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Response to	HMIP inspection framework and programmes 2019-20
Issued by	HM Inspectorate of Probation
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Notes	For more information please contact Jo Easton at jo.easton@magistrates-association.org.uk

The Magistrates Association (MA) is a national charity accountable to its members with a mission to provide a voice for magistrates, support its members in administering the law and educate people on the role of the magistracy in England and Wales. The MA promotes magistrates' work, the interests of justice and the sound administration of the law.

Consultation questions

Question 1: We welcome views on the additional considerations applied to our prioritisation of thematic inspections.

We believe the additional considerations are helpful, and when taken together, all the considerations should be useful in prioritising thematic inspections.

Question 2: We welcome views on our proposed topics for thematic inspections for 2020 and beyond.

The MA believes that accommodation and mental health are two of the most important areas for thematic inspection, and therefore welcome the plans to focus on these topics. In relation to mental health, it would be important to ensure factors relating to multiple vulnerabilities that interact with mental health are considered as well as assessing both the input of Liaison and Diversion (and comparable in Wales) teams into PSRs and the availability of Mental Health Treatment Requirements across England and Wales.

We would also like to propose HMIP consider looking at the use of Electronic Monitoring (EM) as part of a community sentence – specifically how the newly rolled-out GPS tags are being used. We note that last year, HMIP said they would evaluate whether EM was appropriate for thematic inspection, and, without knowing the outcome of that evaluation, we would point out the new policy that allows GPS rather than Radio Frequency (RF) tags to be used as part of a community sentence has now been brought in.

Question 3: We welcome views on our proposed research projects.

We welcome the proposal to carry out research on staff training and development. We believe it is particularly important to consider what training CRC staff receive on court practice and sentencing, as they may not have sat in court themselves.

The issue of the courts' confidence in probation as well as their awareness of and engagement with both NPS and CRCs is vitally important, and the MA would support the proposal to carry out research on this issue. Specifically, we believe it would be helpful to assess quality and appropriateness of PSRs made to magistrates.

In relation to the topics proposed for youth justice, the MA is particularly supportive of HMIP looking at the quality of delivery of court disposals vs out of court disposals and out of court disposals (including the effectiveness of joint working with the police).

Additional Comment:

We support the approach taken by HMIP in working to develop "a bespoke methodology" for Wales, as this will be an appropriate way of acknowledging the unique model to be followed in Wales.