



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND WELLBEING SUPPORT

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

FEBRUARY 2023

WHAT WAS THIS INSPECTION ABOUT?

- ▶ This inspection looked at how criminal justice organisations in Northern Ireland develop current leaders and potential future leaders. It also looked at how criminal justice organisations supported the wellbeing of their staff to prevent psychological and physical issues and to assist their recovery when they were unwell.
- ▶ The inspection covered the work of the organisations supported by the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Human Resources function; namely Forensic Science Northern Ireland (FSNI), the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS), the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland (PPS), the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) and the Youth Justice Agency (YJA). It also considered the work of criminal justice organisations outside the NICS including the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and the Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI).

HOW DID YOU CARRY OUT THIS INSPECTION?

- ▶ This inspection used a framework that outlined areas to be inspected including wellbeing and workforce development.
- ▶ The inspection involved consultation with Trade Unions and Staff Associations as well as senior leaders and human resources professionals. We also asked staff to tell us about their views and experiences and undertook a staff survey that everyone could participate in.

WHAT DID INSPECTORS FIND?

- ▶ All organisations had developed strategies that included outcomes related to their people or workforce. We found limited examples of succession planning and fairness, equality and diversity continued to be a challenge.
- ▶ There was a significant amount of activity in relation to providing opportunities for leadership development and wellbeing support.
- ▶ The views of staff were mixed about the awareness and effectiveness of wellbeing support in their organisations, particularly during the period of COVID -19 pandemic lockdowns and public health restrictions.
- ▶ There was insufficient evaluation of how leadership development and wellbeing support interventions had an impact on performance measures, such as sickness absence or employee engagement.
- ▶ There were some examples of evaluation of individual leadership programmes and of sickness data across the organisations for the purposes of annual reporting and understanding trends in absence.

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WHAT NEEDS TO BE BETTER?

Inspectors have made six recommendations for improvement including:

At a strategic level (leadership level):

- ▶ Criminal justice organisations should signal their commitment to staff wellbeing by signing an appropriate mental health pledge or charter.
- ▶ There should be greater identification of current and required future leadership skills that is incorporated into people strategies and succession plans.

At an operational level (on the ground level):

- ▶ A joint criminal justice system induction programme for new leaders should be developed.
- ▶ The PPS should develop bespoke wellbeing support plans for those working in roles which have the potential to cause psychological harm.
- ▶ Better methods should be developed to support the evaluation and effectiveness of leadership development programmes.
- ▶ Effective methods for evaluating the awareness and effectiveness of preventative wellbeing initiatives should be put in place.

WHAT DO INSPECTORS WANT TO SEE HAPPEN NOW?

- ▶ The prompt implementation of Inspection recommendations leading to a more collaborative approach across the criminal justice system to leadership development and wellbeing support that is informed by evaluation and data on outcomes.

Criminal Justice Inspection
Northern Ireland
a better justice system for all



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