

London Assembly Police and Crime Committee - Wednesday 20 July 2022

Transcript of Agenda Item 5 – Probation Services in London

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): We now move on to our main item of business, the discussion on probation services in London. I would like to welcome our guests: Kilvinder Vigurs, who is the Regional Director for the London Probation Service, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS); Will Balakrishnan, Director of Commissioning and Partnerships from the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC); Commander Nick John, Head of Criminal Justice for the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS); and joining us virtually is Katie Lomas, National Chair of the National Association of Probation Officers (Napo).

I am going to start with the questions. I will address all of you. Do you think the reunified Probation Service provides a better model for delivering probation services in London? If so, can you provide examples of how the service has improved over the last year?

Commander Nick John (Head of Criminal Justice, Metropolitan Police Service): Good morning. It is fair to say that since the changes we have seen and continue to see significant improvement in the working relationships between the Probation Service and the MPS. We operate in partnership across a wide range of different areas, Integrated Offender Management (IOM), electronic monitoring, violence reduction, intelligence, etc. What we are seeing and continue to see is those good relationships, both at the operational and tactical level, as well as more strategically.

There are a number of really positive benefits to that, and we are starting to see that greater engagement because it is unified under one service as opposed to having two places to go. In brief, we have absolutely recognised the benefits of coming together as the one service. There obviously are challenges around capacity and that continues to be the case in both sides of the partnership, but we are grateful for the support that we continue to get working in partnership with the Probation Service as a whole.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): That is good news. Will?

Will Balakrishnan (Director of Commissioning and Partnerships, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): I echo what [Commander] Nick [John] says. The Mayor always supported the reunification of Probation and we were pleased to be consulted at MOPAC on the new model before it went live. For us, the big difference is improving the role that the London Probation Service (LPS) can play in multiagency work, particularly the capacity to involve stakeholders. Post-unification we have seen that move on dramatically. I think about things like Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC); Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs); IOM; a lot of the violence reduction work that we are convening at MOPAC, but also in terms of data sharing. Just having one organisation to be able to do that makes a huge difference.

It is too early to be objective yet. We will have to wait to see the reoffending stats. There is quite a big lag. But everything is pointing in the right direction.

Another thing that is really important is thinking about reducing teenage homicides, we know from some recent analysis that often those whose violence escalates are medium-risk offenders. If you can imagine the old model, those medium-risk offenders would have been with the Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC), now they are with Probation, therefore we have those offenders under one national service. That just makes it

much easier for us as a partnership to respond to escalations in risk. That is crucial for public protection. Therefore, all in all, we really welcome the changes.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Good, it is something we are going to be keeping an eye on therefore stats will show as we go along. Kilvinder, what do you think?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): Yes, absolutely echoing what Nick and Will [Balakrishnan] have said. In essence I am marking my own homework here being the Director of the one organisation, but echoing the same about one voice as a Probation Service so that things are much more streamlined, much more effective. Having one system, whether it be information technology (IT) systems; whether it be having one person at a Community Safety Partnership Board instead of two; whether it be having two separate operating models for IOM, we just have one. Also, the commissioning opportunities we have had, being able to deliver on a women's service across London, working really closely with MOPAC on that and Women's Blueprint is just a really good example of how we are able to deliver one model across London. There are lots of other examples, which I am sure will come out today.

Picking up the point from Nick in relation to working with the MPS, again the efficiencies around sharing information. I am sure it is easier for the MPS to go to one Head of Service, one Senior Probation Officer. There are efficiencies in the merger. There is also value for money for the taxpayer. Therefore, yes, the unification has been positive.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): That is all really good. In our meeting on 22 June [2022] we heard repeatedly that under the reunification Probation Officers' caseloads were far too high to allow them to do their jobs effectively. What action are you taking on that, Kilvinder?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): It is not just about Probation Officers. I inherited a vacancy rate of about 600 from the private sector, from the CRC. In the National Probation Service (NPS) we had reduced that gap significantly. The biggest gap is for our Probation Service Officers who carry far more cases. The difference is the Probation Officers carry the more complex risky cases. We have a really strong pipeline of getting Probation Officers into the workplace. I have something like over 200 trainees in the business at the moment, 60 just qualified last month, I have another 70 due to qualify in October. Next April I am taking 180. It is very positive in terms of that pipeline.

We are on a mass recruitment drive for our administrators. We are looking at a completely different model in London to have a service centre approach, which the CRC used to use and was very positive, therefore we want to take some of that innovation from the private sector and develop that. We need to recruit just under 300 Probation Service Officers. We need to put them in our Prison Resettlement teams. After unification, a number of people did not want to work within the Civil Service, they did not want to do the work that is required under the remit of the Probation Service and left. That means we have huge gaps in our resettlement work, therefore a huge drive to get people in there. A huge drive to get people to do our unpaid work supervisors. That is how you get the 600, therefore a huge recruitment drive. Then bringing them in cohorts so that we can provide some comprehensive learning and development so that we keep them as well, rather than just trying to land 600 in one day.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Yes, because, in the past, I have read that your retention rates have been really bad, haven't they?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): Yes, it depends on each grade as well. Part of the problem is the cost of living in London and a lot of the public sector has the same experience. People can get paid more in different departments and in different organisations in London. Therefore, there are more opportunities for our colleagues in London to move on to do different things. Some of the attrition rate is due to people leaving to work in the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), HMPPS elsewhere, or even just out of London.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Is the fact that they are also inexperienced, is that giving you any problems?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): It does. But the biggest impact of that has been COVID and people working remotely. We have to remember that we carried on as keyworkers providing a frontline service, but on a rota basis. Therefore, sometimes the experienced staff we have were not in the offices at the same time as some of our inexperienced officers. Therefore, we are moving to - and have been doing for a number of months - getting the experienced officers in the buildings again with our new staff because you learn on the job as a Probation Service Officer.

While we want people to be able to work flexibly at home and in the office, what we are missing is people in the office to give advice. I think that it is 50:50 in terms of experience levels. We still have a significant number of people who are vocationally-led who want to be doing the work they do. We need them to support the trainees coming in.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Have there been any specific issues implementing this new model that have given you concern?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): It is time. The way I put it, people talk about June, but it was end of June from a central level the contracts were signed off. That is when we started to do the ground work in July. For every department the NPS had, the CRC had a department. We had to merge those, had to recruit the top tier, my Regional Leadership Team, my Operational Leadership Team. We had to reconfigure our Performance and Quality Teams, just as some examples. Bringing two into one has taken us some time, while still delivering the frontline service.

One of the challenges, including the vacancy rate, has been the IT systems. The London CRC had a completely different IT system to the NPS. Therefore, it has really taken six to seven months for those practitioners to learn the systems. Again, you learn it as you use it because there are so many component parts to all the different digital systems in HMPPS. Those are probably the bigger challenges.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Given those challenges, and of course recruitment and problems like that, when are you forecasting that you will be full speed ahead with it running exactly as it should?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): I used July to March to focus on the mobilisation/stabilisation. By 1 April [2022], albeit the vacancies that we have to understand, and that is why we are working on prioritising Probation, which in essence is triaging all our cases to make sure resources follow risk, we have a firm delivery plan, which started from 1 April [2022].

The reality is we have Her Majesty's Inspectorate [of Probation] (HMIP) with us at the moment. They announced they were coming to us a few weeks ago. The unfortunate issue is they are picking a sample of cases six months after the merger. Our previous HMIP reports had come out as inadequate and sampling cases six months after the merger is going to show that things will not have moved on because people are learning

those new IT systems, we had not got the Learning and Development Plans in place. Therefore, again, that is going to be a challenge for us going forward because the systems were put in place ready by 1 April this year.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): No doubt you will be able to comment on the report anyway, but let us see how that goes. Assembly Member Desai.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair): Good morning, panel. If I can ask you, Kilvinder, to some extent you already answered this question, but all the six Probation Services that have been reviewed by HMIP since reunification have been deemed as requiring improvement. How would your service fare if it was inspected tomorrow?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): It would be similar. If you take a snapshot of where we were in June last year, or just before then, and you separated out the inspection reports, and even our internal audits, you would see that the CRCs were faring less well, they were poorer. Therefore, on the merger in June/July, the inspection case audits are the similar cases. Therefore, they are inspecting cases that have not had the opportunity for our colleagues to have adapted to the new systems and the new learning and development. Therefore, there is an argument, a challenge, around picking case samples at a point where we have just merged. That is the challenge. We have a plan in place, the recruitment plan, the learning and development plan, I would like to see HMIP come back in 12 months to see where all those probation regions are at, being allowed to deliver on those plans, and then be inspected.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair): We have heard from a number of stakeholders that, notwithstanding the difficulties they faced, there were innovative and positive aspects to the CRC model. Would you agree with this? If so, how are you ensuring that learning is retained and incorporated into the new model?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): Yes. I talked about the service centre approach. That was an innovation London CRC developed and we have kept that. A number of the CRC colleagues are part of the leadership team, therefore they have come with their experiences, capturing them in that way. Looking at the digital systems that they were using and how we can develop those. Looking at the different ways that they have worked with different cohorts of people, sharing that learning. One of the key people in our Learning and Development Team was in the CRC, and she has been able to bring her experience of that. We have a blended approach at the leadership table. There is not a dominance of the previous NPS. We have made sure that the whole Leadership Team is a blended one.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair): Thank you.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Now I would like to ask the very first question to Katie Lomas, who is the National Chair of Napo, who is joining us remotely. Katie, the original question was, do you think the reunified Probation Service provides a better model for delivering probation services in London? Can you provide examples of how the service has improved over the last year from your perspective?

Katie Lomas (National Chair, National Association of Probation Officers): Thank you very much, Chair. Thank you for inviting me to speak. Although I have a national role in Napo, I am the link officer for our London branch, therefore meet regularly with our members who work in London and see a perspective on a national level and locally for London as well.

There are a few things to say about what happened to Probation last year. I know that a lot of people use the language that Kilvinder [Vigurs] has been using and call it a merger, but it was not a merger. The CRCs, their contracts were ended, they ceased to exist apart from for ongoing contractual reasons, and the work that they were doing and the staff who were doing that work were transferred into the NPS, which was renamed on the same day as the Probation Service.

What actually happened was that those staff were transplanted into an organisation that worked very, very differently. There is clearly going to be a period of adjustment. There are always going to be things that people need to learn, new ways of working, systems, which Kilvinder has explained will be new and different. That is always going to be challenging and take time. However, the wider context of this happening during a pandemic where we were working on exceptional delivery models, therefore we were not delivering our services as normal, and the huge staffing issues in both organisations that were unifying together, that context explains why we are still not seeing a level of operation in the Probation Service that would be expected.

I just wanted to pick up on a few particular items. One is that a lot of the learning and development that has been offered to staff, both the staff transferring and the existing staff that came from the NPS, it is online learning that is offered to them. It is not delivered - I do not think - in a way that we would recognise as best practice for learning and development. Especially given the drive to bring people into the workplace together so that more-experienced and less-experienced staff, or staff with different types of experience from different settings can learn from one another. Sitting on your own at a computer watching a video and then doing an online test at the end of it does not really give the best experience. The feedback we have had from members about their learning is that it has been quite poor, "boring" has been used quite a lot, frustrating, and not giving them what they need, the tools that they need to do their work.

For that reason, there still remains an inconsistency in how cases are allocated, therefore staff from the former NPS are consistently allocated more higher-risk and more complex cases than staff who transferred from the CRCs, because staff from the CRCs still need more support and learning and development in order to take on those more complex cases.

Inevitably, there are things from the CRCs that have been continued and a lot of those have been very positive. A lot of the partnership working, a lot of the ways of approaching work that the CRCs used, have been continued. That is really positive. One thing that Kilvinder mentioned was the service centre approach to administration. That is completely at odds with the national operating model for the Probation Service, because in the national operating model it is recognised that administration staff play a really important part in the frontline service delivery and they should be located with their colleagues on the front line so that they get to know the people they are working with, they get to know the people on probation, who those people are supervising. They can build those relationships and support the frontline operational staff in delivering the sentence management and intervention work for the people on probation who we are supporting.

The service centre approach, which is a very transactional approach to the delivery of administration, disconnects a lot, it disconnects administration from service delivery, and that means that inevitably the Probation Officers and Probation Service Officers will end up doing far more of the administrative work themselves and that reduces their contact time with the people they are supervising. All of those things are things that will take some time to improve.

Other things that I think are working well are the fact that the service is unified and a lot of the feedback from our members is that they are really pleased that the service is unified. A lot of concern is about their workloads and workloads for Probation Officers in London are typically one and a half to two times their capacity. People

are doing one and a half to two people's work, and if your workloads are that high there is no way that you can fulfil all of the expectations on you. That is leading to much higher leaving rates and London has higher leaving rates than other parts of the country for qualified staff. Not only because of the workload pressures, but also because staff can see that they can get better pay elsewhere for doing similar roles. London is unfortunately a leader in those leaving rates.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Thank you for that. Very briefly, because I am mindful of moving us on, have you got any responses to that, Kilvinder?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): The main response is about the service centre because we have had feedback from people on probation who call the service centre and the feedback from those individuals, they are saying they get an excellent service from that reception and that the triaging from service centre is better than when they call the reception at the office. It is really important to note that by no way at all are we removing case administrators from offices. What we are doing is managing the vacancies. Every probation office in London has carried significant admin vacancies. Also, the agencies that we employ that cost us a lot of money, we cannot manage them because when we have to performance manage them or something they leave. Therefore, we are constantly churning agency staff, managing vacancies, which puts far more pressure on our managers and our practitioners.

Therefore, the model is, and it has been agreed nationally, that we will have case administrators working with those practitioners on the things that will support that day-to-day work with the service users, the people on probation, but, separately, the service centres will take away some of the data administrative work that the case administrators have to do. It is a different model of working, but we are not removing all case administrators from officers and we have used a lot of staff engagement, people on probation engagement, and lessons learned from the CRC.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Thank you for that. Just a very quick answer really needed, we are told that each practitioner has too many cases, how many people would you normally have as a caseload? How many should you have and how many are some of these Probation Officers carrying?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): We do not talk about case numbers anymore, we talk about workload management percentage, which is at 100%. It is important to note that is a workload management tool, it is not a measuring tool. The reason we do that is because you could have 15 cases that are all high risk and very complex but some of them could be in prison, therefore you are doing the pre-release work on them. If they are all in the community then there is a lot more work to be done on them. Therefore, across London there are 18 probation delivery units. Some of those delivery units are at the 100%, 110%, 120%, we have others at 150% --

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Yes, give us a flavour though. I have not got a clue. Could that be five people, 15 people?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): It is usually between 15 and 20 in the community, but then they could have more who are in prison --

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): No, I get it, we all understand that, it is just that I do not think any of us have any idea how many it would be. Thank you for that. I understand it is different. We are going on to the second section now and that is --

Katie Lomas (National Chair, National Association of Probation Officers): Chairman, so sorry to interrupt, but I just have a clarification on what Kilvinder just said. The workload measurement tool is a measurement tool. It measures people's workload against their capacity. A typical full-time Probation Officer has around 35 to 40 cases, depending on their risk and complexity. There is no way that a full-time Probation Officer has 15 cases. It is 35 to 40 for a full-time Probation Officer working with high-risk complex cases in the community.

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): If I can come back really quickly, sorry, I was saying 15 to 20 in the community but more usually in prison, they could have another 20 in prison, therefore in totality definitely could have 40 to 45 cases. I am not disputing that.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): I expect every officer has a different amount.

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): Yes, it is the complexity.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Yes, I get that. We are moving on to the second section and my colleague Assembly Member Russell is going to lead on these.

Caroline Russell AM: Good morning, everyone. This section is about delivering the functions of the London Probation Service. My first question is to Katie and to Kilvinder. At our first meeting on Probation we heard that Pre-Sentence Reports lack the quality and insight of the offenders' needs. Would you agree with that assessment?

Katie Lomas (National Chair, National Association of Probation Officers): I do agree with that. There is a reason for it and that is a reason that was taken by HMPPS some years ago to reduce the number of Pre-Sentence Reports delivered in a format that required an adjournment for an interview, information gathering, and the preparation of a written report. There was a move to more and more on-the-day verbal reports. Therefore, of course, you are not going to get the in-depth analysis of somebody's needs if you do not have that time to interview them and gather information and prepare a report.

Recently there has been a national move to move back to more adjournments for reports to get a better balance between the drive for speedy justice, which everybody appreciates, but you have to balance that with the need to get proper justice. You do not get proper justice if you do not have a proper analysis of somebody's risk and needs when making a recommendation. Therefore we saw a move that really limited the ability of Probation staff to have the adjournment, do an interview, gather information, potentially a second interview if needed, before making a full report and recommendation to court, to a much, much shortened adjournment until the afternoon and sit and have a chat with somebody, often in a corridor, just to say are they suitable for this sentence that the court is considering.

We absolutely, as a professional association, we are very much in favour of more full Pre-Sentence Reports that require an adjournment. It does not always have to be a lengthy adjournment, but the balance between the need for speedy justice and the need to make a proper assessment and analysis has to be struck. For us, especially where you have somebody who is to be sentenced and they may have complex needs, they may have mental health issues, especially for women, and anyone who has a family, you need to have a proper analysis of the impact of the sentence; are we meeting their needs, are we going to address their rehabilitation needs, are we passing a sentence that will push them further away from desistance from offending because it will put

them in an impossible situation? Are we causing ourselves as a society more problems by removing a critical parent from a family and creating another problem for the rest of the family? Therefore, all of those things need to be considered.

We have had examples where adjournments have not been allowed and therefore people have been given sentences, which are inappropriate and unworkable in the community. We have had examples where people have been sentenced to curfew at an address, which is wholly unsuitable because of risk to other people living at that address. We have had examples where people who are simply not able to do any work at all have been sentenced to unpaid work. We have examples where people go to prison where a community alternative was available and would have been more effective than the short prison sentence they were given. We could give any number of examples.

That adjournment, even a very short adjournment for a full Pre-Sentence Report with a proper analysis is crucial. We are pleased that there is a move back to that. But that creates its own issues and, as Kilvinder has rightly been pointing out, there are staffing issues right across the Probation Service, but particularly in London. Increasing the amount of work, like you are asking the court report writers to do, will pull people away from the other work because if you need more report writers then you have to pull them away from other crucial probation work. Therefore, it will be some time before we see that rebalance and there will continue to be the tension between the push for speedy justice and the need to make a thorough and careful analysis of risk and need. It is those two things together that I think are crucial to making better sentencing decisions.

Caroline Russell AM: Thank you. Kilvinder, did you want to add anything to that?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): I thank Katie for that comprehensive response because that does show what has been happening over the decade. The only thing I would add is that we have some Pre-Sentence Report pilots in London. The staff there have been trauma-informed, focusing on how to work with women, young people, young Black people, and other people with protected characteristics. What we want to be able to do is ensure that those pilots' learning is then cascaded across all the courts. It is a national programme.

Also, access to more community rehabilitation requirements, the investment being made in substance misuse, mental health, etc, to allow us to make better proposals rather than the short prison sentences, which we all know do not work; that revolving door. That is the only thing I would add.

Caroline Russell AM: Are there any particular emerging findings from the Pre-Sentence Report pilot schemes, are there any others apart from the ones that you mentioned, the drug rehabilitation element. But are there any emerging findings from those Pre-Sentence Report pilot schemes that you are interested in or that you think are particularly notable?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): Just picking up Katie's point really, they take longer to do, you want a comprehensive report for somebody with complex needs. That does not take away that there are a significant number of reports that can be done as fast delivery that do not need the longer adjournments. The basis of being trauma-informed allows you to be more inquisitive, look at the particular areas of somebody's development, and that takes time to build up that trust in an interview process, because you are asking some really personal questions.

I should add that we are doing some activities, which is called activity benchmarking costs, where we are looking at the time it takes to do a good Pre-Sentence Report, a good assessment, and all these activities build

into what then goes into the workload management tool. What we have seen in London and other areas is that our target staffing has increased considerably. Therefore, in essence, my vacancies increased because I have been told I need more staff to do the job. That is a positive because of that healthy pipeline in terms of recruitment. It is going to take between ten and 12 months, but the fact that there is an acknowledgement that we do need more staff in our courts, in our pre-release teams, in our prisons, in our communities, running unpaid work, means that my target staffing has gone from something like 2,500 to 2,800 with an acknowledgement that we need more staff to do this work well.

Caroline Russell AM: Yes, therefore understanding how much work it takes to produce a decent Pre-Sentence Report enables you to be much clearer about the amount of staff required to fulfil that. Therefore, it gives you an evidence base to say you need this many staff. Have I understood you correctly?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): Yes. You can extrapolate that. The pilots are showing the time it takes to do a good report, to understand the person they are interviewing, and make a proposal that will deal with those complex needs and avoid people going to prison for short sentences, which is ultimately value for money as well for the taxpayer because they are much more likely to be rehabilitated. Prison does cost more. It will break that cycle. For women, supporting families as well, and young people not escalating into further crime.

Caroline Russell AM: Thank you. Then another question for you, Kilvinder, which is about the commitments in your Reducing Reoffending Plan. You had commitments to reduce the proportion of custodial sentences, particularly the short custodial sentences, across all groups including women and young people. Increasing the use of community sentence treatment requirements, which require people to participate in community treatment to address underlying issues around substance use, mental health, alcohol consumption, as an alternative to imposing custodial sentences, and increasing judicial confidence by engaging with the courts to foster collaborative problem solving and joint working. Therefore, my question is what progress have you made against those commitments made in the Reducing Reoffending Plan to improve the quality of advice provided to courts by Probation staff?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): There are a number of strands to this. On one level, as the Probation Service, we do not have that provision in-house. Around the commissioning tables now with CSPs, Health and others, we are recruiting a number of social and justice co-ordinators to work with us and the agencies to make sure that we are supporting those commissioning opportunities. We are providing our needs assessments, which we did earlier on this year. We are now around the table looking at increasing drug rehabilitation requirements. It is at that commissioning stage where we are developing a service that is fit for purpose that will allow our court staff to make those referrals. We are making those referrals. We need to make more of those referrals and have a service that is fit for purpose.

Also, mental health treatment requirements, we have a pilot running for women at the moment. That will be developed to include men. We are at the early stages of market commercial commissioning and hoping that we will be able to move on that quite quickly.

Caroline Russell AM: Thank you. The Lammy Review found that transforming rehabilitation had led to specialist providers attuned to the needs of particular groups being squeezed out of Probation delivery as they found very limited opportunities to be funded through the CRC supply chains. The review also found a lack of accountability for probation services to meet the needs of people with protected characteristics including people who are Black, Asian, or minority ethnic.

Therefore, what are you doing - and this again is for Kilvinder and Katie - to ensure Probation provides a good service to people of all backgrounds?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): I think that what was highlighted in the Lammy Review is true, which was one of the many reasons that the Probation Service was unified. On unification back in July last year one of the departments that I was eager to set up was our Community Integration and Contracts team. Over the last just under 12 months we have engaged with 15 different third-sector organisations. It has taken time because you are building a structure, working with commercial in the MoJ. We are at the moment negotiating how to provide more grants rather than co-commissioning. I could list a number of organisations. I am not sure it is appropriate here and I know, for example, the Women's Service is still in the bidding process, therefore I am not allowed to get into detail about that. But there are organisations that we have worked with like Clinks and really focused in on organisations that are working with those with protected characteristics.

One of the challenges, there are resources there, there is a budget there, but it is attracting organisations on a local level in the 32 boroughs rather than pan-London. I read the minutes of the meeting in June with some of the charities. Part of the issue for us is that due diligence, that governance arrangement, would that third-sector charity be able to provide a service to that local probation office covering sick leave, covering maternity leave, do they have the financial wherewithal to manage the money that we could give them. We have to go through that process of due diligence to be able to engage with those organisations.

We are looking a lot more at co-commissioning opportunities. I do not know if Will can talk a little bit about that. We have talked a lot about commissioning and co-commissioning, long before unification happened, looking for the levers and the mechanistic way to do this, of engaging the people. One of the organisations, if I may share one, is the Osmani Trust in Tower Hamlets. They work with people from all communities, but given the community it is in, Bangladeshi and Somalian communities. They work with people, some of the mentors are people with lived experiences. They support with education, accommodation, mentoring. We have seen huge successes in that.

We have an organisation, in Haringey, it is called Ark. They are providing housing stock to help some of the people. If you look at the data it is predominantly young Black men coming out of prison, into housing, and then positive moves on. I could go on. We are working with the Irish Chaplaincy because something that often is not mentioned is Gypsy Roma Travellers are over-represented in prisons. Working with an organisation to work with our ex-armed service personnel because again they are a hard-to-reach group. I could go on. Transgender people who are in prison who are going through transition, reaching out to groups from those communities. We are building this, but I would say it has been 12 months in the making and we are on a better footing now and I hope to see that develop.

Caroline Russell AM: Thank you. Katie, did you want to add anything on that question?

Katie Lomas (National Chair, National Association of Probation Officers): Yes, thank you. Kilvinder has given a really good picture of how the Probation Service now can do some of that work and can reach out and make more partnerships. It is really heartening to see. The destruction of those relationships in 2014 was one of the things that really set the Probation Service and the probation system back.

But I just wanted to pick up on the specific point about people from the Black, Asian, and minority ethnic, backgrounds. We have done some work at Napo, we have led some work around race, and we have partnered

with HMPPS in doing a race survey, looking at both the experiences of staff and people on probation. There is an action plan and it has taken a long time to get there. However, it just highlights how much work there is to do. The Probation Service is now a very large organisation and very complex and has multiple layers of hierarchy that did not exist before. Leadership on issues around race has been lacking. That is changing now. There is a renewed focus on race and on the experiences of both staff and people on probation of the system.

There is clearly a lot of work to do and the action plan is ambitious, but is vital. Unless we have a staff group who feel confident that they will be treated with dignity and respect, then we will not have a staff group who are able to work confidently with people on probation in that way. One of the things that is part of probation values is that inquisitive and questioning approach. Therefore, when you go through probation training, you are taught to question everything, to question the system in which you are working, to see the person on probation in front of you who you are working with in the context of the system.

That has become very difficult to do when you are part of the Civil Service and you are constrained in the way you are able to work with people on probation. However, we are getting back towards that, and we are able now to say there is some work that we need to do in our organisation. We need to get better at this. There are things we need to improve if we are to offer that specific, specialised service to people who have been disadvantaged often throughout their journey through the criminal justice system (CJS) because of their background. Absolutely, there is work to do, but I am really pleased that the Race Action Plan is in place and HMPPS is completely committed to it. Napo is running race roadshows with members across England and Wales and that has also been really positive. There is still a lot more work to do and providing specialised commissioned services is only one part of it. We also need to make sure that every person who works in the Probation Service understands the context in which they are working, understands the system and understands the disadvantage that many people experience right the way through the CJS.

Caroline Russell AM: That is very reassuring to hear. We heard at our last meeting from the Head of Policy at Action for Race Equality that there is little evidence that Probation staff even discuss at all ethnicity, culture, religion and experience of discrimination and how sometimes this drives their offending. It is reassuring to hear (a) that you acknowledge how much there is to do; and (b) that that is a piece of work that needs to be done. Thank you very much.

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): The point I want to make is I am a woman of colour, I have faced racism and therefore, as the Mayor once said to me, "We've got skin in the game here". I am really pleased to say that 11 out of my 18 Heads of Service are from Black and Asian communities, which is completely different from any other region in the country. Three out of the 12 Regional Probation Directors are from Black and Asian communities and over 50% of my staff are from Black and Asian communities.

It is important that we do focus on the cultural elements of this because that is one of the issues that I am dealing with in London. After Black Lives Matter, I commissioned an organisation called Equality Works to work with my leadership team and my management team around the cultural competence issue. I know people talk about "race", but when you have multiracial teams there are challenges around the cultural elements of that. Then just recently we have completed a whole round of management training in relation to equality as well and I have put a business case into the Centre and they have agreed that I can have an Equalities Team to be able to build on this work. I just wanted to share some positives we are doing in London.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Thank you very much.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: It has been very interesting hearing from you all this morning and I have to say, Kilvinder, I do not envy you with the task in hand. It is huge, bringing these organisations together and turning around the Service and I can see where you want to get to, but there are a lot of steps in between. Can we just clarify the issues around staffing? You talked about how you inherited a vacancy rate of 600, our briefing talks about 283 vacancies as of 31 March [2022] and clearly there are different roles here, the Probation Officers and admin and so on. We heard from Katie [Lomas] that leave rates are much higher in London and you said something earlier about acknowledged staff of now 2,800, I thought I heard you say, whereas I think you currently employ 2,294. Are you able to set out or, if not, put in writing to us to really understand how many officers and staff you have now, where you want to get to by when and the grades of them? Also, hearing that staff are leaving, how does it compare in London to other bits of the country?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): I will just give you some quick principles, but I will happily follow up in writing for the detail.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Yes, of course. It might be helpful, thank you.

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): It is not just London; you could talk about London and the Home Counties. My colleagues in Thames Valley, around the east of England, Kent, Surrey and Sussex are also struggling because of the different opportunities that are out there. In relation to the staffing levels, the target staffing has increased because there is an acknowledgement that we need more people to do the job in hand. If you break that down - and this is approximate - it is about 150 Probation Officers. We do have agency staff that offset about half of that, but we want permanent staff. It is just under 300 Probation Service Officers and that is the big one for me; that we need to do that mass recruitment. Then in terms of Case Administrators, it is about 150. Within that Probation Service Officer group, that is people who will do the prison resettlement work because, like I say, there was an exodus after unification, so we are going to need, again, just under 100 probably to do that work. That might not be a perfect number that I have given you. We need people in our Victims Unit as well. If you break that Probation Service Officer role down into different departments, probably about 150 of them are delivering sentence management. We also want to recruit lots of Unpaid Work Supervisors. We have a backlog of Unpaid Work Community Payback, a fantastic department that we have that is doing lots of work in the community, but we need to recruit more supervisors.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: That is really helpful and if we could get that greater detail it would be helpful. With the numbers you have, do you currently have enough staff to deliver an effective service in London?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): We are doing what is called prioritising probation at the moment, which is in essence a bit like accident and emergency triaging. We are putting resources following risk and we have to think about our high-risk cases and our complex cases. One of the initiatives we are looking at in [the London Borough of] Croydon is with the HMPPS Co-financing Organisation Hub. This is a hub system for working with people who are finding it hard to get employment. Our Probation staff are looking to base themselves there for our lower risk cases so that we can have a hub system where there are other people there that we can work with much more in a collaborative approach. We are looking at innovative ways of doing things differently for those lower risk cases. Sometimes, I think people forget that more of our cases of community cases are not people from prison. We are looking at different ways of working with those big numbers of lower risk people so that they do have some intervention, but do not have the intervention that is required for those more complex cases.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: OK, you are managing and you are going to be recruiting and so on. There has been a national drive that I believe the MoJ announced in 2021, trying to get 1,000 more Probation Officers nationally. Has that benefited your service and what other things are you doing to try to retain your officers?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): On the first part, Probation Officers, yes, we have a very, very healthy pipeline and a real diverse pipeline. We are getting more men and more older people in, and we have always been strong with a mix of ethnic group. The retention is a lot harder - I cannot deny that - because it is London and there are more opportunities. We have trained people who have gone off to be police officers and we have trained people who have gone off to work in the MoJ or our different departments, so that is a tough one. It becomes a vicious circle. If we get those 600 people *in situ*, the work will get easier because everybody's workloads will be distributed fairly, but it is trying to hold people. The message I give is "Do the best you can in the current circumstances". We want to get the people in so that people's lives will be easier and they will want to stay because actually it is a vocationally led organisation.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Yes, exactly. You have answered quite a lot of my questions. The final one is around your agency staff because you are spending more than double any other Probation region, £367,000 I think, on agency staff in the last year. How do you ensure that those officers have the necessary training and qualifications before they take up the post?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): A lot of the agency staff are not Probation Officers. A significant number are administrators, which goes back to the Service Centre, a vicious circle. In terms of the practitioners, Probation Officers or Probation Service Officers, they also have to complete the mandatory training. In terms of the ground work, one of the things we did after unification was setting some standards about mandatory training in terms of CRC colleagues and NPS colleagues. Ultimately, NPS colleagues needed to do some retraining around working with complex substance misuse people on probation who had gone to the CRC. Having said that, we are making sure that every member of staff is doing safeguarding training, trauma-based approach training and domestic abuse training, including the agency practitioners.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Thank you very much.

Marina Ahmad AM: Kilvinder, I am really pleased with what you were saying and the efforts that you clearly have made. I have a couple of questions on your previous answer. You talked about 50% of your officers now being from a Black, Asian and minority ethnic community and you also talked about recognising cultural issues in terms of that recruitment. Could you unpick that a little bit for us so that we understand what the issues and the difficulties are? Secondly, within that 50% how many are now within the higher levels of decision-making within the hierarchy? I suspect that might have something to do with retention.

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): If I pick up the cultural issues first, the issue is that people talk about Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups as one homogenous group and they are not. For example, I have colleagues from North Africa, I have people from Jamaica, I have people from Pakistan and I have people from India. We know the geopolitics around that so that can get played out in communities. The whole issue of respect, respecting people's religions and respecting people's way of life is really, really important and that is the cultural differences. Sometimes, you get tensions because it is not a homogenous group and we do not all think the same just because of the pigment. Actually, having those deep and meaningful conversations is why we brought in equalities work in to

start to unpick that because some of our white managers really struggled to deal with that, so enabling them to have those conversations.

Just over 30% of the middle management group are from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups. As I said, 11 out of my 18 Heads of Service - the ones who lead on the Probation Delivery Units (PDU), delivering the service - are from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups. Already you can see big numbers that I am really proud of, I have to say, but challenges come with them, so it is really important that I get them the mentors and the support they have.

Marina Ahmad AM: Thank you so much for explaining that.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): We are now going on to prison leavers and resettlement and the questions are going to be started by Assembly Member Rogers.

Nick Rogers AM: My questions are initially directed at Kilvinder. At the previous meeting on probation, the Committee heard that over 60% of women leaving Her Majesty's Prison (HMP) Bronzefield do not have appropriate accommodation on release. It does not just seem to be a problem confined to women; in 2019/20, 12,000 people left prison homeless. Why are so many people leaving prison without suitable accommodation, what are you doing to address this and where do projects like, I think it is, Community Accommodation Service Tier 3 (CAS3) fit in?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): I will try to break this down. One of the issues is, as the Probation Service, we do not hold stock. We can offer advice and support. This is a community issue, and we work very closely with local authorities in relation to homelessness issues. In relation to be it women or men coming out of prison homeless, with the CAS3 we are working in five lots across London to ensure that from autumn [2022] onwards nobody will be released from prison homeless. They will have somewhere to stay - I cannot remember the exact number - I think for 30 days whilst we work with them to move them on. That is another good news story. There are lots of good news stories, but what we are trying to do is resolve issues that have been around for too long.

There were lots of bad things, but one of the positive unforeseen consequences that came out of COVID, is the work we did with local authorities and the private sector to get all our homeless people on probation into accommodation. It demonstrated what we could do. That developed into the Homeless Prevention Team, working with the police in relation to managing the risk, with the local authorities and others supporting us in that. That has developed into that CAS3 and that opportunity to learn from what happened in COVID.

In terms of what has happened in the past, people being released homeless, it is a wider community issue about why people go in to prisons, how people can lose their accommodation and these short-term sentences. People are complex. One of our Day One services that we commissioned was with St Mungo's and the Single Homelessness Project to support people in that pre-release work. Again, because we do not have stock we do not have anywhere to move people into. It is about advice and support and working with the local authority, but the CAS3 is the positive new story in this.

Nick Rogers AM: Thank you. If I am hearing you correctly, from autumn when you will be making sure that everyone has at least 30 days of accommodation, does that mean that no one is going to be leaving prison homeless at that point, certainly in London?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): I am certainly not guaranteeing a 100% success rate in anything. I have been around too long for that. The goal is that and the ambition is that. We are at the moment putting the infrastructure and the commissioning in place to move to that goal. Whether it be autumn, soon after that or even before that, we have to go through that commercial process.

One of the issues we do have is that revolving door and the numbers coming in and out. I have seen this because I have monitored the issue about women coming out of [HMP] Bronzefield and I have personally monitored them. One of the issues was unification and how Bronzefield is actually located in Kent, Surrey and Sussex and London, but they have London people. I have worked really closely with my colleagues in Kent, Surrey and Sussex to make sure that we bridge that gap in terms of resources and I have paid more from the London budget to support Bronzefield. Sometimes, the issue is that appointments are made at local authorities, people do not attend their appointments because they are complex and have huge issues and there is the whole thing about taking a horse to water and getting it to drink. We are working with very complex individuals, but our goal/our ambition is to make sure that we can support everybody in accommodation, substance misuse, mental health, etc.

Nick Rogers AM: Thank you. Why would you say it is so difficult for Prison and Probation services to ensure that everyone leaving prison has the basics they need to function such as bank accounts, identification (ID) and access to healthcare as well as accommodation? Where do resettlement passports sit as a potential solution to these problems?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): You are asking me a lot of detail here and I know some of the general principles. There is a lot of work being done on the resettlement passports with prisons and there are some pilot areas going. I know we are working locally to make sure that people have ID before they leave prison, and if they have ID they have access to things. We are doing a lot of work around continuity of care. The criminal justice health framework has changed and we are around that table. I do not know if Will can help me correct some of that. We are employing Social Health and Justice Co-ordinators to make sure that we do that continuity of care so if somebody is in a prison, be it a substance misuse issue or a mental health issue, that continuity of care carries on when they are in the community. It has been fragmented because of the different commissioning models and some people commission the service in the prison and you commission another service in the community. We need one commissioning framework so it is a seamless transition. Again, a lot of work is being done on continuity of care. We are kind of at the start or at the middle of lots of exciting pieces of work being done and we just need to keep that momentum, keep our staff and keep people having the hope that we will get there.

Nick Rogers AM: That sounds like it involves a lot of working with partners. Is that the case?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): Absolutely. I think on a monthly basis I meet with the Directors from Health, I meet regularly with MOPAC and I meet with Louisa Rolfe [OBE, Assistant Commissioner for Met Operations] from the MPS. I meet with all my Heads of Service and they meet with their local authorities as Community Safety Partnerships. I have been in Probation for 28 years and one of the things I would say about Probation is we are partners in everything. We are the glue that sometimes brings partners together and that is what I have always loved in the work of probation. It is a collaborative partnership world, we cannot do anything on our own and we must not work in siloes. Going back to unification, the exciting bit is we can all come back together and do this.

Nick Rogers AM: Excellent, thank you. How effective has your work been in supporting prison leavers into education, training and employment (ETE) and what have been some of the main challenges you have faced in those areas?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): One of our Day One services is with MAXIMUM, our ETE providers. Again, it is about linking in that pre-release work, so six months or about that time people coming out and being linked in with that provider. The challenge has been losing a lot of the resettlement staff on unification so that we suddenly have this huge gap in our resources and we need to plug that. One of the things we need to be smarter at is that co-commissioning with our prison colleagues so instead of paying twice for ETE we are paying once. That is so that that is seamless again from anything that people have done in the prison regarding education, employment and apprenticeships and that they can carry on doing that same thing when they come out.

Nick Rogers AM: Thank you very much. I have a question now, for Will. The Mayor funded the transformation of the prison "Escape" restaurant at Wormwood Scrubs, providing training and employment opportunities for prisoners to enter the catering industry after they left prison. Are you able to tell us a bit about that programme and what percentage of the people who participated did, in fact, go on to find employment in that sector?

Will Balakrishnan (Director of Commissioning and Partnerships, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): Sincere apologies. I think that programme may predate my tenure at MOPAC. It is not something that is currently live in our portfolio. It is something that has happened and lives in the Prison Service. I am happy to find out that information and write to the Committee.

Nick Rogers AM: OK. That would be fine, thank you.

Keith Prince AM: This question is for MOPAC and to Will. What are you doing to improve how agencies across London work better to support people on release and how are you monitoring that performance?

Will Balakrishnan (Director of Commissioning and Partnerships, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): As Kilvinder mentioned, supporting people on release is definitely a partnership activity. We have heard already some of the challenges that people face in terms of accommodation and ETE and we have already discussed those. What MOPAC seeks to do with the strong convening roles the Deputy Mayor [for Policing and Crime] and the Mayor have is we seek to bring the CJS together to try to look at these issues end-to-end. This particularly happens with the Mayor's London Crime Reduction Board (LCRB) and the Deputy Mayor [for Policing and Crime] is now chairing the London Criminal Justice Board (LCJB). Again, we are trying to look at these things holistically.

Specifically in terms of prisons, we are very pleased that we are currently in the process of commissioning some additional support. You may recall Prison Pathfinder, a pilot programme which is just coming to an end, that looks specifically at violence interventions in prison with an aim to ensure that on release people are better able to not reoffend. It is really great to see by the way that Kilvinder [Vigurs] and her opposite number in Prisons, Ian Bickers, who is the London Prisons [Prisons Groups] Director, have a joint plan this year, which will be coming out shortly. That was the one weakness of reunification, actually, that in the target operating model we did not talk too much about that, so I am really pleased to see that. What MOPAC is doing to support that is we are doing some additional commissioning, supporting something that will work on both sides of the gate so there will be continuity in that intervention either side. With some additional funding from the Mayor, we are also employing a specific worker, who will be able to work much more with the partnership and

take some of the pressure off Probation and Prisons themselves. Again, they will be looking at forging much better links on release with the rest of the CJS and the rest of the community. Those are just a couple of examples.

Keith Prince AM: And how are you monitoring the performance or are you monitoring the performance?

Will Balakrishnan (Director of Commissioning and Partnerships, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): I presume you are talking about reoffending and other things of that nature. Most of the metrics around prison release are predominantly national statistics. What MOPAC tends to do is to focus on areas that are particularly important to the Mayor's Police and Crime Plan. For example, we are just starting a deep dive, looking particularly at high-harm offenders, working alongside MPS colleagues, Probation colleagues and others to try to get a holistic picture of that type of offender management. In terms of the overall global statistics, there is always quite a big lag on reoffending because obviously it takes a bit of time to work that out. We do look at those statistics and we look at them at the new LCJB, which was previously chaired by Assistant Commissioner Rolfe [OBE] and is now chaired by the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime. That is the engine room, if you like, of the CJS in London.

Keith Prince AM: Do you have specific key performance indicators (KPIs)? Have you set yourself any targets at all?

Will Balakrishnan (Director of Commissioning and Partnerships, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): MOPAC's KPIs, as it were, will be the delivery of things in the Police and Crime Plan and unlike policing, we do not have a statutory oversight role of Probation, Prisons or the CJS. It is something that the Mayor has called for and something that would be incredibly useful. With the police, we have something called a section 36 agreement, which means we can ask for data and the MPS has to give it to us. That would be incredibly useful for all Police and Crime Commissioners to have, it would be a way that we could get data from Prisons and Probation and we could put it together in a way that would allow us to get a joined up picture of the CJS. At the moment, each individual agency will have its own stats from Whitehall, and it does make it a challenge.

Keith Prince AM: That might be a good recommendation, Chairman.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Yes.

Keith Prince AM: Moving on, I believe the Mayor is due to publish a *Women's Prison Release Protocol*. Do you know when that is happening?

Will Balakrishnan (Director of Commissioning and Partnerships, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): Yes, absolutely. The Protocol is a much-needed framework and what it seeks to do is decrease, as we have already talked about, the number of women released from prison without a fixed abode to a safe and secure home. What I would say is the Protocol is really ambitious. We and the Mayor based it on what I call the best and really the best practice we could find. That has been predominantly [HMP] Bronzefield and [the London Borough of] Lambeth, I saw the minutes and watched a bit of the last Committee meeting and I know you have heard a bit more about that.

What is really important is the implementation and that Protocol needs key partners. It needs London Councils - London Councils as the umbrella body as well as the individual local boroughs - and it also needs the G15 housing associations and clearly they are crucial to the piece. We are getting really good engagement with the

G15 at the moment in a number of other areas such as domestic abuse accommodation so I am really pleased with the way that partnership is coming together, and also obviously Probation. Understandably, it is an ambitious Protocol so those partners just want a bit more time before they can become a co-signatory and we really want them to become a co-signatory. I cannot give you an exact time, but I can perhaps write to you with an update.

Keith Prince AM: Would you have a best guess then?

Will Balakrishnan (Director of Commissioning and Partnerships, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): It is not going to take a long time. I would really hope by the end of the year [2022].

Keith Prince AM: By the end of the year.

Will Balakrishnan (Director of Commissioning and Partnerships, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): That is my hope though. Please do not hold me to that because it relies on partners satisfying themselves about delivery, which is clearly important. As Kilvinder mentioned earlier, we are one of only two places in the country to have this sort of co-commissioning agreement with Probation and we are really proud of it. Ours is around female offending and it would be great to have this in place as that new female offending co-commissioning service comes online. That is partly because in terms of preventing homelessness, as Kilvinder mentioned, it is that wraparound support, that holistic look, as well as help with practical issues like ID that is going to, I think, make the biggest difference.

Keith Prince AM: OK. Finally, has the Mayor's Office worked with London's Prison and Probation [Service] to review the effectiveness of duty to refer in helping to meet the housing needs of women leaving prison, as recommended by Safe Homes for Women Leaving Prison?

Will Balakrishnan (Director of Commissioning and Partnerships, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): I am unsure about that specific duty. I do not know, Kilvinder, if you know.

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): Forgive me, I have forgotten his name from the MOPAC office, who chairs the Pan-London Rough Sleepers Steering Group, which I am a member of. The subgroup is looking at issues like that to make sure the whole duty to refer is happening across the piece. It is a different department than yours, I think.

Will Balakrishnan (Director of Commissioning and Partnerships, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): Excellent.

Keith Prince AM: Are you are off the hook there then, Will?

Will Balakrishnan (Director of Commissioning and Partnerships, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): Well, you know, I take a global view of the CJS.

Keith Prince AM: I will leave it there, Chairman, thank you.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: This is a question for you, Kilvinder. When this Committee last looked at probation [22 June 2022], the London CRC review said that it could not secure even temporary accommodation for 27% of those who are leaving the prison service. Has the situation improved in London in finding accommodation for people leaving the prison service?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): I do not have the statistics to back this, but I think that recognising it is a problem is why we are moving to the CAS3 and the work we are doing at the moment is to ensure that that number is reduced dramatically.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: How are you collaborating with London Councils to reduce that figure?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): We are part of the Pan-London Rough Sleepers Board and that is the first time we have worked pan-London with the local authorities, with health services, with MOPAC and ourselves so we work closely with London Councils. As I was saying, during COVID we came together with the local authorities and others to make sure that we worked to get rough sleepers off the streets. There was a significant drop in homelessness then and it is continuing that work. I do not know the numbers right here, right now, and I can get them to you.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Can you get that number back to the Committee, please?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): Yes.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Yes, that will be very helpful to see if you have made any progress since 2017.

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): The biggest number we need to really look at is CAS3 because that is the actual commissioning of a service to support us in reducing that number.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Are people on probation getting the support they need in terms of mental health care?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): That is a tough one because in terms of mental health care, clearly that is the domain of the health services. Sometimes, there is a confusion in relation to vulnerable adults and learning disabilities, so we need to work closer with the local authorities' Safeguarding Adults Departments for that. Then we have to look at the mental health services, which is about diagnosis for mental health. Sometimes, those two completely different things get merged into one and we need to do more work with people with neurodiversity, learning disabilities --

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: For the prisoner leaving the prison service, it does not really matter whether it is mental health services or whether it is the Probation Service. What they want is access to the service, right?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): Yes.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: I am just concerned that 52% of people leaving the prison service have a mental health problem, 52%. That is a huge number and 22% saying that they were having difficulty in seeing a mental health worker. Now it is no consolation to them to say it is the National Health Service (NHS) or what. The question is: how are we helping them to access the services they need?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): The point I am trying to make badly - I am sorry about that - is that the commissioning of that service does not sit in the Probation Service. We have to refer and access services from mental health or from the local authorities.

They are the providers of that service, and we help them by providing our needs assessments and the details we have to say, "This is the service we require of you to commission". One of the things we have been able to do for our Day Two services is we are working with an organisation called [The] Forward [Trust], but that is in relation to dependency. We are also looking at how we can support people with low-level mental health issues and that is something we can commission in-house. It is a wider community conversation about services available to the community, whether it be mental health or whether it be in relation to neurodiversity, and the Probation Service is not set up to provide that service. We have to refer into that service as well.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: When you refer to the service, what happens there and what are the outcomes?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): It is variable, it is a patchwork across London and it will depend on local commissioning of those services.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: A simpler referral pathway for individuals with multiple needs was promised in your Reducing Reoffending Plan by April 2022. Has that Plan been delivered?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): No, not yet.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Why not?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): Because we need to commission the services first to be able to refer them into it. Yes, we need to work on it.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: When do you think we will deliver it? Your target date was April 2022 and we are now in July 2022. When do you think we will deliver this?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): I will have to come back to you on that.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: That would be very helpful, thank you.

Will Balakrishnan (Director of Commissioning and Partnerships, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): May I just come in for a second?

I think what Kilvinder is trying to explain here is at the moment we know there are significant mental health waiting lists for everybody in the community, regardless of whether they are offenders or in our violence against women and girls (VAWG) services or from elsewhere, and it is presenting a real challenge. Something we are trying to do at MOPAC to try to help is we are doing a lot of convening in this space. Specifically for female offending, as part of the new service we are thinking we are going to have a dedicated health advocate, who can work on both sides of the gate and that may help. As ever with MOPAC services, they are not core probation services. They are areas where we think we can help and also contribute to the Police and Crime Plan. Those health advocates may help, they are being co-commissioned by the NHS and that might be a model that might help. Also, as you say, 45% of the IOM cohorts have mental health needs. With some Mayoral money, it really is in the NHS' and local authorities' gift to commission, but we are going to do a little bit of commissioning on a neurodiversity service and a dedicated mental health service, which should both launch next year. We are trying to develop an evidence base. We are trying to pilot things that might help.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: A lot of prisoners have neurodivergent conditions. Leaving aside the mental health services, how are we catering for them?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): That is the point around what the local authority is doing around commissioning that because the Probation Service does not have stock for housing, we do not have nurses and we do not have mental health services. We refer to those community providers. We are round the table and you make a good point. We provide the need, we talk about the needs of our prisoners and we go round the table to advocate for that. You raise a really, really important issue, but some of the people who are more influential in that are not round this table.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: I am a working general practitioner, I see these patients and I am concerned about it. These patients, these people, need services and we need to be responding to those needs. Saying it is the NHS or it is X or it is Y is not good enough for those people who are suffering these conditions. That is the point I am trying to make and we need to raise that voice. We may recognise the needs, but the system is somehow failing them and that is what I am trying to make a point of. Can I have a view from Napo on this, please?

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Katie, do you have a short comment you would like to make on that?

Katie Lomas (National Chair, National Association of Probation Officers): Yes, thank you. There are two things. One is the provision of the services, the treatment services, that people require, and I absolutely agree with Will and Kilvinder that there is not enough access to services for people in the community, whatever group they belong to. What we see is increasing restriction on services to those at the highest levels of need, which means that you cannot get intervention at the lower levels of need and, inevitably, that leads to escalation.

The other side of it is how we work as practitioners with people who have different needs, how we work with people who are neurodivergent and how we work with people who have other mental health issues. A little while ago, we talked about training that was offered for people in the Probation Service. There is very little training for staff in the Probation Service around making the support you are offering and the supervision that is required of you accessible to people, whatever their needs. For me, that is a really key thing that is lacking. We often talk about hard-to-engage groups and we should not talk about hard-to-engage groups. We should talk about groups who need our service to be delivered differently and we should deliver our service differently in order to engage them, not describe them as the problem. There are huge gaps in training and development for Probation staff, especially around how to do this. As I say, once you have qualified as a Probation Officer most of the learning and development on offer is basic mandatory process-based training, it is online learning and it is quite kind of routine. It is just about making sure that you can tick the boxes and you have had some input on the basics. There is nothing about how to deliver the service you are being expected to deliver in a way that meets the needs of people who might have very, very complex needs.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Thank you to all the panel.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Assembly Member Devenish.

Tony Devenish AM: Thank you, Chairman, and good morning. I was going to ask about both mental health and homelessness. They have both been covered, but I do want to make one point. I do not mean in any way to be disrespectful to anybody, but having listened to the previous meeting for three hours and listened to this meeting, I am not sure I am able to do my role of scrutiny. I am not sure we are being given the evidence or

any real metrics to make any case and I do not really understand. At the end of this meeting, if somebody asked me what I had learnt or if somebody asked me, "Well, is the Probation Service in dire trouble?" like the MPS in special measures, for example, I would not know the answer to that. I do not know if you are doing a good job, a bad job or somewhere in the middle and I am really struggling with the metrics. When people say, "Well, X is in charge of that" and they cannot remember X's name and it is another co-located cross-Government organisation --

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Assembly Member Devenish, do you have a question because actually --

Tony Devenish AM: Yes.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): -- I feel very informed from these meetings. I am exceptionally grateful to the guests that we have had and whilst there are other questions to be asked, I think all of us are hugely grateful to the people that we have had --

Tony Devenish AM: Thank you, Chairman. Well, you are entitled to your opinion, and I am entitled to mine. My question --

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): I am. I am, Assembly Member Devenish.

Tony Devenish AM: -- my question --

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): We will move on to a question now from --

Tony Devenish AM: Chair, can I just ask a question?

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Well, please do ask your question then.

Tony Devenish AM: My question is: is there a simple-to-understand dashboard or set of KPIs that are clear, so that when we have this meeting again, no doubt in a year's time, we will be able to look at that, what you provide today and what you provide in a year's time, so we can understand where we are going?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): Yes, I can. There are a number of metrics in Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and the work of the Probation Service is multifaceted. There are metrics around pre-sentence reports, whether that be concordance, whether that be quality. There are metrics around sentence management and, again, some of those are much more about timeliness of things being done. There are the reconviction rates, which are clearly the more longitudinal impacts of rehabilitation. There are rates around recalls. There is work that we have done for pre-release. There are parole reports. There is the work we do with victims so we have victim satisfaction. We also have, again, timeliness issues, SLAs for that.

We probably have a huge raft of a dashboard that we could provide you with. Most of it looks at timeliness. Then we do our own internal audits, but when I say "internal" it is not us marking our own homework; it is HMPPS' auditors coming and looking at it. We have a huge raft of people who are in accommodation, people who are in employment, people who are doing programmes and people who have completed unpaid work. I can provide you with a huge raft of data. I was not asked to provide any today so apologies if you wanted any.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): No, no, no, that is fine. That is lovely if you could provide us with some because we do find it interesting. Thank you so much. We are running short of time on this, but I am now going to Assembly Member Ahmad.

Marina Ahmad AM: Thank you, Chair, and can I echo your gratitude and thanks for the information that our panel has provided to us today. I have personally found it incredibly informative.

It is well documented that there have been massive cuts to the CJS since 2010 in the police with the number of officers, the 21,000 officers, the police staff, [Her Majesty's] Courts [and Tribunals] Service, the Prison Service and the Crown Prosecution Service that has had to have 33% of cuts. The Probation Service from 2003 to 2019 has had a budget fall of 40% nationally and, despite the COVID uplift, the Probation Service still has had a 15% cut in real terms since 2010. You have all explained over the last two sessions how hard you have had to work within that very difficult situation. With that background and knowledge, my question is: has there been a large cohort of offenders since 2010 who have been let down by these resource issues within the Probation Service?

Katie Lomas (National Chair, National Association of Probation Officers): Thank you. It is a really interesting question. The budget cuts and the resources cuts have compounded the harm done by Transforming Rehabilitation (TR), which broke up a system which worked perfectly well. At the time of TR when that happened in 2014, all of the probation trusts were measured as performing to a good or outstanding level and none of them required improvement. In that context, you can weather some budget cuts. If you are performing well and you are starting from that position, you can adjust the way you deliver a service and weather it and we have a history of doing that in Probation. I have been in Probation since 2005 and certainly we saw cuts in the mid-2000s to the late 2000s that we were able to weather because probation trusts were able to adjust the way that they delivered their services and continued delivering them.

What happened in 2014, layered on top of budget cuts, was the breakup of a system that worked well and you had the separation into the NPS and the CRCs, both of which were set up without enough of the right staff. I want to be really clear about that. The way that the probation trusts were broken up and separated meant that there were not the right staff in either organisation. That led to some of the CRCs reducing their staffing numbers over the life of their contracts, but it also led to a problem for both organisations in terms of recruitment. Even though budgets were being cut, if they had not have been cut, we would not have been able to recruit anyway. Pay has been suppressed for Probation staff for over a decade and we have only had one cost of living rise in pay in 12 years in Probation. All of those things together - the budget cuts, the breakup of the service, the suppression of pay - have combined to mean that, yes, I absolutely agree there is a cohort of people who deserved a better level of service from Probation. They were not able to get it because the resources were not there and because of the political decisions around how the Probation services are delivered and we see that continuing.

Just in the last fortnight, we have had an instruction that Probation Officers may no longer make recommendations in parole reports or at oral hearings so professional Probation Officers are being told they are not allowed to make a recommendation to the Parole Board. Political decisions like that, have a huge impact on Probation Officer morale, on their practice, on their sense of professional identity and on their confidence to do their job. I absolutely agree, but it is not for want of trying. There are individual Probation Officers, Probation Service Officers, Case Administrators and, senior managers like Kilvinder, who go into work day, after day, after day and fight against this to try to deliver a decent level of service. But when the system is against you, you have very little chance of success, frankly. I know how hard Kilvinder is working in London to try to set up the organisation to be able to deliver services, but when staff are working at 150% plus of their

measured capacity, they are not going to be doing everything they need to do. It is just not possible. 150% of your measured capacity means you are working nine and a half days of work in a five-day week, it is not feasible to do everything you need to do and I do believe that there are people who have suffered from poor service since.

It is really positive that we are getting back to the Probation Service being able to commission in partnership specific services, but we have to note that a lot of those specific, specialised services have been absent or very much limited in the system during the period of TR. Many of those partnerships existed before TR, there is a huge piece of work to do to repair Probation and it needs investment in order to do it. I am not clear that that investment is going to be forthcoming because I do not think that there will be investment in all of the elements that are needed, including pay issues, so that in areas like London Kilvinder can retain more of the staff that she employs and trains.

Marina Ahmad AM: Katie, thank you so much. That was very informative. Before I finish, Chairman, I wonder if I could just ask Commander John if he would like to respond on that because there is an element of joined up services to my question as well. Given the resource implications since 2010 and the budget cuts across the whole of the CJS, do you believe that there has been a cohort of offenders who have not benefited from the services of the Probation Service?

Commander Nick John (Head of Criminal Justice, Metropolitan Police Service): Apologies for not giving a really straight answer, but it is a very difficult question to answer on the basis that, yes, theoretically there are capacity issues across the various partnership arrangements, and we work with Probation very closely across a significant number of different offenders, high-risk and very high, medium and low. What I can say is I do not have any evidence to provide where that is the case. I can provide evidence to the contrary of that around the processes that are undertaken and the effective partnership working. I know we will come on to perhaps some of that when we talk about IOM, Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) and MARAC processes. I go back to my earlier point if I may. Clearly since reunification, we have seen an increase in the working relationship, but there will always be pockets of capacity issues, which we have heard about several times, around the numbers of vacancies that the LPS currently holds.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Thank you. We are coming on to the next section now, which is partnership working to reduce offending. Earlier, Kilvinder, you were praising partnership working and I can absolutely do that. When I was Leader of Harrow Council, we got things done because we worked in partnership and Probation was certainly part of that, so thank you. I am going to ask Will a question to start with. When will the final evaluations of the knife crime and domestic violence Global Positioning System (GPS) tagging pilots be published and are there any early indications of their impact?

Will Balakrishnan (Director of Commissioning and Partnerships, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): Thanks and, yes, there are. We have tagged almost, I think, 1,100 through that scheme and there was a recent HMIP report into electronic monitoring. Although the MOPAC, as it is called, electronic monitoring was not included, we had our own sort of special section at the end that was pretty effusive about the different operating model we use here, the different technology and the ease with which Probation staff - we have a dedicated person - send the information back to the police and our ability to use the GPS. It is all very highly praised.

In terms of the specific evaluations, as you will know, the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime is very keen that our evaluations are really robust. The domestic abuse tagging pilot started in March 2021 as a scheme, we are expecting the initial evaluation to be completed by the end of the summer and we aim to publish that

before Christmas [2022]. For the knife crime pilot, which started in 2019, on the MOPAC website you will be able to find the interim report, which was published in 2020. The final process and performance report for the knife crime pilot, which will include reoffending data - and for obvious reasons reoffending data takes a little bit of time - is going to be published this year [2022]. It was due to be in the spring. We just had a little issue with some control group data because obviously we need to compare our cohort against the control group, which has caused a little delay, but this has now been resolved. It will be available for our internal review and our clearance processes by the end of the summer so, again, we should publish that before Christmas, probably November [2022].

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): If an offender was a thief, as an example, will you put any factoring in that perhaps they have reoffended but not got caught?

Will Balakrishnan (Director of Commissioning and Partnerships, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): That is a slightly tricky one to answer. Obviously, for the MOPAC tagging it is going to be either domestic abuse or knife crime. For acquisitive crime, they would be potentially on a different tag, maybe one of the Home Office schemes. Ours are looking at those two offence types only. If they reoffended and their offence was acquisitive then, yes, that would be part of their reoffending and we would pick that up. Any offence would be a re-offence.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Thank you. Now to Commander John. Do the tagging pilots provide you with the information you need to monitor high risk of harm individuals and intervene to prevent violence when necessary?

Commander Nick John (Head of Criminal Justice, Metropolitan Police Service): As Will has touched on, we have a really effective working relationship across the various electronic monitoring pilots, and I have a dedicated leading responsible officer, who monitors and deals with this. We get a breakdown of the breaches on a regular basis - I think it is weekly - whereby we can review those and then, where appropriate, action those out.

As Will has touched on, since March 2021 - I can give you some figures if you require - we had 141 high-risk offenders for domestic abuse released. Managing those in partnership with Probation, we saw that 54 of those have been breached and they were actioned because with the information that was provided we were able to action those in partnership. As Will has touched on, we know that pilot is being evaluated as we speak, and we will look forward to reviewing those results.

Chairman, you touched on the acquisitive crime elements as well and that is another acquisitive crime electronic monitoring programme we have in place. That has been live since September 2021 and that is ongoing. That is part of a national pilot and, again, when we get the information that comes through, we will review that. It will not always be actioned because it depends on the type of information that is being provided, but I can say that we do have a really good flow of information into the MPS and into our tagging leads so that we can monitor that and then task out into the local officers in the local units.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Good because it can only but help, can it not?

Commander Nick John (Head of Criminal Justice, Metropolitan Police Service): Indeed.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): There is no question of anything else. Kilvinder, are staffing levels in the Offender Management Hubs in the National Security Division up to strength to keep their caseloads

manageable that Lord [Toby] Harris identified as necessary in his 2022 report for effective management of terrorist offenders.

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): Yes. I used to be the National Lead for Terrorism and Serious Organised Crime, but a separate division was created. My colleague, Sara Robinson, is the Deputy Director [Critical Public Protection Operations] for there and the priority has been to ensure that that department is fully staffed so each region has lost staff from the regions to be able to ensure that is resourced fully.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): OK, that gives us confidence. Did you want to come back in on this, Nick?

Commander Nick John (Head of Criminal Justice, Metropolitan Police Service): If I may, Chair. In relation to that particular point, I have spoken to colleagues from within the MPS that operate in partnership. They believe they have, quoting, "an excellent working relationship" with a shared vision and excellent collaboration and that is based on some of the activity taken. There has been some really good joint working around that area, around the first national conference and around some of the vetting aspects, which have all combined to have a really effective working relationship.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Well, that is good news because in that area that is absolutely what we need and all of us want, so thank you for that. I am going to pass over now to Assembly Member Desai.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair): You already answered this question, Nick, but I should still put this to you. Lord [Toby] Harris identified that 30 convicted terrorists have been released, or are due to be released, from prison between March 2021 and March 2025. How confident are you in your joint capacity to effectively monitor those convicted of terrorism offences who are released into London communities?

Commander Nick John (Head of Criminal Justice, Metropolitan Police Service): Thank you. It is fair to add that it is an indication of numbers, as opposed to a specific number. Regardless of that, the MPS has confidence. Hopefully, for the reasons I mentioned a second ago, jointly with the National Security Division we will absolutely be able to manage those effectively on release. Again, there is some significant work that has been undertaken in order to make sure that we are well versed in that partnership space.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair): Any thoughts from you, Kilvinder?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): When I arrived in London five years ago, one of the things that was impressive is the work with the MPS - SO15 [Counter Terrorism Command] - in relation to the work that we do in terms of that MAPPa level 3 high-risk cases that are the relevant people around the table. It is a lot of positive work.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair): Can I come back to you again, Nick? Have you seen any improvement in how high risk of harm offenders are managed in the community by probation since the reunification of services? If so, in what ways?

Commander Nick John (Head of Criminal Justice, Metropolitan Police Service): Apologies, I sound like I am repeating myself. Since reunification, when you look at the high-harm aspects, whether that is through the MAPPa or the MARAC or the sex offenders and so on, we work effectively well together. There are always challenges and that comes back down to the same point that we have spoken about several times this morning around capacity and resourcing, but ultimately we have some good cases around stalking and the Stalking

Threat Assessment Centre and the co-working there, around IOM, which predominantly, I appreciate, deals with medium and lower risk.

However, when you look at MARAC around domestic abuse and high-risk offenders there, there is probation attendance at all 32 of the MARACs across London. They continue to provide that valuable input and data sharing in order to manage and fight against domestic abuse. When it comes to MAPPA, we now work very closely around the releases of those, especially the management of level-2 and level-3 offenders who perhaps are not picked up elsewhere, for example if they are violent offenders as opposed to sex offenders in the Jigsaw Unit. There are countless examples of effective working but, as I say, it is not all without challenge. We continue to see a rising demand and we need to factor that in against a reducing capacity.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair): On the issue of MAPPA, Kilvinder, what progress have you made in improving the co-operation between the various MAPPA, multiagency public protection arrangements, between the different agencies?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): We have the MAPPA Strategic Management Board (SMB) with all the partners around the table. The Chair has recently retired and we have a new one now. Again, one of the best examples of the work that Chair did was to bring all the housing authorities around the table and get an agreement with all of the housing departments and the support to manage those risky individuals.

One of the things that I always want to say is that we do not eliminate risk, we manage it. Managing those high-risk, complex cases has to be a partnership role. We talked about mental health, you can talk about substance misuse and you can talk about accommodation. The MAPPA SMB is to bring all those individuals around the table so that it is a collaborative approach to manage that risk. I support that MAPPA SMB by having people around that table and having the co-ordination team.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair): Thank you. The last question from me is to all of you. How effective is IOM in London and in what ways has the revised framework helped improve how probation and the police work together to reduce repeat offending?

Katie Lomas (National Chair, National Association of Probation Officers): Thank you. The move from IOM, which was not that integrated because it was working with two different probation organisations, to now a properly integrated IOM has been positive. The feedback that we have had from members across London is that they believe that the system is now working as well as they expect it to be. The overall feedback is that this is working well and is an example of good partnership working, it is working well across all the PDUs in London. There is a real positivity around that being properly integrated now. Obviously, all of the services are being impacted by lack of staffing, but this is one where the partnership working is really positive. That takes away some of the impact of lack of staffing in some places.

While in some areas, in some boroughs, you have different services that are available to call on in the community, that sometimes leads to the perception of almost a postcode lottery. If you are in this borough and you have these needs, they will be met but maybe not if you are somewhere else. There is real effort to address that through the new commissioning powers that the Probation Service has and that ability to bring in partners where they are needed. Over time, and it will take a little bit of time, the twin approach of bringing in the right partners and making sure that you have the right partners in place to support people and firming up the staffing on the probation side - we believe that steady-state staffing is due by 2026 - that will deliver an

outstanding IOM system, which is what we are aiming to get back to. It is definitely one of the more positive aspects of work, from the feedback from our members.

Commander Nick John (Head of Criminal Justice, Metropolitan Police Service): As we have said, one service obviously simplifies the communications and allows for the ability to mirror -- we know, for example, in the mirroring each of the MPS IOM teams. We have a sister team within the London Probation Service. Each of the 32 borough-based programmes or schemes have assigned probation officers and it is clear that the LPS governance is clear and aligned with us. The assistance of MOPAC sounds simple but is very clear on who is responsible for what elements and that helps with that.

When we look at the average reoffending rate for an IOM cohort over the last five years, it is about 30%. Our recent figures show the current reoffending rate is 25% with that cohort. Therefore, there is effective partnership working, identifying some of the issues, responding to that and making sure that that newer truly integrated approach is working, or certainly seems to be working, and heading in the right direction when we see that 5% reduction in reoffending rates.

Will Balakrishnan (Director of Commissioning and Partnerships, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): That is very nice to hear. As Nick mentioned, the new IOM framework, the second one, was led by the Deputy Mayor [for Policing and Crime] and MOPAC very much in its convening role and it is nice to hear it is having the impact that we want from partners. What always strikes me about IOM is that offenders who have 11 or more previous offences are about 38% of the total London population of offenders but they commit over 75% of the proven offences. That is why IOM is so important. Sometimes we think that low and medium risk is less important than high risk, but when you think about the impacts of crime on Londoners, it is very much those cases. That is why IOM is so important. Back to where we started with reunification, having one agency to work with on IOM is making a huge difference.

The other thing in London is that it is not just burglary and robbery. IOM is a national framework, but we have been in able to flex it in London. Having violence as our top index in London is important and again that speaks to the main concerns that Londoners have about crime in London, and that is really important. In fact, the proportion of IOM-eligible cases has gone from 10% to 40% in terms of the violence index. We are working with, broadly speaking, the offenders who are going to have the biggest impact.

I want to say one more thing, which is that 31% of IOM cases are recorded as domestic abuse perpetrators. Clearly the Mayor has just launched the new VAWG Strategy. That is another important group. If we do not tackle perpetrators and reoffending of perpetrators, we will not be able to have the impact that we want in our wider VAWG area. It is great to hear from partners that it is going well. That is the feedback that we get, and I think that it is one of the most important tools in our arsenal.

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): I will just agree. We do need to look at the high-level prolific offenders in addition to our high-risk serial harm offenders. Having the MAPPA and the IOM and within that the serious group offending, the violence reduction work, there are so many partnerships. The one that we have not mentioned today, which I hope will get mentioned at some point, is the Youth to Adult Transition hub that we are piloting in Newham, looking at a completely different way of working with these young, vulnerable individuals. You do not become an adult at 18, as I think we all know. It is how we can work with them effectively in that trauma-based approach, with the mental health services there, with the teachers there, with education training there, the early signs of that are very, very positive. If we do that well, if we do the Youth to Adult Transition well, I think that we will see less violent crime after that because we will be targeting these young, vulnerable people who are traumatised.

When you look at assessments of people who commit some horrendous offences, you will see a pattern of trauma in their lives. I am trying to open this up to lots of amazing partnership work that we are doing and piloting, but we need to mainstream it.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair): Chairman, it would be useful to get some statistics or some further information about the Newham project.

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): It is literally just being reviewed now.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair): It has been going for about a year now?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): It has been about a year. Just less.

Will Balakrishnan (Director of Commissioning and Partnerships, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): Just less than a year, yes. The first young people started work in October [2021], but I do not think that the hub was fully up and running until the end of November, beginning of December [2021]. It is exciting.

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): It has stop-start elements to it and that is why we are not quite clear on that. I have been to visit it twice and I have spoken to the people on probation, the young people in there. The way that the whole space, the atmosphere, the workers, it is just the way for us to go and I hope that we can do that across the piece.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair): Thanks, Chairman.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): It is exciting, is it not, and perhaps that is something that we could all go and visit at some point?

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair): We should.

Will Balakrishnan (Director of Commissioning and Partnerships, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): They would love you to come.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Because we need to sort out cause, and prevention is better than anything else.

Our last section now is working with private, voluntary and community sector organisations.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Can I fit in a question here? I am not sure that it fitted anywhere. I want to pick up data. Before the Probation Service split a few years ago, you used to share data with MOPAC and the GLA SafeStats team, which helped informed projects and programmes. This stopped when the split happened, and it has not recommenced. Is this something, Kilvinder, that you will be picking up and working with the GLA to share this data again as soon as possible?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): Do you mean the needs assessments, the data around individuals' needs, or do you mean other SLA data? We are sharing the needs assessments, people's individual needs, be it drugs, relationships and so on.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: No, it is other data, I do not think it is that. It is the latter.

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): The SLA data?

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Yes, and some other, in order that the GLA SafeStats team can properly analyse this.

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): Yes, absolutely.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Maybe, Will, you could pick that up outside. Sharing data is so valuable at all sorts of levels. Different types of data can help you target your service. I want to make sure that was picked up; it was something that was lost in the past.

You have all looked back at our previous meeting, which I thank you for, because that has meant that this morning you have answered some of our questions and picked up some of the discussion from that. Will, are you confident that you know which voluntary and community sector services are out there in London that are available and how they can support people on probation? It feels like there is a huge number out there and I am not convinced. Have you thought about mapping these, for example?

Will Balakrishnan (Director of Commissioning and Partnerships, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): In MOPAC's role we would not necessarily know the totality of those services in terms of probation and specifically work with offenders. I chair something called the Reducing Reoffending Board, which is part of that structure that I mentioned earlier, the LCJB and LCRB. As part of that we have Victim Contact Scheme (VCS) representation on it and we are looking to establish a provider forum, which the voluntary sector themselves are going to lead on, to try to help us make those links.

In terms of the totality of service mapping, when I have done that in previous lives it has been an enormous undertaking, and keeping it up to date is an enormous undertaking. If there was a real reason to do it, it might be a useful thing to do. In terms of the breadth of providers across London, we are good at engaging with them as a Commissioner. I know that you heard countering views last time you met, but you heard many people saying that MOPAC was good at engaging VCS organisations, and that is always heartening to hear.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: What about you, Kilvinder? Are you confident that you know what is out there?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): No, but we do meet with Clinks quarterly. It is the outreach service for us. We hold roundtables that are organised by Clinks, and they can access all these third-sector charities, etc, so that we can talk to them. We have had a number of engagement sessions with them.

I am trying to remember the name of an organisation again. Sorry I cannot rely on my memory today. It is a Black enterprise scheme. It convened a meeting with us with a number of organisations that have been set up and led by people from Black and Asian communities, and looking at how we can work with that group. We are also working with people very early from the private sector looking at how they can support us and do some myth busting, particularly around the Asian community, around domestic abuse and alcohol use. I

cannot say that I am 100% there in terms of everything that London has to offer, but we are linked into organisations that can do that for us.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Excellent, that sounds promising. Katie, how do probation staff keep on top of the available community services in the area where they work?

Katie Lomas (National Chair, National Association of Probation Officers): With great difficulty. Both the answers before show how challenging this is. It is with great difficulty. I have to say that having the partnership and commissioning arrangements back in the Probation Service do help. Under the previous arrangements, with the CRCs doing all of the commissioning and partnership work and the national Probation Service accessing that through the CRCs, probation staff in the National Probation Service felt very, very removed from it and felt that there was a real lack of information. It is a bit better now, but it is very complicated. Often we work in PDUs that are organised within boroughs and that is an important and obvious logical structure to have. However, not everyone lives in a neat bubble. People might live in an area but there are services cross-border that would be more appropriate for them. That can be a massive challenge for probation staff even to know what is in the next-door PDU, never mind what is in another borough and what might be available to people.

Those kinds of things are a huge challenge and take an enormous amount of time for probation staff. If I am a probation officer struggling to find it in my team while there are ten, 20, 30, 40, 50 other probation officers struggling to find the same information, often we are repeating the same things. We are all doing the same things to try to find the same single piece of information. Anything that can be done to improve that access for probation staff through partnership arrangements to other resources in the communities that we serve is valuable.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Absolutely. Kilvinder, do you want to pick that up? Is there some way that you can help map this or provide that comprehensive list?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): Absolutely. Not to be flippant, I think this issue has been around for decades.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Yes, I am sure.

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): The difference now is that you have the internet, which does help a lot more than when we used to have to go through telephone directories. One of the things is that we do now deliver Day One Services. We do have provision for ETE, the accommodation advice and health and wellbeing and they can co-ordinate some of that. We have the Day Two Services, which are around debts and benefits and that dependency to recovery. Again, those partners can support us in finding those local connections and the probation practitioner will not need to do that.

We have the Regional Outcome Innovation Fund. I have tasked each of my Heads of Service, the 18, to be out there in their local communities talking to their staff, "What do we need?". We have the needs assessments. While a lot of people do not like our assessment tool, which is called Oasis, one of the positive things it does is highlight the needs of the cohorts living in these areas. I do take Katie's point absolutely that sometimes there may be something over the borough line that might be more helpful, and we do need to have a smarter intranet that will allow us to look at that. It is about the conversations as well to make sure that the staff are

talking to their Heads of Service so that we are commissioning services or looking at services or directing across the piece.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Lovely, thank you. You will have seen in the transcript for our last meeting lots of concerns about the Dynamic Framework. We heard that it was felt to be inaccessible and precluded many of London's specialist and voluntary organisations. There was an independent review nationally that said that it was a commercial procurement model ill-suited to funding small and specialist organisations. Do you agree with our guests at our last meeting that it is overly bureaucratic and what are you doing to ensure that smaller organisations can overcome this bureaucracy, in order to deliver the specialist local services that we need?

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): I would first of all say that if that is their experience, that is their experience, and I would not countermand that. There have been a lot of conversations at the MoJ and HMPPS about how to make this easier. There are conversations at the moment about how to use grant funding in addition to co-commissioning. If we want those smaller organisations, we still have to do the due diligence piece of work and look at if we can grant fund them.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Yes, I understand that.

Kilvinder Vigurs (Regional Director for London, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service): That is being explored and we hope to hear a conclusion of that in the next week or two. That is how close we are to that. There is a lot of work being done to make the whole Dynamic Framework a lot easier for the smaller organisations. We are also helping them with the work with Clinks and direct contact with some of these organisations, working with them to see what we can do as well to support that process.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Thank you. Will, I will come to you on that.

Will Balakrishnan (Director of Commissioning and Partnerships, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): The challenge of the Dynamic Framework was that they had to come up with something that would work as well for London as it would for Rutland or Wiltshire. They probably do not have the breadth of providers, so it is an inelegant solution.

Kilvinder mentioned co-commissioning and this is something that I think is really important. You heard about our women's services and you heard from many of them last time. We are doing that co-commissioning now of the women's service through the Dynamic Framework but because of MOPAC's experience and expertise and because of the learning from the first round, we have been able to use that -- I cannot talk too much about it because it is a live procurement. We have been able to do it in a way that ensured that small providers were not excluded. This is why I think co-commissioning is important. We have to use our combined expertise here. I do not want to suggest further recommendations from the Assembly, but this is exactly the sort of thing that we need more of. We need us working in consort. You have heard about all our good partnership working. As a personal view, I think that we should extend to the commissioning of services in London.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: We also did hear last time that voluntary organisations thought MOPAC's commissioning process was challenging for small organisations, and we have heard that before about the work that you have done on victims and so on, different commissioning, but some of the very smaller organisations are concerned about that. Co-commissioning is obviously something that you are going for at the moment, but how are you making sure that any commissioning that you do is genuinely open and inclusive for these smaller organisations so that they can play their role in delivering services?

Will Balakrishnan (Director of Commissioning and Partnerships, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): Absolutely. There is a balance to be struck. What MOPAC tries to do and advise the Deputy Mayor [for Policing and Crime] about is the best way to deliver outcomes for Londoners. Clearly, we believe in many of those cases the best way to deliver those outcomes will be smaller organisations, will be by-and-for organisations. My experience -- and I cannot speak to the past; MOPAC is about to have its ten-year anniversary. Maybe it is older. Apologies, I should know that.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: It is just over ten years. March 2012.

Will Balakrishnan (Director of Commissioning and Partnerships, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): Just over ten. We are planning a celebration. In the last couple of years things like the VAWG Grassroots Fund, which I know that you have heard about before. That was specifically designed with the sector to enable that to happen. That is a good example. The use of consortia and encouraging consortia to bid. We have seen that in the women's offending services we have now. You heard from Niki [Scordi, Chief Executive Officer, Advance] last time, who is a big part of that. That is a consortia of small organisations coming together. There are loads of good examples at MOPAC.

I obviously get a certain view from the market when I speak to them. I have to be honest - and I am not just saying this - that it is normally positive about how good we are about encouraging small organisations to come forward, things like the Victims Small Grant Fund, the Grassroots Fund. We have loads of examples. However, I am always happy to go back to people and talk to them. I did not necessarily recognise that feedback, I have to be honest, but I take it seriously and I will be talking to some of those organisations myself.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: They are trying to diversify the different ways that people can bid for funding for their work in order to support smaller groups in London.

Will Balakrishnan (Director of Commissioning and Partnerships, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): Absolutely. We are always trying to do that. The other thing that I would say about MOPAC's commissioning is that we do not always have free choice. We are moving slightly away from probation, but in other parts of our forest we get lots of money that the MoJ gives us, with strings. I am thinking particularly about a recent round of Isla funding where we are asked to do a process in a certain way and distribute the money in a certain way. We still try to use as much influence and discretion as possible to allow that to go to the providers that we think will be able to have the biggest impact. That space that is going to be small, by-and-for organisations. We do our best with the process but often it is a process not of MOPAC's design.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: That is been helpful, thank you very much indeed.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Thank you. I am very aware that we have asked hardly any questions of you, Commander John. Is there anything that you would like to say regarding probation or anything that you would like to point out to the Committee?

Commander Nick John (Head of Criminal Justice, Metropolitan Police Service): That is not a problem at all. The main points that I wanted to make I feel I have been able to make, due to the time that you have allowed me, around the fact that everything is not always as great as it could be. We can always make improvements. We recognise where those improvements are and we are working tirelessly in partnership to address those, namely around demand and capacity, which we have all mentioned many times. Whether it is with MOPAC, whether it with the LPS, I do feel that there are some strong partnerships that are working

towards supporting offenders and reducing reoffending and managing high risk and high harm. I hope that has come across today with regards to how effective some of the partnerships are at all the levels within our responsibilities and remits.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Thank you very much for that. That brings our meeting nearly to a close. I would genuinely like to thank our guests for attending the meeting today and for participating in this discussion. I have noted that if different training could be provided in some ways, I think that would be helpful – I certainly heard that from Katie. All of you identified the need for more staffing, and of course we will await the Inspector's report, but we will be mindful of the fact that the Inspection is being carried out six months after the merger process has started. We will certainly be taking an interest in that as the Committee has been very interested in this whole subject.