders and learner feedback.

Build an inclusive culture through effective leadership and management.

We will know we are successful when:

- An internal leadership scheme has been implemented by September 2021.
- Line Manager's awareness of EDIB issues has been built into Management training as an objective.
- Culture Code has been published in Summer 2021.
- Analyse staff data and People Surveys annually to inform action plans to address areas for improvement.

Accountability

How we will be held to account:

Probation Workforce Programme	Probation Service	HMPPS	MoJ	External
 Probation Workforce Programme Board Workforce Management Project Board Professional Agenda Project Board Feedback from internal stakeholders including staff networks, staff and People on Probation 	 Regional Equality Managers Regional Probation Directors 	 HMPPS Business Strategy Race Action Programme HMPPS Diversity and Inclusion Working Group, monitoring progress against the HMPPS Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Roadmap (2021-2022) Probation Operational Management Committee 	 Diversity Board, monitoring progress against the MOJ Belonging Approach Strategy 2021-2023 	 External Advice and Scrutiny Panel and third sector organisations Cabinet Office – A Civil Service for Everyone Strategy Trade Unions Annual Equality Reports, reports from HMIP Inspectors of Prison and Probation Legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty