



One minute guide

The Probation Service

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What is the Probation Service?

[The Probation Service](#) is a statutory criminal justice service that supervises adults who have been convicted of criminal offences and are serving their sentence in prison and in the community. Its creation has unified the Community Rehabilitation Company and the National Probation Service and they manage People on Probation who pose low to very high risk of harm (in Leeds there are two Probation offices). Their role is to:

- protect the public through the effective rehabilitation of People on Probation, by tackling the causes of offending and enabling them to turn their lives around;
- support victims of crime; and
- reduce reoffending.

They work in partnership with other organisations to:

- **Assess risk** and advise the Courts, to support the effective sentencing and rehabilitation of People on Probation; and
- **Directly manage** People on Probation, both in the community and before their release from custody.

What does the Probation Service look like in Leeds?

The Probation Service has a Unit in Leeds, which is the busiest city in the Yorkshire and the Humber Division. The Probation Service in Leeds has a number of teams working with People on Probation, as well as a Victim Liaison Unit working with victims of sexual and/or violent crimes (where People on Probation have been sentenced to more than twelve months in custody). There are also Probation Practitioners at Leeds Magistrates and Crown Courts, and the Probation Service manage several Approved Premises (previously known as Probation Hostels; these are transitional accommodation options for high risk prisoners to aid their reintegration into society following their release from prison, or to manage escalating risk when in the community).

What kind of work does the Probation Service do?

People on Probation have a sentence plan which outlines the rules they must follow during their sentence. This sometimes includes restrictions on who they can have contact with. Sentence plans can include some or all of the following:

- Behaviour programmes they must complete in relation to their offence(s);
- Treatment they must complete, e.g. for alcohol or drug addiction etc.; and
- Unpaid work (if it is part of their sentence).

If People on Probation are on a Community based sentence and break certain rules in their plan, they can be returned to Court and may be given additional requirements or sentenced to a period of imprisonment. If People on Probation are on prison licence and breach their conditions, they can have additional conditions added to their licence or be returned to custody.

People on Probation are allocated a Probation Practitioner. Probation Practitioners protect the public by having regular contact with People on Probation, ensuring they are complying with the conditions/ requirements of their release from prison or community based sentence, and, not committing crime. They also ensure that People on Probation can access services that reduce the risk of them committing more crime, including drug or alcohol treatment, accommodation and education.

What should practitioners do if they are working with a family where adults have Probation Service involvement?

Within the context of [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) and the [Think Family](#) approach, it is important to consider the adults in a family when you are working with children. If you have concerns about adults in or associated with a family and think they may pose a risk, you can use the contact number below to find out whether they are known to a Probation Practitioner.

Probation Practitioners routinely check whether People on Probation have children or have contact with any children. If they do, Probation Practitioners will check with Children's Social Work Services whether the child/ children are known to them. The Probation Service make referrals to Children's Social Work Services when they have concerns that a child/ children are in need, are experiencing, or are at risk of experiencing abuse or neglect. Probation Practitioners are key partners for the Children's Social Work Service, e.g. attending Child Protection Conferences and Core Groups.

If you are working with a family where adults are known to the Probation Service, you must make sure that their Probation Practitioner is informed of any changes in circumstance, and/ or behaviour that may indicate further offending (e.g. drug and alcohol use or spending which cannot be explained by the family's income) so that they can revise their risk assessment if necessary. **This applies even if the People on Probation are serving a custodial sentence**, as there may be increased risks whilst in custody and the information will inform plans around that individual's release. Probation Practitioners also need to know the reasons for any case closures, and what actions have been carried out in response to referrals.

Key contacts and further information

To check whether an adult in a family you are working with is known to the Probation Service in Leeds, please contact the duty officer/manager on: 0113 208 3550 / 01924 975 176.

For more information about the Probation Service, please visit the [Probation Service](#) website or contact Jolene Varlow from the Probation Service in Leeds, on 0113 208 3550 / 01924 975 176.