



HM Prison & Probation Service

OFFICIAL

Mixed Caseloads Staff FAQ January 2022

Q. When will mixed caseloads be delivered in my region?

- A. All regions are planning to deliver mixed caseloads between now and June 2022, following delivery of the following key enablers:
- Regional digital probation delivery unit migration has been completed, enabling new allocations across staff groups
 - All relevant Learning & Development has been completed as required by staff in the region
 - The region has full control over allocation of cases to Probation Practitioners; this is only relevant to regions serviced by the Probation Service Centre
 - Cases are being allocated and held across historic staff group split

Your manager will confirm timescales for mixed caseload delivery in your region, as our Estates team will undertake work throughout 2022 to support the delivery of mixed caseloads. If you have any questions, please email: mixedcaseloads@justice.gov.uk.

Q. When will I start to feel the benefits of managing a mixed caseload?

- A. Mixed and unified caseloads will deliver many benefits. We anticipate that managing mixed caseloads will enhance staff wellbeing by reducing the emotional burden of managing particular cohorts; it will also help to improve individuals' skills, knowledge, career satisfaction and continuity. We recognise that, while caseloads have begun to mix in most regions, most staff will not yet be experiencing the full benefits associated with holding a varied caseload, as this is typically achieved incrementally. It's important to recognise that staffing gaps in our workforce have hindered our ability to provide Probation Officers with more varied risk levels within their caseloads – i.e., managing Tier C cases. Work is underway to recruit to Probation Officer vacancies alongside the increased targets for PQiP recruitment; however, given the staffing position inherited by the new Probation Service and the time it will take to recruit and train Probation Officers, we anticipate reaching our target staffing levels in 2025. Additionally, staff experience will be different in different Probation Delivery Units across the country, depending on staffing profiles.

Q. What is the latest update on our probation estate and mixed caseloads?

- A. The Estates team is supporting plans for the expansion of the delivery of mixed caseloads across each region by December 2022 through:
- Defining national requirements for security and agreeing these requirements with Regional Probation Directors and Trade Unions
 - Agreeing priority sites for the delivery of mixed caseloads with Regional Probation Directors
 - Surveying the entire Probation estate for adherence to the agreed security standards
 - Undertaking upgrade works at the priority sites in each region

It is expected that critical and high priority sites within regions will be fully compliant with mixed caseload security requirements by December 2022. If you have any questions, please email: mixedcaseloads@justice.gov.uk.

Q. I work in a region supported by the Professional Service Centre. How does this currently impact on mixed caseloads?

- A. The Professional Service Centre is an administrative hub providing a range of administrative services to the Greater Manchester, North West, East Midlands, Yorkshire and the Humber and South Central regions.

Allocation of all cases, with the exception of single requirement unpaid work, was completed by all regions in October 2021. The Professional Service Centre will continue to allocate single requirement unpaid work cases into the Professional Service Centre Community Payback hub; this will continue until the management of these cases transfer into regions at the end of March 2022, at which point regions will assume responsibility for the allocation of these cases.

Until the Professional Service Centre ceases operations at the end March 2022, the Professional Service Centre will continue to provide administrative support to legacy CRC staff and their cases. If you have any questions, please email: mixedcaseloads@justice.gov.uk.

Q. How can I discover more about ViSOR vetting and training?

- A. ViSOR is a secure national database that supports Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) and is used in the joint management of individuals posing a risk of serious harm.

The work required to ensure all relevant staff have undergone ViSOR vetting and have access to ViSOR remains a priority for the Probation Reform Programme. A ViSOR vetting and training plan has been agreed by Probation Service senior leaders and information setting out our approach to ensuring staff are appropriately ViSOR vetted, have received training and have access to the system was published in December 2021 and is available on the [Probation Hub](#).

Our national priority is to ensure that all Senior Probation Officers and other business critical staff are ViSOR vetted and trained. Heads of Public Protection have been consulted about the plan and regions have identified ViSOR implementation leads. A

more detailed FAQ document about ViSOR vetting and training is available on the [Probation Hub](#).

We have secured approval from the Home Office regarding access to ViSOR in all former CRC transferred in sites. If you have any questions, please email: mixedcaseloads@justice.gov.uk.

Q. What information is available about new MAPPA learning and development?

A. A range of learning and development activity is available for all former NPS and CRC staff to support their ability to take on mixed and varied caseloads; please see the [Probation Hub](#).

This includes MAPPA learning launched in November 2021 and has been designed by the newly established Design Faculty sitting in the Probation Workforce Programme in consultation with frontline practitioners and managers and represents the first national learning product on MAPPA.

MAPPA learning is an innovative digital product including interactive exercises covering the basics of MAPPA and the management of MAPPA nominals. The learning also covers Duty to Cooperate, partnership / multi agency working, making referrals, preparing for MAPPA meetings, risk escalation, victims and lessons learned from serious case reviews. A selection of podcasts recorded by subject matter experts is also available.

Staff may begin to take on the management of more mixed and varied caseloads after they have completed and are applying the learning and development modules relevant to the type of case and their individual learning needs. Line manager assessment of previous experience and the application of learning and development modules is essential for all staff taking on the management of more mixed and varied caseloads. Staff will be required to complete learning and development in accordance with regional plans and timescales. If you have any questions, please email: mixedcaseloads@justice.gov.uk.

Q. How can probation practitioners working in semi specialist roles operate effectively with a mixed caseload in a probation operational delivery model?

Probation practitioners working in probation operational delivery models can operate in semi specialist roles where regions consider this is required in response to local need. Regions also have the flexibility to adapt the use of the probation operational delivery model structure to meet local need – for example, those working with younger cohorts, women specific teams, integrated offender management, resettlement teams, etc. The probation operational delivery model can support semi specialist operational delivery and form a team point of contact for partner agencies, which will support continuity and communication. It is likely that the feasibility of dedicated specialist probation operational delivery models will be more suited to urban areas due to caseload numbers, but it is anticipated that local analysis of caseload will inform such decisions. If you have any questions, please email: mixedcaseloads@justice.gov.uk.