



# HM Prison & Probation Service

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3 November 2021

Dear Peter,

## **THE HMPPS RACE ACTION PROGRAMME: UPDATE NOVEMBER 2021**

Thank you for your letter dated 14 October 2021. Jo Farrar has requested that I respond to you on behalf of HMPPS.

HMPPS remains committed to the activity and purpose of the Race Action Programme and a range of activity has taken place since the inception of the Programme in December 2020. The Programme is scheduled to run until March 2024 so there are more than two years (rather than 12 months) remaining.

Over the next two years Race Action Programme, which builds on the MoJ Race Action Plan, will tackle racial discrimination and disproportionality across HMPPS and create a diverse and inclusive workforce which gives all staff an opportunity to be their best. Prisoners, children and people on probation are also an important focus for the programme which will tackle disparity in outcomes in order to reduce reoffending and enhance rehabilitative practices. Through the delivery of our five priority projects our aspiration is that the Race Action Programme will facilitate greater engagement with the Third Sector, improve commissioning practices, enhance recruitment processes, promote consistent application of policies, and provide safe spaces to manage the effects of racial trauma and enhance the current learning provision to address current gaps in cultural understanding across all staff groups.

I would like to reassure you that following the publication of the launch booklet, the Race Action Programme team have continued to drive forward on a range of activities. The absence of any external facing documentation in no way reflects the priority of this Programme or the scale of the activity which is being undertaken.

The Programme has already delivered its first national product – the HMPPS Race Allyship Charter was launched in August 2021. Race Allyship helps to build better relationships amongst staff as they work together to challenge the existence and impact of racial discrimination. As key change agents, Race Allies will amplify the voices across the organisation who speak out against racial

inequality and reinforce the message that inclusion is everybody's business and we all have a part to play. Race Allyship aligns closely to the HMPPS Strategic Objectives, through our Race Allyship Community we can support the creation of an open learning culture which enables people to be their best. As part of delivering a justice system that works for everyone and reflects our diverse society, we are absolutely committed to creating a workplace where everyone feels welcome and valued - Race Allyship will help us to achieve that goal. Since the launch of the HMPPS Allyship Charter we have seen more than a 10 percent increase in the number of Allies in our Race Staff Network.

The Programme team are engaging heavily with external partners, including the Prison Reform Trust. The governance structure of the Programme also includes members of the External Advice and Scrutiny Panel and we currently have representatives from the Zahid Mubarek Trust and BTEG on our Race Action Programme Board.

During the first phase of the Programme we have worked toward the development of a clear set of detailed programme plans and deliverables which will sit behind the headlines we shared within the launch document. We engaged heavily with partners from across HMPPS, the wider Department and the third sector throughout the development of our ambitions and as a result we can be confident that we have the right set of deliverables for the Programme.

The External Advice and Scrutiny Panel members have been engaged throughout our planning for the programme, which allows them to conduct their role in advising and challenging appropriately. We placed particular emphasis on them providing us with challenge around the extent to which our ambitions will meet the needs of prisoners, children and those on probation as this will be an important focus for the Programme. In addition to these quarterly meetings, we also meet individual members of the EASP on a regular basis to discuss our plans in greater detail. This demonstrates that whilst our plans are not yet published, consultation with our voluntary sector partners has been at the heart of the development and delivery activity of the Race Action Programme.

Our ambitions, and a more detailed assessment of the data and evidence to support them, will be provided in the Second Edition of our Race Action Programme Booklet which is currently in the final stages of our internal governance process and is scheduled for publication next month. The Programme team are working hard to ensure that staff within HMPPS are aware of the ambitions of the Race Action Programme and the HMPPS intranet page dedicated to the RAP will be published in a similar timeframe.

The Programme will devise a robust measurement and evaluation strategy to allow us to assess the success of our initiatives and we will consistently map the benefits of our activity through the close monitoring of a range of metrics.

As we move into the delivery phase of the programme we will be actively working with a wide range of internal and external partners and members of the EASP have been invited to join a selection of our working groups. Throughout the lifecycle of the Programme we will continually look for opportunities to work jointly with the third sector to ensure that we refine our thinking and gain the benefit from their knowledge and expertise, in particular those which have a specific focus on the Black, Asian and minority ethnic community.

In addition to this, HMPPS has an Equality Analysis process to help ensure that decisions are taken with fairness to all Protected Characteristics in mind. The current process is currently under review with the purpose of launching a new Policy Framework on Equality Analysis in 2022. The new policy framework will further strengthen arrangements around completion, monitoring and appropriately robust challenge.

I would like to thank you for your continued interest in the Race Action Programme and would be very willing to meet with you to discuss this matter in further detail. I will of course ensure that we provide you with a copy of the Second Edition of the Race Action Booklet as soon as it is published. Colleagues from the Race Action Programme would also like to extend the offer to meet with you for a further discussion if that would be helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Blakeman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ian Blakeman  
Executive Director Strategy, Planning and Performance