



HM Prison &
Probation Service



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Dear / Annwyl Jess,

Richard Oldfield Report

I wanted to write to you in response to the recently published report on the Dynamic Framework of the Probation Service by Richard Oldfield. We welcome this report and the findings made by Richard.

We are pleased that the report recognises the enormous effort that has gone into establishing the Dynamic Framework to enable us to deliver Commissioned Rehabilitative Services and the success of awarding all 110 contracts for day one of our new unified Probation Service with around two-thirds of contracts going to the voluntary sector. As always, we want to continue to learn lessons from our recent unification and we are glad that the report also highlights the actions we are taking to further improve the structure of the Framework and its processes.

Three core recommendation were made within the report:

- Use of grants be encouraged and that they become the default (rather than contracts) for awards under £1m
- Contracts should require a specified % of funding to be deployed to VCSE / SME subcontractors
- More granular reporting and simplification of competition process

We too share the ambition to further promote the use of grants and we will look to provide commissioning teams with clear guidance to help make grants the presumptive choice for funding that fits the specified criteria. We are currently finalising the criteria but anticipate it will be a combination of award value, as recommended in the report and type of requirement / service.

We fully support the underlying objective that the second recommendation – that contracts should require a specified percentage of funding to be deployed to VCSE / SME subcontractors – aims to deliver, which is to encourage and grow the involvement of small and medium sized organisations in service delivery, but we do not intend to introduce the requirement as set out in the report, on the grounds that it can constrain or limit competition.

Instead, we will look to implement other actions to support achieving this objective ensuring we remain within the defined procurement regulations. Where the regulations allow, we will look to promote the involvement of SME / VCSE and will continue to promote the framework to enable both regional and local engagement. We will continue to review the involvement of VCSEs and SMEs in the delivery of rehabilitative services and take further action if required.

With regard to the recommendation of more granular reporting and simplification of competition, we fully support this recommendation and are already taking actions to address it. For instance, we are currently producing a new set of call off competition documents. We will be conducting a comprehensive lessons learned exercise to aid future commissioning and procurement.

As stated above, we welcome the three core recommendations provided in the report and the range of other recommendations made and we are continuously looking to improve the Dynamic Framework, working in as collaborative a way as possible with the market. We have already updated our market-facing engagement materials and we will be looking to provide more detailed guidance to probation regions later this year, as well as procuring a national contract for engaging people on probation, helping us to inform the future development of rehabilitative services.

I look forward to our continued partnership working going forward and I am excited about the opportunities unification will bring to further enhance our relationship with the voluntary sector and the important services it delivers for communities.

I would also be happy to meet to discuss the report and our proposed actions further if you find this useful.

Yours sincerely / Yn gywir

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "A. Rees".

Amy Rees,
Director General of Probation and Wales, HM Prison and Probation Service
Cyfarwyddwr Cyffredinol y Gwasanaeth Prawf a Chymru, Gwasanaeth Carchardai a Phrawf EM