

Inspection of Adult Offending Work in Northamptonshire

An inspection led by HMI Probation



Foreword

The inspection of adult offending work in Northamptonshire was undertaken as part of our Inspection of Adult Offending Work programme that started in April 2013 and will cover all areas of England and Wales. Our purpose in undertaking these inspections is to assess whether the sentence of the court is delivered effectively, and whether work with the individual offender protects the public, reduces the likelihood of reoffending, and provides a high quality service to courts and victims.

This inspection is the last of six where we are focusing on the quality of work in cases where the primary offence is one of violence. Work with violent offenders forms a significant proportion of the work of any Probation Trust. Our sample encompasses a range of violent offences and includes domestic violence but not, for these six inspections, sexual offending. In each case inspected, we expect to see an assessment of the factors that have contributed to the behaviour and progress in addressing these factors and thereby reducing the likelihood of reoffending.

In addition to inspecting cases, we also consider the extent to which the management arrangements have supported those working with offenders through effective leadership and management of staff, appropriate access to resources and constructive partnership with other organisations.

The case sample for this inspection was drawn from those cases managed by Northamptonshire Probation Trust. We found, overall, that work to deliver sentences of the court was effective. Individuals were seen regularly and work undertaken with them in accordance with their sentence plan. Victim contact work was undertaken appropriately.

Court reports included clear proposals, and recommended community sentences where appropriate. The Trust had made a key contribution to increasing the speed with which cases were dealt with. A range of interventions was delivered to reduce the likelihood of reoffending, supported by effective work with other organisations at a strategic level. The Trust was working well with partners in public protection work, but work to support the protection of children from the risk of harm posed by some offenders was sometimes hampered by poor communication and a lack of information from other departments.

The Trust had used internal auditing to identify effectively those areas of practice requiring improvement, and had been addressing the recommendations from our last inspection to improve the quality of risk of harm work in individual cases. However, there was room for further improvement in the quality of risk of harm assessment and planning and management scrutiny. Insufficient priority was accorded to the safety of victims.

We were impressed by the positive way both managers and staff engaged in the inspection process and were clearly keen to learn from our findings. Our inspection report contains a number of recommendations that address our concerns, and are designed to promote the necessary improvements.



Liz Calderbank

HM Chief Inspector of Probation

January 2014

Summary

Outcomes	The proportion of work judged to have been done well enough
Assisting sentencing	78%
Delivering the sentence of the court	79%
Reducing the likelihood of reoffending	73%
Protecting the public	68%
Delivering effective work for victims	74%

Outcome 1: Assisting sentencing

Overall, 78% of work to assist sentencing was done well enough.

There was a good working relationship between the Trust and the courts that facilitated the delivery of strategic objectives and the efficient running of the courts on a daily basis. Sentencers and probation staff met regularly through a well developed liaison structure. The Trust had made a key contribution to increasing the speed with which cases were dealt with, achieving a substantial increase in the proportion of pre-sentence inquiries completed on the day. Sentencers were satisfied overall with the quality of reports, and with the confidence and experience of probation staff working in court.

Court reports were generally based on sufficient information for the court appearance. Most reports contained an appropriate proposal for a community sentence, and the sentence imposed by the court broadly followed the proposal. However, many court reports lacked a sufficient risk of harm screening and/or assessment, and some contained a description rather than an analysis of the offending. Many reports did not indicate the individual's motivation and capacity to comply with the proposed sentence.

Outcome 2: Delivering the sentence of the court

Overall, 79% of work to deliver the sentence of the court was done well enough.

Contact with offenders usually started promptly at the beginning of supervision. Inductions were good and individuals were clearly informed of their commitments and opportunities. There was sufficient assessment of needs and potential barriers to engagement, and of factors to assist rehabilitation. However, action to minimise the impact of potential barriers to engagement should have been included in sentence planning and taken in more cases.

Sentence planning was based on a sufficient assessment of the likelihood of reoffending, risk of harm to others and any other necessary assessments; planned and actual levels of contact with individuals were generally appropriate. However, initial and review sentence plans needed to be more timely, and too many plans failed to address Child Protection concerns. Sentence planning objectives lacked sufficient clarity and outcome-focus. The quality of sentence plan reviews required improvement.

In most cases, interventions were delivered according to the requirements of the sentence and in line with the sentence planning objectives. People were encouraged to engage with their sentence and their individual needs were taken into account.

A timely and investigative approach was taken where appointments had been missed, and where it was needed, effective action was generally taken to secure compliance. Sentence requirements were generally

carried out as intended and sentence plan objectives were achieved fully or partially in the majority of cases. Most people had not been charged with, or convicted of, a new offence during their sentence. People on supervision were largely positive about their experience of contact with the Probation Trust. Offender managers received regular formal supervision and almost all held positive views about the quality and support of line managers.

Outcome 3: Reducing the likelihood of reoffending

Overall, 73% of work to reduce reoffending was done well enough.

Assessments to address the likelihood of reoffending were generally sufficient, taking into account previous relevant behaviour, information from the individual's home and social environment, and factors which contributed to offending. Most individuals were actively and meaningfully involved in the assessment of their likelihood of reoffending. Some assessments should have been completed sooner, and drawn more fully on all available sources of information.

The Trust had an appropriate range of accredited programmes available to address the different types of offending, along with a number of interventions delivered through the use of Specified Activity Requirements.

In the majority of those cases where we judged that alcohol misuse was a factor which made the individual more likely to reoffend, this was taken into account in the assessment of likelihood of reoffending and relevant interventions had been delivered. However, interventions to address alcohol problems were not always included in sentence plans.

Assessments of the likelihood of reoffending were not always reviewed in a timely way, or when there had been significant change. Reviews were not generally used to celebrate progress or acknowledge the changes individuals had made in their lives. The quality of joint working with the provider of drug and alcohol interventions was insufficient in some cases.

The majority of cases had made either good progress or some progress in tackling the most significant factors associated with their likelihood of reoffending.

Outcome 4: Protecting the public by minimising risk of harm to others

Overall, 68% of work to protect the public by minimising the risk of harm to others was done well enough.

The Risk of Serious Harm classification (low, medium, high or very high RoSH to others) was correct in most cases. However, initial Risk of Serious Harm screenings were not completed sufficiently well in some cases, with full details of the current offence and relevant previous behaviour were not always taken into account.

Where required, an initial full risk of harm analysis was either not done or not done well enough in more than one-third of cases. Some were not timely and some needed to draw more fully on available sources of information, such as from Children's Services. There was insufficient analysis of the offending in some cases.

Risk management plans were either not done or of insufficient quality in more than one-third of cases. Many did not anticipate possible changes in risk of harm factors. More than one-third did not accurately describe how the objectives of the sentence plan would address risk of harm issues and protect actual and potential victims.

Relevant information was not always received from Children's Services, and multi-agency Child Protection procedures were used effectively in only half of the relevant cases. In general, insufficient priority was accorded to the safety of current and potential victims in one-third of relevant cases.

Many reviews of Risk of Serious Harm assessments and risk management plans were not timely, or were not done promptly after a significant change in circumstances or risk of harm factors.

Restrictive requirements or conditions were monitored fully in most cases and approved premises were used effectively to manage risk of harm to others.

A few cases eligible for Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements had not been identified, but in general the arrangements operated effectively. Decisions taken within Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements were generally clearly recorded and followed through and acted upon.

Outcome 5: Delivering effective work for victims

Overall, 74% of work to deliver effective services to victims was done well enough.

Most victim contact work was undertaken appropriately, and the quality of the work was good. Victims who responded to our questionnaire about their experience had very positive views about the work undertaken with them.

Insufficient attention was paid to child safeguarding in relation to the offender's contact with any children and young people in one-quarter of relevant cases. In ongoing work with offenders, insufficient priority was accorded to the safety of current and potential victims by the offender manager and any other workers in one-third of relevant cases.

Recommendations

Post-inspection improvement work should focus particularly on ensuring that:

1. risk of harm to others is assessed accurately and promptly, and is reviewed as appropriate; information from other organisations and the safety of actual and potential victims is taken into account
2. additional attention is given to work to protect children and young people
3. effective management oversight is clearly evidenced in the records of all cases involving the protection of children and of those classified as posing a high/very high Risk of Serious Harm to others
4. offenders are actively involved in the review of work done with them during their supervision; reviews are timely and used to support progress, and reinforce objectives and commitment to the sentence.

Please note – all names referred to in the practice examples have been amended to protect the individual's identity.

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Assisting sentencing

1

Outcome 1: Assisting sentencing

What we expect to see

Pre-sentence reports (PSRs) and work in court are intended to enable sentencers to impose appropriate and effective sentences. We expect to see good quality reports which include an assessment of the offender and, where appropriate, a clear proposal.

Case assessment score

Overall, 78% of work to assist sentencing was done well enough.

Key strengths

1. Court reports were generally based on sufficient information for the court appearance. Most reports contained an appropriate proposal for a community sentence, and the sentence imposed by the court broadly followed the proposal.
2. Sentencers were satisfied overall with the quality of reports, and with the confidence and experience of probation staff working in court.
3. The Trust had made a key contribution to increasing the speed with which cases were dealt with, achieving a substantial increase in the proportion of pre-sentence inquiries completed on the day.

Key areas for improvement

1. More than one-quarter of court reports lacked a sufficient risk of harm screening and/or assessment, and some contained a description rather than an analysis of the offending.
2. Many reports did not indicate the individual's motivation and capacity to comply with the proposed sentence.

Explanation of findings

1. Assessment and planning to inform sentencing

- 1.1. The sample we inspected included 41 cases where a report had been prepared for the court to assist them in passing an appropriate sentence. Four of these were oral reports and the remainder were full length or shorter format typed reports.
- 1.2. Almost all of the typed reports were written in a clear and accessible style, although a small number could have been more concise, a point observed by the sentencers we met. This was often caused by insufficient editing of reports produced in the full length format, as they were generated by the Offender Assessment System (OASys) template.
- 1.3. Overall, 78% of the written reports were based on sufficient information for the court appearance. Seven of the eight reports that were not had been prepared in the short report format. Generally, the sources were indicated and verified where necessary, and most were based on the required assessment of likelihood of reoffending and relevant information about the offender's home and social environment. The full reports were of better quality than those prepared in the shorter format against all of these criteria.

- 1.4. Local policy was that all cases were subject to a paper based Risk of Serious Harm (RoSH) screening at court, based on national practice expectations to inform the preparation of reports. Where this triggered a full analysis of the risk of harm to others, the case would be adjourned for a minimum of five days for further inquiries and written report to be prepared. However, there was no evidence in 27% of written reports (mostly those in the shorter format) that they had been based on the required risk of harm screening or assessment. The shorter format written reports were not derived from use of the OASys assessment, and this may have contributed to the finding.
- 1.5. The quality of the content of written reports was judged to be insufficient in 35%. The most frequent area for improvement was the need for a more accurate analysis of the risk of harm posed by the offender, which applied in 32%. Some reports placed too much reliance on the offender's account of their offence, or gave a description of the offence and did not contain enough objective analysis of the offender's behaviour and the risks they posed. Again, the overall content of full written reports was better than those in the shorter format.
- 1.6. At a strategic level the Trust's policy was that PSRs should be done on adjournment, and produced on the day only once staff were confident this was feasible, even though the latter was, in reality, the far more common outcome. However, it appeared to us that operational staff considered the default position was that reports were completed on the day, and cases only adjourned where necessary. This was probably driven by the courts' expectations arising from the Trust's successful contribution to joint work designed to speed up the administration of justice, as explained below. Some decisions to provide a report on the day were based on the offence type and the intention of the court to impose a specific sentence, without regard to the need for a thorough assessment of the potential risk of harm to others posed by the individual. The Trust had introduced a screening tool to indicate to court liaison staff the appropriate type of report to be used, but in some cases this had not been used correctly.
- 1.7. Of the written reports, 81% contained an appropriate proposal for a community sentence. Nearly all included clear and specific proposals, which generally followed logically from the main content of the report, and were proportionate to the seriousness of the offence.
- 1.8. The proposal for the type of sentence was broadly followed by the court in all but four cases. Nearly three-quarters of the proposals were for a community order. There were only two proposals for a suspended sentence order, both of which were followed. Other suspended sentence orders in the sample were made following a proposal for a community order. There were also two proposals for a custodial sentence, but in both of these cases the court passed a community sentence.
- 1.9. Most proposals were appropriate to the nature of the offending, and to the offender's circumstances, but one-third of the reports did not indicate the offender's level of motivation and ability to complete the proposed sentence, while 41% of the reports inspected failed to identify how any particular barriers to compliance and engagement would be addressed. The sentencers we met said they were particularly interested to know about the offender's level of motivation and how any barriers to completing the sentence could be overcome.
- 1.10. In nearly all written reports, the planned outcome of the proposed sentence was clear, and related to the intended purposes of the proposed sentence. They took full account of the assessed likelihood of reoffending and the risk of harm posed by the individual.

2. Leadership and management to support sentencing

- 2.1. We met with sentencers, court personnel and Trust staff responsible for liaison with the courts. There was a good working relationship between the Trust and the courts that supported the efficient running of the courts on a daily basis and had facilitated significant improvements in the administration of justice. Sentencers were impressed by the way the Trust had worked with them to achieve strategic objectives.

Practice illustration – promoting compliance with the sentence

The Probation Trust had played a key role in the CJSSS programme through supporting the quicker processing of cases at court. This had also supported the previous National Offender Management Service (NOMS) target to deliver 70% of reports on the same day they were requested. This had been achieved with a move from 80% of cases being adjourned for reports to 80% reports being completed on the day.

To achieve this, the Trust had invested more qualified probation officer time into court liaison work and clarified the role boundaries between probation officer and probation service officer posts. The latter had received additional training in report writing and the assessment of risk of harm. The Trust attempted to identify in advance the hearings for cases currently under supervision so that a court report could be ready on the day.

Sentencers were impressed with the experience and confidence of the probation liaison staff and their flexibility in organising the production of reports at court given the constraints imposed by time, space and complexity of court listing. They considered that the Trust had been 'most helpful and supportive, and just got on with it and made it happen'.

In addition to the specific benefit of speedier justice, sentencers also appreciated the much higher level of personal contact with liaison staff, in assisting with sentencing decisions, that was inherent in the revised arrangements.

- 2.2. Sentencers and probation staff met regularly through a well developed liaison structure. The Trust contributed to regular Probation Liaison Committee meetings, and these were supported by more frequent meetings at operational level. Processes enabled sentencers routinely to feedback on the quality of court reports. The Trust had run an online sentencer survey in 2012 to obtain direct feedback on liaison services, and planned to repeat this in the near future.
- 2.3. There was a joint newsletter (Magistrates' Matter) for sentencers, and they received a regular performance update on enforcement, compliance and completions. Figures on reoffending rates were only available from national data, and the Trust recognised that the provision of local outcome data for both sentencers and offender managers was an area where more could be done.
- 2.4. Simple headline information on the interventions provided by the Trust was available to sentencers at court, but a more in-depth national information book was now out of date. Sentencers thought that some of their colleagues were not fully aware of the current changes to the range of accredited programme provision.
- 2.5. The county had a comparatively high rate for the use of custody (relative to national figures) and to support the court in reducing this, the Trust had introduced an Effective Proposal Framework and trained all report writers in its use. The Trust reported a reduction in the use of custody and suspended sentences and better matching of order requirements to the needs of the case. The Trust had also piloted a new intensive community order delivered as part of the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) scheme, and promoted through the attendance of IOM staff at court for sentencing.
- 2.6. The Trust had good strategic oversight of the practical changes contributing to the CJSSS agenda and the move to a high proportion of shorter format reports. This was supported by processes to ensure that the correct type of report was produced according to the nature of the case. The Trust was aware of the potential pitfalls in the large scale use of shorter format reports identified above, and had undertaken some ad hoc monitoring of the processes to guard against them.

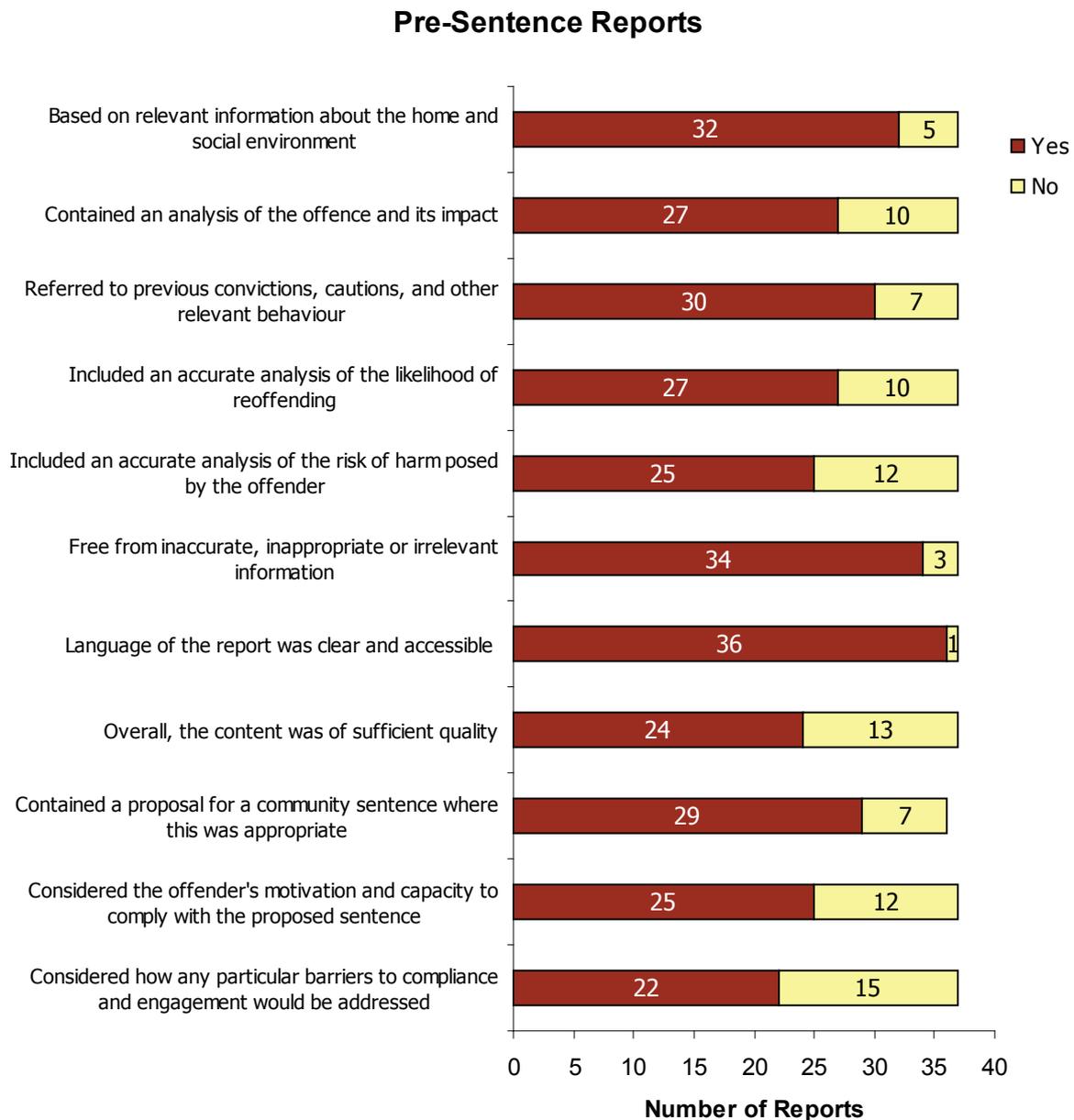
Summary

Overall, 78% of work to assist sentencing was done well enough.

For a summary of our findings please see page 2

Data Summary

The following chart summarises data from some of the key questions assessed during the inspection of cases. [NB: 70 cases were inspected. However, the total answers may not equal this, since some questions may not have been applicable to every case]



Delivering the sentence of the court

2

Outcome 2: Delivering the sentence of the court

What we expect to see

Victims, sentencers and the public have the right to expect that the sentence of the court will be delivered as intended, and enforced where necessary. We expect to see work to engage and motivate offenders in order to ensure that they complete their sentences, and that the work undertaken with them is effective in reducing offending and promoting community reintegration.

Case assessment score

Overall, 79% of work to deliver the sentence of the court was done well enough.

Key strengths

1. Contact with offenders usually started promptly at the beginning of supervision. Inductions were good and individuals were clearly informed of their commitments and opportunities. There was sufficient assessment of needs and potential barriers to engagement, and of factors to assist rehabilitation.
2. Sentence planning was based on a sufficient assessment of the likelihood of reoffending, risk of harm to others, and any other necessary assessments and planned and actual levels of contact with individuals were generally appropriate.
3. In most cases, interventions were delivered according to the requirements of the sentence and in line with the sentence planning objectives. People were encouraged to engage with their sentence and their individual needs were taken into account.
4. A timely and investigative approach was taken where appointments had been missed and, where it was needed, effective action was generally taken to secure compliance.
5. Sentence requirements were generally carried out as intended and sentence plan objectives were achieved fully or partially in the majority of cases. Most people had not been charged with, or convicted of, a new offence during their sentence.
6. People on supervision were largely positive about their experience of contact with the Probation Trust.
7. Offender managers received regular formal supervision and almost all held positive views about the quality and support of line managers.

Key areas for improvement

1. Action to minimise the impact of potential barriers to engagement should have been included in sentence planning and taken in more cases.
2. Initial and review sentence plans needed to be more timely, and too many plans failed to address Child Protection concerns. Sentence planning objectives lacked sufficient clarity and outcome-focus.
3. The quality of sentence plan reviews required improvement.

Explanation of findings

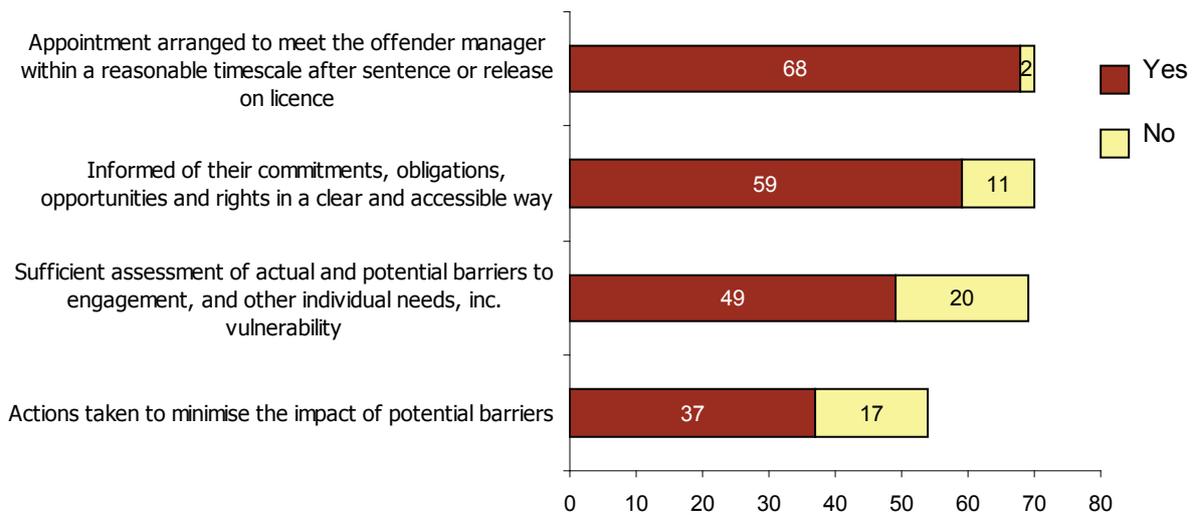
1. Assessment and planning to deliver the sentence

- 1.1. We assessed 70 cases as part of this inspection, of which 62 were clearly allocated to the correct

tier of service at the start of their community sentence or release on licence. The indicative tiering had not been followed in eight cases, but a valid reason for this had only been recorded in two of them.

- 1.2. In all but two of the cases an appointment was arranged for the individual to meet their offender manager soon after sentence. In 83% of cases there was evidence they were offered a full, timely and individualised induction at the start of their order or licence.
- 1.3. Sentence planning was based on a sufficient assessment of the likelihood of reoffending, risk of harm to others, and any other necessary assessments in most cases. However we found that in those cases where there had been a full written PSR the plan was better than those where sentencing had been based on a shorter format report. In all cases plans were sufficiently timely in more than three-quarters of cases.
- 1.4. The chart below provides a breakdown of our findings about work related to engaging people at the start of supervision. This shows that most aspects of this task were being done well. In particular, we found most people starting supervision were clearly informed in an understandable way of their commitments, obligations, opportunities and rights in relation to their order or licence. In the majority of cases there had been a sufficient assessment of the person’s individual needs. This included any vulnerability issues and potential barriers to that person engaging with their sentence and completing it successfully, such as mental health problems or being homeless. However, action to minimise the impact of potential barriers to engagement should have been taken in more cases.

Engaging people at the start of sentence

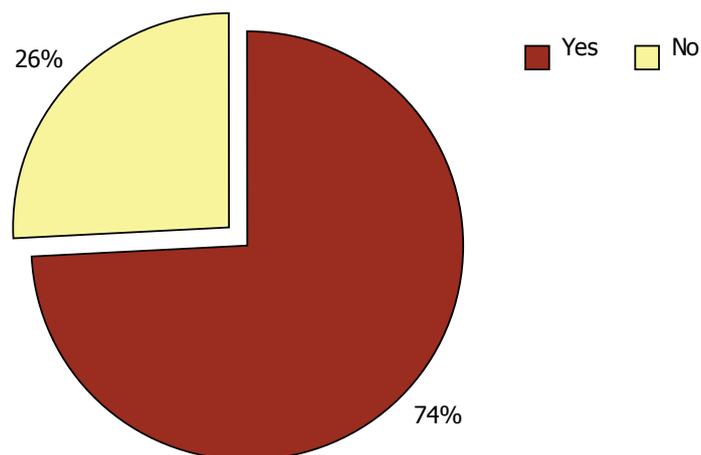


- 1.5. In sentence planning, we expect to see that individuals are actively and meaningfully involved in their drawing up their plan. We saw evidence of this in 74% of the cases, while in the NOMS Offender Survey results for the Trust the figure was higher (see below). Overall, we found that a timely and informed sentence plan had been completed in 72% of cases, while in 23% the plan should have been done earlier. In most cases, planning was sufficiently informed by the assessment of the individual’s likelihood of reoffending and risk of harm to others. In three cases there was no initial plan at all.
- 1.6. In more than three-quarters of the 56 cases where this was relevant, there was sufficient assessment of factors likely to assist with rehabilitation. This included education, employability, accommodation and potential sources of support within the family or community. This is an important factor in them desisting from committing crime in the longer term. Only 58% of cases had evidence of a current Skills for Life screening, although it was local policy for one to be done in all cases at the PSR or initial planning stage. The Trust had been tracking performance on

their completion and said it had improved, although not to the level that we found in our sample. However, even though screenings were often missing, in the majority of cases there was sufficient assessment of needs relating to education and employability.

- 1.7. In more than three-quarters of cases where such issues had been identified, sufficient action had been either taken or included in sentence planning to enhance the impact of these factors. The individual had been signposted to an appropriate service in most cases where that was required.
- 1.8. As illustrated in the following chart, during sentence planning the offender manager could have paid more attention to factors which might promote the individual's engagement and compliance with their sentence in one-quarter of the cases we inspected. In particular, in almost one-third, insufficient attention was paid to their strengths and aptitudes, and the methods most likely to be effective in work with them. More attention was needed to the individual's level of motivation and capacity to change in nearly one-quarter.
- 1.9. Consequently, actions needed to minimise the impact of potential barriers to engagement were not included in relevant planning documents in nearly one-third of the cases.

Sentence planning paid sufficient attention to factors which may promote compliance



- 1.10. Sentence planning set appropriate objectives in nearly three-quarters of cases. Plans usually contained objectives which were appropriate to the purposes of sentencing and which tackled the factors linked with the likelihood of reoffending and risk of harm to others. However, there were no objectives to manage Child Protection concerns in seven out of 21 relevant cases, or to address required actions from multi-agency risk management procedures, for example from Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), in 5 out of 20 relevant cases.
- 1.11. While in the majority of cases the contribution of alcohol misuse to the offence was taken into account in the assessment of likelihood of reoffending (and relevant interventions were subsequently delivered) it was not addressed sufficiently in sentence planning in nearly one-quarter of the 35 relevant cases.
- 1.12. We expect to see sentence planning objectives which are clearly and simply worded, outcome-focused and set out achievable steps, but 43% of the plans did not meet these criteria. In more cases it was clearer what the individual had to do to achieve the objectives, but there were still more than one-quarter where it was hard to tell what was actually expected.
- 1.13. Planned levels of contact with the individual were generally appropriate to the case and were recorded.

- 1.14. In three-quarters of the cases there was a clear record of the contribution to be made by all workers in the case to achieving sentence planning objectives, and evidence that relevant parts of the plan had been communicated to other people involved.
- 1.15. In 79% of cases there was clear indication of when the sentence plan would be reviewed, and this was usually appropriate for the case. The timescale for reviewing progress against objectives was clear in 81%, but there was no indication of what changes might prompt an unscheduled review in 57%.

2. Delivery and review of the sentence plan and maximising offender engagement

- 2.1. Interventions were delivered according to the requirements of the sentence in 81% of cases, and in line with the sentence planning objectives in 72%.
- 2.2. In most cases the risk of harm to others presented by the offender was taken into account in the delivery of interventions, irrespective of the assessed level of that risk.
- 2.3. Most individuals also received sufficient help to improve their social networks and sources of support within the family and community where this was needed.

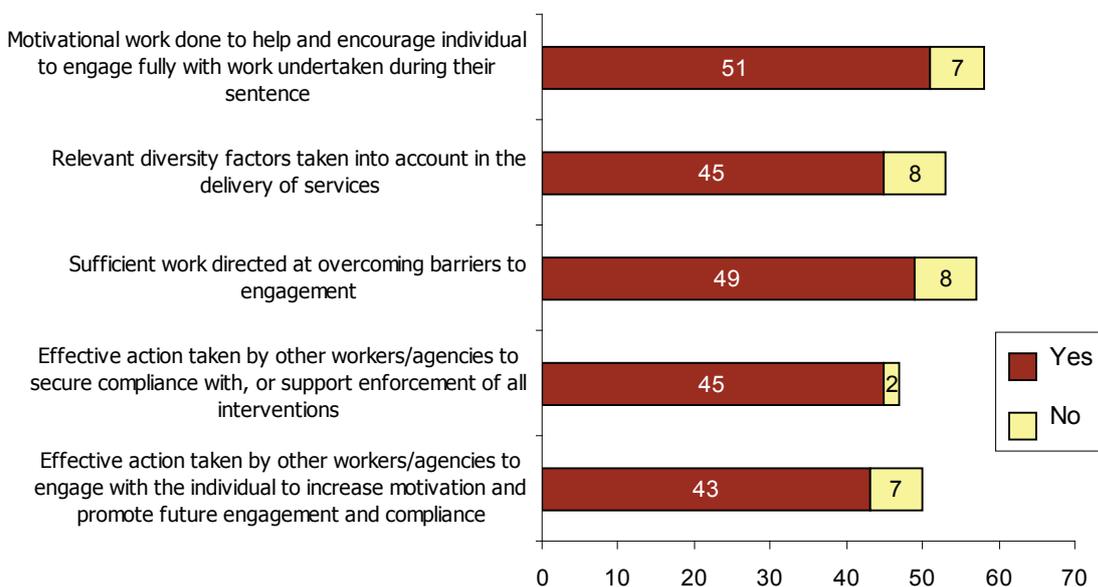
Practice illustration – Practical help to support offending behaviour work and promote desistance

Darren had a history of violent and other offending, mostly connected with binge drinking and cocaine use. He had served a long custodial sentence for serious violent offences, and while in custody had completed the Thinking Skills Programme (TSP). Prison staff described him as a ‘hugely changed character’.

Once released on licence, Darren made a determined effort to rebuild his life. He stayed away from his former associates, using learning from his TSP and techniques suggested by his offender manager to make better decisions about his life. He was keen to find work and his offender manager linked him with the education, training and employment (ETE) worker.

When Darren found work through an agency his ETE worker obtained suitable work clothes and boots for him, to support the efforts he had made himself. Some nine months after his release, Darren had been working consistently for five months in his new employment, he had not been reconvicted, and there was no sign of the drinking and drug problems of old.

Increasing motivation and promoting compliance with the sentence

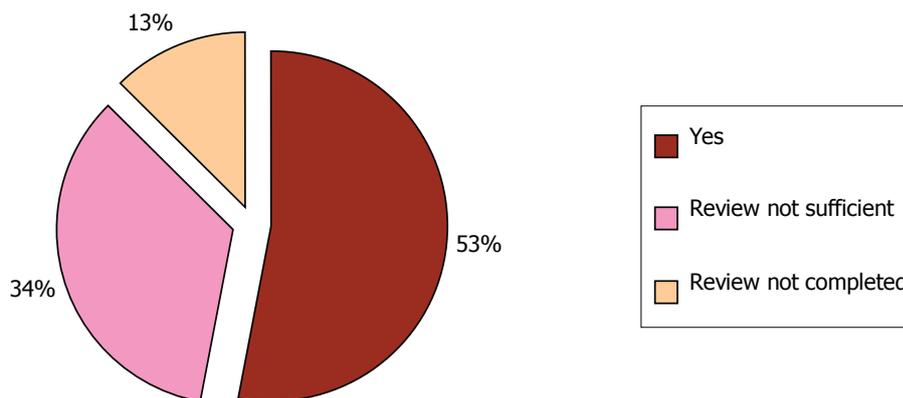


- 2.4. As illustrated in the following chart, in most cases motivational work was done with individuals to encourage them to engage fully with their sentence, and any diversity factors and other individual needs were taken into account in the delivery of services in nearly all cases. In most cases, sufficient work was done to help individuals overcome any barriers they faced in getting through their order or licence, for example lack of settled accommodation, or mental health issues like depression.
- 2.5. The level of contact arranged with individuals was sufficient to promote positive outcomes in 80% of cases. In almost all cases it was sufficient to facilitate the delivery of the sentence and achieve sentence plan objectives. In most cases there was enough contact with individuals to tackle their likelihood of reoffending and take full account of their level of risk of harm, and monitor changes in dynamic risk factors.
- 2.6. However, we did observe that in many cases there was an automatic reduction in the level of contact based on length of time under supervision (for example, to monthly contact after six months), without evidence of a rationale for this decision. Such a rationale should have been based on a sufficient assessment of the current likelihood of further offending or risk of harm to others, and recorded in a review of the progress being made by the case. The Trust's own audit of cases had also found that often there was no record of any judgement to determine the level of contact, but concluded that since the levels of contact were sufficient in most cases professional judgements must actually have been made.
- 2.7. The level of contact maintained with offenders in custody was enough to contribute to the post-release planning and case management in the majority of licence cases.
- 2.8. Overall, in most cases sufficient resources were allocated throughout the sentence to address the purpose of the sentence, the likelihood of reoffending and risk of harm to others, and any relevant diversity needs.
- 2.9. In nearly all cases the offender manager took a leading role in relation to other workers in managing the sentence, and monitored attendance at appointments for supervision, rehabilitation work or for unpaid work.
- 2.10. In all but a few instances, a timely and investigative approach was taken where appointments had been missed. Where it was needed, effective action was generally taken by other workers involved in the case to secure compliance. In most cases, other workers also took action to increase motivation and encourage engagement and compliance in the future. The Trust had a service users' relationship forum, and this had been used to improve warning letters to make them more engaging and encouraging.
- 2.11. In 53 cases, the individual had not attended when required or there were instances of unacceptable behaviour. In most of these cases professional judgements by offender managers about the acceptability of absence or other behaviour were appropriate, and the decisions made were reasonable, consistent and clearly recorded.
- 2.12. In all but two cases, a clear and timely formal warning was given to the individual and, where necessary, enforcement proceedings or recall were used appropriately in all but three cases. Clear explanations were given to the individual in most instances about why they were being returned to court or recalled, and proceedings were started promptly. In most cases sufficient effort was made to re-engage the offender with their sentence plan, and encourage their commitment to continued engagement.
- 2.13. We expect to see sentence plans reviewed within the timescale stated in the initial plan or within a reasonable period. Where a review was required, this had been done sufficiently well in only 53% of cases. One-third were of insufficient quality, and in 13% no review had been undertaken at all.
- 2.14. Our inspection sample of cases, approximately nine months into supervision, fell during a period when the Trust had temporarily lost the facility to produce management information reports on the

completion of OASys reviews. Middle managers were aware that where there had been staffing shortages practitioners had given priority to completing initial and termination assessments and reviews, rather than interim reviews.

- 2.15. The two following charts set out the detail of our findings in relation to the review of sentence plans. A particular area of concern was in relation to timeliness, where one-third of sentence plans had not been reviewed within a reasonable interval after the initial sentence plan or last review (given the specific nature of each case), and one-third had not been reviewed in line with the timescale stated in the initial plan. The leadership of the Trust was aware that this was a problem, and had found through its own audit that practitioners were not exercising professional judgment in deciding when cases should be reviewed.
- 2.16. The Trust also recognised that reviews of sentence plans often contained little or no specific detail of the work done and progress achieved to date. This significantly reduced the degree to which reviews could be used to recognise and reinforce the progress being made by the individual and support and encourage their desistance from offending. Further details of our findings in relation to reviewing sentence plans are given below.
- 2.17. It is good practice that reviews are undertaken where there had been significant change, for example completion of a requirement of the sentence, or changes in the individual’s circumstances which might affect classification of risk of harm to others. However, reviews had not been done promptly following any significant change of this kind in more than half of 44 relevant cases, nor used to allocate additional resources in more than one-third of the 23 where this was required.
- 2.18. The Trust considered one cause of this was the failure of the new alcohol and drug interventions provider to supply information to offender managers on the progress of cases for which it was delivering services and this, therefore, did not prompt, and certainly could not inform, reviews of the case. A new agreement with the provider had been put in place to restore the previous practice of three-way review meetings to review progress on specific interventions.

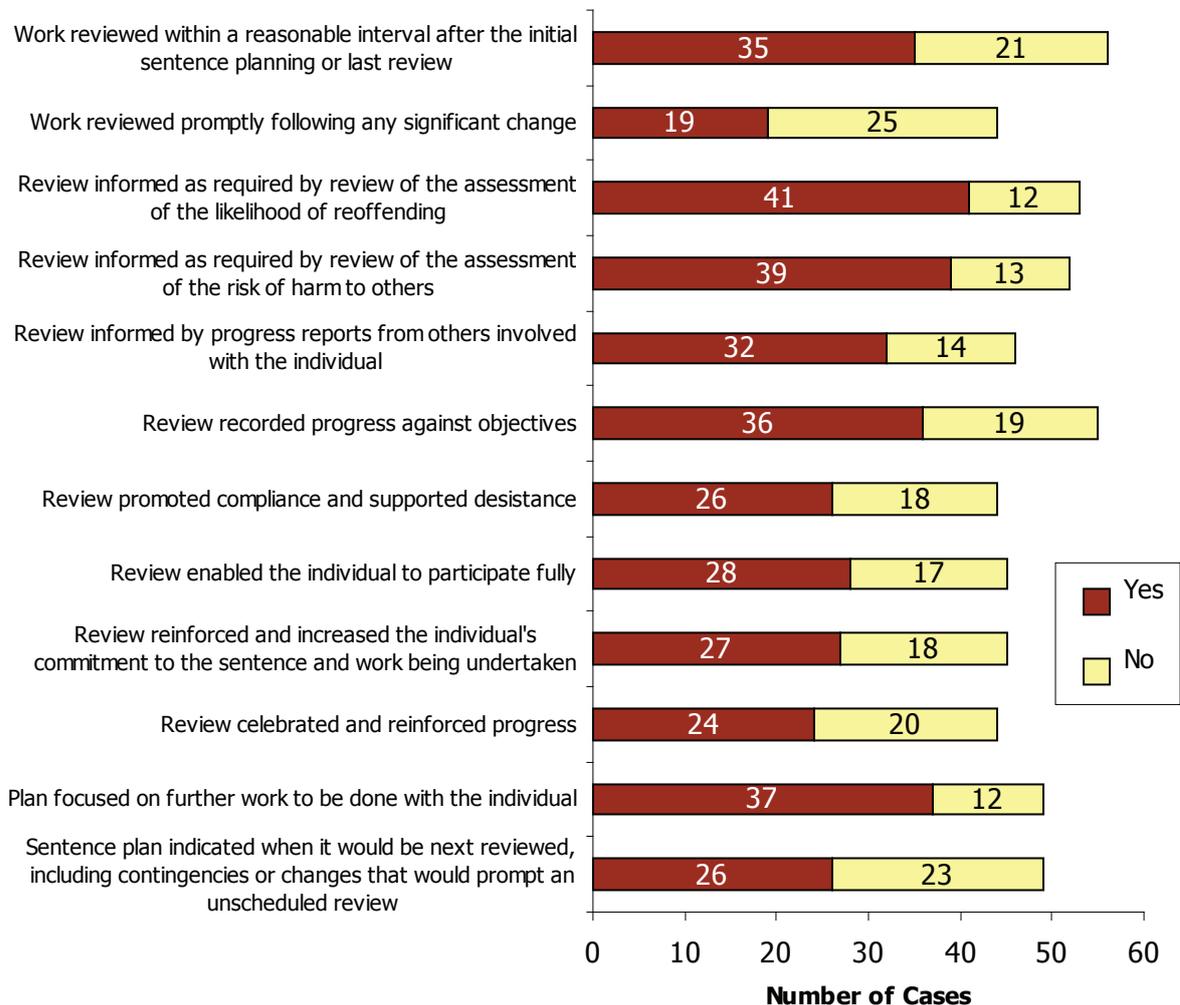
Sufficient review of the sentence plan



- 2.19. In more than one-third of cases sentence plan reviews were not being used to reinforce and increase the individual’s commitment to their sentence, and not undertaken in a way which enabled the individual to participate fully. More than one-third were not used as an opportunity to celebrate the individual’s progress. These were missed opportunities to encourage individuals in their efforts to complete their sentence and desist from offending.
- 2.20. In one-quarter of cases, reviews did not focus on the further work to be done with the individual, and did not describe the ongoing level and pattern of contact. Only half indicated when the sentence

plan would next be reviewed, including a record of any contingencies or changes that would prompt an unscheduled review, and only two-thirds set a period for further reviews appropriate to the case.

Reviewing sentence plans and reinforcing progress

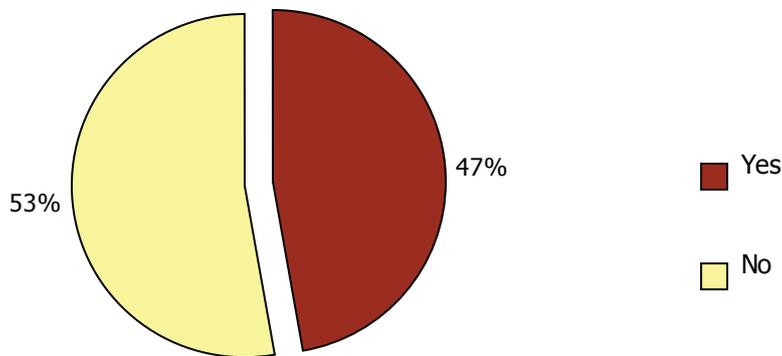


- 2.21. Seven cases in our sample had been transferred between Trusts following a change of address, and in all cases there was there clarity about who was managing the case at every point in the transfer process.
- 2.22. In particular, for two cases arriving into the Trust's area, an appointment had been made as soon as possible following notification of them living in the area. There was a sufficient update of the sentence plan, and assessment of likelihood of reoffending and risk of harm in one of the cases arriving in the Trust area. In the five cases transferring out of the Trust, this had been done in three of them.
- 2.23. The transfer of cases from the Youth Offending Service (YOS) to probation was well supported by the Trust, and included joint meetings in line with agreed protocols. This is in line with good practice identified in our recent thematic inspection on the management of people in their transition from youth offending to adult probation services.
- 2.24. Case recording was generally good and supported the overall management of the case. Recording of information was generally clear and timely. In one-quarter of the cases the records did not fully reflect the work carried out with the individual, and from discussion with offender managers it was clear that more work had gone into the cases than was actually evidenced.

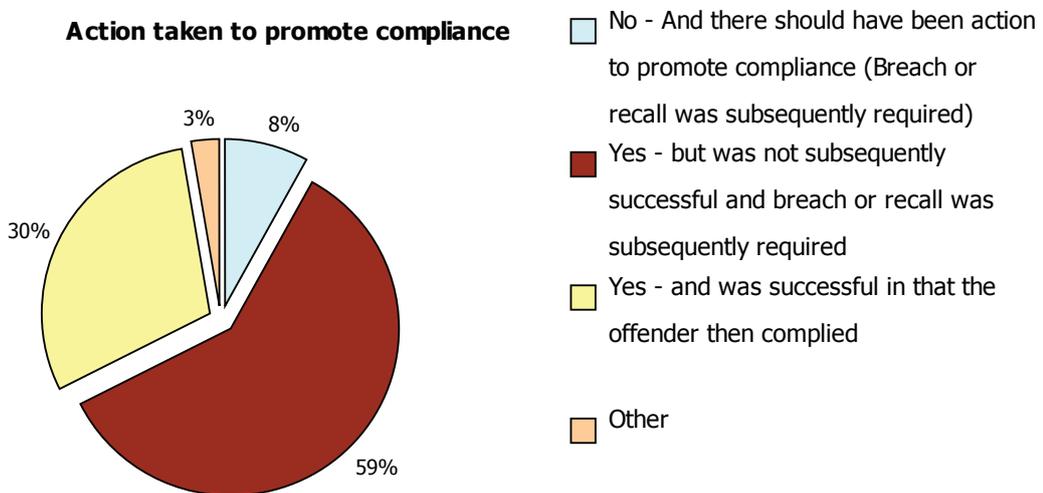
3. Initial outcomes are achieved

- 3.1. The requirements of the order or licence were delivered as intended in 84% of the cases in the sample. In those where they were not, this was often due to the late delivery of specific interventions. In almost all cases, reporting instructions given to individuals were sufficient for the purpose of carrying out the sentence of the court.
- 3.2. In 47% of cases the individual complied with the sentence without the need for additional action by the offender manager. In the remainder, either immediate breach or recall action was taken, or steps were taken by the offender manager to promote compliance. This was successful in one-third of the cases where undertaken, while in the others breach or recall action had to be taken subsequently. The offender manager failed to take sufficient steps to promote compliance in only three cases.

The individual complied with the requirements of the sentence, without the need for the offender manager to take action to promote compliance

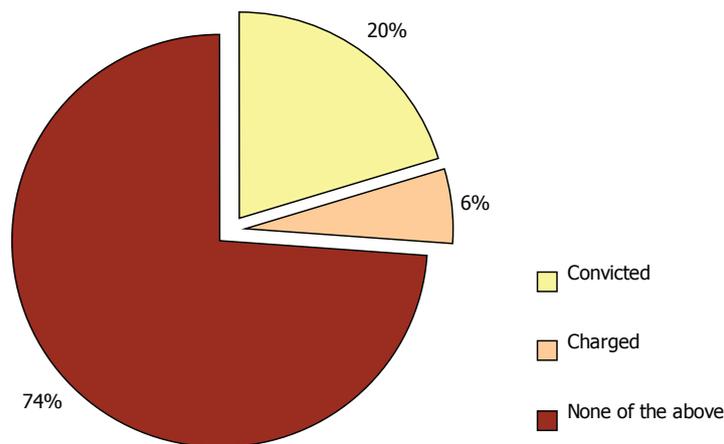


Action taken to promote compliance



- 3.3. In the case sample, 74% of individuals had not been cautioned for, charged with or convicted of a further offence during the period of supervision we inspected.

Further offending committed since the start of the sentence or release on licence



- 3.4. Sentence planning objectives had been achieved fully in 21%, and partially in 54% of cases. The delivery of the sentence plan had usually been maintained when there was a change in offender manager.
- 3.5. Three cases in the sample had been appropriately terminated early for good progress, and we identified only one other case that could have been, but an application had not been made to the court. One case had been terminated early but should not have been.

What people who had offended thought of their experience:

NOMS conducts an annual survey of the views of people in contact with Probation Trusts. For 2012, Northamptonshire had 414 responses, the data from which is given below.

- The findings were largely positive. The survey found a strong level of individuals’ involvement in their sentence planning, consistent with our inspection findings. Their experiences of being on supervision were very positive, and this is also consistent with the generally positive findings of this inspection in relation to the achievement of positive outcomes.
- The large majority indicated they felt they had received sufficient help, and this was consistent with our finding that sentence planning objectives had been fully or partially achieved in three-quarters of cases.

Comments from individuals:

"I'm happy with the support I'm getting from probation."

"I would not change anything [about the Probation Service] because the help and support has always been there for me."

"You [the local probation staff] are all great so thank you for all your help and support."

"Having a planned written program helped me to settle down after a very unsettled way of life."

Less positive comments:

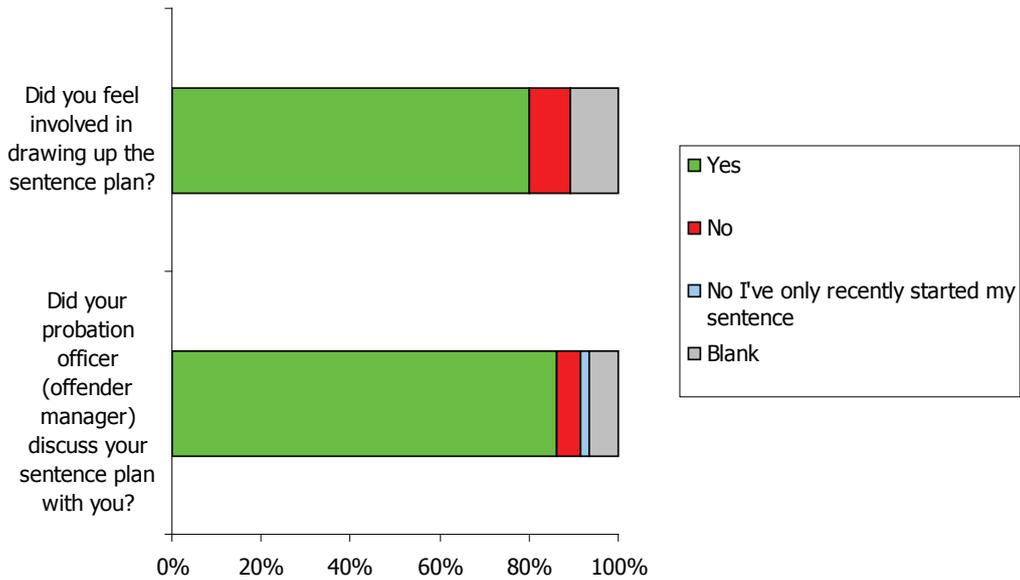
"[I wasn't happy with] the waiting times to see somebody - the waiting is a bit uncomfortable sometimes."

"[I would prefer] coming every week rather than less often (monthly)."

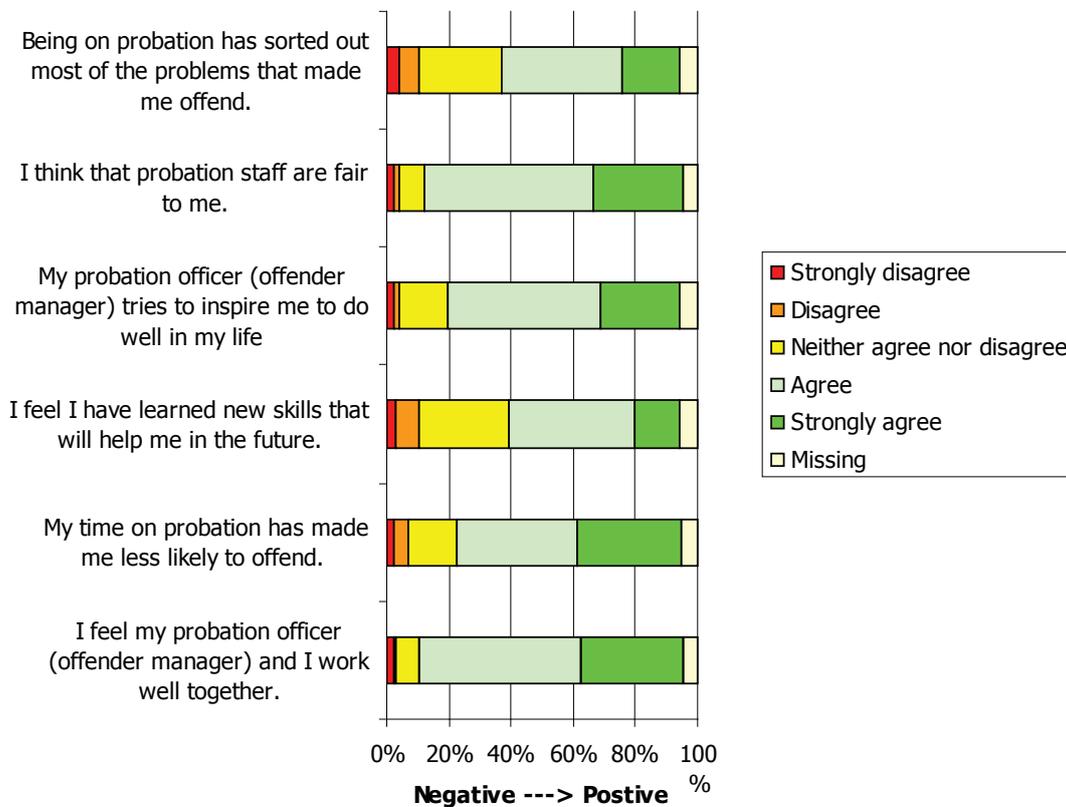
"There needs to be a greater understanding of each persons abilities, and a far better way of organising Unpaid Work projects to use offender skill sets."

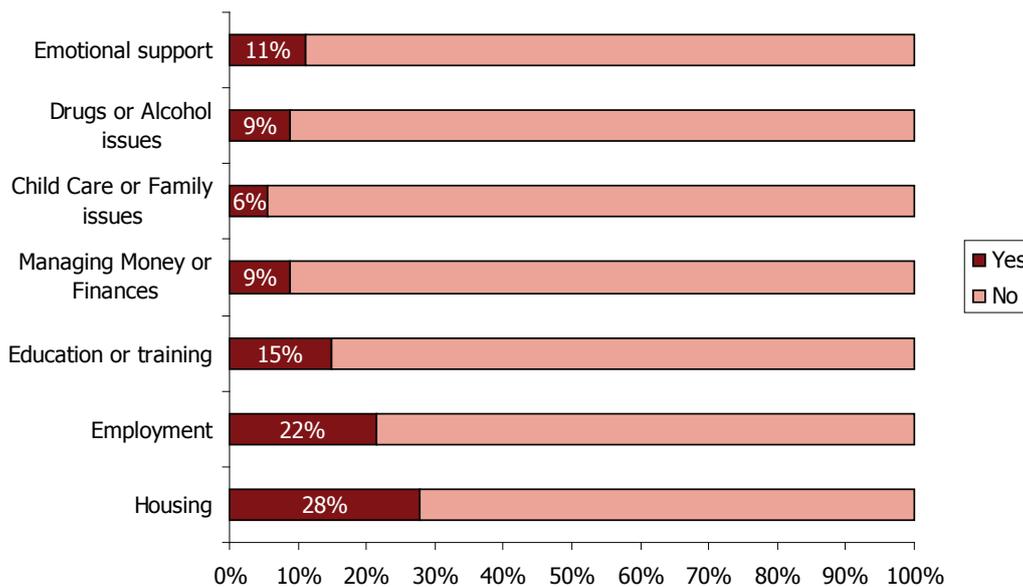
The charts below show some of the responses from the survey.

Section 1 - About Current Order/Sentence



Section 2 - About Experience on Probation



I would like (or would have liked) more help with:**4. Leadership and management to deliver the sentence and achieve initial outcomes**

- 4.1. We interviewed 35 offender managers during the inspection (as part of the inspection of the cases in the sample) to gain their views about their experience of working for the Trust. When asked about workloads, one-quarter thought that these were not actively monitored, and/or not managed in a fair and transparent way. The Trust acknowledged that there had been difficulties, particularly with the workload measurement tool not running during the switch-over to nDelius. Many staff thought the tool had a more fundamental problem in not being sufficiently able to take account of the qualitative demands of different types of work. There was a fortnightly middle managers meeting to review workload measurement tool outputs and look at workloads and offender manager availability across county.
- 4.2. In respect of staff absences, 74% thought that planned absences, such as holiday leave or long-term sick leave, were managed in an effective way to minimise any disruption to the continuity of offender management. However, in relation to unplanned absences (such as short notice sickness), only 60% thought they were handled to ensure that offenders were still seen as planned. Staff in some places reported working practices that focused on providing consistent paring arrangements to cover all absences, but this was not universal.
- 4.3. The Trust had been working to address long-term problems of a high rate of staff absence and protracted difficulties in the application of staff capability procedures, both of which resulted in a continuing lack of capacity. This, in turn, had impacted negatively on both practitioner workloads (and their ability to deliver work to a sufficient standard) and the capacity of middle managers to focus on quality improvement. Work was being done with the middle manager group to support them in absence management, and relevant training had been provided.
- 4.4. Almost all of the offender managers held very positive views about the skills of their line managers, saying that they had the ability to assess the quality of their work, assist their development, and support them. All but four thought that their manager was actively involved in helping them improve the quality of their work. Three-quarters thought that routine countersigning of their work and management oversight was an active process.
- 4.5. However, staff also reported difficulties caused by a lack of consistency among some countersigning managers as to the standard required for assessments and plans, and the appropriate threshold for the escalation of cases causing concern within inter-agency management processes. This was

highlighted where management oversight was being provided by different staff on different days to cover manager absences, and work in the same cases would be repeatedly 'rolled-back' for amendment prior to signing-off as different countersigners raised different issues for rectification. The Trust aimed to increase consistency in the use of oversight through the OASys quality assurance process and running of benchmarking exercises.

- 4.6. Of the offender managers we interviewed, half had regular, professional supervision (line management meetings) with their manager at six-weekly intervals, with only one having supervision less frequently. The remainder had meetings more often, typically at monthly intervals.
- 4.7. This was a commendable frequency of supervisory input given that resources and workloads across the middle manager group were not evenly spread, and the community delivery managers that held line management oversight of offender management teams had large groups of staff to manage. However, this may have contributed to the insufficient management oversight of work in individual cases noted later in the report.
- 4.8. The Trust's performance unit provided a 'dashboard list' that identified problems and training needs relating to individual practitioners, to support line managers in their supervision of practitioners. The Trust had also made extensive use of internal auditing to identify effectively those areas of practice requiring improvement.
- 4.9. Case discussion, personal well-being, and training and development featured in supervision for most of the staff we met, while career development was discussed with one-half.
- 4.10. Only six of the offender managers had received mentoring or coaching at some time, but nearly half reported that their practice had been observed, mostly by their manager, followed by feedback and discussion. Some had also been involved in action learning sets or similar structured learning.
- 4.11. The Trust had been implementing the Skills for Effective Engagement and Development and Supervision (SEEDS) project during the period of work covered by this inspection, and this had included an offender engagement working party, desistance road shows, action learning sets, and informal mentoring groups. However, the full implementation of the programme appeared to have stalled and it was not mentioned by many of the offender managers we met, nor was it specifically in evidence in many of the cases we inspected.
- 4.12. Most offender managers thought that the particular methods used in supervision had promoted improvements in their practice, and only seven thought they had not. Of the 17 who indicated that they had relevant diversity needs, nine of them thought that these had been reasonably addressed by the organisation.
- 4.13. In respect of learning and development opportunities, most offender managers held a relevant professional qualification. However, 13 out of the 35 staff we interviewed did not think that arrangements for ongoing training and development were sufficient to equip them to do their current job, while 18 thought the same in relation to them meeting future development needs. In most cases they thought this was because there were insufficient relevant training or development opportunities, rather than a lack of time to undertake them.
- 4.14. Fourteen of the thirty-five staff reported receiving specific training in practice methods or interventions in respect of violent offending. Many felt that they had received sufficient training around diversity factors but more than half reported less confidence in making initial assessments around a range of issues including culture, ethnicity and language, mental health problems, and issues relating to women offenders and those in the 18-21 age range.
- 4.15. All but one of those who were interviewed felt confident that they could identify and work with Child Protection and safeguarding issues, although as noted later in this report, insufficient attention was paid to child safeguarding in relation to the offender's contact with any children and young people in one-quarter of cases.

- 4.16. Half of the offender managers spoke positively about formal opportunities to discuss practice issues with colleagues, and thought that arrangements to share the learning from Serious Further Offences (SFOs) and Serious Case Reviews were sufficient. Overall, less than half of the offender managers interviewed thought that the Trust promoted a culture of learning and development.
- 4.17. Training and development was a standard agenda item in supervision, but some observed that there had been insufficient staff consultation in the creation of the Trust's training plan. The Trust no longer had its own training officer or training unit. However, a number of offender managers had been trained as trainers, and various training events on core practice issues has been delivered.
- 4.18. Support was provided to middle managers through a leadership development forum, and for some through training in supervision skills and coaching. A staff survey had been used to identify issues for middle managers.

Summary

Overall, 79% of work to deliver the sentence of the court was done well enough.

We have recommended that post-inspection improvement work focuses on ensuring that:

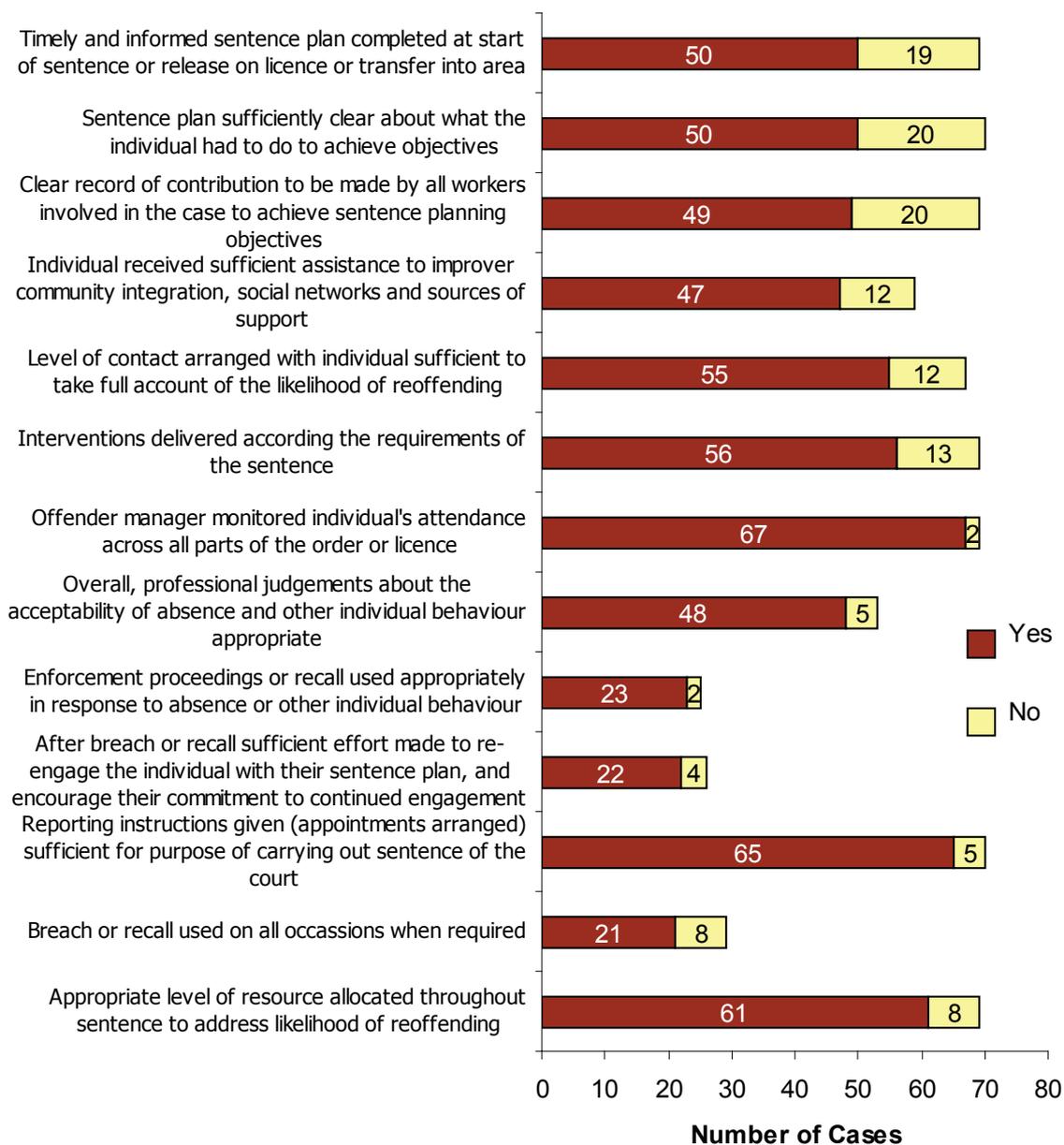
- offenders are actively involved in the review of work done with them during their supervision, reviews are timely and used to support progress, and reinforce objectives and commitment to the sentence.

For a summary of our findings please see page 2

Data Summary

The following chart summarises data from some of the key questions assessed during the inspection of cases. [NB: 70 cases were inspected. However, the total answers may not equal this, since some questions may not have been applicable to every case]

Delivering the Sentence



Reducing the likelihood of reoffending

3

Outcome 3: Reducing the likelihood of reoffending

What we expect to see

A number of factors may contribute to the likelihood of an offender committing further crime. We expect to see an accurate assessment of these factors at the start of sentence and evidence that effective, targeted work has reduced the likelihood of reoffending.

Case assessment score

Overall, 73% of work to reduce the likelihood of reoffending was done well enough.

Key strengths

1. Assessments to address the likelihood of reoffending were generally sufficient, taking into account previous relevant behaviour, information from the individual's home and social environment, and factors which contributed to offending. Most individuals were actively and meaningfully involved in the assessment of their likelihood of reoffending.
2. The Trust had an appropriate range of accredited programmes available to address the different types of offending, along with a number of interventions delivered through the use of specified activity requirements (SARs).
3. In the majority of those cases where we judged that alcohol misuse was a factor which made the individual more likely to reoffend, this was taken into account in the assessment of likelihood of reoffending and relevant interventions had been delivered.
4. The majority of individuals had made either good or some progress in tackling the most significant factors associated with their likelihood of reoffending.

Key areas for improvement

1. Some assessments of the likelihood of reoffending should have been completed sooner and drawn more fully on all available sources of information.
2. Assessments of the likelihood of reoffending were not always reviewed in a timely way or when there had been significant change. Reviews were not generally used to celebrate progress or acknowledge the changes individuals had made in their lives.
3. The quality of joint working with the provider of offender drug and alcohol interventions was insufficient in some cases.

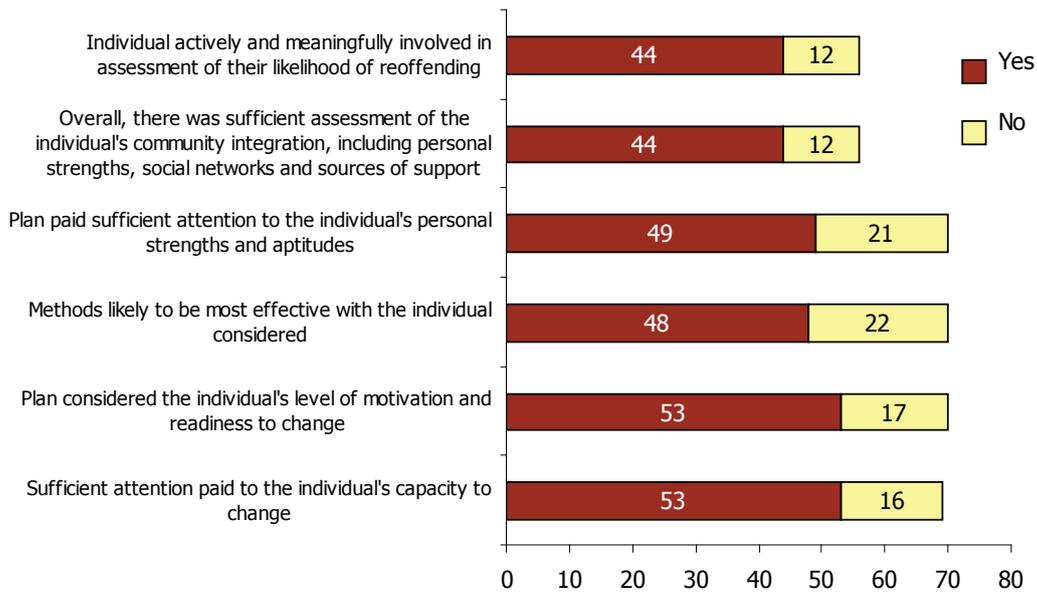
Explanation of findings

1. Assessment to reduce the likelihood of reoffending

- 1.1. An assessment of the factors which may contribute to the likelihood of further offending was required in 56 of the cases in our sample (the other cases being a community orders or suspended sentence orders where the only requirements were unpaid work and/or curfew). An assessment was completed in all but one of the cases, although one-quarter of the assessments should have been completed sooner. Similarly, one-quarter did not draw fully on all available sources of information. The quality of assessments was higher in those cases where a full written PSR (as opposed to a shorter format report) had been prepared for sentence.

- 1.2. Apart from these issues, the quality of assessments to address the likelihood of reoffending was generally sufficient. They took previous relevant behaviour into account, and in almost all cases they included relevant information from the individual’s home and social environment. The factors which related to that person’s offending were identified, for example lack of stable accommodation, or drug or alcohol misuse.
- 1.3. We expect that individuals are actively and meaningfully involved in the assessment of the factors related to their offending and of what will help them to desist from reoffending. There was evidence of this in 79% of the relevant cases. Further information is given in the following chart.

Involving people in assessing the likelihood of them reoffending

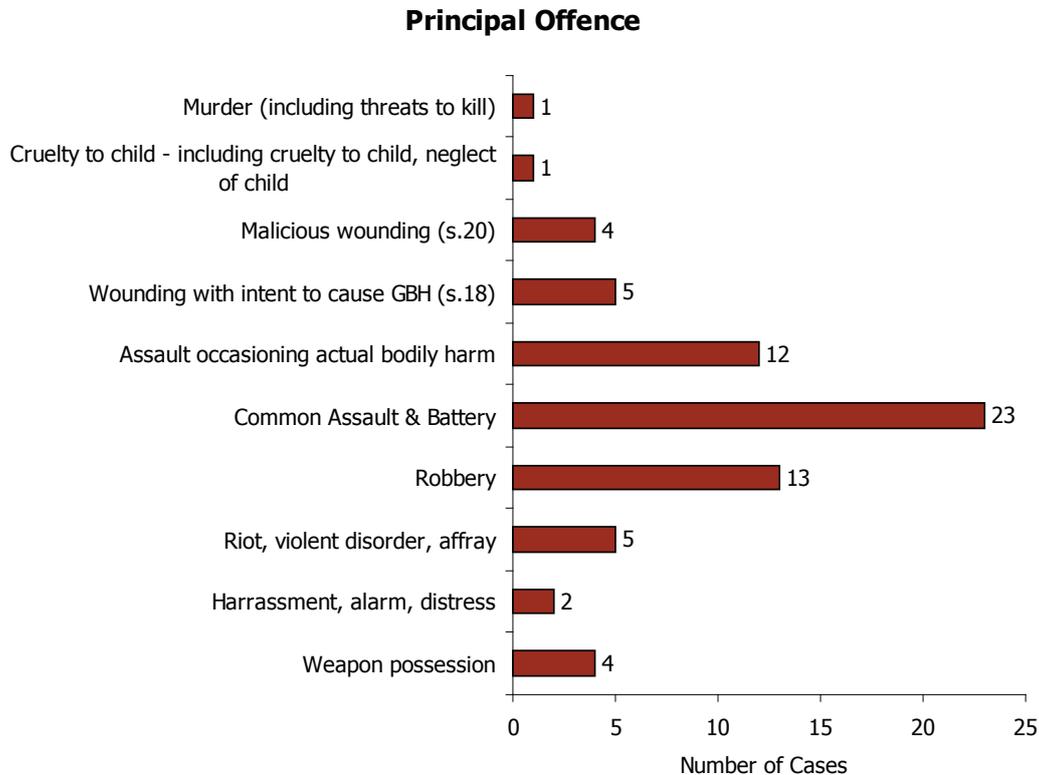


Practice illustration – Engaging offenders in their assessment

Completion of the initial OASys assessment involves the offender in completing a 27 point self-assessment questionnaire. To increase the engagement of offenders in this part of the assessment process NOMS had devised a more user friendly version. We were pleased to see that this was being used by the Trust to good effect. It was easier to read for those having difficulties with literacy or dyslexia. It was laid out more sparsely; used a large, clear font; and incorporated simple graphic icons to aid understanding.

- 1.4. If offending-related factors are not recognised in the assessment then it is unlikely that the right interventions will be provided. Over the 70 cases, there were a variety of factors that were related to the likelihood of reoffending. Based on our assessment of the cases the most prevalent were thinking and behaviour (89% of the cases), followed by alcohol misuse (60%). Difficulties with lifestyle and associates, handling relationships and emotional well-being were all present in more than 40% of the cases.
- 1.5. In view of the links between alcohol intoxication and violent offending, we were particularly interested, in this inspection, to see what role alcohol use played in the main offence and to what extent this was recognised in the likelihood of reoffending assessment. Of the cases where we judged that alcohol misuse was a factor which made the individual more likely to reoffend, this was taken into account sufficiently in the assessment in 63%. However, as noted above, it was not always taken sufficient account of in sentence planning.

1.6. Offenders in our sample were convicted of a range of offences, counting the 'principal' (most serious) of the offences for which the current sentence been passed. A detailed breakdown of the principal offences is given in the chart below.



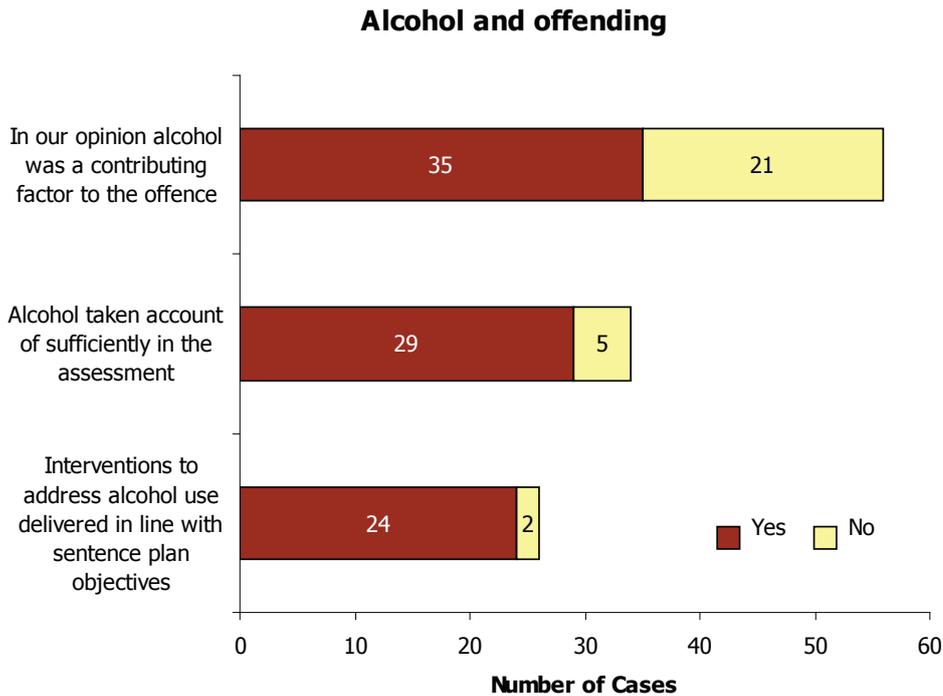
- 1.7. While in four cases the principal offence related to possession of a weapon, in a total of 26 cases (more than one-third of the sample) the offence(s) had involved the use, carrying or possession of a weapon.
- 1.8. The offence involved domestic violence in 27% of the cases. For all of the cases, 70% of the offences involved physical violence and 64% were likely to have resulted in psychological harm. Race, religion or other hate did not appear to have been a motivating factor in any of the cases.

2. Delivery of interventions to reduce the likelihood of reoffending

- 2.1. Constructive interventions encouraged and challenged the individual to take responsibility for their actions and decisions related to offending in 84% of cases. A similar proportion of cases showed that work with the individual kept a focus on the changes they needed to make to their behaviour.
- 2.2. The Trust had an appropriate range of accredited programmes available to address the different types of offending, and broadly there was sufficient capacity to deliver programmes to address both domestic and other violence.
- 2.3. Only 18 cases in the sample included the planned delivery of an accredited programme. These included Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme and Building Better Relationships (BBR) (ten cases), TSP (two cases), and Controlling Anger and Learning to Manage it and Aggression Replacement Training (seven cases). Where generic interventions were being used, such as the TSP, it was clear that the programme was intended to address specific and relevant behaviours, such as poor consequential thinking in the handling of disputes and arguments leading to violence.
- 2.4. The Trust had developed non-accredited structured programmes delivered through use of SARs. One was aimed at domestic abuse perpetrators, and was similar to the BBR group programme, but intended for those that were unable to travel to a group, or ineligible by virtue of presenting a

lower risk of harm to others. A second, 'Step into your future' was a general programme to improve cognitive thinking and community integration, and aimed at those whose offending was not serious enough for them to be eligible for an accredited programme. There was also an alcohol programme delivered in conjunction with a partner agency, and an ETE programme delivered in-house. A dedicated Women's SAR was provided through a partner organisation.

- 2.5. This range of interventions used in the sample both reflected and was appropriate to the range of offending behaviours noted above. Accredited programmes were scheduled variously in the daytime and evenings, and run at Northampton, Kettering and Wellingborough. However, the overall level of programme referrals and commencements was insufficient to maintain a sustainable level of delivery. This required some participants to travel between towns in order to access the next available programme and, thereby, avoid a lengthy waiting time and, for some, these journeys would have been logistically difficult. As a result, there was a spiral of decline in which the availability of programmes for those who could attend was reduced because of them being rendered unviable by the numbers that could not. The reduced programme schedule increased the likelihood that those who had been able to attend could not attend the remaining alternatives.
- 2.6. The Trust had tried to find out why more referrals were not being made. In some cases it appeared to us that offender managers were too ready to resort to the delivery of structured work on an individual basis rather than insist that offenders undertook the relevant accredited group programme. Practical assistance was available in the form of public transport fares or use of drivers if required. The Trust thought changing messages from NOMS, about which types of offender were suitable for particular programmes, had contributed to reduced referral rates.
- 2.7. In many cases where the offender had been deemed ineligible or unsuitable to undertake offending-related work in a group programme, we saw evidence of planned and structured work being done individually to address offending-related factors.
- 2.8. In 10 out of the 18 cases the delivery of the programme was consistent with the sentence plan; it had either been completed by the time of our inspection or there were plans to deliver it at an appropriate time in the future. In the remainder, it had been delivered later than planned in two cases, and had not yet been delivered, but should have been, in six, some nine months into the order or licence.
- 2.9. There was one approved premises in the Northamptonshire Probation Trust area, providing controlled accommodation for offenders under supervision. Nine cases in the sample involved people who had been resident in approved premises, and constructive interventions had been provided for seven of these through their residency. In other cases, the use of approved premises was only to provide restriction or emergency accommodation to manage risk of harm.
- 2.10. In 11 cases the individual's sentence contained a SAR, and in all of these the delivery of the specified activity made the intended contribution to the planned work with the person who had offended. Most of the SARs were used to deliver the alcohol programme.
- 2.11. In almost all of those cases where we judged that alcohol misuse was a factor that made the individual more likely to reoffend, relevant interventions to address this had been delivered.

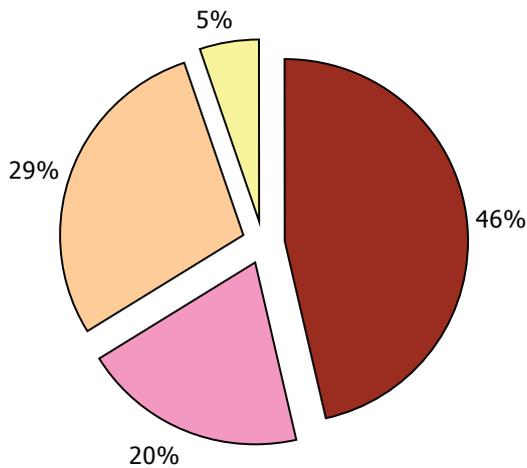


- 2.12. In 80% of cases, individuals were well prepared for the interventions delivered throughout their community order or licence, for example accredited programmes including work that needed to be done by the offender manager with the individual before they started the group work element of the programme. However, the offender manager then regularly reviewed with the individual the work they had done in other parts of their order or licence in only 64% of cases.
- 2.13. Following a change in the contracted provider for offender drug and alcohol counselling services there had been deterioration in the quality of shared working and the level of information exchange. This had impacted on the ability of offender managers to exercise proper management and oversight of some cases using these services. The Trust reported that the situation was improving.
- 2.14. To support and sustain their desistance from offending, 88% of individuals were informed of relevant local services that could assist them, and were then referred to these services if appropriate.
- 2.15. We expect to see the assessment of the likelihood of reoffending reviewed thoroughly when required, but in only just over half of the cases had there been a sufficient review. In one-third of cases the review was insufficient, and in eight cases it had not been reviewed at all. In many reviews, changes in relevant factors were not taken into account, and the assessment was not reviewed within a reasonable interval after the initial assessment or following any significant change.

3. Likelihood of reoffending is reduced

- 3.1. There was a sufficient record of the degree of progress or change made by the offender in 77% of the cases. If planned work with the individual had been completed, we would expect to see improvements in factors associated with the likelihood of reoffending, by the time of our inspection some nine months into the sentence or release from custody.
- 3.2. We found 46% had made good progress and a further 20% some progress on the most significant factors. In 29% of the cases we thought that there had been insufficient progress in respect of the most significant factors for that individual, while in a few there was evidence of deterioration.

Overall progress made in relation to factors identified as making the individual more likely to reoffend



- 3.3. The overall amount of progress made, given the relatively short length of time since sentence or release from custody, was sufficient. This reflected the findings noted earlier, that in the majority of cases orders and licences were delivered as intended and sentence plan objectives fully or partially achieved.
- 3.4. In relation to those factors associated with offending (as noted above), we assessed whether, by this point in the sentence, sufficient interventions or services had been delivered, and sufficient progress had been made. The proportions of cases were as follows:

Offending-related factor (and number of cases identified by us where this applied):	Of those cases where the factor was identified, the % where	
	sufficient interventions or services were delivered was:	sufficient progress was made:
Most prevalent factors:		
thinking and behaviour (62)	58%	48%
alcohol misuse (42)	50%	52%
Other common factors		
difficulties handling relationships (33)	42%	33%
emotional well-being (30)	53%	33%
lifestyle and associates (30)	47%	47%
attitudes to offending (25)	52%	36%

- 3.5. Resources had been used efficiently to help the individual achieve the planned outcomes in 79% of cases, but only two-thirds of cases showed improved integration into the community or family relationships. Where relevant, in a similar proportion of cases, no action had been taken or plans put in place to ensure that positive outcomes were sustainable beyond the end of the sentence

4. Leadership and management to reduce the likelihood of reoffending

- 4.1. The Trust recognised that the provision of local outcome data on the impact of interventions for offender managers and partner agencies was an area where more could be done (as noted above). All partner agencies described a good relationship with probation staff at practitioner level, and having a key person they could liaise with. When asked about sharing of risk information each provider was confident that they received key information from the Trust relating to any risk of harm to others that might be posed by the case. However, only colleagues in the IOM team and mental health professionals were routinely invited to attend case reviews.
- 4.2. Offender managers had positive views about the range of interventions available to them, with 66% of those we met rating it as sufficient or excellent. As noted above, we considered the Trust had an appropriate range of interventions available to address violent offending and its most common causes.
- 4.3. The change of locally contracted provision for a whole range of services for drug and alcohol related offending (in February 2013) had caused considerable disruption to the effective management of cases during the period from which our inspection sample was drawn. This included disruption of professional working relationships, difficulties in communication, and the failure of the provider to convey feedback to offender managers on the progress of the work they had been contracted to provide. This may have contributed to our finding of the insufficient reviewing of work by offender managers noted above. Work to resolve these problems had also consumed management resources within the Trust.
- 4.4. The Trust was taking an active role in developing relationships with district and local health and well-being boards, and in a county-wide strategic group with all of the key agencies, to promote offender health.
- 4.5. The Trust had supported a mental health liaison and diversion service that intervened both at point of arrest and at court. Mental health staff were able to contribute to nDelius case diaries through email or phone contact with offender managers, and provide access to clinic records. The services were dealing with people with both mental health problems and learning disabilities, within both the Probation Trust and the YOS. The service provided initial assessments and professional input into information provided to sentencers verbally and in written reports. Probation staff also had access to mental health specialists in personality disorder.
- 4.6. Even though lack of accommodation was rarely a direct cause of offending, it was often a significant impediment to people being able to make a consistent commitment to undertaking activities aimed at reducing the likelihood of reoffending and lessen their risk of harm to others. We found the lack of access to suitable accommodation for many offenders was a problem across Northamptonshire. The Reducing Reoffending Strategy of the County Community Safety and Coordination Group had this as a pathway, and in the strategic leaders group Northampton Borough Council took a lead in this. However, the group and the Trust had to deal with seven separate local authorities. Various activities had taken place, but impact had been minimal. Some local councils did not own any social housing.
- 4.7. The Trust had made use of local OASys data and segmented offender data from NOMS to determine and set priorities for the local commissioning of services. It showed outstanding needs for women with violent tendencies and young adult male offenders. The Trust had also taken into account the findings and recommendations for our recent inspection on the provision of services for women offenders¹. These two considerations had led to the development of specialist provision for female offenders, based on delivery seven days per week from local community bases and linked into other local services to promote community integration.

¹ HMI Probation, et al., (October 2011), Equal but different: An inspection of the use of alternatives to custody for women offenders, HMI Probation, Manchester.

4.8. There appeared to be some potential duplication of work between the drugs and alcohol service provider who was offering offenders work on personal relationships as an add on to substance misuse services, when such work was already being provided directly by the Trust.

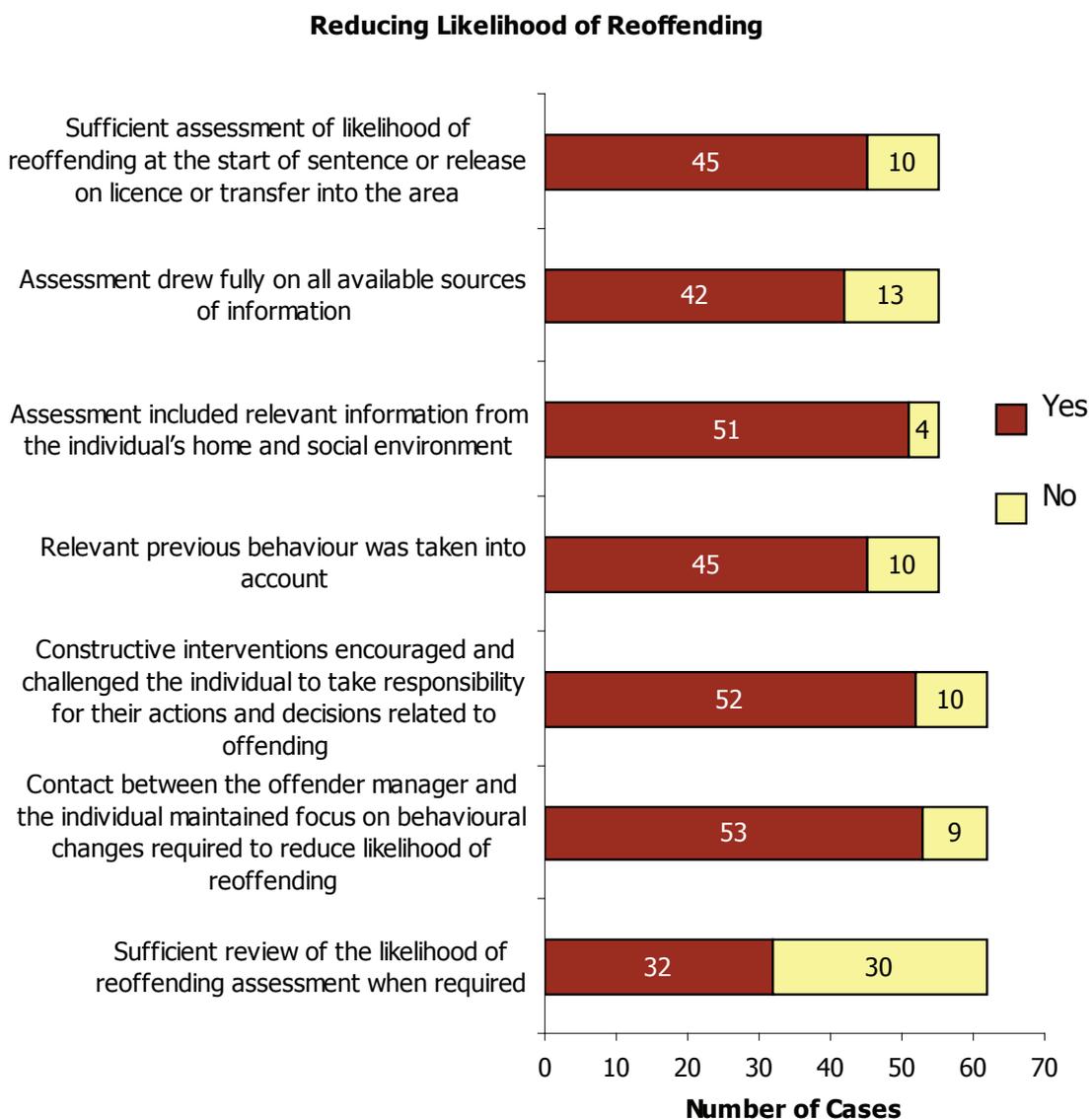
Summary

Overall, 73% of work to reduce the likelihood of reoffending was done well enough.

For a summary of our findings please see page 2

Data Summary

The following chart summarises data from some of the key questions assessed during the inspection of cases. [NB: 70 cases were inspected. However, the total answers may not equal this, since some questions may not have been applicable to every case]



**Protecting
the public by
minimising
risk of harm to
others**

4

Outcome 4: Protecting the public by minimising the risk of harm to others

What we expect to see

Some offenders present a risk of harm to other people. In all cases we expect to see the level of this risk properly assessed and, where necessary, plans made to manage and minimise risk to other people. All reasonable action should be taken to protect the public and ensure the safety of victims¹.

Case assessment score

Overall, 68% of work to ensure the protection of the public was done well enough.

Key strengths

1. The RoSH classification (low, medium, high or very high RoSH to others) was correct in most cases.
2. Restrictive requirements or conditions were monitored fully in most cases and approved premises were used effectively to manage risk of harm to others.
3. A few MAPPA eligible cases had not been identified, but in general the arrangements operated effectively. Decisions taken within MAPPA were generally clearly recorded and followed through and acted upon.

Key areas for improvement

1. Initial RoSH screenings were not completed sufficiently well in some cases. Full details of the current offence and relevant previous behaviour were not always taken into account.
2. Where required, an initial full risk of harm analysis was either not done or not done well enough in more than one-third of cases. Some were not timely and some needed to draw more fully on available sources of information, such as from Children's Services. There was insufficient analysis of the offending in some cases.
3. Risk management plans were either not done or of insufficient quality in more than one-third of cases. Many did not anticipate possible changes in risk of harm factors. More than one-third did not accurately describe how the objectives of the sentence plan would address risk of harm issues and protect actual and potential victims.
4. Relevant information was not always received from Children's Services. Multi-agency Child Protection procedures were used effectively in only half of the relevant cases.
5. Insufficient priority was accorded to the safety of current and potential victims in one-third of relevant cases. Many reviews of risk of harm assessments and risk management plans were not timely, or were not done promptly after a significant change in circumstances or risk of harm factors.

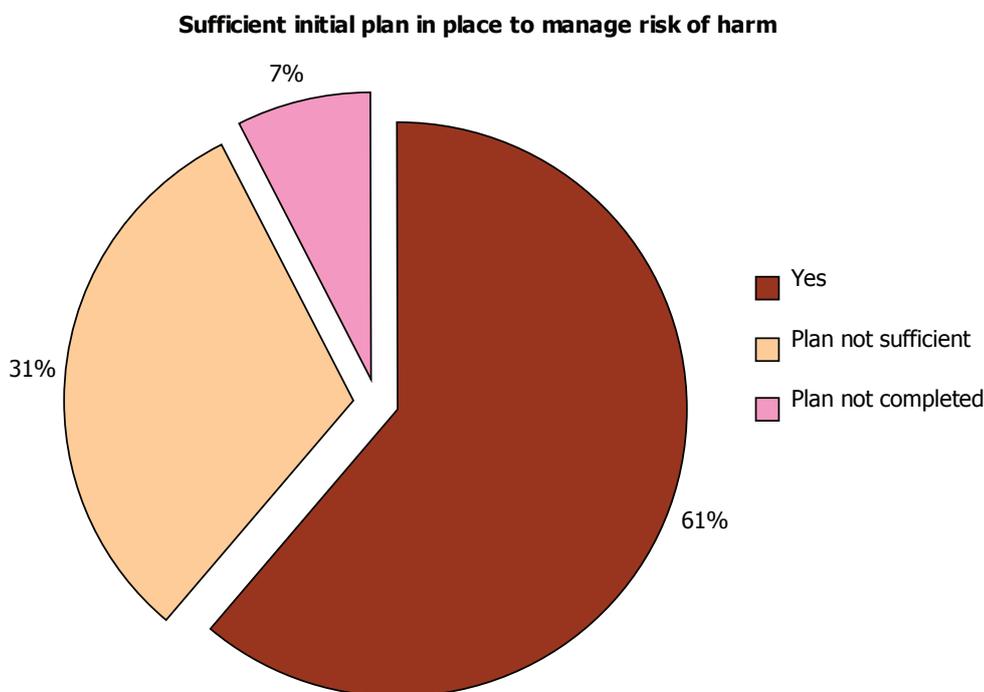
¹ Our judgements about work to protect actual and potential victims are incorporated into the overall score for Protecting the Public as well as contributing to the score for Delivering Effective Work for Victims. In this report, the detailed findings are discussed under Outcome 5: Delivering Effective work for Victims.

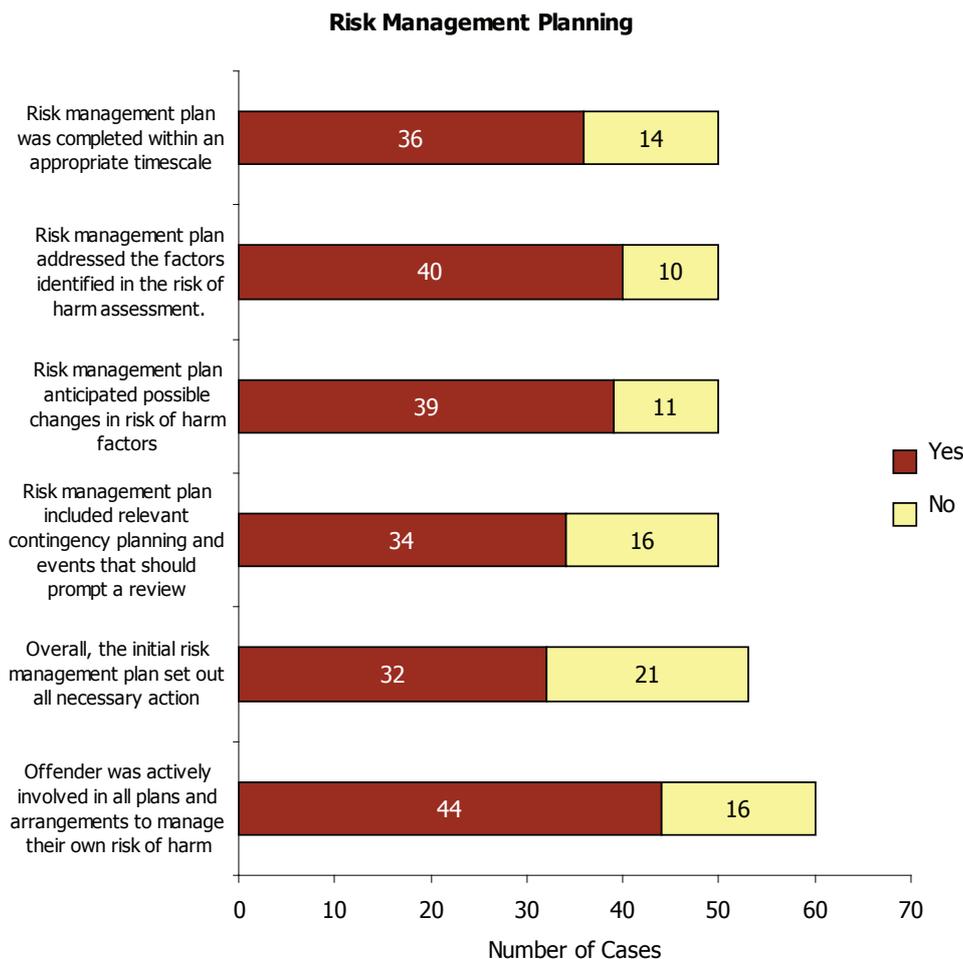
Explanation of findings

1. Assessment and planning to minimise risk of harm to others

- 1.1. The initial RoSH screening was completed sufficiently well in 71% of cases. However, in 24% of cases the screening was completed late, and in 22% the screening was inaccurate; for example, it failed to note that the current offence or previous behaviour involved abuse against partners or other family members, or that the individual had been assessed as posing a high or very high risk of harm to others on a previous occasion. In two cases there was no record of an initial screening having been completed. Within these figures, the timeliness and accuracy of RoSH screenings was poorer where offenders had been sentenced on the basis of a shorter format PSR rather than a full one.
- 1.2. All cases were subject to a paper based RoSH screening at court, and Trust policy was that where this was triggered the case would be adjourned for a minimum of five days for further inquiries and a written report to be prepared. Almost all of the cases in our sample would have triggered the requirement for a full analysis of the risk of harm to others (given the nature of the current offence). In a number of cases the override exemption was used when a screening was undertaken at court, and it was not possible to judge from the case record the basis on which this decision had been made.
- 1.3. The Trust was aware of the potential dangers of community sentences with a single unpaid work requirement being passed by the court without a RoSH screening being undertaken first, including a full analysis if required. The unpaid work unit was able to undertake these assessments internally after sentence if required, to permit the safe and prompt start of unpaid work requirements.
- 1.4. A similar concern related to the partner project providing the women's SAR, where the project was dependent on a copy of the PSR as the initial source of information about the case. They appreciated that cases sentenced without a PSR would not have an OASys completed by the Trust until after sentence, but not that this would also apply to those cases sentenced using shorter format report.
- 1.5. The contracted provider for offender drug and alcohol services had a comprehensive two stage risk assessment process but this did not facilitate and record any detailed exploration of issues. It recorded offending behaviour but did not cross-reference the OASys risk management plan.
- 1.6. In 83% of cases in the sample, we judged there was a correct RoSH classification recorded. Five classifications were too low and seven too high.
- 1.7. Having an accurate assessment at an early stage of the order or licence is important to enable all staff to understand what level of risk of harm is present and what factors might increase or lower that risk. However, in five cases where it was required, there was no record of an initial full risk of harm analysis having been completed. Given the nature of the offences in our sample, most (if not all of them) should have triggered a full analysis of the risk of harm to others (or use of the override to decide not to complete one).
- 1.8. In the remainder of the cases where a full analysis was required and had been completed, 40% did not contain a sufficient initial risk of harm analysis. For all assessments, the largest area for improvement was for the analysis to draw fully on all available sources of information, such as full details of current and previous offences, and information from Children's Services (37%). A number did not take relevant previous behaviour into account, or contain sufficient analysis, as distinct from description. Assessments were not timely in 23% of cases. Within these figures, the quality of full analyses was less good where cases had been sentenced on the basis of a shorter format PSR rather than a full one.
- 1.9. Information was actively sought, as appropriate, from other relevant staff and agencies involved with the offender in 74% of cases; although information was not always received or made sufficient use of.

- 1.10. Insufficient attention was paid to child safeguarding in relation to the offender’s contact with any children and young people in 25% of cases. As we noted earlier, all of the offender managers we interviewed felt confident that they could identify and work with Child Protection and safeguarding issues. However, this finding suggested further work was required to improve staff practice in this area of work.
- 1.11. Relevant information was not always received from Children’s Services. In too many cases routine inquiries from the Trust to Children’s Services had not been met with a satisfactory response. Some were not acknowledged promptly with a clear indication of the action that was to be taken (such as undertaking an investigation). In others decisions to take no action had been notified but without an explanation as to why, so that the Trust had an incomplete picture of the context in which they were managing the risk posed by the individual.
- 1.12. In the 19 cases where restrictive requirements (such as a curfew or electronic monitoring or restraining orders) were in place, their use was judged to be appropriate in most instances. They were generally proportionate to the risk of harm and the likelihood of reoffending, although they did not contribute to minimising the risk of harm to actual or potential victims in five cases.
- 1.13. Five community or suspended sentence orders included an electronically monitored curfew. In only three, it was seen as providing a significant punishment, and it was used to contribute to the protection of the public from risk of harm or further offending by the individual in only two.
- 1.14. Risk management plans are required in cases where the RoSH classification is medium or higher, but only 61% of such cases in the sample contained a sufficient plan. In four cases there was no initial plan at all. The remaining 31% were of insufficient quality.
- 1.15. The key areas for improvement were addressing the risks posed to any specific victims (39%), and describing how the objectives of the sentence plan and other activities would address risk of harm issues and protect actual and potential victims (40%). There was also a need to improve timeliness and include contingency planning. Further details are given in the following charts.



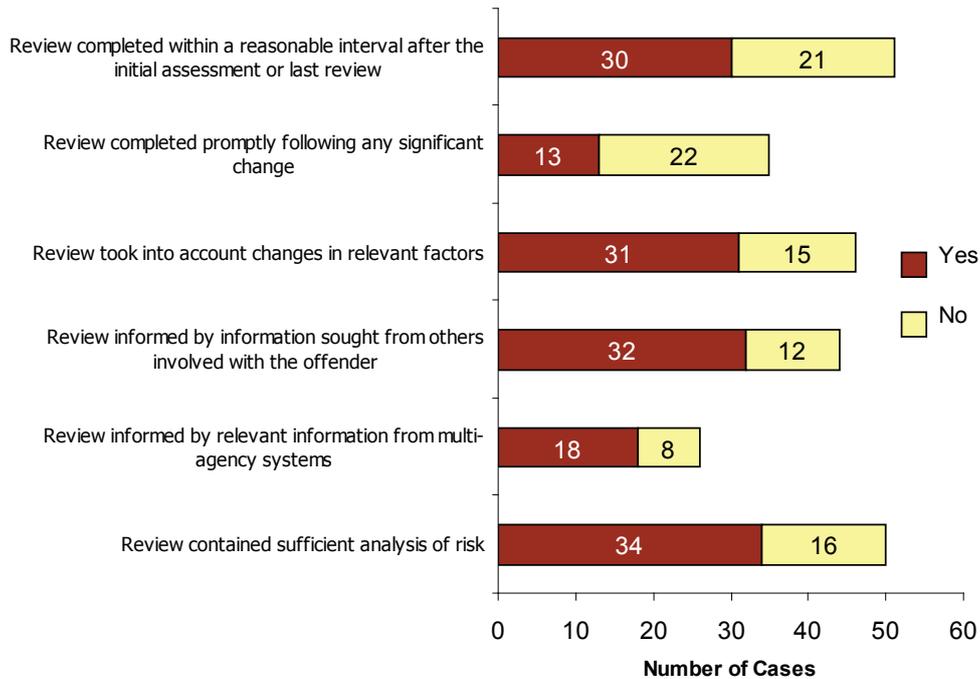
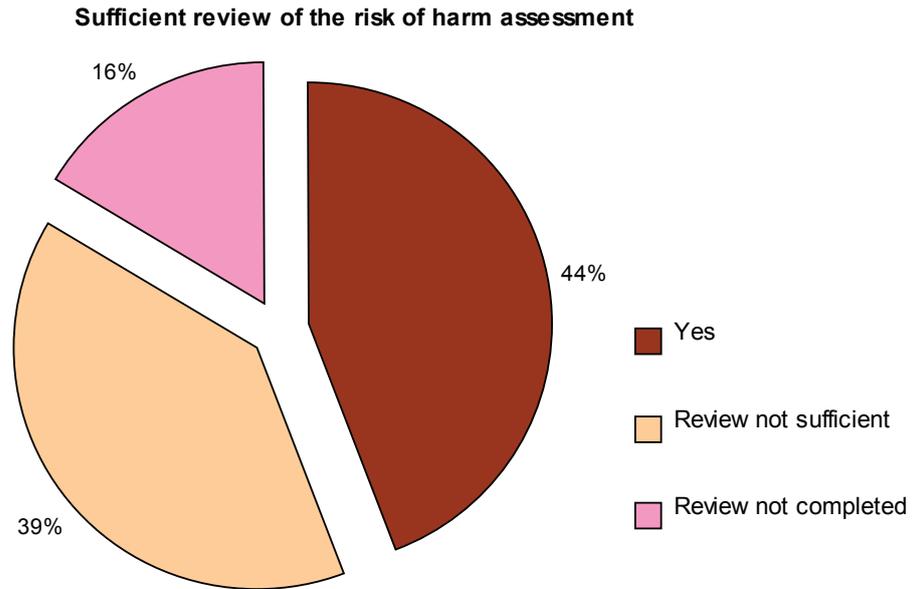


- 1.16. Overall, only 60% of risk management plans set out all necessary action. Many plans were unclear about who would do what and when, and could have been clearer about how information would be shared. However, in 70% of the cases, the plan and any key risk of harm information was communicated to all relevant agencies. There was evidence in almost three-quarters of the cases that the offender was actively involved in all plans and arrangements to manage their own risk of harm, including constructive and restrictive interventions
- 1.17. As with RoSH screenings and analyses, within these figures, the quality of risk management plans was not as good where offenders had been sentenced on the basis of a shorter format PSR rather than a full one.
- 1.18. Seven cases in the sample should have been recorded on Violent and Sexual Offender Register (ViSOR) but only three had been. (This is the information system managed by the police to share information in some cases where there has been sexual or serious violent offending).
- 1.19. Twenty-five cases met the criteria for MAPPA, but five of these this were not identified accurately. In the 20 cases that were identified, the initial level of MAPPA management was appropriate in all but one (that was too low).
- 1.20. Eight cases needed management at higher levels within MAPPA, and for all of these an appropriate referral was made and the details of the case and MAPPA category were accurate. In all but one case the referral was timely and actions agreed by MAPPA had been included in all relevant planning documents, such as risk management plans, and had been communicated to all relevant bodies.

2. Delivery of interventions to minimise risk of harm to others

- 2.1. The response by the offender manager to changes in the risk of harm posed to others was

- inappropriate in 10 out of 24 relevant cases. In eight the change was not identified swiftly, in 11 not acted upon by all relevant staff, and in six cases other agencies were not notified where needed.
- 2.2. In the 28 cases where there were restrictive requirements or conditions, they were monitored fully in three-quarters of them. For residents in approved premises, the requirement to reside there and other restrictions on their behaviour were used effectively to manage risk of harm to others. Staff reported good working relationships between the approved premises and offender management units.
 - 2.3. We expect to see an initial home visit carried out in cases classified as posing a high risk of serious harm to others or where there are Child Protection concerns. This was not done in 13 out of 37 cases where we thought that it should have been. In our view, home visits should have been repeated in 27 cases, but this was only done in eight. However, we did see effective use of home visiting by police officers as part of the planned contact in some cases being managed through the IOM arrangements.
 - 2.4. There were 19 cases in the sample where enforcement proceedings or recall to custody were needed in response to an increase in the risk of harm posed by the individual. This was done appropriately, and sufficient efforts were made to re-engage the individuals with their sentence plan, in nearly all of them. In only one case was no action taken.
 - 2.5. There was ongoing management at MAPPAs Level 2 or 3 in eight cases, and this worked effectively in six of them. Decisions taken within MAPPAs were generally clearly recorded, and followed through and acted upon in all of them. In two cases actions were not reviewed appropriately, and in one case not all relevant staff working with the offender contributed effectively to MAPPAs, and the decisions taken in MAPPAs were not clearly recorded or acted upon.
 - 2.6. ViSOR was used effectively in only two out of the eight cases where it was required.
 - 2.7. Multi-agency Child Protection procedures were used effectively in only half of the 14 relevant cases. In the remaining cases, decisions had not been recorded clearly, communicated, followed through and acted upon, or reviewed appropriately.
 - 2.8. Insufficient priority was accorded to the safety of current and potential victims by the offender manager and any other workers in one-third of 56 relevant cases. There was no evidence that the offender manager had taken into account any concerns expressed by the victim and the likely impact of the offender's behaviour on the victim in 41% of 44 relevant cases.
 - 2.9. Risk of harm issues change over time for many individuals and we expect to find that the assessment is reviewed to reflect this. In 44% of the 61 relevant cases there was a sufficient review, but in 16% there had been no review at all.
 - 2.10. In general, many reviews completed were not timely, and more were not done promptly after a significant change in circumstances or risk of harm factors. The Trust thought that in cases subject to IOM, reviews were sometimes being undertaken but not being recorded in OASys. More details about reviews are given in the following charts.

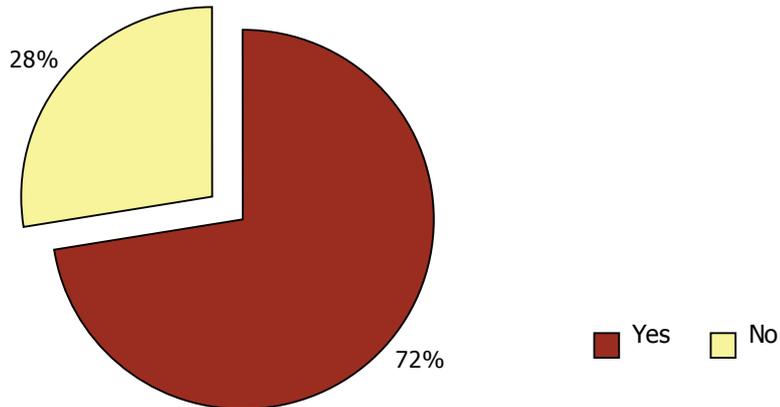


- 2.11. Actions set out in risk management plans were carried out, as required, in three-quarters of cases. The plans themselves, however, were not sufficiently well reviewed in 39% of the cases. In a further 15% there had been no review at all. The key areas for improvement were essentially the same as for the review of risk of harm assessments noted above. For any further reviews the planned review period was not appropriate to the risks posed by the person in one-third of the cases.
- 2.12. Where cases are assessed as posing a high or very high risk of serious harm to others, or where there are Child Protection concerns, we expect to see structured management involvement in the case. We found insufficient evidence of this in 70% of such cases. For example, in some cases work had been countersigned by a manager when there were clear gaps in quality, such as in the risk management planning. Oversight arrangements had also failed to identify and remedy those cases where no risk of harm assessment or plans had been done or reviewed at all.

3. Risk of harm is minimised

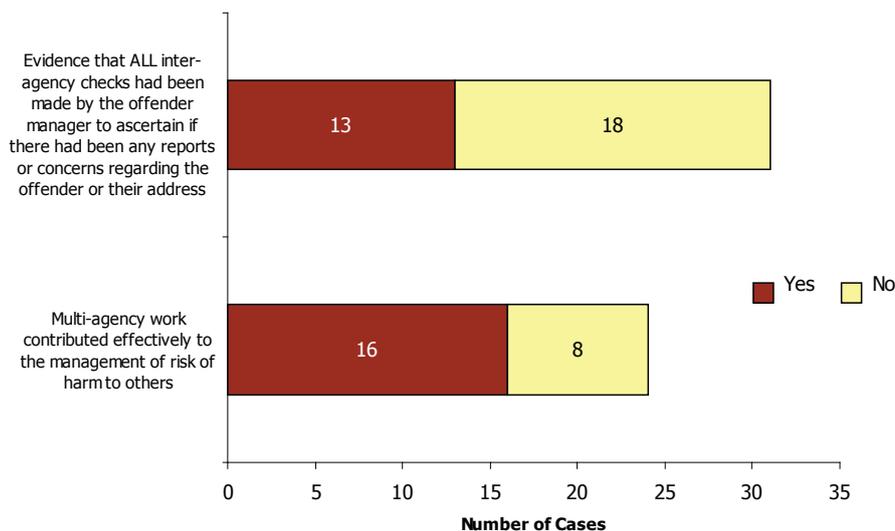
3.1. In nearly three-quarters of cases, all reasonable action had been taken to keep to a minimum the offender’s risk of harm to others.

All reasonable action was taken to keep to a minimum the offender’s risk of harm to others



3.2. Where multi-agency work had taken place, it had not contributed effectively to the management of risk of harm in one-third of cases. We were concerned to find that in 18 out of 31 relevant cases, there was no evidence that all inter-agency checks had been made to see if there had been any reports or concerns regarding the individual or addresses they were connected with. For 14 cases, checks had not been made with police regarding domestic violence callouts, and in ten no check had been made with Children’s Services. More positively, where the checks had been done and there was new information, the offender manager took appropriate action in every case.

Working with other agencies



3.3. For cases managed through MAPPAs at Levels 2 and 3 we expect to see that plans are in place to minimise the risk of harm presented by the individual, in the longer term, when no longer subject to MAPPAs management (this was a recommendation in the joint Criminal Justice Thematic inspection *Putting the pieces together: An inspection of Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements*²). There was evidence of this in only three of the six cases where it was relevant.

² HMI Probation & HMI Constabulary (November 2011) *Putting the pieces together: An inspection of Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements*, HMI Probation, Manchester.

4. Leadership and management to minimise risk of harm to others

- 4.1. All offender managers had received training in the use of OASys to assess risk of harm to others. The Trust had appointed a quality development officer and had made extensive use of the RADAR (Risk Audit Development and Research) approach to performance improvement. This involved the auditing of cases against bespoke criteria to assess the quality of practice against a range of issues related to public protection. Use of RADAR was targeted by using routine OASys returns, with results fed into professional supervision and performance appraisal.
- 4.2. The Trust had also run public protection action learning sets to address recommendations from our previous inspection in 2011 relating to that area of practice. While the Trust felt there had been an improvement in the quality of practice, the findings above indicate that there was scope for further improvement.
- 4.3. As already noted above, there was very limited access to appropriate accommodation for homeless offenders or for those whose accommodation was unsuitable and resulted in an increased level of risk to others. Northamptonshire senior managers observed that within the MAPPAs, a disproportionate amount of time was spent trying to sort intractable housing problems. MAPPAs had an accommodation protocol in place but not all of the local authorities had signed up to it, and the MAPPAs were having to fund accommodation directly in some instances. The number of direct access beds originally provided through the former Supporting People programme had reduced from 20 to just five for the whole county. The Trust observed that this problem was compounded by the lack of a national 'clearing house' scheme for beds in the approved premises estate.
- 4.4. The police service described good relationships with the Trust and probation staff, who were seen as good and supportive partners within the IOM arrangements. The IOM unit issued 'red/amber/green' ratings to specific offenders to indicate their level of risk to public and the seriousness of the offending activity. However, much of the IOM police time appeared to be spent on activity to disrupt criminal behaviour rather than stabilise, manage and reduce the potential risk of harm to others.
- 4.5. The Trust had a clear strategic understanding of how the management of those posing a risk to children and young people can impact on other services duties and responsibilities. The Trust was represented at strategic level on the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), and has used that forum to challenge assumptions about work and raise reoccurring issues. The Chair of the LSCB observed that the Probation Trust was a committed partner. The Trust had provided resources to ensure links were in place between themselves and Children's Services. Recently they had given the time of a senior probation officer to assist in the development and working of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub. Although, as noted above, there were areas of work requiring significant improvement, we saw some cases where there was a good relationship between probation staff and social workers, and effective protection work as a result. However, more use could have been made of case management information by both the Trust and Children's Services to monitor the impact of changes made to improve working together, and identify any specific barriers to improving joint work.
- 4.6. As evidenced in the cases we saw (and noted above), despite there being good strategic links, this had not ensured that offender managers were always informed by Children's Services about the outcomes of referrals made where there were concerns about children and young people. As a result, probation staff were sometimes working with those that posed a risk to children and young people but without knowing the response of Children's Services had been or what actions other agencies might be taking. Agencies also lost the opportunity to share information about changes in factors relating to the offenders' risk of harm to children and young people.

Summary

Overall, 68% work to ensure the protection of the public was done well enough.

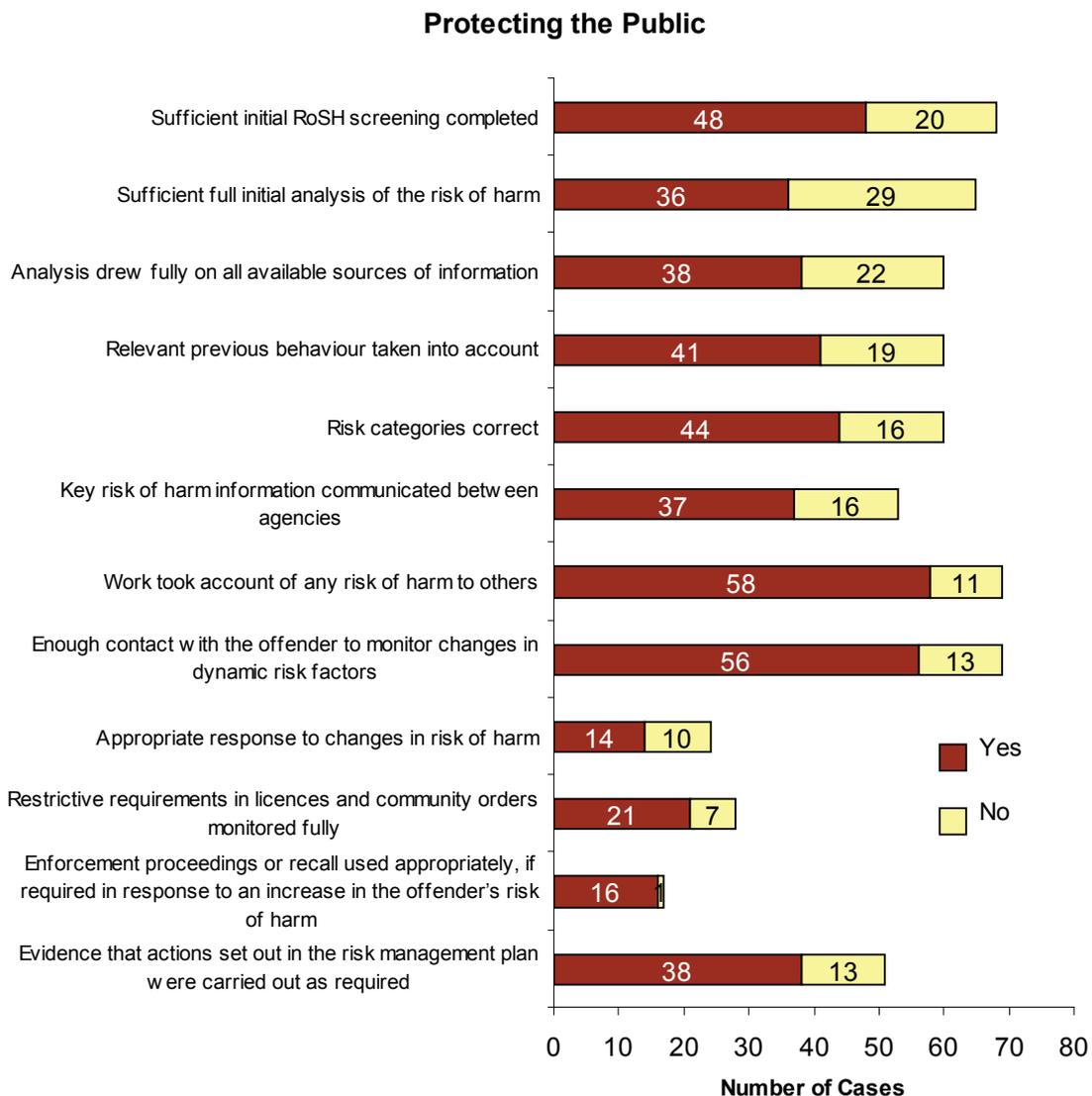
We have recommended that post-inspection improvement work focuses on ensuring that:

- risk of harm to others is assessed accurately and promptly, and is reviewed as appropriate; information from other organisations and the safety of actual and potential victims is taken into account
- additional attention is given to work to protect children and young people
- effective management oversight is clearly evidenced in the records of all cases involving the protection of children and of those classified as posing a high/very high Risk of Serious Harm to others.

For a summary of our findings please see page 2

Data Summary

The following chart summarises data from some of the key questions assessed during the inspection of cases. [NB: 70 cases were inspected. However, the total answers may not equal this, since some questions may not have been applicable to every case]



Delivering effective work for victims

5

Outcome 5: Delivering effective work for victims

What we expect to see

The safety of actual and potential victims should be given a high priority. We expect to see this given attention in work with individual offenders. Where statutory victim contact work is required, we expect to see this undertaken so that victims are kept appropriately informed.

Case assessment score

Overall, 74% of work to deliver effective services for victims was done well enough.

Key strength

1. Most victim contact work was undertaken appropriately, and the quality of the work was good. Victims who responded to our questionnaire about their experience had very positive views about the work undertaken with them.

Key areas for improvement

1. Insufficient attention was paid to child safeguarding in relation to the offender's contact with any children and young people in one-quarter of relevant cases.
2. In ongoing work with offenders, insufficient priority was accorded to the safety of current and potential victims by the offender manager and any other workers in one-third of relevant cases.

Explanation of findings

1. Assessment and planning to minimise risk of harm to victims

- 1.1. We expect to see offender managers and others giving appropriate attention to risk of harm to actual and potential victims in their assessment of the offender and work to plan the supervision. As already noted in Outcome 4: Protecting the Public, the quality of this work was insufficient in too many cases.
- 1.2. A thorough assessment may require information to be sought from other agencies, and we found that in 37% of assessments, the largest area for improvement was for the analysis to draw fully on all available sources of information, such as full details of current and previous offences, and information from Children's Services.
- 1.3. Information from Children's Services was sought on a routine basis at the start of a new order of licence only in cases where it was believed there were children and young people living in the same household as the offender, or if there were children and young people already known to Children's Services, connected with them.
- 1.4. As already noted, the response to such inquiries was variable. In view of this, it was unsurprising that we judged insufficient attention was paid to child safeguarding in relation to the offender's contact with any children and young people in one-quarter of all cases.
- 1.5. More than one-third of risk management plans did not address the risk of harm to any specific victims, and one-third of plans failed to describe how the objectives in the sentence plan or other activities would protect actual or potential victims

2. Delivery of interventions to minimise risk of harm to victims

- 2.1. In ongoing work with offenders, insufficient priority was accorded to the safety of current and potential victims by the offender manager and any other workers in one-third of relevant cases. There was no evidence that the offender manager had taken into account any concerns expressed by the victim and the likely impact of the offender's behaviour on the victim in 41% of the 52 relevant cases.
- 2.2. In three-quarters of the cases with restrictive requirements these were monitored fully, and there was evidence that the actions set out in the risk management plan had been carried out as required in more than three-quarters of cases.

3. Risk of harm to victims is minimised

- 3.1. In 35% of cases where there was an identifiable victim (or potential victim), we judged that the risk of harm to actual or potential identifiable victims had not been managed effectively. Where necessary, the safety of children and young people had not been promoted in 36% of cases. This conclusion was unsurprising given the shortcomings set out earlier in relation to work to protect children and young people.

4. Victim contact and restorative justice

- 4.1. Probation Trusts have responsibility for running victim contact schemes. They provide victims of certain crimes with information about the key points in an offender's custodial sentence, and give victims the chance to say what conditions they think should be included in the offender's licence when that person is released.
- 4.2. There were 20 licence cases in our sample where victim contact work was required and in 18 of these an offer of a face-to-face meeting with the victim contact worker was made. All offers were made within eight weeks of the offender being sentenced to custody.

Comments from victims

Six victims of crime who were in touch with the victim contact scheme responded to our questionnaire.

Responses to the questionnaire were as follows:

- All confirmed that the initial letter about the scheme was easy to understand and made it clear that they had a choice about whether to become involved.
- In all cases they said that their individual circumstances and needs had been taken into account and all thought that victim contact staff had a full understanding of the impact of the offence on them.
- All of the victims said that they were kept informed about key points in the individual's sentence.
- In all five of the cases where the individual was being considered for release, victims said they had the chance to say what conditions they thought should be included in the licence; in the four relevant cases, extra licence conditions had been added to help keep them safer when the individual was released.
- Three respondents said they had reported concerns to the Trust; and two reported being satisfied with the Trust's response, the other was not.
- Five said they felt safer as a result of the work undertaken via the victim contact scheme, while one said it had made no difference.
- All of the six respondents were partly or completely satisfied with the service provided.

- 4.3. Six victims took up the offer of contact and the quality of the work undertaken with them was sufficient in all cases. In all cases there was regular and accurate information exchanged between the offender manager and the victim contact worker and between the offender manager and prison staff.
- 4.4. Where relevant, all victims were given the opportunity to express their views on proposed licence conditions, and informed of any relevant events during the offenders sentence, and relevant conditions of the offender's release.
- 4.5. With regards to restorative justice, we identified 12 cases in the sample where a restorative justice intervention might have been appropriate. In one of these an intervention was offered to the victim of the offence, but the offer was not taken up.

5. Leadership and management to deliver effective work for victims

- 5.1. The Trust had a well run and supported victim contact scheme. There were good working and strategic relationships with the police in all areas of public protection work, including MAPPA and IOM cases.
- 5.2. As noted above, the Trust had good strategic relationships within the LSCB, but in some cases there was insufficient communication with Children's Services in relation to cases the Trust had raised concerns about.
- 5.3. The Trust was providing a good range of appropriate interventions to tackle violent offending, and to support potentially dangerous offenders with complex needs.
- 5.4. The use of restorative justice interventions by the Probation Trust was at an early stage, and the Trust was working towards embedding the wider use of restorative justice in its work.

Summary

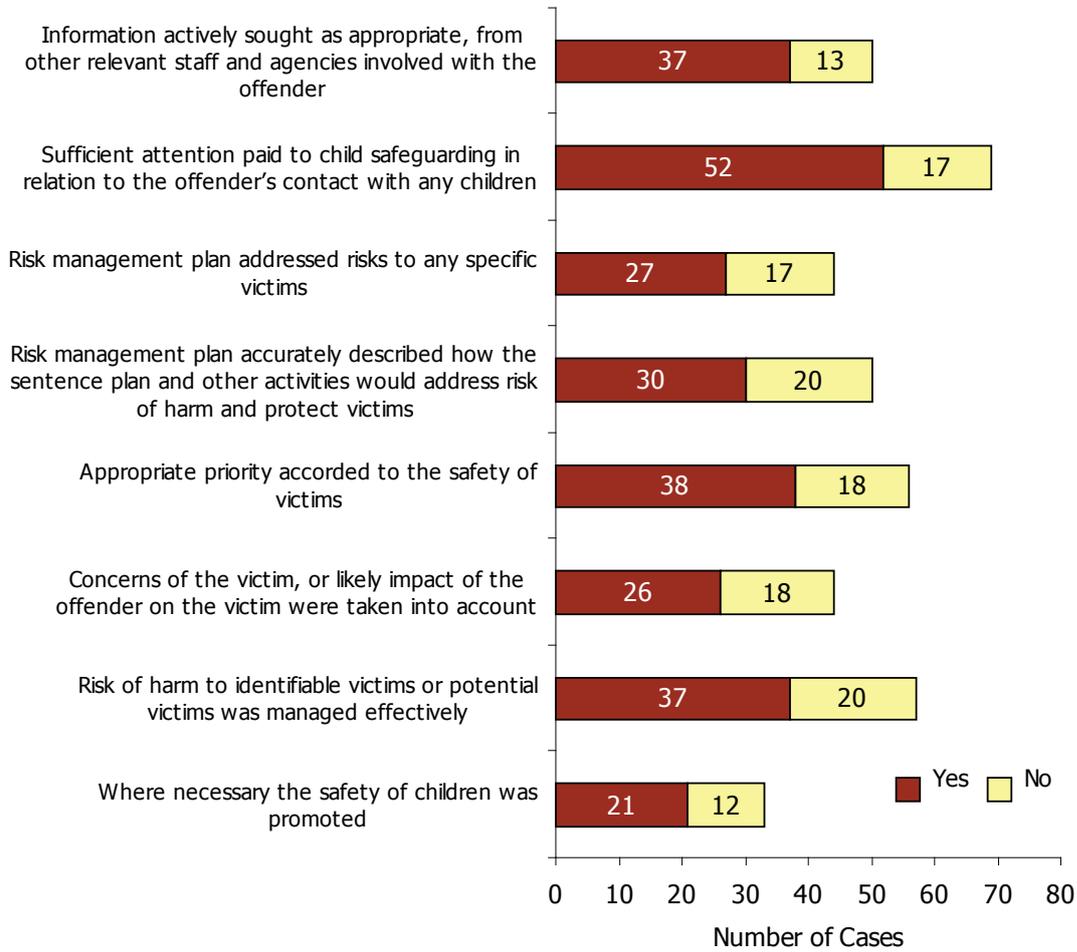
Overall, 74% of work to ensure the protection of the public was done well enough.

For a summary of our findings please see page 2

Data Summary

The following chart summarises data from some of the key questions assessed during the inspection of cases. [NB: 70 cases were inspected. However, the total answers may not equal this, since some questions may not have been applicable to every case]

Effective Work for Victims



Appendices

Appendix 1

Contextual information about the area inspected

Northamptonshire demographic data

Local Authority	Unemployment ¹	Population ²	Black and minority ethnic population ³
Corby	8.2%	61,300	4.6%
Daventry	6.4%	77,800	3.5%
East Northamptonshire	6.8%	86,800	3.2%
Kettering	7.3%	93,500	6.0%
Northampton	7.6%	212,100	15.6%
South Northamptonshire	4.2%	85,200	3.2%
Wellingborough	8.3%	75,400	12.8%
Northamptonshire	7.0%	692,000	8.6%
England and Wales	8.0%	56,075,900	14.1%

¹ Office for National Statistics Local Labour Market Indicators - October to September 2012

² Office for National Statistics 2011 Census

³ Office for National Statistics 2011 Census

Crime Survey for England and Wales, 2011/2012

Offences per 1,000	Northamptonshire	England and Wales
Violence against the person offences (rate per 1,000 adults)	15	14

Probation Caseload Data

Total by gender/ethnicity (Analytical Services, Ministry of Justice October 2012)

Northamptonshire	Supervised in community and pre-release	National average
Total caseload	2,862	n/a
% White	84%	76.4%
% Minority ethnic	12.9%	19.9%
% Male	90.5%	90.0%
% Female	9.5%	10.0%

Appendix 2

Contextual information about the inspected case sample

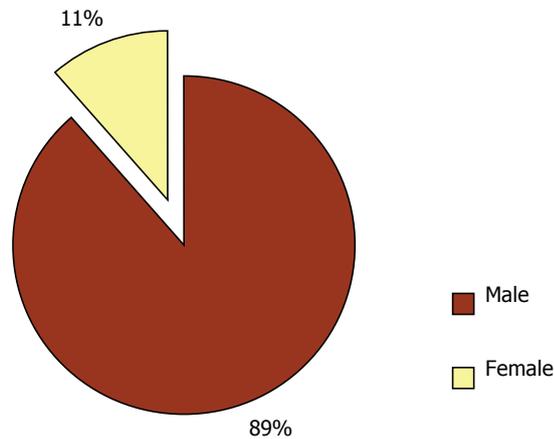
In the first fieldwork week we look at a representative sample of between 50 and 90 individual cases (depending on the size of the area), which have been supervised for around nine months. These are community orders, suspended sentence orders and post-custody licences.

During the year 2013-2014, this sample is drawn from cases managed by a Probation Trust. The sampling methodology will be adapted in future to incorporate work managed by other providers.

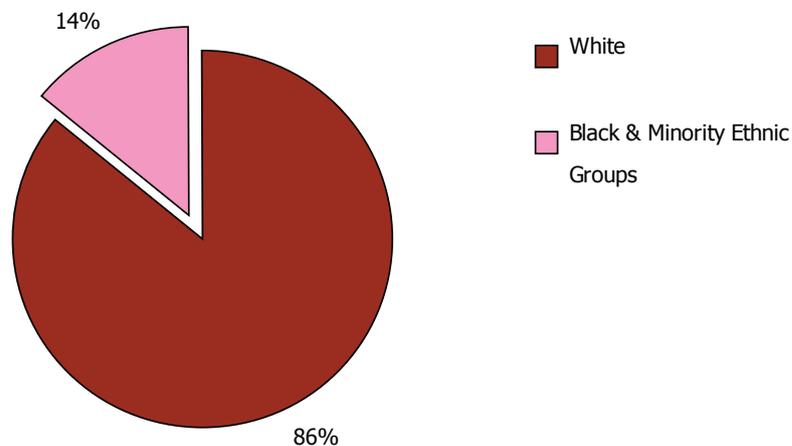
Between April and September 2013, the focus of the inspections is work with those who have committed violent offences.

In Northamptonshire we inspected a total of 70 cases.

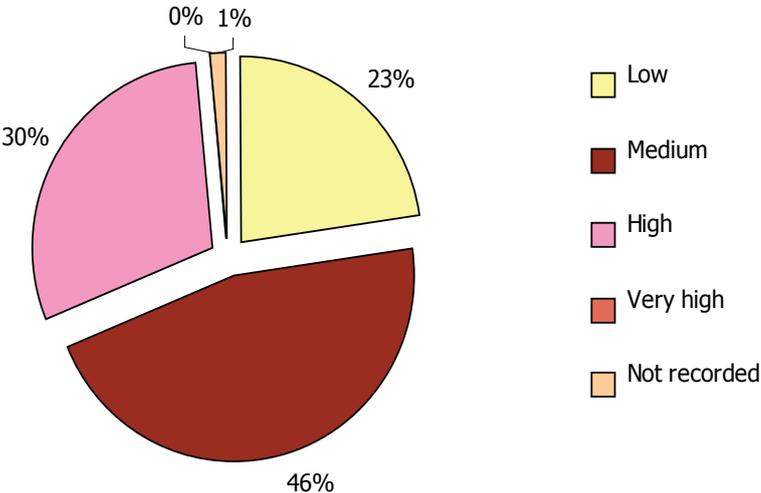
Gender



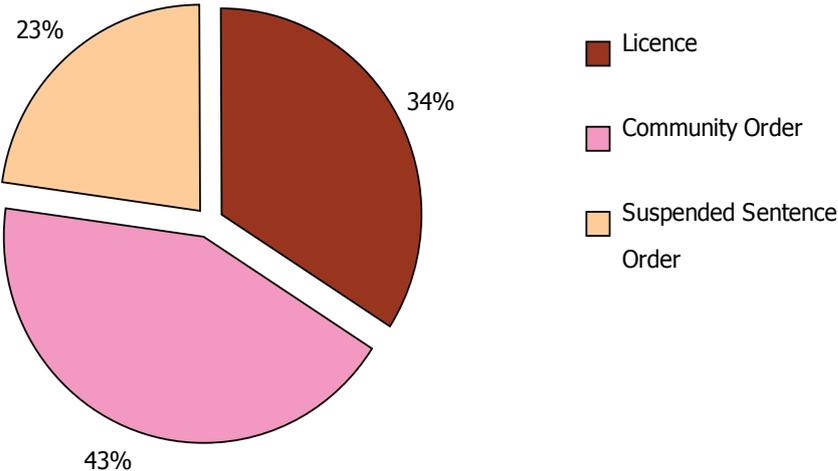
Race and Ethnicity



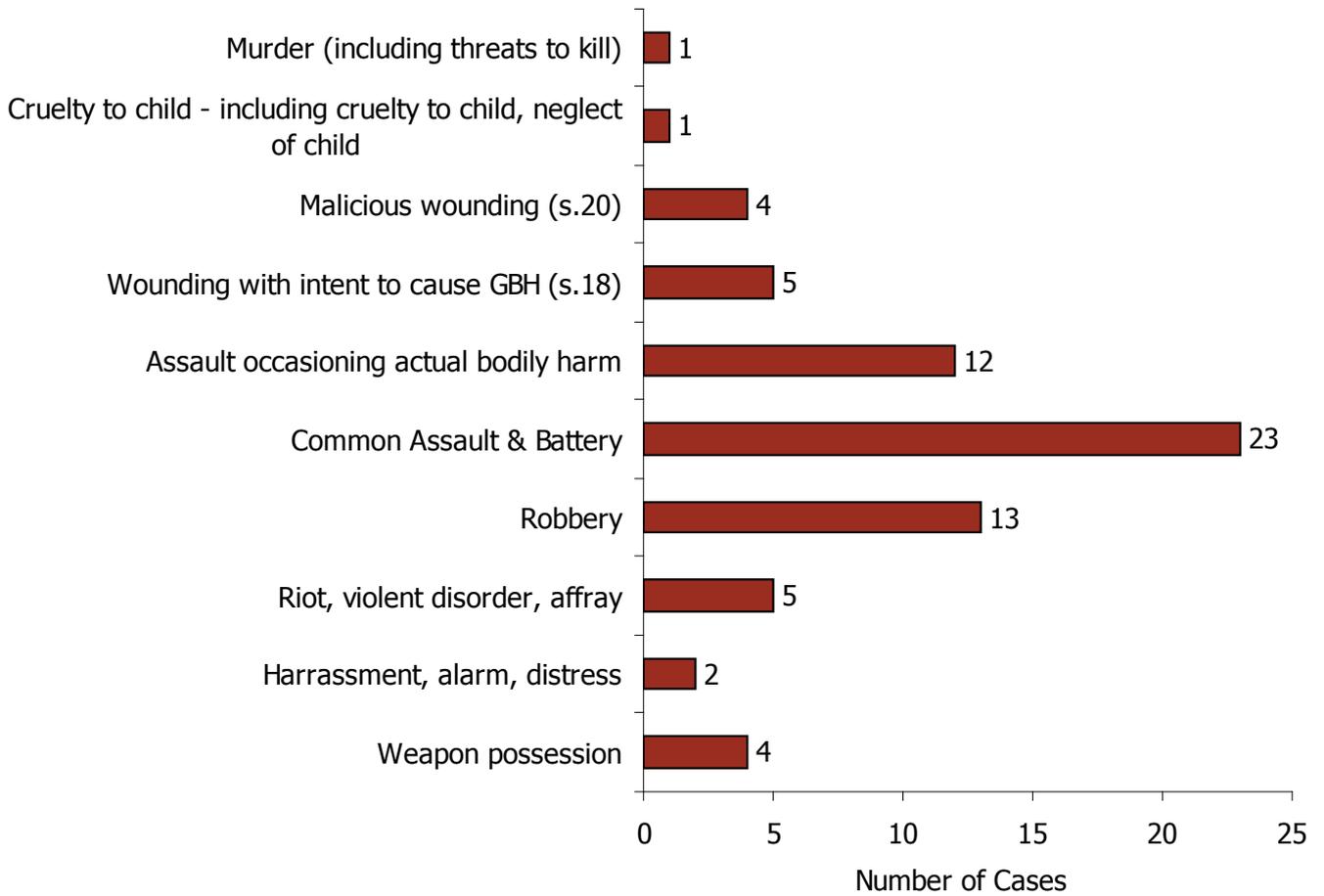
OASys RoSH classification as recorded at the start of sentence or release on licence or transfer into this area



Type of Case



Principal Offence



Appendix 3

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all the staff from Northamptonshire Probation Trust, members of the management team and partner organisations for their assistance in ensuring the smooth running of the inspection. We are particularly grateful to the staff who were trained as Local Assessors and worked as members of the inspection team.

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Assistant Chief Inspector	Sally Lester, <i>HMI Probation</i>

Appendix 4

Inspection arrangements

Full details of arrangements for the Inspection of Adult Offending Work are available from the HMI Probation website at the following address:

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/about/hmi-probation/inspection-programmes-adult/inspection-of-adult-offending-work>

Inspection focus

During the year 2013-2014, the Inspection of Adult Offending Work focuses on the work of Probation Trusts, supported by local partnership arrangements. This will change in due course, when work with offenders is managed and delivered by other organisations. The inspection framework has been designed to be adapted to accommodate these changes.

This inspection focuses on the quality of practice through inspecting a sample of cases managed by the organisation. In each case we follow the 'offender's journey' - that is, we firstly examine the quality of the assessment of the factors that need to be addressed to prevent offending; secondly the quality of work that is done with the offender to change their behaviour; and thirdly the evidence of outcomes – that is, whether the work has been well targeted, effective, and supports desistance. The inspection of these cases contributes to our overall judgements about the quality of work to:

- assist sentencing
- deliver the sentence of the court
- reduce the likelihood of reoffending
- protect the public
- deliver effective work for victims.

The type of cases inspected will change every six months. We are currently selecting cases where the index offence is one of violence (but not including sexual offending, as this has been the subject of a thematic inspection). After each group of inspections, we will publish an aggregate report, in which we will use data from case inspection to highlight good practice and identify areas for improvement.

The case sample comprises of offenders who are subject to a community order or post-custody licence.

Methodology

Each inspection is announced ten weeks before the first fieldwork week. The primary focus is the quality of work undertaken with adults who have offended, and statutory victim contact work in relevant cases. The work is assessed by a team of inspection staff and trained Local Assessors. Practitioners working with the case are interviewed in-depth and asked to explain their thinking and to identify supporting evidence in the record. They are also asked about the extent to which elements of leadership and management support the quality of their work.

Although our main focus is the quality of practice, we will also comment on leadership and management in our reports where this provides an explanation or context for the findings about practice. Prior to or during this first week, we receive copies of relevant local documents that inform our understanding of the organisation's structure and priorities. Inspection teams follow up lines of enquiry triggered by case inspections, this may involve meeting local managers, talking with practitioners or administration staff, or general observation of office practice.

Formal meetings with managers, sentencers and service providers are held two weeks after the case inspection. Preliminary analysis of the data from the case inspections allows us to explore, in greater detail, the themes that are emerging. We also consider specific local characteristics and needs; the ways in which gaps in provision are identified and filled; and work that has been done to improve the quality of service delivery. In particular, issues relating to leadership, management and partnership are explored to help us understand their contribution, or otherwise, to the quality of the work delivered.

The views of victims are obtained through a questionnaire, and sentencers are interviewed about the quality of court based work. The views of offenders are obtained through a survey conducted annually by NOMS.

At the end of the second fieldwork week, we present our findings to local strategic managers.

Publication arrangements

A draft report is sent to the Probation Trust for comment three weeks after the inspection, with publication approximately six weeks later. In addition the published copy goes to the relevant Ministers, other inspectorates, the Ministry of Justice Policy Group, NOMS and Police and Crime Commissioners. Copies are made available to the press and placed on our website. Reports on inspections undertaken in Wales are published in both Welsh and English.

Appendix 5

Scoring approach

This describes the methodology for assigning scores to each of the sections of the report.

In each case inspection staff examine how well the work was done across the case, following the criteria below:

1. ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING

- 1.1 Assessment and planning to inform sentencing
- 2.1 Assessment and planning to deliver the sentence
- 3.1 Assessment to reduce the likelihood of reoffending
- 4.1 Assessment and planning to minimise risk of harm to others
- 5.1 Assessment and planning to minimise risk of harm to victims

2. DELIVERY AND REVIEW

- 2.2 Delivery and review of the sentence plan and maximising offender engagement
- 3.2 Delivery of interventions to reduce the likelihood of reoffending
- 4.2 Delivery of interventions to minimise risk of harm to others
- 5.2 Delivery of interventions to minimise risk of harm to victims

3. CASE OUTCOMES

- 2.3 Initial outcomes are achieved
- 3.3 Likelihood of reoffending is reduced
- 4.3 Risk of harm to others is minimised
- 5.3 Risk of harm to victims is minimised

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

We look for evidence that leadership and management support the work with individual cases. This evidence is obtained through interviews with staff and managers from probation trusts and other organisations, and from sentencers.

- 1.4 Leadership and management to support sentencing
- 2.4 Leadership and management to deliver the sentence and achieve initial outcomes
- 3.4 Leadership and management to reduce the likelihood of reoffending
- 4.4 Leadership and management to minimise risk of harm to others
- 5.4 Leadership and management to deliver effective work for victims

5. VICTIM WORK

- 5.5 Victim contact and restorative justice.

Each scoring question in the inspection tool contributes to a score for the relevant section in the report. This approach enables us to say how often each aspect of the work was done well enough. Each section of the report focuses on a key outcome.

The score is based on the proportion of work judged sufficient ('above the line') across all the cases we inspected.

The **score for each of sections 1-5** is then calculated as the average of the scores for the component general criteria.

The **ASSISTING SENTENCING score** is calculated as an average, over all the relevant questions in the case assessment tool, of the proportion of work judged 'above the line'.

The **DELIVERING THE SENTENCE OF THE COURT score** is calculated as an average, over all the relevant questions in the case assessment tool, of the proportion of work judged 'above the line'.

The **REDUCING THE LIKELIHOOD OF REOFFENDING score** is calculated as an average, over all the relevant questions in the case assessment tool, of the proportion of work judged 'above the line'.

The **PROTECTING THE PUBLIC score** is calculated as an average, over all the relevant questions in the case assessment tool, of the proportion of work judged 'above the line'.

The **DELIVERING EFFECTIVE WORK FOR VICTIMS score** is calculated as an average, over all the relevant questions in the case assessment tool, of the proportion of work judged 'above the line'. Some of the questions in this section also contribute to the Protecting the Public score.

Development of the inspection criteria

We are grateful to the service users we met through Revolving Doors for their input on 'what an experience of supervision should be like'. Their thoughtful comments contributed to our detailed inspection criteria, and helped to shape our inspection guidance and set benchmarks for the quality of practice we define as sufficient.

Appendix 6

Criteria

CRITERIA for the INSPECTION of ADULT OFFENDING WORK										
PROCESS										
Headline CRITERIA OUTCOMES	1	ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING	2	DELIVERY AND REVIEW	3	CASE OUTCOMES	4	LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	5	VICTIM WORK
1 ASSISTING SENTENCING	1.1	Assessment and planning to inform sentencing					1.4	Leadership and management to support sentencing		
2 DELIVERING THE SENTENCE OF THE COURT	2.1	Assessment and planning to deliver the sentence	2.2	Delivery and review of the sentence plan and maximising offender engagement	2.3	Initial outcomes are achieved	2.4	Leadership and management to deliver the sentence and achieve initial outcomes		
3 REDUCING THE LIKELIHOOD OF REOFFENDING	3.1	Assessment to reduce the likelihood of reoffending	3.2	Delivery of interventions to reduce the likelihood of reoffending	3.3	Likelihood of reoffending is reduced	3.4	Leadership and management to reduce the likelihood of reoffending		
4 PROTECTING THE PUBLIC by minimising the risk of harm to others	4.1	Assessment and planning to minimise risk of harm to others	4.2	Delivery of interventions to minimise risk of harm to others	4.3	Risk of harm to others is minimised	4.4	Leadership and management to minimise risk of harm to others		
5 DELIVERING EFFECTIVE WORK FOR VICTIMS	5.1	Assessment and planning to minimise risk of harm to victims	5.2	Delivery of interventions to minimise risk of harm to victims	5.3	Risk of harm to victims is minimised	5.4	Leadership and management to deliver effective work for victims	5.5	Victim contact and restorative justice

The aspects of adult offending work that were covered in this inspection are defined in the inspection criteria, which are available at

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/about/hmiprob/iaow-criteria.pdf>

Appendix 7

Glossary

<i>Accredited programme</i>	Structured courses for offenders which are designed to identify and reduce the factors related to their offending behaviour. Following evaluation, the design of the programmes has been accredited by a panel of experts
<i>Approved premises</i>	Approved premises provide controlled accommodation for offenders under supervision
<i>Child protection</i>	Work to ensure that that all reasonable action has been taken to keep to a minimum the risk of a child or young person coming to harm
<i>CJSSS</i>	Criminal justice: Simple, Speedy, Summary: programme to facilitate the quicker processing of cases at court
<i>Desistance</i>	The process by which people stop offending and build a new, crime-free identity
<i>Dynamic factors</i>	As distinct from static factors. Dynamic factors are the factors in someone's circumstances and behaviour that can change over time
<i>ETE</i>	Education, training and employment: work to improve an individual's learning, and to increase their employment prospects
<i>HMI Probation</i>	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation
<i>Interventions; constructive and restrictive interventions</i>	<p>A <i>constructive</i> intervention is where the primary purpose is to reduce likelihood of reoffending.</p> <p>A <i>restrictive</i> intervention is where the primary purpose is to keep to a minimum the individual's risk of harm to others.</p> <p>Example: with a sex offender, a constructive intervention might be to put them through an accredited sex offender programme; a <i>restrictive intervention</i> (to minimise their risk of harm) might be to monitor regularly and meticulously their accommodation, their employment and the places they frequent, imposing and enforcing clear restrictions as appropriate to each case.</p> <p>NB: Both types of intervention are important</p>
<i>IOM</i>	Integrated Offender Management
<i>LDU</i>	Local delivery unit: an operation unit comprising of a probation office or offices. LDUs are generally coterminous with police basic command units and local authority structures
<i>LSCB</i>	Local Safeguarding Children Board: set up in each local authority (as a result of the Children Act 2004) to coordinate and ensure the effectiveness of the multi-agency work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in that locality
<i>MAPPA</i>	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements: where probation, police, prison and other agencies work together locally to manage offenders who pose a higher risk of harm to others
<i>nDelius</i>	National Delius: the national probation case management system which was completed in 2012, based on the earlier Delius system used by some Probation Trusts. The system is being rolled out through 2013
<i>NOMS</i>	National Offender Management Service: the single agency responsible for both Prisons and Probation Trusts

<i>OASys/ eOASys</i>	Offender Assessment System/electronic Offender Assessment System: the nationally designed and prescribed framework for both Probation and Prisons to assess offenders, implemented in stages from April 2003. It makes use of both static and dynamic factors
<i>Offender management</i>	A core principle of offender management is that a single offender manager takes responsibility for managing an offender through the period of time they are serving their sentence, whether in custody or the community. Offenders are managed differently depending on their risk of harm to others and what constructive and restrictive interventions are required. Individual intervention programmes are designed and supported by the wider 'offender management team or network', which can be made up of the offender manager, offender supervisor, key workers and case administrators
<i>Offender manager</i>	In the language of offender management, this is the term for the officer with lead responsibility for managing a specific case from 'end to end'
<i>Probation officer</i>	This is the term for a 'qualified' offender manager who has undertaken a higher education based course for two years. The name of the qualification and content of the training varies depending on when it was undertaken. They manage offenders posing the highest risk of harm to the public and other more complex cases
<i>Probation services officer</i>	This is the term for an offender manager who was originally recruited with no qualification. From 2010 they may access locally determined training to 'qualify' as a probation services officer or to build on this to qualify as a probation officer. They may manage all but the most complex cases or those posing the highest risk of harm to the public depending on their level of training and experience
<i>PSR</i>	Pre-sentence report: this refers to any report prepared for a court, whether delivered orally or in a written format
<i>'Risk of harm work'</i>	This is the term generally used by HMI Probation to describe work to protect the public, primarily using restrictive interventions, to keep to a minimum the individual's opportunity to behave in a way that is a risk of harm to others
<i>RoSH</i>	Risk of Serious Harm: a term used in OASys. All cases are classified as presenting a low/medium/high/very high Risk of Serious Harm to others. HMI Probation uses this term when referring to the classification system, but uses the broader term risk of harm when referring to the analysis which has to take place in order to determine the classification level. This helps to clarify the distinction between the probability of an event occurring and the impact/severity of the event. The term Risk of Serious Harm only incorporates 'serious' impact, whereas using 'Risk of Harm' enables the necessary attention to be given to those offenders for whom lower impact/severity harmful behaviour is probable
<i>Safeguarding</i>	The ability to demonstrate that a child or young person's well-being has been 'safeguarded'. This includes – but can be broader than – child protection
<i>SEEDS</i>	Skills for Effective Engagement and Development and Supervision: an initiative in place across many Probation Trusts which emphasises the importance of the practitioners' skills in relationship building to ensure effective work with individuals. The development of these skills is supported by the observation of practice and reflective feedback by managers or others.
<i>SFO</i>	Serious Further Offence: when an offender is charged with an offence classified as an SFO (serious sexual or violent offences), the Probation Trust conducts an investigation and review of the management of the case

<i>Strategic Management Board</i>	Strategic Management Board: the duties and responsibilities of the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements 'Responsible Authority' (police, probation and prison service) are discharged through the Strategic Management Board. This consists of senior representatives of the agencies involved in Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements and lay advisors
<i>Static factors</i>	As distinct from dynamic factors. Static factors are elements of someone's history that by definition can subsequently never change (i.e. the age at which they committed their first offence)
<i>ViSOR</i>	Violent and Sexual Offender Register: this is the information system managed by the police to share information in some cases where there has been sexual or serious violent offending
<i>YOS/YOT/YJS</i>	Youth Offending Service/Youth Offending Team/Youth Justice Service: these are common titles for the bodies commonly referred to as YOTs

Appendix 8

Role of HMI Probation and Code of Practice

Information on the role of HMI Probation and Code of Practice can be found on our website:

www.justice.gsi.gov.uk/about/hmi-probation

The Inspectorate is a public body. Anyone wishing to comment on an inspection, a report or any other matter falling within its remit should write to:

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