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Quality & Impact inspection:  
The effectiveness of probation work by the  
**London Community Rehabilitation Company**

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An inspection by HM Inspectorate of Probation  
March 2018

This inspection was led by HM Inspector Joe Simpson, supported by a team of inspectors, as well as staff from our operations and research teams. The Assistant Chief Inspector responsible for this inspection programme is Helen Rinaldi. We would like to thank all those who helped plan and took part in the inspection; without their help and cooperation, the inspection would not have been possible.

Please note that throughout the report the names in the practice examples have been changed to protect the individual's identity.

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## Foreword

This is our second inspection of probation services delivered by the London Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC). The first (in 2016) covered North London only.

In this pan-London inspection we found that, with the exception of effective unpaid work arrangements, the CRC does now have the basics in place, albeit later than originally envisaged in its contract. The CRC had acted on our 2016 recommendations. It had used them as a catalyst for change, and adopted a more conventional operating model. Londoners under probation supervision are now being seen, and seen sufficiently regularly in the main.

The organisation still relies too much for comfort on agency staff, and it is in the middle of a large-scale performance improvement project, with one in three professional staff affected at the outset. While maintaining this year's focus on assessment and planning in each case, the CRC now needs to improve materially the extent to which it delivers its plans for each individual under probation supervision.

The CRC is now turning its attention to two other key tenets of good probation services: local strategic partnerships, and the range of specialist services (interventions) required to make a real difference to people's lives and prospects. Critical relationships with local strategic partners suffered under the CRC's previous operating model, but CRC leaders are taking the opportunity now to re-energise these essential networks. We were pleased to see the CRC's working relationship with the National Probation Service beginning to improve, from a low base.

The consistent provision of specialist services is particularly difficult in our capital city, where the funding and other priorities of 32 individual boroughs and the Mayor's office can differ. Even so, too many Londoners under the CRC's supervision are not given the specialist services they need to make a difference to their lives and outlook. Things are set to improve: the CRC has well-developed plans to increase the range and quality of its rehabilitative services this year, and we hope to see not just plans but good provision, next time we inspect.

Individual caseloads have reduced when compared with those we saw in North London a year ago. We gauge that staff morale is better overall. And seeing beyond the CRC's extraordinary preparations for our inspection, we are in no doubt that the quality of work has improved from a very low base, and is still improving. Public protection and rehabilitative work are still not good enough, but rehabilitative work is at least comparable in quality to the average in other CRCs we have inspected. That is not acceptable – as that average is itself unacceptable, in our view – but it is a notable improvement and achievement for this CRC and its staff. There is much more for this CRC to do, but it has made significant progress over the last year.



**Dame Glenys Stacey**  
HM Chief Inspector of Probation

March 2018

## Key facts

262,347

The total number of offenders subject to probation supervision across England and Wales<sup>1</sup>

29,473

The number of offenders supervised by the London CRC<sup>1</sup>

41%

The proportion of the CRC cases that relate to a custodial sentence (pre- or post-release supervision)<sup>1</sup>. The proportion for all England and Wales CRCs was 40%

80%

The proportion of offenders who were recorded as having successfully completed their period of licence or post-sentence supervision with the CRC following a release from custody<sup>2</sup>. The performance figure for all England and Wales was 77%, against a target of 65%

78%

The proportion of offenders who were recorded as having successfully completed their community sentence with the CRC<sup>3</sup>. The performance figure for all England and Wales was 79%, against a target of 75%

73%

The proportion of offenders managed by London CRC reporting satisfaction with key aspects of their supervision. The figure for England and Wales was 78%<sup>4</sup>

2 (of 21)

The number of CRCs owned by MTCnovo

1 Offender Management Caseload Statistics as at 30 June 2017, Ministry of Justice.

2 CRC Service Level 9a, Community Performance Quarterly Statistics April - June 2017, Q1, Ministry of Justice

3 CRC Service Level 8, Community Performance Quarterly Statistics April - June 2017, Q1, Ministry of Justice

4 Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) Offender Survey March 2017, HMPPS Performance Hub

# 1. Overall judgements and recommendations

- Protecting the public
- Reducing reoffending
- Abiding by the sentence
- The National Probation Service and Community Rehabilitation Company working together
- Recommendations

## 1. Overall judgements and recommendations

We last inspected probation services in London in September 2016. At that time, we examined the work delivered by both the London CRC and the National Probation Service (NPS) (London division) across eight boroughs in the north of the capital.

Because of our concerns about the quality of work at that time, particularly the work of the CRC, we undertook to revisit London the following year. We have done so, and inspected the work of the two organisations separately, across the whole of London. We recently reported our findings on the quality and impact of the work of the NPS in London<sup>5</sup>. This report covers the work of the London CRC. The outcomes from our September 2016 inspection are summarised in Appendix 3.

The findings of this inspection are set out in the following chapters and summarised here.

### Protecting the public

The quality of public protection work was variable and not of an acceptable standard overall.

The CRC has made clear progress since 2016. The quality of work is improving but it is still not satisfactory. Senior managers acknowledge that they are still implementing effective risk management arrangements.

Most assessments focused on the right things, but many of the issues identified were not reflected in plans. We noted improvements in responding to changing circumstances in relation to risk of harm, but plans were not always reviewed to reflect these changes or the individual's progress.

In too many cases, there was an inadequate response to public protection concerns, and too few included interventions focused on protecting those at risk of harm.

Some staff were not confident in addressing aspects of public protection and not all were doing this work to a good enough standard. Despite management oversight taking place, staff did not produce quality work in too many cases. We noted the positive contribution to public protection work of contracted providers and partners, however.

### Reducing reoffending

The quality of work is not acceptable. We found significant improvements in several aspects of practice but, overall, services did not sufficiently support rehabilitation.

Our inspection findings showed that the quality of work was close to the national average for those CRCs that we have inspected. Although that level of performance is not in itself acceptable, this is impressive progress in a short period of time. The improvements were in elements of core probation practice: producing assessments and plans, and seeing individuals under probation supervision.

Most assessments of individuals were of sufficient quality, but they did not always

<sup>5</sup> *Quality & Impact inspection: the effectiveness of probation work by the National Probation Service in London*, HMIP (January 2018).

feed into plans of work. Individuals were not involved sufficiently in planning or reviewing the work being done.

A greater proportion of people were receiving specialist services (interventions) than in 2016, but this still fell short of being satisfactory.

### **Abiding by the sentence**

The quality of work was acceptable overall. Most individuals abided by the conditions of their sentence. The CRC took appropriate action in response to non-compliance, and undertook enforcement when appropriate in most cases.

Contact levels were satisfactory in most cases. The quality of engagement varied, however, and staff did not always ensure that the diverse needs of those they supervised were met.

The arrangements for unpaid work were poor.

### **The Community Rehabilitation Company and National Probation Service working together**

Working relationships and formal reporting systems had improved since our last inspection. An interface agreement between the London CRC and NPS promoted effective work between the two organisations. Risk escalation arrangements had improved.

NPS take-up of services (interventions) on offer from the CRC was low. Delays in implementing the London CRC rate card meant that details of services were not made available to the NPS in good time. The situation was exacerbated by a lack of confidence among some NPS staff in the quality of CRC services on offer<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> *Quality & Impact inspection: the effectiveness of probation work by the National Probation Service in London*, HMIP (January 2018).



# Recommendations

## **The London Community Rehabilitation Company should:**

1. ensure, in all cases, that responsible officers identify the risk of harm posed by individuals and deliver plans of work that protect the public sufficiently
  2. improve the range, volume, quality, and take-up of interventions to better address individuals' rehabilitation needs
  3. deliver unpaid work effectively
  4. improve local strategic relationships with partners, to support the delivery of services and the safeguarding of children
  5. ensure all practitioners have the training, skills and knowledge needed to undertake their duties
  6. use management information to better understand and manage the workloads of staff, staff engagement and the tensions inherent in delivering a large-scale performance improvement project.
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## **2. The arrangements for delivering probation services in London**

- National context
- Local context
- Organisational arrangements in the Community Rehabilitation Company

## National context

Some 260,000 adults are supervised by probation services annually<sup>7</sup>. Probation services supervise individuals serving community orders, provide offenders with resettlement services while they are in prison (in anticipation of their release) and supervise for a minimum of 12 months all individuals released from prison<sup>8</sup>.

To protect the public, probation staff assess and manage the risks that offenders pose to the community. They help to rehabilitate offenders by dealing with problems such as drug and alcohol misuse and lack of employment or housing, to reduce the prospect of reoffending. They monitor whether individuals are complying with court requirements. If offenders fail to comply, probation staff return them to court or request recall to prison.

These services are provided by a publicly owned National Probation Service and 21 privately owned Community Rehabilitation Companies that provide services under contract.

The NPS advises courts on sentencing all offenders, and manages those who present a high or very high risk of serious harm, or who are managed under Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). CRCs supervise most other offenders who present a low or medium risk of harm.

## Local context

Here we report on probation services delivered in London by the CRC. We provide demographic data and information about the area in Appendix 2.

The population of London was estimated at 8.8 million in 2016, which accounted for 15% of the overall population of England and Wales<sup>9</sup>. London has a much lower proportion of white British residents (44.9%) than the England and Wales average (80.5%<sup>10</sup>). It has a slightly lower reoffending rate than the England and Wales average<sup>11</sup>.

The London CRC has the largest number of individuals under supervision of all the 21 CRCs<sup>12</sup>. The CRC is owned by MTCnovo, a company created specifically to own CRCs. The company comprises an American parent company (Management and Training Corporation) and a new UK-based company (novo). In the United States of America, MTC manages private prisons and provides services to help people learn new academic, technical and social skills. In England, MTCnovo also owns a neighbouring CRC, Thames Valley.

7 Offender management statistics quarterly April to June 2017, Ministry of Justice.

8 All those sentenced, for offences committed after the implementation of the *Offender Rehabilitation Act 2014*, to more than one day and less than 24 months in custody, are supervised in the community for 12 months post-release. Others serving longer custodial sentences may have longer total periods of supervision on licence.

9 United Kingdom population estimates mid-2016, Office for National Statistics, June 2017.

10 2011 census, Office for National Statistics, December 2012.

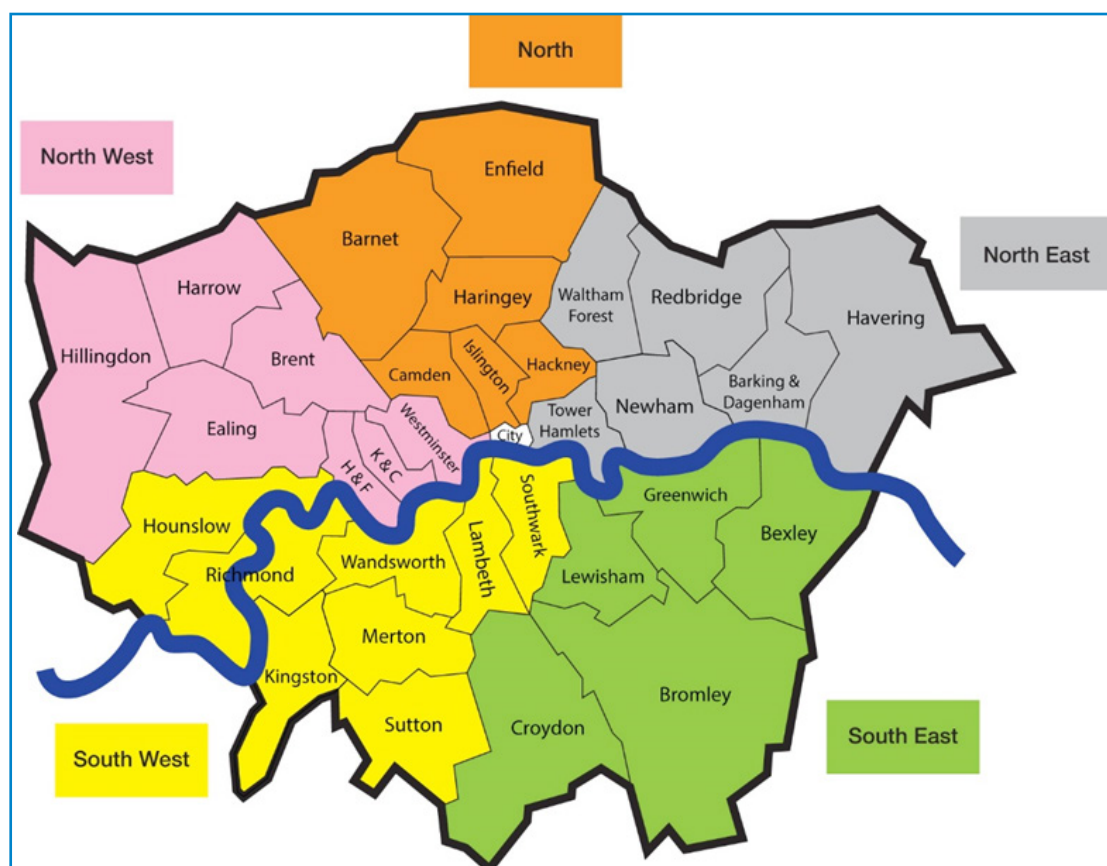
11 Proven reoffending statistics quarterly, Ministry of Justice, October 2017.

12 Offender management statistics quarterly April to June 2017, Table 4.10: Offender supervised in the community at period end, by NPS region, Division and CRC, England and Wales.

London CRC had a caseload of 29,473 on 30 June 2017. This was 18% of the total national CRC caseload. The most recently released data shows that London CRC is meeting 4 of the 15 contract performance targets<sup>13</sup>. For two of those targets, its performance is also above the national average. There were a further five measures for which no data has been supplied for London because of concerns about the quality of the data.

## Organisational arrangements in the London Community Rehabilitation Company

The CRC is divided into five areas, covering 32 boroughs and the City of London.



**Figure 1: London boroughs and the five areas within the CRC**

Source: London CRC September 2017

### Leadership and management

MTCNovo's successful bid to deliver probation services in London proposed an operating model which grouped individuals into cohorts based on their age and gender, with a specialist grouping for those with mental health needs. The intention was to develop evidence-based interventions and specialist practitioners for each cohort, and to maximise partnership working. It was introduced in December 2015.

In practice, the model had significant drawbacks, and did not produce the results

<sup>13</sup> Community Performance Quarterly Management Information, Ministry of Justice, April to June 2017.

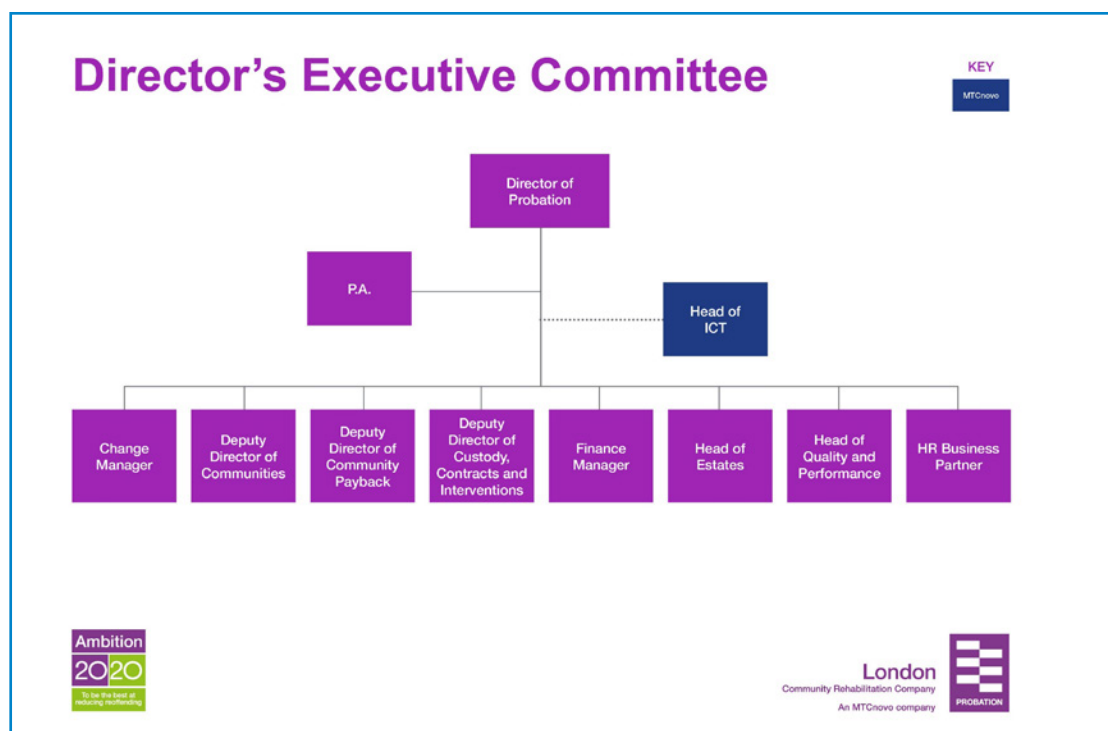
envisaged. Our 2016 inspection, an internal review of the cohort model and feedback from the CRC's 2016 staff survey all suggested a change was needed. In January 2017, the CRC reverted to a more traditional model of local teams that are responsible for all the work on their patch and for nurturing local partnerships (at borough level). Staff have generally welcomed the move away from the cohort model.

Senior staff acknowledged that introducing the cohort model, and then managing the move to the current model, had inhibited the CRC's performance in the early years of the contract. The CRC has had to prioritise improving core aspects of its services quickly, for both service quality and financial reasons.

The CRC had developed and implemented a three-year plan:

- creating a vision and strategy (Ambition 2020) to set the direction, priorities and aspirations of the organisation
- introducing a new operating model with reduced and generic workloads for most staff (while some specialisms remain)
- implementing structural change to ensure clear lines of accountability for delivering services.

Implementation is being overseen by a new Executive Committee:



**Figure 2: London CRC: senior leadership team**

*Source: London CRC September 2017*

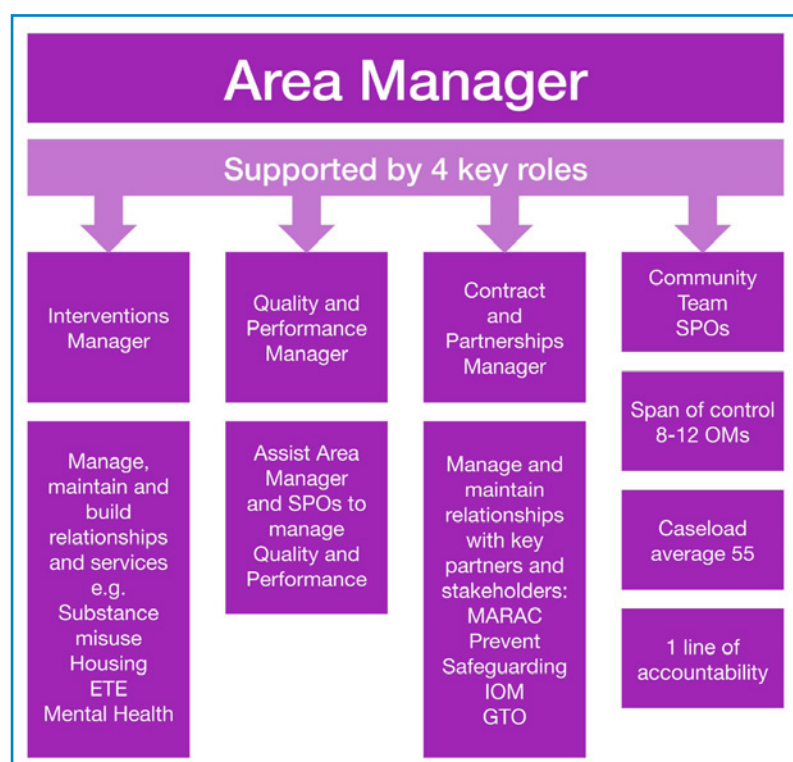
Ambition 2020 included plans for 'getting back to basics', to put the organisation on a solid footing in relation to core aspects of practice. This was a key early step in a sequence of organisational developments designed to improve the quality of services. Work was well underway at the time of the inspection, and was focused on four key areas: sentence planning, appointments, enforcement, and safeguarding.

This work has resulted in rapid and impressive improvements in the quality of some areas of core practice. It has required strong leadership and a great effort by staff throughout the organisation. It has also created anxieties for some members of staff.

### The new operating model in practice

Under the new operating model, local team managers are accountable to five area managers, who in turn have area-based support staff to bolster the focus on performance and quality. The five area managers work closely together to ensure that consistent messages are being delivered to teams across London.

**Figure 3: London CRC: area governance structure<sup>14</sup>**



Source: London CRC September 2017

### Staffing and workloads

The CRC has made considerable progress in reducing exceptional individual caseloads and in making sure work is more equitably distributed among staff across the capital. It competes with NPS London in recruiting staff, and relies heavily on agency workers, given the long-standing difficulties with recruiting in the capital. The CRC intends that professionals should carry about 55 cases each. At the time of our inspection, the average caseload for community-based cases was 57<sup>15</sup>, but nevertheless, most caseworkers reported being stretched.

14 Within this figure, ETE refers to 'education, training and employment'; GTO to 'gripping the offender'; MARAC to Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference; SPO to Senior Probation Officer; and OM to offender manager (see glossary for more details).

15 Average caseload was 57.2 for the three months September to November 2017 inclusive, as advised by the CRC on 30 January 2018.

We found staff morale was variable. Practitioners in the London CRC have experienced considerable upheaval in recent years. We found that many staff welcomed the recent changes, and many were in better spirits when compared to those we met on our last inspection, in North London.

Two-thirds of staff said that their workload had a negative effect on the case under review or on other cases that they were supervising. This was a modest improvement compared with the position we found last year. It is not an unusual proportion when compared to other CRCs.

### **The CRC's performance improvement project**

Senior managers maintain that some staff are not delivering services to the quality standards required, and that this is a long-standing issue from the past.

The 'back to basics' agenda included the performance improvement project, a structured process to assess the capability of all responsible officers. For those found wanting, a performance improvement plan (PIP) was put in place.

One in three staff had not met the basic threshold requirements and were included in individual PIP arrangements. CRC managers told us that all those in the PIP had five days' training to help them reach the required level of performance.

The PIP process was not popular with many staff, and tensions had arisen. We encountered several myths, for example that a disproportionate number of staff with specific diversity characteristics were included in the PIP process. We could not find any evidence that PIP was being used disproportionately. However, it was clear that many staff experienced PIP as being heavy-handed, rather than supportive.

### **Training and development**

Almost one-third of staff reported that their general training needs had not been met, and senior managers recognised that training had not had a high profile recently. They have plans to address this in the coming year, but we noted that a training needs analysis was not in evidence. Meanwhile, staff training had centred on the getting back to basics agenda, for example enforcement briefings.

We found that the level of knowledge, skills and experience of staff varied considerably, particularly among the probation services officers (PSOs) who made up the bulk of those included in the PIP process.

Staff had come to the PSO role from a variety of routes. Several PSOs had an administrative background and had limited experience in supervising offenders. Others had held roles in unpaid work (UPW) and found the shift to supervising people on an individual basis daunting. A number of these staff reported feeling that they had not been adequately trained and supported in their work.



## Caseload versus total workload

Some staff may be feeling stretched by additional administrative tasks, as exemplified by one member of staff:

*"I am full-time and I have a caseload of 53. This is far more manageable than last year, when I had over 100 cases and was covering four boroughs. I now feel that I have a bit of wriggle room to plan and reflect. Although it's not all good; I have to do my own admin, and a task that would have taken a case administrator 15 minutes to do can take me all afternoon".*

Some staff complained that administrative duties had increased their workload (as opposed to caseload) substantially, and that senior managers were not sufficiently aware of the full range of workload pressures on staff. Furthermore, women's specialist workers and Integrated Offender Management (IOM) staff carry the same workload as other staff, despite the additional demands that these types of cases can generate.

One worker said:

*"My current caseload is not manageable as I also do IOM, which takes a lot of my time. I struggle to keep up with my cases. In the past, the IOM would have been reflected in my caseload, but apparently this is no longer the case. There is no workload adjustment for specialist roles, which I think is unfair".*

## Diversity and equality

We found a surprisingly limited focus on staff or service user diversity, given the diverse nature of the staff and offender groups in the capital. We did not see any examples of interventions aimed at black and minority ethnic service users.

More needed to be done to recognise and respond to both staff and service users' diversity needs, so that relevant issues could be addressed effectively.

## Staff diversity

Staff told us that communication within the organisation had focused on performance management issues in the last year. Managers recognised that the recent focus on performance and quality meant that diversity issues had not had a high profile in the organisation.

Several black responsible officers said they felt that race and ethnicity did not have an adequate profile, both for staff and for those under probation supervision. For example, a responsible officer told us of an experience when she had been subject to a racist comment in the reception area. When she reported this to a manager, no action was taken.

The CRC conducts joint risk assessments with their NPS colleagues on the security of their buildings and reception areas. Any issues arising are addressed at local joint health and safety meetings. The CRC has confirmed there were no incidents reported in the last 12 months in relation to safe access and security for women workers.



However, women workers themselves told us of their ongoing concerns about safety and security. Wider issues were raised, for example the level of support for those seeking part-time work, and securing work patterns that support family life.

Diversity-related tensions and misunderstandings about the PIP process could have been managed more effectively. For example, despite contrary views and expressed concerns, we found the organisation's own management information showed no diversity-related disproportionality for staff involved in the PIP process, and the organisation could have allayed fears earlier.

A senior manager has recently taken the lead for diversity and equality, and was developing plans to give these matters due attention. Staff told us that communication was stifled by being mainly routed through line management channels. The CRC is considering the development of employee-led networks to engage more broadly with staff on a range of issues, including diversity and equality.

### **Services for women**

The CRC did not have an effective strategy for ensuring consistency in meeting the needs of women. Service delivery for women varied considerably between offices, and consistency was not always within the CRC's control. So, for example, a project undertaken jointly with the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) was not a pan-London project, and not all women lived within easy reach of a women's centre (known locally as hubs). We were told that most (but not all) offices have women-only reporting, but this did not reflect reality for many women. There is no facility to run women-only UPW sessions apart from singleton placements.

MOPAC and the CRC jointly funded the Advance Minerva project. The project works with women service users in the community, offering practical and emotional support to help to break the cycle of offending for women and their families. Services are delivered to women who are residents of Barking & Dagenham, Brent, Camden & Islington, Croydon, Ealing, Hackney, Hammersmith & Fulham, Haringey, Havering, Hounslow, Kensington & Chelsea, Lambeth, Lewisham, Newham, Southwark, Waltham Forest, and Westminster.

### **Working environment**

Most field teams share offices with the NPS, and the CRC has limited scope for making significant changes across the estate. Despite this, the CRC has a strategy to improve the quality of its premises and has a 'model' office at Bromley, which it would like to see replicated elsewhere. Staff in Bromley work in an open-plan setting. It is welcoming and has modern facilities, including Wi-Fi for laptop use. All the staff spoken to during the inspection liked the new facilities. If they needed confidential spaces for discussions with service users, there were small meeting rooms where these could take place. The CRC says there is anecdotal evidence that service users have been more engaged at the model office.

The CRC is in the final stage of developing a new case management system, OMNIA. This is an ambitious effort to provide much more functionality, with a new means of assessing and planning the work, and different mechanisms for recording activities. Implementation is planned for early 2018. Senior managers believe it will help staff to further improve the quality of assessments and plans.

## **Available services (interventions)**

The provision of necessary specialist services (interventions) is not sufficiently comprehensive or coherent. Interventions were being delivered primarily via one-to-one sessions, and we found the quality of these inconsistent. Important services directly commissioned by the CRC are not available throughout London.

London's local authorities and MOPAC have differing priorities, making coherent provision more difficult for this CRC. The situation was exacerbated when the organisation lost its links to many local partnerships under the cohort model. We found insufficient delivery of interventions across the capital to address domestic abuse.

The CRC is seeking to improve matters. The development of interventions is an integral part of its recently introduced Ambition 2020 strategy. It is trying to re-establish relationships with local partners, and is recruiting interventions managers to develop local partnerships and improve the resources available to responsible officers. Plans are in hand to increase the provision of domestic abuse interventions in 2018.

In relation to accredited programmes, we agreed with CRC senior managers that the completion rate was disappointing. In addition, there were waiting lists across all programmes.

The CRC is committed to working with MOPAC and has seconded a probation officer to the Serious Group Offending Unit. It has also had a seconded officer working with the Prevent and Terrorism Act branch of the Metropolitan Police.

MOPAC was positive about the CRC's engagement at a strategic level. It also welcomed the work done through the Alcohol Abstinence Monitoring Requirement. This is managed by the CRC across London. Electronic monitoring services tag service users at their home addresses. There is also a pilot Tagging at Source project. This operates at two courts in London (Westminster and Bromley magistrates' courts) and is supported by two members of staff. The pilot is designed to measure the impact on compliance of tagging at court rather than waiting for electronic monitoring to be put in place at the home address.

London has other high-profile crime-related issues to address, such as gangs and extremism. The higher proportion of foreign national offenders in the capital also adds a complicating factor. CRC leaders say that the organisation is beginning to revisit its links with local services and partners to jointly address public protection and reoffending issues. However, there are many multi-agency meetings for a thin local management structure to service.

## **Integrated Offender Management (IOM)**

IOM had not developed significantly since the last inspection. MOPAC noted that pan-London IOM arrangements were inconsistent due to varying levels of partnership engagement in local areas. The CRC has no specific contractual obligations in respect of IOM and is reviewing its involvement in such schemes.

## **Resettlement services**

Access to suitable accommodation in London is difficult.

Under contract, the CRC completes resettlement plans before individuals are released from prison. However, these mainly consist of signposting offenders to housing agencies. The resettlement plans do not provide housing. Provision of accommodation for prisoners who leave custody homeless remains a challenge.

The CRC acknowledges that it needs to improve its performance on resettlement. As part of the restructure, a custody manager was appointed. This has helped to improve relationships between prisons and the CRC.

## **Quality assurance**

In June 2017, the CRC implemented its quality assurance strategy. The head of quality and performance leads on this and reports to the executive committee on progress, including progress on the performance improvement project. More recently, quality and performance managers have been appointed to support each of the five area managers. This work has initially focused on 'getting back to basics' and ensuring that the CRC meets the performance requirements set out in its contract. The approach has helped the CRC to achieve progress in some areas of practice.

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# **3. An evaluation of the quality of probation services delivered by the London Community Rehabilitation Company**

- Protecting the public
- Reducing reoffending
- Abiding by the sentence
- The Community Rehabilitation Company and National Probation Service working together

## Protecting the public

The quality of public protection work is not of an acceptable standard. It is improving, however.

### Assessment and planning

Clear progress has been made since we looked at public protection work in North London in 2016. The progress is welcome but there is still considerable room for further improvement. Senior managers acknowledge that they are at the foundation stage of putting in place effective risk management arrangements.

Many of the practice improvement initiatives came into effect in March 2017, around the time when the cases in our sample began. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the positive impact of the changes had not fully bedded in for the cases sampled. It was clear to us that, as the cases progressed, in general so did the quality of work. This rapidly evolving picture suggests that cases that have begun more recently are more likely to have benefited from the organisational changes to date, as staff and processes are now more settled within the new framework.

Almost three-quarters of initial assessments of the risk of harm posed to others were satisfactory. Initial plans to address risk of harm were not of an acceptable standard in slightly more than half of the cases, however.

***Poor practice example:** Mike is a 19-year-old subject to an eight-week custodial sentence for an offence of possessing a knife. This was his first experience of being subject to adult probation services.*

*Prior to being released on licence, he was recognised as being someone who might need more intensive input from probation services. There was no contact with him in custody, however, and no direct pre-release planning by the responsible officer.*

*Upon release, Mike did not engage well and did not willingly share information. The initial assessment and planning did not accurately identify the offending or public protection issues. Unsurprisingly, therefore, the plan of work was not focused on offending or on the obvious public protection concerns in the case.*

In contrast, the following case shows what can be done with clear planning, followed by effective delivery, to manage risk of harm:

***Good practice example:** Paul received a suspended sentence order for assault and harassment of a female colleague. A further offence against the same victim saw the prison sentence being activated. He served six weeks and was released on a period of post-sentence supervision (PSS).*

*The responsible officer set additional licence conditions for him to continue with offending behaviour work. She extended the restraining order from two to four years, to promote long-term management of the risk of harm that he posed to the victim.*

## Delivery and reviewing progress

Immediately ahead of our inspection, CRC managers had reviewed all the cases that were selected for potential inclusion in our sample. This led to practitioners addressing deficits found. As this had taken place just before our arrival, it did not affect the bulk of the period of probation supervision we considered. We routinely look behind the most recent steps in any case.

Inspection preparation had inflated the numbers of assessments and plans that had been reviewed; indeed, we saw several unnecessary reviews. The inspection preparation did help the CRC to spot and deal with a few cases that would otherwise have given rise to considerable concern on our part, had the CRC not identified and addressed the issues before we arrived. Despite the undoubted progress this CRC has made, leaders cannot be confident that there are no other current cases in which unidentified risks exist.

There was an inadequate response to public protection concerns in too many cases. For example, interventions delivered by responsible officers had sufficiently focused on protecting those at risk of harm in only half of the cases in our sample.

***Poor practice example:** Kevin was on licence for offences of assault, driving without due care and attention, and possession of cannabis. Kevin posed a medium risk of harm to a range of people: to children (due to a previous robbery offence); to a known adult (due to domestic abuse offending); to staff (because of threats to shoot police); and to the public, as indicated by his current driving offence.*

*Additional licence requirements were in place to attend the Building Better Relationships (BBR) accredited programme and to participate in the MOPAC-supported 'Gripping the Offender' project aimed at tackling prolific offending in certain London boroughs.*

*Despite these being licence conditions, eight months into the period of supervision Kevin had not commenced the BBR programme and drug testing had not begun.*

We judged that all reasonable action had been taken by the responsible officer to keep to a minimum the service user's risk of harm to others in only 56% of the relevant cases. The following example shows what can be achieved with an appropriate focus on the need to protect individuals from harm:

***Good practice example:** Carole was on an 18-month Offender Rehabilitation Order Act 2014 (ORA) community order for an offence of disorderly behaviour, which involved threatening behaviour towards a teacher at her daughter's school. Carole presented a medium risk of harm to staff, to a known adult – the victim of the offence – and to children. Carole's daughter was known to children's social care services as being in need of support services.*

*Work included regular meetings with children's social care services, home visits and Carole's attendance at a rehabilitation and reintegration alcohol treatment provider. The responsible officer supported Carole in her engagement with these services.*

*Carole successfully completed alcohol treatment and had consistent negative tests for alcohol misuse. Because of Carole's progress, the case was closed by children's social care services.*

We noted the ongoing and improving contribution to public protection work by contracted providers and partners. In 90% of relevant cases, the providers and partners had taken all reasonable action to keep to a minimum the risk of harm that the individual posed to others.

Several staff said they were not confident in addressing aspects of public protection, particularly when faced with domestic abuse or child safeguarding issues. Systems to ensure that routine formal supervision takes place have helped senior probation officers to monitor inexperienced officers' understanding and awareness of risk factors.

***Poor practice example:** David is subject to a community order for assaulting a police officer. He has a long-standing alcohol problem and a history of violence against his partners. David has a new relationship, in which there is a child. He does not live with that child but has unsupervised contact with her.*

*No referral to children's social care services had been made. This demonstrated a lack of awareness of risk factors by the responsible officer.*

Risk of harm is dynamic, and we were pleased to note an increase in the proportion of cases in which responsible officers had responded appropriately to changing circumstances in relation to risk of harm. Responsible officers reviewed assessments and revised planning sufficiently well in over two-thirds of the cases inspected. However, we judged that management oversight had a positive impact on public protection in only one-third of relevant cases.

### **Safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults**

Local managers acknowledged that they have some way to go in relation to safeguarding work. One said:

*"We are in a better place than we were but we are still at the beginning of the journey".*

The operating model allows PSOs to hold medium-risk cases featuring potential child safeguarding concerns. Many PSOs have had insufficient training to manage these cases.

The CRC has an Internal Safeguarding Board, and proposes that managers will attend local safeguarding boards once per year. Local managers report that they are unable to attend more often due to capacity issues and the need to service 32 boroughs. Having reduced attendance to such infrequent levels suggests that the CRC is not treating child safeguarding work as a priority.

The organisational structure associated with the cohort model saw the CRC reduce its contact with local safeguarding partnerships. It now has proposals for improved future engagement, but these have not been discussed with local partnerships. The CRC intends to deliver two days of in-house safeguarding training to staff in 2018. Staff will not be able to take up places on safeguarding training delivered by local partners, however, as that would exceed their allocation of training days. The CRC's engagement at the multi-agency level on safeguarding children is under-developed and does not adequately support effective practice.

In addition, we found significant gaps in information-sharing in relation to child safeguarding. CRC staff estimate that local authorities' response rate to requests for information is around 60%, leaving a sizeable proportion of cases with potential child protection issues. The CRC manages incoming requests for information through a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub mailbox. It has found that 80% of the information requested is for individuals who are not known to the CRC. Current information-sharing arrangements on child safeguarding are inefficient and do not support effective practice in this area.

### Impact and potential impact

In our evaluation of the cases, we judged whether there was evidence that sufficient progress had been made in minimising the risk of harm posed by individuals to a range of third parties, including the public, known adults, children, staff and prisoners. On average, sufficient progress was found in around half of the relevant cases. This is in line with the national average for CRCs, and an improvement on the previous results. However, there is still significant room for improvement.

**Table 1: Enablers and barriers for the CRC relating to the inspection domain of protecting the public.**

Enablers		Barriers	
1.	Reduced caseloads and higher levels of contact with service users provided practitioners with more opportunities to address public protection issues.	1.	Inadequate plans, interventions and reviews failed to underpin the effective management of risk of harm. This, together with a lack of skills, knowledge and experience for some responsible officers, left the public vulnerable..
2.	Where responsible officers were experienced and supported, they managed effectively the risk of harm posed by service users.	2.	The CRC's engagement at the multi-agency level on safeguarding children – and limited information-sharing arrangements in this field – did not support effective practice.



## Reducing reoffending

The quality of work to reduce offending is not acceptable. Despite significant improvements in several aspects of practice, services do not sufficiently support the rehabilitation of offenders overall.

The results from our case inspections show that the London CRC is close to the average for most of our measures, compared with the results for other CRCs inspected so far. Compared with the previous (and historical) inspection results, this is impressive progress in a short time. The improvements mostly relate to the basics of probation practice: producing assessments and plans, and seeing individuals.

### Assessment, planning and delivery

As in other CRC areas, assessments produced by the NPS at court are sometimes incomplete. In London, we found that 37% were not of good enough quality and, for CRC staff, this made starting work with individuals more difficult. These cases had to be reassessed by CRC staff, consuming time and resources.

We found that, within an appropriate time following allocation, the overall assessment in relation to reducing reoffending was sufficient in over two-thirds of cases. The quality of sentence plans was adequate in only just over half of the cases we inspected, however. The following cases illustrate how opportunities can be missed through inadequate planning:

***Poor practice example:** Debbie was sentenced for an offence of assault against a female, and four police assaults. She had made progress in custody in addressing her drug and alcohol use, and in engaging with health care. She had also worked on deficits in her thinking and behaviour. Upon release, Debbie was subject to a licence and PSS for a period of 12 months.*

*Debbie was not visited in prison for pre-release planning. Consequently, the responsible officer was not fully aware of the release plans that were in place. This led to a last-minute attempt to try and arrange an appointment for the day of release in the area where temporary accommodation had been found.*

*On release, Debbie was seen by various duty officers. The responsible officer had not interviewed her and was not aware of the extent of her offending behaviour. There was no clear plan of what work needed to take place. No motivational work was done with Debbie. Within eight weeks, the progress made in custody had been lost. Debbie is now wanted on a warrant.*

**Poor practice example:** George was released on licence after a 29-month custodial sentence for an offence of burglary. Having failed to attend appointments, he was recalled to prison. When he was re-released, there was no enhanced contact.

The responsible officer did not undertake a thorough initial assessment, and planning simply stated “engage with sentence planning”. This provided no direction on what was required to address offending and manage his risk of harm. George was not involved in the planning and did not have a clear understanding of what was required of him.

He had many missed appointments (with these recorded as being acceptable) and he missed many re-arranged appointments. Although George’s licence conditions included engaging with the IOM scheme and substance misuse services, there was limited evidence that he had done this.

George self-reported his level of substance misuse and this was not being checked through drug-testing results. George again disengaged and was recalled to custody.

In our sample, offending-related issues were most commonly rooted in poor thinking and behaviour, alcohol misuse, emotional and mental health needs, difficult relationships, lack of education, training and employment, drugs misuse and accommodation needs. The majority of assessments were accurate in respect of these issues, but too few went on to feature them in sentence planning. The need to ensure that plans reflect the issues in the case, and generate action to address them, is obvious.

Some individuals have high levels of need and require more than one intervention. We judged that sufficient progress had been made in delivering required interventions in around 40% of cases. Education, training and employment was an area of high-volume need that both featured in plans and led to reasonable access to services. The figures for all the other areas of need were disappointing. The following examples show what can be achieved with well-targeted effort by staff:

**Good practice example:** Martin was released on licence for drug smuggling offences. The CRC supported him in finding accommodation and helped him to look for employment. Through his local council, Martin has been successful in securing a job in waste management.

He is currently being seen by Penrose<sup>16</sup> staff, who supervise the PSS element of his sentence. Martin said: “Overall they have been pretty good with me. I have found all the people who have dealt with me to be very helpful and understanding and I have nothing but good things to say. I was referred to the work path and they got me my CSCS [Construction Skills Certification Scheme] card and because of that I then got my job. I have been at my job for three to four months and I am really pleased. I am now on PSS licence but I don’t need to see them as often. I am very low risk of getting into trouble again. Prison gave me the kick up the backside I needed. The people I have been seeing at probation have all been very helpful”.

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16 Penrose is a charity that provides resettlement services under contract to the London CRC.

**Good practice example:** Don was subject to a community order with an Alcohol Treatment Requirement (ATR). He identified that he was at risk of relapse following the ATR sessions, as other group members would go to the pub immediately after the session. His responsible officer arranged to see him for his probation appointments after ATR so that Don could use this as a reason not to go to the pub without losing face. The responsible officer built on the work that had taken place at the ATR sessions and gave him additional materials to work on.

Another released prisoner said:

*“Probation have been really helpful. I would say they have gone above and beyond what they needed to do. When I first got out of custody I wanted to set up my own cleaning business and they gave me lots of help and advice. I also attended the drugs programme and all my drug tests have been clear. My trigger for drugs is boredom and I do get lonely, so keeping busy is really important to me. Working has really helped. The other thing I found useful was reporting back to the judge. Because I have no family it was good to see that someone of authority was proud of what I was achieving. The only fly in the ointment is UPW. I can’t work in the week because of my business, but as soon as they instruct me for the weekend, I will do it, I want to do it 100%”.*

### **Rehabilitation activity requirements**

Rehabilitation activity requirements (RARs) allow probation providers to do what they think best for each individual to reduce the prospect of reoffending. The bulk of RARs are delivered by CRCs. As we have found elsewhere, many responsible officers had a limited understanding of RAR days and were unclear how to record activities. Responsible officers gave differing accounts of how RAR days were used. Some told us that there were inconsistencies in the extent to which partners reported on attendance. Others told us that they carried out the RAR days themselves. Decisions on the way that RAR days were delivered bore little relation to need. We concluded that London CRC was not using the freedoms introduced via RARs to full effect, and responsible officers were offering too little purposeful activity.

### **Accredited programmes**

Given the high percentage of individuals assessed as needing help with poor thinking skills, it was disappointing to note the low profile of accredited programmes in our sample. This reflects the picture nationally, as outlined in our recent thematic inspection of probation services in courts<sup>17</sup>.

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17 Thematic inspection: The work of probation services in courts, HMI Probation (June 2017).

**Poor practice example:** Trevor was made subject to a nine-week custodial sentence, with 12 months PSS, for an offence of driving while disqualified. He had previous convictions for domestic abuse and there were subsequent safeguarding concerns in relation to children. The assessment and the plan were not of a good standard and Trevor had not been included in those processes. They did not tackle his thinking skills needs.

Checks had not been made with the police to monitor domestic abuse concerns. Trevor was being offered appointments every two months. This was not enough to manage the risk posed by this medium risk of harm service user.

## Reviewing progress

In 70% of cases, responsible officers had reviewed progress in the case. The quality of these reviews varied, despite preparatory work done by managers and practitioners on the selected cases ahead of this inspection. Some of these reviews were undoubtedly prompted by the announcement of the inspection. We found that just over half of the relevant cases had benefited from adjusted planning where necessary. The following example shows how reviewing the case can help:

**Poor practice example:** Alan is a 25-year-old subject to a 24-month custodial sentence for possession of class A drugs with intent to supply. A thorough assessment of his offending was completed. The responsible officer had a good understanding of the protective factors and focused on these to ensure they were well-supported.

The responsible officer put a clear sentence plan in place. It identified appropriate areas of rehabilitation need and set achievable objectives. The responsible officer planned one-to-one sessions with Alan thoughtfully. These sessions have helped Alan to develop insight into his lifestyle and to improve his thinking skills.

This learning has also been used to tailor future sentence planning objectives effectively.

## Impact and potential impact

One-quarter of individuals in our case sample had been convicted, cautioned or had another out of court disposal for an offence committed since the start of their sentence or release on licence. This is similar to the national average. In almost all of these cases, the seriousness of proven reoffending was assessed as having remained constant<sup>18</sup>.

To assess the impact of probation services, we looked at the progress individuals had made in relation to the factors linked to their offending. Results ranged from just under one-third (31%) making sufficient progress or achieving the outcome for addressing alcohol issues, to over half (56%) progressing in relation to education, training and employment needs.

We then looked at the contribution of responsible officers towards progress being

<sup>18</sup> This relates to information recorded in the inspected cases; it is not verified by Police National Computer data.

made. This ranged from responsible officers contributing to progress in over two-thirds (67%) of cases involving education, training and employment issues to just over half (51%) of cases involving alcohol issues. A contribution towards progress on alcohol issues by contracted providers was evident in less than half (47%) of cases. For partners, the results were better, with contributions to progress in more cases. For example, in meeting drugs needs, partners contributed sufficiently to achieving progress in nearly two-thirds (64%) of cases.

**Table 2: Enablers and barriers for the CRC relating to the inspection domain of reducing reoffending.**

Enablers		Barriers	
1.	Accurate assessments and plans, which led to targeted interventions, promoted rehabilitation.	1.	Not delivering interventions targeted at the needs of individuals meant opportunities to support rehabilitation were missed.
2.	There was a high level of commitment and continued effort from staff and managers to provide services.	2.	Too much of the contact with individuals lacked focus.

## Abiding by the sentence

The quality of work was acceptable overall. Most offenders abided by the conditions of their sentence. The frequency of appointments offered was sufficient in most cases. Appropriate action was taken in response to non-compliance and enforcement in most cases. The quality of engagement varied, however, and the CRC did not always meet diverse needs.

## Engaging with individuals under probation supervision

The CRC recognises the value of engaging with individuals through focus groups, and ran a pilot for this until June 2017. We were pleased to note that it plans to run one focus group every three months in each of the five areas of London. In the pilot, feedback to the CRC was mixed but generally positive.

Nineteen individuals gave feedback and spoke positively about their responsible officers. Participants in the pilot felt that reception staff were welcoming, although they suggested that glass partitions in reception areas made it difficult to communicate, particularly when talking about personal matters (such as drug test results) in crowded reception areas. Several participants referred to the poor condition of reception areas, and anxieties about getting caught up in incidents caused by disruptive service users.

Others noted that they had had several changes of responsible officer, without knowing why. Changes of officer created stress for some, as they had to establish a new working relationship and go over their history again. Some said they were not aware of the breadth of assistance available from the CRC. Women liked the women's hub they attended and felt that it was effective.

When we talked with service users, several issues emerged. All were being seen regularly by responsible officers, but felt that the time was not always used constructively. All felt that they had made progress towards their rehabilitation, but that this was not always because of the contact with probation services – that is, they felt they had brought about the positive change by their own efforts. That said, all indicated that their responsible officers were genuinely interested in them and wanted to help.

They told us that clear instructions were given at induction. They knew the consequences of non-attendance and that there were agencies to support them. All said that their responsible officers were reliable, consistent in their approach, flexible and respectful. One stated:

*“My probation officer has so many people to see they can only listen so much. I don't expect much. As long as I come and I don't get breached, I am happy”.*

Most of those we spoke to were unclear about whether they had a sentence plan or how RAR days were being used. One said:

*“There is not a plan but we complete worksheets; there has been progress, a combination of probation and myself”.*

## Meeting the needs of service users

Staff failed to take account of individuals' diversity in one-third of cases inspected. This was on a par with other CRCs that we have inspected, but leaves a good deal of room for improvement. The following case illustrates diverse needs being catered for effectively:

**Good practice example:** Fran was subject to a suspended sentence order with 100 hours of UPW and 30 RAR days for an offence of cruelty to or neglect of children. Fran's case was allocated to a responsible officer who was responsible for supervising females.

The responsible officer made a prompt referral to Minerva, the women's centre. Fran was motivated to comply with the order. Access to services ensured that her needs were being met. Fran was given an enhanced level of support, provided through counselling. This helped her address traumatic events and experiences of being abused. The responsible officer also supported Fran to complete UPW over a three-month period.

The responsible officer had effectively planned and delivered the work to be carried out on the order. Fran received support that helped her to understand the triggers to her offending, build up her self-esteem and establish improved protective factors in her life. It was a good example of treating the offender as an individual – with individual and diverse needs – which paid dividends.

Service users were included in planning supervision work in just over half of the cases. This deteriorated to less than half at the review stage. This meant that, for many, opportunities were missed to track progress and adjust plans as necessary. Responsible officers identified barriers to engagement and sought to overcome these in just over half of the cases.

## Enforcement

The legal requirements of orders or licences were delivered satisfactorily in almost three-quarters of the cases inspected. This was a significant improvement on the position at the end of 2016 and is slightly higher than the national average of those CRC cases inspected to date. Absence and/or non-compliance had been responded to appropriately in over two-thirds of cases.

**Good practice example:** Duncan was subject to a suspended sentence order. There was also a UPW requirement that became unworkable, mainly because of issues with service delivery. Duncan had been breached for this twice previously. There was a warrant outstanding for breach of the order and Duncan would not surrender to court.

The responsible officer offered to meet Duncan to help him to surrender to custody. The case was heard and the order was revoked with an alternative sentence passed. This paved the way for an improved relationship with Duncan.



## Delivery

Unsurprisingly, we find that maintaining continuity of responsible officer is a major factor in securing service users' purposeful participation in rehabilitative work. In London, 59% of the cases we inspected had kept the same responsible officer. This was better than the national figure of those CRC cases inspected to date (of 48%). Some teams had a disproportionate number of new, inexperienced or agency staff and this was reflected in the higher number of changes of responsible officer in those teams.

The number of appointments offered was sufficient to meet the individual's needs in almost three-quarters of the cases inspected.

## Unpaid work (UPW)

The arrangements for UPW were poor and led to ineffective provision overall. At the time of the inspection, the stand-down rate was not known. Projects were oversubscribed and many service users were being sent home. Placements were not matched to individuals, and many experienced significant costs for travel.

CRC leaders acknowledged that their UPW provision was limited. They noted that, in the last year, UPW had not been a priority and that service quality development lagged behind improving delivery in offender management teams. A manager had recently been appointed to review UPW and implement an improvement plan.

With UPW, there were problems with communicating with service users and responsible officers and unclear processes and accountability arrangements. UPW staff were holding caseloads of more than 100 and the standard of training offered did not meet their needs. It was clear that the full potential benefits of UPW were not being made available to service users.

In one project we visited, service users reported that there were frequent stand-downs because some sites were over-subscribed. The maximum permissible group size was ten. If a higher number than this reported for UPW, people were sent home. One person told us he had been stood down on six occasions. He was credited with one hour on each occasion, but there was no support for his travel costs. For him, the cost of travelling to a work site on a Sunday could be as much as £15.

One responsible officer said:

*"I have worked in UPW before and I can tell you it is worse now than it's ever been. We have mobiles now but we can never get through to UPW. My cases send me messages about being on UPW sites and no supervisor turning up. They also send pictures of their timesheets so I can see them, as too often they are not put on nDelius [the national case management system] and it looks like they have failed, when really it's the organisation that has failed".*

One individual said:

*"I was waiting on a corner to be picked up for 30 minutes. I then 'phoned the probation office who said to 'phone UPW. I was on the 'phone for 45 minutes and I sent screenshots of where I was standing to the email address, but got no reply. I saw someone with a clipboard coming*



*towards me who was the project supervisor. It turned out that the actual project was around a corner down a side street. It is not just me; others have said 'why do they tell us to meet them on the road rather than around the corner where they are?'"*

**Poor practice example:** *Eric was sentenced to a community order with 100 hours UPW and 20 RAR days for breach of a non-molestation order. Eric was employed on a zero-hours contract and had to be available when required for work. His hours of work varied from day to day.*

*He began his UPW at a community café in a local park, but had difficulty in contacting the UPW control centre to change his hours when his job required it. On one occasion, he had to leave early to go to work and this was classed as unacceptable. Subsequent attempts to speak to the UPW unit by telephone were problematic.*

*We also tried the advertised number and it rang for two hours without being answered.*

*Eric continued to keep appointments with his responsible officer but they did not address the problems he was experiencing in completing his UPW. Eric accrued 17 unacceptable absences on UPW.*

*He was returned to court for breach and the UPW requirement was replaced with an electronically monitored curfew, which he completed successfully.*

**Poor practice example:** *Diana received 200 hours of UPW as part of an ORA suspended sentence. She missed her UPW induction appointment as she had a Drug Rehabilitation Requirement (DRR) appointment at the same time. Her induction took place five weeks after the order was made and she was instructed to start work the following week.*

*Diana missed that session due to another clash with DDR. She missed further appointments, often due to conflict with DRR review hearings.*

*After a few months, Diana gained full-time employment. Consequently, her responsible officer requested that she was moved to a weekend placement. However, she continues to accrue acceptable absences, with no sign of being moved to a weekend placement.*

## **Impact and potential impact**

The 'getting back to basics' strategy was clearly having a positive effect on contact levels with service users and with delivering the requirements of orders and licences. Nevertheless, individuals were not as involved in shaping the work to be done and their individual needs were not planned for as well as they should have been. Over half of those in our inspection sample had complied with their sentence, however. Compared with our 2016 inspection of CRC work in North London, there was evidence that a higher proportion of service users were receiving a service that met their rehabilitation needs. However, overall, this was still far from satisfactory.

**Table 3: Enablers and barriers for the CRC relating to the inspection domain of abiding by the sentence.**

Enablers		Barriers	
1.	When service users abided by the conditions of their sentence and there were sufficient levels of contact, rehabilitation was more likely.	1.	Not including service users in the planning and reviewing processes detracted from achieving rehabilitation goals.
2.	Appropriate action in response to non-compliance promoted engagement.	2.	Not meeting the diverse needs of individuals undermined rehabilitation.
3.	Continuity of staff promoted rehabilitation.	3.	UPW arrangements failed to contribute to rehabilitation and reducing reoffending.

## The Community Rehabilitation Company and National Probation Service working together

It was evident that the new CRC structure has helped with communication and problem-solving between CRC staff and their NPS colleagues. Most interface issues are now being resolved at operational level rather than through escalation. The interface agreement between the London CRC and NPS promotes effective work between the two organisations. Most of the staff with whom we spoke described reasonable working relationships in co-located offices. However, tensions arose over use of reception areas, particularly in respect of women-only reporting arrangements.

We have found, both from this inspection and our recent one of NPS work in London, that NPS staff still lack confidence in making use of the services available from the CRC via their rate card<sup>19</sup>. The CRC's delay in implementing the rate card, and the NPS' concerns about the quality of what was on offer, had limited the NPS' purchasing of services through this mechanism. This has reduced the services available to NPS offenders and the revenue of the CRC.

### Information exchange

CRC leaders attended sentencer liaison meetings, but work to address court issues at the operational level was variable. As elsewhere, the absence of CRC staff in courts contributes to a lack of knowledge by NPS staff and sentencers about available CRC services.

Many CRC staff felt they received insufficient information from NPS court staff to inform sentence planning, including information on protected characteristics. In our sample, almost nine in ten pre-sentence reports (PSRs) sufficiently identified and analysed areas linked to reoffending and in all but one of the PSRs the proposal focused on the right issues. Both results were above the national average for PSR quality. However, we judged that the overall assessment in relation to reducing reoffending was insufficient in over one-third of cases, at the point immediately before the case was allocated to the CRC. This was mainly because the Case Allocation System forms and safeguarding checks had not been completed adequately by the NPS.

### Enforcement and recall

Delays in processing breach referrals had a negative impact on the management of CRC service users. The London NPS recognised that it needed to further improve its enforcement processes and was working through its quality development officers to achieve this. The CRC and NPS ran joint enforcement training workshops to improve the quality of this work. The relationships between the two agencies on court work had been strained and the NPS Court Delivery Project was working jointly with the CRC to address these issues.

Despite this, the NPS said that breach papers were too often poorly prepared and had to be returned. Data from the NPS showed this to be so in about one in four cases sent for breach. CRC staff reported that working with some NPS enforcement officers to process breach cases was problematic. This made it more difficult to progress this work efficiently.

<sup>19</sup> *Quality & Impact inspection: the effectiveness of probation work by the National Probation Service in London*, HMIP (January 2018).

**Table 4: Enablers and barriers for the CRC and NPS working together relating to the inspection domains of protecting the public, reducing reoffending and abiding by the sentence.**

Enablers		Barriers	
1.	London CRC's recent restructure had improved opportunities for senior managers to collaborate and resolve problems.	1.	Inadequate checks, assessments and provision of information by NPS court staff created problems for CRC responsible officers.
2.	Where issues of concern were identified, relevant project work was initiated to try and resolve these.	2.	The delay in implementing the rate card curtailed the rehabilitation options for service users.
3.	The risk escalation process had improved.		

# Appendices

1. Inspection methodology
2. Background data
3. Previous Quality & Impact inspection outcomes from North London (September 2016)
4. Data analysis from inspected cases
5. Glossary

## Appendix 1: Inspection methodology

HMI Probation's Quality & Impact programme commenced in April 2016. It was designed to examine probation work in discrete geographical areas, equivalent to a police/Police and Crime Commissioner area, regardless of who delivers the work. For this inspection in London (and our most recent inspection), we have inspected the work of the two main delivery organisations (the CRC and the NPS) separately, but in both cases across the whole of the capital. We have also inspected how well the two organisations work together and the contribution of any partners working with these organisations.

An inspection team visited the area for five full weeks in October and November 2017. Before starting fieldwork, we held fact-finding meetings with the CRC in London and gathered a range of evidence. In the first three weeks of fieldwork, we inspected a pre-determined number of cases (community orders, suspended sentence orders, and licences) of individuals sentenced or released from prison about nine months previously. These cases may not have been fully representative of all the eligible cases, but so far as possible we made sure that the proportions matched in terms of (i) gender, (ii) ethnicity, (iii) sentence type and (iv) office location – with minimum numbers set for (i) and (ii). Cases were also selected from the full available range of risk of serious harm and likelihood of reoffending levels, and from as many responsible officers as possible. The sample consisted of 148 CRC cases, drawn from 22 of the 25 CRC offices.

The team then returned three weeks later to pursue lines of enquiry emerging from the first three weeks, observing specific activities and interventions and speaking with key staff, managers and partners, in focus groups, meetings, or on a one-to-one basis.

In this inspection, we conducted 8 staff focus groups involving 46 staff, 16 managers and 4 staff from 2 different partnerships. We visited the model office in Bromley and an UPW project. We attempted to speak with service users who had consented to being contacted. We spoke with 25 service users from the CRC whose cases we inspected. We also spoke with 19 other service users through focus groups or on the UPW site visit.

The inspection focused on assessing how the quality of practice contributed to achieving positive outcomes for service users, and evaluating what encouraging impact had been achieved. We were mindful that current impact could provide evidence of progress towards long-term desistance. We were seeking to report on whether the work undertaken was likely to lead to reduced reoffending, the public were protected from harm and individuals had abided by their sentence.

## Appendix 2: Background data

This inspection covered all the boroughs in London.

### Population demographics

The population of London was estimated at 8,787,892 in 2016. It has 15% of the overall population of England and Wales, which was estimated at 58,381,217.

The estimated daytime population for London in 2014 was 10,046,359. The estimated resident population at that time was 8,543,590.

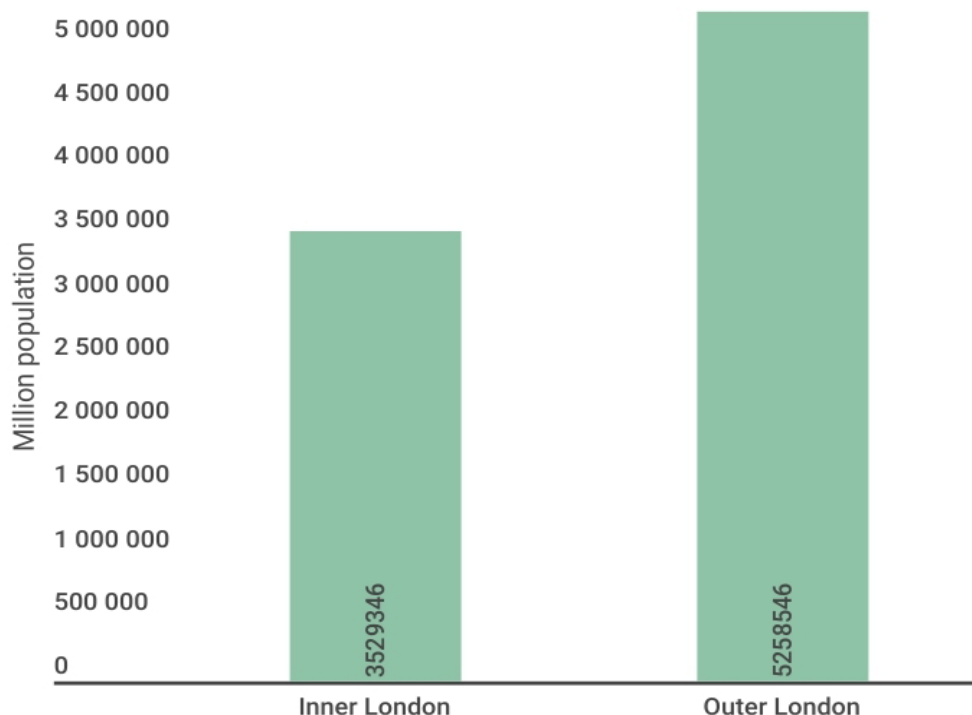
*Source: 2014 London Datastore, October 2015*

London is divided into inner and outer London, although there are different mechanisms for determining which a borough falls into. For the purposes of the figures quoted below, the following categorisation has been used.

- **Inner London** consists of the City of London and 13 boroughs: Camden, Hackney, Hammersmith & Fulham, Haringey, Islington, Kensington & Chelsea, Lambeth, Lewisham, Newham, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Wandsworth and Westminster.
- **Outer London** consists of 19 boroughs: Barking & Dagenham, Barnet, Bexley, Brent, Bromley, Croydon, Ealing, Enfield, Greenwich, Harrow, Havering, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kingston-upon-Thames, Merton, Redbridge, Richmond-upon-Thames, Sutton, and Waltham Forest.

*Source: London Datastore 2015*

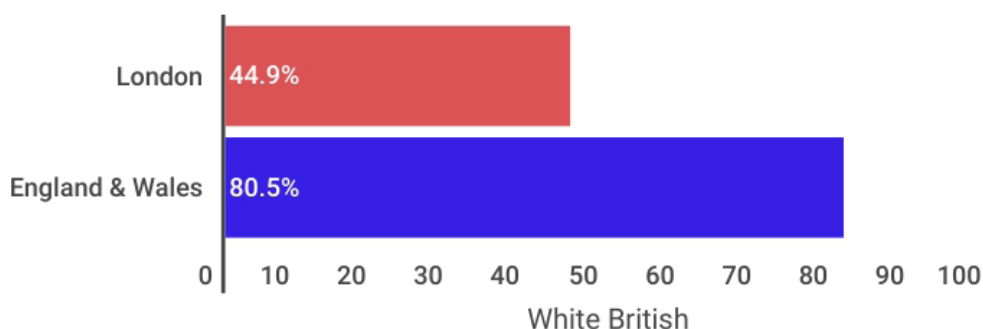
**Figure 2.1: Population estimate, mid-2016**



*Source: Population estimates mid-2016, Office for National Statistics, June 2017*

London has a much lower proportion of white British residents (44.9%) than the England and Wales average (80.5%).

**Figure 2.2: Ethnicity in London, 2011 census**

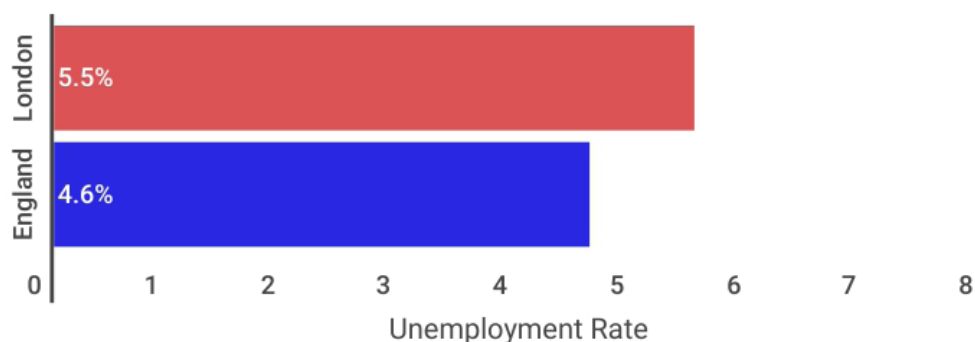


Source: 2011 Census, Office for National Statistics, December 2012

### Levels of deprivation and crime

As shown by Figure 2.3, unemployment in London is higher than the England average.

**Figure 2.3: Unemployment in London, July 2016 – June 2017**



Source: Regional labour market statistics, Office for National Statistics, October 2017

### Levels of reoffending

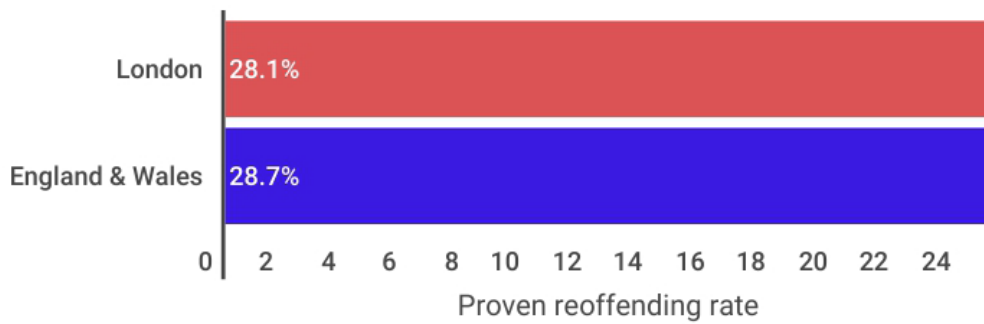
The proven reoffending rates for London are set out in Figure 2.4. They are based on adult offenders who were released from custody, received a non-custodial conviction at court or received a caution in the period October 2015 to December 2015. London has a slightly lower reoffending rate than the England and Wales average.

The adjusted reoffending figure for the London CRC during the period October 2015 to December 2015 was 43.4%. This is a statistically significant reduction in the binary reoffending rate when compared with the 2011 baseline reoffending rate<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>20</sup> The 28.1% figure refers to all reoffending from prison release and the courts in London, whether NPS, CRC or unsupervised. The 43.4% figure refers solely to London CRC cases. This result for London CRC was lower than its 2011 baseline and it achieved the binary target.



**Figure 2.4: Proven reoffending rate, October 2015 to December 2015**

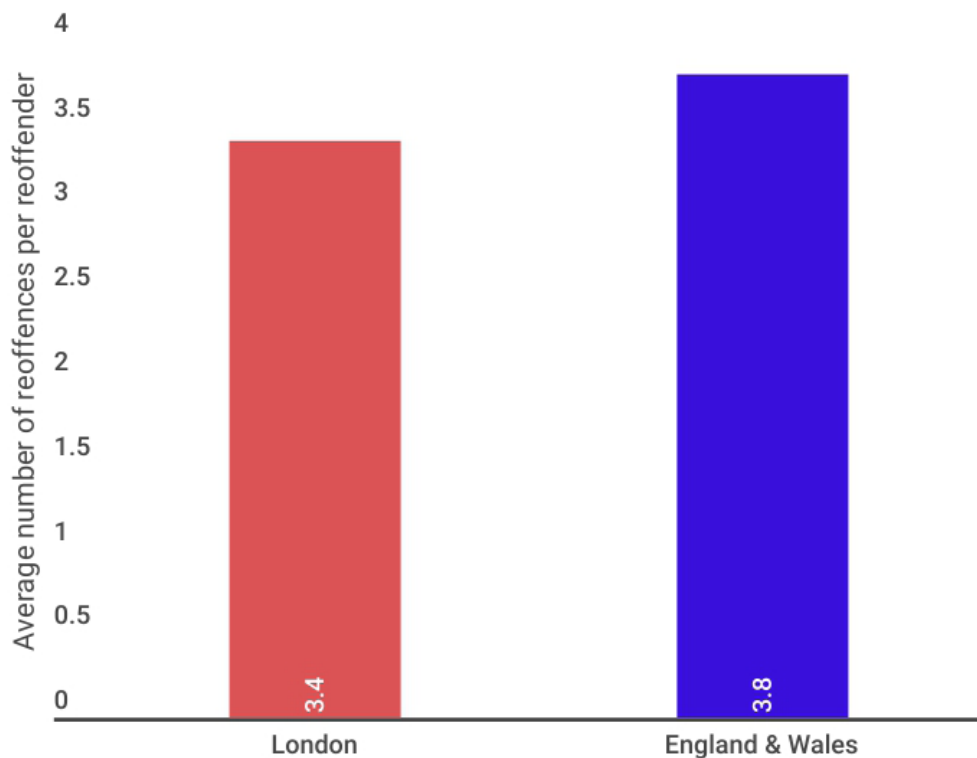


*Source: Proven reoffending, Ministry of Justice, October 2017*

There were 3.4 reoffences on average per reoffender in London for the October 2015 to December 2015 cohort. This is lower than the England and Wales average.

The average rate for the London CRC for the same cohort was 4.2. However, judgements cannot be made against the 2011 baseline until the annual binary rate is available.

**Figure 2.5: Offending histories, October 2015 to December 2015**



*Source: Proven reoffending, Ministry of Justice, October 2017*

## Appendix 3: Contextual information, including previous Quality & Impact inspection outcomes from North London (September 2016)

In our 2016 inspection in North London, we found the quality of work by the CRC to be poor. There was some welcome good practice by individual officers and first-line managers, but generally practice was well below standard, with the public exposed unduly to the risk of harm in some cases despite lessons from the past. That is plainly not acceptable.

A combination of unmanageable caseloads, inexperienced officers, extremely poor oversight and a lack of senior management focus and control meant that some service users were not seen for weeks or months, and some were lost in the system altogether – something we alerted managers to early on in our inspection. This simple lack of management attention to basic attendance and supervision was the most striking and surprising finding and, again, not acceptable.

Sadly, and despite the heroic efforts of some staff, we found that there had been little or no likely impact on reducing reoffending. Staff were sometimes working long hours and were often 'fire-fighting' rather than being enabled to deliver a professional service consistently or sufficiently well.

In 2016, we made the following recommendations:

*The Community Rehabilitation Company and National Probation Service should:*

1. produce easily accessible information to enable all staff to make swift contact with relevant colleagues in each organisation
2. require all staff to work together to solve individual problems and focus on the desired outcome.

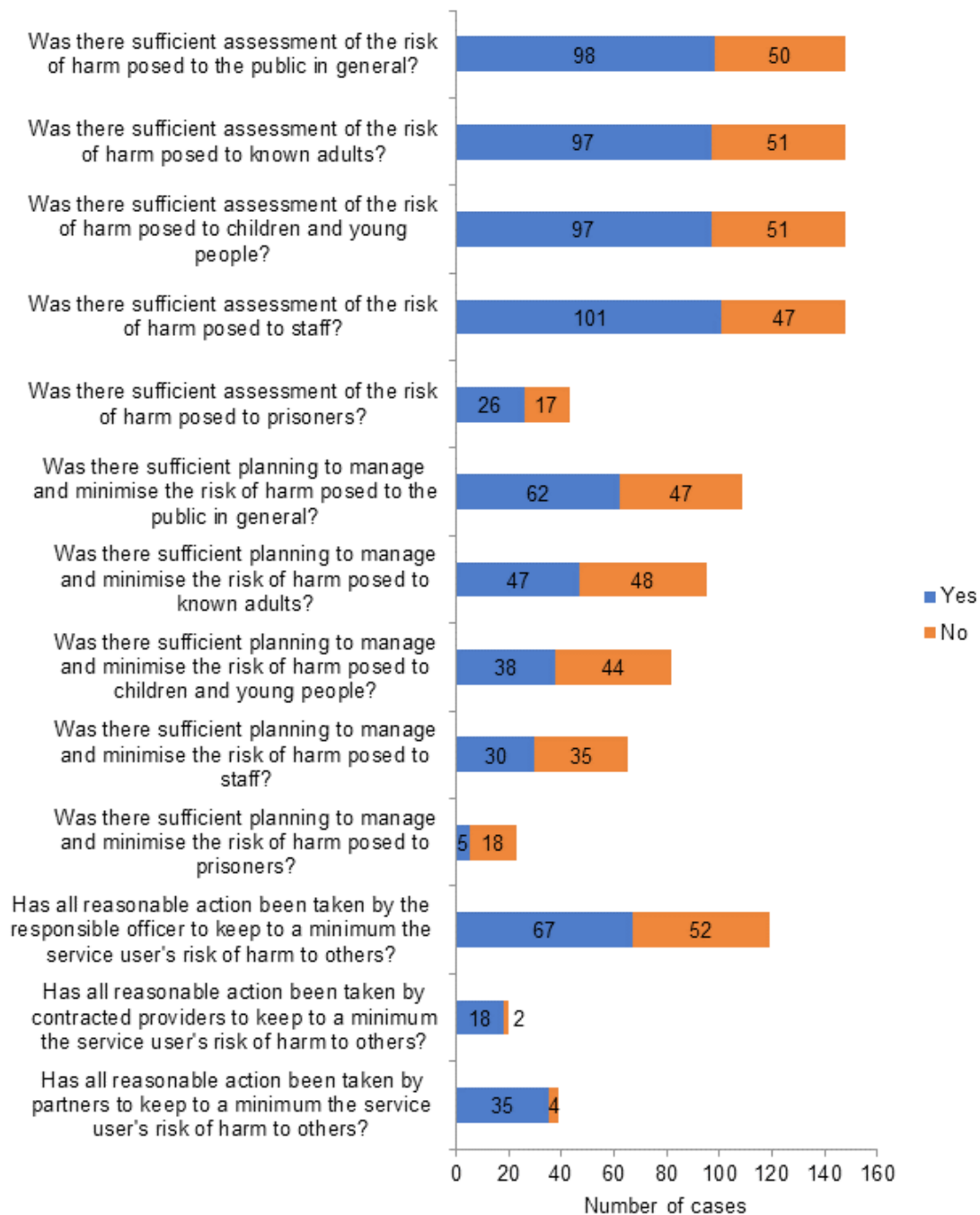
*The Community Rehabilitation Company should:*

3. make sure that all functional departments prioritise the operational delivery to service users
4. obtain and regularly scrutinise relevant management information to support effective operational delivery
5. make every effort to reduce caseloads to manageable levels, setting clear priorities for casework activities
6. manage the impact of sickness absence effectively
7. provide all staff with supervision and support in accordance with experience and workload
8. procure sufficient resource within the supply chain to deliver consistent services to all service users
9. provide the rate card to the NPS without further delay.

## Appendix 4: Data analysis from inspected cases

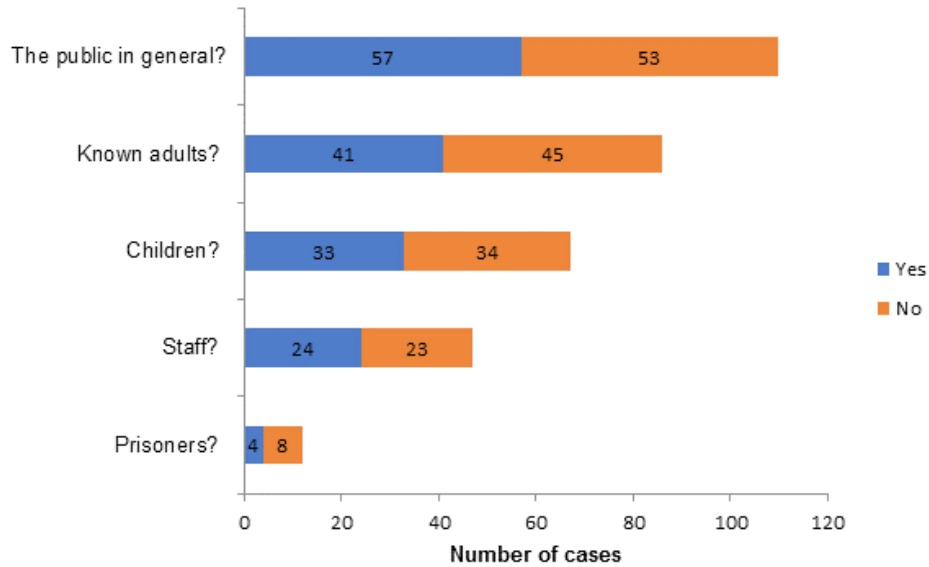
These charts illustrate key findings from relevant practice inspection cases. They show absolute numbers rather than percentages. The size of the bar chart segments provides an idea of proportion, while the number gives an idea of how large the sample was.

**Figure 4.1 Public Protection**

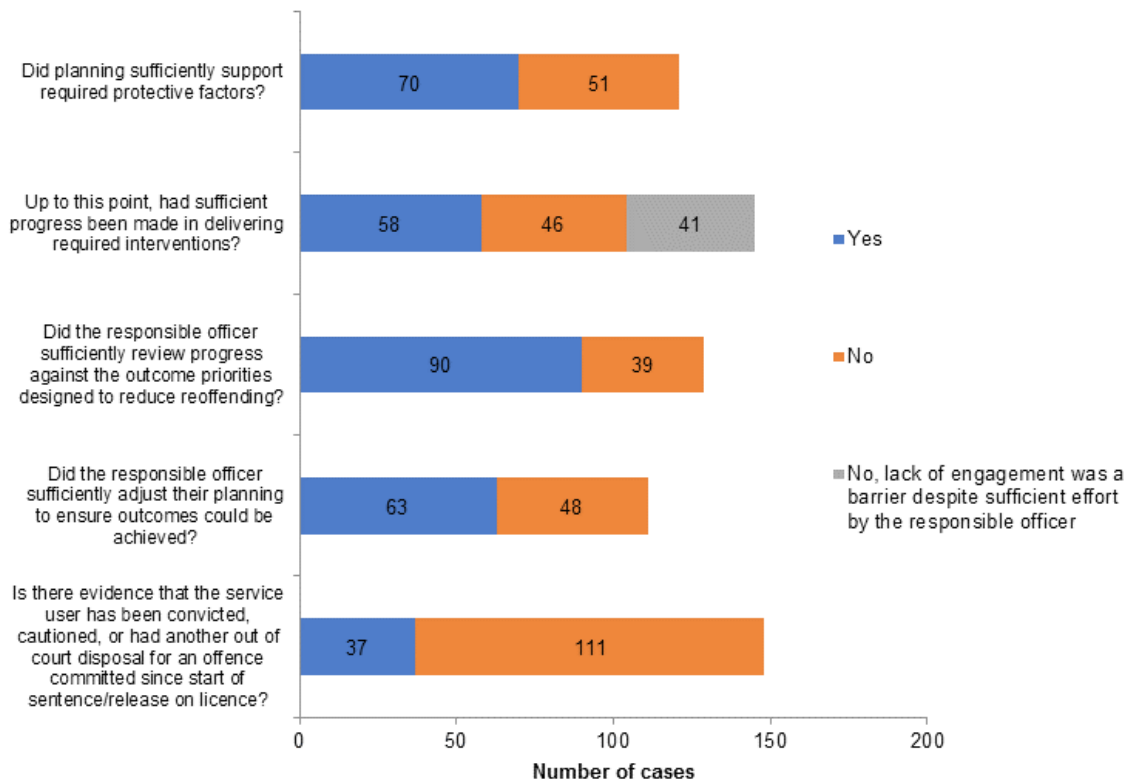


**Figure 4.2 Public Protection**

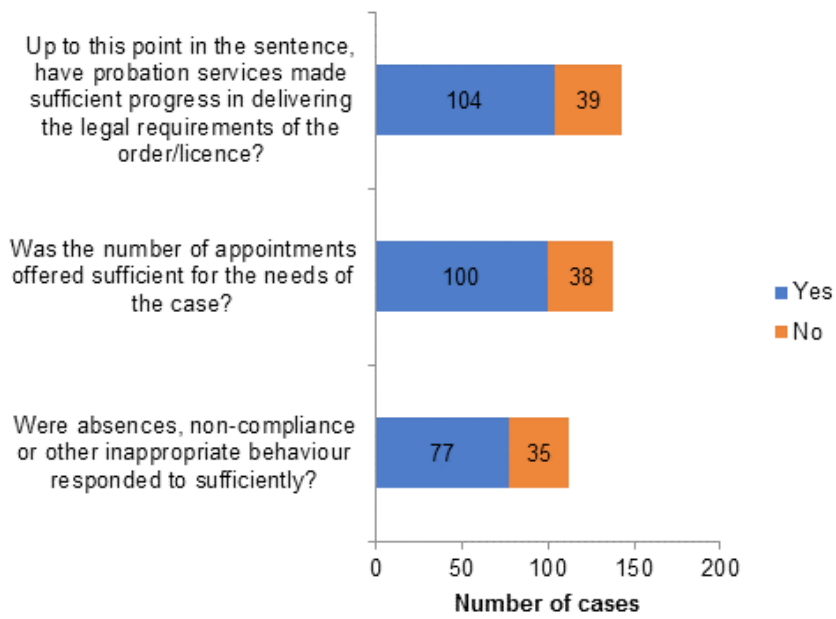
Up to this point in the order/licence, has the responsible officer made sufficient progress in influencing the risk of harm posed by this service user to:



**Figure 4.3 Reducing Reoffending**



**Figure 4.4 Abiding by the sentence**



## Appendix 5: Glossary

Accredited programme	A programme of work delivered to offenders in groups or individually through a requirement in a community order or a suspended sentence order, or part of a custodial sentence or a condition in a prison licence. Accredited programmes are accredited by the Correctional Services Accreditation Panel as being effective in reducing the likelihood of reoffending
Alcohol Abstinence Monitoring Requirement	The Alcohol Abstinence Monitoring Requirement is a power given to the courts in the <i>Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012</i> that allows them to order offenders to abstain from alcohol for a period of up to 120 days and to be regularly tested for compliance
ATR	Alcohol Treatment Requirement: a requirement that a court may attach to a community or suspended sentence order aimed at tackling alcohol abuse
Allocation	The process by which a decision is made about whether an offender will be supervised by a CRC or the NPS
Breach (of an order or licence)	Where an offender fails to comply with the conditions of a court order or licence. Enforcement action may be taken to return the offender to court for additional action or recall them to prison
Case Allocation System	A document that needs to be completed before a case is allocated to a CRC or the NPS
CRC	Community Rehabilitation Company: 21 such companies were set up in June 2014 to manage most offenders who present a low or medium risk of serious harm
Desistance	The cessation of offending or other antisocial behaviour
DRR	Drug Rehabilitation Requirement: a requirement that a court may attach to a community order or a suspended sentence order aimed at tackling drugs misuse
Escalation	The term used to describe the process where a case allocated to a CRC is referred to the NPS for reallocation on the grounds that an increase in the risk of harm posed by the service user now places that person within the category of those who should be supervised by the NPS
ETE	Education, training and employment: work to improve an individual's learning, and to increase their employment prospects
Foreign national offender	A foreign national who has been convicted of a crime in the United Kingdom
Gripping the offender	A MOPAC-supported initiative which provides GPS tracking, additional resources and intensive monitoring for selected offenders in eight East London boroughs

IOM	Integrated Offender Management: a cross-agency response to the crime and reoffending threats faced by local communities. The most persistent and problematic offenders are identified and managed jointly by partner agencies working together
Intervention	Work with an individual that is designed to change their offending behaviour and/or to support public protection
Licence	This is a period of supervision immediately following release from custody, and is typically implemented after an offender has served half of their sentence. Any breaches to the conditions of the licence can lead to a recall to prison, where the offender could remain in custody for the duration of their original sentence
Local Safeguarding Children Board	Set up in each local authority/London borough (as a result of the <i>Children Act 2004</i> ) to coordinate and ensure the effectiveness of the multi-agency work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in that locality
MAPPA	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. Level 1 is ordinary agency management where the risks posed by the offender can be managed by the agency responsible for the supervision or case management of the offender. This compares with Levels 2 and 3, which require active multi-agency management
MARAC	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference: part of a coordinated community response to domestic abuse, incorporating representatives from statutory, community and voluntary agencies working to protect known victims/survivors and children from the alleged perpetrator
MoJ	Ministry of Justice: the government department with responsibility for the criminal justice system in the United Kingdom
MOPAC	Mayor's Office of Policing and Crime: headed by the Mayor of London, who is responsible for policing in the capital, outside the City of London
MTCnovo	The private company that owns and operates London Community Rehabilitation Company
Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub	The first point of contact for new safeguarding concerns or enquiries. They usually include representatives from the local authority (children and adult social care services), the police, health bodies, probation and other agencies
nDelius	National Delius: the approved case management system used by the NPS and the CRCs in England and Wales

NPS	National Probation Service: a single national service which came into being in June 2014. Its role is to deliver services to courts and to manage specific groups of offenders, including those presenting a high or very high risk of serious harm and those subject to MAPPA in England and Wales
OM	Offender manager: the term used in London CRC for the officer (otherwise known as the 'responsible officer') who holds lead responsibility for managing a case
<i>Offender Rehabilitation Act 2014</i>	Implemented in February 2015, applying to offences committed on or after that date, the <i>Offender Rehabilitation Act 2014 (ORA)</i> is the Act of Parliament that accompanies the <i>Transforming Rehabilitation</i> programme
OMNIA	The title of the London CRC's new combined case management and risk and needs tool. It is not an acronym, but means 'all'
Partners	Partners include statutory and non-statutory organisations, working with the offender through a partnership agreement with a CRC or the NPS
Penrose	A charity that provides resettlement services under contract to the London CRC. These services are targeted at individuals on licence or post-sentence supervision towards the end of their supervision period
Prevent	Prevent is one of four strands of the government's counter-terrorism strategy, known as Contest. The other strands are: Prepare, Protect, and Pursue. Prevent is designed to support people at risk of joining extremist groups and carrying out terrorist activities. In practice, it aims for police and other organisations to build relations across the UK and requires faith leaders, teachers, doctors and others to refer any suspicions about people to a local Prevent body. An assessment is then made about whether further action is needed
Probation officer	This is the term for a responsible officer who has completed a higher-education-based professional qualification. The name of the qualification and content of the training vary depending on when the qualification was undertaken. They manage more complex cases
Providers	Providers deliver a service or input commissioned by and provided under contract to a CRC or the NPS. This includes the staff and services provided under the contract, even when they are integrated or located within a CRC or the NPS



PSO	Probation services officer: this is the term for a responsible officer who was originally recruited with no professional qualification. 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 depending on their level of training and experience. Some PSOs work within the court setting, where their duties include the writing of pre-sentence reports
PSR	Pre-sentence report: this refers to any report prepared for a court, whether delivered orally or in a written format
PSS	Post-sentence supervision: a period of supervision following the end of a licence; any breaches are enforced by the magistrates' court. Introduced as part of the <i>Offender Rehabilitation Act 2014</i>
RAR	Rehabilitation activity requirement: from February 2015, when the <i>Offender Rehabilitation Act 2014</i> was implemented, courts can specify a number of RAR days within an order; it is for probation services to decide on the precise work to be done during the RAR days awarded
Rate card	A directory of services offered by the CRC for use with the NPS with their service users, detailing the price
Responsible officer	The term used for the officer (previously entitled 'offender manager') who holds lead responsibility for managing a case
SPO	Senior Probation Officer: first line manager
SSO	Suspended sentence order: a custodial sentence that is suspended and carried out in the community
Terrorism Act(s)	From 2000 to the present, the UK Parliament has passed a series of Terrorism Acts aimed at terrorism in general. Between them, the Acts provide a definition of terrorism and establish new police powers and procedures (beyond those related to crime in general), which can be applied in terrorist cases
<i>Transforming Rehabilitation</i>	The government's programme for how offenders are managed in England and Wales from June 2014
UPW	Unpaid work: a court can include an unpaid work requirement as part of a community order. Offenders can be required to work for up to 300 hours on community projects under supervision. Since February 2015, unpaid work has been delivered by CRCs
Women's hub/women's centre	A centre dedicated to services for women. This may include education, training and interventions to help with confidence and self-esteem



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