

A Strategic Plan for NAPA 2023-6

NAPA's purpose:

Officially, as registered in Companies House, we are:

The Independent National Approved Premises Association CIC [NAPA]

Company Number: 11961233

NAPA CIC (Community Interest Company) is an association of the ten providers of the fourteen (in 2023) independently managed Approved Premises in England & Wales. All Approved Premises (APs), whether run independently or by the state directly, provide community based residential facilities for those who have offended.

The independently managed sector currently provides about 12% of the Approved Premises (AP) estate in England & Wales, and well over 50% of the AP provision for females (six out of nine female APs). These independent APs (IAPs) are usually owned by a charity, with a board of trustees, but there are some other provider organisations too. However, they all operate as part of His Majesty's Prison & Probation Service's (HMPPS) AP estate, alongside those managed directly by the Probation Service itself.

Over the years, the role of Approved Premises has reflected the changing priorities of the criminal justice system. Under earlier names such as "Approved Homes" and "Probation & Bail Hostels", APs have evolved from housing homeless boys convicted of petty offences, providing substitute families for adolescents, training unemployed offenders for work, counselling in therapeutic communities, and offering alternatives to custodial sentences, and instead they more recently have been providing enhanced supervision in the community for high-risk individuals on release from prison.

NAPA aims to:

Deliver a range of services and functions that support and assist the work of our associate IAPs by contributing to the achievement of best practice, consistency and high-quality service delivery across the whole of the sector.

We particularly seek to:

- **Influence** – policy and practice; to achieve both the best use of independent Approved Premises (IAPs) and the highest standards of practice in the work they undertake.
- **Work in Positive Partnership** – with independently managed Approved Premises, managing bodies, the Ministry of Justice, The Probation Service (PS), HMPPS and other relevant agencies.
- **Represent** – employer perspectives relating to the provision of independent Approved Premises and the staff that work in them.
- **Disseminate** – information on practice, policy developments and opportunities.
- **Promote** – understanding of the work of IAPs; the development of quality standards; appropriate levels of resourcing; and best use of all IAPs.
- **Contribute to** – the identification of training and staff development needs; the provision of training; the development of policy and the sharing of good practice.

The work of NAPA and its Strategic Director is overseen by an Executive Committee drawn from the associate IAP providers. These individuals are the formal Directors and Members of NAPA CIC.

For reference: – Extract from the Companies House registration entry for NAPA CIC:

Article 5 - Objects: 'The objects of the Company are to carry on activities which benefit the community and in particular (without limitation) to furthering the work of independent approved premises in delivering community based residential facilities for high risk offenders.'

Community Interest statement: 'In particular, the company's activities will provide benefit by furthering the work of independent approved premises in delivering community based residential facilities for high risk offenders.'

Activities: 'The company has been set up to support the independent approved premises in England and Wales. The Company will deliver a range of services and functions that support and assist the independent approved premises by contributing to the achievement of best practice, consistency and high quality service delivery.'

Community benefit: Independent approved premises are community based and at the forefront of efforts to protect the public by reducing reoffending and managing risk of harm....

...If the company makes any surplus it will be retained and reinvested into the business.

A Summary of NAPA's purpose and aims:

In short, we consider that we have an ***enabling*** role in our business relationship with our associate IAP providers. NAPA's role could be informally described as similar to that of a 'trade association', in that each of the IAPs has its own governing body, and it is not for NAPA to have any kind of 'governing' or 'managing' role in respect of any of them. But NAPA can serve in an 'enabling' role in matters where the IAPs have interests in common, for example with information-sharing and some training. Furthermore, NAPA can act as the collective eyes, ears and voice of IAP providers within the wider criminal justice and supported accommodation networks.

The 2023-6 context:

At the time of preparing the previous Plan, envisaged as being 2022-4, seven of the then eight IAP providers were engaged first in securing a short-term renewal of 'old' contracts to April 2024, and then were expecting to embark on endeavouring to secure 'new' contracts to start from April 2024. This was the timescale envisaged by HMPPS; therefore that earlier Plan aimed to take NAPA to that April 2024 point, and its content was written with that context in mind.

As of September 2023, that context has changed. NAPA now has ten associate IAP providers, three of which operate solely on 'new' contracts, while the other seven continue to operate with 'old' contracts – one of which (Hestia) operates two 'old' contracts and one 'new' contract.

Furthermore, HMPPS's commissioning process has been completely rescheduled, with the earlier timescale now cancelled, so that once again there is first a process to renew the existing 'old' contracts to a changeover date, and also a process to implement a commissioning programme so that all IAPs will be operating on 'new' contracts with effect from that new date – the new date being April 2026.

Therefore, the two 'enabling' roles that were envisaged for NAPA for the 2022-4 period, outlined below, still apply - but now for the period leading up to April 2026. For this reason, much of the content of this new Plan simply reflects much of the content of the earlier Plan. However, in addition, we recognise that NAPA must ensure that we also provide a service to those Associate providers who already operate on 'new' contracts.

'New' contracts represent an entirely new contractual arrangement being established between HMPPS and the successful bidding IAP providers. Although NAPA does not, of course, negotiate any individual IAP contracts itself, it does expect to take up an 'enabling' role in the process, especially over aspects of the new proposed contracts that all or most IAPs will have in common.

For this purpose NAPA will need to continue to be 'well positioned' and prepared throughout the 2023-6 period. NAPA will need to be aware of how Government policy is developing, both in the Ministry of Justice and more widely, informed about the implications of such policy developments, and well prepared for engaging with Government on both the principles and the detailed practice that those implications bring. Looking further into the future, NAPA is preparing for the period after April 2026 concerning all the issues that will undoubtedly arise concerning how the post-2026 contracts will be 'performance managed' in practice from then on – the planning for this has already started.

There are therefore two elements to NAPA's 'enabling' role during 2022-6: a) to help IAPs in their negotiations during 2023-6 for the new contracts that are expected to run from April 2026, and also b) to prepare for the task of helping IAPs with managing their future working relationships with HMPPS after April 2026 in the operation of those new contracts. The second of these elements is even now live business for the IAP providers already operating with 'new' contracts.

Workstreams:

In broad terms, these can be categorised as 'Internal' (to NAPA, its own functioning and administration of its work with its associates) and 'External' (its working relationships with its associates and HM Prison and Probation Service, and also with a wider range of organisations and interested parties). Each of these two workstreams has, in principle, two elements: a Maintenance and a Development element.

A. Internal:

A. Maintenance:

For NAPA itself our plan is to achieve and maintain a good level of **resilience** and **security**.

Finance: NAPA resolved in September 2022 to maintain its annual charge to £6k per annum, having not increased it for several years, and furthermore resolved that this would be the charge per IAP provider, rather than per IAP. This means that NAPA expects to be operating on a small financial loss each year while this continues – circa £5k pa in total – but this is readily affordable in the short term because of the size of NAPA's reserve. This policy is to be reviewed each autumn, so that if circumstances change we could act to restore NAPA's financial resilience if necessary.

Website and social media: We intend to be self-sufficient and resilient as far as we can in terms of maintaining our website – following our revision of 2021 - plus our Twitter and LinkedIn accounts, and all our administrative systems. Each of our two employed staff will continue to be able to access all our administrative resources, and each will be able to cover for the other when needed.

Training, and sharing experiences: For our associate IAP providers we will maintain an annual calendar of meetings, training events and the Conference/AGM. The training packages provided by our Associate Trainers (ATs) primarily focus on aspects of long-term skill development. They complement the wider opportunities to share experiences and perspectives provided by NAPA's meetings. Our aim is to maintain the resources and facilities that we need so that we can enable each individual IAP to develop its own work much more straightforwardly than it would be able to do on its own.

Governance: NAPA's Executive Committee will continue to direct the organisation. It will meet at least four times per year and consists of the Directors of NAPA CIC formally registered at Companies House plus some additional Trustees and/or senior managers from associate IAPs who become Members of the CIC for their term on the Executive. The Handbook, with Appendices, adopted in 2023, provides the framework for the governance of NAPA.

In summary, we take the view that the main future Internal work will be 'Maintenance only', though through regular reviews we must be open to taking new measures to improve our resilience and security, and respond to any setbacks of course.

A2. Development:

We will identify and implement any new measures that are needed to achieve a good level of **resilience** and **security** (for example, internet security of our online systems), and proper governance of the CIC.

B. External:

B1. Maintenance:

NAPA aims to maintain all the existing liaison mechanisms with HMPPS and the wider AP sector. Our role in these liaison mechanisms is to ensure that the work of IAPs is well co-ordinated with the state sector where it should be co-ordinated, but also independent from it where it should be independent. However, where there continues to be a lack of shared understanding between HMPPS and IAPs about how those two considerations are defined, a Development workstream relates to this.

B2. Development:

NAPA aims to develop a shared understanding with HMPPS and our wider partners about where it is proper to be 'integrated' with state-run APs and where it is proper to behave independently.

NAPA aims to keep developing NAPA's understanding of Government contracting arrangements as they in turn develop, to ensure that IAPs are enabled to engage as effectively as possible when each round of contracting opens.

NAPA also aims to be open to developing working relationships with potential providers of IAPs, so that should new IAP providers come on stream they are attracted by the option of becoming an associate of both NAPA and the other IAPs.

Aim / Outcome in 2026

In principle, we should be regularly measuring, during the period of this Plan, how far the Plan is proving successful in practice; however, 'organisational success' is not an easy thing to measure.

NAPA is not a service delivery organisation, but each of its associate IAP providers is. The main purpose of each Approved Premises is so that individuals who have previously offended will reduce their offending behaviour, alongside some other 'pro-social' purposes. An IAP's success in achieving this and other purposes can in principle be measured through long-term research methods. If an IAP is found to be successful through such research, then the credit should of course go properly to that individual IAP.

In principle, the aim of NAPA CIC is, in its capacity as an 'enabler', to make a contribution that helps each independent AP to achieve those purposes. The way to 'measure' that indirect contribution that NAPA might be making to the effectiveness of each IAP is to ask the people best

placed to assess whether NAPA's work has 'made a difference' in practice - the staff and Trustees of each IAP.

Accordingly we planned in 2021 to survey annually those staff and Trustees for their assessment of NAPA's contribution, using a survey employing a 'Likert' scale (which provides quantified 'scores' of 'satisfaction'). We undertook such a survey in September/October 2021, the results of which effectively served as a 'baseline' or 'benchmark' position; the idea was that in January or so of 2023 and subsequent years we could conduct further Annual Surveys and the scores each year could then be tracked, and indeed we did this in January 2023 and will do so in each future January. This regular 'set' of questions in the Annual Survey help NAPA gauge these aspects of its work:

- For maintaining its key Internal processes, the IAPs meetings, the annual Conference, and the annual 'training package'
- For maintaining its key External process, facilitating the working relationship between IAPs and MoJ/HMPPS.
- For developing its External workstream, promoting the work of IAPs within the wider criminal justice system
- And overall value for money for IAPs, as perceived by the associate IAPs

However, what are probably more important than the results of the formal 'scores' are the informal 'free text' feedback about which aspects of NAPA's work have been found to be most helpful or least helpful to IAPs each year. Accordingly, the results of the survey will be collated and analysed, and then presented for the consideration of the Executive each year. In this way the feedback will continue to inform the content of the Workplan for each subsequent financial year, and of future strategic Plans too.

The questions in NAPA's Annual Survey

1. In my opinion, the IAP meetings I've attended this last year have been productive and worthwhile.
2. In my opinion, the most recent NAPA Conference that I attended was productive and worthwhile.
3. In my opinion, the training package our IAP(s) received this last year was productive and worthwhile to the staff.
4. In my opinion, NAPA's work was helpful to us in managing our interactions with MoJ/HMPPS.
5. In my opinion, NAPA has been helpful in promoting the work of our IAP(s) within the CJS.
6. In my opinion, during the last 12 months NAPA has made a contribution in enabling my IAP to benefit the community this year.
7. In my opinion, the service that NAPA has provided for my IAP during the last 12 months has been good value overall