Criminal Justice Inspection
Northern Ireland
a better justice system for all

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND WELLBEING SUPPORT

A THEMATIC INSPECTION OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND WELLBEING SUPPORT IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM IN NORTHERN IRELAND

FEBRUARY 2023

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A THEMATIC INSPECTION OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND WELLBEING SUPPORT IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM IN NORTHERN IRELAND

February 2023

Laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly under Section 49(2) of the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002 (as amended by paragraph 7(2) of Schedule 13 to The Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Devolution of Policing and Justice Functions) Order 2010) by the Department of Justice.

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CES	Centre for Effective Services
CIPD	Chartered Institue of Personnel and Development
CJI	Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland
DETI	Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment (now the Department for the Economy)
FSNI	Forensic Science Northern Ireland
HMICFRS	His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary Fire & Rescue Services
NIAO	Northern Ireland Audit Office
NICS	Northern Ireland Civil Service
NICS HR	Northern Ireland Civil Service Human Resources
NICS HR LInKS	Northern Ireland Civil Service Human Resources Learning Information Knowledge and Skills
NICTS	Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service
NIPB	Northern Ireland Policing Board
NIPS	Northern Ireland Prison Service
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
PBNI	Probation Board for Northern Ireland
PPS	Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland
PRRT	Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
RHI	Renewable Heat Incentive
UK	United Kingdom
YJA	Youth Justice Agency

CHIEF INSPECTOR'S FOREWORD

If there was ever a time for great leadership and a renewed focus on making the criminal justice system work better as a system it is now. Delivering transformation, quality services and implementing legislation and policy is dependent on leaders who are not afraid to take decisions and build skilled teams who can face the future with confidence.

The criminal justice system in Northern Ireland reflects a diverse range of organisations with their own cultures, structures and leadership styles. What they all have in common is knowing that their staff are their best asset and developing effective leaders is crucial to delivering future change and organisational success.

This inspection was the first time that Criminal Justice Inspection (CJI) looked at leadership development across the criminal justice system and how the wellbeing of staff was being supported. They are two distinct but related topics. Good leaders listen to their team, shape and inform how staff wellbeing is considered and taken seriously.

Stakeholders told me that they had concerns about how well leaders in the criminal justice system were working together, that silo mentalities were persisting and frequent senior management changes and an apparent lack of succession planning was impacting on confidence. They also told me that they were concerned about how staff wellbeing was being supported. We know personal and professional issues impact on wellbeing and how individuals respond to

the challenging and varied work demands required of them, whether that is attending a horrific crime scene or road traffic collision; dealing with evidence in child sex abuse cases; being present during a lengthy criminal trial listening to harrowing evidence; or trying to care for prisoners who repeatedly self-harm.

This inspection looked at how strategies and actions for leadership development were delivered in key criminal justice system organisations, and the arrangements in place to support their staff and their particular needs.

Our evidence gathering included a staff survey that was well responded to and Inspectors invested significant time talking to individuals who wanted to tell them about their experiences. Some of what we heard was deeply concerning and it is clear those individuals had strong feelings about their experiences at work.   It is important that leaders actively listen to concerns raised and where possible, identify a resolution to issues impacting on confidence in leadership and organisational culture.

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The report makes six recommendations aimed at improving how leadership development and wellbeing needs are identified and evaluated. They include a recommendation for leaders to work together to improve how new criminal justice system leaders foster a network and learn about the criminal justice system. This is not a panacea but it is a new step and should provide an opportunity for leaders from different criminal justice organisations to see and hear why it is so important it works as a 'system' and develop the collaboration and real partnerships needed to make that happen.

I am grateful to Rachel Lindsay, Lead Inspector, supported by Inspectors Stevie Wilson (now retired) and Dr Roisin Devlin. I am also particularly grateful to all leaders and staff in the inspected criminal justice organisations who spoke to us.

Jacqui Durkin
Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice in Northern Ireland

February 2023

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The effective development of leaders in an organisation and the cultivation of an organisation with staff who are psychologically and physically well are areas of human resources which are inextricably linked.

Research has shown that there is a clear link between leadership behaviours and wellbeing.[1] Wellbeing is an issue that was gaining importance prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic but is now at the top of the business agenda.

This inspection considered the approach of the main organisations of the criminal justice system including Forensic Science Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Services, the Northern Ireland Prison Service, the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the Probation Board for Northern Ireland, the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland and the Youth Justice Agency to these two areas. The inspection noted the mix of provision across the organisations between those which used the Northern Ireland Civil Service Human Resources services and those which had their own organisational Human Resources function.

Strategy and Governance

All organisations had organisational strategies which included outcomes relating to their people or workforce, both in their corporate and business plans and in specific people strategies. Specific strategies in relation to talent management or succession planning were limited, although some organisations were beginning to take action in this area. Fairness, equality and diversity were key across all organisations and featured in activities relating to recruitment and development, but none of the organisations reported significant progress in addressing existing differentials across their workforce.

Wellbeing also featured in organisational strategies with structures in place to deliver across the various types of wellbeing interventions. The Northern Ireland Prison Service were working to address a number of recommendations arising from a *Review of Support Services for Operational and Retired Prison Staff*.[2]

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1   *Alimo-Metcalfe et al 2007; Alimo-Metcalfe and Bradley 2008; Bradley and Alimo-Metcalfe 2008 as cited in CIPD, Research Insight, Engaging leadership: Creating organisations that maximise the potential of their people, 2015* available at https://engageforsuccess.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Shaping-the-Future-Engaging_Leadership-Creating-Orgs-that-Maximise-the-Potential-of-their-People.pdf.

2   *DoJ, A Review of Support Services for Operational Prison Staff, January 2021* available at https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/justice/nips-report-jan-21.pdf.

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Some organisations had signed a commitment or charter which provided a framework for wellbeing activity and signalled a commitment to their workforce and the public to focus on mental health and wellbeing. It is recommended that other criminal justice system organisations also take this step.

Delivery

Although there was a significant investment in leadership development programmes and activities, most of the inspected organisations did not appear to be well advanced in identifying their own workforce skills and capabilities currently or for the future. This needs further development by the organisations. The Northern Ireland Civil Service was developing its approach in relation to existing or future skills gaps rather than a reliance on the historical generalist nature of promotion. Equality, diversity and inclusion continued to be a challenge across the criminal justice system. The Chief Executives' Forum Women in Leadership development programme was one example of longstanding cross-sectoral intervention to address general imbalance in public sector leadership. Temporary promotion was often used as a development opportunity but was not viewed to be as fair and objective a process as that used for permanent promotion. All organisations offered access to a wide range of leadership programmes and activities both in-house and cross-sectoral. Improved induction arrangements for new leaders across the criminal justice system should be developed.

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic had led to an increase in staff communications around wellbeing, with a greater focus on ensuring staff were aware that support was available. Staff raised concerns about the authenticity of these messages given the challenging nature of work during the lockdowns and health restrictions and the more recent messaging about COVID-19 recovery and addressing the backlogs in the criminal justice system. There were mixed views across the organisations to whether there were sufficient additional measures taken to support employee wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic. In most organisations staff believed that their line manager understood the importance of wellbeing but feedback in some organisations indicated that access to specialist support in times of difficulty was slow and difficult to navigate.

A variety of factors had an impact on staff wellbeing, particularly in relation to the nature of some of the work undertaken by those working in the criminal justice system. Some organisations had identified these roles, for example in policing, and implemented additional measures to try and reduce the likelihood of psychological distress and trauma. It is recommended that the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland do more work in this area, to work with and learn from the approach of their colleagues in policing.

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There were some examples of evaluation in relation to development initiatives or programmes but overall this was limited and did not consider how leadership development linked to performance measures. There was also a lack of evaluation as to how wellbeing interventions impacted on wellbeing measures such as sickness absence or employee engagement data. It is recommended that there are effective mechanisms developed to enable the evaluation of both leadership development programmes and preventative wellbeing initiatives. Sickness absence was routinely monitored by the criminal justice system organisations. Factors impacting on sickness absence were reported on across the Northern Ireland Civil Service. Research undertaken in policing highlighted the case for investing in evidence-based interventions to prevent mental health problems developing, rather than relying on occupational health interventions for those who were experiencing problems.

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STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATION 1

All organisations within the criminal justice system should sign the Mental Health at Work Commitment, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland's Mental Health Charter or an appropriate pledge for their organisation.

(paragraph 2.36)

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATION 2

All criminal justice system organisations should identify current and required future leadership skills and capabilities in their workforce and incorporate needs in their people strategies and succession plans.

(paragraph 3.3)

OPERATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

OPERATIONAL RECOMMENDATION 1

The Department of Justice in conjunction with relevant organisations and Non-Departmental Public Bodies should consider developing a joint criminal justice system induction programme for new leaders to foster understanding of the operating context of each organisation and partnerships.

(paragraph 3.41)

OPERATIONAL RECOMMENDATION 2

The Public Prosecution Service in Northern Ireland should, in consultation with employees and staff associations, develop plans for the provision of bespoke wellbeing support for those working in roles in the Serious Crime Unit and Regions which have the potential to cause psychological harm. Consideration should be given to the delivery of joint wellbeing interventions with colleagues within the Police Service of Northern Ireland's Public Protection Branch.

(paragraph 3.74)

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OPERATIONAL RECOMMENDATION 3

Criminal justice organisations should develop effective mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness of leadership development programmes delivered to their staff during the design or planning process.

(paragraph 4.9)

OPERATIONAL RECOMMENDATION 4

Criminal justice organisations should develop effective mechanisms for evaluating the awareness and effectiveness of preventative wellbeing initiatives delivered to staff during the design or planning process.

(paragraph 4.13)

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THE IMPORTANCE OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN ORGANISATIONS

1.1   The Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development (CIPD) notes that two aspects of development activity are needed for the leaders of organisations:

- identifying and developing capabilities of individuals to lead others effectively (leader development); and
- creating organisational structures and cultures that encourage and enable leadership.[3]

1.2   Given the vast range of types, delivery and content of leadership programmes and approaches as well as individual and organisational differences, there is a lack of research data on the impact of leadership development on organisational outcomes. A research paper by the King's Fund on the impact of leadership development in healthcare noted *'Overall, the evidence for the effectiveness of specific leadership development programmes within the NHS [National Health Service] is highly variable and little robust evidence has been accumulated, despite the vast sums spent.'*[4]

1.3   The key practice concerns in leader or leadership development were outlined by David Day in the *SAGE Handbook of Leadership* as follows:[5]

- feedback - learning should be a daily, ongoing process regardless of the job;
- sustainability - the need to make leadership development sustainable and not to rely on episodic or program-focused development;
- succession planning - understanding the development needs of individuals and arranging the appropriate experiences to help them learn and develop;
- high potentials - being identified as a high potential should put an individual into a special pool of candidates to receive accelerated developmental experiences; and
- evaluation - a hallmark of an effective development initiative; a well-known taxonomy of training outcomes is that developed by Kirkpatrick of reactions, learning behaviour and results.

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3   *CIPD, Factsheet: Leadership in the workplace, April 2021* available at
      https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/strategy/leadership/factsheet#gref.
4   *West, M. at al, Leadership and leadership development in health care: The evidence base, February 2015.* available at
      https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/leadership-and-leadership-development-health-care.
5   *Day, D.V. Leadership development, in Bryman, A. et al, The SAGE Handbook of Leadership Development, 2011* available at
      https://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=5GmF7L4jTO0C&oi=fnd&pg=PA37&dq=leadership+development&ots=
      96zyM6HTP2&sig=S-Im-HPwBixJgeNI6T0edbyoTRw&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=leadership%20development&f=false.

1.4   Occupational Psychologist Professor Beverly Alimo-Metcalfe and colleagues undertook research to investigate why most leadership development initiatives fail in the public and private sector.[6] This revealed that the three greatest barriers to success were the behaviours and attitudes of the most senior managers. They explained that *'the first barrier was that these top managers believed that their status in the organisation was evidence enough that 'they had what it took' to be regarded as a leader, and regarded their development as, therefore, unnecessary. Nonetheless, they believed that the managers below them needed it! However, when these managers returned to the workplace with a clearer idea of what leadership should look like, they became much more aware of the poor quality of leadership role-modelled by their senior managers, and their frustrations increased. This engaging leadership was deepened by the third major problem, which was that when the managers attempted to implement their learning, their suggestions for improvement were rejected or ignored by their somewhat defensive and/ or reactionary bosses. The result was disenchantment, greater cynicism and lower morale among the manager group, who eventually stopped making any suggestions or trying new ways of leading.'* An organisational culture which encourages development at all levels is therefore essential for success.

AN INCREASING FOCUS ON WELLBEING AT WORK

1.5   The CIPD noted in 2016 that employee health and wellbeing had risen sharply up the public policy agenda over the previous 10 years[7] and more recently that *'the COVID-19 pandemic has raised concerns about people's health and wellbeing to the top of the business agenda'*.[8]

1.6   There are legal, moral and economic reasons for a focus on employee wellbeing. Employers have a legal duty of care for employees and it is clearly the right thing to do to support employees to be psychologically and physically well. Research studies have outlined the costs of failing to focus on wellbeing; stress and poor mental health alone costs United Kingdom (UK) employers £45 billion per annum yet for every £1 spent by employers on mental health interventions they get £5 back in reduced absence, presenteeism and staff turnover (Deloitte, 2020[9]). The Health and Safety Executive estimated that 17.9 million days were lost in Great Britain in 2019-20 to stress, depression or anxiety.[10]

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6   *Alimo-Metcalfe et al 2000 as cited in CIPD, Research Insight, Engaging leadership: Creating organisations that maximise the potential of their people, 2015* available at https://engageforsuccess.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Shaping-the-Future-Engaging_Leadership-Creating-Orgs-that-Maximise-the-Potential-of-their-People.pdf.

7   *CIPD, Policy report: Growing the health and wellbeing agenda: From first steps to full potential, January 2016* available at https://beta.cipduat.co.uk/Images/health-well-being-agenda_2016-first-steps-full-potential_tcm18-10453.pdf.

8   *CIPD, Factsheet: Wellbeing at work, April 2021* available at https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/culture/wellbeing/factsheet#.

9   *Deloitte, Poor mental health costs UK employers up to £45 billion a year, January 2020* available at https://www2.deloitte.com/uk/en/pages/press-releases/articles/poor-mental-health-costs-uk-employers-up-to-pound-45-billion-a-year.html.

10   *Health and Safety Executive, Working days lost in Great Britain, November 2020* available at https://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/dayslost.htm.

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The Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland reported that in 2018-19 an estimated 16,000 people in Northern Ireland workplaces suffered from stress, anxiety or depression caused or made worse by work.[11] During the same period it is believed some 373,000 working days were lost to the local economy through associated staff absences.

1.7   A report by the Mental Health Foundation and London School of Economics and Political Science published in March 2022[12] calculated that poor mental health costs the UK £118 billion per year, including £3.4 billion in Northern Ireland, and that much of this is preventable. The research gathered from the UK and internationally showed the benefit of preventative work including that a review of workplace interventions found savings of £5 for every £1 invested in supporting mental health. This corroborates the figure quoted by Deloitte as noted previously.

1.8   In April 2021 the CIPD reported the results of their Health and Wellbeing at Work Survey conducted in partnership with SimplyHealth.[13] This found that the top two causes of stress at work were, as in previous years, 'workload/volume of work' and 'management style'. This was greater than the effect of 'New work-related demands or challenges due to homeworking as a result of COVID-19' which was included in the survey for the first time.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEADERSHIP AND WELLBEING

1.9   Psychological research has established the link between leadership behaviours and wellbeing. Alimo-Metcalfe and colleagues were commissioned to undertake research by the Department of Health in England[14] to investigate the causal relationship between engaging leadership and performance and productivity. The research found that: (1) the degree to which teams perceived the style of leadership adopted in their team as one of 'engaging with others' was a better predictor of staff morale and wellbeing than either 'visionary leadership' or 'leadership capabilities'; and (2) that only 'engaging leadership' significantly predicted the team's performance, measured in terms of productivity, even when contextual factors had been taken into account. The research provided evidence that the most productive teams also experienced high levels of morale and high levels of wellbeing.

11   *Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland, On World Mental Health Day HSENI offers employers help with how to effectively manage work-related stress, 9 October 2020* available at https://www.hseni.gov.uk/news/world-mental-health-day-hseni-offers-employers-help-how-effectively-manage-work-related-stress.

12   *McDaid, D & Park, A., Mental Health Foundation/London School of Economics and Political Science, The economic case for investing in the prevention of mental health conditions in the UK, March 2022* available at https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/about-us/news/mental-health-problems-cost-uk-economy-least-gbp-118-billion-year-new-research.

13   *CIPD/SimplyHealth, Health and wellbeing at work 2021: Survey report, April 2021* available at https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/health-wellbeing-work-report-2021_tcm18-93541.pdf.

14   *Alimo-Metcalfe et al 2007; Alimo-Metcalfe and Bradley 2008; Bradley and Alimo-Metcalfe 2008 as cited in CIPD, Research Insight, Engaging leadership: Creating organisations that maximise the potential of their people, 2015* available at https://engageforsuccess.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Shaping-the-Future-Engaging_Leadership-Creating-Orgs-that-Maximise-the-Potential-of-their-People.pdf.

1.10   A literature review by Skakon and colleagues found that leader behaviours, the relationship between leaders and their employees and specific leadership styles were all associated with employee stress and affective wellbeing.[15] A whitepaper by Engage for Success also set out the evidence for the linkage between employee engagement and wellbeing, and the consequential impact on individual and organisational performance.[16]

1.11   The importance of skilled line managers was highlighted in a recent report by Edenred.[17] Their research included an employer survey completed by 128 human resources professionals in February 2022 and an employee survey completed by 2,000 UK workers at the end of 2021. They noted five key challenges that human resources professionals would face in the year ahead. The second of these was that health, wellbeing and work-life balance was the top threat to performance in 2022, with 64% of employers surveyed stating that health and mental wellbeing issues represented the biggest threat to their people's performance, an increase from 57% in 2021. Edenred identified the third challenge as being that line managers needed better tools to navigate the challenges ahead with employers continuing to invest in the tools which are critical to making hybrid working succeed for everyone in their organisation, in terms of new technology and policies and support for flexible working arrangements.

THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

1.12   For staff working in the criminal justice system, there is a consistent body of research that those who work in emergency and security professions are at increased risk of work-related stress.[18], [19] In addition, certain requirements of the working environment of the criminal justice organisations and types of work undertaken (for example working with critical or traumatic incidents, working with victims or offenders of child abuse, shift work[20]) are known to increase the risk of psychological harm or disorders.

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15   *Skakon, J. et al, Are leaders' wellbeing, behaviours and style associated with the affective wellbeing of their employees? A systematic review of three decades of research, Work and Stress, 24(2), 107-139, June 2010 available at* https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02678373.2010.495262?scroll=top&needAccess=true.

16   *Engage for Success, Wellbeing and employee engagement: The evidence whitepaper, June 2014 available at* https://engageforsuccess.org/wellbeing/case-study-wellbeing-and-employee-engagement-the-evidence-whitepaper/.

17   *Edenred, Five key challenges HR will face in the year ahead: The people challenges during uncertain times and how HR plan to tackle them, May 2022 available at* https://content.edenred.co.uk/b2b/content/Edenred-Five-key-challenges-HR-will-face-in-the-year-ahead-report.pdf.

18   *Leino, T.M., Selin, R., Summala, H. and Virtanen, M, Violence and psychological distress among police officers and security guards, Occupational Medicine, 2011, Vol. 61, No 6, pp. 400-406 available at* https://academic.oup.com/occmed/article/61/6/400/1388077.

19   *Kinman, G. Work-related wellbeing in UK prison officers: A benchmarking approach, September 2016, International Journal of Workplace Health Management 9(3) pp. 290-307 available at* http://uobrep.openrepository.com/uobrep/bitstream/10547/621928/2/G+Kinman+Work-related+wellbeing+in+UK+prison+officers.pdf.

20   *Violanti, J.M. et al, Police stressors and health: a state-of-the-art review, Policing, 2017 Nov; 40(4): pp. 642–656 available at* https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6400077/.

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1.13 The website 'Blue Light Together'[21] offers UK emergency services staff, volunteers, retirees and their friends and family information, ideas and support to help look after their mental health. The website highlights the findings of research undertaken by Mind in 2015[22] and 2021[23] which found the following:

- 66% of police staff felt their mental health deteriorated as a result of the pandemic;
- 32% of police service personnel stated that they did not access support, as they did not think their issue was serious enough;
- 62% of police staff said that their workload had increased due to the pandemic; and
- staff and volunteers working in the police were more negatively affected by media coverage related to COVID-19 during the pandemic.

1.14 While the majority of research to date in the UK has focused on police and prison staff, international studies also indicate there are likely to be negative effects on psychological wellbeing of working in prosecution[24] or probation[25] roles. During the period of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated lockdowns and restrictions, most front-line staff in the criminal justice system had been unable to work from home either partly or at all and therefore had faced additional pressures of continuing to undertake their role while using personal protective equipment or adaptations to the arrangements for face to face/in-person work as well as dealing with the wider impacts of the pandemic on public services.

INSPECTION AND REVIEW REPORTS

1.15 In March 2020 the report of the *Independent Public Inquiry into the Non-Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) scheme ('the RHI Inquiry')* was published.[26] The RHI Inquiry was established by the Minister of Finance in response to concerns around the development and performance of the scheme by the then Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI); which became the Department for the Economy in 2016) and public and media interest. The purpose of the Inquiry was to investigate, enquire into and report on the 'RHI scheme' including its design, governance, implementation and operation, and efforts to control the costs of that scheme, from its conception in 2011 to the conclusion of the Inquiry. Among many issues covered in the report the Inquiry panel found that:

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21 *See* https://bluelighttogether.org.uk/.
22 *Mind, Mind research finds stress affects nine in ten emergency services personnel, March 2015* available at https://www.mind.org.uk/news-campaigns/news/mind-research-finds-stress-affects-nine-in-ten-emergency-services-personnel/.
23 *Mind, Behind the Mask How the coronavirus pandemic impacted the mental health of emergency responders, 2021* available at https://www.mind.org.uk/media/7246/blue-light-behind-the-mask-report-en-2021.pdf.
24 *Leiterdorf-Shkedy, S. and Tali, G. The sensitive prosecutor: Emotional experiences of prosecutors in managing criminal proceedings, International Journal of Law and Psychiatry, Mar-Apr 2019; 63, pp. 8-17* available at https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30072158/.
25 *Gayman, M., Powell, N. and Bradley, M. Probation/parole officer psychological wellbeing: The impact of supervising persons with mental health needs, American Journal of Criminal Justice, 2018, 43, pp. 509–529* available at https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12103-017-9422-6#citeas.
26 *Coghlin, P et al, The Report of the Independent Public Inquiry into the Non-domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) Scheme, March 2020* available at https://wayback.archive-it.org/11112/20200911092828/https://www.rhiinquiry.org/report-independent-public-inquiry-non-domestic-renewable-heat-incentive-rhi-scheme

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- without the necessary resources and capability, DETI should never have embarked on such a novel and complicated, demand-led scheme;
- DETI did not ensure that adequate resources and expertise were applied to its development, delivery or running; and
- the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) policy, followed by DETI at the time, as to deploying generalist civil servants without having due regard for the distinctive requirements of certain roles (particularly in business areas such as Energy Division), was a contributory factor to the problems with the Northern Ireland RHI scheme.

1.16   The final recommendation of the RHI Inquiry was that the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) should assess and validate progress in implementing the lessons learned from the Northern Ireland RHI scheme and report on such progress periodically. A report presenting the first such update summarising progress against the recommendations was published by the NIAO in March 2022.[27]
The report presented the NIAO's assessment of whether the recommendations were implemented, likely to be implemented or not likely to be implemented.

1.17   The NIAO overall conclusion was that '*Two years on from the publication of the RHI Inquiry Report, progress in addressing the recommendations has been disappointing in areas. Only 18 of the recommendations can be categorised as implemented and in some themes there has been minimal progress.*' In relation to the two themes relevant to this report, the NIAO found that only limited progress had been made in responding to the recommendations in the area of professional skills and reasonable progress had been made against recommendations in the resourcing and people theme but that further action was still required.

1.18   The NIAO also published a report in November 2020 entitled *Capacity and Capability in the Northern Ireland Civil Service.*[28] This report examined the degree to which the NICS workforce was sufficiently equipped in terms of both staffing numbers ('capacity') and appropriate skills, knowledge and expertise ('capability'). It concluded that '*The NICS must transform how it plans, recruits, manages and develops its workforce if it is to successfully address current and future challenges and deliver value for money*.' Of relevance to this inspection the report highlighted the following findings:

- the NICS had not adequately identified the skills and experience base of its current workforce nor the requirements for delivering future Programme for Governments;
- the NICS recruitment approach at the time of the NIAO's review did not support placement of 'the right people in the right posts at the right time';

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27   *NIAO, Northern Ireland Non-Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme: Assessing progress with the implementation of the Public Inquiry recommendations, March 2022* available at https://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-non-domestic-renewable-heat-incentive-scheme-assessing-progress

28   *NIAO, Capacity and Capability in the Northern Ireland Civil Service, November 2020* available at https://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk/publications/capacity-and-capability-northern-ireland-civil-service-0.

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- there was scope for enhancing NICS learning and development arrangements;
- leadership and talent management needed to be strengthened across the NICS; and
- NICS sickness absence rates were almost twice the level of the other UK civil services.

1.19   The report of the NICS *People Survey 2021* was published in January 2022.[29] The survey was conducted across the nine NICS Ministerial departments as well as the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) and the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland. It did not include NIPS operational staff as NIPS agreed to undertake work with Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) to develop a separate survey. The NIPS had engaged in initial discussions with NISRA at the time of writing this report and this work was to continue into the start of 2023.

1.20   The fieldwork ran from 18 October to 17 November 2021. The final overall response rate achieved was 52% and in total, 12,983 people participated in the survey. The overall finding was that the NICS Employee Engagement Index[30] was 57%, an increase of six percentage points since the 2019 NICS People Survey. The scores for all nine engagement themes also increased since the 2019 People Survey. The themes where respondents were less likely to agree with the statements were in the themes of learning and development, pay and benefits and leadership and managing change. By comparison the Employee Engagement Index for the Cabinet Office Civil Service People Survey was 68% in 2021.[31]

1.21   In January 2021 the then Minister of Justice, Naomi Long MLA, presented two reports to the Northern Ireland Assembly from a review of support services for operational staff of the NIPS; the first which considered currently serving staff and the second retired staff.[32] The report regarding support services for operational staff made 12 recommendations for change which focused on:

- staff recruitment;
- staff training;
- supervision;
- mental health awareness and resilience;
- human resources systems and processes;
- critical incident procedures; and
- psychological interventions and counselling.

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29   *Northern Ireland Civil Service, Northern Ireland Civil Service People Survey 2021: NICS Benchmark scores, January 2022. Internal NICS document.*

30   The Employee Engagement Index is the weighted average of the responses to the five employee engagement questions (B47-B51). It ranges from 0% to 100%. A score of 0% represents respondents who give a rating of "strongly disagree" to all five questions. A score of 100% represents respondents who give a rating of "strongly agree" to all five questions. The NICS score is the average across all 12,983 respondents (not organisations). The scores for individual departments and business areas are averages across all staff employed in those departments and business areas.

31   *Cabinet Office, Civil Service People Survey 2021: Benchmark scores, June 2022* available at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-people-survey-2021-results.

32   *See* http://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/statement-and-reports-review-support-services-serving-and-retired-prison-officers.

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The then Minister of Justice confirmed that the Director General of the NIPS had been asked to lead an internal implementation group and report on progress, with an evaluation to be undertaken by the report authors. Given the scale and scope of this Review, and the intended evaluation to be undertaken, CJI's current inspection will attempt to avoid duplication and not revisit the significant amount of work undertaken by the Review Team.

THE CJI INSPECTION

1.22   This inspection aimed to examine the approach to leadership development and wellbeing support in the key organisations of the criminal justice system; namely FSNI, the NICTS, the NIPS, the PBNI, the PSNI, the PPS and the YJA. The methodology for the inspection is outlined in Appendix 1 and the Terms of Reference contained in Appendix 2. The inspection fieldwork consisted of interviews with stakeholder organisations who supported the NICS in this area (such as the Chief Executives' Forum) and Staff Associations and Trade Unions across the criminal justice agencies who represented and looked after the interests of their members in the workplace. Inspectors also met with representatives from NICS Human Resources (NICS HR; the centralised human resources function for the NICS). Online surveys were developed and were shared with all staff in the inspected agencies. In the surveys staff were asked their views on a series of questions related to leadership development and wellbeing support. Questions regarding wellbeing were adapted from some of those used in the survey undertaken by the CIPD and SimplyHealth for the CIPD's Health and Wellbeing at Work 2021 report.[33] Further details of the staff surveys are contained in Appendix 3.

1.23   As noted in the Terms of Reference for this inspection, CJI's remit only extends to the work of the criminal justice agencies themselves. The organisations that make up the criminal justice system have differing statuses and therefore governance arrangements, which extends to human resource service and delivery functions for the organisations. As agencies of the Department of Justice (DoJ), the NICTS, FSNI and YJA are part of the NICS and therefore utilise the leadership development and wellbeing programmes offered through the wider civil service through NICS HR. The NIPS is also a DoJ agency and utilises NICS HR programmes, although has developed its own bespoke leadership development programmes for Prison Officer and Governor grades. The PPS is a Non-Ministerial Department which also uses the services of NICS HR. CJI does not have the remit to inspect the wider NICS and therefore the functions of NICS HR but in achieving the aims of this organisation consulted with relevant individuals as stakeholders. The PSNI has its own human resources function although it operates under national processes and guidance for some leadership development activities, as provided by the College of Policing. Finally, as a Non-Departmental Public Body, the PBNI also has its own human resources function.

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33   *CIPD, Health and wellbeing at work survey 2021, April 2021* available at
https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/health-wellbeing-work-report-2021_tcm18-93541.pdf.

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CHAPTER 2:
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THE NICS PEOPLE STRATEGY

2.1 The NICS *People Strategy 2018-21*[34] summarised its ambition to '*work and behave differently across the NICS to achieve our vision of a well-led, high-performing, outcome-focused and inclusive NICS in which diversity is truly valued*'. The Strategy highlighted three areas of focus:

- strengthening leadership and line management at all levels of the NICS;
- building the capacity of all line managers to effectively manage and lead people at every level of the NICS to support every civil servant to reach their potential and perform to the highest level; and
- ensuring line managers and leaders have the right tools (policies, procedures, and guidance), skills (through effective learning, development and training) and expert support (through added-value HR advice and assistance) to lead people and manage change effectively.

The areas of focus were as outlined in the boxes below:

A well-led NICS — **1**
- Improve how we engage and communicate with people across the service about issues that affect them.
- Build the capacity of line managers and leaders across the service.
- Provide effective tools for line managers and leaders including streamlined and practical people policies, processes, guidance and training.

A high-performing NICS — **2**
- Improve how we manage performance through regular and timely feedback mechanisms and appropriate guidance.
- Deliver a NICS-wide approach to strategic workforce planning and improve recruitment and vacancy management.
- Increase the use of new and flexible ways of working.

An outcome-focused NICS — **3**
- Build career paths that develop breadth of experience and depth of expertise.
- Improve how we engage with staff and communicate with them about their contribution to delivery of outcomes.

An inclusive NICS in which diversity is truly valued — a great place to work — **4**
- Deliver evidence-based interventions and targeted action to drive balance and inclusion in terms of gender, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender, ethnic minority, and disability.
- Ensure our people have working environments that are conducive to them performing their best.

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34 *Department of Finance, NICS People Strategy 2018-21, September 2018* available at
https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dfp/nics-people-strategy-2018-21.pdf.

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2.2   Some of the key strands of work noted as part of the enabling role of the NICS HR included:

- implementing a NICS-wide approach to strategic workforce planning and improving recruitment and vacancy management;
- delivering mentoring programmes, secondments and a more consistent and transparent approach to staff mobility;
- implementing a mandatory approach to induction and knowledge transfer;
- reviewing the NICS approach to professions including heads of profession roles;
- building on our health and wellbeing framework with particular emphasis on mental health and support for colleagues facing life challenging events; and
- promoting the positive behaviours we expect of all our people for an inclusive culture which is intolerant of discrimination, bullying and harassment.

2.3   The NIAO *Capacity and Capability* report commented on the ability of the NICS and NICS HR to deliver on the People Strategy noting: '*Despite significant reorganisation since 2006, the aim of having a centralised and effective HR function with sustained capability and transparent governance arrangements in the NICS has not been fully achieved. Given the pressures it is currently facing and without the appropriate investment in a change programme, it is also difficult to see how the NICS and NICS HR can drive the transformation wanted and needed to achieve meaningful progress in delivering its People Strategy (paragraphs 5.12 to 5.15), which will be key to building enhanced capacity and capability in the NICS.*'[35]

2.4   CJI Inspectors asked the NICS criminal justice organisations how they were utilising the NICS People Strategy to drive forward the people agenda in their own organisations. The then Permanent Secretary of DoJ was a member of the NICS Board that agreed the People Strategy and was also a diversity lead in the NICS. There was a mix of responses as to the extent to which organisations were using the People Strategy to drive forward leadership development and wellbeing support. Organisations reported that they had either developed their own people strategy or plan for the organisation or that they worked broadly under the NICS People Strategy, responding to people issues as they were relevant to the needs of the particular business area.

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35   *NIAO, Capacity and Capability in the Northern Ireland Civil Services, November 2020* available at https://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk/publications/capacity-and-capability-northern-ireland-civil-service-0.

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The FSNI strategic outcomes and objectives

2.5   The FSNI *Corporate Plan for 2021-24*[36] included a strategic outcome to have *'An engaged workforce'* with the objective *'to value and develop our people promoting equality and wellbeing and professional competence.'* A number of actions were listed in the Business Plan 2021-22 in support of strategic outcome four, *'ensure staff are equipped to meet the needs of the organisation'*.

The NICTS Modernisation Programme

2.6   The NICTS had undertaken a significant amount of work in this area as part of the NICTS Modernisation Programme. In October 2021 the Chief Modernisation Officer had taken on responsibility for the People Programme, with a new People Strategy being developed and a Head of People and Business Change had been appointed. The People Strategy was intended to cover five key pillars of: Skills; Leadership, Engagement; Wellbeing; and Resourcing. A People Strategy Working Group was established by the NICTS in February 2022 to take forward the development and delivery of the People Strategy 2022-27 and annual delivery plan. The resulting People Strategy was launched by the Acting Director of the NICTS in October 2022.

The NIPS Continuous Improvement Programme

2.7   In July 2018 the NIPS published their *'Prisons 2020: Driving continuous improvement in the Northern Ireland Prison Service'* document.[37] This included four outcome areas to support the overall outcome *'to provide an efficient, effective, modern and affordable service which is focused on the development of our staff and is capable of rehabilitating those placed in our care.'* The outcome under the area of 'People' was *'We have a professional, skilled workforce who are motivated and engaged'*. This included work priorities relating to employee wellbeing, communication and engagement, learning and development, recognising achievement and leadership development. The *Prisons 25 by 25 Continuous Improvement Framework* was published on 26 September 2022.[38] The Strategic Framework contained a strand on 'Our People' which included the areas of wellbeing and resilience, learning and development, staff engagement, valuing people and respecting diversity. The NIPS advised that an action plan had been developed to support this.

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36   *FSNI, Corporate Plan 2021-2024 and Business Plan 2021-2022, April 2022* available at
      https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/justice/fsni-corporate-plan-2021-24.pdf
37   *NIPS, Prisons 2020: Driving continuous improvement in the Northern Ireland Prison Service, July 2018* available at
      https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/justice/prisons-2020-the-way-forward.pdf.
38   *NIPS, Prisons 25 by 25: Driving continuous improvement in the Northern Ireland Prison Service* available at https://www.
      justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/justice/prisons%2025by25-building%20for%20the%20future.PDF.

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The PPS people priorities

2.8   The PPS *Annual Business Plan for 2022-23*[39] set out the organisation's five strategic priorities. These included 'Supporting and empowering our people' with an intended outcome that *'The PPS is a well-led, outcome focussed and high performing organisation, in which all staff feel valued.'* The PPS *People Plan for 2022-23* also included six People Priorities, three of which were relevant to this inspection: strategic workforce planning and timely, responsive vacancy management and supply (priority 2), improved focus on both the physical and mental wellbeing of staff (priority 5) and improvement and development of leadership skills (priority 6). Inspectors were advised that work was being taken forward through the Leadership Subgroup of the People and Resources Committee in support of these priorities. The Subgroup had developed an action plan, drafted in consultation with staff, to drive activity in this area.

ORGANISATIONS OUTSIDE THE NICS

The PSNI People Strategy

2.9   The PSNI had developed a *People Strategy for 2020-25*[40] which was based around five 'People Principles':

- being representative and inclusive;
- resourcing for the future;
- leading together;
- serving with professionalism; and
- valuing health and wellbeing.

A People Action Plan had been developed in support of the strategy. This Strategy was a project within the PSNI *Horizon 2025 Modernisation Plan*.[41] This Plan contained five workstreams including 'leadership and management' and 'people and culture'.

2.10   Delivery against the People Strategy and its associated Annual People Action Plan was managed through the governance of the People and Culture Board. Five delivery groups reported into the People and Culture Board; Being representative and inclusive; Resourcing for the future; Leading together; Serving with professionalism; and Valuing health and wellbeing. The Resources Committee of the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) also received updates from the PSNI about the People Action Plan. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated restrictions and impact on service delivery, the PSNI representatives were just beginning to implement the projects within the People Strategy at the time of the fieldwork for this inspection.

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39   *PPSNI, Annual Business Plan 2022-23, May 2022* available at https://www.ppsni.gov.uk/publications/type/businessplans.
40   *PSNI, People Strategy 2020-25, internal document.*
41   *PSNI Horizon 2025 Modernisation Plan, October 2021* available at https://www.psni.police.uk/globalassets/inside-the-psni/our-strategies-and-vision/documents/horizon-2025-spreads.pdf.

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The PBNI People Strategy

2.11   The PBNI *Corporate Plan for 2020-23*[42] included a priority entitled *'Valuing and Developing our People'*. Within the PBNI *Business Plan for 2022-23*[43] the key outcome for this priority was *'To be a high performing organisation within the current operating context'* with the indicator of achievement being *'Improved staff attendance and staff engagement'*. This priority included two actions; *'Develop and implement an organisational structure that is fit for purpose, in meeting strategic objectives'* and *'Ensure that our organisational culture supports the delivery of an effective probation service.'*

2.12   The PBNI *People Strategy for 2020-23*[44] was aligned to the Corporate Plan and focused on four key strategic areas; culture, succession planning and talent management, valuing wellbeing, and equality and inclusion. Under the area of succession planning was an intention: *'We will work with operational colleagues to deliver mentoring programmes and a wider talent management and career progression system to meet PBNI's future needs to grow our staff and allow them the space and opportunity to develop their skills.'* At the time of this inspection the PBNI were updating their current People Strategy and associated actions.

SUCCESSION PLANNING AND TALENT MANAGEMENT

2.13   The NIAO *Capacity and Capability report*[45] highlighted the need for better succession planning within the NICS, recommending *'A NICS-wide workforce plan should be developed to include both headcount and skills, informed by a workforce planning template applied consistently across departments, and further developed to assist succession planning'*. It also noted that *'The age profile of the Senior Civil Service (paragraph 3.40) indicates that significant priority needs to be given to succession planning and developing its future leaders.'* The report also noted that an overarching talent management plan had not been developed.

2.14   In addition, the NIAO report on the progress of implementation of the RHI Public Inquiry recommendations[46] found that: *'a review of recruitment and selection policy in the NICS is underway (along with the procedural guidance which will support its implementation) which aims to support the fundamental principle of the 'right people, with the right skills for the role, in the right posts, at the right time'.*

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42   *PBNI, PBNI Corporate Plan 2020-23, September 2020* available at
     https://www.pbni.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/PBNI-Corporate-Plan-2020-23-FINAL-Tagged-for-website.pdf.
43   *PBNI, PBNI Business Plan 2022-23, May 2022* available at
     https://www.pbni.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/PBNI-Business-Plan-2022-23.pdf.
44   *PBNI, People Strategy 2020-23, internal document.*
45   *Northern Ireland Audit Office, Capacity and Capability in the Northern Ireland Civil Service, November 2020* available at
     https://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk/publications/capacity-and-capability-northern-ireland-civil-service-0.
46   *NIAO, Northern Ireland Non-Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme: Assessing progress with the implementation of the Public Inquiry recommendations, March 2022* available at https://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-non-domestic-renewable-heat-incentive-scheme-assessing-progress.

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The review is also expected to identify ways in which recruitment and selection policies can support the delivery of the Civil Service People Strategy and the NICS ambition to be representative of society here. The review aims to support the NICS ambition to open up recruitment more widely, to attract the best possible candidates, and to expand the resourcing mix, through methods such as a greater use of apprenticeships, broadening secondment opportunities and introducing initiatives to support the employment of people furthest from employment such as disabled people or young care leavers'.

2.15   Leaders across all the organisations spoken to as part of this inspection highlighted the challenges of succession planning within public sector human resource processes. They highlighted the need to ensure that fairness and equality were prioritised and avoiding any perception of nepotism or favouritism to individuals. On 5 September 2022 the Finance Minister and Head of the Civil Service launched a recruitment campaign for a new Civil Service Graduate Management programme.[47]

2.16   None of the organisations inspected had a specific talent management strategy which outlined how those with high potential at the lower levels of the organisation would be progressed up through the levels of the organisation into management and leadership roles. For those within the NICS there was not an overarching talent management strategy although one of the actions in the *NICS People Strategy 2018-21* was to '*Deliver an NICS-wide approach to strategic workforce planning and strengthen strategic workforce planning in departments, aligning talent management and mobility'.*[48] There had been work by the PSNI and the NIPS in this area (see Chapter 2: Delivery) but had not yet developed a mainstream, long-term approach to talent management.

2.17   In October 2021 the NIPB commissioned a research report[49] on barriers to the recruitment of Assistant Chief Constables within the PSNI. This was in response to challenges faced around the recruitment of Assistant Chief Constables within the PSNI. The report identified a number of barriers and resulting recommendations to address them. The first of these recommendations was the development of a talent management strategy by the PSNI. This was included in the PSNI's *People Strategy Action Plan for 2021-22* and was an ongoing piece of work for 2023-24.[50] CJI consider this to be an important recommendation for the PSNI to achieve.

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47   *See* https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/news/finance-minister-launches-new-civil-service-graduate-programme.

48   *Department of Finance, NICS People Strategy 2018-21, September 2018* available at
      https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dfp/nics-people-strategy-2018-21.pdf.

49   *NI Policing Board, internal report.*

50   *PSNI, People strategy: Annual people action plan 2021-22, internal document.*

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STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS FAIRNESS, EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

2.18   In the staff surveys conducted for this inspection, in general, more staff agreed or strongly agreed with the statement *'the process for selecting staff into senior leadership positions in my organisation on a permanent basis appears to me to be fair and transparent'* than the same statement relating to selection on a temporary basis. The figures below show that, although there were some variations, this trend was the same across all criminal justice organisations. The nature of temporary promotion is such that it often requires a shorter, faster process to fill a post quickly which is subject to an internal trawl rather than a competition across the whole organisation or the NICS. This highlights the challenges for any process which is perceived by staff to be less objective and fair than the traditional, full selection process.

Figure 1: Survey participants' responses to statement 'The process for selecting staff into senior leadership positions in my organisation on a TEMPORARY basis appears to me to be fair and transparent'
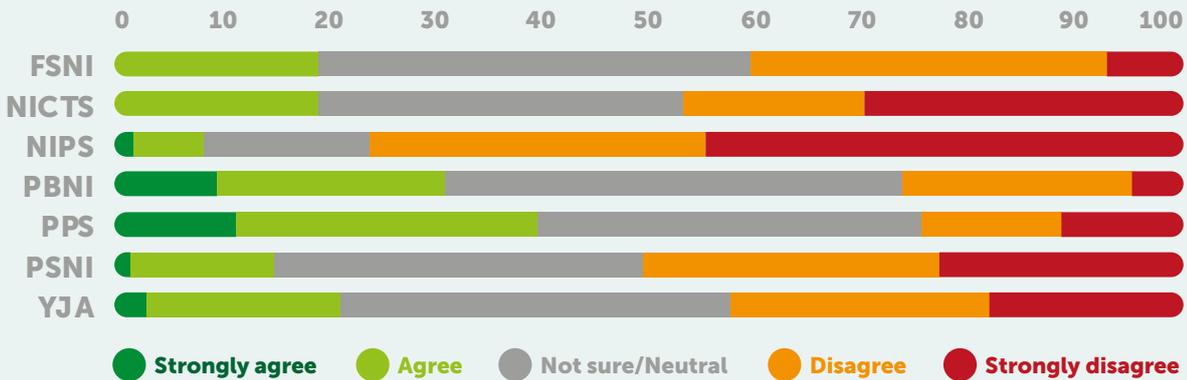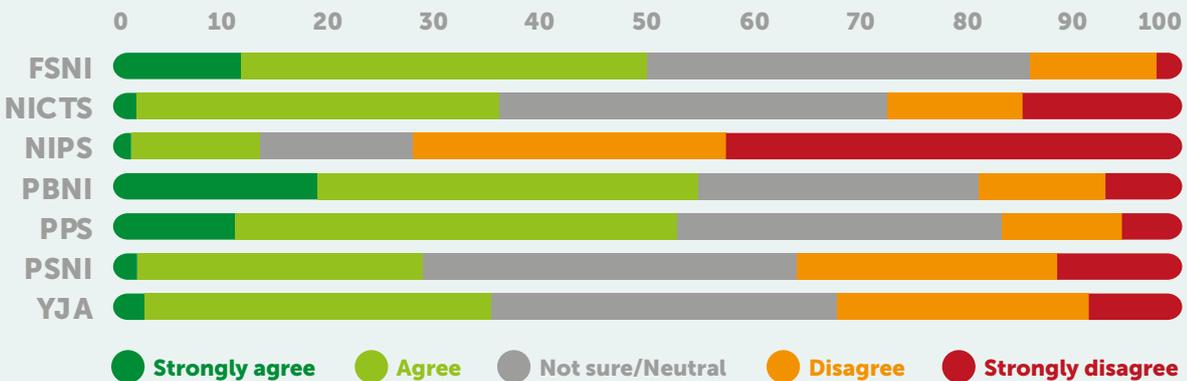

Figure 2: Survey participants' responses to statement 'The process for selecting staff into senior leadership positions in my organisation on a PERMANENT basis appears to me to be fair and transparent'

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2.19   A key issue for the NICS in terms of diversity was the age profile of its workforce. The NICS *Employment Equality and Diversity Plan 2008-11*[51] highlighted some key issues in terms of the NICS workforce including that:

- women and Roman Catholics were under-represented at senior levels;
- women were under-represented in some professional and specialist grades; and
- generally the NICS needed to do more to encourage people from ethnic minority communities and people with disabilities to apply for NICS jobs.

The plan set out some key aims, objectives and measures of success to address the issues identified including '*to take steps towards making the NICS workforce more representative of the community we serve.*'

2.20   More recent data on diversity and equality in the NICS produced by NISRA[52] reported on statistics across NICS grades from 2010 to 2021 (although sufficiently detailed data for employees within NIPS Prison grades was only available from 2012 to 2021). The report noted that:

- females made up 50.3% of the NICS workforce in 2021, up from 47.9% in 2000 and slightly down from the previous two years;
- within the most senior grades, female representation had significantly increased from 11.3% in 2000 to 41.5% in 2020, decreasing slightly to 41.4% in 2021;
- excluding those with a community background recorded as 'Not Determined', Protestants made up 50.5% and Catholics 49.5% of NICS staff in 2021, a difference of one percentage point. The comparative difference in 2000 was 16.6 percentage points (Protestants made up 58.3% and Catholics 41.7%);
- while Catholics made up less than half of staff in six of the nine grade levels in 2021, representation was higher than in 2010 at all grade levels above Administrative Officer (AO). Excluding Prison grades, where 15.6% of staff were Catholic, Catholic representation ranged from 41.5% at Grade 5 and above to 52.8% at Executive Officer I/II levels. Catholic representation was lower than that in the economically active population at Grade 5 and above, at Administrative Assistant level and in the Prison grades;
- the NICS had an older age profile than that of the economically active population with 11.7% of NICS staff aged 16-34 compared with 45.2% among the economically active. In 2021 the average age (median 47 years) of staff was eight years older than in 2000 (39 years); and
- the proportion of staff who declared a disability (5.6%) or who were from minority ethnic groups (NICS, 0.3%; economically active population, 3.6%) continued to be lower than in the economically active population. At 0.7% Prison grades had the lowest proportion of staff declaring a disability in 2021.

51   *Department of Finance, NICS Employment Equality and Diversity Plan 2008 to 2011, June 2011* available at https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dfp/nics-employment-equality-and-diversity-plan-september.pdf.
52   *NISRA, Equality statistics for the Northern Ireland Civil Service 2021, January 2021* available at https://www.nisra.gov.uk/system/files/statistics/2021%20Equality%20Report_0.pdf.

2.21   As outlined above, diversity and inclusion featured in the NICS *People Strategy 2018-21*[53] as one of the four priority actions (*'An inclusive NICS in which diversity is truly valued – a great place to work'*). This priority action included a number of supporting actions which included work in the areas of evidence-based interventions and targeted actions to improve balance at all levels of the NICS (including delivery of the Gender Action Plan), a NICS outreach programme focusing on disability and relevant ethnic groups, and each Department and profession to set out priorities for increasing diversity and inclusion.

2.22   The NIAO report on *Capacity and Capability in the NICS* noted: *'More use of graduate schemes, alongside planned apprenticeship schemes and other development initiatives aligned to the delivery of the NICS diversity and inclusion agenda, are essential in ensuring that the NICS has access to the skilled and experienced leaders that it needs now and in the future.'*[54] It also found that progress had been made on a range of actions, including a consistent Departmental workforce planning model, development and delivery of a number of leadership development programmes and delivering tasks to improve workforce diversity and inclusion. It noted however that despite this progress *'delivery of other important actions has failed to progress in the way that NICS HR and many other stakeholders had hoped.'*

2.23   Principle one of the PSNI's *People Strategy 2020-25*[55] was *'Being representative and inclusive'* and the associated Action Plan included actions and measures relevant to this area including the production of a *'Barriers to Recruitment Strategy'*. The most recent PSNI workforce statistics[56] reported that 67% of Police Officers and 78% of Police Staff were from a perceived Protestant background compared to 32% of Police Officers and 20% of Police Staff from a perceived Roman Catholic background (the remainder being 'not determined'). A total of 30% of Police Officers and 57% of Police Staff were female with only 0.58% of Police Officers and 0.69% of Police Staff being from an Ethnic Minority. These figures reflected the continuing challenge for the organisation to be more reflective of the community in terms of community background and gender.

2.24   The PBNI's *People Strategy 2020-23*[57] indicated an intention to develop an equality, diversity and inclusion strategy which would focus on all of the protected characteristics of equality legislation, consider the external assessment of its strategies through Diversity Mark and establish quality standards for inclusive collaborative leadership. These would be supported through the leadership development programme.

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53   *Department of Finance, NICS People Strategy 2018-21, September 2018* available at
      https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dfp/nics-people-strategy-2018-21.pdf.
54   *NIAO, Capacity and capability in the Northern Ireland Civil Service, November 2020* available at
      https://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk/publications/capacity-and-capability-northern-ireland-civil-service-0.
55   *PSNI, People Strategy 2020-2025, internal document*
56   *PSNI, Workforce composition statistics, February 2022* available at
      https://www.psni.police.uk/inside-psni/Statistics/workforce-composition-statistics/.
57   *PBNI, People Strategy 2020-23, internal document.*

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Wellbeing strategies

2.25 As outlined above the NICS *People Strategy 2018-21*[58] included a key strand of work around *'Building on our health and wellbeing framework with particular emphasis on mental health and support for colleagues facing life challenging events'*. Attendance was a key measure for the NICS and the People Strategy included an action to *'improve attendance - establish a task force on attendance management.'*

2.26 NICS HR Learning, Occupational Health Service and Wellbeing Directorate included the following services:

- Welfare Support Service - to provide support to all staff through the provision of an independent and confidential service, helping them to cope with and work through any type of personal or work-related issues which may affect their ability to work effectively; and
- Occupational Health Service - to provide occupational health and medical advice to NICS Departments, Civil Service Pensions, other public service pensions and the Driver and Vehicle Agency.

This Directorate was responsible for the delivery of the NICS Well programme (see Chapter 3 - Delivery).

2.27 The NIPS had included the Prisons WELL employee wellbeing programme as an activity within the *Prisons 2020 strategy*.[59] Within the pillar of 'Our People' the NIPS stated they would *'Put in place a new employee wellbeing programme PRISONS WELL which is customised to meet the unique needs of NIPS staff.'* The *Year One Delivery Plan for 2018-19*[60] included the key area of employee wellbeing with the action to *'Develop a new Prisons WELL employee wellbeing programme, including: delivery of personal resilience workshops for operational staff; customised provision in place to support staff (particularly post-incident); a menu of wellbeing initiatives in place to enable headquarters and establishments to meet the specific needs of their staff'* by March 2019.'

2.28 The NIPS *Review of Support Services for Operational and Retired Prison Staff* included at Recommendation 4a *'that a Mental Health and Wellbeing framework is developed and implemented, led by a member of the NIPS senior team, encompassing all strands of NIPS approach to wellbeing for its people.'*[61] The accompanying action plan stated that a framework would be finalised and agreed by 30 June 2021.[62]

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58   *Department of Finance, NICS People Strategy 2018-21, September 2018* available at
     https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dfp/nics-people-strategy-2018-21.pdf.
59   *NIPS, Prisons 2020: Driving continuous improvement in the Northern Ireland Prison Service: The way forward, July 2018*
     available at https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/justice/prisons-2020-the-way-forward.pdf.
60   *NIPS, Prisons 2020 Delivery Plan (Year 1), July 2018* available at
     https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/justice/prisons-2020-delivery-plan-year1_0.pdf.
61   *DoJ, A review of support services for operational prison staff, January 2021* available at
     https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/justice/nips-report-jan-21.pdf.
62   *DoJ, Annex C: review of support services for operational prison staff and action plan, January 2021* available at
     https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/justice/annex-c-support-services.pdf.

2.29   The PSNI's *People Strategy 2020-25*[63] included *'valuing health and wellbeing'* as its fifth principle. The associated Action Plan[64] included six actions and measures in support of the outcome *'We value health and wellbeing; genuinely care about the physical and mental health of colleagues and together we create a safe, supportive and thriving environment'*.

2.30   The PSNI had also appointed to a new post of Mental Health Risk Management Strategy Lead in 2021. The primary purpose of the position was to have lead responsibility for the establishment of a Mental Health Risk Management Strategy to implement proactive measures for the mitigation of the risks of psychological harm among Police Officers and Police Staff. This included undertaking research and the application of research by leading the development, implementation and evaluation of risk management interventions.

2.31   In 2020 His Royal Highness The Duke of Cambridge (now The Prince of Wales) convened the first Emergency Services Senior Leaders Board, representing 135 blue light organisations across policing, fire and ambulance services and UK Search and Rescue as part of the work of The Royal Foundation of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge.[65] In 2021 the Board had focused on driving improved collaboration across the services. This culminated in a UK-first commitment unveiled at the Emergency Services Mental Health Symposium in November 2021 ensuring mental health was recognised as a priority across the emergency services. The symposium included a commitment to adopt a uniform set of standards on mental health across the 400,000 strong combined workforce. One of the signatories was the Chair of the National Police Chiefs' Council, the body that brings police forces in the UK together to help policing co-ordinate operations, reform, improve and provide value for money. The PSNI were a member of the National Police Chiefs' Council.

2.32   Mental Health at Work was the result of a collaboration between a range of key organisations. It was curated by Mind, supported by the Mental Health at Work Leadership Council and in partnership with The Royal Foundation. This partnership led to the development of an online gateway to resources, training and information providing the tools needed to make workplace wellbeing a priority in any organisation. The Mental Health at Work Commitment, as signed by the heads of the member organisations for the four emergency services[66], was a framework that built on the existing knowledge about what works, based on the Thriving at Work standards[67], pulling from the pledges and standards that were already in existence, using up-to-date research, from UK employers and mental health experts.

63   *PSNI People Strategy 2020-2025, internal document.*
64   *PSN People Strategy Annual People Action Plan 2021-2022, internal document.*
65   *See* https://royalfoundation.com/. Following the death of Queen Elizabeth II in September 2022 their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge were granted the titles of Prince and Princess of Wales and accordingly the organisation has been renamed The Royal Foundation of the Prince and Princess of Wales.
66   *See* https://bluelighttogether.org.uk/app/uploads/2021/11/Blue-Light-MHAW-Commitment_Signing-Page_Final.pdf.
67   An independent review of mental health and employers was commissioned by the then UK Prime Minister in January 2017 and conducted by Lord Dennis Stevenson, the mental health campaigner and former chairman of HBOS, and Paul Farmer CBE, the CEO of Mind. 'Thriving at work: The Stevenson/Farmer review of mental health and employers reviewed into how employers could better support all employees' mental health, including recommended core standards.

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The Commitment included six standards as follows:

1. prioritise mental health in the workplace by developing and delivering a systematic programme of activity;
2. proactively ensure work design and organisational culture drive positive mental health outcomes;
3. promote an open culture around mental health;
4. increase organisational confidence and capability;
5. provide mental health tools and support; and
6. increase transparency and accountability through internal and external reporting.

2.33 The signed Commitment stated: '*In signing this Commitment, we are publicly endorsing the six standards that follow, and committing on behalf of our member organisations that these Commitments will be adopted and integrated into their workplace. These standards will be integrated into existing wellbeing strategies. In addition we will develop a Wellbeing Impact Assessment to be applied to new and existing policies under review'*. A further aspect of the Commitment, and one that CJI was invited to discuss with The Royal Foundation, was that '*We welcome future assessments by the respective independent Inspectorates or regulatory bodies to further improve mental health support.*' While this current inspection was undertaken too soon after the signing of the Commitment to be able to see any impact, CJI intends to consider this issue in future inspections and work with partnership with His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) to assess this issue where appropriate.

2.34 The PBNI's *Corporate Plan 2020-23* highlighted, under its strategic priority 'Valuing and Developing our People' the intention to '...*create a culture where wellbeing and learning are at the forefront of what we do.*'[68] The PBNI *People Strategy for 2020-23*[69] focused on four key strategic areas; culture, succession planning and talent management, valuing wellbeing, and equality and inclusion. The PBNI *Wellbeing Strategy for 2020-23*[70] included a number of aims which it was intended would be achieved by strengthening the six wellbeing strands within the PBNI, particularly with a focus on mental health and physical health.

2.35 The PBNI had signed up to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland's Mental Health Charter.[71] The Charter, jointly produced by the Equality Commission, Action Mental Health, Disability Action, Mindwise, Mental Health Foundation and Niamh, provided a framework for working towards mentally healthy workplaces. This included five Charter Commitments as follows:

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68 *PBNI, PBNI Corporate Plan 2020-23, September 2020* available at https://www.pbni.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/PBNI-Corporate-Plan-2020-23-FINAL-Tagged-for-website.pdf.
69 *PBNI, People Strategy 2020-23, internal document*.
70 *PBNI, Wellbeing Strategy 2020-23, internal document*.
71 *See* https://www.equalityni.org/MentalHealthCharter.

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1. create an open and inclusive workplace culture which displays respect for those with mental ill health;
2. to promote equality of opportunity and challenge discrimination in the workplace;
3. to promote equality of opportunity in recruitment and selection for those with mental ill health;
4. to identify and provide sources of information and support regarding mental ill health; and
5. to adopt 'Every Customer Counts - promoting accessible services' recommendations.

2.36 There is evidence therefore of organisations within the criminal justice system making a public commitment to focus on the mental health and wellbeing of their employees. Both the Mental Health at Work Commitment and the Mental Health Charter offer a series of commitments or a framework which set out what organisations intend to commit to delivering for employees.

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATION 1

Inspectors recommend that **all organisations within the criminal justice system should sign the Mental Health at Work Commitment, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland's Mental Health Charter or an appropriate pledge for their organisation.**

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DEVELOPING FUTURE LEADERS: UNDERSTANDING AND DEVELOPING WORKFORCE SKILLS AND CAPABILITIES

3.1   As outlined in Chapter 1 the NIAO report *'Capacity and Capability in the NICS'*[72] found that the NICS had not adequately identified the skills and experience base of its current workforce nor the requirements for delivering future Programme for Governments. Included in the NICS People Strategy 2018-21[73] ('the Strategy') actions to take in support of the outcome to have a 'high-performing' NICS included to *'conduct annual comprehensive NICS skills audits, actual and projected, to inform learning and development strategies and workforce plans.'* The Strategy also identified the need to *'Develop new skills in the NICS (for example commercial and data science) and behaviours (for example adaptability, innovation and dealing with conflict) in support of the need to become more outcome-focused'.*

3.2   The PSNI's *Leadership Strategy*[74] included work undertaken by the College of Policing, National Police Chiefs' Council and Her (now His) Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (now HMICFRS) to develop a set of guiding principles for organisational leadership, published in February 2017.[75] The principles were structured into three themes as per the diagram at Figure 3. The PSNI's Leadership Strategy noted that it would focus on *'outlining the specific elements and actions which the PSNI consider will assist us in, Understanding, Displaying and Developing Leadership that best supports our officers and staff to Keep People Safe.'* At the time of the inspection the PSNI's Police College had recently completed a training needs analysis for Chief Superintendents to inform their training plans.

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72   *NIAO, Capacity and Capability in the Northern Ireland Civil Service, November 2020* available at
      https://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk/publications/capacity-and-capability-northern-ireland-civil-service-0.
73   *Department of Finance, NICS People Strategy 2018-21, September 2018* available at
      https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dfp/nics-people-strategy-2018-21.pdf.
74   *PSNI, Leadership strategy 2017-2020, internal document*
75   *College of Policing, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary & National Police Chief's Council, Guiding principles for organisational leadership, February 2017* available at https://assets.college.police.uk/s3fs-public/guiding-principles-for-organisational-leadership.pdf.

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Figure 3: Guiding principles for police leadership

Displaying Leadership
Morale and wellbeing
Innovation
Diverse Leadership Teams

Understanding Leadership
Current capability
Future capability
Setting direction

Guiding Principles for Police Leadership

Developing Leadership
Performance
Learning and Development
Talent

3.3   In this inspection, Inspectors were advised that the organisations of the NICS utilised the work done by NICS HR in support of the People Strategy to assess skills and capabilities across the NICS in a proactive manner. Most of the inspected organisations did not appear to be advanced in relation to identifying their own workforce skills and capabilities currently or for the future and how these fed into their succession planning and development plans. The PSNI's Leadership Strategy included a leadership skills matrix which set out the personal, professional and business capabilities required for each level of the organisation. It noted that the PSNI would, through its network of Heads of Function, review the matrix on an annual basis to identify any new, changing or emerging skill requirements.

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATION 2

Inspectors recommend that **all criminal justice system organisations should identify current and required future leadership skills and capabilities in their workforce and incorporate needs in their people strategies and succession plans.**

SUCCESSION PLANNING

3.4   Succession planning is defined by the CIPD as *'the process of identifying and developing potential future leaders and senior managers, as well as individuals, to fill business-critical roles'*.[76] It notes that the first aim of a succession plan is to identify business-critical roles for which potential successors are needed with the objective that these can be filled effectively if a current post holder leaves the organisation. All organisations reported that succession planning was a challenge for the criminal justice system which had traditionally not been undertaken well.

76   *CIPD, Succession planning factsheet, November 2020* available at
      https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/strategy/resourcing/succession-planning-factsheet#gref.

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It was also difficult where fairness and opportunities being open to all employees were a cornerstone of the workforce and any interventions which were seen to favour an individual or group would face significant challenge. Examples were given of posts being temporarily filled without a permanent replacement for long periods of time leading to instability and uncertainty.

3.5   Where issues arose or where individual organisations in the NICS had identified current or future skills gaps, there was discussion between the organisational leaders and NICS HR about how best to address this. Examples were provided of roles where it had been identified that the approach of appointing generalists would not provide sufficient expertise where it was required such as in scientific or legal positions. In some instances Inspectors were advised that there continued to be challenges between the existing approach and the need to be more flexible when succession planning for specialist posts. One solution to this being proposed was building on the concept of 'job families' whereby roles with similar skills could be recruited together. This approach had been used for many years for specific posts, for example in accountancy, but the possibility of rolling this out further was being considered.

3.6   The Chief Executives' Forum[77] and Chief Officers 3rd Sector (CO3) had begun delivering a three month cross sectoral development programme for high potentials, following a successful pilot early in 2021. This was delivered to 10-14 managers from each sector (who were broadly equivalent to NICS Principal/Deputy Principal level and equivalent Local Council grades). The aim of the programme was to develop effective partnerships based on trust, clarity of accountability, and a shared understanding of purpose and outcomes across the two sectors.[78]

3.7   In the staff survey conducted for this inspection respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed with the statement 'Changes to senior leadership positions (for example due to promotion/transfer) are planned for and organised sufficiently to ensure stability in the relevant business area'. Figure 4 illustrates the responses across the seven organisations. This indicates that, with the exception of the PPS, staff in all organisations were more likely to respond that they 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed' than the other response options.

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77   The Chief Executives' Forum (see https://www.ceforum.org/) is a membership organisation encompassing the leadership teams of Northern Ireland's public sector bodies. It includes local and central government and the network of arm's length bodies that deliver public services in Northern Ireland. CO3 (see https://co3.org.uk/) is a network of third sector leaders who inspire and support through building peer connections, skills development and advocacy.

78   *See* https://ceforum.org/programmes/cross-sectoral-development-programme.

Figure 4: Survey participants' responses to statement 'Changes to senior leadership positions (e.g. due to promotion/transfer) are planned for and organised sufficiently to ensure stability in the relevant business area'
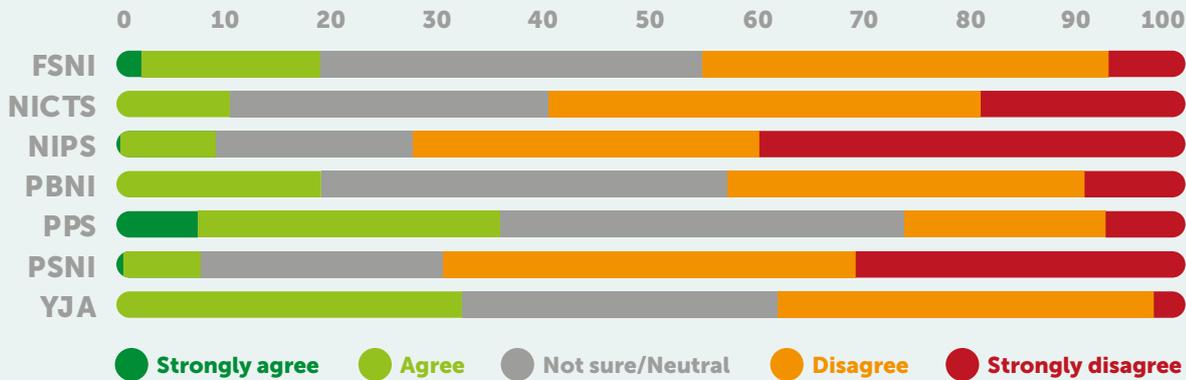
3.8 CJI's *Finding the Balance* report published in May 2013[79] looked at how the PSNI matched human resources with priorities. The report commented on the need for the PSNI to take a service-wide approach to allocating staff to meet future policing needs of the community and recommended that longer term workforce planning be strengthened in the PSNI with a stronger focus on utilising good practice. This included the implementation of effective succession planning to address ongoing skills and knowledge gaps. While the focus of the *Finding the Balance* report was on the PSNI's workforce as a whole rather than purely at leadership positions, there is a clear need for succession planning into key leadership posts. The PSNI advised that in recent years a significant number of senior promotion processes had been progressed to produce merit lists to address succession planning issues. A Senior Management Appointments Panel chaired by the Chief Constable or Deputy Chief Constable met following promotion processes to skills match Officers to vacancies and included the movement of substantive Officers as appropriate. The key considerations of the principles for this process were noted as being *'the best interests of the community and organisation.'*[80]

Equality, diversity and inclusion

3.9 The recruitment website for the NICS clearly set out its commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion stating *'We have a strong and clear commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and encourage our colleagues to bring their true selves to work… By striving to create an inclusive working environment in which difference is recognised and valued we'll be able to respond more effectively to the needs of the citizens we serve.'*[81] The website also noted the NICS achievements in this area including Bronze Diversity Mark, Lead Partner for Employers for Disability, Stonewall Silver Employer and Friend of Belfast Mela.

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79 *CJI, Finding the Balance: Matching human resources with priorities in the Police Service of Northern Ireland, May 2013* available at https://www.cjini.org/TheInspections/Inspection-Reports/2013/A/Finding-the-Balance.
80 *PSNI, Senior management appointments panel principles, September 2020, internal document.*
81 *See* https://irecruit-ext.hrconnect.nigov.net/career/Join-Us/.

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3.10 A 2020 briefing paper produced for the Northern Ireland Assembly entitled *Who Runs Northern Ireland?*[82] summarised available statistics on gender representation in decision-making positions in Northern Ireland, including in politics, public appointments and the public sector. Figures outlined that in the PSNI males made up 100% of Chief and Deputy Chief Constable roles, 80% of Assistant Chief Constables, 42% of staff and 70% of Police Officers. In the NICS males made up 67% of Permanent Secretaries, 62% of Senior Civil Servants and 50% of the all Civil Service positions.

3.11 Consideration had been given by the criminal justice organisations and the wider NICS as to how to increase diversity in its workforce and leadership. One longstanding programme focusing on women in leadership was run by the Chief Executives' Forum as outlined in the following example . The Chief Executives' Forum is a membership organisation encompassing the leadership teams of Northern Ireland's public sector bodies.[83]

Example 1: Chief Executives' Forum Women in Leadership Development Programme[84]

The Chief Executives' Forum Women in Leadership Development Programme had been running since 2003 (including under previous names as the Women's Leadership Initiative and the Building Inclusive Leaders Programme). The Programme had been delivered annually to '*address the under representation of women working in strategic decision-making roles across all public sector organisations in Northern Ireland, particularly at Chief Executive level.*'

The year-long programme featured a series of action learning events, individual coaching and mentoring sessions, virtual webinars and a two-day leadership retreat, along with 360˚ assessment and high-profile guest speakers.

One of the strengths of this programme was that it brought together women who were aspiring or existing senior leaders working across the Civil Service, local government and the wider public sector. Since its inception it had been delivered by an external provider with input from senior leaders within the private, public and third sectors.

3.12 The PBNI website also stated '*As an equal opportunities employer PBNI aims to recruit and develop the very best talent available across a wide range of disciplines.*'[85] The PBNI were intending to join Diversity Mark.[86]

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82 *Potter, M. Who runs Northern Ireland? A summary of statistics relating to gender and power in 2020, Research and Information Service Briefing Paper, Northern Ireland Assembly, January 2020* available at http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/raise/publications/2017-2022/2020/assembly_exec_review/0120.pdf.

83 *See* https://www.ceforum.org/.

84 *See* https://www.ceforum.org/programmes/building-inclusive-leaders

85 *See* https://www.pbni.org.uk/recruitment/.

86 Diversity Mark are the awarding body of the Diversity Mark accreditation. Founded by Women in Business NI, their mission is to help businesses across the UK and Ireland build more diverse and inclusive workplaces. *See* https://diversity-mark-ni.co.uk/.

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In contrast to some organisations in the criminal justice system, the PBNI leadership was predominantly made up of female leaders, reflecting the gender balance of the social work workforce (with males accounting for only 23% of the PBNI workforce[87]). Consideration was therefore given as to how to highlight the role of male leaders in the organisation.

3.13   Schemes had also been developed to enhance the diversity of police leadership by the College of Policing, although these were not in use within the PSNI at the time of this inspection. Direct Entry programmes had been developed for both Inspector and Superintendent ranks. The five-year evaluation report of the Direct Entry Superintendent programme[88] outlined some success in the ambition to increase diversity, stating; '*The programme (cohorts 1 to 5) recruited around double the proportion of women (16 out of 33 programme members) and people from a black or minority ethnic background (3 out of 33 programme members) than represented nationally at superintendent rank (28 per cent and four per cent, respectively).*' This was promising although, as the report noted that the proportions of programme members from these demographic groups was lower than in national population figures, there was still some way to go to fully achieve this aim.

3.14   The College of Policing also delivered the Aspire leadership development programme[89] for Chief Inspectors, Superintendents and Police Staff equivalents who identified as being from a group currently underrepresented in the service. This aimed to provide these senior leaders with knowledge, tools, confidence and skills to support their further development.

3.15   In addition the College delivered a Senior Leaders Development Centre for Police Officers and Staff (Superintendents, Chief Superintendents and Police Staff equivalents) who identified with a group underrepresented in senior policing, and were interested in reaching chief officer level within the next five years.[90] This was an intensive two-day session that mirrored the environment of an executive-level assessment centre (akin to the assessment process for the Strategic Command Course - see paragraph 3.35) in order to provide participants with a realistic experience in a supportive learning environment. Police Officers and Police Staff within the PSNI were eligible to apply for this session.

NEW TALENT SELECTION AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Providing development opportunities

3.16   As noted previously all organisations inspected offered development opportunities in some form. The most common format was the opportunity for individuals to apply for temporary promotion in advance of a vacancy at a higher level being filled

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87   *PBNI, People Strategy 2020-23, internal document.*

88   *College of Policing, Direct Entry Superintendent programme Five-year evaluation report 2014 – 2019, July 2020* available at https://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2020-0445/DE-Superintendent-programme-evaluation.pdf.

89   *See* https://www.college.police.uk/career-learning/learning/courses/aspire-leadership-development-programme.

90   *See* https://www.college.police.uk/career-learning/learning/courses/senior-leaders-development-centre.

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on a permanent basis. This offered the opportunity for individuals to experience a more senior role for usually (although not always) a short period of time, enabling them to make their own decisions about whether or not to apply to the permanent role. On some occasions this also enabled individuals to move to a different area of work within their organisation, for example from a policy to an operational role or vice versa, to broaden their own experience. In the organisations of the NICS it would also enable individuals to apply to a different Government Department, subject to the approval of their line manager or Department.

3.17   Some organisations had, in the past, offered secondment or research development opportunities for senior leaders or those aspiring to senior leadership roles within or outside of the criminal justice system. This had included, for example, working within the DoJ, national policing organisations or to undertake research through bodies such as The Churchill Fellowship.[91] Budgetary constraints at the time of this inspection meant that these types of opportunities were more limited than they had been in the past. The PSNI and An Garda Síochána continued to operate an exchange scheme, set up as a result of the *Report of the Independent Commission on Policing 1999* (the 'Patten Report').

3.18   One instance of a development programme, created by the NIPS with support from NICS HR, offering aspiring leaders the opportunity to experience a leadership role is outlined in the following example.

Example 2: NIPS Future Leaders Scheme
The NIPS had developed a Future Leaders Scheme which commenced in 2019 and aimed to identify those in prison grades at first line management level who had the potential to move into leadership positions. The programme was open to those in Senior Officer positions and included a selection process for those who applied. The aims of the Scheme were to assist Senior Officers to develop and acquire the skills, knowledge and experience that will equip them to progress to Unit Manager; and provide postings and learning and development opportunities which would help participants realise their full potential.

Once in the Scheme the individuals were temporarily promoted to Unit Manager and rotated through a series of roles within the NIPS in one of which they were required to undertake a project. On conclusion of the two-year programme individuals were required to pass the course and then were eligible to apply to be selected into Governor roles after passing an interview board. While it was noted in the candidate booklet that '*Temporary promotion and participation in the Scheme alone are no guarantee of substantive promotion*' it was intended that the Scheme would assist in developing a talent pool of future leaders.

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91   *See* https://www.churchillfellowship.org/

Selecting new talent

3.19   Historically, most organisations in the criminal justice system had operated a hierarchical approach to leadership where individuals joined at the lowest level of the organisation and progressed over their career lifetime. At the time of this inspection the PSNI and the NIPS continued to operate in this way in operational roles with individuals being recruited as either Police Constables or Prison Officers respectively being promoted up the ranks to the leadership of the organisation. Senior Police Officer positions were advertised externally and non-PSNI personnel (who had progressed to that rank in another police service) were able to apply and be appointed. In addition the PSNI recruited externally into leadership roles for Police Staff, for example recent recruitment into Chief Operating Officer and Assistant Chief Officer roles.

3.20   Previously the NICS had also only recruited externally to positions at Administrative Officer level or at specific certain grades, mainly in the Senior Civil Service. As outlined in Chapter 1, reports of the RHI Inquiry and the NIAO had both commented on the need for the NICS to broaden the skills base of its workforce and address the lack of diversity in the NICS. In response to recommendations made, the NICS policy had recently changed with a move to external recruitment at every level in an effort to increase the diversity and skill mix of the NICS. There had also been a change in the selection and assessment processes which had previously been primarily using the method of a promotion board, based around a competency-based interview, to one where different assessment methodologies were utilised. It was hoped that these changes would address the issues of the current age profile of the workforce and introduce new skills and experience and fresh thinking into the NICS.

3.21   In contrast the PPS and the PBNI had operated a policy of external recruitment, over many years, to enable those working in other sectors (for example in legal private practice or in health and social care roles) to apply for roles within the organisations at every level. This meant that both leadership teams had a mix of those who had worked their way up through the levels of the organisation as well as those who had entered at middle or senior management level.

3.22   In England and Wales the College of Policing had developed and delivered a number of schemes to develop talent within Police Services across the UK. The Fast Track programme was a development programme and promotion mechanism *'to enable the most talented serving police constables to advance to the rank of inspector within two years.'* [92] In addition, the College had been responsible for delivering two direct entry programmes to bring external candidates, with proven leadership skills, into policing at either Inspector or Superintendent rank.[93] A five-year evaluation of the Fast Track and Direct Entry programmes had been submitted to Parliament and a decision on the future of these schemes was awaiting the outcome of a consultation with the service in 2022.

92   *See* https://www.college.police.uk/career-learning/learning/courses/fast-track-programme-serving-constables.
93   *See* https://www.college.police.uk/joining-police/direct-entry-police.

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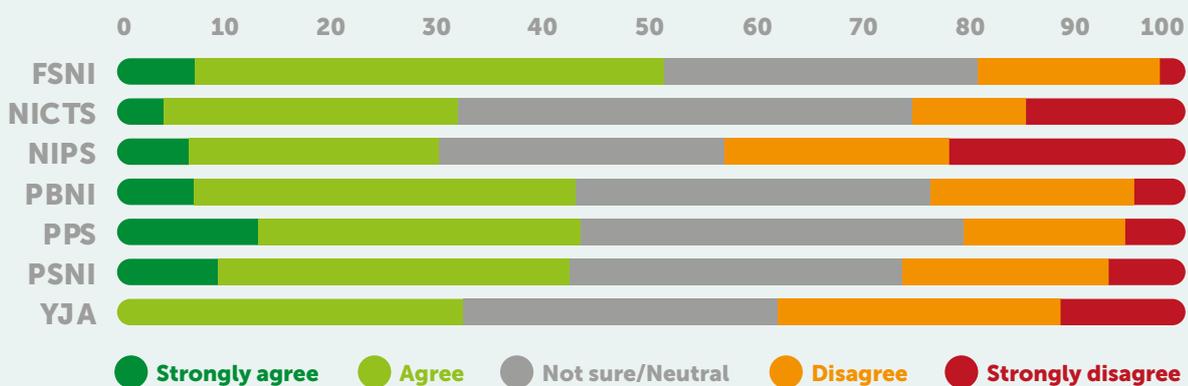CHAPTER 4: OUTCOMES

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3.23   The PSNI participated in the Fast Track Constable to Inspector Programme and had four spaces each year at the National Assessment Centre where candidates were selected. One Officer commenced the scheme in December 2021, three commenced in December 2022 and four candidates were due to attend the March 2023 assessment centre.

Recruiting and promoting fairly

3.24   Fair and open competition to appointments are a cornerstone of appointments within the public sector. For example, the Civil Service Commissioners[94] are appointed under the Northern Ireland Constitution Act 1973. Their function is to regulate appointments to the NICS. The main purpose is to perform regulatory functions in relation to open recruitment to the NICS at all levels. Commissioners maintain the principle of selection on merit on the basis of fair and open competition in relation to selection for appointment. Similarly when appointing to Assistant Chief Officer posts in the PSNI, the Policing Board for Northern Ireland will appoint an independent advisor to oversee the recruitment and selection process.

3.25   In the staff surveys conducted for this inspection, in general, more staff agreed or strongly agreed than disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement 'My organisation takes action to encourage those from different groups and backgrounds from across the various Section 75 categories[95] to apply for senior leadership positions. In all organisations except the NIPS and the YJA, between a third and just under a half of staff in the organisations responded 'not sure/neutral', this is illustrated in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Survey participants' responses to statement 'My organisation takes action to encourage those from different groups and backgrounds to apply for senior leadership positions'.


Legend: Strongly agree, Agree, Not sure/Neutral, Disagree, Strongly disagree

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94   *See* https://www.nicscommissioners.org/index.htm.
95   Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 places a statutory obligation on public authorities to carry out their functions with due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and good relations in respect of religious belief, political opinion, gender, race, disability, age, marital status, dependants and sexual orientation.

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3.26   A similar pattern is apparent for responses to the statement 'The processes for selecting staff into senior leadership positions in my organisation appear to ensure equality of opportunity for people from all backgrounds (for example gender, age, religion/community background, ethnicity, disability etc.)' as shown in Figure 6. For this question in all organisations except the NIPS, a greater proportion of those surveyed 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the statement than 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed' although again between a third and just under a half of staff in the organisations responded 'not sure/neutral'.

Figure 6: Survey participants' responses to statement 'The processes for selecting staff into senior leadership positions in my organisation appear to ensure equality of opportunity for people from all backgrounds (for example gender, age, religion/community background, ethnicity, disability etc.)'.
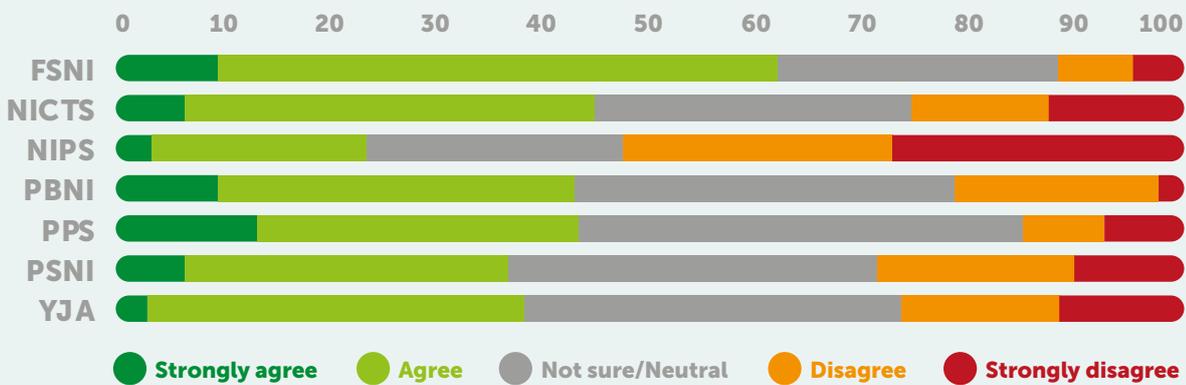
Developing leadership skills

3.27   Membership of The Chief Executives' Forum[96] ('the Forum') included Local and Central Government and the network of arm's length bodies that deliver public services in Northern Ireland and was therefore open to all organisations involved in this inspection. The Forum provided networking opportunities and information sharing events for members, with the aim of supporting them to achieve improved outcomes for everyone in Northern Ireland. It also developed and delivered programmes for leaders across the public sector (including the Women's Leadership Programme outlined previously). Several of the organisations in this inspection mentioned the role of the Forum and the opportunities for networking and development offered which individuals could avail of.

3.28   CO3, the Chief Executives' Forum and Grant Thornton worked together to develop and deliver a Cross-Sectoral Leadership Exchange programme, the most recent being at the start of 2022.[97] The four-month initiative brought together a range of senior leaders from the third sector and the public sector to learn from one another, through a series of Action Learning Groups.

96   *See* https://www.ceforum.org/.
97   *Grant Thornton, Leadership Exchange: Senior Leaders Sharing Learning Across Sectors, Programme brochure: January - April 2022* available at https://www.ceforum.org/system/publications/assets/000/000/084/original/Cross_Sectoral_Leadership_Exchange_Prog_2022_Brochure.pdf.

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The Programme was aimed specifically at Third Sector Chief Executives, Local Government Chief Executives, NICS and Public Sector Leaders, acknowledging that these leaders must work in partnership to deliver for Northern Ireland.

3.29   Common Purpose was another provider of cross-sectoral development programmes that were open to the criminal justice organisations as well as public and private sector.[98]   As a not-for-profit organisation Common Purpose delivered face-to-face and online leadership programmes. The Common Purpose Programmes for senior leaders and emerging leaders in the UK and Ireland had been delivered online since the lockdown and restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.30   NICS organisations had access to the range of leadership products developed by NICS HR Learning and Development. The team aimed to *'provide training consultancy services that can help identify, design and develop new learning interventions that support the enhancement of skills and capabilities required by the NICS staff to deliver the Programme for Government and comply with legislative requirements. The focus on the development of learning interventions is aligned to corporate strategic need, the NICS People Strategy and the NICS Competency Framework.'*[99]   This team had worked with the NIPS in the design of their Future Leaders Programme (see example at paragraph 3.18).

3.31   A number of online and face-to-face courses and workshops were available via the web-based learning management system 'NICS HR LInKS' (Learning Information Knowledge and Skills). Topics included resilience, wellbeing and skills in communication, management, performance and technical business processes. Leadership was a category by which users could search for relevant courses, although most of the courses were most suited to first and second line management level. There was no mandated course or courses for those moving into senior leadership roles, rather individuals were responsible for identifying their own development needs and availing of appropriate learning opportunities with the support of their line manager.

3.32   For senior leaders in the NICS, programmes had been developed to cut-across Departments and organisations. *'Leading for the Future'* was a leadership development programme for leaders in the NICS developed by the Centre for Effective Services.[100]   Two programmes were designed and delivered and approximately 40 Deputy Secretaries from across the NICS took part in the first Programme. An evaluation was conducted and reported on in January 2021 as described in the following example.[101]

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98   *See* https://commonpurpose.org/.
99   *Department of Finance intranet, NICS HR Learning, OHS and Wellbeing.*
100 *See* https://ceforum.org/events/618
101 *Centre for Effective Services, Leading for the Future: Learning from a Leadership Development Programme for Senior Civil Servants in Northern Ireland, Evaluation report, January 2021* available at https://d1j85byv4fcann.cloudfront.net/cesdownloads/Goal_Leadership-Report-26.01.21_online-version.pdf?mtime=20210210184325&focal=none.

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Example 3: 'Leading for the Future' NICS Leadership Programme

Leading for the Future was a leadership development programme for leaders in the NICS. The programme was designed in the context of significant challenges in Northern Ireland such as the reshaping of government Departments and preparing for an outcomes focused Programme for Government.

The NICS engaged support from the Centre for Effective Services (CES) to design and deliver two Programmes, one for Grade 3 (Deputy Secretaries) and one for Grade 2 (Permanent Secretary level). The CES carried out an evaluation with the Grade 3s to explore the difference that the programme made to those who took part, and to generate learning for public services about the design and delivery of leadership development initiatives for senior public servants.

The evaluation report highlighted significant positive differences in the skills, attitudes and practices of the leaders who took part. These included changes to individual awareness and behaviours; changes in team culture and engagement; and changes in collaborative working.

It highlights five factors which are critical to the design and delivery of leadership development programmes:

- Commitment of senior leadership;
- A robust and appropriately scoped programme design;
- Specialised trainer knowledge and experience;
- An inclusive and reflective learning approach; and
- A process to monitor and evaluate programme implementation and participants' progress.

The evaluation suggested that the use of strategic projects as learning tools and enhanced use of technology to enable the participants to engage with each other outside the formal structures of the programme could be further developed in the design and delivery of future similar initiatives.

3.33   In the PSNI leadership programmes had also been delivered with the support of external providers. These included:

- Chartered Management Institute Level 7 Postgraduate Diploma in Leadership and Management delivered by the William J Clinton Leadership Institute at Queen's University Belfast for Superintendents, Chief Superintendents and Grade 5 Police Staff. The programme was being delivered to the second group of participants at the time of the fieldwork for this inspection;
- Springboard Development Plus[102] Senior Women in Policing Programme piloted September 2020 to March 2021 in conjunction with Police Scotland. Initially aimed at newly promoted Superintendent and Police Staff equivalent level and included cross force mentoring; and

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102 *See* https://springboardconsultancy.com/development-plus/.

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- places for leaders from the PSNI on leadership programmes delivered by the Health and Social Care Leadership Centre[103] (Acumen, Proteus and Aspire) for leaders in health and social care organisations.

3.34 The PSNI's Police College also developed and delivered a number of in-house operational and organisational programmes which were available to those in leadership roles. These included online master class webinars developed by the Police College in the PSNI during the period of restrictions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, aligned with the five people principles from the PSNI's People and Culture Strategy. The sessions were presented by a range of senior internal and external speakers and open to all staff. Previously coaching and mentoring had been offered, including to match senior leaders in the PSNI with senior leaders in other organisations, but the strategy for coaching and mentoring this was under review at the time of this inspection.

3.35 Superintendents, Chief Superintendents and Police Staff equivalent grades were eligible to apply for the Senior Police National Assessment Centre with support from the PSNI, designed and delivered by the College of Policing. Those who were successful in passing the Assessment Centre then could apply for the Police Service Strategic Command Course and were allocated an executive coach to work with them. It was a statutory requirement for Officers seeking promotion to Assistant Chief Constable rank or above to pass the course before applying for posts. The course included modules in organisational leadership, operational leadership and personal leadership. All graduates of the course also left with a personal development plan to support their continuing professional development. At the time of the inspection there was a review being undertaken of progression to Chief Officer[104] level to be concluded in Autumn 2022. The PSNI had also, between 2017 and 2021, offered those in the rank of Superintendent and staff at Grade 7 and above development via the PSNI's 2020 and Beyond Programme to enable them to prepare their own professional development plan, which may lead to them being supported to attend the Senior Police National Assessment Centre.

3.36 In the PBNI the focus in the last couple of years had been on developing Area Managers at middle management level rather than senior leadership due to changes in the leadership team and temporary promotions. It was planned that positions were filled permanently and there was stability in the leadership team that the development needs of leaders would be considered further. Prior to this a range of leadership events, including four with the Senior Leadership Team, had been delivered by a contracted provider. The focus for these events had been on team building and development.

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103 *See* https://leadership.hscni.net/.
104 Chief Officer refers to those at Assistant Chief Constable, Assistant Chief Officer, Deputy Chief Constable, Chief Operating Officer and Chief Constable levels.

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MANAGING AND DEVELOPING INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE

3.37   Performance development processes were in place in all organisations, in which staff at all levels were expected to discuss and agree developmental objectives with their line manager. However, in senior leadership roles most interviewees told us that individuals were expected to assess and identify their own development needs and avail of training and development opportunities which aimed to address gaps or develop them in line with their own career pathways. Although there were some cross-sectoral or departmental leadership programmes offered as outlined previously, there was universal consensus that there was no 'one size fits all' leadership programme and that individuals could tailor their own development opportunities to fit their own needs.

3.38   Some organisations had used coaching and mentoring to aid in the development of individual managers or leaders. This had included the use of mentors within the organisations, mentoring schemes across the DoJ and it's arm's length bodies and senior leaders acting as mentors to those external to their organisation. In some cases mentors or coaches had been availed of through an existing development programme (for example, through the Chief Executives' Forum, the CES or the College of Policing Strategic Command Course).

3.39   Senior leaders and those responsible for providing development programmes highlighted that in senior levels the nature of development needs was often in relation to networking opportunities, peer support or raising awareness of new innovations or practices in relation to specific areas of their business or cross-business issues (such as equality and diversity, media and communications or governance and risk management).

3.40   Organisations like the Chief Executives' Forum offered this type of development by providing networking opportunities and information sharing events for members, with the aim of supporting them to achieve improved outcomes for everyone in Northern Ireland. The Forum regularly ran seminars on public accountability and governance for Audit and Risk Assurance Committee members and media training. In addition, examples of topics covered in the previous year were in relation to hybrid working, cyber resilience, board effectiveness and using legal powers.

3.41   There were no criminal justice specific initiatives of this type for either those promoted to a senior leadership role within an organisation or for those moving across the NICS Agencies or Departments or appointed from an outside organisation. Individuals tended to develop their understanding of their role and its interface with other organisations through role specific activities and projects and 'learning on the job' from others who were existing leaders.

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> ## OPERATIONAL RECOMMENDATION 1
>
> Inspectors therefore recommend that **the Department of Justice in conjunction with relevant organisations and Non-Departmental Public Bodies should consider developing a joint criminal justice system induction programme for new leaders to foster understanding of the operating context of each organisation and partnerships.**

3.42   While this approach is common in many organisations it also assumes that those already in the organisation and peers across other organisations have the appropriate skills, knowledge, behaviours and values to share with others. In this inspection, Inspectors heard concerns from staff in some organisations about existing leaders modelling ineffective or inappropriate attitudes and behaviours which were then learned by those who were promoted into leadership roles. There were particular concerns raised by some staff in the NIPS about the leadership culture in some parts of the organisation which had a significant impact on staff morale.

RAISING AWARENESS OF WELLBEING

3.43   Prior to March 2020 and the declaration of the global COVID-19 pandemic, all organisations had provided information for staff about the importance of wellbeing and the availability of wellbeing support. Since March 2020 the impact of the lockdowns and restrictions implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic on staff wellbeing had been recognised by the criminal justice organisations. Every organisation had taken steps to highlight to staff that the organisation recognised the impact of the pandemic on staff wellbeing and shared information about how to address wellbeing issues caused by this.

3.44   In the NIPS *Review of Support Services for Operational Prison Staff*[105] two recommendations were included which related to awareness raising around wellbeing:

- *Recommendation 4b. It is recommended that members of Senior Management within the organisation front a campaign to speak about the pressures of the role and also the benefits of the job*; and
- *Recommendation 4d. Further development of the local Wellbeing Champions to facilitate an extension of wellbeing promotion 'on the ground' is recommended as a cost-effective approach to increasing awareness*.

The NIPS progress update advised that a Governor had been appointed as a Senior Well Champion and wellbeing leads had been identified in every prison with briefings delivered on roles and responsibilities.

105 *DoJ, A review of support services for operational prison staff, January 2021* available at https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/justice/nips-report-jan-21.pdf.

3.45   Examples were provided to Inspectors about information shared by senior leaders in organisations about the importance of staff wellbeing and resources available. The following example from the PPS outlines this type of approach.

Example 4: PPS Core Brief and Director Updates

The PPS regularly issued a 'Core Brief' to staff (each month or two months) and Director's Updates to staff (two to three times a week in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic and then less frequently as restrictions eased). These briefings were provided to staff to update them on a variety of matters across the organisation and the criminal justice system. Both included an introductory message from the Director of the PPS.

Reference to wellbeing and staff welfare featured significantly in these updates during 2020 and 2021, including signposting staff to support available, as these excerpts illustrate:

April 2020 Director's Update: Health and Wellbeing: '*...I can't stress enough how central the health and wellbeing of all PPS staff has been to all plans to navigate our business through the coming weeks and perhaps months....The Senior Management team wants to emphasise clearly that we know everyone is doing their absolute best in the most unusual of circumstances at both home and work. We understand it is challenging to square the pressures of juggling remote working with childcare, home schooling or helping parents. Please be assured that we are alive to the challenges staff may face and want to be supportive where we can.'* Included links to three information sheets which offer advice in two areas – coping with stress and helping children cope with the impact of the pandemic on their lives.

May 2020 Core Brief: '*...We are acutely aware of the spectrum of pressures coming at you from seemingly every angle in the last six weeks.....The times ahead remain uncertain and demanding. We will continue to take decisions with staff wellbeing in mind at all times, and I will continue to keep you up to date on their impact on staff.'* Feature included on 'Looking after your wellbeing' which included a link to the NICS Staff COVID-19 hub providing resources to help support staff's own and other's wellbeing.

July 2020 Core Brief: Included a feature on the new virtual hub for mental health and wellbeing launched by the Department for Communities and the Department of Health.

July 2020 Director's Update: '*...I have said before that this pandemic will affect many of us in perhaps unseen ways and I would encourage you to speak with your line manager if you have particular pressures or concerns that may be having any impact on your mental or physical wellbeing...Finally, I do hope you have managed to take some leave by now, or have some booked for the near future. I can't stress enough how important a tool annual leave is in protecting health, wellbeing and resilience, not least this year'.* Link included to the NICS COVID-19 hub and description of support information available.
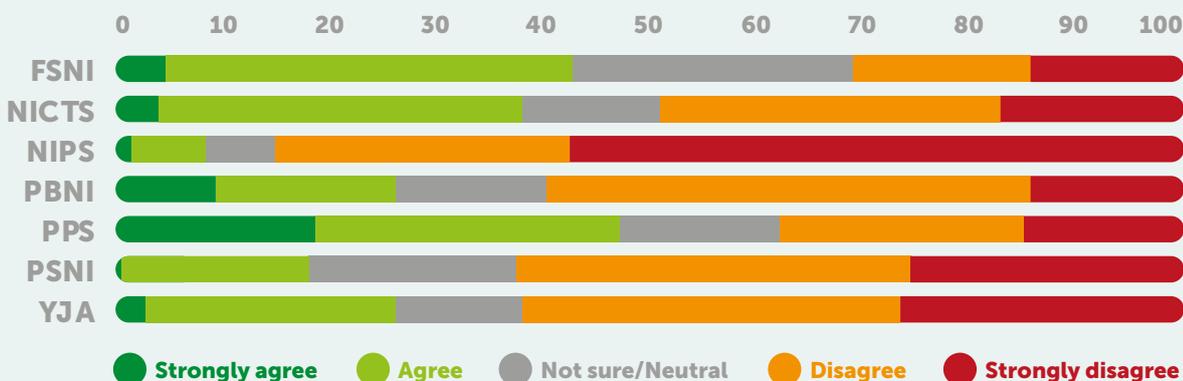
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December 2020 Core Brief: '....I said at the outset that nothing is as important as your health and wellbeing. That includes mental health which has also been impacted so detrimentally by COVID-19. Please read the article below offering sources of help and support for anyone who feels they would benefit from it, particularly at this time of year.' Feature on 'Staff interests at heart of recovery planning' (which notes importance of staff wellbeing in decision making), 'Staff encouraged to take annual leave over Christmas' and 'It's OK not to be OK' (with links to the Covid Wellbeing NI website and the Health and Wellbeing section of the COVID-19 staff information hub).

September 2021 Core Brief: Feature on compassionate leadership in difficult times with links for support website.

March 2021 Director's Update: '...The focus of today's message is very much on staff wellbeing - the need to look after ourselves and each other, the need to protect wellbeing and retain resilience. We are emerging from what we hope are the toughest chapters of the pandemic but there are undoubtedly still some demanding times ahead..... I want to say very clearly that your wellbeing matters and there is help available if you feel you need it.' Link included to the NICS COVID-19 hub.

3.46 Perceptions of how wellbeing was viewed within the organisations varied in the responses received to the staff survey undertaken for this inspection. Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed with the statement 'In my organisation senior leaders are concerned about employee wellbeing' on a scale of strongly agree to strongly disagree. Figure 7 shows the responses across the criminal justice organisations.

Figure 7: Survey responses to agreement with the statement 'In my organisation senior leaders are concerned about employee wellbeing'.

Strongly agree · Agree · Not sure/Neutral · Disagree · Strongly disagree

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IMPROVING WORKFORCE WELLBEING

Preventative health and wellbeing

3.47 A range of initiatives were in place across the criminal justice organisations that were offered to staff either on an ongoing basis or as part of a structured programme. In the staff survey for this inspection respondents were asked to indicate their agreement with the statement 'Employees are encouraged to engage with health and wellbeing initiatives'. Figure 8 below shows the responses received across the organisations surveyed. Staff within the FSNI and the PPS responded more positively than other organisations.

Figure 8: Survey responses to agreement with the statement 'Employees are encouraged to engage with health and wellbeing initiatives'.
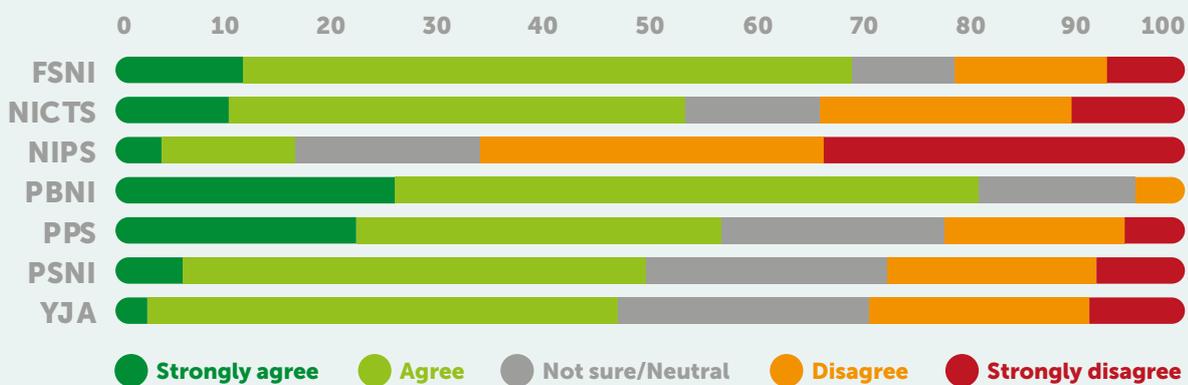

3.48 The survey responses indicate that, in all organisations except the NIPS, between half and two-thirds of respondents agreed that they were encouraged to engage with health and wellbeing initiatives. Comments from staff across the organisations however raised concerns that high workloads and pressures from managers about performance made engaging with these types of initiatives difficult or impossible. CJI's inspection of *Probation Practice* noted *that 'Staff were welcoming of support that helped them improve their own wellbeing but there was a feeling from some staff that the onus was placed on them to address the issues by becoming more resilient to increased workloads. Some also noted that ideas such as time away from desk were unrealistic at the current time'.*[106] Similar issues were raised by staff and staff associations in this inspection across all the criminal justice organisations. Some barriers also related to working arrangements whereby many staff working in operational roles were not easily able to access online webinars. In prisons some staff noted that, at the time of the fieldwork for this inspection, the gyms were still closed for staff use due to the restrictions imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and therefore Prison Officers and staff could not use them at lunchtime. In October 2022 the then Minister for Justice opened a new staff wellbeing hub at Maghaberry Prison.[107]

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106 *CJI, An inspection of Probation Practice in Northern Ireland, December 2020* available at
https://www.cjini.org/TheInspections/Inspection-Reports/2020/October-December/Probation-Practice-in-Northern-Ireland.
107 *DoJ, Long opens new staff wellbeing hub at Maghaberry Prison, September 2022* available at
https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/news/long-opens-new-staff-wellbeing-hub-maghaberry-prison.

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3.49   The staff survey also asked the extent to which respondents agreed with the statement 'My organisation is much more reactive (taking action when people are absent through sickness) than proactive (promoting good wellbeing)'. Between half and three-quarters of staff across all the criminal justice organisations were of the view that organisations were more reactive than proactive with regards to wellbeing as shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9: Survey responses to agreement with the statement 'My organisation is much more reactive (taking action when people are absent through sickness) than proactive (promoting good wellbeing)'.
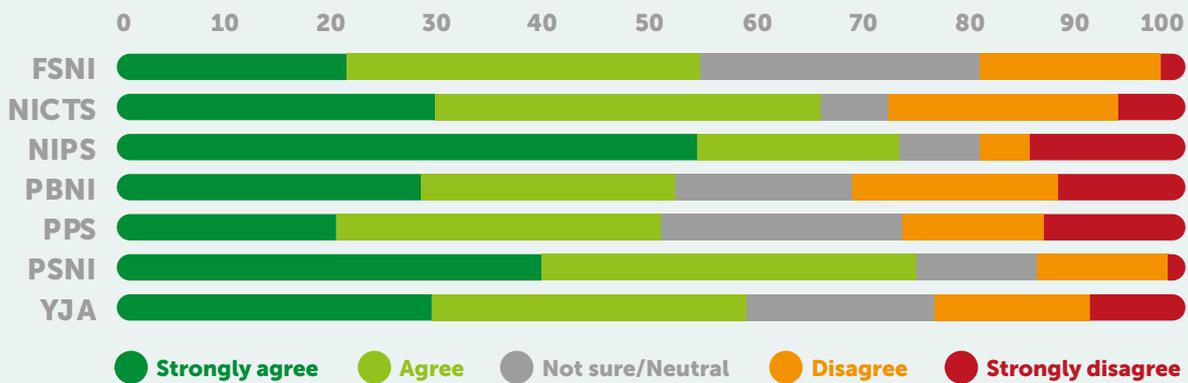
3.50   Staff within the NICS were able to avail of NICS WELL. The website for NICS WELL[108] described it as '*a multi-level strategy for positive organisational and individual healthy behaviour change and aims to build a health-promoting community. The programme supports and empowers all employees to get involved. It delivers key messages; organises health interventions and activities; and, the various components are linked through an innovative, interactive WELL website. Since its launch in September 2012 the WELL programme has recruited 170 externally accredited Volunteer Champions and delivered over 80 health and wellbeing events to 5,000 staff, with 3,000 indicating they would make a positive healthy lifestyle change. 16,360 individual staff have engaged with the website - representing almost two thirds of the entire workforce, with over 30,000 total interactions.*'

3.51   In January 2018 the NICS made a commitment to promote mental wellbeing in the workplace by signing up to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland's Mental Health Charter.[109] In support of this NICS HR had undertaken a number of initiatives to support staff health and wellbeing.

3.52   In May 2021 the Chief Constable's report to the Northern Ireland Policing Board[110] included an update on the development of wellbeing hubs as follows: '*In order to mitigate the impacts on our people, Post Incident Peer Support and Wellbeing Volunteer Teams worked together at short notice to co-ordinate a welfare response.*

108 *See* https://www.nicswell.co.uk/.
109 *Department of Finance intranet site, NICS HR pages.*
110 *PSNI, Chief Constable's Report to Northern Ireland Policing Board, 6 May 2021* available at https://www.psni.police.uk/news/Latest-News/060521-chief-constables-report-to-nipb/.

This was a collaborative effort between officers and staff from District Policing, Operational Support Department and the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service. A range of support arrangements were made available including physical, mental health and social wellbeing measures to ensure that frontline personnel were afforded much needed comfort and respite facilities at Wellbeing Hubs across the country. Wellbeing Hubs provided psychological defusing and debriefing services to anyone availing of the open facilities at Musgrave, Antrim Road, Maydown and Newtownabbey Police Stations'. Example 5 shows the work that has been done by an Officer from the PSNI to design a model of post incident peer support.

Example 5: Peer support within the PSNI

In 2018 PSNI Sergeant Belinda Mason CF undertook research supported through a Churchill Fellowship and a bursary from the Royal Ulster Constabulary George Cross Foundation. This was focused on challenging the stigma around mental health in policing through wellbeing strategies.[a] Sergeant Mason used her learnings from America, Australia and Canada to create a model of peer support for emergency services. This model matched each individual with a peer who would then provide mental health support by listening and signposting them to appropriate services. It was adopted as best practice by the National Police Wellbeing Service and training was delivered to around half of UK police forces, including the PSNI.

The model also involved the Police Service appointing a peer support co-ordinator to ensure all peer supporters are afforded the correct level of support. They and the peer supporters were then trained and accredited to support colleagues in the event of an incident occurring which could impact on their wellbeing.

In September 2021 Sergeant Mason secured a grant of £260,000 from the Gillette Movember campaign for a Mental Wellbeing and Trauma Resilience Programme she created for the PSNI.[b] The programme was co-designed by clinical psychologists from the PSNI's Occupational Health and Welfare Service, Police Officers and Police Staff. It included five projects as follows:

1. Foundation training programme on trauma-informed practice and mental health awareness for new employees and their families;
2. Expansion of the post incident police peer supporters and wellbeing volunteers;
3. Digitalisation and normalisation of the use of bespoke individualised wellbeing and trauma resilience plans within the organisation;
4. Development of an early intervention system for wellness monitoring using existing police systems; and
5. Use of peer supporters and wellbeing volunteers to deliver an innovative form of group eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing to help address work-related trauma at any early stage of exposure.

a   See https://www.churchillfellowship.org/ideas-experts/fellows-directory/belinda-mason.
b   See https://uk.movember.com/story/movember-funds-new-projects-to-support-mental-health-of-vets-and-first-responders.

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3.53   It is positive that this work was being undertaken in the PSNI, however there remains uncertainty around its long-term future, given that the funding for these projects has been provided by a charity. At the time of this inspection the PSNI were anticipating a shortfall in their budget of around £59 million, due to the absence of the Northern Ireland Executive and confirmation from the Finance Minister that this would mean it was not possible to agree a Draft Budget.[111] The PSNI had confirmed their ambition was to focus on a preventative approach to wellbeing, however it remained unclear whether this work would be able to continue to be funded once the Movember funding came to an end.

3.54   Nationally the police service had developed initiatives which provided support to police forces/services and their staff. The National Police Wellbeing Service (Oscar Kilo)[112] was launched in 2019, as part of the College of Policing, to assist police forces to build wellbeing support for their workforce. The Service was a source of advice, guidance, training and resources to those working to improve and build upon wellbeing in policing organisations. This included the provision of the peer support training programme outlined in the PSNI peer support case study. A Blue Light Wellbeing Framework had also been developed as a self-assessment tool which set the wellbeing standard for the emergency services.

3.55   Blue Light Together[113] was an online resource designed for people working and volunteering in emergency services, retirees and their friends and family, so that they can find the right kind of support for their mental health. The website was created by Mind, in partnership with the Royal Foundation of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge (now Their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales) and UK charities who provided support to the ambulance, fire and police services.

The site showcased a number of case studies from police services across the UK who were providing wellbeing support to officers, including the work undertaken by Sergeant Mason and colleagues within the PSNI.[114]

3.56   CJI's inspection of *Probation Practice*, published in December 2020[115] noted that within the PBNI '*Wellbeing and health and safety were a focus for senior management and featured in strategic documents*'. It found that '*During 2019-20 a variety of events or themed activities were offered to individual staff and teams under the health and wellbeing programme ranging from mental health training, time away from desk, sport/exercise activities, social events and fundraising activities.*' These types of activities were continuing during the time period for this inspection with a particular focus on physical and mental health.

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111   *PSNI, Chief Constable: Budget uncertainty will mean tough choices, 030322 Policing Board News Release, 3 March 2022* available at https://www.psni.police.uk/news/Latest-News/030322-policing-board-news-release/#:~:text=Due%20to%20a%20combination%20of,%C2%A359million%20in%202022%2D23.

112   *See* https://www.oscarkilo.org.uk/.

113   *See* https://bluelighttogether.org.uk/.

114   *See* https://bluelighttogether.org.uk/app/uploads/2021/11/Standard-4_Police-Northern-Ireland-Case-Study_Wellbeing-Leads-guide.pdf.

115   *CJI, An inspection of Probation Practice in Northern Ireland, December 2020* available at https://www.cjini.org/TheInspections/Inspection-Reports/2020/October-December/Probation-Practice-in-Northern-Ireland.

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3.57   The PBNI and the PPS had also trained a number of staff as Mental Health First Aiders using the Public Health Agency programme.[116] Mental Health First Aid is the help provided to a person developing a mental health problem or who is in a mental health crisis.[117] The first aid is given until appropriate professional treatment is received or until the crisis resolves.

3.58   The PBNI Wellbeing Working Group was in place to develop and organise the programme of activities as well as events being organised by local teams. During 2020-21 a virtual programme was delivered due to the restrictions imposed on face-to-face activities. In 2022, the PBNI were offering a range of resources to support the financial health of staff, such as retirement seminars, reflective of the age profile of some of the workforce (with 53% of staff being aged 45 and over[118]). Wellbeing Champions within the working group had been appointed and their role included to champion attendance at wellbeing sessions. The PBNI had also used a stress questionnaire in areas where individual staff or teams were feeling under pressure.

3.59   In the FSNI leaders were conscious that many operational staff, particularly those who were laboratory-based, had been unable to work from home during the lockdowns of the COVID-19 pandemic and therefore were less susceptible to some of the difficulties faced such as social isolation and the impact of juggling work with caring responsibilities. The focus within the FSNI had therefore been more on the working environment of those who were on-site, particularly those who worked in a laboratory, some of which were windowless. A staff garden had been developed and picnic benches had been provided for use in the grounds during the summer months.

3.60   As outlined in Chapter 2 above the NIPS wellbeing programme 'Prisons WELL' employee wellbeing programme featured in the *Year One Delivery Plan for 2018-19*[119]. The *Year One Delivery Plan end of year report*[120] confirmed that the Prisons WELL programme had been developed and launched in all prison establishments and headquarters in March 2019. The report indicated that approximately 80% of available staff at each site had attended the launch and were aware of the programme. Health events had also been organised prior to the pandemic where staff could get their blood pressure checked. Resilience training and one-to-one counselling sessions were offered to staff with the Police Rehabilitation and Resettlement Trust (PRRT).

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116   *See* https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/directorate-public-health/health-and-social-wellbeing-improvement/improving-wellbeing-through-peace-.
117   *See* https://aware-ni.org/mental-health-first-aid.
118   *PBNI, People Strategy 2020-23, internal document*.
119   *NIPS, Prisons 2020 Delivery Plan (Year 1), July 2018* available at https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/justice/prisons-2020-delivery-plan-year1_0.pdf.
120   *NIPS, Prisons 2020 Delivery Plan (Year 1) report, 2019* available at https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/justice/Prisons%202020%20Year%201%20Delivery%20Plan%20Report.pdf.

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3.61   The *Prisons WELL Year Two Delivery Plan for 2019-20*[121] noted a number of actions in relation to employee wellbeing and the end of year report[122] noted most of these had been achieved. These actions included a Prisons WELL champion forum, a wellbeing framework and improving staff resilience through training and scoping the potential for a critical incident response package. At the time of the fieldwork for this inspection the NIPS advised Inspectors that a Critical Incident Stress Management System had been developed to support staff who had experienced critical incidents. This had been introduced and lessons were being learned from the first incident to be dealt with using this system, although anecdotal evidence suggested a positive response from staff.

3.62   The NIPS review of support services for operational prison staff[123] included Recommendation 3c '*the Review Team recommends training on mental health and resilience should not only take place at induction stage for new recruits. Training must take place for both staff and also all grades of management to be able to recognise the signs of mental health issues, to support with coping mechanisms, to remind staff where help is available and to promote a positive attitude towards wellbeing and self-care including the importance of taking early action to prevent deterioration*.' The update provided by the NIPS indicated that resilience training was being delivered to new recruits and discussions were ongoing regarding provision of such training across the other operational grades.

3.63   Concerns were raised by staff in the NIPS that the corporate focus on wellbeing did not accord with their experiences of wellbeing support when staff were absent from work through ill health. Many staff stated that they felt that the culture was one where staff felt compelled to return to work for fear of losing their job rather than feeling supported to return to work in a way that best sustained their return to full health. Letters which used terminology such as 'inefficiency' and telephone calls from line managers which were perceived to be focused on how soon the individual would resume their normal duties rather than exploring what the organisation could do to support them were cited as examples of this. The *Review of Support Services for Operational Prison Staff*[124] also discussed this issue and Recommendation 6a stated that '*the wording of letters sent to NIPS staff when off on sickness absence should be reviewed as a matter of priority*.' The accompanying action plan developed by the NIPS confirmed that the wording of letters had been reviewed and amended.[125]

121 *NIPS, Prisons 2020 Delivery plan (Year 2) report, 2019* available at https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/justice/Prisons%202020%20Delivery%20Plan%20%28Year%202%29%20Report.DOCX.

122 *NIPS, Prisons 2020 Delivery plan (Year 2) report, June 2020* available at https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/justice/Prisons%202020%20Year%202%20Delivery%20Plan.pdf.

123 *DoJ, A review of support services for operational prison staff, January 2021* available at https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/justice/nips-report-jan-21.pdf.

124 *DoJ, A review of support services for operational prison staff, January 2021* available at https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/justice/nips-report-jan-21.pdf.

125 *DoJ, Annex C: review of support services for operational prison staff and action plan, January 2021* available at https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/justice/annex-c-support-services.pdf.

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Line manager awareness and understanding about wellbeing

3.64   Figure 10 illustrates the responses received when individuals across the criminal justice organisations were asked in the staff survey to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the following statement 'my immediate line manager demonstrates that they understand the importance of wellbeing'.

Figure 10: Survey responses to agreement with the statement 'my immediate line manager demonstrates that they understand the importance of wellbeing'.
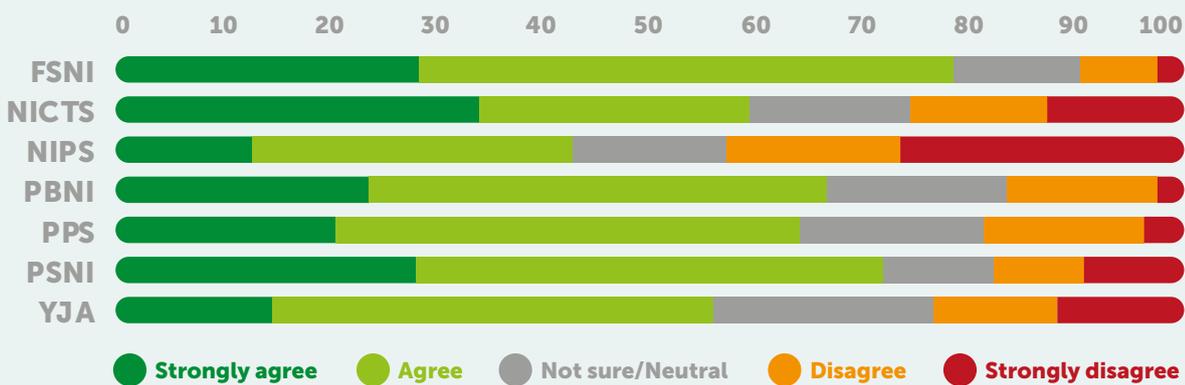
3.65   There was a range of responses to this question but in all organisations except for the NIPS over half of staff responding to the survey stated that they agreed or strongly agreed that their line manager demonstrated that they understood the importance of wellbeing. This links to some of the comments noted previously where NIPS staff felt that the focus of their line manager was on getting them back to work rather than supporting their wellbeing and offering interventions to ensure they were physically and psychologically able to cope with the requirements of their role. Similarly comments from NICTS employees who had responded negatively to this question related to the perceived focus of managers on operational business rather than on wellbeing.

3.66   The PBNI had provided training to managers on how to spot the signs of mental health issues and they were provided with a toolkit to use. As noted before the PBNI and the PPS had also trained mental health first aiders and this included some line managers.

Identification of factors impacting on the need for wellbeing support

3.67   Through the staff surveys and consultations with Staff Associations and Trade Unions CJI heard about issues which, although broader than the topics being inspected, were viewed to have a significant impact on staff wellbeing. These issues were believed to have a negative impact on staff morale as well as increasing levels of sickness absence in some organisations. In the PSNI for example, the protracted nature of disciplinary procedures was cited as one such issue which impacted on the wellbeing of not only the Police Officer or Police Staff member under investigation but also other members of their team or department.

In addition, in the NIPS and the PSNI the issue of shift patterns was raised as impacting on the work-life balance of staff and leading to poor wellbeing and potentially burnout in some cases.

3.68   In the NIPS similarly, concerns were heard about the length of time taken to complete disciplinary processes as well as to resolve grievance issues, despite clear timescales being in place. Staff lacked confidence in the procedures as it was perceived the investigations were not sufficiently independent. This was also raised in the *Review of Support Services for Operational Prison Staff* report[126] which noted '*The issue of disciplinary or grievance investigations was also a common theme from POA [Prison Officer Association], management, staff and some MLA's with the issue of length of time to progress to hearing, or sometimes not reaching hearing, being raised. It was outlined often by staff how processes were not being followed and that this was prolonging matters and adding to stress.*' The Review subsequently recommended that a review of the disciplinary procedures be carried out and that stipulated timescales be followed (Recommendation 6b(i)). The NIPS confirmed that this review had been completed and a working group had been established with the Prison Officers' Association to discuss its recommendations.

3.69   In this inspection CJI had a particular interest in whether organisations had identified particular roles which had the potential to negatively impact on the psychological or physical wellbeing of staff. The impact on Police Officers of working in sexual offence investigation teams arose in CJI's 2010 thematic inspection of the criminal justice system's handling of cases of sexual violence and abuse.[127] The report recommended that '*The PSNI should develop a co-ordinated and consistent approach to the provision of welfare services for officers working in the investigation of sexual offences and consider proactive methods for managing the welfare of staff.*'

3.70   During the period of public health restrictions and lockdowns imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, CJI again heard examples of the challenges for those working in sexual offences teams both in the PSNI and the PPS, where distressing images or statements were being viewed either at home or in workplaces with very limited contact with colleagues or managers. The CJI Follow-Up Review of the Inspection Recommendations of the 2018 *Without Witness* report[128] included in the introductory chapter that '*The PPS Assistant Director for the Serious Crime Unit noted to Inspectors his concerns for the wellbeing of staff who were dealing with sensitive and often distressing work at home, without the normal supports from colleagues and managers that were available in an office environment.*

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126 *DoJ, A review of support services for operational prison staff, January 2021* available at
https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/justice/nips-report-jan-21.pdf.
127 *CJI, Sexual Violence and Abuse: A thematic inspection of the handling of sexual violence and abuse cases by the Criminal Justice System in Northern Ireland, July 2010* available at https://www.cjini.org/getattachment/0ad6b7e4-0810-4151-8bb0-e28789591efc/Sexual-Violence-and-Abuse.aspx.
128 *CJI, Without Witness: A thematic inspection of the handling of sexual violence and abuse cases by the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland: A follow-up review of the inspection recommendations, March 2021* available at https://www.cjini.org/TheInspections/Action-Plan-Reviews-Inspection-Follow-Up-Revie/2021/January-March/Without-Witness-Public-Protection-Inspection-1.

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The PPS had been developing ways of supporting their staff further by facilitating their attendance in the office when the Assistant Director was present, scoping out training on trauma when working at home and monitoring staff wellbeing.' In this current inspection therefore, Inspectors asked the criminal justice organisations about the identification of such roles and what additional interventions had been implemented to reduce the likelihood of negative impact on staff wellbeing.

3.71 The PBNI had previously attempted to address this issue by using a mobility policy which ensured that Probation Officers working in certain roles (for example in prison or public protection roles) were required to move every three years and have a period of 'respite' in a field team. Staff feedback on this approach had been mixed and therefore the PBNI had sought alternative ways to ensure they met their duty of care for employees while enabling staff to develop their own interests in specific types of work and professional development. The PBNI had also trialled various methods for mandating individual and group counselling sessions, again adjusting the approach based on staff feedback. As outlined above, supervision was a core facet of probation work and therefore line managers could discuss potentially traumatic incidents with staff on an individual basis.

3.72 In the FSNI the staff considered most at risk of psychological harm from the impact of their work was those who attended the scene of road traffic collisions. This team held debriefs after attending particularly distressing scenes and FSNI management felt they supported each other well. Within the YJA, as in probation work, supervision was a key aspect of the manager-employee relationships and included consideration of the impact of potentially traumatic cases and circumstances. In Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre staff could also avail of support from those in the Community Adolescent Mental Health Service who visited the Centre, particularly after critical incidents although consideration was being given as to how this could be provided in a more responsive and timely manner.

3.73 The NICTS had also considered how it could support staff working in courts where the evidence heard during a trial could cause distress, for example Court Clerks who sat through the trials for child abuse and sex offence cases. Senior management advised that a solution had been developed in response to staff concerns about this issue, where managers aimed to rotate Court Clerks during lengthy or challenging Crown Court trials so that they did not have to sit through the entirety of the evidence. The NICTS advised that this initiative had been built upon and shared among courts. In addition to the NICS Wellbeing Services available to staff, the NICTS had also looked to partners in the voluntary and community sector such as Victim Support Northern Ireland, the Wave Trauma Centre and others to provide support to staff. Peer support and desk aides signposting staff to sources of supports were also noted.

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3.74   The PPS also recognised the potential for those working in the Serious Crime Unit, for example on sex offence and homicide offences, to be impacted by their work. The support offered to date had been the standard NICS Well offerings (although it was noted that uptake was low) as well as line manager and peer support. There was no regular and mandatory wellbeing support provided to Prosecutors and Staff over and above this and this was acknowledged to be a potential gap. The wellbeing needs of Prosecutors and Staff working in the two PPS Regions who also undertook work which had the potential to cause psychological harm, such as sexual offences and road traffic collisions, was also not proactively provided for in this way. The PPS advised that a new Health and Wellbeing Subgroup, led at Assistant Director level, had recently reported to the Senior Management Group. This presented options for the delivery of trauma resilience training to prosecutors, extending beyond the Serious Crime Unit, and included the identification of relevant providers.

OPERATIONAL RECOMMENDATION 2

Inspectors recommend that **the Public Prosecution Service should, in consultation with employees and staff associations, develop plans for the provision of bespoke wellbeing support for those working in roles in the Serious Crime Unit and Regions which have the potential to cause psychological harm. Consideration should be given to the delivery of joint wellbeing interventions with colleagues within the Police Service of Northern Ireland's Public Protection Branch.**

Wellbeing and occupational health support

3.75   In response to the COVID-19 pandemic the Department of Finance had developed a COVID-19 staff information hub available on its website.[129] This included pages on health and wellbeing which brought together resources across the NICS website regarding advice on looking after physical and mental health, advice for line managers, events and training and NICS advice and support.

3.76   The NICS offered a Welfare Support Service which provided support to staff through the provision of an independent and confidential service, helping them to cope with and work through any type of personal or work-related issues which may affect their ability to work effectively. The NICS Occupational Health Service provided professional advice and services on a wide spectrum of workplace health and wellbeing issues to NICS Departments. The Service enabled customers to promote and maintain health in the workplace, including through the provision of NICS WELL and by working in partnership with Welfare Support Service, NICS HR Learning and Development and others.

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129 *See* https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/landing-pages/covid-19-guidance-nics-employees.

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3.77   Inspire were the Employee Assistance Programme provider for NICS employees.[130] They offered a range of wellbeing support services for staff including the Employee Assistance Programme and an online wellbeing hub.[131] The Employee Assistance Programme provided access to a range of wellbeing support services, including the Inspire Support Hub, specialist wellbeing information or counselling.

3.78   The PSNI *Horizon 2025 Modernisation Plan* 'people and culture' workstream included a project to undertake Phase 2 of delivering a review of Occupational Health and Wellbeing which involved creating an implementation plan to deliver the recommendations. This followed on from the review completed in Phase 1 during 2020-21.[132]

3.79   It was highlighted by stakeholders and those responding to the PSNI staff survey that waiting lists to receive support from the PSNI's Occupational Health and Welfare service were too long. This was accepted by the PSNI and the review outlined above was being progressed in order to identify where issues existed and how the service could be reconfigured to meet the need. Previously the Police Federation for Northern Ireland had supported additional capacity for the PSNI's Occupational Health and Welfare service by funding sessions with the PRRT. A programme of preventative wellbeing activities (such as mindfulness, horticulture and yoga) had also been offered for specific parts of the organisation, for example those working in the Public Protection Branch.

3.80   Inspectors were also told that the NIPS Occupational Health Service had struggled to meet the level of demand over recent years. They had also contracted the PRRT to provide psychological support services to Prison Officers who were absent from work for ill-health on a long-term basis. Prison staff who spoke to Inspectors after completing the staff survey expressed concerns about the ability to access support when they were absent from work. Some gave examples of long delays in being able to access specialist advice and support, including psychological therapies, which made their condition worsen.

3.81   The Review of support services for operational prison staff recommended that '*The current budget provisions for Inspire, PRRT and Occupational Health should be reviewed to ensure optimum usage and value for money and to examine the scope for greater budget allocation to these services. Furthermore, in order to carry out the recommendations in this Review, the Review Team contests that budget allocation to NIPS, in this area of support services must increase, as this is a clear case of invest to save*' (Recommendation 12).[133]

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130 *See* https://www.inspirewellbeing.org/.
131 *See* https://www.inspiresupporthub.org/.
132 *PSNI, Horizon 2025 Modernisation Plan, October 2021* available at https://www.psni.police.uk/globalassets/inside-the-psni/our-strategies-and-vision/documents/horizon-2025-spreads.pdf.
133 *DoJ, A Review of Support Services for Operational Prison Staff, January 2021* available at https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/justice/nips-report-jan-21.pdf.

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The NIPS action plan accepted this recommendation stating '*It is recognised that to implement the recommendations contained in this report the current budget provision should be reviewed and where appropriate additional funding allocated in the context of invest to save. NIPS will engage with the Department as costs are developed.*'[134] The progress report confirmed that additional funding had been provided and that a number of business cases were being progressed. The NIPS also advised Inspectors of steps taken through NICS and PRRT services to assess and provide services for those in need of a referral. Figures provided indicated that during the financial years 2021-22 and in the 2022-23 reporting period up to October 2022 the longest wait for provision was 42 days.
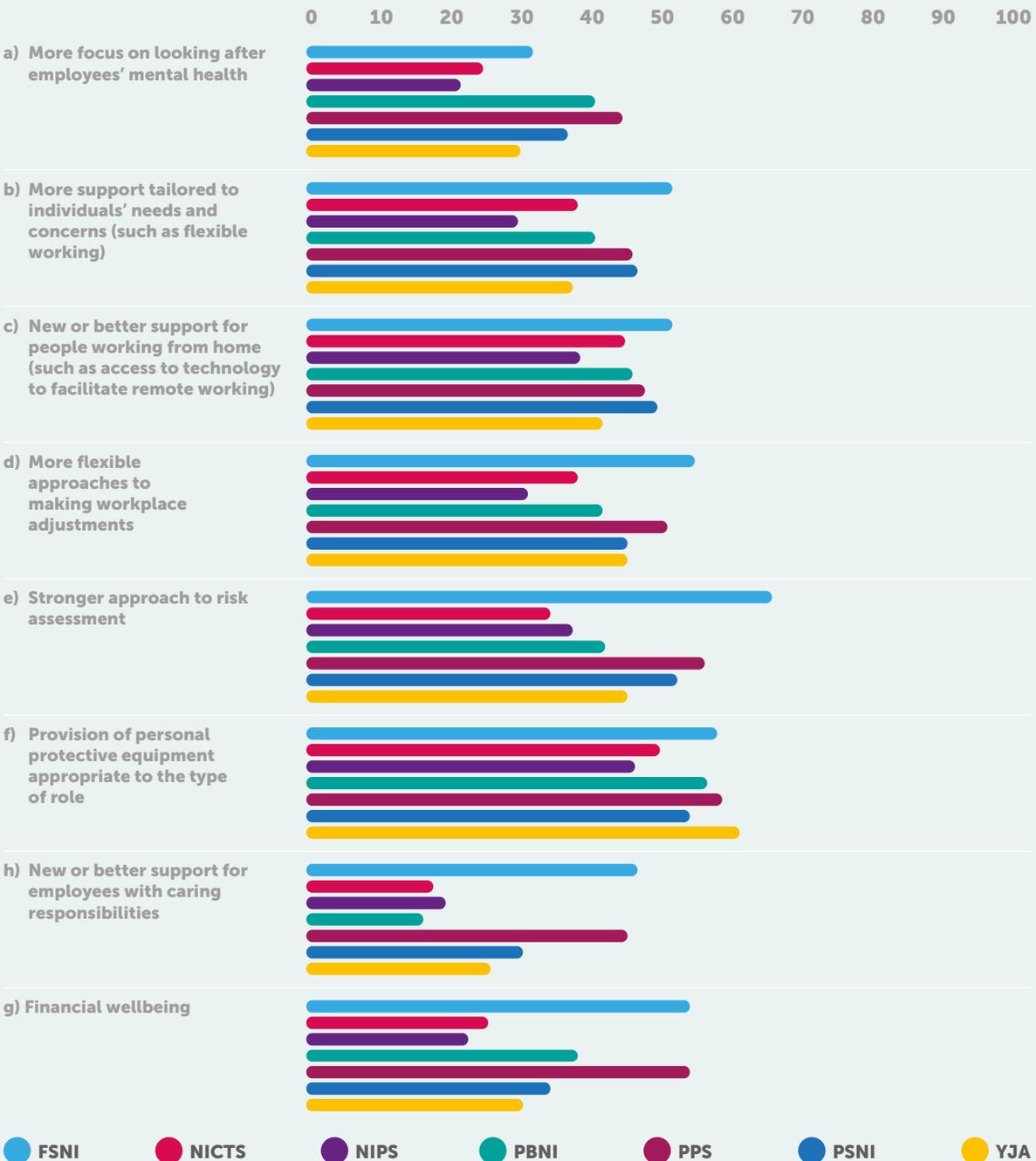
THE RESPONSE TO COVID-19

3.82   The COVID-19 pandemic and its associated restrictions were a challenge for all criminal justice organisations, particularly those which had front-line workers who were unable to work from home. For those who still had to attend the workplace, Inspectors heard it was a difficult time as restrictions such as social distancing and mask wearing were hard to implement in conditions such as residential custodial environments or front-line police response. For those organisations where some of the work could be undertaken remotely, steps were put in place very quickly to enable staff to work from home and utilise video conferencing on a vast scale, never seen before. The additional challenge created by home working was that in most organisations only a proportion of the roles were suitable for home working. Some staff and staff associations therefore reported that morale issues had been experienced by those who were still required for front-line operational duties, creating some divisions in the workforce.

3.83   Staff who completed the survey for this inspection were asked about the measures implemented by their organisation to support employee wellbeing in response to COVID-19. Respondents were asked to select those measures, from a list of eight possible options (as included in the list of options in the CIPD/SimplyHealth survey outlined in Chapter 1[135] relating to mental health, tailored support, working from home, workplace adjustments, risk assessment, personal protective equipment, caring responsibilities and financial wellbeing), that they perceived their employer had implemented. It should be noted that this relates to the *perception* of those who responded, not whether or not the organisation actually implemented it. Figure 11 outlines the results of the responses. As would be expected, a stronger approach to risk assessment and the provision of personal protective equipment featured across all the organisations, particularly for those whose staff continued to deliver services on the frontline.

134 *DoJ, Annex C: Review of Support Services for Operational Prison Staff and Action Plan, January 2021* available at
     https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/justice/annex-c-support-services.pdf.
135 *CIPD/SimplyHealth, Health and wellbeing at work 2021: Survey report, April 2021* available at
     https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/health-wellbeing-work-report-2021_tcm18-93541.pdf.

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The perceptions about new or better support for employees with caring responsibilities varied widely from 17% in the PBNI to as high as 47% in the FSNI. Similarly, responses showed a variation in the perception of whether there was more focus on looking after employees' mental health, ranging from 22% of respondents in the NIPS to 44% in the PPS.

Figure 11: Survey responses to the question 'My organisation implemented this measure to support employee wellbeing in response to COVID-19'

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3.84   Staff who completed the survey for this inspection were asked about the response to COVID-19 in relation to wellbeing. Figure 12 shows the extent to which staff across the organisations agreed or disagreed with the statement 'I believe my organisation took sufficient additional measures to support employee wellbeing in response to COVID-19'. This indicates that again there was variation across the organisations with 80% of staff responding from the PBNI agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement versus 67% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing of staff responding from the NIPS.

Figure 12: Survey responses to agreement with the statement 'I believe my organisation took sufficient additional measures to support employee wellbeing in response to COVID-19'.

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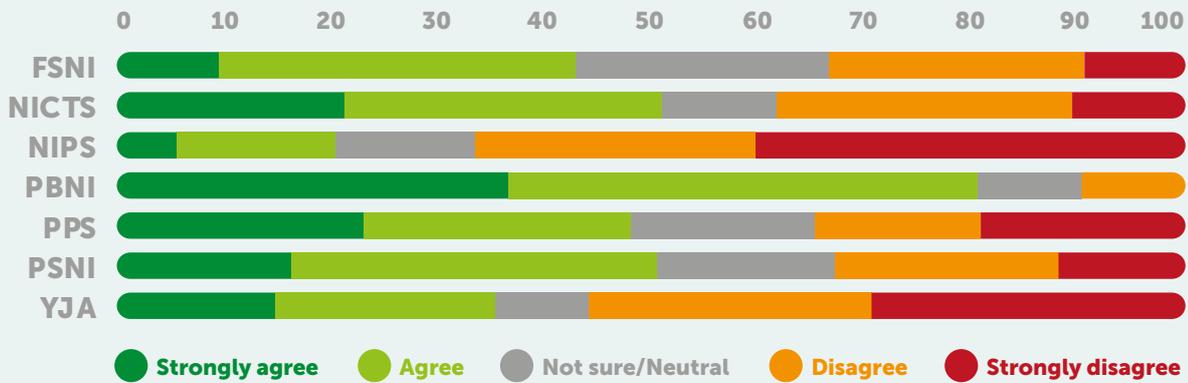
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EVALUATION OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

4.1   David Day[136] notes that any leadership development initiative that aspires to be high quality should have comprehensive evaluation designed into it from the beginning. Although Day outlines the challenge of the lack of evaluation undertaken by organisations and therefore of evidencing changes. However, he cites research by Howard and Wellins[137] which found that companies that measure leadership development results had programs that were 20 times more likely to be rated as very high quality by executives and Human Resources professionals.

4.2   Overall, evaluation of leadership development programmes described in this inspection report was limited. Evaluation tended to relate to the immediate experience of those who had participated in the development programme rather than collecting longer-term feedback or linking development to performance measures or longer-term outcomes.

4.3   The Kirkpatrick Model of evaluation is a well-established method of leveraging and validating talent investments, including leadership development and succession planning interventions.[138] The four levels are as follows:

- Level 1: Reaction - The degree to which participants find the training favourable, engaging, and relevant to their jobs;
- Level 2: Learning - The degree to which participants acquire the intended knowledge, skills, attitude, confidence, and commitment based on their participation in the training;
- Level 3: Behaviour - The degree to which participants apply what they learned during training when they are back on the job; and
- Level 4: Results - The degree to which targeted outcomes occur as a result of the training and the support and accountability package.

CJI were advised that the evaluation of initiatives which took place tended to relate to Level 1 and Level 2, occasionally relating to Level 3.

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136 Day, D.V. *Leadership development, in Bryman, A. et al, The SAGE Handbook of Leadership Development, 2011. Available online at:* **https://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=5GmF7L4jTO0C&oi=fnd&pg=PA37&dq=leadership+development&ots=96zyM6HTP2&sig=S-Im-HPwBixJgeNI6T0edbyoTRw&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=leadership%20development&f=false**

137 Howard, A., & Wellins, R. *Global leadership forecast 2008/2009: Overcoming the shortfall in developing leaders, 2008. Bridgeville, PA: DDI Centre for Applied Behavioural Research.* As cited in Day, D.V, 2011 (see above).

138 *See* **https://www.kirkpatrickpartners.com/the-kirkpatrick-model/**.

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4.4   Some of the cross-sectoral initiatives delivered by external providers had an evaluation element included. For example, following the Leading for the Future leadership programme for leaders in the NICS (see Chapter 3: Delivery) the CES (who designed and delivered the programmes) carried out an evaluation with the Grade 3 Civil Servants[139] to explore the difference that the programme made to those who took part, and to generate learning for public services about the design and delivery of leadership development initiatives for senior public servants. Questionnaires were completed by participants before and after the programme. Focus group sessions were held six months later to explore how leaders had retained and applied learning therefore evaluating its impact at Kirkpatrick's Levels 1, 2 and 3 (Reaction, Learning, Behaviour).

4.5   The evaluation reported '*significant positive differences in the skills, attitudes and practices of the leaders who took part. These included changes to individual awareness and behaviours; changes in team culture and engagement; and changes in collaborative working*.' Focus group sessions six months after the programme revealed that leaders were working differently and were sharing differently. The report also outlined five success factors from the design and delivery of the programme:

1.   support from senior leadership;
2.   a co-design approach;
3.   trainer knowledge and experience;
4.   an inclusive and reflexive learning approach; and
5.   monitoring and evaluating outcomes.

4.6   The Chief Executives' Forum conducted periodic evaluations of its programmes aimed at developing women in the public sector. The latest evaluation report was also produced in 2020 in respect of its *Building Inclusive Leaders'* programme (the successor to the Women's Leadership Initiative).[140] This aimed to evaluate the programme against a set of objectives:

•   to determine the impact of the programme on individual participants;
•   to determine the impact of the programme on the wider public service; and
•   to determine levels of satisfaction with the management and delivery of the *Building Inclusive Leaders* programme.

The evaluation included three cohorts of programme participants who had completed the programme between 2018 and 2020 and therefore aimed to evaluate its impact at Kirkpatrick's Levels 1, 2 and 3. The evaluation identified 19 research themes and some final reflections and thoughts for taking the programme forward. This included the focus of the programme being on women only.

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139 *Centre for Effective Services, Leading for the Future: Learning from a Leadership Development Programme for Senior Civil Servants in Northern Ireland Evaluation Report, January 2021* available at **https://www.effectiveservices.org/resources/leading-for-the-future**.

140 *RF Associates, Chief Executives' Forum Building Inclusive Leaders Programme Evaluation, May 2021* available at **https://www.ceforum.org/system/publications/assets/000/000/077/original/CEF_Building_Inclusive_Leaders_Evaluation_Report_2019-2020.pdf**.

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4.7   The NIPB produced a report for the then Minister of Justice following each recruitment competition for Chief Officer posts for the purposes of providing the Minister with the necessary assurance regarding the process. The report on the process to select candidates for Assistant Chief Constable positions[141] included quality assurance of the Appointment Panel's shortlisting and interview assessments and outcomes by a Selection and Assessment Advisor and independent oversight from an Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Advisor.

4.8   The PPS went through external assessment of their investment in their workforce in 2021, undertaken by Investors in People.[142] This provided them with an assessment across a range of people areas and indicated areas that the organisation could be proud of as well as areas for improvement. One of the areas to work on included developing, enabling and strengthening leadership behaviours. They achieved Investors in People Silver accreditation in September 2021.

IMPACT OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT ON PERFORMANCE

4.9   Kirkpatrick's evaluation at Level 4 Results, the degree to which targeted outcomes occur as a result of the training and the support and accountability package is the most difficult level of evaluation to undertake. Inspectors did not see any examples of where evaluation was conducted at Level 4. The NICS People Survey for 2021[143] contained questions around learning development, including '*I am able to access the right learning and development opportunities when I need to*' and '*Learning and development activities I have completed in the past 12 months have helped to improve my performance*'. These however related to perceptions of the impact on performance rather than a true assessment of the impact of development on performance measures.

OPERATIONAL RECOMMENDATION 3

Inspectors recommend that **criminal justice organisations should develop effective mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness of leadership development programmes delivered to their staff during the design or planning process.**

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141   *NIPB, internal document.*
142   See https://www.investorsinpeople.com/.
143   *NICS, People Survey 2021: NICS benchmark scores, January 2022* available at https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dfp/NICS%20People%20Survey%202021%20-%20Benchmark%20Report%20January%20-%20Final%20Version%20for%20Publication.pdf.

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AWARENESS OF WELLBEING INITIATIVES

4.10   The NICS *People Survey 2021*[144] included a section on wellbeing both in general and in relation to support provided at work. This included asking the extent to which staff agreed with the statement: '*I am aware of the support available to me in work with regards to mental health and wellbeing*'. This was the first year this question had been included[145] and 20% of NICS staff confirmed that they were aware. Figures for staff in the DoJ and the PPS were 12% and 16% respectively.

4.11   There appeared to be little research undertaken specifically by the criminal justice organisations about wellbeing awareness. One exception was work undertaken by the PPS Temporary Head of Communications on '*Communicating with PPS staff during the Coronavirus Pandemic*' during March 2020 and September 2021. This report aimed to check the approach to internal communications taken since March 2020, to evaluate its direction and outcomes as well as how it measured up against best practice and similar organisations. The first page of this report included a 'word cloud'[146] created using the Director's Updates (see Chapter 2: Delivery above) within which the words 'wellbeing', 'safety' and 'health' were some of the biggest words.

EVALUATION AND IMPACT OF WELLBEING INITIATIVES

4.12   As well as the wellbeing questions asked in relation to awareness of support the NICS *People Survey 2021*[147] included questions asking the extent to which staff agreed:

- Wellbeing Question 06: The people in my team genuinely care about my wellbeing;
- Wellbeing Question 07: I can talk to my manager about my health and wellbeing; and
- Wellbeing Question 08: I know how to respond if a member of staff approaches me with a health and wellbeing issue.

Across the NICS 17% (W06), 19% (W07) and 8% (W08) agreed with the statements. For the DoJ these figures were 11%, 12% and 4% respectively and for the PPS were 12%, 14% and 5%. Inclusion of these questions in future versions of the survey will enable results to be tracked on a longitudinal basis and assist with the evaluation of wellbeing interventions.

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144 *NICS, People Survey 2021: NICS benchmark scores, January 2022* available at https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dfp/NICS%20People%20Survey%202021%20-%20Benchmark%20Report%20January%20-%20Final%20Version%20for%20Publication.pdf.

145 The 2019 version of the People Survey had included questions about general wellbeing but not specifically in relation to wellbeing in the workplace, see https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dfp/NICS%20people%20survey%202019%20benchmark%20scores.pdf.

146 A word cloud is a collection, or cluster, of words depicted in different sizes. The bigger and bolder the word appears, the more often it's mentioned within a given text and the more important it is.

147 *NICS, People Survey 2021: NICS benchmark scores, January 2022* available at https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dfp/NICS%20People%20Survey%202021%20-%20Benchmark%20Report%20January%20-%20Final%20Version%20for%20Publication.pdf.

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4.13   There was little evidence of any formal evaluation of wellbeing initiatives provided to CJI for the purposes of this inspection. The PBNI advised CJI that a survey on the range and value of wellbeing activities available to staff was to be undertaken, in order to tailor the organisation's wellbeing activities to meet staff needs in the future. Due to resource pressures this activity had not yet been undertaken. Given the range of programmes and options available across the NICS and non-NICS organisations of the criminal justice system it would be challenging to directly link specific initiatives with outcomes. However, there was little evaluation of even broadly what impact wellbeing activity had on agencies such as measures or reduced sickness absence.

OPERATIONAL RECOMMENDATION 4

Inspectors recommend that **criminal justice organisations should develop effective mechanisms for evaluating the awareness and effectiveness of preventative wellbeing initiatives delivered to staff during the design or planning process.**

4.14   Agencies monitored sickness absence rates year–on–year and figures were reported in their annual reports. Table 1 outlines the average working days lost per employee for the criminal justice organisations as well as the overall figures for the NICS and the DoJ for comparison purposes.

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Table 1: Average working days lost due to sickness during last three financial years across the criminal justice system.

	Average working days lost 2021-22	Average working days lost 2020-21	Average working days lost 2019-20
FSNI	8.1[148]	8.1[149]	5.8
NICTS	13.5[150]	11.4	14.2[151]
NIPS	25.3	16.4	18.7[152]
PPS	9.3[153]	6.7	12.6
PBNI	11.5[154]	10.3	16.7[155]
PSNI – Police Officers – Police Staff	16.05[156] 11.15	11.14[157] 7.95	12.65 9.88
YJA	16.8[158]	12.7	14.3[159]
NICS overall[160]	*12.2*	*9.8*	*12.9*
DoJ overall[161]	*18.5*	*13.5*	*15.5*

4.15   These figures indicate that although all organisations, except the FSNI, experienced a decrease in sickness absence during 2020-21 (the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic) there was an increase for all the organisations for whom this data was available in 2021-22, in some cases to above pre-pandemic levels.

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148 *NISRA, Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service 2021-22, June 2022* available at https://www.nisra.gov.uk/system/files/statistics/2122-Financial-Year-Absence-Report.pdf.

149 *FSNI, Annual Report and Accounts 2021-22, June 2022* available at https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/justice/fsni-2021-22%20annual%20report%20and%20accounts.pdf.

150 *NICTS, Annual Report and Accounts 2021-22, July 2022* available at https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/justice/2021-22%20Annual%20Report%20and%20Accounts%20-%20NI%20Courts%20and%20Tribunals%20Service.pdf.

151 *NICTS, Annual Report and Accounts 2020-21, July 2021* available at https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/justice/nicts-annual-report-and-accounts-2020-21.PDF.

152 *NIPS, Annual Report and Accounts 2020-21, July 2021* available at https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/justice/NIPS%20Annual%20Report%20and%20Accounts%202020-21%20-%20Final.pdf.

153 *NISRA, Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service 2021-22, June 2022* available at https://www.nisra.gov.uk/system/files/statistics/2122-Financial-Year-Absence-Report.pdf.

154 *PBNI, Annual Report and Accounts 2021-22, July 2022* available at https://www.pbni.org.uk/files/pbni/2022-09/Probation%20Board%20-%20Annual%20Report%202021-22%20WEB.pdf.

155 *PBNI, Annual Report and Accounts 2020-21, July 2021* available at https://www.pbni.org.uk/files/pbni/2022-06/Annual%20Report%20Accounts%202020-21_0.pdf.

156 *PSNI, Annual Report and Accounts 2021-22, July 2022* available at https://www.psni.police.uk/sites/default/files/2022-08/Police%20Service%20of%20Northern%20Ireland%20-%20Annual%20Report%20and%20Accounts%20for%20the%20year%20ended%2031%20March%202022.pdf.

157 *PSNI, Annual Report and Accounts 2020-21, July 2021* available at https://www.psni.police.uk/globalassets/inside-the-psni/our-departments/finance-and-support-services/documents/2021/police-service-of-northern-ireland---annual-report-and-accounts---for-year-ended-31-march-2021.pdf.

158 *YJA, Annual Report and Accounts 2021-22, July 2022* available at https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/justice/yja-annual-report-and-accounts-2021-22%20Final.PDF.

159 *YJA, Annual Report and Accounts 2020-21, July 2021* available at https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/justice/yja-annual-report-and-accounts-2020-21.PDF.

160 *NISRA, Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service 2021-22, June 2022* available at https://www.nisra.gov.uk/system/files/statistics/2122-Financial-Year-Absence-Report.pdf.

161 *NISRA, Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service 2021-22, June 2022* available at https://www.nisra.gov.uk/system/files/statistics/2122-Financial-Year-Absence-Report.pdf.

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This was also the case across the wider NICS.[162] The most notable increase was that within the workforce of the NIPS. The NIPS Annual Report and Accounts noted '*Sickness absence levels across NIPS continues to be high and the true effects of the worldwide COVID pandemic on attendance at work are yet to be explained.*'

4.16   The 2021-22 NISRA sickness absence report[163] also noted the following information of relevance to this inspection:

- the average number of working days lost due to sickness absence in 2021-2022 ranged from 8.5 days for the Department of Education and the Department of Finance to 18.5 days for the DoJ;
- all Departments saw a rise in their absence levels from last year, with the DoJ experiencing the greatest increase;
- the DoJ contain around 14.7% of all NICS staff and had the biggest impact on the overall increase in absence level;
- within the DoJ all grade levels (aside from DP and Industrial staff) experienced a rise, with Prison Grade staff having the biggest impact on this increase;
- Prison Grade staff had the highest level of COVID-19 sickness absence with 3.93 working days lost per staff year;
- Prison Grade staff had the highest incidence of long-term sickness absence - with nearly a third (30.1%) of staff having a long-term absence spell in 2021-2022. This was an increase on the 2020-2021 figure of 21.4%; and
- the average long-term duration of Prison Grade absences was 67.1 working days, which was higher than the overall NICS average (64.3 working days). In total, 81.4% of all working days lost by Prison Grade staff were due to long-term absences.

4.17   The NIPS had identified a number of reasons which resulted in the high sickness rates, which had been a challenge for a long period of time. Traditionally reasons for sickness had been related to physical injuries experienced by Prison Officers, stress and anxiety and more recently COVID-19 related illnesses such as chest and respiratory problems. It was highlighted that although the PRRT had been contracted to provide physiotherapy and psychology services for Prison Staff, the ongoing issues with waiting lists in the Health Service more generally also had a negative impact on long-term sickness absence when staff required surgery or clinical interventions.

4.18   In recognition of the issues faced by the NIPS regarding sickness absence the Review of Support Services for Operational Prison Staff[164] recommended that '*an HR team from Grade 7 and below is based in NIPS Headquarters and Establishments as*

162 *NISRA, Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service 2021-22, June 2022* available at https://www.nisra.gov.uk/system/files/statistics/2122-Financial-Year-Absence-Report.pdf.
163 *NISRA, Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service 2021-22, June 2022* available at https://www.nisra.gov.uk/system/files/statistics/2122-Financial-Year-Absence-Report.pdf.
164 *DoJ, A Review of Support Services for Operational Prison Staff, January 2021* available at https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/justice/nips-report-jan-21.pdf.

was previously the case, and all functions managed in-house to NIPS, with a dotted line into NICS HR.', noting that *'NIPS does have different needs to that of the wider NICS due to the nature of the prison role. NIPS sickness absence levels, as can be seen in the data findings, are markedly higher than those in the wider NICS.'* This was implemented from June 2021.

4.19   The most recent NISRA report on sickness absence in the NICS[165] outlined the main contributing factors to sickness absence in the past five years. This illustrated both the commonalities between the wider NICS and the NIPS and the specific circumstances of operational prison grade staff, stating: *'During the 2021-2022 year Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses continued to be the largest contributor to sickness absence, as has been the case for a number of years ..... for the three years prior to the COVID-19 pandemic Injury, Fracture was the second largest contributor to sickness absence. However, in the 2020-21 financial year this was replaced by Chest and Respiratory Problems which continued to be the second largest contributor to sickness absence in 2021-2022. The contribution of Chest and Respiratory Problems to overall sickness levels has increased considerably since COVID-19; moving from previously being the eighth and eleventh contributor in 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 respectively. Injury, Fracture has remained in the top three sickness absence reasons for the last five years..... Prison Grade and Industrial staff had a noticeably higher proportion of working days lost to Injury, Fracture than staff in other grade levels... This is likely to reflect the type of work undertaken by these grades.'*

4.20   Information provided to CJI for the purposes of this inspection in relation to the PSNI's Mental Health Service advised that the PSNI Gold sickness absence group in September 2020 had identified concerns around mental health-related injury-on-duty incidents and interest in developing a strategy to mitigate these. In the financial year 2019-20, PSNI HR had recorded 578 officers having absences for psychological reasons with 49,631 total days lost, that is 18% of all absences were due to psychological stressors, a similar percentage as the previous year. The cost of the salary of a Constable at that time was £57,249 per year or £220.19 per day (for 260 working days) with the direct cost of lost effective service estimated at £10,928,249 (Sherwood, 2020[166]).

4.21   Research undertaken by Sherwood for a doctoral thesis also evidenced the severity of psychological injuries among the PSNI population, together with evidence of the growing demand on the Mental Health Service, and consistently high sick absence for psychological injury. These types of analysis attempted to provide a quantitative rationale for spending on occupational health and mental health services in line with a 'spend to save' approach. The PSNI also highlighted the need however to

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165 *NISRA, Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service, June 2022* available at
       https://www.nisra.gov.uk/system/files/statistics/2122-Financial-Year-Absence-Report.pdf.
166 *Sherwood, L. Identifying context specific risk among trauma-exposed PSNI personnel, 2020* available at http://www.tara.tcd.
       ie/bitstream/handle/2262/95256/Full%20Thesis%20FINAL%20SUBMISSION%202.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y.

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focus on preventative actions in order to reduce the numbers in the workforce who required these services. The research noted in Chapter 1 from the Mental Health Foundation and London School of Economics and Political Science[167] clearly outlines the case for investing in evidence-based interventions to prevent mental health problems from developing.

4.22   There were mixed views from organisations in the NICS about the level of information they received from their NICS HR Business Partner which helped them identify patterns and trends in relation to sickness absence in order to take preventative action or specific interventions to address issues arising. In cases where this information was improved it was reported that there had been additional requests for information in order to inform understanding at Senior Management level. There is a need for organisations to ensure they have scoped out and agreed what information is required to enable them to make decisions about how to best prevent or address wellbeing issues or sickness absence, particularly when it was longer term. Where information is outstanding they should take steps to address this with their NICS HR Business Partner colleagues. Organisations were however able to access specific information from the NICS People Survey relating to their own workforce and the NIPS had gained agreement to run their own specific survey, tailored for Prison Staff, which was positive.

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167 *McDaid, D & Park, A., Mental Health Foundation/London School of Economics and Political Science, The economic case for investing in the prevention of mental health conditions in the UK, March 2022* available at https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/about-us/news/mental-health-problems-cost-uk-economy-least-gbp-118-billion-year-new-research.

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5.1   It is clear from the evidence obtained during the fieldwork for this inspection that there is significant investment by the criminal justice organisations in both leadership development and wellbeing support. Every organisation inspected referenced people issues in its corporate and business planning to a greater or lesser extent and many had a people strategy specific to their organisation. Organisations within the NICS were supported by Business Partners in NICS HR and organisations outside of the NICS had their own Human Resources teams.

5.2   The understanding by organisations about the current skills base of their workforce and the skills required for their leadership roles in the future needs further development. The diversity of the workforce was also a challenge faced by every organisation. While each of the organisations of the criminal justice system had their own strategies and delivery plans to address their own organisational needs, there was little evidence of joined up or collective leadership development across the system. There were therefore few examples of activities to encourage leaders to work collaboratively and understand the operational independence, remit and priorities of each organisation.

5.3   This inspection report has not listed or described every leadership programme or wellbeing initiative across the criminal justice organisations. It is clear from the evidence presented to Inspectors that there are a broad range of programmes available to aspiring and current leaders both within organisations and across the public sector, including technical and operational skills, people and organisational leadership and change and networking and peer support. Similarly, there was a wide range of wellbeing initiatives available across the organisations both in person and on-line, singularly and in groups, within the workplace and outside of working hours. The responses to the staff surveys conducted for the purposes of this inspection identified both areas of positive practice where staff felt supported by their organisations but also areas where staff did not feel that the organisational culture in terms of leadership development or delivery of wellbeing initiatives was sufficiently embedded.

5.4   The academic literature in relation to leadership development has found it difficult to link improved outcomes with development programmes or initiatives. Similarly in this inspection there was a lack of data presented which aimed to assess the contribution of leadership development to organisational performance or other metrics. For wellbeing support Inspectors also struggled to find evidence of data analysis which attempted to link preventative wellbeing initiatives or support

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programmes with outcome data such as sickness absence or reductions in long-term sickness. The introduction of wellbeing measures into the NICS People Survey 2021 provides a baseline from which to assess wellbeing in the future.[168] There is clearly more work to be done across the criminal justice organisations to assess whether spending on leadership development and wellbeing support provides value for money.

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168 *Northern Ireland Civil Service, Northern Ireland Civil Service People Survey 2021: NICS Benchmark scores, January 2022. Internal NICS document.*

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METHODOLOGY

DESKTOP RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OF INSPECTION TERMS OF REFERENCE AND QUESTION AREAS

Research literature and guidance documentation was reviewed in relation to leadership development and wellbeing support. Other relevant documents included the RHI Inquiry[169], the NIAO Capacity and Capability Report[170], the NICS People Strategy[171] and the evaluation report of the NICS Senior Civil Servant leadership development programme.[172]

DOCUMENT REVIEW

A review was undertaken of the documentation collated to cross-reference information against the topic areas and later obtained during the fieldwork. This was used also to inform interview questions during the fieldwork phase.

FIELDWORK

Staff survey
Surveys were conducted online using the NICS Citizen Space platform. Each survey contained a bespoke introductory page for the organisation to which it related but the content was consistent across the organisations. The questions were a mixture of forced choice quantitative type questions as well as open-box questions allowing a longer answer. Section 75 monitoring questions were included, which did not have to be completed. All respondents were invited to provide their details for the purposes of requesting a telephone interview with a CJI Inspector. Surveys were shared via email to all staff in each organisation which contained an explanation about the purpose of the survey and inviting individuals to complete the questions. A total of 738 responses were received across the seven organisations. Responses were analysed using the Citizen Space analysis functions.

169 Coghlin, P et al, *The Report of the Independent Public Inquiry into the Non-domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) Scheme, March 2020* available at https://wayback.archive-it.org/11112/20200911092828/https://www.rhiinquiry.org/report-independent-public-inquiry-non-domestic-renewable-heat-incentive-rhi-scheme

170 *Northern Ireland Audit Office, Capacity and capability in the Northern Ireland Civil Services, November 2020.* available at https://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk/publications/capacity-and-capability-northern-ireland-civil-service-0.

171 *Department of Finance, NICS People Strategy 2018-21, September 2018.* Available online at: https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/publications/nics-people-strategy-2018-21

172 *Centre for Effective Services, Leading for the Future: Learning from a Leadership Development Programme for Senior Civil Servants in Northern Ireland, January 2021* available at https://www.effectiveservices.org/resources/leading-for-the-future.

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Telephone interviews

Respondents who indicated that they wished to speak to a CJI Inspector, were emailed once the surveys had closed, to invite them to participate in a telephone interview. Interviews were scheduled for 30 minutes duration, mainly over a period of one week in October 2021. There were 68 respondents invited to participate in a telephone interview and 43 interviews were conducted. Thematic analysis was used to identify key themes arising from the interviews which then assisted in forming the questions for the next stage of the fieldwork.

Interviews/focus groups

One-to-one and focus groups interviews were conducted with a range of personnel within the relevant agencies. Interviews were also conducted with stakeholders from areas of the NICS and the criminal justice system which interface with the inspected agencies and with the various staff associations and Trade Unions which represent staff working across the system. Representatives from the following areas were interviewed during the fieldwork:

Forensic Science Northern Ireland:

- Director of Customer and Corporate Services; and
- People Development Manager.

Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service:

- Chief Modernisation Officer;
- Chief Operating Officer;
- Head of Court Operations;
- People and Business Change Manager; and
- NICTS Strategic HR Business Partner.

Northern Ireland Prison Service:

- Head of Strategy and Governance.

Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland:

- Assistant Director, High Court and International; and
- Senior Assistant Director.

Police Service of Northern Ireland:

- Assistant Chief Officer People and Organisational Development;
- Consultant Clinical Psychologist, Occupational Health and Welfare Service;
- Head of Learning Support, Police College; and
- Detective Chief Inspector, Learning Support, Police College.

Probation Board for Northern Ireland:

- Director of Operations; and
- Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development.

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Youth Justice Agency:

- Chief Executive;
- Director of Corporate Services;
- Director of Youth Justice Services; and
- Director of Custodial Services.

Stakeholders:

- Chief Executives' Forum.
- DoJ Director of Access to Justice.
- DoJ Director of Safer Communities.
- NICS HR:
    - Director of NICS HR;
    - Director of NICS Learning and Development;
    - Director Strategic HR Business Partnering;
    - NICS HR Business Partner, NICTS; and
    - NICS HR Business Partner, NIPS.
- Northern Ireland Policing Board.
- Probation Board for Northern Ireland.
- Staff associations across the organisations:
    - the FDA (the union for managers and professionals in public service);
    - Northern Ireland Public Services Alliance;
    - Law Society of Northern Ireland;
    - National Probation Officers' Association;
    - Police Federation for Northern Ireland;
    - Prison Officers' Association;
    - Prison Governors' Association; and
    - Superintendents' Association of Northern Ireland.

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APPENDIX 2:
TERMS OF REFERENCE

AN INSPECTION OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND WELLBEING SUPPORT IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM IN NORTHERN IRELAND

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Introduction

Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJI) proposes to undertake a thematic inspection of leadership development and wellbeing across the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland. CJI has undertaken inspections that incorporate elements of leadership and leadership development and the way staff are supported in organisations (as included in CJI's inspection framework) but has not previously published a specific inspection of the way in which the criminal justice system supports and develops its leaders for the challenges they face.

This inspection will consider the approach of the following criminal justice organisations to leadership development and wellbeing: the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland (PPS), the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS), Forensic Science Northern Ireland (FSNI), the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS), the Youth Justice Agency (YJA) and the Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI).

Context
The Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development (CIPD) notes that two aspects of development activity are needed for the leaders of organisations:

- identifying and developing capabilities of individuals to lead others effectively (leader development); and
- creating organisational structures and cultures that encourage and enable leadership[173].

The Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) People Strategy 2018-21[174] highlights 'Strengthening leadership and line management at all levels of the NICS' as an area of focus with relevant priority actions including:

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173 CIPD, *Factsheet: Leadership in the workplace, April 2021* available at
     https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/strategy/leadership/factsheet#gref.
174 NICS, *NICS People strategy 2018-21, September 2018* available at
     https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dfp/nics-people-strategy-2018-21.pdf.

- a well-led NICS (including to build the capacity of line managers and leaders across the service and provide effective tools for line managers and leaders including streamlined and practical people policies, processes, guidance and training); and
- an outcome-focused NICS (including to build career paths that develop breadth of experience and depth of expertise).

The CIPD noted in 2016 that employee health and wellbeing had risen sharply up the public policy agenda over the previous ten years[175] and more recently that *'the COVID-19 pandemic has raised concerns about people's health and wellbeing to the top of the business agenda'*[176].

Aims of the Inspection

The broad aims of the Inspection are to:

- examine the effectiveness of organisational strategies and delivery with regard to how **potential** future leaders are identified and developed;
- examine the effectiveness of organisational strategies and delivery with regard to how **current** leaders are developed in new and existing roles;
- examine the effectiveness of organisational strategies and delivery to promote equality and diversity at a leadership level;
- examine and assess the outcomes of strategies and delivery mechanisms for leadership development against targets and expectations, including those relating to Section 75 categories[177];
- examine the effectiveness of organisational strategies and delivery to support the wellbeing of staff at all levels working in criminal justice organisations; and
- examine and assess the outcomes of strategies and delivery mechanisms for wellbeing support against targets and expectations, particularly in relation to staff working in roles identified as high-pressure or with the potential to cause psychological distress.

It should be noted that, as agencies of the Department of Justice (DoJ), the NICTS, FSNI and YJA are part of the NICS and therefore utilise the leadership development and wellbeing programmes offered through the wider civil service. The NIPS is also a DoJ agency and utilises NICS programmes, although does develop its own bespoke leadership development programmes for Prison Officer and Governor grades. CJI does not have the remit to inspect the wider NICS but in achieving the aims of this organisation will consult relevant individuals as stakeholders.

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175 *CIPD, Policy report: Growing the health and wellbeing agenda: From first steps to full potential, January 2016* available at https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/health-wellbeing-agenda_2016-first-steps-full-potential_tcm18-10453.pdf.

176 *CIPD, Factsheet: Wellbeing at work, April 202.* available at https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/culture/wellbeing/factsheet#.

177 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 places a statutory obligation on public authorities to carry out their functions with due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and good relations in respect of religious belief, political opinion, gender, race, disability, age, marital status, dependants and sexual orientation.

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Methodology

The following methodology is proposed to assess the strategy and governance, delivery and outcomes of the inspected organisations. The framework of areas to be inspected is as follows.[178]

Overseeing cultural change - diversity and innovation

- Wellbeing:
    - developing a focus on wellbeing;
    - raising awareness of wellbeing; and
    - improving workforce wellbeing.
- The importance of fairness in spotting and developing potential senior leaders:
    - identifying and developing talent.
- Fair selection for leadership at all levels:
    - recruiting and promoting fairly; and
    - improving promotion selection processes.

Workforce development

- Understanding leadership requirements and assessing performance:
    - developing leadership skills; and
    - managing and developing individual performance.
- Developing future leaders:
    - understanding and developing workforce skills and capabilities.
- Succession planning.
- New talent selection and development opportunities:
    - providing development opportunities; and
    - selecting new talent.

Design and Planning

Preliminary research

Data and initial information has been sought from the agencies to be inspected in order to inform the scope of this inspection.

Benchmarking, research and data collection

Collection of benchmarking information and data, where available, from other jurisdictions and sectors in Northern Ireland, and review of inspection and research reports will be undertaken.

Contact with agencies

Terms of reference will be prepared and shared with the PSNI, the PPS, the FSNI, the NICTS, the NIPS, the YJA and the PBNI prior to the initiation of the inspection. Liaison officers from the organisations should be nominated for the purposes of this inspection.

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178 Based on a framework developed by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire & Rescue Service for its 2017 Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL) inspections to assess leadership as part of the efficiency and legitimacy reports. See https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/peel-police-leadership-2017/.

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Policies and procedures, management information, minutes of meetings and related documentation from the inspected organisations will be requested and reviewed.

Delivery
Stakeholder consultation
The following stakeholder organisations will be consulted:

- Chief Executive's Forum;
- DoJ Human Resources Business Partner;
- DoJ Directors (Access to Justice/Safer Communities/Reducing Offending);
- NICS Strategic HR;
- Northern Ireland Policing Board;
- Office of the Lord Chief Justice;
- Staff associations across the organisations:
  - the FDA (The union for managers and professionals in public service);
  - Northern Ireland Public Services Alliance (NIPSA);
  - Law Society of Northern Ireland;
  - National Probation Officers' Association;
  - Police Federation for Northern Ireland;
  - Prison Officers' Association;
  - Prison Governors' Association;
  - Superintendents' Association of Northern Ireland; and
  - UNISON.

Development of fieldwork plan
An online survey will be developed and shared with agency liaison officers for onward circulation to staff within the organisations. This will seek the views of staff on leadership development and wellbeing support provided within the organisations, enabling a broad range of staff to be consulted. Individuals will be invited to respond anonymously to the survey but will be given the opportunity to speak to a CJI Inspector to follow-up on any issues.

Data from the completed surveys will be analysed and used to inform the fieldwork within the agencies.

CJI will liaise with the inspection liaison points of contact in each organisation to arrange a series of meetings and focus groups with relevant individuals within the PSNI, the PPS, the FSNI, the NICTS, the NIPS, the YJA and the PBNI.

Initial feedback to agency
On conclusion of the fieldwork the evidence will be collated, triangulated and analysed and emerging recommendations will be developed. CJI will then present the findings to appropriate organisations.

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Drafting of report

Following completion of the fieldwork and analysis of data a draft report will be shared with the inspected bodies for factual accuracy check. The Chief Inspector will invite the inspected bodies to complete an action plan within six weeks to address the recommendations and if the plan has been agreed and is available it will be published as part of the final inspection report. The inspection report will be shared, under embargo, in advance of the publication date with the inspected bodies.

Publication and Closure

A report will be sent to the Minister of Justice for permission to publish. When permission is received the report will be finalised for publication. A press release will be drafted and shared with the NIPS, NICTS and the PSNI prior to publication and release. A publication date will be agreed and the report will be issued.

Indicative Timetable

Scoping/Research: April-June 2021.
Online survey: May-June 2021.
Stakeholder consultation: May-July 2021.
Agency fieldwork: July-September 2021.
Draft Report to agencies: January 2022.
Factual accuracy feedback received: February 2022.

The above timetable may be impacted by factors such as the easing of COVID-19 public health restrictions and subsequent impact on the ability to conduct fieldwork where it needs to be undertaken face-to-face. The inspected organisation will be kept advised of any significant changes to the indicative timetable.

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APPENDIX 3:
STAFF SURVEYS

SURVEY QUESTIONS

Section 1: Leadership development

In the following questions you will be asking to think about the senior leadership of your organisation and the extent to which you agree with the statements made. Where the word 'leadership' is used this refers to the senior levels of the organisation i.e. Assistant Director, Grade 7 Business Support Staff/Governor grades/Superintendent and above (amended as appropriate for organisation).

Q1 The process for selecting staff into senior leadership positions in my organisation on a temporary basis appears to me to be fair and transparent.
(Scale: Strongly agree to strongly disagree)

Q2 The process for selecting staff into senior leadership positions in my organisation on a permanent basis appears to me to be fair and transparent.
(Scale: Strongly agree to strongly disagree)

Q3 My organisation takes action to encourage those from different backgrounds to apply for senior leadership positions (for example gender, age, religion/community background, ethnicity, disability etc.).
(Scale: Strongly agree to strongly disagree)

Q4 The processes for selecting staff into senior leadership positions in my organisation appear to ensure equality of opportunity for people from all backgrounds (for example gender, age, religion/community background, ethnicity, disability etc.).
(Scale: Strongly agree to strongly disagree)

Q5 Changes to senior leadership positions (e.g. due to promotion/transfer) are planned for and organised sufficiently to ensure stability in the relevant business area.
(Scale: Strongly agree to strongly disagree)

Q6 I believe that senior leaders in my organisation have the appropriate knowledge, skills and experience to do the job well.
(Scale: Strongly agree to strongly disagree)

Q7 Please provide any further comments about the organisations approach to selecting and developing senior leaders below.

Section 2: Wellbeing support

In these questions you are asked to consider the organisations approach to employee wellbeing support as it relates to you individually and all staff in your organisation.

Q8   To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following:

- In my organisation senior leaders are concerned about employee wellbeing;
- My immediate line manager demonstrates that they understand the importance of wellbeing;
- Employees are encouraged to engage with health and wellbeing initiatives; and
- My organisation is much more reactive (taking action when people are absent through sickness) than proactive (promoting good wellbeing).
  (Scale: Strongly agree to strongly disagree)

Q9   Does your organisation's activities in the area of employee health and wellbeing include support across the following areas of wellbeing?

- Mental health (for example stress management; debriefing of critical incidents);
- Good work (for example ensuring jobs are designed to be at the right level of difficulty for the grade/are sufficiently manageable during working hours, ensure appropriate work–life balance);
- Engagement with staff/social relationships (for example employee forums, good teamworking);
- Values/principles (for example leaders draw on their own values such as honesty, fairness and equality when making decisions; inclusion and diversity training);
- Physical health (for example health promotion; good rehabilitation);
- Personal growth (for example mentoring);
- Good lifestyle choices (for example diet; smoking cessation; health awareness raising); and
- Financial wellbeing (for example pension advice or debt counselling).
  (Respondents invited to tick 'yes' for each option)

Q10   To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following:

- My organisation actively promotes good mental wellbeing;
- Staff are well informed about organisational support for mental health;
- Senior leaders encourage a focus on mental wellbeing through their actions and behaviour;
- Managers are confident and sufficiently skilled to have sensitive discussions and signpost staff to expert sources of help if needed; and
- Managers are confident and competent to spot the early warning signs of mental ill health.
  (Scale: Strongly agree to strongly disagree)

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Q11   Please provide any further comments about the organisational approach to wellbeing below (you will have an opportunity to comment about the organisational response to the COVID-19 pandemic in the next section).

Section 3: Response to COVID-19
For the following questions please think specifically about the time since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020.

COVID-19
Q12a)   What additional measures did your organisation take to support employee wellbeing in response to COVID-19; and

Q12b)   Which would you like to see retained after the pandemic has subsided:
- More focus on looking after employees' mental health;
- More support tailored to individuals' needs and concerns (such as flexible working);
- New or better support for people working from home (such as access to technology to facilitate remote working);
- More flexible approaches to making workplace adjustments;
- Stronger approach to risk assessment;
- Provision of personal protective equipment appropriate to the type of role;
- Increased employee wellbeing support or benefits (such as an employee assistance programme); and
- New or better support for employees with caring responsibilities.
  (Respondents invited to tick 'yes' for each option)

Q13   I believe my organisation took sufficient additional measures to support employee wellbeing in response to COVID-19.
  (Scale: Strongly agree to strongly disagree)

Q14   Please provide any further comments about the organisational response to COVID-19 below.

Section 4: About you
As a public body we are required, under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, to collect the equality and diversity information for those who assist in our inspection work. This information is used to identify any differences in perceptions about the service provided by those from different backgrounds and is collated anonymously. We use the monitoring categories as recommended by the Equality Commission NI. If you do not wish to complete any of these questions please move to the next question or the final section.

Q15   Age.

Q16   Gender.

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Q17 Care of dependents.

Q18 Marital status.

Q19 Community background.

Q20 Ethnicity.

Q21 English as a first language.

Q22 Religion.

Q23 Sexual Orientation.

Q24 Management responsibility.

Section 5: Further contact

If you wish to speak to a CJI Inspector, in confidence, about any of the questions/issues raised in this survey please provide contact details below.

Survey responses

Organisation	Number of responses received
FSNI	42
NICTS	47
NIPS	239
PBNI	42
PPS	53
PSNI	281
YJA	34
Total	**738**

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