

CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM

There are two questions that we are seeking your views on, which are:

- 1. Do you agree with the Board's objectives over the coming years?**
- 2. Are there any other issues you think we should consider in our Corporate Plan?**

Please complete this form and return it by **Monday 3 March 2025**.

The questionnaire can be completed by individual stakeholders, members of the public, or on behalf of a group or organisation.

Please indicate if you are responding as:

A member of the public ☐

On behalf of an organisation ☒

Other (Please specify) ☐

Your name (optional) ...Amanda Stewart OBE.....

Organisation's Name (if responding on behalf of an organisation) ...Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI).....

If other: Please Specify

Communications Consent (optional)

Email: Consultation@probation-ni.gov.uk...

If you wish to be added to the Board Communication emails please tick the box below and provide your email to confirm.

☐	Email	n/a
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Please note that replying 'yes' we will use your contact details to provide information on the role and work of the Board and PCSPs. Our Privacy Notice can be found at www.nipolicingboard.org.uk

1. Do you agree with the Board's objectives over the coming years?

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Yes

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No

Please state the reasons for your answer including any additional suggestions for priority areas.

1. Do you agree with the Board's objectives over the coming years?

The Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI) believe the five objectives that are set out in the Corporate Plan cover the main strategic areas for policing. We have some specific comments in relation to three objectives which are set out below.

Objective A - To monitor PSNI's resourcing plans, advocating on issues which support policing, including transformational change and delivery of a representative service.

In respect of resourcing, PBNI understand the significant resourcing issues experienced by the Police Service and others and agree that a 'collective approach to resourcing issues across Government is now more important than ever'. PBNI has highlighted to the Justice Committee and Department of Justice that decisions taken as a result of resourcing issues in one part of the justice system has consequences for other parts of justice. For example, we know that decisions in respect of police numbers (both increasing and reducing police numbers) has an impact on probation's workload. Similarly changes in police service delivery are likely to impact upon probation service delivery and workload. There are a number of areas where police officers and probation officers work closely and that includes through the Public Protection Arrangements for Northern Ireland, the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences and Reducing Offending in Partnership. Any changes to the models of service delivery in these areas are likely to impact upon Probation's workload.

We welcome the inclusion of transformational change within this objective and would suggest the Board explicitly link this objective to the draft Programme for Government priority on Reform and Transformation of Public Services. Within the Corporate Plan, the PSNI Horizon 2025 transformation strategy and the related individual strategies on IT,

Estates, Fleet, People and Transport are mentioned; we would suggest that PSNI's input to the speeding up justice programme is also referenced and included within this objective.

Objective B - To monitor, oversee and assess the performance of the PSNI through the Board and its Committees and ensure the delivery of Human Rights based, community focused policing.

The Policing Board's scrutiny and accountability functions are critically important in ensuring community confidence in policing and we welcome the clear focus set out within this objective of providing accountability and scrutiny to help improve performance and build confidence.

One of the ways in which the Board monitors the performance of the PSNI in complying with the Human Rights Act 1998 is by undertaking human rights thematic reviews. We understand that this mechanism enables an in-depth examination of specific areas of policing from a human rights perspective. PBNi work closely with PSNI in various ways including through the public protection arrangements and reducing offending in partnership. Additionally, we have a team of staff co-located with PSNI in Seapark. A key feature of this thematic approach is the use of the community's experience of policing as evidence by which to evaluate police policy and practice. The Board may wish to consider if it was relevant to the review widening the scope to key partnerships within which PBNi operate.

Additionally, we have a keen interest in reducing offending, welcome the Board's approach through the Policing Plan to high harm crimes, such as CSE, Domestic Abuse and Hate Crime. PBNi would advocate for a joined up approach to reducing reoffending across the various justice bodies and with the wider Executive to support better resource allocation and a co-ordinated effort to support fewer victims of crime. Additionally, at a local level through PCSPs and supporting joined up delivery for those presenting as vulnerable in local communities, many of whom are the same people accessing all our services at various points. The PfG provides an opportunity to develop these partnerships in support of police and others and to deliver better outcomes for individuals and communities.

Objective C- Through engagement and collaboration, to raise awareness of the Board's work to enable local communities, PCSPs and partners to support the delivery of policing outcomes.

PBNi is fully committed to engaging with local communities and partners to encourage

partnership working to find solutions to local community safety issues. PCSPs are a valuable forum to help us to carry out that work. We welcome the reference in the narrative of this objective that it supports the Department of Justice Strategic Themes of supporting safe and resilient communities and addressing harm and *vulnerability*. There has been an increase in the numbers of vulnerable people supervised by probation including those who have offended due to substance misuse, poor mental health and trauma. The increased vulnerability and complexity of individuals that we are dealing with in probation is reflected across the wider justice system. We therefore believe PCSPs provide a forum to support PBNI and other partner organisations work with vulnerable people. Local projects funded by the PCSPs, local advertising campaigns and awareness work within communities should focus on the importance of tackling mental health, trauma, and addictions.

Probation staff are also facing a significant challenge in accessing appropriate housing for people who have offended. We know that housing people who have offended within local communities can be an issue of concern for local residents and we would welcome a co-ordinated approach by designated bodies to help raise awareness of the importance of supporting people to desist from crime by providing appropriate housing.

We welcome the continued communication, engagement and outreach that is carried out professionally by the Board's Communications Team. The prioritisation of Domestic Abuse (incorporating Violence Against Women and Girls) as the first area to be considered within a series of strategic engagement events is important. PBNI will also be carrying out significant engagement work in this area and would welcome the opportunity to share resources, information, evidence, training and good practice with the Board.

2. Are there any other issues you think we should consider in our Corporate Plan?

Please state the reasons for your answer.

We note the Corporate Plan states that many of the demands facing policing require more than a policing response, such as tackling hate crime and violence against women and girls. We completely concur with this and would welcome a focus on collaboration with statutory partners in respect of a number of areas including domestic abuse, sexual offences, child exploitation, hate crime, tackling paramilitarism and criminality.

Within PBNi we have been focused over the last 2 years on commencing a journey of implementing a 'trauma informed approach' to delivering services and informing our practice. We are also using that approach to build organisational resilience and support our staff who are working in difficult and challenging circumstances. This may be an area of work that the Board is interested in reflecting within its own Corporate Plan.

Thank you for completing our questionnaire.