



Her Majesty's
Inspectorate of
Probation

An inspection of probation services in:
Northumbria
Community Rehabilitation Company

HMI Probation, February 2020

Acknowledgements

This inspection was led by HM Inspector Lisa Parker, supported by a team of inspectors and colleagues from across the Inspectorate. We would like to thank all those who participated in any way in this inspection. Without their help and cooperation, the inspection would not have been possible.

The role of HM Inspectorate of Probation

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation is the independent inspector of youth offending and probation services in England and Wales. We report on the effectiveness of probation and youth offending service work with adults and children. We inspect these services and publish inspection reports. We highlight good and poor practice, and use our data and information to encourage high-quality services. We are independent of government, and speak independently.

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

The fieldwork for this inspection started on Monday 16 September 2019.

© Crown copyright 2020

You may re-use this information (excluding logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence or email psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

Where we have identified any third-party copyright information, you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available for download at:

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation

Published by:

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation
1st Floor Civil Justice Centre
1 Bridge Street West
Manchester
M3 3FX

Follow us on Twitter [@hmiprobation](https://twitter.com/hmiprobation)

Contents

Foreword	4
Ratings	5
Executive summary	6
Recommendations	11
Background	13
Contextual facts	15
1. Organisational delivery	16
2. Case supervision	29
3. CRC-specific work	40
Annex 1: Background to probation services	47
Annex 2: Methodology	48
Annex 3: Organisational design and map	52
Annex 4: Inspection data	57

Foreword

We returned to Northumbria in September 2019, a little over a year after our last inspection, and found that much had improved.

The management team has made concerted efforts to address the concerns we raised with them in 2018. These efforts are starting to pay dividends, although there is still more to do. A year ago, we rated Northumbria Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) as 'Requires improvement' and, although this inspection found the same rating, much progress was evident. It is heartening to see that the CRC has achieved a marked improvement, in several areas, with five out of the ten standards we inspect against now rated as 'Good'.

The organisation has strong, effective leadership which is driving improved results, particularly in how the CRC addresses offending-related factors within its work. The recommendations we made in 2018 have been taken seriously. As a result, we have seen improvements in access to buildings; assessment; victim support work; and, with the additional funding provided by Her Majesty's Prisons and Probation Service, the Through the Gate service. The service has a stable workforce with few vacancies. The range of services offered is impressive, relationships with partners are excellent, and management oversight and quality assurance systems are improving.

Our key concern was the handling of risk of harm issues. Although the CRC has shown some improvements, albeit from a low base, too little home visiting or consideration of victims continues to restrict its effectiveness in achieving this important goal. The public expects to see professional and assured work to keep people safe from harm. We urge the CRC to continue its efforts, and drive further improvement in protecting the public from harm. Better sharing of learning from critical case reviews would also strengthen practice.

While unpaid work started promptly and was managed well, and the worksites we visited were well run, the variety of unpaid work projects needs to increase, to allow for more employment-related skills to be developed during these sentences. We would also urge the CRC to increase the availability of private interview space within its offices; staff and partners told us that working in an open-plan interview space restricted their ability to conduct challenging discussions and to influence people to turn away from crime.



Justin Russell

Chief Inspector of Probation

Ratings

Northumbria
Community Rehabilitation Company

Score

15/30

Overall rating

Requires improvement



1. Organisational delivery

1.1 Leadership

Good



1.2 Staff

Good



1.3 Services

Good



1.4 Information and facilities

Good



2. Case supervision

2.1 Assessment

Requires improvement



2.2 Planning

Requires improvement



2.3 Implementation and delivery

Requires improvement



2.4 Reviewing

Requires improvement



4. CRC-specific work¹

4.1 Unpaid work

Requires improvement



4.2 Through the Gate

Good



¹ CRC aspects of domain three work are listed in *HMI Probation's Standards* as 4.1 and 4.2.

Executive summary

Overall, Northumbria Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) is rated as 'Requires improvement'. This rating has been determined by inspecting this provider in three areas of its work, referred to as 'domains'. We inspect against 10 'standards', shared between the domains. These standards are based on established models and frameworks, which are grounded in evidence, learning and experience. They are designed to drive improvements in the quality of work with people who have offended.² Published scoring rules generate the overall provider rating.³ The findings and subsequent ratings in those three domains are described below.

1. Organisational delivery



With a clear vision, purpose and set of values, the governance of the CRC is sound. It has an effective operating model, on which staff and partners are clear. It has aligned its objectives to local voluntary and statutory partners, and the leadership team has nurtured positive relationships with stakeholders. There is an optimism in Northumbria which is described as 'infectious'. We take this to be a sign of good leadership.

The CRC benefits from a high level of stability in its workforce. It has few vacancies and a low rate of sickness. Measures are in place to plan and respond to workload pressures. Staff have access to training, support and supervision, but induction is too basic for many roles and should be improved. During 2019, the CRC strengthened its approach to management oversight but it was too early to see the impact of this in the cases we assessed. Despite the uncertainty caused by the Probation Reform Programme and the bringing forward of the CRC contract end date, the CRC has continued to invest in training probation officers of the future. Staff engagement in the organisation is healthy. We were pleased to see the CRC taking proactive steps to support staff, with positive mental health approaches.

The range of services available in Northumbria is impressive. Many of the interventions are rooted in evidence and research. Women are relatively well provided for, but other groups are less well considered. The Through the Gate service has much improved since our last inspection, and has benefited from the additional funding provided by Her Majesty's Prisons and Probation Service. By contrast, unpaid work and the way that education, training and employment opportunities are handled need to improve, and the provision of a broader variety of projects is key to this. Importantly, the CRC needs to analyse levels of disproportionality in its services, in line with its public sector equality duty.

Appropriate policies are in place to guide staff practice, and information and communications technology functions well. While the local offices are well connected to transport systems, and are bright and welcoming, confidentiality is compromised, and some staff complain that open-plan booths diminish opportunities to challenge

² HMI Probation's standards can be found here:

<https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/about-our-work/our-standards-and-ratings/>

³ Each of the 10 standards is scored on a 0–3 scale, in which 'Inadequate' = 0; 'Requires improvement' = 1; 'Good' = 2; 'Outstanding' = 3. Adding these scores produces a total score ranging from 0 to 30, which is banded to produce the overall rating, as follows: 0–5 = 'Inadequate', 6–15 = 'Requires improvement', 16–25 = 'Good', 26–30 = 'Outstanding'.

difficult behaviour or discuss sensitive issues. The provision of toilet facilities for service users is essential within main offices, and should be addressed.

The CRC has worked hard on its performance and has met all its service level measures. The quality agenda has gained momentum over the past year, and we saw developing systems to drive quality, with some tangible successes, such as improvements in assessing and planning to deal with offence-related factors. The CRC needs to review and improve how it shares learning when things go wrong, however – for example, in serious further offences reviews.

People under the CRC's supervision were positive about the services they receive. Much has been achieved to engage individuals in improving the provision here.

Key strengths of the CRC are as follows:

- There are excellent relationships with partners.
- There is almost full staffing, with a stable and committed workforce who feel well supported.
- Individuals are well engaged, both in their supervision and in improving services. Telephone-only contact has been stopped, leading to more face-to-face contact.
- There is a strong commitment to, and track record of, training new probation officers.
- Quality approaches are beginning to show improvements in practice.

The main areas for improvement are as follows:

- Induction and training arrangements do not adequately prepare new staff to practise in probation.
- Management oversight is not yet effective.
- The CRC does not systematically analyse its data, to check that services and practices are fair and equitable.
- There is not enough private space to conduct in-depth or challenging interventions.
- The Blyth office does not have appropriate toilet facilities for people visiting the premises.

2. Case supervision



We inspected 68 community sentence cases and 29 post-release supervision cases. We interviewed 62 responsible officers and 6 service users; and examined the quality of assessment; planning; implementation and delivery; and reviewing. Each of these elements was inspected in respect of engaging the service user and addressing issues relevant to offending and desistance. In the 85 cases where there were factors related to harm, we also inspected work to keep other people safe. The quality of the work done under each element needs to be above a specified threshold, to achieve a particular score.

Northumbria CRC has achieved an overall rating of 'Requires improvement' for its case management, as all of its work, in assessing, planning, interventions and reviewing, fell short of the 'Good' threshold (that two-thirds of cases should be

managed satisfactorily). This was due to shortcomings in relation to keeping other people safe across all four key areas.

We are pleased that there have been some tangible improvements to casework in Northumbria. Assessment practice has improved, and input from other agencies is routinely sought. Sentences start promptly and are well managed. Flexibility is given to people, to maximise their attendance and support them in successfully completing their sentences. Despite these advances, risk of harm work remains inconsistent.

The quality of reviewing is slightly weaker than for the other key case supervision standards. While written reviews are usually completed, too little attention is given to noting progress, difficulties or dynamic changes for the individuals under supervision. Opportunities are missed to talk to people about how they are progressing or how their risks are changing.

Key strengths of case supervision are as follows:

- Responsible officers engage people well.
- The CRC has made a significant improvement in the assessment of people's offending-related needs, using information from other agencies to build on this assessment and put improved plans in place.
- The CRC has demonstrated significant improvements in how it tackles risk of harm to others.

Areas of case supervision requiring improvement are as follows:

- Risk of harm is still not managed robustly enough, and contingency planning is particularly weak.
- Victims are not considered sufficiently.
- Home visits are not taking place in enough cases and this has had an impact on the CRC's ability to keep other people safe.
- Responsible officers need to build effective relationships with individuals before they leave prison.

3. CRC-specific work

A blue folder icon with the letters 'CRC' in white text inside it.

Our key findings about other core activities specific to CRCs are as follows:

Unpaid work

We inspected the management of 25 unpaid work requirements, looking at assessment and planning; safety; and implementation of the court order. We also observed two induction sessions and seven work parties, to examine the extent to which unpaid work is delivered in a way that supports desistance.

The quality of the work undertaken by responsible officers was patchy and, therefore, we have rated this CRC's unpaid work as 'Requires improvement'. Less than one-half (48 per cent) of the people undertaking unpaid work had assessments tailored to their circumstances. This represents a significant decline on the work we saw in our previous inspection. Unpaid work was delivered safely for 79 per cent of people, and, impressively, in 84 per cent of cases the sentence of the court was implemented appropriately.

While there are a healthy number of individual placements – for example, in charity shops – the majority of individuals worked on group projects at the time of our inspection. These group projects are limited in scope and mostly consist of completing ground works.

We were concerned that the CRC was being too permissive in regard to crediting people with unpaid hours. When people obtained employment, up to 20 per cent of their unpaid work hours were deducted from their court orders. While there is provision to allow for learning and skills development work to be credited, the CRC's approach was, in our view, beyond the scope of the scheme's spirit.

The staff involved in unpaid work delivery modelled positive behaviour to the groups they supervised. During our site visits, we observed good application of the rules, and consistent attention being paid to health and safety.

Key strengths of unpaid work are:

- The orders of the courts start promptly and are managed well.
- Worksites run safely, with due consideration to people's individual circumstances.
- Supervisors are professional and act as good role models.

Areas for improvement of unpaid work are:

- Unpaid work assessments are not personalised.
- The CRC has problems in the way that it transfers information about risk of harm to worksites.
- The CRC has used the 20 per cent allowance, available for learning and skills development, too freely.
- There is not enough variety in the group placements available.
- Education, training and employment opportunities are underdeveloped.

Through the Gate

We inspected the management of 11 cases where the CRC had delivered pre-release Through the Gate resettlement work, looking at resettlement planning; delivery of resettlement services; and release coordination. We also held meetings with the specific CRC senior manager and middle manager, three prison governors from three separate prisons and a group of CRC resettlement workers directly responsible for preparing resettlement plans and meeting identified resettlement needs. Further, we undertook a site visit to HM Prison Northumberland.

Overall, we judged this area of practice to be 'Good'. Resettlement planning focused on the correct areas, to address offending and to promote desistance, in 64 per cent of cases. Resettlement work was appropriate for more than 8 out of 10 people. Resettlement activity was coordinated properly for more than 9 out of every 10 people.

In our 2018 inspection, we rated Through the Gate services as 'Requires improvement', having found some areas of effective practice but a lack of coordinated communication with community-based services to support individuals on their release. Our 2019 findings were slightly better, overall. Although there had been a decline in the quality of planning, we saw a particular improvement in the way that information is coordinated between prison departments. The new specification for enhanced Through the Gate work has been implemented well, and we were pleased to see the scheme performing well from its implementation.

Key strengths of Through the Gate are:

- The Through the Gate service is firmly strengths based, and focused on building upon the positive elements in people's lives.
- The CRC has formed productive relationships within the local prisons, and has used these to deliver good services.
- Through the Gate staff work flexibly, to ensure that services are delivered consistently in all locations.
- Collaborative working between Shelter, Changing Lives and the CRC staff ensures a seamless service.

Areas for improvement of Through the Gate are:

- The transfer of information is not robust enough.
- Staff based in Her Majesty's Prisons Durham and Northumberland do not have sufficient access to risk information.
- Within resettlement plans, not enough attention is paid to keeping the public safe.

Recommendations

Achievement of recommendations from the previous inspection⁴

In our previous inspection report, we made six recommendations to the CRC. During this inspection, we investigated the extent to which these recommendations have been achieved. We found that sufficient progress has been made on two of the recommendations, and the remaining four have seen some progress.

We recommended that the CRC:

1. *Better integrate the assessment tools Justice Star and Offender Assessment System (OASys) to improve the quality of sentence planning and risk management.*

The CRC has made some progress on this recommendation.

In response to this recommendation, full use of layer 3 OASys assessments was re-instituted, removing the need to use Justice Star as a primary assessment tool and avoiding the need to integrate the information held in the two systems. This is work in progress. We have seen a small improvement in sentence planning and risk management, in comparison with our 2018 inspection.

2. *Improve the quality of management oversight so as to enhance the analysis and development of risk management and sentence plans.*

The CRC has made some progress on this recommendation.

Management oversight has been improved. Senior probation officers have attended workshops to ensure that individual role responsibilities are clear. Guidance has also been published, albeit very recently. This meant that the potential for impact was limited in the cases we inspected. We did not collect quantitative data about management oversight in our last inspection; however, for this inspection we found it to be sufficient in around half of the cases we inspected.

3. *Ensure that all CRC premises are accessible to disabled people.*

The CRC has made some progress on this recommendation.

The CRC has reviewed its buildings and sought relevant planning permissions to improve accessibility. This has not been granted in all instances. The Sunderland and Gateshead offices still have no direct disabled access. In these offices, 'managed solutions' are in place, whereby service users are offered taxis and reporting facilities at other, accessible offices. The Newcastle office has, very recently, been adapted to offer wheelchair access. This has resulted in improved access for some people with increased mobility needs.

4. *Ensure that an individual's suitability for group induction has been considered.*

The CRC has made some progress on this recommendation.

There are facilities for individual inductions to be used when this is appropriate; however, we found that this was not always used, when needed. We observed two group inductions of unpaid work, and witnessed one person experiencing

⁴ HMI Probation. (2018). *An inspection of Northumbria Community Rehabilitation Company.*

difficulties in a group setting. Improved information has been sought from court, to enable the CRC to respond appropriately to individual need. Staff showed an awareness of the need to offer individual inductions. While there has been improvement against this recommendation, more should be done.

5. *Improve staff awareness of the role of partner link workers and deploy more of them to support delivery of the Building Better Relationships programme.*⁵

The CRC has made sufficient progress on this recommendation.

A dedicated partner link worker is now in post, and working with approximately 14 cases. The CRC acknowledged that there is scope to increase this work, in order to benefit more people who have been affected by domestic abuse.

6. *Better coordinate risk management plans and resettlement plans when prisoners are released.*

The CRC has made sufficient progress on this recommendation.

The new, enhanced Through the Gate scheme provided a catalyst for improved communication with responsible officers. Our inspection found effective coordination of resettlement activity for 91 per cent of people. The enhanced Through the Gate board has started to work on broader resettlement practice, to improve work between staff in prisons and in the community.

New recommendations

As a result of our inspection findings, we have made eight recommendations that we believe, if implemented, will have a positive impact on the quality of probation services.

Northumbria CRC should:

1. ensure that all staff who assess, plan, work with and review risk of harm to others have the requisite skills, knowledge and resources
2. ensure that people who require home visits receive them
3. improve the quality of management oversight, to enhance the analysis and development of risk management and sentence plans

This recommendation has been repeated from the previous inspection.

4. ensure that services are not experienced disproportionately for different groups of people
5. increase the variety of projects available for unpaid work, to allow for better employment-related skills to be developed, with only pre-employment activity counted towards allowable unpaid work hours
6. ensure that information about people leaving prison is transferred to responsible officers appropriately
7. provide sufficient private interview space to allow all structured interventions and sensitive discussions to take place confidentially
8. ensure that learning from formal reviews, such as serious further offence reviews, is disseminated both to individuals and thematically.

⁵ Building Better Relationships is an accredited programme to tackle domestic abuse. In appropriate cases, a partner link worker is appointed to support direct victims of domestic abuse.

Background

Northumbria CRC

Northumbria CRC covers a large geographical area which is noted for good professional relationships. This is undoubtedly helped by having a single police force, one police and crime commissioner and one local criminal justice board. The CRC works with six local authorities, and these authorities work together to serve the needs of local people. The CRC has organised itself to align with local authorities, and managers in each of the CRC's local management centres have a key role in developing and maintaining relationships with colleagues in youth offending, children's and adult services.

As at July 2019, the CRC stated they had approximately 3,788 people under its statutory supervision, with a total of 180 staff. Around 93 of these staff hold cases. The CRC has a relatively stable staff group, with a low turnover and few vacancies. It has met almost all of its contractual targets over the past year, and has achieved a small reduction in reoffending overall.

In terms of diversity, over 9 out of 10 people under supervision are from a white British background. There is a smaller proportion of people from a black and minority ethnic background than in the general population locally. In terms of religious belief, 15.5 per cent identify as Christian, which is much lower than in the local population, and just over 1 per cent of service users identify as Muslim, which is slightly lower than the local demographic representation. The CRC has identified that over 40 per cent of the people it supervises have a disability. Women make up around 19 per cent of the caseload. This number has increased over recent years. People under the age of 25 constitute 23 per cent of the caseload.

Northumbria is home to almost one and a half million people. The area struggles with high levels of social need, however, which often feeds into offending. Recorded crime rates are the fifth highest in England and Wales.⁶ Public order offences are committed at more than twice the national average.⁷ Rates of unemployment are some of the highest in the country, with South Shields being particularly hard hit. The economic history of the area is one of heavy industry, with ship building, coal mining and vehicle manufacture employing thousands of people. The decline in these industries has led to economic difficulties and a rise in regeneration projects. The North-East region receives a higher than national average level of structural funding from the European Union,⁸ linked to lower levels of gross domestic product.

Drug use is higher than in many parts of England and Wales,⁹ and the number of drug-related deaths is the highest of all regions,¹⁰ with six people, supervised by the CRC, dying in Gateshead, for example, in the past year. The Newcastle and

⁶ Home Office. (2019). *Crime Rates in England and Wales: Police Recorded Crime*. June 2019.

⁷ Home Office. (2019). *Crime Rates in England and Wales: Police Recorded Crime*. June 2019.

⁸ <http://speri.dept.shef.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Brief24-UK-regions-and-European-structural-and-investment-funds.pdf>

⁹ <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/statistics-on-drug-misuse/2018>

¹⁰ Office for National Statistics. (2019). Deaths related to drug poisoning in England and Wales: 2018 registrations, August 2019.

Gateshead area has been part of the Fulfilling Lives programme¹¹ to tackle multiple and complex needs, both directly and through improving the way that services work together to try to secure enduring change.

Sodexo Justice Services' CRCs

Sodexo Justice Services ('Sodexo') is part of a large multinational private company with a wide range of commercial interests. It owns six CRCs covering Northumbria; Cumbria & Lancashire; South Yorkshire; Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire & Northamptonshire; Norfolk & Suffolk; and Essex. It operates a strategic partnership with a well-known charity, Nacro, with contracts to deliver probation services across the six CRCs. It is the third-largest CRC-owning company in the country by contract value, and has 18 per cent of the market share.¹² Sodexo also runs 4 of the 14 private prisons in England and Wales, with all 4 located in England.¹³

Two Sodexo senior staff (regional Chief Executive Officers) each have oversight of a region – one in the north and one in the south of England – with each responsible for three CRCs, and reporting to the Director of Operations (Community) in Sodexo Justice Services. Corporate support services are provided by teams based in London and Salford, and supplemented by regional CRC personnel who cover human resources, finance, business development and communications.

Northumbria CRC is led by a director with overall responsibility for business management and performance, supported by deputy directors.

For more information about this CRC, including details of their operating model, please see Annex 3 of this report.

¹¹ Fulfilling Lives is an eight-year learning programme looking to improve the lives of people with complex needs and build a trauma-informed approach within the services across Newcastle and Gateshead. It is 1 of 12 programmes across England funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, looking to influence the system nationally.

¹² Offender Management Caseload Statistics as at 30 June 2019, Ministry of Justice.

¹³ Private prisons run by Sodexo are: HMP Bronzefield; HMP/YOI Forest Bank; HMP Peterborough; and HMP Northumberland. Source: Ministry of Justice website, 30 January 2017.

Contextual facts

1,715

The total number of individuals supervised on community sentences by Northumbria CRC ¹⁴

769

The number of individuals supervised post-release by Northumbria CRC ¹⁴

43.1%

The proportion of Northumbria CRC's service users with a proven reoffence ¹⁵

41.7%

The proportion of CRC service users (England and Wales) with a proven reoffence ¹⁵

£12.02m

Annual turnover year ending 31 August 2018 ¹⁶

Performance against key targets

75%

The proportion of individuals recorded as having successfully completed their community orders or suspended sentence orders for Northumbria CRC. The performance figure for all England and Wales was 76%, against a target of 75% ¹⁷

60%

The proportion of positive compliance outcomes with licences and, where applicable, post-sentence supervision periods for Northumbria CRC. The performance figure for all England and Wales was 66%, against a target of 65% ¹⁸

90%

The proportion of positive completions of unpaid work requirements for the CRC. The performance figure for all England and Wales was 92%, against a target of 90% ¹⁹

¹⁴ Ministry of Justice. (2019). *Offender management caseload statistics as at 30 June 2019*.

¹⁵ Ministry of Justice. (2019). *Proven reoffending, Payment by results, October to December 2017, 2019*.

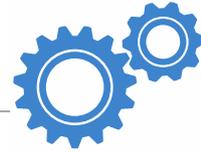
¹⁶ Data supplied by CRC to Companies House.

¹⁷ Ministry of Justice. (2019). *CRC Service Level 8, Community performance quarterly statistics, April 2018 – June 2019, Q1*.

¹⁸ Ministry of Justice. (2019). *CRC Assurance Metric J, Community performance quarterly statistics, April 2018 – June 2019, Q1*.

¹⁹ Ministry of Justice. (2019). *CRC Service Level 10, Community performance quarterly statistics, April 2018 – June 2019, Q1*.

1. Organisational delivery



Northumbria CRC has a clear vision, purpose and set of values. Its governance is sound. The operating model is clear both to staff and partners. The CRC is fortunate to have a stable workforce, with almost full staffing. Training, support and supervision are in place, but induction for does not prepare new starters well enough. There is evidence of excellent partnership working and largely effective services, although there is little analysis of disproportionality at play. The CRC has started to improve management oversight and quality assurance. People supervised by the CRC were positive about the services on offer. Much has been done to engage service users in improving the provision there, but we found continuing problems with confidentiality in local offices.

Strengths:

- The CRC has excellent relationships with partners.
- The CRC is almost fully staffed, with a stable and committed workforce who feel well supported.
- Individuals are well engaged, both in their supervision and in improving the CRC's services.
- The CRC has a strong commitment to, and track record of, training new probation officers.
- Quality approaches are beginning to deliver improvements in practice.

Areas for improvement:

- Induction and training arrangements do not adequately prepare new staff to practise in probation.
- Management oversight systems are not yet effective.
- The CRC does not systematically analyse its data, to check that services and practices are fair and equitable.
- There is not enough private space to conduct in-depth or challenging one-to-one interventions.
- The Blyth office does not have appropriate toilet facilities for people visiting the premises.

	Previous inspection	Current inspection
1.1. Leadership		
The leadership of the organisation supports and promotes the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all service users.	Requires improvement	Good

Key data

	12 months previously	Current
Proportion of staff interviewed who agreed that the organisation prioritised quality ²⁰	54%	54%

In making a judgement about leadership, we take into account the answers to the following three questions.

Is there an effective vision and strategy driving the delivery of a high-quality service for all service users?

The CRC has an established vision and strategy. Its purpose is: ‘to change lives for the better by reducing reoffending and improving the quality of life of those in our supervision and care’, supported by values of ‘service spirit’, ‘team spirit’ and ‘spirit of progress’. Staff and partners report an improving sense of purpose and quality, in line with the CRC’s vision.

The ‘prevention and rehabilitation’ subgroup of the local criminal justice board is chaired by the director, and we found consistent evidence of tangible work to deliver the strategy for reducing reoffending. The CRC works hard to monitor cohorts of people, to track and learn more about reoffending in Northumbria. We witnessed excellent relationships in action – for example, in Gateshead, where partners are working hard to improve outcomes for people and move them away from offending. Prison governors locally are positive about the vision of the CRC. The police, National Probation Service (NPS), and local statutory and voluntary partners described the CRC as ‘mature and responsive’.

Of the staff we interviewed, 54 per cent said that the CRC prioritised quality. This is the same score as that achieved last year, and better than the aggregate score nationally across all CRCs. A staff engagement network provides an opportunity to engage people in change. The practice advisory group meets monthly, and includes practitioners and managers. This connects to the monthly DRIVE (staff case review) meeting, to which every staff member is invited annually.

There is a range of communication channels used, including mail boxes (for example, for probation reform queries, and a general ‘Ask Nick’ email box, directed towards the Chief Executive), together with senior manager visits. All middle

²⁰ HMI Probation inspection data.

managers are engaged in the senior leaders' forum. The CRC vision and strategy is displayed in the local offices. There is a clearly articulated governance structure, which operates within the CRC and with the parent company. There are clear strategic areas, with nominated owners, and direct plans are in place to drive activity, such as contract exit planning.

There is an annual service plan and annual service report, analysing progress against objectives, but we found weaknesses in some aspects of planning to drive improvements, for example, with supply chain delivery. The CRC has engaged well with regular assurance activity. The North-East CRC Chief Executives meet together with the NPS regional deputy director, to work collaboratively to ensure continuity of services. The CRC is involved in the delivery of conditional cautioning interventions as part of a joined-up agenda of early diversion from the criminal justice system. Integrated offender management arrangements have been refocused to support the reducing reoffending purpose of the CRC.

Are potential risks to service delivery anticipated and planned for in advance?

A business risk register has been reintroduced since our last inspection. It is monitored to manage business risks; the senior leadership reviews the risks and takes remedial actions. Performance improvement has been a key focus, as evidenced through the inspection. The risk register contains appropriate key risks – for example, the quality of operational delivery. We noted actions flowing from these risks, such as the rollout of a case audit tool in Northumbria.

Two major changes have been implemented since our 2018 inspection. Following a key recommendation, the CRC has reintroduced the use of full OASys assessments and planning. The CRC has implemented this change well, with communications, briefings and discussion. The requirement for probation providers to ensure at least one face-to-face contact between service users and their responsible officers each month has prompted the CRC to undertake detailed work to calculate the impact of staffing and resources, prior to full implementation.

Does the operating model support effective service delivery, meeting the needs of all service users?

The model has been modified to remove telephone-only contact. This has increased the amount of face-to-face contact service that users receive. We saw high levels of continuity of responsible officers, with 81 per cent of cases having the same officer. This compares favourably with last year, at 76 per cent, and the national aggregate across all CRCs, of 64 per cent.

The operating model allows for differing levels of intensity, depending on the needs of the person under supervision. There are bespoke facilities for women, via women's hubs. The people we spoke to who are under supervision are positive about getting the help they need. There is a clear operating model, and staff guidance is in place.

Operational partners are clear about the purpose of their work. Over 80 per cent of responsible officers reported that there is good coordination of work with partner agencies. Staff and partners are involved in joint training events.

The CRC has an annual service plan, but does not break this plan down to cluster or local management centre levels. A range of plans was evident, but often activity was not driven by a specific plan; instead, an action log approach was used to track progress. We saw evidence that an office move was well managed, when the new North Tyneside office was operationalised. When face-to-face contact levels needed

to be improved, staff were moved from the hub into field teams, with appropriate consultation and planning.

	Previous inspection	Current inspection
1.2. Staff		
Staff within the organisation are empowered to deliver a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all service users.	Good	Good

Key staffing data ²¹	Previous year	Current year
Total staff headcount (FTE)	171	180
Vacancy rate (total number of unfilled posts as a percentage of total staff headcount)	2.84%	1.64%
Vacancy rate for probation officers (PO) or equivalent grade only (total number of unfilled posts as a percentage of total number of required PO posts)	1.14%	1.09%
Sickness absence rate (all staff)	No data	4.49%
Staff attrition (percentage of all staff leaving in a 12-month period)	No data	7%

Caseload data ²²	Previous year	Current year
Average caseload for PO (FTE)	Not known	51
Average caseload for a probation services officer (PSO) (FTE)	Not known	48
Proportion of POs (or equivalent) in this CRC describing caseload as unmanageable	44%	50%
Proportion of PSOs (or equivalent) in this CRC describing caseload as unmanageable	40%	33%

²¹ Data supplied by the CRC.

²² Data from inspection interviews with responsible officers.

For the purposes of comparison, in our inspections of all CRCs between June 2018 and June 2019, 63 per cent of probation officers and 56 per cent of probation service officers told inspectors that their caseloads were unmanageable.

In making a judgement about staffing, we take into account the answers to the following five questions.

Do staffing and workload levels support the delivery of a high-quality service for all service users?

Of the responsible officers we interviewed, 62 per cent said that their workload is manageable. Some indicated that there has been an improving picture over the last year, when 59 per cent of staff found workloads manageable. This compares favourably with the year 1 aggregate figure for all CRCs, which was 41 per cent. Unpaid work and Through the Gate staff reported that they are busy, but with manageable workloads. Managers reported being content with their workloads, and the CRC has put additional resources in place to support managers with facilities and human resources processes, including from regionally based staff.

There are few vacancies, and there are tangible plans to fill all posts. The CRC uses a new tool, Ramp 2, to measure workloads for case-holding staff. This indicates that there was headroom in average capacity across the year, with specific pressure points in the Newcastle office, and more particularly in the probation officer grade. Administrative staff are mostly based in the central hub (further detail of the organisational model is provided at Annex 3). Reception staff are managed from the hub, and cover is arranged across the area. The jobs are rotated. We heard high praise for reception staff and the way they operate.

The CRC has deployed measures to respond to workload pressures. For example, a Through the Gate staff member agreed to move between prisons, to cover staffing gaps. The CRC also uses overtime, sessional staff and temporary staff. Staffing and pressure points are regularly reviewed at the workforce planning meeting. There is a facility for staff to raise concerns about workload pressure, although some staff reported feeling that this is a pointless exercise, as lots of people are 'in the same boat', with heavy workloads.

Do the skills and profile of staff support the delivery of a high-quality service for all service users?

Although 97 per cent of the staff we interviewed said that they believed they had the necessary practice skills and knowledge, our casework data indicated that there are skills, knowledge or practice deficits, particularly in managing risk to others.

There is a clear process for case allocation, using a colour banding system, and senior probation officers allocate work directly. We saw good examples where this was done thoughtfully.

Job descriptions outline relevant governance and reporting arrangements. These clearly set out staff responsibilities and lines of accountability. Succession planning and talent processes operate, with key roles identified. It is a rudimentary system, whereby staff are identified for roles directly, and is potentially subjective and open to bias. In support of Sodexo's 'nurture growth' ambition, managers have been asked to 'identify at least two successors for each role'. The strategy requires managers to provide individuals with development plans, to 'help grow people into their next role'.

The Northumbria CRC staff group is around 80 per cent female. A drive to attract more men has had some success. During 2018/2019, of the 16 new starters, 6 were male. Staff with a declared disability (14 per cent) under-represent the local population (20 per cent). The ethnic make-up of the CRC is not sufficiently diverse,

with 96 per cent identifying as white British, against a local population which is more ethnically diverse, with just under 93 per cent identifying as white British. The age profile is also out of step with the working-age population, with most staff aged between 45 and 54 years (33 per cent) and under 2 per cent aged between 18 and 25 years.

Does the oversight of work support high-quality delivery and professional development?

Staff reported that the supervision process is effective, meets their needs and supports them to deliver high-quality services. Supervision is regular for the large majority of staff. Managers are accessible, and usually based with their staff in open-plan offices. This facilitates regular informal case discussions, although not all managers are located on the same site as their staff. The appraisal system is embedded, with strong levels of compliance across the organisation.

Most new staff receive an induction. Some staff described a three-day induction, whereas others cited an induction lasting a week and a half. Several felt that it had not met their needs. While staff described the inductions as sufficient, we are not convinced. Staff told us that induction could be improved by including an overview of the computer systems, rather than having to wait several weeks for formal training. A series of training and on-site learning follows induction. We were told by staff that: *“When you do start using the IT [information technology], you become a drain on the office”*. When staff are promoted or take career breaks, the reinduction process is patchy. We found examples of good handovers and, conversely, of ones where staff received no meeting and no communication about the changes that had taken place during the extended period that they had been absent.

The senior management team assured us that poor performance is addressed in the organisation, with informal and formal routes, and this most commonly leads to an uplift in performance.

The improvement in management oversight was a key recommendation from our previous inspection. The CRC has clearly started to take steps to improve this; however, we found that management oversight was sufficient for less than half of the people whose cases we reviewed.

Are arrangements for learning and development comprehensive and responsive?

There is a training matrix in place, which specifies training requirements by role, but it is not used comprehensively. There is a disconnect between the central training offer and line managers in the CRC, with a poorly functioning system to check if staff complete all mandatory training. Despite bespoke training being put in place, geared towards addressing areas for improvement highlighted by our 2018 report, we found practice deficits, particularly in keeping people safe. A large majority of staff, 81 per cent, said that they have access to in-service training. This compares favourably with the figure we found at our last inspection, 76 per cent, and the aggregate score across all CRCs of 63 per cent. The staff we interviewed were generally happy with the training available, with 80 per cent giving a positive response.

There are apprenticeships on offer. There is a strong commitment to the Professional Qualification in Probation, and four people recently graduated in Northumbria. The case audit system has started to provide individual feedback to responsible officers.

Do managers pay sufficient attention to staff engagement?

Staff receive praise from managers for good work, and there is a formal reward and recognition system. An electronic ‘thank you’ system can be used by all staff.

Colleagues can make a nomination via the intranet, and a 'thank you' flashes up on the recipient's computer screen as an e-card. Around three or four 'Star' awards are presented by the director to staff each month, in recognition of good work. Long service awards celebrate the achievements of staff serving over 20 years in the probation field. Sodexo holds national Star awards annually. Staff pay has been improved, in recognition of conditions in the market. These are positive moves, but the CRC has yet to monitor the discretionary awards, to ensure that these are delivered equitably.

Staff engage with managers and ask questions – for example, via a designated mailbox for probation reform. The CRC runs regular pulse surveys and an annual staff survey. In 2017, the staff survey returned an engagement score of 16 per cent. It is positive to see an improved engagement score of 43 per cent from the most recent survey. The CRC promotes attendance at staff engagement meetings, and holds regular consultations with the trade unions to address staff issues.

Staff are confident that stress and other issues can be raised safely with managers, and 83 per cent are positive about staff wellbeing. As an extension to the 'dignity at work' policy, the CRC has an increased focus on health and wellbeing. It has organised a series of events to support staff resilience, including the provision of water bottles, and messages to hydrate and take breaks. The 'Sodexo Supports Me' facility offers advice and counselling. Further, a 'mental health champion' scheme has been implemented, to raise awareness of common mental health problems and to support staff, and staff appreciate it.

We found that 71 per cent of responsible officers thought that safety was appropriately considered, and 90 per cent of staff told us that they had received a positive response to requests for reasonable adjustments. Display screen equipment assessments are completed and a health and safety committee is in place.

	Previous inspection	Current inspection
1.3. Services		
A comprehensive range of high-quality services is in place, supporting a tailored and responsive service for all service users.	Good	Good

In making a judgement about services, we take into account the answers to the following three questions.

Is there a sufficiently comprehensive and up-to-date analysis of the profile of service users, used by the organisation to deliver well-targeted services?

Characteristics of inspected domain 2 cases ²³	All CRCs in year one	This CRC in current inspection
Proportion of caseload who are female	17%	14%

²³ All data from HMI Probation inspection.

Proportion of inspected cases who are black and minority ethnic	14%	4%
Proportion of inspected cases with a disability	49%	29%
Proportion of inspected cases where inspectors identified substance misuse problems	72%	78%
Proportion of inspected cases where inspectors identified domestic abuse issues	41%	41%
Proportion of inspected cases where inspectors identified child safeguarding issues	32%	20% ²⁴

The CRC has compiled data from OASys for the last three quarters relating to offending-related needs and risk. It is also tracking reoffending closely. While there is direct consultation with service users, drawn together by the service user council, the formal analysis of the OASys data has not yet been shared with this group. There are high levels of offending-related needs in Northumbria, compared with the national average.

The return to systematic use of full OASys assessments means that the CRC can be more confident that it captures the needs and risks of the people under its supervision, and uses this to inform new service provision. Recent analysis has led to the implementation of services to address the behaviour of women who are violent, for example. The CRC is aware that the analysis for Gateshead is out of step with that for the rest of Northumbria. The reasons for this difference are not yet understood.

The CRC is to be commended for its analysis of levels of emotional wellbeing, which prompted increased services, such as the counselling provision for service users in each office. This particular service is popular with the responsible officers we interviewed.

A limited analysis has been collated to help the CRC understand if there is disproportionality, and where it may lie. Some work has been done to analyse breaches and recalls but no particular pattern has emerged. The CRC has pledged to work to the recommendations of the Lammy Review,²⁵ to improve data capture and analysis.

Although sentencers were not aware of any particular changes made by the CRC in response to local responses to the crime or sentencing trends, it has recently introduced an intervention to address stalking and harassment. The police, however, highlighted the need to address emerging issues around county lines and polydrug use. The current level of analysis does not yet allow to CRC to be responsive to patterns of crime or offence-related issues, but it does shape the eligibility criteria for some interventions. The CRC has work to do in this area.

²⁴ In 16 per cent of cases, there was no clear record of whether child safeguarding issues were present.

²⁵ Lammy, D. (2017). *The Lammy Review: An Independent Review into the Treatment of, and Outcomes for, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Individuals in the Criminal Justice System*. London: Lammy Review.

Does the CRC provide the volume, range and quality of services to meet the needs of the service users? ²⁶

	Current inspection
Number of successful completions for Building Better Relationships	136
Number of successful completions for the Thinking Skills Programme	30
Number of successful completions of rehabilitation activity requirements (RARs)	3,534

The CRC has appropriate services in place to meet risk and need. Interventions typically focus on building strengths in order to help people to move away from offending. Innovation funding has helped to establish a counselling provision. Of the responsible officers we spoke to, 83 per cent said that they had access to the services they require for the people they supervise. Our casework inspection, however, found that structured interventions should be used more often.

All of the CRC's service providers are contracted to an agreed volume level, paid monthly. The CRC supports smaller partners when they have staffing gaps, but this sometimes means that there is interrupted provision, for short periods.

The CRC has invested in buildings in a wide spread of places, including 'pop-up' facilities in more remote areas. Rural areas are less well served, and some staff based in Northumberland said that there are poorer services in their area; sometimes, services consist of telephone-based contact only.

Accredited programmes are delivered at two sites, Sunderland and Newcastle, and some service users reported difficulties in accessing programmes after finishing work. Other interventions, however, are more widely available and are delivered as home visits where necessary.

In our 2018 report, we commented that: 'action to address equality and diversity is responsive rather than proactive and strategic'. We noted too little progress in this area; there are no mechanisms to review equitability of services for groups with protected characteristics. Maturity assessments are undertaken in some cases, but there is no screening to consider learning difficulties actively. The CRC does not formally review levels of disproportionality within services delivered by its supply chain, and regular meetings and contract reviews could be strengthened to include this feature.

There has been no audit of accredited programmes since the inception of the CRC, but this is not an issue that the CRC can influence. Although some of the RARs have been evaluated (for example, Positive Pathways), and the CRC has sought to model its RARs on academic research, more formal evaluation would add rigour to the CRC's work.

²⁶ Data supplied by the CRC.

Are relationships with providers and other agencies established, maintained and used effectively to deliver high-quality services to service users?

There is evidence of good relationships with partners. Shelter provides housing, and finance, benefits and debt advice in custody and in the community. Nepacs and the Northern Engagement into Recovery from Addiction Foundation (NERAF) provide family interventions and drug and alcohol support, respectively. Military veterans receive a bespoke service through the Northern Learning Trust. Changing Lives provides women's services in nine community hubs and in HMP/YOI Low Newton. The operational partners meet regularly to discuss individual contract reviews, and together solve operational problems and share learning. The CRC is plugged-in to a wide network locally and we saw good evidence of effective relationships in Northumbria.

Police officers are co-located in local CRC offices, to support joint working and integrated offender management. Information is exchanged with local agencies, to enable appropriate management of risk of harm to others. There are strong, functional links with the NPS and, jointly, the organisations have tackled issues to improve risk and general offender management, such as risk escalation and breach quality.

The rate card brochure is provided to sentencers. There is a quarterly meeting between the sentencers and the CRC. Sentencers are generally knowledgeable about the services on offer from the CRC, but report that they would like more information about specific locations, to enhance their sentencing decisions. Sentencers have a positive relationship with the CRC, and this facilitates the delivery of their expectations.

Service user involvement

Northumbria CRC has a tradition of service user involvement that spans five years. There is a well-established service user council, supported by User Voice. More recently, the North-East division of the NPS has co-financed this council, as a joint venture. This is a positive arrangement, made between the organisations, to provide a system-wide vehicle to help drive improvements to local probation services.

The service user council meets quarterly and is facilitated by the CRC director. Some of its proposals have been discussed and fed back to the CRC, which has been responsive and effected changes.

Housing is a key concern but, as a good example of the service user council working well, a working group has been set up to try to tackle this. Service users were pleased to see more work under way to provide help with mental health needs, and the steering group to oversee the offer for veterans was commended.

Council members told us that Through the Gate services have improved, and are better staffed. This has resulted in a better follow-through from custody to release. People are now more aware of who the Through the Gate staff are. Presentation days are set up by the council, to help people learn about the support on offer from the scheme.

Service users report problems with the Sunderland office, which has steps at the entrance. The service user council described this as: 'a problem for those with mobility issues'. When User Voice raised this issue with the CRC, it responded by arranging a reporting facility at an accessible office, in South Shields, with travel costs reimbursed. Transport costs remain a contentious issue for them, and service users report that local management centres interpret the rules about transport support inconsistently. Some provide funding up front, whereas others reimburse afterwards.

The general feeling reported from service users is that the booths have been a great success, in terms of breaking down barriers, are less intimidating and create a more comfortable atmosphere. We judged, however, that service users with mental health issues may not be comfortable holding private and personal conversations in booths.

User Voice is currently examining the RAR days, as these are confusing for service users, who often report that they do not know what counts as an RAR day.

During this inspection, we attempted to contact 18 service users by telephone, and successfully recorded the views of 6. Generally, service users were content with services. They all said that they had received the help they needed to keep out of trouble. We also spoke to over 25 people undertaking unpaid work.

At the time of the inspection, there were no volunteer or peer mentor routes into employment with the CRC, although Shelter was working with some voluntary staff.

	Previous inspection	Current inspection
1.4. Information and facilities		
Timely and relevant information is available and appropriate facilities are in place to support a high-quality, personalised and responsive approach for all service users.	Requires Improvement	Good

In making a judgement about information and facilities, we take into account the answers to the following four questions.

Do the policies and guidance in place enable staff to deliver a high-quality service, meeting the needs of all service users?

The CRC intranet contains all relevant policies and guidance. Some items were flagged as ‘mandatory reading’, and compliance with this is monitored via an audit trail. There is a clear policy on case recording, which refers to the CRISSA²⁷ model and has extra guidance related to the need for specific recording and coding of events. The details of services and operational partners are clear and comprehensive, and there is good guidance on referral mechanisms and eligibility. Policies support the effective interface between the CRC and NPS – for example, escalation arrangements.

Major policies are reviewed on a three-year cycle, and there is a mechanism in the intranet to set up reminders to review specific policies and guidance; however, we were not convinced that there is sufficient oversight to ensure that timely reviews of policies are carried out. A clear majority of staff were aware of relevant policies, such as recording and defensible decision-making.

Do the premises and offices enable staff to deliver a high-quality service, meeting the needs of all service users?

Offices have clear signage and are located close to public transport links. Some offices remain inaccessible to wheelchair users, however, despite concerted efforts

²⁷ CRISSA is an acronym for a structured approach to record appointments. C – Check in; R – Review; I – Implement; S – Summarise; S – Set tasks; A – Appointments.

by the CRC to improve the situation. Where offices are not accessible, managed solutions have been put in place.

We remain concerned about the levels of confidentiality provided, as service users are routinely interviewed in open-plan booths. While a small amount of private interview space is available, this is insufficient to complete the volume of structured or sensitive work that is required. Some staff and partners are unhappy with the booths and feel that the lack of an appropriate interview environment sometimes limits the scope of work that can be undertaken. As we reported in 2018, toilet facilities are not provided for service users in the Blyth office. Likewise, toilets are not sufficiently near to unpaid work delivery sites in all cases. The CRC maintains that the nearby public toilets are an adequate alternative, but we disagree.

We were pleased to see that Through the Gate staff are provided with private space to see people, and are making good use of in-cell telephony in the prisons where it is available.

Staff reported feeling safe at work, with almost three-quarters of staff saying that the organisation pays attention to staff safety. The SoloProtect system is a lone worker safety device which is used widely, and appreciated by staff.

Do the information and communications technology (ICT) systems enable staff to deliver a high-quality service, meeting the needs of all service users?

The ICT is fit for purpose. Staff and operational partner staff members are each provided with a laptop computer and mobile phone, which enable them to work remotely. Staff are well supported when things go wrong with their technology.

The CRC is ISO/IEC 27001²⁸ certified, but we found some concerning practice in terms of data exchange. The problems lay with some of the information transfer from the Through the Gate service. We discovered that staff are recording information and storing it electronically in a prison-based system. This information is préciséd and entered onto OASys. The full version is uploaded onto nDelius for some, but not all, cases. There is potential for important information not to be communicated.

Unpaid work supervisors told us that finding time to access the ICT systems was sometimes difficult, given the immediate nature of their work. There is a range of management information systems used by the CRC. Good use is made of the reporting functions contained in nDelius, and supplementary tracker spreadsheets provide managers with information to drive performance. Workforce information is collated, and reports produced, from a human resources system and this feeds into the Ramp 2 tool to assist in monitoring workloads.

Is analysis, evidence and learning used effectively to drive improvement?

The CRC manages performance well, using a system to prompt staff to complete work on time. It has worked hard to address the recommendations from our last inspection report and has a reputation for taking remedial action seriously. There is a reasonable level of understanding of performance across the CRC. It has invested in a new case audit approach to improve quality. One case per responsible officer per quarter is audited by senior probation officers and the development officer. The results are recorded and sent to the individual officer and their manager, for discussion.

²⁸ ISO/IEC 27001 is an information security standard, part of the ISO/IEC 27000 family of standards. It is published by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) under the joint ISO and IEC subcommittee.

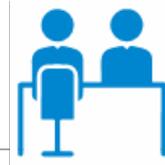
The CRC is confident in its assurance systems, believing them to be comprehensive and effective. The approach is shared by all six Sodexo-run CRCs. Staff report some difficulties, however, including receiving incorrect or irrelevant information from the audit out-turn. The case audit system was established in March 2019 and it is too early to see the results from this approach. In our casework inspections, in line with our last inspection, we continued to find too few cases where keeping other people safe featured sufficiently.

Following the start of the enhanced Through the Gate scheme, the CRC held a 'First 100 Days' event, to review progress with staff and partners. This was well received.

There is no systematic process for thematic learning from serious further offences to be disseminated across the organisation. One manager is responsible for completing serious further offence and death under supervision reviews. Good information is collected from this activity, and action plans are put in place as a result of this. Individuals who are part of the process, however, are not routinely given formal feedback following the review. The learning themes need to be formally disseminated.

Service user views are regularly sought and considered, using the service user council, which is supported by User Voice. The CRC also asks people to complete exit questionnaires, to review its service user experiences and the services delivered.

2. Case supervision



We inspected 68 community sentence cases and 29 post-release supervision cases; we interviewed 62 responsible officers and 6 service users; and examined the quality of assessment; planning; implementation and delivery; and reviewing. Each of these elements was inspected in respect of engaging the service user and addressing the issues relevant to offending and desistance. In the 85 cases where there were factors related to harm, we also inspected work to keep other people safe. The quality of the work done under each element needs to be above a specified threshold, to achieve a particular score.

We found that responsible officers are generally doing effective work to engage people in their assessments, in their plans, in the work they need to do in moving away from offending, and in reviewing their progress. By contrast, responsible officers are not making enough contact with people in custody, to build effective working relationships that could support successful resettlement.

Similarly, we noted that responsible officers are now taking good account of desistance and offending-related factors when assessing, planning and directing interventions. There has been some progress in this area since our 2018 inspection.

The weaknesses in practice lie in how consistently staff consider risk of harm to others when they are assessing, planning and delivering interventions, and reviewing.

Strengths:

- Responsible officers positively engage service users.
- Information from other agencies is being incorporated into assessments.
- The CRC has made a substantial improvement in the assessment of people's offending-related needs, to put improved plans in place.
- The CRC has demonstrated substantial improvements in how it tackles risk of harm to others.

Areas for improvement:

- Risk of harm is not managed robustly enough, and contingency planning is particularly weak.
- Victims are not considered sufficiently.
- Home visits are not taking place in enough cases, and this is having an impact on the CRC's ability to keep other people safe.
- Responsible officers need to build effective relationships with individuals before they leave prison.

	Previous inspection	Current inspection
2.1. Assessment		
Assessment is well informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the service user.	Requires improvement	Requires improvement

Our rating²⁹ for assessment is based on the following three questions:

Comparison with Northumbria CRC in previous inspection and all CRCs	Previous inspection	Current inspection	All CRCs ³⁰
Does assessment focus sufficiently on engaging the service user? ³¹	81%	74%	68%
Does assessment focus sufficiently on the factors linked to offending and desistance? ³¹	70%	80%	63%
Does assessment focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe? ³¹	54%	58%	55%

Northumbria CRC has achieved an overall score of 'Requires improvement' for its assessment work. Although assessment practice is generally improved, and input from other agencies is routinely sought, it fell short of the 'Good' threshold (that two-thirds of cases should be managed satisfactorily). This was due to shortcomings in relation to keeping other people safe.

Does assessment focus sufficiently on engaging the service user?

For 8 out of 10 people, responsible officers took good account of their motivation and readiness to comply. We saw account taken of people's individual needs and help identified to address barriers that people may face. Mental health, addiction and child care responsibilities were all considered, for example. The distance that people have to travel to reach their appointments is sometimes a barrier, and the CRC continues to grapple with distance, as some areas that are more rural have poorer public transport options.

The Northumbria area is made up of just under 93 per cent white British people, and we found a lack of attention to issues of ethnicity, with some assessments taking little account of people's ethnicity or cultural strengths. More care needs to be taken to build diversity issues, such as disability and maturity, into assessments.

²⁹ The rating for the standard is normally driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. See Annex 2 for a more detailed explanation.

³⁰ From inspection data for all HMI Probation inspections, June 2018 to June 2019.

³¹ The answers to these key questions are underpinned by more detailed 'prompts'. The table in Annex 4 illustrates the percentage of the case sample with a satisfactory 'yes' response to each prompt.

Although the CRC is generally good at activities which engage people under its supervision in assessment activity, we would encourage a more consistent approach to including service users in assessing themselves, as over one-third of people were not consulted sufficiently. We have seen a decline in this area, which may be linked to changing assessment practice (see next section).

Does assessment focus sufficiently on the factors linked to offending and desistance?

Following our 2018 inspection, the CRC implemented changes to local assessment processes. It reintroduced OASys as its key assessment tool. We have seen improvements that appear to be linked to this decision. Indeed, many staff told us that they were pleased to be using OASys again because it is a comprehensive tool.

Responsible officers were identifying offending-related factors, but we saw a lower incidence of the necessary analysis of these factors. It was positive to see clearly a strengths-based element to assessment, and where tools, such as Justice Star,³² were used, to complement the OASys assessment, we noted a more comprehensive assessment.

The CRC has made solid progress in ensuring that assessment sufficiently focuses on factors linked to offending and desistance. Also notable was the consistent use of information from other sources, as the following good practice example demonstrates.

Good practice example

Terry's assessment had in-depth historical information recorded, including information from the youth offending team and children's services. The analysis of the impact of childhood experiences detailed the links between Terry witnessing domestic violence as a child and his current offending behaviour.

This is an important component, as it enables people to receive high-quality assessments, enriched with important information, which act as a cornerstone to well-directed plans and interventions.

Does assessment focus sufficiently on the risk of harm to others?

Our inspection found that responsible officers identified the risk of harm to others in just over half of the cases, but analysis, to inform the assessment of risk of harm to others, was less common. Responsible officers had sufficiently identified the risk, to whom they applied, *and* analysed these sufficiently in only 44 per cent of the cases we inspected.

Potential and actual victims had been considered properly in less than half of the assessments we reviewed. This is a major flaw and needs to be rectified.

We found that, in a large majority of cases, the relevant checks with the police and with children's social care services had been undertaken, either at the court stage or

³² Justice Star is a strengths-based assessment tool which considers a range of offending-related needs and invites the user to rank these needs.

later, by CRC staff. We would like to see higher levels of professional curiosity being applied to collateral information, to maximise protection of the public.

Poor practice example

Although Stacey was not attending appointments, there was sufficient information on file for the basis of an assessment. Despite her having been subject to a youth referral order in 2018, the responsible officer did not liaise with the youth offending team, and failed to request a copy of their assessment. This was a missed opportunity to obtain further information pertinent to risk assessment.

Stacey has several previous convictions for violent offences and thefts against multiple victims. The responsible officer had little knowledge of any of the details relating to these. Domestic abuse checks were not undertaken, at court or subsequently, by the CRC, despite information disclosed by Stacey that she was suffering domestic abuse. Child safeguarding checks were undertaken but the information was not followed up properly to safeguard effectively the five children linked to this case. These children were not considered as potential victims, or seen to be at risk of harm.

Probation officer grade staff are markedly better than probation services officers at incorporating risk sufficiently into assessments, with over two-thirds of these staff working sufficiently in this area.

	Previous inspection	Current inspection
2.2. Planning		
Planning is well informed, holistic and personalised, actively involving the service user.	Inadequate	Requires improvement

Our rating³³ for planning is based on the following three questions:

Comparison with Northumbria CRC in previous inspection and all CRCs	Previous inspection	Current inspection	All CRCs ³⁴
Does planning focus sufficiently on engaging the service user? ³⁵	74%	78%	63%
Does planning focus sufficiently on reducing reoffending and supporting the service user's desistance? ³⁵	66%	74%	64%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe? ³⁵	45%	51%	46%

³³ The rating for the standard is normally driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated by boldening in the table. See Annex 2 for a more detailed explanation.

³⁴ From inspection data for all HMI Probation inspections from June 2018 to June 2019.

³⁵ The answers to these key questions are underpinned by more detailed 'prompts'. The table in Annex 4 illustrates the percentage of the case sample with a satisfactory 'yes' response to each prompt.

Northumbria CRC has achieved an overall score of 'Requires improvement' for its planning work, falling short of the 'Good' threshold (that two-thirds of cases should be managed satisfactorily). This was due to shortcomings in relation to keeping other people safe.

Does planning focus sufficiently on engaging the service user?

Engaging people in their own planning was a consistent feature in over three-quarters of the cases we inspected. This included responsible officers considering motivation and readiness to change. We were pleased to see that this has improved significantly since our last inspection, and is probably linked to the systematic use of the full OASys tool. We saw planning that reflected the requirements of the sentences and licences, and took account of available timescales, for three-quarters of the individuals under supervision.

Consistently, planning also included a clear approach to setting out the level, pattern and type of contact that was required of the people under supervision.

Does planning focus sufficiently on reducing reoffending and supporting the service user's desistance?

In line with our findings about assessment practice, we have seen a significant improvement in planning that reflects desistance and offending-related factors. The use of OASys has helped to make improvements in planning practice, with more than three-quarters of people having their offending-related factors identified in their plans.

Service users were drawn into planning frequently, and this will bolster individuals in their efforts to remain offence free.

In the main, we found that the right services were identified within plans, in order to meet the needs of individuals under supervision.

Does planning address appropriately factors associated with the risk of harm to others?

Not enough planning addressed risk of harm factors sufficiently, although this is an improving picture, and is significantly better than at the time of the previous inspection. Inspectors picked up an overuse of generic risk management plans and contingency arrangements. The CRC will need to explore this practice further, and provide more tailored planning, to manage the specific risks that the service users may pose.

Poor practice example

The risk management plan details restrictive controls and contingency planning; however, these are generic and not personalised to Dawn. Elements of the planning are not relevant – for example, children's services involvement. It appears that the plan has been copied and pasted from another document and does not clearly identify how to manage risk in Dawn's individual case.

Too few cases set out the necessary constructive factors or the provisions that would strengthen public protection. Worryingly, only half of the cases inspected featured responsible officers making enough links with other agencies, to ensure that people

were kept safe. Contingency planning was particularly weak, and we found no improvement to the practice that we had encountered in our previous inspection.

Poor practice example

For Mark, there was a plan but it was not realistic. There was insufficient analysis of the key underpinning issues, and a lack of contingency planning regarding risk of harm. No exploration of potential sexual and criminal exploitation was made. No police checks were recorded. No links to the plan involving the drug treatment agency or children’s services were included in how work with Mark was planned.

Further, we observed that contingency planning for women was weaker than for men. Starkly, only around a quarter of women under supervision benefited from enough planning to keep other people safe.

	Previous inspection	Current inspection
2.3. Implementation and delivery		
High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging the service user	Inadequate	Requires improvement

Our rating³⁶ for implementation and delivery is based on the following three questions:

Comparison with Northumbria CRC in previous inspection and all CRCs	Previous inspection	Current inspection	All CRCs ³⁷
Is the sentence/post-custody period implemented effectively, with a focus on engaging the service user? ³⁸	75%	79%	70%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the service user’s desistance? ³⁸	61%	68%	52%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people? ³⁸	41%	56%	41%

Northumbria CRC has achieved an overall score of ‘Requires improvement’ for its implementation and delivery. It fell short of the ‘Good’ threshold (that two-thirds of cases should be managed satisfactorily). Sentences start promptly and are well

³⁶ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated by boldening in the table. See Annex 2 for a more detailed explanation.

³⁷ From inspection data for all HMI Probation inspections, June 2018 to June 2019.

³⁸ The answers to these key questions are underpinned by more detailed ‘prompts’. The table in Annex 4 illustrates the percentage of the case sample with a satisfactory ‘yes’ response to each prompt.

managed. Flexibility is given to people, to maximise their attendance and support them in successfully completing their sentences. Despite these advances, risk of harm work remains inconsistent.

Is the sentence/post-custody period implemented appropriately, with a focus on engaging the service user?

Overall, the CRC engendered a good level of engagement of people within their sentences. We were impressed to find flexibility given to people, to help them to complete their sentences successfully. For example, changes had been made to appointment times or venues, to enable people to attend, in 89 per cent of cases.

Research highlights the need for effective supervisory relationships,³⁹ and we were pleased to note the high value placed on this in Northumbria. In 8 out of 10 cases, service users kept the same responsible officer that they started their sentence with.

For people leaving custody, however, the picture was not as rosy. Inspectors noted a lack of engagement between responsible officers and people prior to their release from custody. This may be symptomatic of the Through the Gate service undertaking most of the work with people held in custody. Nonetheless, the CRC has work to do here, to improve the transition and prospects for licensees. The CRC has set up a project group to look at quality in resettlement practice, and new guidance was issued to staff in June 2019. More needs to be done, however, to lift the quality of the experience that people receive when resettling from prison.

Do the services delivered focus sufficiently on reducing reoffending and supporting the service user's desistance?

In the main, the correct services were delivered, to help people address their offending. We saw that there was a stronger focus on desistance-related activities, however, such as help with accommodation. Sometimes, offending-related work got 'lost' or was deprioritised, often in the context of people presenting themselves in recurrent crises. Overall, however, the score for this CRC compares favourably with the year 1 aggregate score for all CRCs, in delivering the right services to support people with desistance and to tackle their offence-related factors.

Work with other agencies was well coordinated for most people, with services engaged which could often provide help beyond the term of the sentence.

More could be done to include other people as part of the support system for those under supervision. Only half of the people we judged to have appropriate supporters had the benefit of these people being included in the way that they were supervised. It is possible that the low level of home visiting that we observed in Northumbria was having an impact on this support strand, as discussed in the next section.

Just over half of the people using the CRC's services were getting the right level of contact. Four out of ten people were not keeping enough of their appointments, and more should be done to improve attendance rates.

³⁹ Sturm, A., Menger, A., de Vogel, V. and Huibers, M.J.H. (2019). 'Predictors of Change of Working Alliance Over the Course of Probation Supervision: A Prospective Cohort Study'. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*. Online first, pp. 1-21.

Do the services delivered focus appropriately on managing and minimising the risk of harm to others?

Management of the risk of harm was considered when responsible officers set the level of contact, and we judged this to be sufficiently good in a reasonable majority of cases. We noted the significant improvement in this area, compared with the situation at the time of our previous inspection. It is likely that this is, in part, related to the successful implementation of minimum levels of face-to-face contact with responsible officers. Additionally, some of the work that the CRC has undertaken to improve practice is beginning to show some positive results.

There is clearly still much more to do to improve the protection of victims in the CRC's casework, as we judged this to be sufficient in only 53 per cent of cases.

We found the way that responsible officers were including other agencies in their work to manage the risk of harm to others was sufficient in two-thirds of cases. By contrast, the CRC was including key individuals to support the effective management of risk of harm in only around 4 out of every 10 cases.

Home visits were not used enough, with only a third of people receiving a home visit, where one was merited. These visits are resource intensive but offer vital information and an opportunity to see people within their home environment. As such, interacting with people at home often leads to a deeper understanding of individual circumstances, potential support networks and the difficulties that people face in turning away from crime.

Overall, probation officer grade staff delivered harm-reductive services well, and more consistently than probation services officer grades.

	Previous inspection	Current inspection
2.4. Reviewing		
Reviewing of progress is well informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the service user.	Inadequate	Requires improvement

Our rating⁴⁰ for reviewing is based on the following three questions:

Comparison with Northumbria CRC in previous inspection	Previous inspection	Current inspection	All CRCs ⁴¹
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the service user's compliance and engagement? ^{42 43}	No comparable data available	65%	65%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the service user's desistance? ^{42 43}	No comparable data available	70%	62%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe? ⁴²	38%	48% ⁴⁴	44%

Northumbria CRC has achieved an overall score of 'Requires improvement' for its reviewing work. It fell short of the 'Good' threshold (that two-thirds of cases should be managed satisfactorily). This was due to shortcomings in relation to keeping other people safe. Reviewing is slightly weaker than in the other key areas. While written reviews are usually completed, too little attention is given to noting progress, difficulties or dynamic changes for the individuals under supervision. Opportunities are missed to talk to people about how their offending, lifestyle or risks are changing.

Does reviewing effectively support the service user's compliance and engagement?

Our judgement of reviewing activity in Northumbria CRC follows the same lines as other areas of practice, discussed above. Broadly speaking, engagement and

⁴⁰ The rating for the standard is normally driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated by bold in the table. See Annex 2 for a more detailed explanation.

⁴¹ From inspection data for all HMI Probation inspections, June 2018 to June 2019.

⁴² The answers to these key questions are underpinned by more detailed 'prompts'. The table in Annex 4 illustrates the percentage of the case sample with a satisfactory 'yes' response to each prompt.

⁴³ Comparable data between the previous and current inspection are not available. This is due to a methodological change.

⁴⁴ In this standard, we have exercised professional judgement, increasing the rating to 'Requires improvement', as the original score was less than 5% below the boundary for that rating, and our overall findings in relation to reviewing were improved. See Annex 2 for a more detailed explanation.

offending-related factors are considered in enough cases, but the focus on keeping other people safe is not sharp enough.

Written reviews were generally taking place. Overall, the content of reviewing was also appropriate, with consideration given to compliance. Responsible officers were adjusting plans to remove barriers in just over 6 out of 10 cases. Disappointingly, less than half of the people whose cases we looked at had been included in their own reviews. This was a missed opportunity for strengthening the working relationship and creating recognition and impetus for further positive achievements.

Does reviewing effectively support progress towards desistance?

Responsible officers are reviewing progress in 7 out of ten cases and this provides people with a responsive service, more likely to help them desist from offending. It was positive to note that the large majority of work we inspected built upon people's strengths.

Inspectors were also pleased to see people having supervision reviews which included supporting information from other agencies. This provides a more holistic and meaningful review.

Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

Reviewing was weakest in relation to keeping other people safe. Only a third of people benefited from having an accurate review of changes related to risk of harm to others. Under half of the individuals under supervision had relevant risk-of-harm-related input from other agencies.

Crucially, people are not being included in reviewing their own risky behaviour, and this was a missed opportunity in around two-thirds of the work we looked at.

Written reviews need to take place more consistently. Reviewing practice is not yet rigorous enough and must concentrate on where risk of harm to others is changing. On discussing reviewing practice with CRC managers, it was acknowledged that this is a priority area for the quality assurance team. We urge the CRC to redouble its efforts to instil a culture of professional curiosity within casework. Such curiosity helps to add rigour to reviewing work.

Poor practice example

Jamie had an 18-month sentence with 15 RAR days and a requirement to complete the Building Better Relationships programme. He had a restraining order due to two assaults, which were committed in a context of domestic abuse. The responsible officer completed a joint planning and reviewing session with him. The formal review, however, lacked analysis and detail, with information from the police and children's social care services not being used or followed up. Up-to-date checks were not made. Jamie disclosed that he had been seeing his daughter, and then had contact withdrawn. Although contact issues had been a trigger for his offences, the review neglected to consider increasing risks fully. There was no evidence of liaison with children's services to discuss arrangements for any contact. MATAC⁴⁵ is involved in the case but the responsible officer was unclear of its role. Risk planning was not personalised and appears to be a generic copy. There is no evidence of appropriate intervention being delivered – for example, work on relationships, attitudes, thinking and behaviour. Sessions tended to be welfare focused. Reviewing has not fully recognised or understood the impact of changes.

⁴⁵ MATAC (multi-agency tasking and coordination) is a domestic abuse perpetrators project, funded by the Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner. It identifies and targets the most harmful perpetrators through analysis of recency, frequency and gravity of offending. Those identified are referred into the MATAC process, where key partners agree on interventions using a domestic abuse 'toolkit'. This can include targeting and disrupting perpetrators and or supporting them to address their behaviour.

3. CRC-specific work⁴⁶

	Previous inspection	Current inspection
4.1. Unpaid work		
Unpaid work is delivered safely and effectively, engaging the service user in line with the expectations of the court.	Good	Requires improvement

*Due to changes in inspection standards and methodology between the first and second rounds of CRC inspections, the rating for unpaid work is **not** directly comparable with the rating for the previous year.*

We inspected the management of 25 unpaid work requirements, looking at assessment and planning; safety; and implementation of the court order. We also observed two induction sessions and seven work parties, to examine the extent to which unpaid work was delivered in a way that supported desistance. The projects we visited were located across the CRC area and included community gardens and grounds improvements at a church, a rugby club and at sheltered accommodation.

We found variable results from this inspection. Unpaid work assessments were not personalised, to fit people's individual circumstances, for over half of the cases we inspected. By contrast, people undertaking unpaid work benefited from safe delivery in almost 8 out of 10 cases. The sentence of the court was delivered appropriately in 84 per cent of cases.

Strengths:

- The orders of the courts start promptly and are managed well.
- Worksites run safely, with due consideration to people's individual circumstances.
- Supervisors are professional and act as good role models.

Areas for improvement:

- Unpaid work assessments are not personalised.
- The CRC has problems in the way that it transfers information about risk of harm to worksites.
- The CRC has used the 20 per cent allowance, available for learning and skills development, too freely.
- There is not enough variety in the group placements available.
- Education, training and employment (ETE) opportunities are underdeveloped.

⁴⁶ CRC aspects of domain three work are listed in *HMI Probation's Standards* as 4.1 and 4.2.

Unpaid work key data⁴⁷

	Current inspection
Number of unpaid work stand-downs in previous 12 months	111
Percentage of successful completions of unpaid work requirements in previous 12 months	90.45%
Percentage of unpaid work hours completed as ETE activity in previous 12 months	5.9%

Our rating⁴⁸ for unpaid work is based on the following four questions:

Current inspection	
Is the assessment and planning of unpaid work personalised? ⁴⁹	48% ⁵⁰
Is unpaid work delivered safely? ⁴⁹	79%
Do arrangements for unpaid work maximise rehabilitative elements and support desistance?	This question produces qualitative evidence only.
Is the sentence of the court implemented appropriately? ⁴⁹	84%

The quality of the work undertaken by responsible officers was patchy and, therefore, we have rated this CRC's unpaid work as 'Requires improvement'. Assessments were not properly tailored to the circumstances of the people it supervises. Unpaid work was delivered safely for 79 per cent of people, and, impressively, in 84 per cent of cases the sentence of the court was implemented appropriately.

Is the assessment and planning of unpaid work personalised?

While we saw processes that allowed for the collection and assessment of factors relating to diversity, personal circumstances and strengths, the quality of completion of these assessments was sporadic. We found that key information was often missing, or simply scored-through on the paper forms. Information about religion or pregnancy, for example, should be actively considered, to ensure that placements are appropriately personalised.

Women are usually offered individual placements, but where increased risk of harm issues exist, women are placed on group projects. The CRC attempts to ensure that a female supervisor oversees such groups; however, it could not assure us that this never resulted in anyone being placed as a lone woman on a group.

⁴⁷ Information supplied by CRC.

⁴⁸ The provisional rating for the standard is normally driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table.

⁴⁹ The answers to these key questions are underpinned by more detailed 'prompts'. The table in Annex 4 illustrates the percentage of the case sample with a satisfactory 'yes' response to each prompt.

⁵⁰ Based on positive qualitative evidence from site visits and given the lowest score of 48% was only 2 percentage points less than the next performance band, professional discretion was used to raise the rating to 'Requires improvement'.

The CRC has a limited range of group projects. At the time of our inspection, these were all ground works projects. There are plans to expand the types of project, but health and safety refresher training needs to be undertaken before ladders can be used, for example. This meant that decorating projects were not feasible at the point of our inspection. The net result is that, at induction, a binary decision is made to place people either singly or in 'agency' placements, which are mostly charity shops; if there are risk considerations, they are placed in a group project. Matching individuals to relevant placements has, therefore, become somewhat obsolete.

While there is some variety in the ground works projects, the CRC is not particularly responsive to people's individual strengths or aspirations. As an example, when individuals identify key skills that they would like to develop, to improve their employment prospects, such as food hygiene, there are very few opportunities for these to be worked on, given the CRC's limited range of placements. Indeed, there were no catering placements on offer at the time of the inspection. We suggest that the CRC looks again at the variety of placements it has on order, and matches these to people's needs, particularly for ETE.

Is unpaid work delivered safely?

Risk of harm information was considered prior to selecting placements for people undertaking unpaid work. Despite this, we saw difficulties for supervisors on worksites, when people attended who had not been allocated to work on that particular day. The relevant information was, therefore, not always available. Staff 'on the ground' were capable of making good, impromptu decisions to manage presenting risks, but planning for these risks was not effective. One supervisor suggested that a 'master' register of all the people undertaking unpaid work could be made available to unpaid work staff, to support better risk management.

The CRC has an established approach to the safe delivery of unpaid work. The worksites we visited were safe, with regular checks to assess tools and equipment. 'Toolbox talks' took place every day on site, to ensure that people carrying out unpaid work were safely inducted, with equipment and operating instructions explained. Equipment was generally well maintained.

Do arrangements for unpaid work maximise rehabilitative elements and support desistance?

Overall, the qualitative observations we made found that the provision of unpaid work was good. Within this, some aspects of the scheme were particularly well managed, but areas such as personalisation and ETE were not.

There were sessions arranged to ensure that people were inducted speedily after sentence. Despite our recommendation from the last inspection, that people's suitability for group induction was assessed, we witnessed an induction where such consideration was not given. An individual with specific health and communication needs was ineffectively managed in a group induction session.

Rules were well explained, but there was an inconsistent approach to discussing links to ETE. Concerningly, the CRC was advising people that, on obtaining verified employment, unpaid work hours could be reduced by 20 per cent. This, in our view, is not entirely consistent with the provisions of the Unpaid Work Manual.⁵¹ The CRC

⁵¹ The Unpaid Work Manual is appended to Probation Instruction 20/16: <https://www.justice.gov.uk>psipso>psi-2016>pi-20-2016-unpaid-work>

was aware that new, more explicit instructions had been introduced in early October 2019,⁵² and managers were preparing for the changes needed to take place to amend this practice.

As discussed above, there was a limited range of placements, with most group projects focusing on ground works. Despite the lack of variety, people found the work worthwhile, and could see the value to the community. When these included specific skills development and problem solving, individuals reported a higher level of positive impact derived from the work undertaken. In the main, supervisors were clear about the skills development they were facilitating on the project.

One individual told us:

“I find the work therapeutic as it gives me a good feeling, knowing I'm doing something good for the community”.

Another person highlighted the problems with some of the projects selected:

“Litter picking is degrading and awful”.

We invite the CRC to extend its range of placements.

Is the sentence of the court implemented appropriately?

The CRC shows real strength in its ability to manage unpaid work requirements well, in line with the sentencer expectations. Good processes are in place to transfer work from local courts to the CRC. People are inducted promptly and start undertaking their unpaid work soon after sentence. Responsible officers take steps to ensure that people can maximise their attendance, and we saw examples of changes being made to reporting days to facilitate this.

The required enforcement steps were taken in most cases, with orders being returned to court to mark failures to comply. There were cases, however, where breach action was not timely and was subsequently withdrawn multiple times.

⁵² Probation Instruction 04/19: <https://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/offenders/psipso/2019/pi-04-2019-unpaid-work.pdf>

	Previous inspection	Current inspection
3.2. Through the Gate		
Through the Gate services are personalised and coordinated, addressing the service user's resettlement needs.	Requires improvement	Good

Due to changes in inspection standards and methodology between the first and second rounds of CRC inspections, the rating for Through the Gate is not directly comparable with the rating for the previous year.

We inspected the management of 11 cases where the CRC had delivered pre-release Through the Gate resettlement work, looking at resettlement planning, the delivery of resettlement services and release coordination. We also conducted a site visit to Her Majesty's Prison Northumberland, to corroborate our findings. The CRC runs a Through the Gate service in Her Majesty's Prisons Low Newton and Durham.

In our 2018 inspection, we rated Through the Gate services as 'Requires improvement', having found some areas of effective practice but a lack of coordinated communication with community-based services to support individuals on their release. Our 2019 findings are better, overall. Although there had been a decline in the quality of planning, we saw a substantial improvement in the way that information is coordinated between prison departments.

The new specification for enhanced Through the Gate work has been implemented well, and we are pleased to see the scheme performing well from when it was introduced in April 2019. The new service includes bespoke housing, debts and benefits advice, provided by Shelter staff, and prison-based one-to-one-work delivered by the Through the Gate staff. There has been a 25 per cent increase in staffing for Through the Gate. There is currently little use made of peer mentors, and pick-up services, to support people on the day of their release, are seldom offered to male prisoners. Women get a better level of service, with transport being provided in some cases.

Strengths:

- The Through the Gate service is firmly strengths based and focused on building on the positive elements in people's lives.
- The CRC has formed productive relationships within the local prisons, and has used these to deliver good services.
- The Through the Gate staff work flexibly, to ensure that services are delivered consistently in all locations.
- Collaborative working between Shelter, Changing Lives and the CRC staff ensures a seamless service.

Areas for improvement:

- The transfer of information is not robust enough.
- Staff based in HMP Durham and HMP Northumberland do not have enough access to risk information.
- Not enough attention is paid to risk of harm in the direct work of the Through the Gate service.

Our rating⁵³ for Through the Gate is based on the following three questions:

Comparison with Northumbria in previous inspection and all CRCs	Previous inspection	Current inspection	All CRCs ⁵⁴
Does resettlement planning focus sufficiently on the service user's resettlement needs and on factors linked to offending and desistance?	90%	64% ⁵⁵	69%
Does resettlement activity focus sufficiently on supporting the service user's resettlement?	70%	82%	62%
Is there effective coordination of resettlement activity?	55%	91%	59%

Overall, we judged this area of practice to be 'Good'. Resettlement planning focused on the correct areas, to address offending and to promote desistance, in 64 per cent of cases. Resettlement work was appropriate for more than 8 out of 10 people. Resettlement activity was coordinated properly for more than 9 out of every 10 people.

Does resettlement planning focus sufficiently on the service user's resettlement needs and on factors linked to offending and desistance?

Most of the aspects of resettlement planning were consistently done well. Staff ensured that plans were clear and timely. They included individuals in planning, and drew upon their strengths. Relevant sources of information were considered in almost three-quarters of the cases, and diversity and personal circumstances were thought through in a similar number.

Plans, however, did not adequately consider risks of harm sufficiently. This was a marked weakness in practice and needs to be addressed. Many of the staff undertaking this work are relatively new in post, and the CRC will need to consider how best to support colleagues undertaking important planning tasks with people presenting a wide range of challenges, complexities and risky behaviours.

⁵³ The provisional rating for the standard is normally driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table.

⁵⁴ From inspection data for all HMI Probation inspections, June 2018 to June 2019.

⁵⁵ In this standard, we have exercised professional judgement, increasing the rating to 'Good', as the original score was less than 5% below the boundary for that rating, and our overall findings in relation to Through the Gate were encouraging.

Does resettlement activity focus sufficiently on supporting the service user's resettlement?

In common with many other areas of practice, the CRC was proficient in helping people to engage, using strengths-based approaches.

In most cases, we noted that people's personal circumstances and diversity were considered appropriately. The major fault line was risk of harm work. Far too few people had the benefit of resettlement work that took proper account of the risks they posed to others.

Is there effective coordination of resettlement activity?

We saw a marked improvement from the previous inspection in the coordination of resettlement activity. Improvements in the recording of information with the OASys database have facilitated clearer communications with community-based responsible officers. While the CRC has improved communications, there was one area of concern: staff based in the prisons are storing information on prison-based systems, and not all relevant information is transferring to community providers, at the point of release. We urge the CRC to improve the flow of information, in order to safeguard people on release.

Practice guidance for custodial sentence cases was issued in July 2019, to support improvements to practice.

Annex 1: Background to probation services

Around 255,000 adults are supervised by probation services annually.⁵⁶ 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.⁵⁷

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

These services are currently provided by a publicly owned National Probation Service (NPS) and 18 privately owned Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) that provide services under contract. The government has announced its intention to change the arrangements for delivering probation services, and has given notice to CRCs that it will terminate their contracts early, by Spring 2021, with responsibility for offender management passing to the NPS at that point.

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.

⁵⁶ Ministry of Justice. (2019) *Offender Management Caseload Statistics* as at 30 June 2019 (based on the average of total offenders supervised in the previous four quarters to the end of June. 2019).

⁵⁷ All those sentenced, for offences committed after the implementation of the *Offender Rehabilitation Act 2014*, to more than 1 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.

Annex 2: Methodology

The inspection methodology is summarised below, linked to the three domains in our standards framework. We focused on obtaining evidence against the standards, key questions and prompts in our inspection framework.

Domain one: organisational delivery

The provider submitted evidence in advance, and the CRC's Chief Executive Officer delivered a presentation covering the following areas:

- How does the leadership of the organisation support and promote the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all service users?
- How are staff in the organisation empowered to deliver a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all service users?
- Is there a comprehensive range of high-quality services in place, supporting a tailored and responsive service for all service users?
- Is timely and relevant information available, and are there appropriate facilities to support a high-quality, personalised and responsive approach for all service users?
- What are your priorities for further improvement, and why?

During the main fieldwork phase, we interviewed 62 individual responsible officers, asking them about their experiences of training, development, management supervision and leadership. We held various meetings groups and individuals, which allowed us to triangulate evidence and information. In total, we conducted 35 meetings, which included meetings with senior managers, operational partners and stakeholders, and with middle managers and frontline staff. We also visited all six local management centre offices and two of the hubs delivering women's services (Blyth and Newcastle East). The evidence collected under this domain was judged against our published ratings characteristics.⁵⁸

Domain two: case supervision

We completed case assessments over a two-week period, examining service users' files and interviewing responsible officers and service users. The cases selected were those of individuals who had been under community supervision for approximately six to seven months (either through a community sentence or following release from custody). This enabled us to examine work in relation to assessing, planning, implementing and reviewing. Where necessary, interviews with other people closely involved in the case also took place.

We examined 97 cases from all six local management centres. The sample size was set to achieve a confidence level of 80 per cent (with a margin of error of 5), and we ensured that the ratios in relation to gender, type of disposal and risk of serious harm level matched those in the eligible population.

⁵⁸ HMI Probation's domain one ratings characteristics can be found here: <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2018/05/Probation-Domain-One-rating-characteristics-March-18-final.pdf>

In some areas of this report, data may have been split into smaller sub-samples – for example, male/female cases, probation officer/probation services officer cases. Where this is the case, the margin of error for the sub-sample findings may be higher than 5.

Domain three: CRC work

We completed case assessments for two further samples: unpaid work and Through the Gate. As in domain two, the sample size for unpaid work is set to achieve a confidence level of 80 per cent (with a margin of error of 5). Published data is insufficient to calculate accurate margins of error for Through the Gate work, so the size of the case sample for that element of work is estimated, based on overall workload and previous inspection data.

Unpaid work

We examined 25 cases with unpaid work requirements⁵⁹ that had begun at least three months previously. The sample included cases managed by the NPS, as well as cases managed by the CRC. We ensured that the ratios in relation to gender and risk of serious harm level matched those in the eligible population. We used the case management and assessment systems to inspect these cases.

We observed seven unpaid work projects and two unpaid work induction sessions, to gather qualitative evidence.

We also held meetings with the following individuals/groups, which allowed us to triangulate evidence and gather additional information:

- the senior manager with overall responsibility for the delivery of unpaid work
- the middle manager with responsibilities for unpaid work
- a group of supervisors of unpaid work, from a range of geographical locations.

Through the Gate

We examined 11 custodial cases⁶⁰ in which the individual had been released on licence or post-sentence supervision from the CRC's resettlement prisons, over a four-week period, shortly before inspection fieldwork. The sample included those entitled to pre-release Through the Gate services from the CRC who were then supervised post-release by the CRC being inspected. We used the case management and assessment systems to inspect these cases. Further, we undertook a site visit to HMP Northumberland.

We also held meetings with the following individuals/groups:

- the senior manager in the CRC responsible for Through the Gate services
- resettlement managers from HM Prison and Probation Service
- the middle manager responsible for Through the Gate services in specific prisons
- a group of CRC resettlement workers directly responsible for preparing resettlement plans and/or meeting identified resettlement needs.

⁵⁹ The required sample size was 30; however, fewer requirements were made in the two-week period and so we inspected 100 per cent of the requirements made.

⁶⁰ The required sample size was 20; however, fewer cases were released in the relevant two-week period and so we inspected 100 per cent of the available releases.

Ratings explained

Domain one ratings are proposed by the lead inspector for each standard. They will be a single judgement, using all the relevant sources of evidence. More detailed information can be found in the probation inspection domain one rules and guidance on the website.

Domain two and three standard ratings are based on the results of the inspection of individual cases. Ratings are at the standard level, and based on consolidated results (at key question level) of all cases inspected in the relevant domain. In CRC inspections only, the rating for unpaid work in domain three may also be influenced by evidence from observations.

For each standard, the rating is aligned to the lowest banding at the key question level, recognising that each key question is an integral part of the standard.

Lowest banding (key question level)	Rating (standard)
Minority: <50%	Inadequate
Too few: 50–64%	Requires improvement
Reasonable majority: 65–79%	Good
Large majority: 80%+	Outstanding ☆

We use case subsamples for some of the key questions in domains two and three. For example, when judging whether planning focused sufficiently on keeping other people safe, we exclude those cases where the inspector deemed the risk of serious harm to be low. This approach is justified on the basis that we focus on those cases where we expect meaningful work to take place.

An element of professional judgement may be applied to the standards ratings in domains two and three. Exceptionally, the ratings panel considers whether professional discretion should be exercised where the lowest percentage at the key question level is close to the rating boundary – for example, between ‘Requires improvement’ and ‘Good’ (specifically, within five percentage points of the boundary or where a differing judgement in one case would result in a change in rating). The panel considers the sizes of any subsamples used and the percentages for the other key questions within that standard, such as whether they fall within different bandings and the level of divergence, to make this decision.

Rating unpaid work

For the unpaid work standard, domain three case inspections provide data on key questions 4.1.1, 4.1.2 and 4.1.4. Analysis of that data provides an indicative rating for the unpaid work standard, aligned with banding, as above. Qualitative evidence for key question 4.1.3 is obtained from observations during the fieldwork, other written evidence provided by the CRC, and evidence obtained from relevant meetings. This qualitative evidence may be used to increase or decrease the indicative rating for unpaid work by one band. If the lead inspector believes that that is justified, the proposal is put to the ratings panel, for ratification or rejection.

Overall provider rating

Straightforward scoring rules are used to generate the overall provider rating. Each of the 10 standards will be scored on a 0–3 scale, in which ‘Inadequate’ = 0; ‘Requires improvement’ = 1; ‘Good’ = 2; ‘Outstanding’ = 3. Adding these scores produces a total score ranging from 0 to 30, which is banded to produce the overall rating, as follows:

- 0–5 = Inadequate
- 6–15 = Requires improvement
- 16–25 = Good
- 26–30 = Outstanding.

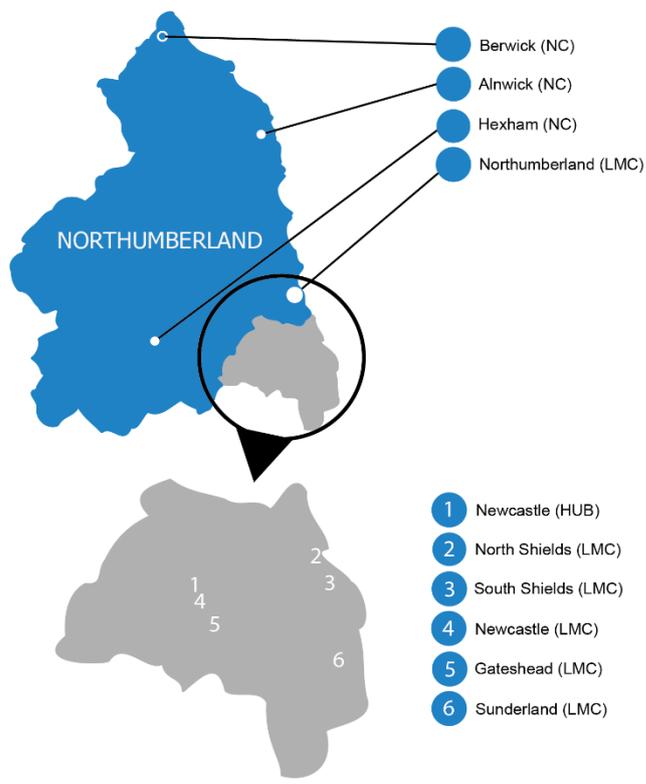
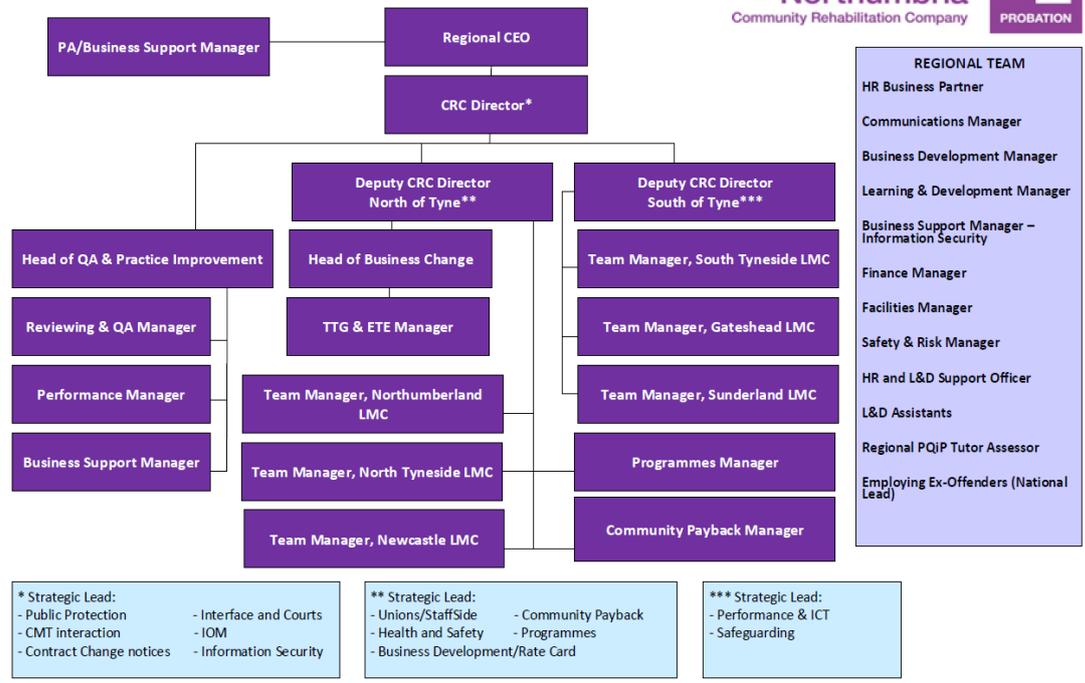
We do not include any weightings in the scoring rules. The rationale for this is that all parts of the standards framework are strongly linked to effective service delivery and positive outcomes, and we have restricted ourselves to those that are most essential. Our view is that providers need to focus across all the standards, and we do not want to distort behaviours in any undesirable ways. Furthermore, the underpinning evidence supports including all standards/key questions in the rating, rather than weighting individual elements.

Comparative data

Where HMI Probation have comparative data, our internal data analysis calculates whether any changes are statistically significant or not (using the Z-score test, with a significance level of 0.1). We do not publish that level of detail, but where inspectors are referring to changes in data that meet this significance test, they will use the word 'significant'. They use different words to describe other changes in data, which do not meet the significance test.

Annex 3: Organisational design and map

Northumbria CRC Leadership & Management July 2019



The Hub is the central point for all our administration, performance and corporate activity. The Hub carries out an 'arm's length' offender management function, using our operational partners to undertake interventions on our behalf. Staff in the Hub handle all key processes involved in managing a community order, including case allocation, reporting, dealing with breaches and the purchase of interventions.

Local Management Centres (LMCs) are our primary offices within our areas of operation where service users report in person. Staff will work on a 'hot desk' arrangement supporting the new approach to mobile working.

Neighbourhood Centres (NCs) are smaller offices and do not have a dedicated reception facility, but staff can 'hot desk' and meet service users there.

The Operating Model in Practice

Our Target Operating Model:

The key elements of the Target Operating Model (TOM) can best be depicted in the diagram at figure 1.

Case Allocation:

All cases or requirements assigned to the CRC are initially received through a NDelius notification by the centralised administrative team based at the CRC Hub. In the majority of cases, new cases are sent electronically to the relevant field Team Manager for allocation to an appropriate Responsible Officer, determined by the operating model “colour band” to be assigned to the case (see figure 2). The relevant manager determines which Responsible Officer will hold the case based on grade, experience and current workload. Guidance in relation to allocation by grade of staff is attached as figure 3.

This applies to all community and custodial sentences, except for cases that include a single requirement of Unpaid Work hours; these are automatically assigned to Community Payback and allocated to a UW responsible officer by the Hub administrative team. Cases with only one or more restrictive requirements are also allocated directly by the Hub, to be held centrally by a hub-based practitioner for enforcement purposes.

Figure 1

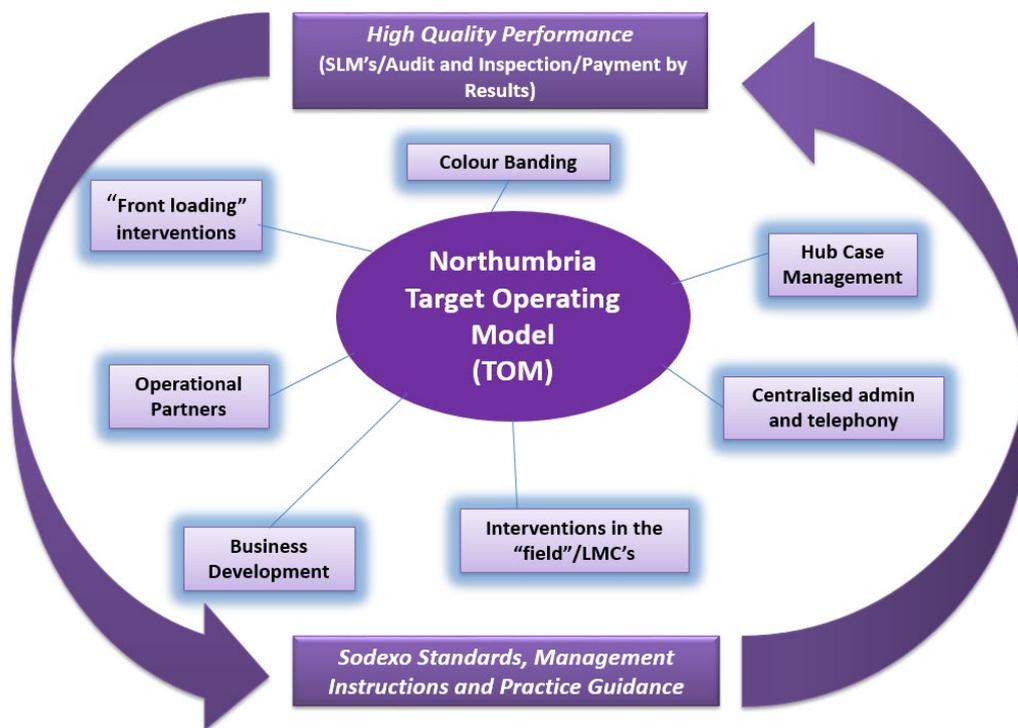


Figure 2

Colour Banding Allocation Guidance

Decisions in regard to the allocation of colour banding are primarily based on an assessment of risk of serious harm and risk of reoffending as set out in the allocation matrix. However, the additional guidance should also be utilised to ensure the issues of complexity and offence/sentence type are also considered.

Risk of Reoffending			
<p>Very High RoR</p> <p>Indicative OGRS 3 90-100.</p> <p>IOM nominal</p>	<p><u>Red</u></p> <p>Structured assessment followed by high intensity rehabilitation and social reintegration interventions/ motivational work.</p> <p>Sentence Plan delivered via multi-agency partnership arrangements</p>	<p><u>Red</u></p> <p>Structured assessment followed by high intensity rehabilitation and social reintegration interventions/ motivational work.</p> <p>Sentence Plan delivered via multi-agency partnership arrangements</p> <p>Delivery of a robust Risk Management Plan</p>	
<p>High RoR based on OGRS/ Professional Judgement</p> <p>Indicative OGRS 3 50-89</p>	<p><u>Yellow</u></p> <p>Structured assessment followed by rehabilitation and social reintegration interventions/ motivational work.</p>	<p><u>Blue</u></p> <p>Structured assessment followed by high intensity rehabilitation and social reintegration interventions/ motivational work.</p> <p>Delivery of a robust Risk Management Plan</p>	
<p>Low RoR based on OGRS/ Professional Judgement.</p> <p>Indicative OGRS 3 0-49</p>	<p><u>Green</u></p> <p>Structured assessment followed by a focus on social integration by supply chain.</p>	<p><u>Yellow</u></p> <p>Structured assessment followed by rehabilitation and social reintegration interventions/ motivational work.</p> <p>Delivery of a robust Risk Management Plan.</p>	
	Low RoSH	Medium RoSH	Risk of Serious Harm

Allocation to Yellow: Any case could be allocated to Yellow based on professional judgement with particular reference to risk of harm/reoffending and complexity of need. However, the following cases should be allocated to Yellow as a minimum:

- DRRs, ATRs and MHTRs
- Where a young person has identified adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)
- Involvement in serious organised crime, even on the periphery

Automatic Allocation to Blue (Red if very high RoR or IOM nominal):

- Safeguarding - Child Protection Plan in place.
- Sex Offenders
- Prevent Cases

Consider Allocation to Blue (red if very high RoR or IOM nominal): Any case could be allocated to Blue on the basis of professional judgement but particular consideration should be given in the following cases:

- Safeguarding – child concern, child in need
- Domestic Abuse
- Hate Crime
- Complex Mental Health

Automatic Allocation to Red: All IOM nominals should be allocated to Red.
Figure 3

Case allocation to Responsible Officers in the LMCs

General Principles

- Decisions regarding allocation of cases are primarily based on professional judgement by Team Managers, using an assessment of risk of serious harm and risk of reoffending as outlined in the Colour Band Allocation Matrix.
- Responsible Officers (ROs) can be either PO or PSO, cases will be allocated using the colour band allocation guidance, taking into account risks and complexity of the case alongside experience, competence and level of training/qualification of the RO.
- There may be exceptions (see below) where it is determined the case can only be held by a PO. A PSO can be involved in delivering parts of the sentence plan with oversight retained by the PO as the allocated RO.
- Northumbria CRC recognises the value of POs as potential role models, coaches and mentors supporting PSO development. Involvement of POs in the Practice Enhancement Programme (PEP) will support candidates in holding more complex cases as part of their development.
- There remains an expectation within Northumbria CRC that all PSOs hold or are working to achieve and appropriate level 3 qualification or equivalent.
- Any deviation from this approach needs to be clearly recorded by the Team Manager. A more consistent or long-term departure would be notified to the Trade Unions via the Deputy Director outlining the rationale for the decision.

Exceptions

Issues around risk and complexity may dictate a Team Manager decides a PSO should not be a Responsible Officer. Typically, this may involve, but not be limited to;

- **Domestic abuse** – consideration to be given to the level of harm presented, ongoing risk to individuals, involvement in multi-agency forums such as MARAC/MATAC and the evidence of entrenched patterns of behaviour.
- **Hate Crime** – risk levels, complexity and level of training/qualification will inform allocation. Concerns around radicalisation and potential terrorism need to be sensitively handled and effectively linked in to police and probation Counter Terrorism staff.
- **Mental Health** – Mental Health Treatment Requirement cases will generally be allocated to POs. Other cases with mental health issues will again be allocated according to complexity, risk and experience, competency and training/qualification of staff member.
- **Sexual Offending** – current cases imposed for a sexual offence should be held by POs. Those with a historic sex offence should be generally allocated to a PO.
- **Child Protection** – a current child protection plan at the point of allocation
- PSO case management to continue with clear evidence of managerial oversight and support.

Annex 4: Inspection data⁶¹

The answers to the key questions that determine the ratings for each standard are underpinned by answers to more detailed 'prompts'. This table illustrates the percentage of the case sample with a satisfactory 'yes' response to the prompt questions. It should be noted that there is no mechanistic connection between the proportion of prompt questions answered positively, and the overall score at the key question level. The 'total' does not necessarily equal the 'sum of the parts'. The summary judgement is the overall finding made by the inspector, having taken consideration of the answers to all the prompts, weighing up the relative impact of the strengths and weaknesses.

Where we have changed the standard, key question or prompt since the previous round of inspections, now comparative data is available.

	Previous inspection	Current inspection
2.1. Assessment		
Does assessment focus sufficiently on engaging the service user?		
Does assessment analyse the service user's motivation and readiness to engage and comply with the sentence?	74%	81%
Does assessment analyse the service user's diversity and personal circumstances, and consider the impact these have on their ability to comply and engage with service delivery? ⁶²	No comparable data available	62%
Is the service user meaningfully involved in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?	77%	64%
Does assessment focus sufficiently on the factors linked to offending and desistance?		
Does assessment identify and analyse offending-related factors?	44%	52%
Does assessment identify the service user's strengths and protective factors? ⁶²	No comparable data available	80%
Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information?	63%	82%

⁶¹ HMI Probation inspection data.

⁶² Comparable data between the previous and current inspection are not available. This is due to a methodological change.

Does assessment focus sufficiently on the risk of harm to others?		
Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risk of harm to others, including identifying who is at risk and the nature of that risk? ⁶³	No comparable data available	44%
Does assessment analyse any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims? ⁶³	No comparable data available	46%
Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including past behaviour and convictions, and involve other agencies where appropriate? ⁶³	No comparable data available	51%
Were domestic abuse checks undertaken? ^{63 64}	No comparable data available	89%
Did child safeguarding information sharing take place in cases where required? ^{63 65}	No comparable data available	85%
2.2. Planning		
Does planning focus sufficiently on engaging the service user?		
Is the service user meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views taken into account?	69%	64%
Does planning take sufficient account of the service user's diversity and personal circumstances, which may affect engagement and compliance? ⁶³	No comparable data available	75%
Does planning take sufficient account of the service user's readiness and motivation to change, which may affect engagement and compliance?	69%	80%

⁶³ Comparable data between the previous and current inspection are not available. This is due to a methodological change.

⁶⁴ Expected in all cases.

⁶⁵ Expected in all cases where the service user has children, is in contact with children or presents a potential risk of harm to children.

Does planning set out how all the requirements of the sentence or licence/post-sentence supervision will be delivered within the available timescales?	75%	75%
Does planning set a level, pattern and type of contact sufficient to engage the service user and to support the effectiveness of specific interventions?	81%	77%
Does planning focus sufficiently on reducing reoffending and supporting the service user's desistance?		
Does planning sufficiently reflect offending-related factors and prioritise those which are most critical?	62%	77%
Does planning build on the service user's strengths and protective factors, utilising potential sources of support? ⁶⁶	No comparable data available	69%
Does planning set out the services most likely to reduce reoffending and support desistance?	72%	75%
Does planning address appropriately factors associated with the risk of harm to others?		
Does planning sufficiently address risk of harm factors and prioritise those which are most critical?	43%	57%
Does planning set out the necessary constructive and/or restrictive interventions to manage the risk of harm?	56%	59%
Does planning make appropriate links to the work of other agencies involved with the service user and any multi-agency plans? ⁶⁶	No comparable data available	50%
Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified?	49%	46%
2.3. Implementation and delivery		
Is the sentence/post-custody period implemented appropriately, with a focus on engaging the service user?		
Do the requirements of the sentence start promptly, or at an appropriate time?	73%	68%

⁶⁶ Comparable data between the previous and current inspection are not available. This is due to a methodological change.

Is sufficient focus given to maintaining an effective working relationship with the service user?	82%	85%
Are sufficient efforts made to enable the service user to complete the sentence, including flexibility to take appropriate account of their personal circumstances?	87%	89%
Post-custody cases only: Was there a proportionate level of contact with the prisoner before release?	67%	44%
Are risks of non-compliance identified and addressed in a timely fashion to reduce the need for enforcement actions?	71%	73%
Are enforcement actions taken when appropriate? ⁶⁷	No comparable data available	67%
Are sufficient efforts made to re-engage the service user after enforcement actions or recall?	78%	88%
Do the services delivered focus sufficiently on reducing reoffending and supporting the service user's desistance?		
Are the delivered services those most likely to reduce reoffending and support desistance, with sufficient attention given to sequencing and the available timescales?	64%	71%
Wherever possible, does the delivery of services build upon the service user's strengths and enhance protective factors? ⁶⁶	No comparable data available	68%
Is the involvement of other organisations in the delivery of services sufficiently well coordinated? ⁶⁷	No comparable data available	78%
Are key individuals in the service user's life engaged, where appropriate, to support their desistance? ⁶⁷	No comparable data available	47%
Is the level and nature of contact sufficient to reduce reoffending and support desistance?	57%	53%
Are local services engaged to support and sustain desistance during the sentence and beyond? ⁶⁷	No comparable	68%

⁶⁷ Comparable data between the previous and current inspection are not available. This is due to a methodological change.

	data available	
Do the services delivered focus appropriately on managing and minimising the risk of harm to others?		
Is the level and nature of contact offered sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	52%	65%
Is sufficient attention given to protecting actual and potential victims? ⁶⁸	No comparable data available	53%
Is the involvement of other agencies in managing and minimising the risk of harm sufficiently well coordinated? ⁶⁸	No comparable data available	67%
Are key individuals in the service user's life engaged, where appropriate, to support the effective management of risk of harm? ⁶⁸	No comparable data available	43%
Are home visits undertaken, where necessary, to support the effective management of risk of harm? ⁶⁸	No comparable data available	35%
2.4. Reviewing		
Does reviewing effectively support the service user's compliance and engagement?		
In cases where it is needed, does reviewing consider compliance and engagement levels and any relevant barriers? ⁶⁸	No comparable data available	65%
In cases where it was needed, were any necessary adjustments made to the ongoing plan of work to take account of compliance and engagement levels and any relevant barriers? ⁶⁸	No comparable data available	61%
Is the service user meaningfully involved in reviewing their progress and engagement? ⁶⁸	No comparable data available	44%

⁶⁸ Comparable data between the previous and current inspection are not available. This is due to a methodological change.

Are written reviews completed as appropriate as a formal record of actions to implement the sentence? ⁶⁹	No comparable data available	68%
Does reviewing effectively support progress towards desistance?		
Does reviewing identify and address changes in factors linked to offending behaviour, with the necessary adjustments being made to the ongoing plan of work? ⁶⁹	No comparable data available	56%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on building upon the service user's strengths and enhancing protective factors? ⁶⁹	No comparable data available	80%
Is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies working with the service user? ⁶⁹	No comparable data available	77%
Are written reviews completed as appropriate as a formal record of the progress towards desistance? ⁶⁹	No comparable data available	73%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?		
Does reviewing identify and address changes in factors related to risk of harm, with the necessary adjustments being made to the ongoing plan of work? ⁶⁹	No comparable data available	33%
Is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in managing the service user's risk of harm? ⁶⁹	No comparable data available	47%
Is the service user (and, where appropriate, key individuals in the service user's life) meaningfully involved in reviewing their risk of harm?	40%	33%
Are written reviews completed as appropriate as a formal record of the management of the service user's risk of harm? ⁶⁹	No comparable data available	63%

⁶⁹ Comparable data between the previous and current inspection are not available. This is due to a methodological change.

4.1 Unpaid work		
Is the assessment and planning of unpaid work personalised?		
Does assessment consider the service user's diversity and personal circumstances, and the impact these have on their ability to comply and engage with unpaid work? ⁷⁰	No comparable data available	44%
Does unpaid work build upon a service user's strengths and enhance their protective factors? ⁷⁰	No comparable data available	42%
Is the allocated work suitable, taking account of the service user's diversity and personal circumstances? ⁷⁰	No comparable data available	80%
Is unpaid work delivered safely?		
Does the delivery of unpaid work take account of risk of harm to other service users, staff or the public? ⁷⁰	No comparable data available	88%
Does unpaid work consider issues relating to the health and safety or potential vulnerability of the service user? ⁷⁰	No comparable data available	88%
Where the responsible officer is engaged in other activity/work with the service user, does regular communication take place? ⁷⁰	No comparable data available	81%
Is the sentence of the court implemented appropriately?		
Does unpaid work commence promptly and happen regularly? ⁷⁰	No comparable data available	88%
Do arrangements for unpaid work encourage the service user's engagement and compliance with the order? ⁷⁰	No comparable data available	92%

⁷⁰ Comparable data between the previous and current inspection are not available. This is due to a methodological change.

Are professional judgements made in relation to decisions about missed appointments? ⁷¹	No comparable data available	87%
Are enforcement actions taken when appropriate? ⁷¹	No comparable data available	74%
4.2 Through the Gate		
Does resettlement planning focus sufficiently on the service user's resettlement needs and on factors linked to offending and desistance?		
Is there a clear and timely plan for how the service user's resettlement needs will be addressed?	100%	82%
Does the plan sufficiently draw on available sources of information?	85%	73%
Is the service user meaningfully involved in planning their resettlement and are their views considered?	85%	91%
Does the resettlement plan identify the service user's strengths and protective factors and consider ways to build upon these?	85%	100%
Does the plan take sufficient account of the service user's diversity and personal circumstances?	90%	73%
Does the resettlement plan take account of factors related to risk of harm? ⁷¹	No comparable data available	18%
Does resettlement activity focus sufficiently on supporting the service user's resettlement?		
Are resettlement services delivered in line with the service user's resettlement needs, prioritising those which are most critical? ⁷¹	80%	No comparable data available
Wherever possible, do resettlement services build upon the service user's strengths and enhance their protective factors? ⁷¹	No comparable data available	89%

⁷¹ Comparable data between the previous and current inspection are not available. This is due to a methodological change.

Does resettlement activity take sufficient account of the service user's diversity and personal circumstances? ⁷²	No comparable data available	64%
Does resettlement activity take sufficient account of any factors related to risk of harm? ⁷²	No comparable data available	50%
Is there effective coordination of resettlement activity?		
Is there effective coordination of resettlement activity with other services being delivered in the prison? ⁷²	No comparable data available	89%
Is there effective communication with the responsible officer in the community, prior to and at the point of release?	60%	82%
Do resettlement services support effective handover to local services in the community? ⁷²	No comparable data available	73%

⁷² Comparable data between the previous and current inspection are not available. This is due to a methodological change.



Her Majesty's
Inspectorate of
Probation

HM Inspectorate of Probation
1 Bridge Street West
Civil Justice Centre
Manchester
M3 3FX

ISBN: 978-1-84099-934-1