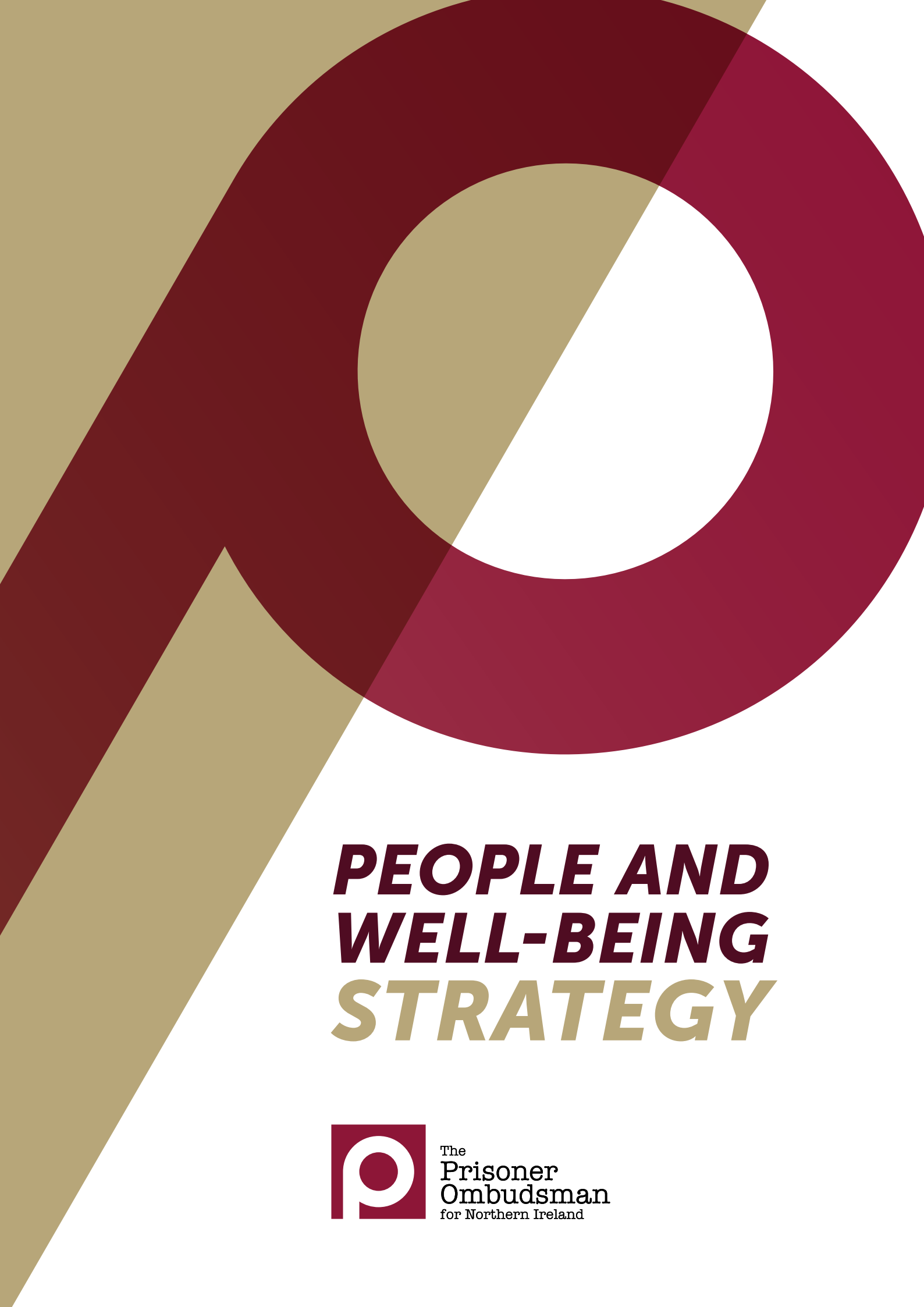




PEOPLE AND WELL-BEING STRATEGY



The
Prisoner
Ombudsman
for Northern Ireland

Foreword

I am pleased to present my People and Well-being Strategy 2026-2028. The outworkings of this strategy will be felt by prisoners, their families, stakeholders and the individuals who make up our team. As Prisoner Ombudsman I am committed to a culture and working environment where everyone feels valued and supported to play their role in delivering for prisoners. I want each member of staff to feel they have a place and a stake in their own future development.

Each of us in our actions and behaviours will demonstrate a commitment to prisoner welfare as we seek to achieve our vision of being a trusted, independent and transparent voice for fairness, accountability and learning in Northern Ireland's prisons – ensuring dignity, justice and continuous improvement in the treatment of prisoners. Through this Strategy we will achieve the outcomes set out in my Strategic and Business Plans.

This People and Well-being Strategy calls for an approach which jointly considers the needs of staff, prisoners and stakeholders. I will endeavour to create a culture which encourages our organisation to thrive, where we work together as one team, caring for those we serve and each other.

This Strategy is linked to the objectives outlined in my Strategic Plan 2025-2028, specifically:

- ▶ Improve investigative processes and timelines
- ▶ Improve visibility and accessibility
- ▶ Reinforce independence
- ▶ Optimise resources for efficiency and effectiveness

The Strategy will consist of 4 principles. These are:

- ▶ Being representative and inclusive
- ▶ Leading together
- ▶ Serving with professionalism
- ▶ Valuing health and well-being

Being representative and Inclusive:

Representativeness and inclusivity are a key enabler of legitimacy and confidence in what we do, which will allow us to attract and retain staff to a career in the Office of the Prisoner Ombudsman. Diversity makes us stronger. We will endeavour to recruit individuals from a range of lived experiences and backgrounds. We are committed to being an inclusive organisation, attracting and retaining a diverse, talented workforce through inclusive employment practices, effective onboarding and a culture of respect, belonging and continuous development within a supportive workplace culture. We will ensure that everyone feels welcome, is treated with dignity, valued as their authentic selves and are confident to share their perspectives and ideas.

Leading together:

This Strategy underlines that leadership is not solely for Supervisors and Managerial grades, but a responsibility for all. We will invest in the growth of the organisation and individual staff so that each one can realise leadership potential, breaking down silos and working together as a team. We will create an agile team supported by multidisciplinary training to build resilience, confidence and strengthen collaborative efforts to ensure efficient delivery of our objectives. We will promote an environment conducive to decision making where individuals will be supported to put themselves forward to act decisively, from an evidence base without fear of blame or loss of confidence. In doing so, we will aspire to improve business performance and be more efficient in our decision making. Individuals will gain exposure and experience which will grow their confidence to potentially seek out career progression. We are committed to building skills and will invest in lateral development and leadership competence.

Serving with professionalism:

We will continue to build trust with prisoners and our key stakeholders by demonstrating professionalism at all times. We will be accountable for our decisions and recommendations and be transparent in our actions. We will promote an organisational culture where professionalism and integrity are expected towards everyone. We will equip our staff with the necessary training and support to deliver our Strategic Plan. We will deliver financial probity by operating effectively and efficiently. We will recognise and reward professionalism and outstanding effort.

Valuing health and well-being:

We recognise that health, well-being and resilience is central to a thriving organisation. A People and Well-being Strategy is essential to protect our investment in our people. We will continually review our working practices to get the optimum work life balance, including hybrid working protocols. We will invest in creating a safe and healthy working environment, promoting a culture of well-being. Prevention will be a default as we actively identify situations where there is a risk of physical injury or emotional trauma. We will invest in post incident services and training to promote resilience and mental health well-being. We will actively listen to our colleagues, build supportive teams and consult our staff on change that impacts on them.

Governance:

Delivery against the People and Well-being Strategy will be managed through the governance of weekly meetings and monthly Senior Management Team meetings. It will be monitored against our annual Business Plan. External engagement will be subject to ongoing survey and subject to our performance management protocols.