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**Ymateb i Ymgynghoriad / Consultation Response**

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**Background information about Estyn**

Estyn is the Office of Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales. As a Crown body, Estyn is independent of the Welsh Government.

Estyn's principal aim is to raise the standards and quality education and training in Wales. This is primarily set out in the Learning and Skills Act 2000 and the Education Act 2005. In exercising its functions, Estyn must give regard to the:

- Quality of education and training in Wales;
- Extent to which education and training meets the needs of learners;
- Educational standards achieved by education and training providers in Wales;
- Quality of leadership and management of those education and training providers;
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of learners; and,
- Contribution made to the well-being of learners.

Estyn's remit includes (but is not exclusive to) nurseries and non-maintained settings, primary schools, secondary schools, independent schools, pupil referrals units, further education, adult community learning, local government education services, work-based learning, and teacher education and training.

Estyn may give advice to the Assembly on any matter connected to education and training in Wales. To achieve excellence for learners, Estyn has set three strategic objectives:

- Provide accountability to service users on the quality and standards of education and training in Wales;
- Inform the development of national policy by the Welsh Government;
- Build capacity for improvement of the education and training system in Wales.

This response is not confidential.

## Response

### Introduction

We broadly support the proposed changes to inspection of probation services. Our key responses are summarised below.

- We support the inspection of local Probation Delivery Units (PDUs) separately, with local findings feeding into a regional inspection.
- It would be helpful to publish judgements about how effectively the local PDU meets targets agreed with HMPPS, whilst also taking account of any targets and objectives set by the regional group.
- In order to clearly identify how effectively local PDUs are managed and led, it would be helpful to rate the domain one standards that apply to each PDU.
- Given the proviso for required contingencies set out in 3.10, a cohort approach would be helpful.
- It would be helpful to consider how the regional leadership monitors and evaluates local PDU delivery.
- It would be useful to consider how a region undertakes strategic planning and quality management across its area of responsibility.
- Inspectors should consider how the regional unit ensures that all key partners come together effectively to provide the services required to support clients.
- While inspectors will consider performance against commissioned indicators, it would be useful to consider also the appropriateness and effectiveness of any additional performance indicators that the regional unit may set.
- We would agree with rating performance of regional and local units to identify local variations in performance.
- The inspectorate could aggregate the data and findings gathered in any year from PDU and regional inspections to identify common themes and areas of national concern within a thematic style of reporting.
- Without having an additional layer of inspection activity to monitor those services requiring improvement, we believe that a two year cycle is reasonable.
- An inspection model that focuses on clients' sustainable positive progress within factors such as accommodation or employment/education/training would put an emphasis more appropriately on the impact of services.
- A client's sustainable progress may be difficult for an inspection team to evaluate during the period of an inspection. This approach will therefore rely on the PDU/regional unit gathering, monitoring and evaluating data and evidence that is outcome focussed.
- Regional units would need to demonstrate how they take a strategic approach to evaluating the impact of services and how they make an informed response to their evaluation.

## Consultation questions

QUESTION – Is an inspection focus on the new local PDUs the right approach?

Given the proposed management structures, we agree with the proposal for inspecting local PDUs separately, with local findings feeding into a regional inspection. This would help to avoid diluting judgements and would help to provide more targeted recommendations.

QUESTION – What information would be relevant and useful to publish at a PDU level?

It would be helpful to publish judgements about how effectively the local PDU meets targets agreed with HMPPS, whilst also taking account of any targets and objectives set by the regional group.

In order to clearly identify how effectively local PDUs are managed and led, it would be helpful to consider and make judgements/ratings on the domain one standards that apply to each PDU. This would enable the formation of clear, customised, local recommendations and would form a helpful, more transparent basis for the formulation of a regional rating.

QUESTION – Should we include ratings for local leadership, staffing and services as well as ratings of the quality of individual case supervision?

In order to clearly identify how effectively local PDUs are managed and led, it would be helpful to consider and make judgements/ratings on the domain one standards that apply to each PDU. This would enable the formation of clear, customised, local recommendations and would form a helpful, more transparent basis for the formulation of a regional rating.

QUESTION – Do you see any problem with us moving from a sampling to a cohort approach to domain two inspection?

Given the proviso for required contingencies set out in 3.10, a cohort approach would be helpful. The size of the resulting sample would still provide a reasonable number to identify issues or strengths in each PDU's delivery.

QUESTION – What aspects of probation organisation and delivery should be inspected and rated at regional rather than PDU level?

It would be helpful to consider how the regional leadership monitors and evaluates local PDU delivery, and how they respond to any shortcomings they identify at local level.

It would be useful to consider how strategic planning is developed and what quality management system is used to ensure a consistently effective service across its area of responsibility.

Since purposeful partnership working will be essential in supporting clients, it would be useful to consider how the regional unit ensures that all key partners come together effectively to provide the services required to enable clients to make suitable progress.

Performance against commissioned indicators will be necessary, but it will be useful to consider the appropriateness and effectiveness of any additional performance indicators that the regional unit may set to enable progress against its strategic planning and quality improvement plans.

QUESTION – Should unpaid work, resettlement services and the quality of victim liaison work be rated at regional rather than PDU level?

There are arguments for rating performance of these aspects at both levels. This is particularly the case since there may be local variations in performance, which would be better diagnosed and highlighted at a local level, with accountability being allocated at local and regional levels.

QUESTION – Responsibility for some aspects of probation delivery will continue to rest at national rather than regional or PDU level. How should inspection of these functions be taken forward from 2021?

It would be possible to aggregate the data and findings gathered in any year from PDU and regional inspections to identify common themes and areas of national concern within a thematic style of reporting. This would provide an agenda to which the NPS would respond.

QUESTION – Is inspection of each PDU and region every two years a proportionate approach?

Without having an additional layer of inspection activity to monitor those services requiring improvement, we agree with the proposal for a two year cycle.

QUESTION – What is the best way of measuring outcomes for service users while under probation supervision? What outcomes should we focus on?

The assumption that good quality inputs and well managed supervision will deliver better outcomes for service users is appropriate where it is tested against the quality of outcomes that are achieved. Therefore a model that takes full account of, and focuses on clients' sustainable positive progress within factors such as accommodation, employment/education/training, substance misuse or criminal activity will put the emphasis more appropriately on the impact of services. This would enable a judgement to be made on the quality and effectiveness of interventions in reducing offending behaviour.

A client's sustainable progress may be difficult for an inspection team to evaluate during the period of an inspection. This approach would therefore rely on the PDU/regional unit gathering, monitoring and evaluating data and evidence that is outcome focussed, and evidence that uses this evaluation appropriately to plan service improvement. While the proposed domain two standards would enable judgements of effectiveness against an individual, regional units would need to demonstrate how they take a strategic approach to

evaluating the impact of services and how they make an informed response to their evaluation.