



Economic
and Social
Research Council



Co-Production and Probation Inspection ESRC DTP Collaborative Studentship

University of Nottingham and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation

The Midlands Graduate School is an accredited Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP). One of 14 such partnerships in the UK, the Midlands Graduate School is a collaboration between the University of Warwick, Aston University, University of Birmingham, University of Leicester, Loughborough University and the University of Nottingham.

The University of Nottingham as part of Midlands Graduate School is now inviting applications for an ESRC Doctoral Studentship in association with our collaborative partner HM Inspectorate of Probation (HMI Probation) to commence in October 2021.

There is increased emphasis across a range of sectors on the importance of co-production in service development, however, few empirical studies have explored what this looks like in practice. This is particularly apparent in the criminal justice arena, where an increasing emphasis has been placed on user engagement, but where distinct challenges arise in the context of mandated services. This research will take place at a unique juncture as HMI Probation develops 'co-production' within its inspection work and seeks to expand the involvement of service users at various levels. This research will explore the theories and discourses informing the development of service user involvement in the work of probation and youth justice inspection, the modes and practical processes through which co-production will be achieved; the experiences of co-production, and the impact of this work on inspection processes and outcomes.

This research is a unique opportunity to empirically examine co-production in probation and youth justice services, contributing to informing policy and practice. The PhD research will be supervised by Dr Nicola Carr and Dr Lisa Warwick (University of Nottingham) and Dr Robin Moore and Karen Kendall (HMI Probation). It will focus on the following questions:

1. *What theories and discourses have informed the development of co-production within public services and within the work of probation and youth justice inspection specifically?*
2. *What practical challenges are involved in the development and governance of co-produced inspections?*
3. *What are the experiences of co-production for those involved in this work?*
4. *What impacts does co-produced inspection have on processes of inspection and service delivery and wider probation outcomes?*

The student will undertake a multi-modal approach to this research, beginning with a literature review and policy analysis. The field work will consist of ethnographic methods of participant

observation and semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders. Through this research the student will produce original contributions to knowledge in an underexplored area which will inform and develop HMI Probation's co-production work. This project also has potential for broader policy impacts within co-production in the criminal justice system.

Application Process

To be considered for this PhD, please complete the Collaborative Studentship application form [available online here](#) and email this along with a CV and covering letter to vicky.spencer1@nottingham.ac.uk. Shortlisted applicants will also be required to provide two references.

Application deadline: 1st March 2021

Please note that interviews for shortlisted applicants will take place on 09th March 2021.

Midlands Graduate School ESRC DTP

Our ESRC studentships cover fees at the home rate, a maintenance stipend, and extensive support for research training, as well as research activity support grants. Support is available to both home and international applicants. For further details, visit: www.mgsdtp.ac.uk/studentships/eligibility/.

Informal enquiries about the research or The School of Sociology and Sociology prior to application can be directed to Nicola.Carr@nottingham.ac.uk